

Studies on Homophobia

From Individual Psychology to Group Phenomenon

by

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Abstract

A consideration of homophobia could encompass both an investigation into the individual psychology and group factors which play a role in the constitution of homophobia. Yet the link between individual-psychological explanations of homophobia and explanations that posit homophobia as a group phenomenon has received scant attention. The combination of these two tasks constitutes the general aim of the larger project. The larger project seeks to question the extent to which particular concepts such as repression, repudiation, negation, castration, splitting of the ego and phobia, in Freudian psychoanalytic theory, can contribute to understanding homophobia as individual-psychological and social phenomenon. This raises a further theoretical problem. Is it theoretically tenable to extrapolate from explanations of individual psychology to explanations of social psychology? Freud would argue against such an extrapolation. However, the impossibility, on the grounds of Freudian psychoanalytic theory, of extrapolating from individual psychology to social psychology, would not rule out drawing a link between individual-psychological and social homophobia. In other words, the link between individual-psychological and social homophobia will have to be explored and established on different grounds. The first portion of the dissertation considers the theoretical problems with social-psychological accounts of homophobia and the issues with a particular individual-psychological account of the condition through the lens of Freudian psychoanalytic theory. The second portion looks to an understanding of both individual-psychological and social homophobia and then illustrates the link between the two. Through careful conceptual work I argue, as the thesis of this dissertation, that an analogy between fetishism and homophobia exposes the latter condition as both an individual-psychological and social phenomenon. By drawing this kind of analogy, the link between individual-psychological and social homophobia becomes more apparent within the scope of Freudian psychoanalytic theory.

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I

Introduction

The term *homophobia* ... brings together a medical and diagnostic vocabulary and a social scientific one; we have the individual sickness, on the one hand, and the socially efficacious prejudice on the other. The homophobe is both victim and oppressor.

Daniel Wickberg (2000: 46)

Homosexuality is a concept with a longstanding history of definition, re-definition, categorisation, recategorisation, analysis, re-analysis, cultural influence and rhetorical practice. In *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 ([1976] 1998), Foucault points to the emergence of the medical category of ‘homosexuality’ in the latter half of the nineteenth century:

We must not forget that the psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was characterized – Westphal’s famous article of 1870 on “contrary sexual sensations” can stand as its date of birth – less by a type of sexual relations than by a certain quality of sexual sensibility, a certain way of inverting the masculine and the feminine in oneself. Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species. ([1976] 1998: 43)

Foucault fleetingly emphasises the importance of Karl Friedrich Otto Westphal’s characterisation and description of ‘homosexuality’ in *Archiv für Neurologie* (1870). Westphal’s assertions and theorisations mark the beginning of the characterisation of homosexuality especially as a medical and psychiatric category. From its initial categorisations onwards, ‘the homosexual’ became a ‘species’ of human (with the possible exception of the present) with distinct (psychical and perhaps physiological) traits and a unique manner of being (Foucault [1976] 1998: 42-43). About a century later, another concept related to certain characterisations and categorisations of homosexuality emerged in the field of psychology. A phenomenon was conceptualised that, generally speaking, is described as an aversion to homosexuality.

The concept of ‘homophobia’ entered the discourses of psychology in the last third of the twentieth century with the work of Dr. George Weinberg (Herek 2004: 7).¹ With the introduction of the category of ‘homophobia’ into the social sciences and humanities, especially psychology, in the last third of the twentieth century (Wickberg 2000: 45), ‘the homophobe’ became a kind of person with a distinct character; ‘the homophobe’ became an active character in narratives of oppression, discrimination and violence against persons identifying or being identified as ‘homosexual’, ‘gay’, or ‘queer’. In an article entitled ‘Making Up People’ ([1986] 2004), Ian Hacking argues that ‘types’ of people are consistently invented in the process of knowledge-production; in other words, disciplines such as psychology make up people. Following Hacking’s line of argument, it is possible to claim that the ‘homophobe’ was given distinct characteristics and was imagined to have unique modes of functioning. The discursive practice of ‘making up people’ (in the case of homophobia) was not, however, a single occurrence. The new concept of ‘homophobia’ would undergo an inordinate number of revisions, criticisms and reconceptualisations. The constant revision, criticism and reconceptualisation of ‘homophobia’ would indicate that ‘the homophobe’ as a specific type of person was (and is) being repeatedly reinvented. The psychological and sociological category of ‘homophobia’ came with innumerable accounts of the character traits, mentalities and experiences of the ‘homophobe’ (Wickberg 2000: 50-51). Oftentimes, these traits, mentalities and experiences are subject to hasty generalisations.

Who or what does the designation ‘the male homophobe’ describe? Which characteristics are attributed to this man? Such portrayals of ‘homophobes’ are unrealistic and stereotypical in the way they are imagined or described. Perhaps the designation ‘male homophobe’ conjures up the image of an elderly gentleman with grey hair and beer in hand, telling stories of his years serving in the military. Maybe it solicits the figure of the archetypal schoolyard bully, muscular and ‘unrefined’, picking on the children he considers ‘effeminate’. Hasty generalisations about the male homophobe (such as the stereotypical portrayal of the schoolyard bully and/or elderly

¹ In ‘Beyond “Homophobia”: Thinking About Sexual Prejudice and Stigma in the Twenty-First Century’ (2004), Herek describes the thought process of Weinberg which led to his theorisations of homophobia: “It was in September of 1965, while preparing an invited speech for the East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) banquet, that Weinberg hit upon the idea that would develop into homophobia. In an interview, he told me he was reflecting on the fact that many heterosexual psychoanalysts evinced strongly negative personal reactions to being around a homosexual in a nonclinical setting. It occurred to him that these reactions could be described as a phobia.” (2004: 7)

gentleman) generally indicate a failure to interrogate the complexities of the emergence, maintenance and operation of homophobia in men. From a more critical perspective, homophobia is seen as a phenomenon characterised by inherent (logical) contradictions and affective confusion. The contradictions and confusions which form part of the discourse of/on 'homophobia' indicate the lack of definition.²

In *Le Protocole Compassionel* ([1991] 1994) Hervé Guibert illustrates the confusing, and often self-contradictory, behaviour manifested in homophobia:

Suddenly Djanlouka told me he wanted to defy death. He had come for that purpose. He had brought a condom. The amateur geologists, who climb the slope above us to chip off chards of haematite, that precious black material scintillating with silvery flashes, could see us, I told him, but Djanlouka at once retorted that he did not give a fuck, he was already unrolling the condom on his erect member, at the same time vigorously masturbating. He stood me up in front of him, my hole bone dry, forcing me to bend over the edge of the cistern. It hurt me, I did not come, I was so knackered. Djanlouka pleased himself upon me very quickly and like an Arab did not bother about my feelings, in the frenzy of his death ride he was spitting on me, I could feel his jets of saliva dripping from my hair and running down my spine, laid bare as a thorn branch or a fish bone. When he had yelled the ecstasy of his ejaculations in my ear, gripping the other in his fist to wrench my ear round and spit this time on my lips, he quickly threw on his clothes and drove off on his bike without a word, having cast his loaded condom into the thick undergrowth. He had done what he had to do, and I knew he would never come back. ([1991] 1994: 139)

Although part of an autobiography (considered a work of fiction), the above passage demonstrates what Emily Apter calls 'neither fiction nor pure autobiography' identifiable in

² In his introduction to 'Homophobia: On the Cultural History of an Idea' (2000) Daniel Wickberg argues that homophobia (also racism and sexism) is far more subtle and elusive in the context of the 20th century, especially in the United States:

While one can find plenty of racists, sexists, and homophobes in American society, one can find almost no one who will stand up and make a philosophical defense of racism, sexism, or homophobia. Those who defend "white pride" or the "traditional family," or who are opposed to "special rights" for homosexuals generally use terms other than those that their political enemies attach to them. Racism, sexism, and homophobia are widely recognized as negative and disparaging terms, terms that racists, sexists, and homophobes would not use for themselves - although there are exceptions. (2000: 42)

The elusive character of homophobia described by Wickberg surely also holds true for the 21st century.

the work of Guibert; Apter argues that Guibert's work can be considered 'working notebooks' on the topic of living with HIV/AIDS (1993: 83). Djanlouka is a protagonist in a fictional autobiography. Certain elements commonly ascribed to homophobia are condensed in the construction of the character of Djanlouka. Can Djanlouka's actions, as they are described in the text, be considered a construction of 'homophobia'? Two instances in the quoted passage seem to point to an affirmative answer to this question; Djanlouka's actions do not conform to the stereotyped version of 'homophobia' as in the case of the fictive or fabled unrefined bully or beer-drinking ex-soldier, though.

In the quoted passage, Djanlouka is spitting on the narrator's head amidst the violent sexual act described. The deliberate act of spitting on the narrator's head can be seen as an act which proceeds from a hatred for the perceived 'homosexuality' of the narrator. Spitting on the narrator is an act of belittlement or mockery of the narrator's sexual orientation. The act of spitting becomes an expression of homophobic sentiment. Djanlouka's active belittlement and violent treatment of the narrator is accompanied by an identifiable 'gay' stereotype. In this instance, it evinces a conflation of homosexuality and HIV/AIDS (and AIDS-related death). Djanlouka considers homosexuality to be synonymous with a slow AIDS-related death. Djanlouka's homophobia is evidenced by his construction of a 'gay' stereotype. According to the stereotype, homosexuality is equivalent to being HIV-positive and destined to die.

The quoted passage from *Le Protocole* marks Djanlouka's actions as indicative of homophobia. How can accounts of 'the homophobe' as a 'type' (in other words, the stereotyped version of 'homophobia') be differentiated from an account which questions the very accuracy of the seemingly 'taxonomic' accounts? Merely identifying elements in a person's (or in this case, a character's) actions and attitudes does not account for homophobia. To tease out the factors that could account for the emergence of homophobia in men requires a thorough exploration of the various, and often disparate conceptualisations of homophobia. Contemporary conceptualisations of homophobia tend to be split between accounts of individual psychology and socio-cultural group dynamics. In the case of the former, 'the male homophobe' is broadly understood as a 'victim' and in the case of the latter he is considered 'oppressor'. In sociological or social-psychological accounts, the predominant understanding of homophobia is that of an exclusively social-psychological phenomenon (in the form of hatred or social/cultural prejudices) (see Sullivan 2004; O'Brien 2007; Logan 1996). The individual-psychological dimensions of homophobia tend to be not only overlooked, but actively ignored.

For a more differentiated account of homophobia, both the individual-psychological and the social elements of homophobia need to be considered. The limitations of exclusively sociological or social-psychological explanations of homophobia become clear if we consider how the latter would, for instance, account for Guibert's vivid description of Djanlouka's explicit homoeroticism. To what extent can Djanlouka's described behaviour be considered as 'taught'? In addition, if his behaviour is 'taught', can Djanlouka be considered an 'oppressor' of other men identifying as 'gay'? These and related questions would impel us to explore individual-psychological accounts of homophobia. Bringing individual-psychological dimensions to bear on investigations of homophobia would yield several possible explanations of Djanlouka's homophobia, as sketched in Guibert's text.

The elements of homophobia described for the character Djanlouka could be analysed as harbouring wishes of same-sex object choice. These wishes of same-sex object choice could, in turn, undergo some kind of 'vicissitude' accounting for the emergence of homophobic attitudes and actions. It is possible that the described homophobic attitude is modelled on a motivation for an 'inversion (homosexuality) in its negative form'. The described homophobic attitude can be read as an evasion of wishes for a same-sex object choice. In the case of evasion of same-sex object choice, 'the homophobe' could be considered a 'victim' of his own psychology. However, there is no avoidance of same-sex object choice in the constructed case of Djanlouka; Djanlouka's 'victimhood' is thus questionable. An exclusively individual-psychological account of homophobia runs the risk of overlooking the social-psychological dimensions of homophobia as described in the character/case of Djanlouka. Explaining Djanlouka's homophobia as a result of a 'negative or negated inversion' would amount to explaining homophobia as an exclusively individual-psychological phenomenon. The predominantly individual-psychological account of homophobia would exclude social factors; the typically social-psychological account would overlook individual dimensions of homophobia. In both cases, one dimension (either the individual-psychological or social-psychological) is overlooked or even ignored. Addressing this problem requires conceptual work. What is required is the conceptualisation of a link between the individual-psychological and the social-psychological dimensions of homophobia. How could the coexistence of Djanlouka's explicit homoeroticism with homophobic behaviour be explained?

Homophobia and homoeroticism co-exist in the described case of Djanlouka's violent sexual assault by the narrator of Guibert's *Le Protocole*. How is it possible to explain such a divided

attitude in the case of homophobia? One current of Djanlouka's divided attitude (as portrayed by Guibert) towards the narrator's 'homosexuality' manifests itself as a 'negative' or 'condemning' response to the perceived difference (i.e. 'homosexuality') of the narrator. The other current of the divided attitude is that of homoeroticism. The task would be to account for both the divided attitude of the homophobe and the factors involved in the emergence of homophobia. There remains the issue of the possible uniqueness or specificity of cases like the fictional construction of Djanlouka's homophobic/homoerotic attitude.

This dissertation aims to address each of the issues regarding the making of homophobia provisionally tabled here. An investigation of homophobia should encompass both individual psychology and possible social dimensions at issue in the genesis of homophobia. Yet, as I will demonstrate in the following chapter, the link between individual-psychological explanations of homophobia and explanations positing homophobia as a social phenomenon has received scant attention. The theoretical combination of these two dimensions constitutes the general aim of the larger project. The larger project seeks to investigate the extent to which particular concepts in Freudian psychoanalytic theory, such as repression, disavowal, repudiation, negation, the castration complex, 'splitting of the ego' and phobia, can contribute to understanding homophobia as individual-psychological *and* social phenomenon.

The term 'homophobia' was first coined in the context of psychology/psychoanalysis, especially in reference to the countertransference of analysts (Bullough [2004] 2015: 1). Clinical psychologist George Weinberg began to use the term 'homophobia' in 1965 to refer to the attitude or sentiments of his colleagues towards homosexuality (ibid.). The initial context in which 'homophobia' emerged as phenomenon, then as concept, presents good reason to investigate it in its individual-psychological dimensions, in terms of psychoanalytic theory.³ Approaching the problem from this angle turns out to be as compelling as it is paradoxical. For despite its initial formulation in the context of psychoanalytic therapy, accounts of 'homophobia' have attained prominence in social psychology or sociology.

The dissertation starts with an exploration of the concept of homophobia in recent and contemporary literature biased in favour of social-psychological explanations, and ends with

³ For Weinberg homophobia seems to be an exclusively individual-psychological phenomenon and he goes so far as to argue that it should be considered for inclusion in formal, clinical diagnostic manuals or "the official list of mental disorders..." (Corner 2017)

an explanation of homophobia that can account for the link between the individual-psychological and social-psychological dimensions of the phenomenon.

II

The Concept of Homophobia: From Methodological Bias to Psychoanalytic Consideration

Over time, the concept of homophobia has ... evolved in its definition as well as its use. We have found, for example, that in many instances homophobia has become a taken-for-granted term that is often deployed without adequate critical attention to its meanings and consequent effects.

Karl Bryant & Salvador Vidal-Ortiz (2008: 388)

i. Introductory Remarks

The concept of homophobia has been considered from a vast array of approaches and theoretical perspectives. The predominant view of homophobia is that it is not necessarily a ‘legitimately’⁴ so called phobia, but that it is constituted by complex social exchanges, such as prejudices and discriminatory attitudes towards particular external objects. Conceptualisations of homophobia tend to display a methodological bias towards a social prejudice-centred explanation of the phenomenon assuming that homophobia arises by way of social acquisition (in the forms of attitudes and prejudices). Homophobia explained by reference to prejudice entails that homophobia is located within the social arena, or on the playing field of consciousness. In other words, homophobia is predominantly considered to be a social-psychological phenomenon, where the role of internal/individual-psychological factors take a back seat.⁵

⁴ What is meant here by ‘legitimate phobia’ is a phobia as described by the DSM III (specifically). In ‘Homophobia: A Misnomer’ (1999) Tony White argues that homophobia is not a phobia in the strict psychiatric/psychological sense (1999: 75). Rather, White describes homophobia as being a case of certain attitudes, namely “homoaggression, homoanxiety, and homorevulsion” (1999: 82).

⁵ Many accounts of homophobia emphasise the social-psychological and disregard individual-psychological dimensions of the homophobe’s psychical life. Dennis Hiebert argues that what is termed ‘homophobia’ is in actual fact ‘homoppression’ and thus explaining homophobic sentiments as a social phenomenon: “Homoppression then is using the social power of moral and legal codes to take from LGBTIQI people their dignity and liberty to express themselves sexually and enjoy the fruits of their love.” (2016:490). Other accounts of homophobia draw a direct link between homophobia and social constructions of gender. Price and Dalecki conducted an ‘empirical’ study of the social basis of homophobia in men and found that the making of homophobia

The interaction between homophobia as an individual-psychological and social phenomenon has received scant attention. In this chapter, I wish to explore the extent to which social-psychological perspectives on homophobia are methodologically biased. Once the methodological bias in social-psychological explanations of homophobia has been elucidated, I wish to posit the idea that psychoanalytic theory can overcome the evident bias and its theoretical consequences. I wish to argue that Freudian psychoanalytic theory can explain homophobia as a phenomenon brought about by the interaction between individual-psychological factors and social factors which become psychically salient. Psychoanalytic theory shows an interplay between internal and external factors in the aetiology of phobias. This chapter seeks to contribute to a psychoanalytic understanding of homophobia as a ‘legitimate’ phobia that cannot simply and solely be explained by social (discriminatory) exchanges.⁶ If homophobia were truly a case of mere prejudice and/or social attitude, it would be easy to simply educate homophobic prejudices away.⁷ This is implausible. The concept of homophobia turns out to be far more intricate and specific than explanations provided by social accounts would have us believe.

ii. A Methodological Bias

The claim that homophobia is not a ‘legitimate’ phobia in the strict (psychological) sense of the word is made by Tony White in ‘Homophobia: A Misnomer’ (1999). White argues that ‘homophobia’ is a term loosely utilised in the public sphere, but that there exists no definite or agreed-upon description of the phenomenon (1999: 77). White’s concern is that talk of ‘homophobia’ occurs in “a situation in which the term... is used in common language, and political groups are based on it, yet a definition is elusive, and an in-depth examination of the

is a matter of gender inequality and socially constructed gender roles (1998: 154-156). Herek seems to agree that, although homophobia is the incorrect term to employ, the phenomenon signified by the term is a case of social psychology; sexual prejudice is a “social evil” that plays out in the social arena (2004: 16-18). Some accounts of stereotyping and prejudice suggest that it is a case of intergroup relations between ‘ingroups’ and ‘outgroups’ (Leyens, et al. 2001: 407-408). This means that stereotyping is an exclusively social phenomenon. In all of these accounts, that are by no means an exhaustive list of the literature on homophobia, the individual-psychological dimensions of stereotyping and homophobic sentiments are ignored.

⁶ A social exchange is taken here to refer to an interaction between two or more persons that is characterised by the socialised sentiments of a group of people or a singular person towards another group of people. Homophobia is a social exchange in as much as it signifies an interaction between the homophobe and individuals identifying as ‘gay’; this interaction is characterised by prejudiced and discriminatory sentiments.

⁷ In an article entitled ‘Where is Xenophobia in the fight against racism’ (2014), Robert Bernasconi explains that education is not enough to eradicate racism and racial discrimination (2014:15); the same could be said for homophobia.

concept seems not to exist” (ibid.). Turning to the DSM III’s definition of ‘phobia’, he finds validation for his claim that homophobia is not a phobia in the strict sense of the word. White adduces a concise but informative list of symptoms in an attempt to sever homophobia from other psychologically ‘legitimate’ phobias:

The victim suddenly feels persistent, irrational panic, dread, horror, or terror when he or she is in a situation that is harmless. The person recognizes that the fear goes beyond normal boundaries and the actual threat of danger. The phobic reaction is automatic, uncontrollable, and pervasive, almost taking over the person's thoughts in a barrage of imaginary threats and dangers. The person suffers from the physical reactions associated with extreme fear: rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath, trembling, and an overwhelming desire to flee the situation. The person flees the feared object or situation, and goes out of his or her way to avoid it. (White 1999: 78)

I quote White at length here to show the rigidity of a psychopathological explanation of ‘phobias’. Applying stringent DSM III criteria, White shows that homophobia cannot be construed as a psychologically-based phobia. The main objection to the classification of homophobia as a ‘legitimate’ phobia, is the claim that homophobic behaviour contradicts the behaviour described for phobics: “Phobic individuals do not seek the object about which they are phobic; they run away from it.” (White 1999: 79) White provides a few examples of statistics of homophobia, but relies heavily on self-confessed accounts of homophobia. The emphasis is placed on the ‘confessed’ material gathered. The issue may be exactly this: White regards the ‘confessed’ and gathered evidence as the sole source of justification for the claim that homophobia is not a ‘legitimate’ phobia. He assumes that homophobia will always be a case of conscious reflexivity; that the individuals interviewed and documented will always self-reflect and consequently confess that they have had homophobic thoughts or have acted out in homophobic ways. To rely on the ‘conscious’ and self-reflective accounts of individuals seems to be a weak source of justification, particularly if the credibility of homophobia as a ‘legitimate’ phobia is at stake. What of the unconfessed and undocumented behaviour of individuals? Is this kind of behaviour merely disregarded and ignored? White seems to imply that homophobia is not a phobia (in the psychological or psychiatric sense of the word) because the only available evidence rules out this possibility. What matters to him are conscious and explicit confessions that can be documented and used to discredit any attempt to classify homophobia under the same banner as ‘legitimate’ phobias. The idea that self-reported

homophobia (as a set of consciously held beliefs and attitudes) is sufficient to disregard homophobia as a ‘legitimate’ ‘phobia’ is problematic. What should be of equal concern are the undocumented and unconfessed dimensions of homophobic behaviour.

Most striking about White’s argument is his attempt at resolving the controversies on the status of homophobia in clinical psychology. White argues that homophobia is a case of ‘attitudes’ of which he identifies three: Homoaggression, homoanxiety and homorevulsion (White 1999: 79). Homoaggression is characterised by verbal and physical hostility towards homosexuals; homoanxiety alludes to an attitude of mild anxiety towards the homosexual object; homorevulsion is distinguished and identified by an individual’s disgust regarding ‘homosexual’ sexual activities (ibid.). These three ‘homophobic’ attitudes are conscious and active reactions displayed by so called ‘homophobes’ toward homosexuals. Reactions of this kind are ostensibly identified by way of clinical observation of what the patient conveys to the clinician. The homoaggressive’s confession of active hostility towards the gay boy in class, the homoanxious’s disclosure of active avoidance of gay bars, the individual with an attitude of revulsion who admits to nausea when mentally occupied with anal sex, all attest to conscious mental and physical responses to the homosexual object. These attitudes can be identified as ‘positive’ psychological reactions toward homosexuals, that is, psychological responses to what is consciously felt and self-reported.⁸ White remains largely incognisant of ‘repression’ and the ‘unconscious’ in his approach to the controversies surrounding the status of homophobia. White’s is one of numerous accounts of homophobia relying heavily on the workings of the conscious mind.

In ‘Homophobia: A Tentative Personality Profile’ (1971), Kenneth T. Smith attempts to excavate the personality traits attributable to the homophobe and his psychology. Smith considers the individual-psychological aspects of homophobia while also drawing from what he calls “societal attitudes” towards homosexuality (1971: 1091). Similarly to White, Smith

⁸ No mention is made of the possibility that what might be occurring in the cases of homoaggression, homoanxiety and homorevulsion is the transformation of psychical material into the ‘negative’ (in terms of conscious actions). Perhaps what is actually at work in the cases of homoaggression, homoanxiety and homorevulsion is *negation*⁸. In his essay entitled *Negation* (1925) Freud argues that one possibility for “repressed” psychical material to resurface in consciousness through prior ‘negation’ of the material in question; i.e. repressed material can be made conscious if it is presented in the ‘negative’ (1925: 235). So, when the homoaggressive individual exclaims his hate for homosexuals, is it not possible that his hostility is merely the conscious manifestation of repressed material being presented in the ‘negative’? This possibility is completely overlooked by White.

uses a statistical evaluation of self-reported attitudes and beliefs as evidence for his findings on homophobia, neglecting dimensions that are not conscious and self-reflective.

Other accounts of homophobia neglect individual-psychological dimensions altogether. Bryant and Vidal-Ortiz (2008), for instance, provide a brief overview of homophobia, its history and its controversial conceptual status in contemporary discourses. Casting aspersion on “individualistic” and “psychological” accounts of homophobia (Bryant & Vidal-Ortiz 2008: 389), Bryant and Vidal-Ortiz foreground the social dimensions of homophobia (*ibid.*), focussing on homophobia as a network of social prejudices and discriminations. Observable violence against homosexuals, institutional structures of homophobia and heteronormative oppression (Bryant & Vidal-Ortiz 2008: 390), they claim, overrule any other psychological and ‘narrowly’ individualistic explanations of homophobia. Once again they consider only the conscious expressions of homophobia in the social arena, with corresponding institutional violence against homosexual individuals.

However, if the focus remains on the social-psychological and conscious manifestations of homophobia, certain aspects of homophobia are rendered difficult to access. Freud argues that “...conscious acts remain disconnected and unintelligible if we insist upon claiming that every mental act that occurs in us must also necessarily be experienced by us through consciousness” (1915: 167). Investigations of homophobia as social phenomenon tend to obscure individual-psychological aspects of homophobia.

Some other accounts of homophobia draw out the complex interplay between internal and external factors. In ‘Homophobia, History, and Homosexuality: Trends for Sexual Minorities’ (2004), for instance, Sullivan argues that societal factors (such as religious and cultural prejudices) play an essential role in the “dual” nature of homophobia (2004: 2) manifested in two, seemingly complementary, forms. The first is internal(ised) homophobia which attests to a kind of homophobia that is constituted by the internalisation of homophobic prejudices held by certain societal institutions (*ibid.*). The second form of homophobia is external homophobia – not as “an isolated individual neurosis but a form of social control that serves psychologically and physically to intimidate sexual minorities and to validate heterosexuality as the only normal sexual identity choice” (Sullivan 2004: 2). Even though Sullivan concedes the possibility that homophobia could be a product of repressed homoerotic feelings on the part of the homophobe (referring to the work of Adams, Wright and Lohr (1996)), repression for him

constitutes a conscious denial of homoerotic wishes (Sullivan 2004: 2).⁹ In Sullivan's account, societal factors are the sole factors in the conscious denial of homoerotic feelings and wishes. Once again, homophobic behaviour and thoughts are entrusted to social-psychological explanations.

Certain accounts ostensibly employing psychoanalytic theory also display a tendency towards social-psychological explanations of homophobia. Donald Moss, for instance, argues that misogyny, homophobia and racism are all forms of hatred produced by group prejudices and discriminations; that "within the sphere of these hatreds", a person does not hate or discriminate alone, but as a "white person, a straight person, a man" (2000: 1316). In other words, a person does not hate individually, but in a group exercising the "first person plural" voice (ibid.). Prejudices and hatreds are directed "taxonomically downward", signifying the instance of disidentification of an individual with a group hierarchically lower than the group with which that individual seeks to identify (Moss ibid.), as a first step in the construction and maintenance of prejudices. The second step in the process of prejudice-construction is the identification of an individual with a group of people sharing a common quality, typically a common belief. The identification/disidentification process is, according to Moss, a defence mechanism against intolerable individual thoughts and wishes. Individually held intolerable thoughts and wishes are transformed into collectively held prejudice or hate (Moss 2000: 1333). Through this interplay of identification and disidentification, Moss avers, an individual's "first person singular voice" is transformed into a collective "first person plural" voice (ibid.). The economy of identification and disidentification allows for a transformation from the 'I feel' or 'I think' to the 'we look down upon' or 'we hate'. Moss's explanation of homophobia displays a tendency toward giving prominence to consciously enacted economies of identification and disidentification. In psychoanalytic theory, there is a strict distinction between economies of identification and drive-based metapsychology. The former is a phenomenon that emerges and operates in the social arena; the latter relates to individual psychology. So, strictly speaking, within the framework of psychoanalytic theory, an economy of identification and

⁹ What Sullivan seems to be alluding to in his formulation of 'repression' is actually 'suppression' in the Freudian sense of the word. In the first lecture of *Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1910 [1909]) Freud argues that Anna O "was obliged to suppress a powerful emotion instead of allowing it its discharge in the appropriate signs of emotion, words or actions. In the episode of her lady-companion's dog, she suppressed any manifestation of her very intense disgust, out of consideration for the woman's feelings..." (1910 [1909]: 17-18). For Freud, 'suppression' is a defence mechanism characterised by its conscious and self-reflexive nature. Suppression seems to be the deliberate and conscious endeavour to avoid unwanted experiences in the external world. It is this conscious endeavour of avoidance which I think Sullivan is referring to.

disidentification belongs to the domain of social psychology. Although Moss is trying to unearth the individual-psychological dimensions of homophobia, he is looking at such dimensions through the lens of social psychology.

In all of the accounts provided here, the same bias seems to be at work. All of the accounts discussed implicitly or explicitly assert that homophobia is a conscious experience; observations, self-reported beliefs, attitudes, and responses, and documentations drawn from institutions and individuals are the sole sources of evidence in the investigation of homophobia. All these accounts attest to a kind of homophobia that can only play itself out in the social arena. When individual-psychological factors are considered, they are explained through the lens of social psychology or sociology. This means that homophobia considered in relation to the individual (in terms of individual psychology) appears over-socialised, and individual-psychological dimensions of homophobia are overlooked.

When homophobia is investigated and studied exclusively within the social arena, the findings will unavoidably be social-psychological or sociological. Asked about the justification for an account of homophobia as social-psychological phenomenon, theorists merely point to the fact that the study was conducted in the social arena. In this way, the method of investigation and the justification for the findings become synonymous. The synonymy of method and justification is the groundwork for circular reasoning found in sociological and social-psychological accounts of homophobia, which simply ignore counterfactuals. The methodological bias in sociological and social-psychological accounts of homophobia is primarily defined by a continuous biased loop of investigation. What can be done to overcome this kind of bias?

The accounts relying on self-reported, consciously held beliefs and attitudes identifiable in the social arena and interpreted through the various lenses of social psychology, could be challenged by introducing considerations of defence mechanisms referred by psychoanalytic theory to the relation between the conscious and the unconscious systems. In an attempt to justify the “existence of something mental that is unconscious” Freud explores numerous counter-arguments in response to his critics (1915: 166). One argument, to which Freud responds, is of particular importance in the context of the argument advanced here:

...the conventional equation of the psychical with the conscious is totally inexpedient. It disrupts psychical continuities, plunges us into insoluble difficulties of psycho-physical parallelism, is open to the reproach that for no obvious reason it over-estimates the part played by consciousness, and that it forces us prematurely to abandon the field of psychological research without being able to offer us any compensation from other fields. (1915: 167-168)

The predominant focus on what is self-reported and observable within the social arena, at the expense of individual-psychological considerations, constitutes a methodological bias which I would like to address in reframing the debates on the status of homophobia through psychoanalytic theory.

iii. Introducing Considerations from Psychoanalytic Theory

In an article entitled ‘Where Is Xenophobia in the Fight against Racism?’ (2014), Robert Bernasconi argues that if racism were a case of mere prejudice against people of a particular race or skin colour, then it would suffice to embark on pedagogical projects to educate these prejudices away (2014: 15). Bernasconi makes it clear that this is not the case: racism and other forms of discrimination cannot simply be educated away. In an analogous way, notions of homophobia as prejudice remain unsatisfactory, as they leave a central component out of consideration. Donald Moss identifies this missing component but does not provide a sufficient explanation. He is particularly interested in the unconscious and its “inaccessibility, its capacity to thrive at the margins, its ferocity, tenacity, its capacity to attach itself, transfer itself, onto any element of conscious experience, its authoritative obliteration of innocence” (2000: 1321). Moss initially emphasises the role of the unconscious; but he does not account for the role of the unconscious in his argument on homophobia, attributing instances of homophobia to economies of identification instead. Unlike Moss, Sullivan entertains the possibility that homophobia could be a case of displaced sexual wish: “that homophobia is associated with homosexual arousal, suggesting the homophobic individual is either unaware of, or denies the presence of same-sex erotic feelings” (2004: 2). It is the ‘unaware’ experience of homoeroticism underlying homophobia that is of interest for this chapter.

The link between homophobia as individual-psychological and as social phenomenon has been undertheorised, due to the neglect of the unconscious and its psychogenetic process, i.e.

repression. In an essay, ‘Imitation and Gender Insubordination’ (2009) Judith Butler questions whether “... sexuality of any kind [is] even possible without the opacity designated by the unconscious, which means that the conscious ‘I’ who would reveal its sexuality is perhaps the last to know the meaning of what it says” (2009: 309). Homophobia is arguably ignited by external (social) forces but is maintained by both external and internal (individual) forces. What is required for an investigation of homophobia is a perspective which can account for the interaction between the individual-psychological and social factors. Psychoanalytic theory, as I will show, offers such a perspective.

On the basis of some considerations from psychoanalytic theory, homophobia will emerge as a ‘legitimate’ phobia, instead of a case of ‘prejudice’ accounted for by reference to socially generated attitudes. To be able to demonstrate this, I will bring the psychoanalytic concepts of ‘repression’ and ‘the unconscious’ into the investigation of homophobia. If homophobia is considered in conjunction with the fundamental role of sexuality, homophobic thoughts and behaviour can be linked to internal wishes and the disallowance of such wishes through repression. To return to Sullivan’s concession that homophobia could be an effect of the repression of same-sex feelings (or wishes), it would be instructive to consider the close relationship between the unconscious and repression by which psychological material (here taken to be same-sex wishes) is expelled from consciousness and forms part of the ‘unconscious’, from where it can continue to produce effects (see Freud 1915: 166).

Repression and ‘the unconscious’ are two inseparable concepts in Freudian psychoanalytic theory. Same-sex wishes (equivalent to the ‘same-sex feelings’ described by Sullivan) can succumb to repression and repudiation, and factors such as guilt, shame, disgust and morality implicated in repression (see Freud [1909] 1910: 45). The relationship between the repression of wishes of same-sex object choice and repudiation emerges as the central object of investigation if homophobia is to be explained as an interaction between internal and external factors. I propose to analyse the repression of same-sex wishes when confronted by moral or cultural factors. When the unconscious is taken into consideration as an active faculty, certain dimensions of psychological experiences are rendered accessible.

If homophobia constitutes a complex interplay between sexual wishes and repudiating factors (including internalised standards of external reality) which prohibit the realisation of such wishes, homophobia could be considered a ‘legitimate’ phobia explicable from perspectives of

psychoanalytic theory. Freud's very specific definition of 'phobia' involves anxiety emerging from a collision between certain sexual wishes and the prohibitions and expectations of reality. In his *Introductory Lectures to Psychoanalysis* ([1916-1917] 1917), Freud defines 'phobia' as "form of anxiety...[which] is bound psychically and attached to particular objects and situations" ([1916-1917] 1917: 398). He identifies a kind of 'anxiety' which is related and restricted to certain "objects and situations"; this kind of anxiety is the anxiety related to phobic objects (or phobias) (ibid.).¹⁰ If homophobia can be accounted for by reference to the repression of same-sex wishes that are met with by certain moral or cultural factors (as reaction formations), homophobia could be said to be a 'legitimate' phobia.

The methodologically biased accounts of homophobia explored in this chapter neglect the possibility that the observable 'somethings-conscious' (such as the homophobe's behaviour, responses and sentiments) attest to the existence of the unconscious; these 'somethings-conscious' are taken to be self-explanatory and self-evident. The introduction of psychoanalytic concepts such as the unconscious, repression, and repudiation renders certain social and consciousness-based accounts of homophobia questionable. Freudian psychoanalytic theory tasks the theorist with investigating both individual-psychological and social factors that play a role in the onset and maintenance of homophobia.

iv. Concluding Remarks on the Concept of Homophobia

My aim in this chapter was two-fold: to identify and elucidate the methodological bias evident in studies on homophobia and to introduce considerations from Freudian psychoanalytic theory to address the gaps entailed by such bias. I have explored homophobia variously referred to complex social exchanges such as prejudices and discriminatory attitudes, which rely heavily on explanations positing the homophobic individual as a conscious and self-reflective agent in the social arena. Drawing from Freud, I have argued that an overemphasis on the 'conscious' could render certain dimensions of psychological experiences inaccessible. The second argument which I put forward is a response, based on considerations from Freudian psychoanalytic theory, to the methodological bias evident in accounts of homophobia as social prejudice. I

¹⁰ In the case study entitled *Analysis of Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy* (1909), Freud analyses Little Hans's phobia of horses and the psychological process which allowed for the formation of his phobia. Little Hans's repression of his incestuous wishes in the wake of castration anxiety led to the formation of his phobia of horses. In this case study Freud identifies a kind of neurosis that has phobia as a primal symptom, namely "anxiety hysteria" (1909: 115-117). For Freud, phobias (as symptoms) are grouped together under a particular neurosis called 'anxiety hysteria'.

have introduced the idea that Freudian psychoanalytic theory could account for both the individual-psychological and social factors that play a role in the construction and reproduction of homophobic attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour. Homophobia as ‘legitimate’ phobia becomes a distinct possibility with Freudian psychoanalytic theory. To substantiate this proposition, I will draw out the implications of psychoanalytic concept-formations for the analysis of the individual-psychological dimensions of homophobia. Investigating the individual psychological dimensions of homophobia could sidestep the methodological bias explored in this chapter. The individual psychology of the homophobe forms part of a counterfactual argument which could disentangle the loop in which sociological and social-psychological accounts of homophobia get entangled. In other words, if the individual psychology of the homophobe forms part of a study of homophobia, the account (of homophobia) could be very different from the one sketched by sociology and social psychology.

III

Male Hysteria as the ‘Negative of Inversion’¹¹

It is ... Freud – with his confusing picture of inversion’s genealogy in the first few pages of the *Three Essays*... – who can be considered the first pluralizer of homosexuality.

Leo Bersani (1995: 104)

In an article entitled ‘Making up People’ ([1986] 2004), Ian Hacking sets the tone for his argument in the following manner: “I should warn that my concern is philosophical and abstract; I look more at what people might be than at what we are. I imagine a philosophical notion I call dynamic nominalism, and reflect too little on the ordinary dynamics of human interaction.” ([1986] 2004: 100) Although I do not envision a so-called ‘dynamic nominalism’¹² to be the outcome of this chapter, this chapter sets out to be ‘philosophical and abstract’. I cannot claim to speak on the concrete lived experiences of the subjects of my investigation. I merely explore the individual psychology (and parallel aetiology) of a specific kind of ‘male hysteric’ as he is theoretically envisioned in an attempt to outline and theorise the making of homophobia. This exploration is divided into three parts. The first part of the chapter will focus on the relation between Freud’s theorisations on inversion and hysteria in men. I will attempt to elucidate the aetiological factors involving inversion that are implicated in the emergence of male hysteria. The second part of this chapter will explore Freud’s notion of ‘repression’. The concept of repression will be considered in light of the evolution of Freud’s thoughts, focusing on the alternations in his conception of repression during and after the

¹¹ The title refers to Freud’s famous abstraction and axiomatic expression of the relationship between neurosis and perversion: “Thus symptoms are formed in part at the expense of abnormal sexuality; *neurosis is, so to speak, the negative of perversion.*” (1905: 26) The current chapter can be seen as a play on this axiomatic expression. By trying to string together the concepts of hysteria in men, repression and inversion, I attempt to show that male hysteria could (in all possibility) be the negative formation of sexual inversion or wishes of inversion; i.e. that hysteria in men could be the negative of inversion.

¹² Hacking has this to say on the matter of ‘dynamic nominalism’: “Dynamic nominalism remains an intriguing doctrine, arguing that numerous human beings and human acts come into being hand in hand with our invention of categories labeling them. It is for me the only intelligible species of nominalism, the only one that can even gesture at an account of how common names and the named could so tidily fit together. It is of more human interest than the arid and scholastic forms of nominalism because it contends that our spheres of possibility, and hence our selves, are to some extent made up by our naming and what that entails.” ([1986] 2004: 113). Freud (in *Three Essays*) seems to counter, and ultimately escape, the rigidity of naming and categorisation which Hacking’s dynamic nominalism seeks to address and critically evaluate.

publication of the first edition of *Three Essays* in 1905. Although the conception of repression in *Three Essays* (i.e. organic repression) will be analysed in-depth, I will consider the possibility that a more theoretically relevant and compatible conception of repression could be found elsewhere, one that is better suited for a possible explanation of homophobia. (The conception of repression mooted in *Three Essays* is not necessarily compatible with Freud's later theorisations on the role of repression in the psychogenesis of hysteria in men.) The third and last section of this chapter will provide some introductory remarks on the conception of repression that I wish to analyse in the process of the dissertation (unless otherwise stipulated). The emphasis placed on the concept of repression (and Freud's alternating views on it) will become clearer once I have explored the relationship between inversion and the aetiology of male hysteria. Freud's pioneering thoughts on inversion will serve as the starting point of both this chapter and the general forthcoming argument on the making of homophobia.

i. Some Considerations Related to Inversion

Arnold Davidson identifies the ground-breaking implications of Freud's discussion of inversion in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1987: 264). In his concluding remarks on inversion in the first of the three essays, Freud depathologises inversion with the separation of the the 'sexual object' and the 'sexual drive' (1905: 11). It is this particular ground-breaking discussion that I wish to explore in the first section of the current chapter. The dynamic account provided by Freud in 'The Sexual Aberrations' elucidates the various forms which inversion could take, making it clear that there is no distinct sexuality called 'inversion'; Freud emphasises the infinite variability of sexuality in terms of a spectrum. He begins his discussion on inversion with the identification of a "poetic fable" (1905: 1) which describes the work of his contemporaries in sexology, neurology and psychiatry.¹³

¹³ This 'poetic fable' could be seen in correlation with what Hacking calls 'making up people' ([1986] 2004: 100) or the invention of the 'pervert'; this making up of people could also be extended to 'inversion' and the consequent invention of the 'invert'. Both the 'poetic fable' and the 'made up people' attest to a fictional depiction of human sexuality by sexologists, psychiatrists and neurologists in the late nineteenth century. Hacking argues that "Davidson is not denying that there have been odd people at all times. He is asserting that perversion, as a disease, and the pervert, as a diseased person, were created in the nineteenth century" ([1986] 2004: 99-100). In addition, Hacking shows that "the contributors [on the topic of invented 'perversions', including that of 'inversion'] by and large accept that the homosexual and the heterosexual as kinds of persons (as ways to be persons, or as conditions of personhood) came into being only toward the end of the nineteenth century" ([1986] 2004: 103). So, the 'homosexual' and the 'heterosexual' became distinct modes of sexual being amidst the investigations and consequent theorisations put forward by Freud's contemporaries (e.g. Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Janet).

Freud rejects the notion that sexuality is functional and reproductive in nature (Van Haute & Westerink 2016: xxi), that sexuality is normatively confined to the relation between a man and a woman. As Freud argues: “The popular theory of the genital drive corresponds closely to the poetic fable of the division of man into two halves – man and woman – that strive to be reunited through love.” (1905: 1-2). Freud almost mockingly continues his brief discussion on the *poetic fable* by stressing the possibility of counter-sexuality or inversion (1905: 2). Inverts are those sexual subjects for whom the sexual object is of the same sex as the subject (Freud *ibid.*). Freud argues that the frequency of inversion and the number of inverts is “considerable”, but that it is impossible to accurately predict or specify how considerable (*ibid.*), for the simple reason that there are infinite manifestations of inversion, particularly regarding the manner in which inverts behave. As a point of entry into the discussion on the plurality of behaviour of inverts, Freud identifies four preliminary variations of inverts based on the frequency and exclusivity of their homosexual behaviour.

For Freud, the first of these variations points to a group of inverts that are strictly reserved in their choice of a sexual object. This group of (‘homosexual’) subjects are called “absolute inverts” (*ibid.*). The individuals placed in this variation are inverts for which the sexual object is exclusively one of the same sex; objects of the opposite sex are never desired (*ibid.*). It is entirely possible that this group of inverts was that which filled the imagination of Freud’s contemporaries, who tended to posit *absolute* inverts as the only form of inversion. This misleading categorisation would have occluded other important variations of inversion, such as the group of subjects classified as *amphigenic* in their inversion. *Amphigenic* inverts do not distinguish between sexual objects of the same or opposite sex; both sexes are objects of longing for this group of inverts (*ibid.*). The *amphigenic* inverts could be considered *bisexual* in contemporary popular opinion. There is also a variation of inverts that is characterised not by preferential object-choice but by circumstance. Freud identifies this group of subjects as *occasional* inverts (*ibid.*). Occasional inverts take someone of the same sex as a sexual object when circumstances demand it; occasional inversion occurs in the absence of the normal sexual object (someone of the opposite sex) (*ibid.*). Beyond the variations in manifest behaviour, Freud also identifies variations in attitude displayed by inverts concerning their own sexuality.

Certain inverts view the “direction of their libido” as a “matter of course” and demand that the course which their libido has taken be considered as equal to that of the heterosexual (normal) drive (*ibid.*). These inverts are completely at ease with the direction of their sexual drive. The

same cannot be said for other inverts who resent their inversion. Freud argues that certain inverts “rebel against the fact of their inversion and feel it as a pathological compulsion” (1905: 2-3). It is this resentment on the part of the invert which is of some interest for our investigation on the individual psychology of the homophobe. If inversion is potentially a resented condition, the resentful invert may seek resort to the eradication of the libido-course which has manifested itself in his sexual life. Beside the manifest behaviour and the attitudes of inverts (towards their own sexuality), Freud also discusses another set of variations of inversion. Freud argues that the psychogenesis of a particular inversion should be borne in mind; attention should be given to the temporal locus of inception of the inversion (1905: 3).

Freud makes a distinction between inversion that has always formed part of the invert’s sexual life, and inversion that has only developed during or after puberty (ibid.). So there is a distinction between an omnitemporal inversion and a peri/post-pubescent inception of inversion. Furthermore, Freud claims, “either a particular characteristic of inversion is retained throughout the life of the individual, or it recedes temporarily, or it features as an episode on the road to normal development” (ibid.).

The variation in recession and/or (re)surfacing of manifest inversion is another point of interest for the elucidation of the conditions which may result in the inception of homophobia. If a time can be pinpointed when the invert had a “distressing experience” (ibid.) with the normal (sexual) object, the psychogenetic locus of inversion could be identified. This *distressing experience* is of particular interest because it could, as Freud mentions in a footnote to his discussion on the relation between neurosis and perversion, speak directly to the “suppression”¹⁴ of the “heterosexual current” (Freud 1905: 27). The consequence of the repression of the ‘heterosexual current’ could be the formation of psychoneurosis and a co-occurring inversion (1905: 27). In men, this heterosexual current can be assumed to be constituted by a masculine orientation which attaches itself to a feminine object. In this case,

¹⁴ It is unclear whether Freud uses the term ‘suppression’ (in this context) as a synonym for the term ‘repression’. In ‘Translating the first Edition of Freud’s *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie*’, Kistner points out that indeed Freud uses the terms ‘suppression’ and ‘repression’ interchangeably (2016: lxxxviii in the first edition of *Three Essays*). The “fact that Freud uses a relatively undifferentiated notion of *Verdrängung* across ... different contexts indicates that he has a less than clear-cut concept of it at the time of writing the first version of *Drei Abhandlungen*” (ibid.). For this reason, I will employ the term ‘repression’ instead of ‘suppression’ (as they are taken to be synonymous in this context) in the hope of eliminating any chance of confusion in the development of the argument. The meaning of ‘repression’ changes in Freud’s later texts and is distinguished from the notion of ‘suppression’ as these concepts become more specialised in their employment. ‘Repression’ and ‘suppression’ are later on distinguished as two separate defence mechanisms in response to unacceptable sexual wishes.

one could assume that the opposite subject-object libidinal arrangement occurs in the subject-position of the male invert; more precisely, the ‘inverted’ current is defined by a feminine orientation which attaches itself to a masculine object. This proves to be a problematic assertion considering Freud’s theorisations of inversion, as it runs counter to Freud’s position on the sexual object of the invert.

Freud dismisses the idea that all inverts are exclusively feminine and that they are in search of masculine characteristics in their sexual objects, both with regards to the physical and psychical make-up of the object (1905: 9).¹⁵ Some inverts do match this scheme of a subject-object relation describing the subject as feminine and in search of an object with masculine attributes (ibid.). However, this scheme does not constitute a general theme in the sexual lives of all inverts (Freud ibid.). Freud argues that “a large proportion of male inverts have retained the psychical character of masculinity, manifesting relatively few secondary characteristics of the opposite sex, and actually seeking female psychical traits in their sexual objects” (ibid.). The ancient Greek pederast is adduced to typify the male invert and his longing for a particular kind of object. Much like the object of the ancient Greek invert, the feminine object of the male invert resembles a woman psychically and physically (Freud 1905: 10). On the one hand, Freud seems to suggest that the libido of certain male inverts is characterised by a feminine attitude/orientation and deliberately seeks out a male sexual object (1905: 9). On the other hand, Freud also suggests that certain male inverts are masculine in their orientation and seek out a feminine sexual object (1905: 10). In the case of these male inverts, the desired sexual object should retain the characteristics of “both sexes” – the ‘boy’ (sexual object) must resemble a woman physically and psychically but must possess the penis (Freud ibid.). The interplay between male and female subject and object positions constitutes one of Freud’s theoretical cornerstones regarding human sexual life; the notion of an interplay or oscillation between male and female subject and object positions will most importantly contribute to the understanding of homophobia. The oscillation described is part of Freud’s conception of bisexuality.

¹⁵ Freud argues that it is almost impossible to extrapolate psychical (or ‘social psychological’) attributions from ‘founding’ biological attributions. Kistner argues that “for Freud, there is no possibility of determining ‘sex’ on the basis of external and internal genitals; moreover, there are determinately corresponding secondary or tertiary ‘sex’ characteristics. While the German adjectives *männlich* and *weiblich* do not differentiate biological from social-psychological gender-specific attributions, Freud makes it clear that we cannot talk of a correlation between somatically considered ‘male’ and social-psychologically considered ‘masculine’ attributions, and between somatically considered ‘female’ and social-psychologically considered ‘feminine’ attributions” (2016: lxxxiii).

Bisexuality is an ambiguous disposition of sexuality where the subject takes on both masculine and feminine roles and the object of this subject's libido is both masculine and feminine in character. According to Van Haute and Westerink, "Freud ... concluded...that there were always four individuals involved in every sexual act: the male/female subject orientation and the male/female object" (2016: xl). So, innate bisexuality is comprised of a kind of oscillation between more than one attitude. Even though Freud places great emphasis on the role of a bisexual disposition in the making of sexuality, no clear-cut, "comprehensive" theorisation on bisexuality can be identified in his *Three Essays* (ibid.). Freud seems to admit that the concept of bisexuality remains insufficiently elaborated. However, Freud's suspicion that bisexuality plays an essential role in the composition of inversion is far from refuted; despite a lack of comprehensive elaboration of bisexuality, Freud still argues that "a bisexual disposition is involved in inversion, though we do not know what that disposition consists of, beyond anatomical formation" (1905: 9). Freud's theorisations of the bisexual disposition, identifiable as part of the composition of sexuality, could be derived from his clinical pre-occupation with the sexual lives of hysterics (Van Haute & Westerink 2016: xxxix-xl). Freud's investigations of hysteria (particularly the Dora case) unearthed a constant rotation of the hysteric between male and female orientations and "male and female objects" (ibid.: xl). In the case of the hysteric, it is possible for a male subject with a masculine/feminine orientation to be sexually drawn to a male object (at some stage in his sexual life). Any sexual wishes that accompany the attraction of the male hysteric to a male object are considered wishes of same-sex object choice. So inversion (in any form or variability) could indicate hysteria. Freud argues that the symptoms of hysteria by no means exclusively coincide with the repression of the "normal sexual drive" (1905: 26). Symptoms also "give expression (by conversion) to the drives which, if they could express themselves directly in fantasy and action undistracted by consciousness, would be described as perverse in the widest sense of the word" (ibid.). With this in mind, Freud argues that symptoms of hysteria are formed at the price of "abnormal sexuality"; i.e. "neurosis is, so to speak, the negative of perversion" (ibid.). Immediately following this axiomatic formulation of the neurosis-perversion relationship, Freud identifies a characteristic essential for any consideration of hysteria in men. In the "unconscious psychic life of all neurotics (without exception), we will find stirrings of inversion and fixations of the libido upon persons of the same sex" (Freud 1905: 27). Importantly, inversion is manifested in various forms and variations. It is important to note that inversion and perversion are not synonymous or even similar. In the case of inversion, the libido does not become fixated at a particular

erogenous zone; inversion is not defined by an extension of polymorphously perverse infantile sexuality into later life. Inversion may be ‘polymorphous’ but, for Freud, it is not ‘perverse’.

Two assertions can be made at this point: the dynamic account provided by Freud in ‘The Sexual Aberrations’ elucidates the various forms which inversion could take, making it clear that there is no distinct sexuality called ‘inversion’; Freud emphasises the infinite variability of sexuality in terms of a spectrum. Repression attending any particular variation opens the possibility that inversion could provide a condition for hysteria in men. Every variation of inversion has, at least, one attribute in common: the same-sex object choice which defines inversion is a matter of affect. Affect, which underlies inversion in any variation, could succumb to repression and may form the groundwork for hysteria in men. To illustrate the notion that inversion (in any variation) forms part of the psychological life of a male hysteric, I wish to sketch a scenario with the assistance of Freud’s theorisations on the complex interplay of psychological conditions which constitute the genesis of a hysteria. As a disclaimer, I would need to add that the scenario sketched below by no means constitutes an attempt at a universal explanation of hysterogenesis in the case of male hysterics. The sketch illustrates a hypothetical scenario of infantile sexual experience which ultimately succumbs to repression post/peri-pubertally.

ii. Psychological Conditions for the Emergence of Hysteria

“One way or another, infantile sexuality becomes subject to repression” (Kistner 2016: lxxxvi). It is the process of repression which initiates the inception (and maintenance) of hysteria. However, repression is not the only factor or condition which plays a role in the emergence of hysteria. In ‘The Transformations of Puberty’ Freud identifies five psychological conditions that together form the fertile soil for the emergence of hysteria. Exploring the necessary conditions for the emergence of hysteria will highlight something important about the aetiology of hysterias (and ultimately homophobia): hysterics construct or fabricate psychological material (especially ‘memories’ of early childhood). The first of the hysterogenic factors is heredity or hysterical disposition. The little boy must be predisposed to a “compliant constitution” (Freud 1905: 90). This means that the boy is already endowed with a disposition towards hysteria among other neurotic manifestations. In his statement of ‘My Views on the Part Played by Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses’ ([1905] 1906), Freud argues that “accidental influences” as primary factors of hysteria-formation took a back seat when emphasis was being

placed on “constitutional and hereditary factors” ([1905] 1906: 275). Freud had abandoned the idea that the chance experience of seduction, as a disruption of infantile sexuality, by adults or other children was the primary factor underlying the emergence of hysteria (ibid.: 274). The reason why I employ the term ‘disruption’ here lies in the fact that the theory of seduction assumes that the ‘seducer’ (adult or another child) does not respect the condition of infantile sexuality – namely that this early form of sexuality is autoerotic and without an object (Freud 1905: 42). More will be said on seduction shortly. Freud does not place the emphasis on seduction alone, but also on the innate disposition towards hysteria, which so to speak ‘meets the seduction half way’. In a hypothetical infantile scenario, the little boy is predisposed to the emergence of hysteria; i.e. the boy’s psychical constitution includes a hysterical disposition. Considering that neurosis is the negative of perversion, the boy should also have a predisposition to perverse sexuality. The child’s perverse sexual life is the very definition of infantile sexuality because it is, at core, masturbatory (1905: 50). Freud emphasises the ‘polymorphously perverse’ nature of infantile sexuality (ibid.). The polymorphously perverse nature of infantile sexuality is the groundwork for the second condition for the emergence of hysteria identified by Freud in *Three Essays*. Keeping the perverse sexuality of the child in mind, some children display what Freud calls “sexual precocity” (1905: 88-89):

It manifests itself in the interruption, abbreviation, or ending of the infantile period of latency, and it becomes a cause of disturbances by occasioning sexual manifestations which, owing on the one hand to the incomplete state of the sexual inhibitions, and on the other hand to the undeveloped state of the genital system, are bound to take on the character of perversions. (ibid.)

Perverse sexual activity in the child may be related to the child’s sexual precocity or premature sexual readiness. Such a child would display a clear absence of ‘sexual inhibitions’ which keep perverse sexual tendencies at bay. Immediately following the above argument, Freud briefly discusses the possible psychical routes that could be taken by precociously perverse infantile sexuality: “These tendencies to perversion may thereafter either persist as such or, after repressions have set in, become the driving forces of neurotic symptoms” (1905: 89). In the hypothetical infantile scenario, the little boy would most possibly display signs of sexual precocity where ‘sexual inhibitions’ have not prevented the manifestation of perverse sexual tendencies. Freud argues that “sexual precocity impedes the control of the sexual drive by the higher psychical agencies, which is so desirable at a later stage, and exacerbates the compulsive

quality that, quite apart from this, characterises the psychical representations of the drive” (ibid.). Sexual precocity plays an essential role in the emergence of hysteria, particularly if the sexual tendencies signified by this precocity succumb to waves of repression once the individual reaches the later stages of peri-pubertal, and post-pubertal life.

So far, we have seen two conditions necessary for the inception (and consequent maintenance) of hysterical symptoms. Another condition is imperative for the emergence of hysteria: “increased *pertinacity* or *susceptibility to fixation*” (ibid.). The child must be disposed to the obsessive tendency of fixation, where a particular perverse manifestation in childhood either continues *en route* into later life, or the manifestation succumbs to repression. In the latter case, neuroses are formed. Another aspect of this pertinacity/susceptibility is identified by Freud. Susceptibility “of early impressions may perhaps lie in another psychical factor that we cannot fail to notice in the causation of the neuroses, namely the preponderance given in psychic life to memory traces in comparison with recent impressions” (ibid.). Memory traces of childhood play an essential role in the susceptibility to fixation as a factor contributing to the emergence of neuroses (and by extension hysteria). In Freud’s account, the psychical factor of susceptibility, a predisposed sexual precocity (another essential psychical factor) and hereditary hysterical disposition all contribute to the possibility of “accidentally experienced stimulations of infantile sexuality” (Freud 1905: 90). The ‘accidental experiences’ as a location of sexual stimulation in childhood are predominantly attributed to adults or other children (ibid.). When all the mentioned conditions are met, and an object is introduced to an object-less infantile libido, the sexual stimulation could be “fixated as a permanent disturbance” (ibid.). As Freud puts it: “The causation [of hysterical symptoms] is shared between a compliant constitution, precocity, the quality of the increased pertinacity of early impressions, and the chance stimulation of the sexual drive by extraneous influences.” (ibid.)

In the hypothetical infantile scenario, the child displays signs of all the conditions noted above. An accidental experience of sexual stimulation is the last factor which plays a role in the emergence of hysteria once the child reaches puberty. The memory traces of this experience surface in puberty; they are repressed when met by reaction formations in conjunction with external inhibitions. The repression of the memory traces of accidental sexual experiences marks the emergence of hysterical symptoms. Freud does provide numerous examples of accidental sexual experiences; examples such as “games of passive motion” and “active muscle exercise” come to mind (1905: 54-55).

The notion of accidental sexual experiences in various forms (such as muscle activity or playful games) begs the question of the reality, or actual occurrence, of such ‘experiences’ in light of the aetiology of hysteria; i.e. whether the sexual experience actually occurred. Phrased differently: the question is whether, after puberty, an early experience of sexual stimulation constituted the psychological material (in the form of memories) implicated in the formation of hysterical symptoms.¹⁶ By the time of writing the first version of *Three Essays*, Freud had become sceptical of the reality of seduction in the formation of hysteria, pre-pubertally. Prior to the theorisations of hysteria in the *Three Essays*, Freud was puzzled by the conundrum of distinguishing between actual occurrences in childhood and merely distorted memories of childhood experiences (ibid.: 274). In an attempt to make sense of, and solve, the conundrum, he introduced the notion of ‘phantasies of seduction’ (ibid.). These phantasies of seduction are conjured up by hysterics in an attempt to avoid memories of their “own sexual activity” during the years of early childhood (ibid.). What is of particular interest in the exploration of the aetiology of hysteria is not the actuality of seduction in childhood. What is of interest is rather the formation of a phantasy of seduction as a defence against hysterics’ mental preoccupation with their own perverse infantile sexual behaviour. Freud emphasises the importance of phantasies of seduction considering the formation of hysterical symptoms:

[Hysterical symptoms] were no longer to be regarded as direct derivatives of the repressed memories of childhood experiences; but between the symptoms and the childish impressions there were inserted the patient’s *phantasies* (or imaginary memories), mostly produced during the years of puberty, which on the one side were built up out of and over the childhood memories and on the other side were transformed directly into the symptoms. It is only after the introduction of this element of hysterical phantasies that the texture of the neurosis and its relation to the patient’s life became intelligible (Freud [1905] 1906: 274)

¹⁶ This argument can be found in Freud’s letter to Wilhelm Fliess dated September 21, 1897. The letter emphasises Freud’s abandonment of his “own *neurotica*”, i.e. his theory of the neuroses (1897: 259). Freud’s ‘theory of the neuroses’ (within the context of this letter) pinpoints seduction as the primary aetiological factor in the emergence of hysteria. In this letter Freud argues the following: “Then came surprise at the fact that in every case the father, not excluding my own, had to be blamed as a pervert – the realization of the unexpected frequency of hysteria, in which the same determinant is invariably established, though such a widespread extent of perversity towards children is, after all, not very probable. (The perversity would have to be immeasurably more frequent than the hysteria, since the illness only arises where there has been an accumulation of events and where a factor that weakens defence has supervened.)” (1897: 259-260)

So the hysteric ‘produces’, constructs or fabricates phantasies of seduction; the aetiology of hysteria is characterised by a kind of construction which serves as a protection against thinking about infantile sexual behaviour. If homophobia is a kind of hysteria, a similar ‘construction’ of psychical material (akin to fabricating phantasies of seduction) would form part of the making of homophobia.

iii. Male Hysteria

Asserting that homophobia is equivalent to (male) hysteria would be a matter of discerning a process of ‘construction’ in both cases. So to understand the possible link between *male* homophobia and *male* hysteria requires an investigation of the ‘phantasies of seduction’ (and its contents which underlies male hysteria). Furthermore, it is crucial to consider some distinctive features of the aetiology of *male* hysteria. What may be unique to the aetiology of male hysteria may also ring true for the making of homophobia (in men). Nowhere in the above discussion on the significance of phantasies of seduction in the aetiology of hysteria is the gender of the patient specified. The picture sketched above seems to imply that both male and female hysterics conjure up a phantasy of seduction which functions as a kind of intermediate psychical material (between actual childhood experiences and hysterical symptoms). So it would be fair to say that hysteria in men is also characterised by the presence of such a phantasy of seduction as a requisite for the formation of hysterical symptoms. In the hypothetical infantile scenario, it is not the actual infantile experience that is of significance; muscle activity and playful games as sexually stimulating experiences in early childhood should not be taken as instances of seduction. Rather, in terms of muscle activity and playful games, the so-called act of ‘seduction’ by other children or adults should be viewed as signifying the psychical material (memory) which is transformed into hysterical symptoms after a wave of repression in puberty. The phantasy of seduction attributed to hysteria in men varies in its content. One particular content-related characteristic of such a phantasy is of interest for the current argument: the gender of the child or adult enacting the apparent seduction in the memory. If, in the case of hysteria in men, the protagonist enacting the seduction in the phantasy is male, it is entirely possible that part of what is being repressed is the male hysteric’s infantile pleasure-seeking (which in some way involves the male ‘seducer’). Symptoms begin to take form once infantile pleasure-seeking succumbs to repression upon the onset of puberty and this repression threatens to come undone. Equipped with a phantasy of seduction, the male hysteric may transform (past) infantile pleasure into symptoms. Infantile sexual pleasures are prone to

conversion into hysterical symptoms upon (organic) repression as transformative technique.¹⁷ In this way, inversion can form an integral part of hysteria in (some) men as Freud claimed. The repression of infantile pleasure-seeking becomes pivotal in hysteria in men:

[In the case of hysteria] it was no longer a question of what [same-sex] sexual experiences a particular individual had had in his childhood, but rather of his reaction to those experiences – of whether he had reacted to them by ‘repression’ or not. (Freud [1905] 1906: 276-277)

Repression is a necessary condition for the formation of hysteria in men; but it is not the only one, nor is it a sufficient one. To avoid a reductionist argument regarding the aetiology of hysteria in men, we need to explore further conditions. A cue for such an exploration can be found in the inconsistency in Freud’s argumentation between the first two and the third of the three essays. The idea of an original bisexual disposition featuring in the first two essays fails to impress itself on Freud’s theorisations of ‘The Transformations of Puberty’ in the third essay. Although Freud mentions the importance of ‘bisexuality’ for the understanding of sexual life in both men and women, he fails to attribute this factor to the sexes equally; i.e. women are not theoretically considered in the same way as men regarding their [bi]sexual disposition. The notion of a bisexual disposition is unequally allocated to the sexes, which indicates an inconsistent application of the principle of bisexuality.¹⁸ In ‘The Transformations of Puberty’ Freud argues that women are more prone to hysteria than men because women have to ‘put aside’ their masculine (clitoral) portion of sexual life; men do not have to ‘put aside’ any particular portion of their sexual life (1905: 72-73). Freud’s claim that women are more ‘prone’ to hysteria ignores the notion of original bisexuality in every person, regardless of sex. In a converse manner, I wish to show that a more consistently employed notion of bisexuality could assist in the understanding of male hysteria. The notion of bisexuality addressed in the first of the *Three Essays*, is instructive not only for the exploration of sexual inversion, but also for the study of hysteria in men.

¹⁷ Repression is termed a ‘transformative technique’ because repressive work changes the quantitative aspect of sexual wishes; i.e. the wish is changed in such a manner that its manifestation in psychical life is unrecognisable. If and when (organic) repression is effective, the sexual wish is transformed into hysterical symptoms. In this case, the likely outcome of the (organic) repression would be ‘conversion hysteria’.

¹⁸ It is entirely possible that the inconsistency regarding the attribution of ‘bisexuality’ (as a concept) between the first two of Freud’s *Three Essays* and the third can be attributed to what Davidson refers to as a kind of mental inertia of theorisation. As Davidson argues in light of Freud’s conservative mentality (as opposed to the revolutionary nature of his work): “Freud’s *Three Essays* ought to have stabilized the new [non-psychiatric] mentality, speeding up its entrenchment by providing it with a conceptual authorization. But given the divergent temporality of the emergence of new concepts and the formation of new mentalities, it is no surprise that Freud’s mental habits never quite caught up with his conceptual articulations.” (1987: 276)

‘Bisexuality’ plays an essential role in Freud’s articulations of human sexuality in *Three Essays*. The postulation of original bisexuality accounts for the way in which the hysteric’s object characteristically and continuously switches/oscillates between masculine and feminine roles.¹⁹ Hysteria emerges once a wave of repression has occurred peri-pubertally; this point has already been established. What is of interest at this particular point in the argument is that aspect of infantile (pre-pubertal) sexual life that must succumb to the repressions in puberty. The period of early childhood or infantile sexual life is characterised by a non-sexed²⁰ and a non-differentiated kind of sexual attitude (Freud 1905: 70-71). Autoerotic infantile sexuality knows no distinction in sexual attitude between little girls and little boys; the differentiation between the sexes only occurs later in the child’s life (ibid.). Freud describes the sex-equality of the libido in the context of infantile sexuality:

Concerning the autoerotic and masturbatory manifestations of [infantile] sexuality, we might posit the proposition that the sexuality of little girls is entirely masculine in character. Indeed, if we were able to give a more definite content to the concepts of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’, we might with some justification maintain that the *libido is regularly and invariably masculine in nature, whether it occurs in men or women, and irrespective of whether its object is a man or a woman.* (1905: 71)

Infantile sexuality is not structured by sexual difference insofar as it is entirely ‘masculine’ or active. However, if the concept of ‘bisexuality’ is introduced into the account of psycho-sexual development, particularly in consideration of infantile sexuality, how can the libido be said to be exclusively masculine? Freud may provide an answer to this question in a footnote added to *Three Essays* in 1915. Freud argues that “when, for instance, libido was described in the text above as being ‘masculine’, the word was being used in this sense, for an instinct is always active even when it has a passive aim in view” ([1905] 1915: 219). This means that libido can

¹⁹ Freud briefly discusses this point of bisexual alteration in *Three Essays*. Amidst his discussion on sadism and masochism, Freud points out something very interesting about perversions in general: “We find, then, that certain among the impulses to perversion occur regularly as pairs of opposites; and this, taken in conjunction with material which will be brought forward later, has a high theoretical significance. It is moreover, a suggestive fact that the existence of the pair of opposites formed by sadism and masochism cannot be attributed merely to the element of aggressiveness. We should rather be inclined to connect the simultaneous presence of these opposites with the opposing masculinity and femininity which are combined in bisexuality – a contrast which often has to be replaced in psycho-analysis by that between activity and passivity.” ([1905] 1924: 160) Although Freud draws a distinction between inversion and perversion (which marks a divergence from the views of his contemporaries in sexology), the oscillation between masculinity and femininity is present in both the cases of ‘inversion’ and ‘perversion’.

²⁰ The adjective ‘non-sexed’ is here not equated to ‘non-sexual’. Infantile sexuality is considered auto-erotically sexual, but there is no differentiation between ‘male’ and ‘female’ subjects in light of early, objectless sexuality.

be sub-divided into two channels of (infantile) sexual aim: namely, an exclusively active aim and a passively active aim. The latter channel seems, at first, paradoxical. However, ‘passive activity’ in sexuality becomes a possibility if the individual’s sexual aim is to actively take up a passive role in sexual encounters. Since infantile sexuality (in whatever form or variation) must succumb to repression, it is possible that this ‘passive activity’ could also succumb to the same fate. However, in order to make such a claim, I will first explore Freud’s articulations and arguments on the facet of infantile sexuality that must succumb to repression if a woman is to take up a feminine subject position during (and after) puberty. By drawing from the model of psycho-sexual development Freud ascribes to women, it would be possible to understand the psycho-sexual development of men as it is theorised in *Three Essays*. If the notion of psycho-sexual development theorised (by comparison) in this section adds to our knowledge of male hysteria, it could also further an understanding of homophobia; perhaps the woman’s psycho-sexual development can bring us one step closer to understanding the aetiology of hysteria in men and thus also homophobia. To come to an understanding of the (psycho-sexual) development of the woman, as it is theorised in the *Three Essays*, her infantile sexual life and activities require some consideration.

Freud argues that the dominant erogenous zone in girls is the clitoris (1905: 71). The infantile sexual life of the girl is marked by the masturbatory stimulation of the clitoral zone; the excitation emanating from the clitoris is, according to Freud, analogous to the boy’s masturbatory stimulation of the penis (ibid.). Freud makes it clear that clitoral masturbation, apparently so prominent amongst pre-pubertal girls, is masculine in nature (1905: 72). The masturbatory behaviour of both boys and girls is exclusively active, that is to say ‘masculine’. This entirely active channel of sexuality has great significance for the little girls’ later sexual life. It is an exclusively active aim of infantile sexuality that must succumb to repression if a girl is to embody her womanhood (ibid.). In other words, the little girl must repress (effectively give up) an entirely masculine portion of her infantile sexual life and take up a feminine role in sexuality. Freud summarises the process of a girl’s peri-pubertal repression of clitoral, masculine sexuality (compared to a man’s sexual development):

If the erogenous susceptibility to [clitoral] stimulation has been successfully transferred from the clitoris to the vaginal orifice, the woman would have changed the leading zone for her sexual activity. A man, on the other hand, retains his leading zone unchanged from childhood. In this change of their leading erogenous zone, and in the wave of repression at puberty, which

as it were, puts aside their infantile masculinity, lie the chief conditions for the greater proneness of women to neurosis and especially to hysteria. These conditions are thus integrally related to the essence of femininity. (1905: 72-73)

With the concept of bisexuality in mind, it is clear that for Freud a little girl must repress masculine sexual aims in favour of feminine sexual life, whereas the boy retains his exclusively active (masculine) sexual channel. For Freud, this explains the susceptibility of women to hysteria after the marked repressions of puberty. What seems to be missing in Freud's explanation is an analogous process for 'hysteria in men'. Neurosis (especially hysteria) in both men and women is, according to Freud, the 'negative of perversion'. Hysteria as negative of perversion is not gender-specific; as Freud explains in a letter to Fliess:

In order to account for why the outcome (of premature sexual experience) is sometimes perversion and sometimes neurosis, I avail myself of the bisexuality of all human beings. In a purely male being there would be a surplus of male release at the two sexual barriers as well – that is pleasure would be generated and consequently perversion; in purely female beings there would be a surplus of unpleasurable substance at these [pubertal] times. (1896: 238)

Freud argues that upon the onset of puberty, men are more susceptible to perversion and women are more susceptible to neurosis. Susceptibility is, however, not the norm in patterns of sexual development; men's proneness to perversion and women's proneness to neurosis does not account for the universal sexual life of men and women, respectively. It is the exceptions directed to the notion of male proneness to perversion which I wish to highlight and consider. In the case of male hysteria, much like in hysteria in women (as discussed above), an aspect of infantile sexuality would have had to succumb to repression at puberty. Is it not possible that boys must also repress a portion of infantile sexual life making them equally prone to hysteria?

It could be argued on the basis of Freud's conception of innate bisexuality that what is subject to repression (in the case of the boy) is a passively active attitude. In this case, the boy would take up a masculine subject position in sexuality, because his passive activity is sacrificed. However, what exactly is the boy being passive to? It could be that, equipped with a phantasy of seduction, the boy represses his wish to play the passive role in the act of seduction once he reaches puberty. In this way, the boy's sexual development would take an inverse route to that of the little girl. The little girl represses infantile masculinity when puberty is reached; the little

boy represses infantile passive activity peri-pubertally. In this sense, the concept of bisexuality can be considered to play a role, as the boy (equipped with original bisexuality) can also be disposed or susceptible to hysteria. Emphasis should be placed on the *possibility* of aetiology of hysteria (in men). The boy's repression of wishes of passivity is a distinct possibility, that is, an aetiological pathway open to the libido of the boy, which may lead to the emergence of male hysteria. All arguments considered, what is up for discussion is whether male hysteria can be considered the negative of inversion. This argument requires far more investigation and reflection because Freud does not (in *Three Essays*) account for the possibility that the boy represses a certain passive activity in puberty. Neither does Freud provide the necessary links between such a possible repression of passive activity (in the phantasy of seduction, in particular) and male hysteria and its underlying wishes of inversion. The only clue Freud provides is the supposition that inversion does underlie hysteria in men; whether the repression of infantile pleasure-seeking can in any way be equated with the repression of a passive activity requires further textual exploration and excavation. Especially given the fact that inversion is not indicative of a fixation at a particular erogenous zone and is not a continuation of infantile sexuality, it is difficult to discern the 'role' inversion 'plays' in the emergence (and maintenance) of hysteria in men. There exists no substantive textual evidence for the claim that male hysteria is the 'negative of inversion'. If homophobia is a kind of hysteria in men, then homophobia (like hysteria in men) will consist of some underlying tendency toward inversion. If it is impossible to fully comprehend the relation between inversion and male hysteria, it would be equally impossible to understand the link between inversion and male homophobia in light of the theorisations set out in (the 1905 edition of) *Three Essays*. On this basis, it is very difficult to draw a substantive link between homophobia and hysteria in men. Despite the major difficulty in drawing a substantive link between homophobia and male hysteria, some (very) vague links do exist between homophobia and hysteria in men.

Homophobia and male hysteria are similar in two (very) vague ways. Firstly, much like the hysteric, the homophobe fabricates or 'constructs' psychical material as a defence. However, unlike the hysteric, the homophobe does not construct 'phantasies of seduction' as a defence against being mentally preoccupied with polymorphously perverse infantile behaviour. Instead of a phantasy, the homophobe constructs a stereotype (such as the one held by Djanlouka in *Le Protocole*). Secondly, the homophobe oscillates or shifts between two attitudes. However, the homophobe's attitudinal oscillation is different from the oscillation between masculine and

feminine roles/attitudes which defines the psychical life of hysterics. These two highly vague links seem to be the extent to which hysteria in men and homophobia can be compared.

From within the context of the 1905 edition of *Three Essays*, not much further can be said on the topic of the relation between male hysteria and homophobia. What can be established, though, is that Freud places a lot of emphasis on the relation between infantile sexuality and repression of (polymorphously perverse) infantile pleasure-seeking upon the onset of puberty. This relation (between infantile sexuality and later repression) motivated the foregoing arguments; one could say that male hysteria finds its conceptual underpinnings in this very relation. There exists no substantive link between homophobia and male hysteria but that does not mean that the vicissitude underlying male hysteria cannot also form part of the making of homophobia.

Although this chapter has alluded to the relation between infantile sexuality and repression, it has not as yet explored the concept of ‘repression’. To establish whether ‘repression’ (as a psychical vicissitude) has anything to do with the emergence and maintenance of homophobia requires a systematic consideration of the concept (of repression). At this stage, I wish to address that ‘elephant in the text’, that concept which haunts every argument up to this point: *repression*.

iv. An Exploration of the Concept of Repression (in *Three Essays*)

Although it is untenable to draw a link between homophobia and male hysteria, it is still important to consider the possibility that repression is implicated in the emergence of homophobia. The concept of repression plays a key role in Freud’s body of work, but sometimes its importance is overshadowed by less than comprehensive ‘readings’ of his work. Pronouncements of grossly generalised and reductive opinions on Freud’s work are commonplace. The mere mention of Freud’s name tends to prompt phrases such as ‘He placed too much emphasis on sex’ and ‘There is more to personal development than the sexual component’. Equally common are those opinions that misconstrue Freud’s work on the sexual life of children, arguing that the very idea of infantile sexuality is preposterous, if not utterly vulgar. Such opinions attest to a crude and vague apprehension of Freud’s works; they indicate serious misunderstandings of Freud’s thought on the importance of sexuality in the psychical

development of the individual. Freud responds to such opinions in his *Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* ([1909] 1910):

Psycho-analysis is seeking to bring to conscious recognition the things in mental life which are repressed; and everyone who forms a judgement on it is himself a human being, who possesses similar repressions and may perhaps be maintaining them with difficulty. They are therefore bound to call up the same resistance in him as in our patients; and that resistance finds it easy to disguise itself as an intellectual rejection and to bring up arguments like those which we ward off in our patients by means of the fundamental rule of psycho-analysis. ([1909] 1910: 39)

Those who simply brush off Freud's work as being 'sex-obsessed' can thus be seen to be acting out in the same way as his patients: by means of resistance against the findings of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic theory. The role of sexuality in psychoanalytic theory is far more complex than the opinions inveighing against the foundational claims of Freudian psychoanalysis would suggest. As stated in the passage quoted above, the objects of psychoanalytic investigation are aspects of 'mental life' that have succumbed to repression. In neurotic patients or opponents of psychoanalytic findings and theorisations, repression plays a key role. In his essay, *On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement* (1914), Freud emphasises the pivotal role of the concept of repression in psychoanalysis:

The theory of repression is the corner-stone on which the whole structure of psychoanalysis rests. It [the theory of repression] is the most essential part of it [psychoanalysis]; and yet it is nothing but a theoretical formulation of a phenomenon which may be observed as often as one pleases if one undertakes an analysis of a neurotic without resorting to hypnosis. (1914: 16)

Yet Freud objects to the idea that 'repression' has an instrumental role in psychoanalytic theory. Rather, Freud argues,

If anyone sought to place the theory of repression and resistance among the premisses instead of the findings of psychoanalysis, I should oppose him most emphatically. Such premisses of a general psychological and biological nature do exist, and it would be useful to consider them on some other occasion; but the theory of repression is a product of psycho-analytic work, a theoretical inference legitimately drawn from innumerable observations. (1914: 16-17)

Freud's conceptualisation of repression did not remain stagnant and unchanged throughout the course of his clinical work. By the time the above quoted passages were written, Freud had already reformulated his conception of repression on which much of this chapter relies. The model of repression considered here is what Jones calls the "second stage of Freud's formulations"²¹ of the concept of repression (1993: 65). The conceptual content of what Jones identifies as the 'second stage' of Freud's conceptualisation of 'repression' will, for the remainder of this chapter, be referred to as 'organic repression'. The adjective 'organic' in Freud's conceptualisation of repression played an essential role in his change of perspective on human sexuality; by the time of writing the 1905 edition of *Three Essays*, Freud attempted to explain perversion and neurosis as "resulting ... from a general human sexual disposition" (Van Haute & Westerink 2016: xxxvi). The identification of a general disposition of sexuality allowed Freud to infer that sexual normality and pathology were not distinct states of sexual being. For Freud, what is considered 'pathological' is nothing more than the 'intensification and exaggeration' of 'normal' dispositional libido (Van Haute & Westerink 2016: xxxvii). Consequently, hysteria was considered to be the overactive attempt at repression of particular libidinal drives (ibid.). The idea that no clear lines can be established between pathology and normality indicates an 'anti-psychiatric mentality' that Freud adopted as a response to the views of his contemporaries (Krafft-Ebing, among others). For Freud, importantly, "(infantile) sexuality and repression could be explained in terms of general human physiological processes" (Van Haute & Westerink 2016: xxxvi). The centrality of human physiology informed the idea that repression was an organic function involved in the emergence of hysteria. Two important questions arise in light of the central importance of human physiology in sexuality: What exactly is meant by 'human physiology' in *Three Essays*? and What is the role played by physiological processes in the repression of libidinal drives?

These questions are by no means easy to answer, primarily because *Three Essays* do not provide a definitive explanation of the role played by physiology in sexuality and in the repression of wishes and drives.

²¹ This stage of Freud's thought on the concept of repression is thought to have originated between the years 1900 and 1906 (1993: 65). In 'Repression: The Evolution of a Psychoanalytic Concept from the 1890's to the 1990's' (1993), Ernest Jones identifies this stage of Freud's theorisation of the concept of repression as "the introduction of the topographic theory" of repression (ibid.).

To address the questions posed above, as a singular step towards understanding the relation between homophobia and repression I wish to compose a brief sketch of the development or progression of the sexual life of the child. I have already highlighted the polymorphously perverse character of infantile sexuality (as it is described by Freud in *Three Essays*). In early childhood, the child seems to have unrestricted access to its own body, acting out every sexual stirring on the body. An unrestricted autoerotism and polymorphous perversity in early childhood are met with what Freud, in *Three Essays*, terms ‘suppression’ later in childhood:

...it seems certain that the germs of sexual stirrings are already present in the newborn child and that these continue to develop for some time, but then become subject to a progressive process of suppression, which can itself be ruptured in turn by proper spurts of sexual development, and delayed by individual peculiarities. (1905: 38)

Particular kinds of sexual stirring forms an integral part of the child’s early sexual life, but such stirrings are ‘progressively’ repressed by the child. What exactly facilitates the suppression (or repression) process mentioned in the passage? Freud identifies certain factors that advance the progressive repression of certain infantile sexual drives and pleasure-seeking. These factors are brought about organically in the child:

During this period of total or only partial latency, those psychical forces are built up which later appear as obstacles in the path of the sexual drive and, like dams, restrict its flow – disgust, shame, and claims of aesthetic and moral ideals. One gets the impression from culturally socialized children that the construction of these dams is the work of education, and no doubt education has much to do with it. But in reality this development is organically conditioned, and can occasionally generate itself without any help at all from education. (Freud 1905: 38-39)

Between the sexual stirrings which characterise early childhood and the progressive repression of such stirrings, certain (‘organically conditioned’) factors can be identified. Repressions are heightened at the onset (or during) puberty. What is felt as pleasure in early infantile sexuality is oftentimes felt as unpleasure post-pubertally or peri-pubertally. What intervenes is ‘organic repression’, referred to (in *Three Essays*) in terms of ‘human physiology’ at the interface of physical and psychical development. This formulation of the meaning of ‘human physiology’ (in *Three Essays*) addresses the problem of the role of human physiology in the repression of libidinal drives or wishes. When the child undergoes certain physiological processes and

physical changes at the onset of puberty, it changes the attitude towards its previous infantile sexual behaviour. Psychically charged with the organically conditioned factors of repression, the pubescent (with his/her new anatomical and physiological changes) will repress the stirrings of infantile sexual life.

Frank Sulloway argues that the second phase (1896/97-1913) of Freud's conceptualisation of repression was primarily characterised by the reaction of 'disgust' (1979: 369). For Freud, disgust (as kind of reaction formation) plays an essential role as "the major catalyst of all higher moral sensibilities" (ibid.). Freud's analysis of Dora's conversion hysteria²² (among other earlier assertions and theorisations) informed him of the importance of 'disgust' as a 'catalyst' of repressive deterrence (ibid.). According to Freud, Herr K's advances toward Dora involved the awareness of the man's erect penis "against her [Dora's] body" ([1901] 1905: 30). In Dora's case, the penis seems to serve an ambiguous purpose: it is for sexual purposes and it serves the function of excretion (Freud [1901] 1905: 31). It is Dora's understanding of the penis's excretory function that kindles within her a feeling of disgust:

If I may suppose that the scene of the kiss took place in this way, I can arrive at the following derivation for the feelings of disgust. Such feelings seem originally to be a reaction to the smell (and afterwards also the sight) of excrement. But the genitals can act as a reminder of the excretory functions; and this applies especially to the male member, for that organ performs the function of micturition as well as the sexual function. Indeed the function of micturition is the earlier known of the two, and the *only* one known during the pre-sexual period. Thus it happens that disgust becomes one of the means of affective expression in the sphere of sexual life. (Freud [1901] 1905: 31).

The excretory ideation (excretion forming an integral part of the sexual life of the child) associated with the penis is met with the reaction of disgust; this ultimately leads to the

²² Laplanche and Pontalis's entry on 'conversion hysteria' shows that this kind of hysteria was the only form of hysteria explicated by Freud. Hysteria tends to come with the characteristic of conversion. It is only when Freud faced the challenges (of diagnosis and aetiology) arising from the case of 'Little Hans' and his anxiety hysteria, that conversion hysteria became a subdivision under the umbrella of hysteria. More precisely, conversion hysteria is understood as a "type of hysteria characterised by the prevalence of conversion symptoms" (Laplanche and Pontalis 1973: 92):

This term is not used in Freud's early work, where the mechanism of conversion* is treated as a characteristic of hysteria in general. When Freud decides, with the analysis of 'Little Hans', to treat a phobic syndrome as a subdivision of hysteria under the name of 'anxiety hysteria', the term 'conversion hysteria' is introduced in order to distinguish what is now just one of the forms of hysteria." (ibid.).

formation of Dora's symptoms²³ and the emergence of conversion hysteria. Freud shows that Dora was fully aware that "there was more than one way of obtaining sexual gratification" ([1901] 1905: 47). Dora's nervous cough and irritated throat (as the emergent hysterical symptoms) were an indication of the kind or form of 'sexual gratification' that was involved in the process of hysterical symptom-formation – sexual activities that involve the use of the oral orifice (Freud [1901] 1905: 47-48). The nervous cough seemed to be related to the constant envisioning of sexual pleasure between two people which involved the use of the mouth for the achievement of satisfaction (ibid.: 48). Dora's mental preoccupation with Herr K's functionally ambiguous erect penis comes to mind once again. So, Freud states,

... it is not to be wondered at that this hysterical girl of nearly nineteen, who had heard of the occurrence of such a method of sexual intercourse (sucking at the male organ), should have developed an unconscious phantasy of this sort and should have given it expression by an irritation in her throat and by coughing. (Freud [1901] 1905: 51)

For Dora, disgust is the connection between the wish of fellatio upon a man and the inception and maintenance of hysterical symptoms. This reaction (disgust) is of cardinal importance for Freud's conceptualisation of organic repression. Sulloway explains:

[Freud] replaced the notion of defences against traumatic seductions with an organic-olfactory theory of repression, attributing man's propensity to sexual neurosis to an excessive repression of pleasurable affects associated with certain infantile erotogenic zones namely, the mouth, nose, throat and anus. (1979: 377)

Excrement (in the form of micturition or defecation) is associated with the olfactory (coprophilic) and visual drives corresponding to the eyes and nose as erogenous zones. Hysterical symptoms may arise from the organic repression of infantile pleasure-seeking motivated by visual and/or olfactory drives. In the case of hysteria in men, disgust as the catalyst of repression arising at the onset of puberty could also be a possibility. While it pertains to neurosis as the negative of perversion, it can also be considered to implicate inversion. Inversion, as discussed in the first section of this chapter, is predominantly characterised by two possible sexual aims: 'intercourse per anum' and 'mutual masturbation'. Both these

²³ Dora's dominant symptom was 'nervous coughing' which, according to Freud, seemed to have plagued her throughout her life (particularly peri-pubertally) ([1901] 1905: 22).

activities are linked to erogenous zones that serve functions of excretion: the penis and the anus. A male pubescent's phantasy of seduction could possibly include, as psychical material, the subtle or outright exposure to the male member of another child or an adult. The constituent material of such a phantasy (i.e. the exposure to the penis or genitals of a same-sex individual) could be met by disgust if the male pubescent is mentally preoccupied with the phantasy of seduction. If the penis of the other same-sex individual plays any role in the phantasy mentally occupying the male pubescent, it is possible that any wishes of same-sex object choice (which involves contact with the penis of the same-sex object) will be repressed peri-pubertally. This could be the case because the male pubescent feels a sense of disgust towards the male member as it is associated, in childhood sexual theories, with an excretory (urinary) function. Much like in Dora's case, disgust in this case would indicate organic repression as condition for the formation of hysterical symptoms. Tomas Geyskens spells out the significance of the anus (as an erogenous zone) in phantasies:

Freud needed the reality of the seduction to account for the perverse character of the fantasies (...). But after the introduction of a spontaneous infantile sexuality, he could explain the perverse character of fantasies by the fact that they are supported by the erotogenic zones. However, Freud's new, biological, theory does not keep his patients from telling the same stories about seduction and other sexual experiences in childhood. These 'memories', Freud now says, are fantasies and these 'fantasies are products of later periods and are projected back from what was then the present into earliest childhood'. (Geyskens 2001: 872)

The male pubescent conjures up phantasies of seduction as an attempt to avoid being preoccupied with wishes and sexual pleasures that defined his infantile sexual life. Phantasies of seduction are a defence against being preoccupied with infantile pleasure-seeking. These phantasies emerge amidst the process of (organic) repression that occurs in puberty. Between childhood and puberty, organic repression takes place; organic repression is distinct from repressions that take place within the parameters of adulthood. Organic repression is the necessary condition for the emergence of conversion hysteria. Conversion hysteria is the only kind of hysteria Freud considered prior to the conceptual and diagnostic issues presented by the Little Hans case history (Laplanche and Pontalis 1973: 92). If homophobia is a conversion hysteria then the homophobe would display symptoms similar to those seen in Dora's case. It is indefensible to claim that a defining characteristic of homophobia is a hysterical cough, for instance. Homophobia is not simply a case of conversion hysteria and does not emerge after a

wave of (organic) repressions have occurred. Does this mean that homophobia is conceptually, and even realistically, incompatible with all forms of hysteria? Is it possible that homophobia is equivalent to another kind of hysteria? The most intuitive place to look is in cases of ‘phobias’.

In *Analysis of Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy* (1909) Freud provides a systematic case history of the horse phobia of Little Hans. Little Hans’s aggressive wishes aimed at the father were accompanied by an intense wish to be with the mother; so intense were these sexual wishes that Little Hans actually attempted to seduce his mother on more than one occasion (ibid.: 118). It was this intense sexual longing for the mother, in part, that later formed the basis for Hans’s horse phobia (ibid.: 136). Hans’s phobia emerged when his intense sexual wishes aimed at the mother was repressed as a result of a castration threat issued by the very object of his longing (the mother) (Freud 1909: 7-8). Hans repressed his (incestuous) sexual wishes as a response to the possibility of becoming different; i.e. being castrated. The homophobe also responds to the possibility of being or becoming different; whether the homophobe’s response to this possibility is repression, is not entirely clear. The fact remains that the homophobe does respond (in one way or another) to the difference or variance he associates with men identifying as ‘gay’. What can be said regarding the response of the homophobe (to the possibility of being or becoming different) is that it is in no way a complete evasion of difference or variance. Djanlouka (as sketched in *Le Protocole*) is, for instance, both hostile towards the narrator (as a man identifying as ‘gay’) but also engages in homoeroticism. Djanlouka does not fully avoid the variance or difference associated with homosexuality. The fact that the homophobe and the anxiety hysteric differ in their response to the possibility of being or becoming different does not conclusively disqualify ‘repression’ as a viable vicissitude that oversees the emergence of homophobia.

It is noteworthy that Freud’s model of organic repression (as explored in this chapter) is not necessarily compatible with the content of Freud’s other texts (particularly, texts written after *Three Essays*) and, as illustrated earlier, is highly inappropriate in trying to theorise the emergence and maintenance of homophobia. Freud’s conceptualisation of repression, among other terms, has undergone numerous changes and revisions over time; the different conceptions of repression are theoretically incommensurable. “The distinction between organic, childhood repressions and the more psychological repressions of adulthood corresponds to Freud’s later dichotomy between *primal* and *secondary* repressions” (Sulloway

1979: 369). The conceptual distinction between ‘primal repression’ and ‘repression proper’ is drawn by Freud in his essay ‘Repression’ (1915). Unless stipulated otherwise, it is Freud’s 1915 conceptualisation of repression that will be employed throughout the following chapters and sections. This particular conceptualisation of repression explicitly posits repression as the vicissitude proper to ‘affect’. To understand the relation between homophobia and repression would also be a matter of interrogating the possibility that ‘affect’ is repressed and, as a result, homophobia emerges. At this stage, no psychical vicissitude can be set aside; not when it comes to an undertheorised psychoanalytic account of homophobia.

This chapter explored the factors contributing to the emergence of hysteria in men; it did not thoroughly or comprehensively account for those factors that are implicated in the emergence and enactment of homophobia. It addressed neither the individual-psychological factors that are directly implicated in the ‘aetiology’ of homophobia, nor did this chapter even touch on the social-psychological dimensions of homophobia. The complication in this chapter arises with the question as to the relation between hysteria in men and homophobia. This chapter suggested that homophobia and hysteria in men share some vague links; but hysteria in men is not to be directly correlated with homophobia. This chapter illustrated some theoretical and conceptual difficulties/obstacles related to drawing a link between repression, hysteria in men and homophobia. Although it is clear that homophobia is not simply a case of hysteria in men, it is still possible that repression forms part of the making of homophobia.

The relation between homophobia and hysteria in men requires further investigation. The pertinence of this relation becomes manifest in the observation that the homophobe is, in one way or another, preoccupied with (male) same-sex sexuality (i.e. male-male homosexuality) and responds to this preoccupation with aversion and an attempt at evasion. In this chapter, I have emphasised one of the possible attempts at evasion: repression. It would be instructive to explore whether repression can be psychoanalytically-theoretically demonstrated to be implicated in homophobia. Alternatively, different vicissitudes implicated in the emergence and functioning of homophobia would have to be identified and explored. Whichever vicissitude can account for the emergence and functioning of homophobia has to be linked to the homophobe’s ideas of homosexuality. Underlying homophobia is the idea of difference which the homophobe associates with homosexuality. To understand the ‘difference’ that the homophobe associates with homosexuality requires careful and thorough conceptual work.

IV

Towards a Psychoanalytic Explanation of Homophobia

I find myself for a moment in the interesting position of not knowing whether what I have to say should be regarded as something long familiar and obvious or as something entirely new and puzzling. But I am inclined to think the latter.

Sigmund Freud ([1938] 1940: 275)

Any theoretical consideration of homophobia would need to take seriously the idea of difference or variance. Confrontation with (the idea of) difference (in homophobia, for instance) can occur in internal psychological life or upon the exposure to an object in the world. Those who interrogate ideas of difference underlying homophobia agree on at least one point: homophobia could be a consequence of repressed ‘homosexuality’.

While most accounts of homophobia remain social-psychological, some do take into account individual-psychological elements. A pivotal ‘individual-psychological element’ is the Freudian concept of ‘repression’. To the extent that Freudian psychoanalytic theory features in recent or contemporary scholarly work, homophobia is considered comparable to a form of neurosis. In most cases, the arguments interrogating homophobia through the lens of Freudian psychoanalytic theory contend that homophobia indicates a neurotic state related to the repression of ‘homosexual’ wishes. Other theorists are less preoccupied with the neurotic underpinnings of homophobia, comparing homophobia to fetishism instead. In ‘Idealization, Splitting, and the Challenge of Homophobia’ (2009) Yanay and Siles for instance argue that the father’s experience of his son’s ‘coming out’ resonates with Freud’s theorisation of fetishism (2009: 346). The analogy drawn between homophobia and fetishism, however, does not engage in thorough conceptual work. Yanay and Siles merely compare certain concepts without drawing the necessary links and parallels; they fail to interrogate the conceptual differences, similarities and parallels in the comparison they are drawing. The same can be said about the construals of homophobia as possible neurosis. In each case, hasty conclusions are drawn without assessing the comparability between homophobia and the Freudian

psychoanalytic explanation of particular psychological phenomena (neurosis, fetishism, etc.). The conceptual underpinnings and relations are left unexplored in these accounts.

In this chapter, I intend to steer clear of such hasty conclusions regarding the making of homophobia. The issue of difference runs far deeper than the homophobe's idea of difference; difference in this chapter takes up an ambiguous meaning. It is of course important to consider the psychological consequences of the perception of difference that could partly account for the emergence of homophobia. I will consider the possible psychological consequences of the perception of difference that attend homophobia whilst simultaneously trying to construe a Freudian psychoanalytic notion of homophobia through an argument from analogy. The analogy I wish to draw is one between the operation of fetishism and the (not yet theorised) 'functioning' of homophobia. To illustrate the analogy between fetishism and homophobia I will interrogate the similarities, but more crucially the differences, between certain Freudian psychoanalytic concepts. Before I can make an argument from analogy, other conceptual comparisons must be considered to illustrate the theoretical-conceptual obstacles to a psychoanalytic explanation of homophobia. The first conceptual comparison which I explore is between 'repression' and 'repudiation'.

The concept of 'repudiation' is very unstable in Freudian psychoanalytic theory. In the English version of the *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* the concept of repudiation appears as translation for various German terms (such as *Urteilsverwerfung* and *Verwerfung*, among others). Laplanche and Pontalis point out Freud's unspecified and disparate uses of 'repudiation' (1973: 166). The authors themselves do not provide a comprehensive outline and evaluation of the concept; they merely point to the influence of Freud's texts on Lacan's development of the concept 'foreclosure' (1973: 166-169). The failure to tease out the issues surrounding Freud's disparate uses of 'repudiation' do not help to clear up the confusion. Adding to the confusion and uncertainty is the fact that in the Wolf Man case history alone, the concept of repudiation has at least three distinct meanings, each with a particular (and distinct) function in Freud's argument. Freud's disparate uses of the concept, and the resulting contradictions are puzzling indeed. Freud has 'unspecified' conceptions, and a 'specialised' conception of 'repudiation'. The translations, the absence of thorough conceptual investigations and the unspecified uses of the term are bound to leave any scholar working in the field of psychoanalytic theory perplexed. The unstable nature of the concept of 'repudiation' should, however, not be seen as a kind of 'conceptual dead end'.

Rather, the unstable character of the concept (of repudiation) provides the scholar with an opportunity to interrogate the range of possibilities that come with comparative conceptual work. Chief among these possibilities is an opportunity to isolate a conception of repudiation that can be considered ‘specialised’ or ‘specific’ in Freud’s thought. A thorough ‘tracing’ of the concept of repudiation through some of Freud’s texts can be fruitful for understanding the place of this particular concept in classical psychoanalytic theory. ‘Tracing’ the concept (of repudiation) could also assist in theorising the link between individual-psychological and social-psychological elements in a particular kind of phobia. In this chapter, I consider a conception of ‘repudiation’ that can aid a theorisation of phobia; more specifically a psychoanalytic theorisation of homophobia. Repudiation emerges as the conceptual ‘centerpiece’ of theorising homophobia in Freudian psychoanalysis. I will attempt to conceptualise ‘repudiation’ by firstly interrogating the relation between ‘repression’ and ‘repudiation’, in teasing out a concept of repudiation by way of a comparative analysis of two of Freud’s texts: the article on ‘Negation’ (1925) and the case history of the Wolf Man, entitled *From The History of an Infantile Neurosis* ([1914] 1918).

i. The Relation between ‘Repression’ and ‘Repudiation’

Nowhere can the versatility of the concept of repudiation be seen more prominently than in Freud’s analysis of the Wolf Man. In the section of the Wolf Man case history entitled ‘Anal Erotism and the Castration Complex’ alone, the concept of repudiation is adduced in disparate senses and contexts. Even before this section of the case history, the concept of repudiation features in Freud’s explanation of the Wolf Man’s anxiety dream. In ‘The Dream and the Primal Scene’ Freud equates the symptom of anxiety with an attempt to repudiate a wish to receive sexual satisfaction from the father:

The dream ended in a state of anxiety, from which he did not recover until he had his Nanya with him. He fled, therefore, from his father to her. His anxiety was a repudiation [*Ablehnung*] of the wish for sexual satisfaction from his father - the trend which had put the dream into his head. The form taken by the anxiety, the fear of ‘being eaten by the wolf’, was only the (as we shall hear, regressive) transposition of the wish to be copulated with by his father, that is, to be given sexual satisfaction in the same way as his mother ([1914] 1918: 46).

At first glance, repudiation in this context (as translation of ‘*Ablehnung*’) seems to be synonymous with ‘anxiety’; that is, repudiation takes the form of a symptom. The Wolf Man’s anxiety pertains to the ‘biting’ or ‘eating’ wolf, forming the foundation of the wolf phobia. The wolf phobia in the Wolf Man’s anxiety dream is the consequence of an unsuccessful repression (ibid.). If the Wolf Man’s anxiety is a consequence of (an unsuccessful) repression, and repudiation is (at least in some respects) synonymous (in this context) with anxiety, then repudiation succeeds repression. However, the synonymy posited here between repudiation and anxiety is a simplification of the role of repudiation. When Freud mentions that the Wolf Man’s ‘anxiety was a repudiation of a wish’, ‘repudiation’ (in this case) is not necessarily synonymous with ‘anxiety’. Rather, repudiation operates within anxiety, emerging as a consequence of unsuccessful repression. Repudiation (as a constitutive element of anxiety) is a consequence of repression; repudiation is a procedure inherent in symptoms, particularly ‘anxiety’. More succinctly put, repudiation is the active component of anxiety; it is the element of anxiety that is ‘doing something’. So, two characteristics of repudiation can be identified: (a) repudiation is an operational function underlying anxiety and (b) repudiation succeeds repression as an integral part of anxiety. A third characteristic can be identified. What is being repudiated is a ‘wish’, which means that repudiation is directed inwards; what is being repudiated is an element of internal psychological life. Repudiation is not directed outwards and does not occur as a result of an encounter with reality or the external world. A wish is however not the only internal phenomenon that can be ‘repudiated’.

Later on in the Wolf Man case history, Freud shows that repudiation can also take place in relation to a subject’s identifications. Freud argues that an integral part of the Wolf Man’s later obsessional neurosis is the repudiation of an identification with the mother and her role in the parental sexual scene or ‘the primal scene’:

Under the influence of the primal scene he came to the conclusion that his mother had been made ill by what his father had done to her; and his dread of having blood in his stool, of being as ill as his mother, was his repudiation of being identified with her in this sexual scene - the same repudiation [*Ablehnung*] with which he awoke from the dream ([1914] 1918: 78).

What is being repudiated is an identification with the mother. The ‘dread’ of having blood in his faeces here appears as synonymous with repudiation (as translation of ‘*Ablehnung*’). However, again this is a simplified reading. The repudiation of identification with the mother

is the operative element that forms part of the ‘dread’ experienced by the Wolf Man; i.e. repudiation is again the procedural component of the ‘dread’. Repudiation of identification with the mother is also directed inwards, much like in the case of the repudiation of wishes of sexual satisfaction (from the father). The Wolf Man repudiated *his* identification with his mother; the repudiation was directed at an internal psychological phenomenon (i.e. identification). Furthermore, if the repudiation of identification with the mother is the ‘same repudiation with which the Wolf Man awoke from the dream’, then we can note that in both cases, the repudiation had to take place after repression. This is the case because repudiation inherent in anxiety is equated with the repudiation of identification. The anxiety (and its operative repudiating function) succeeded repression. If repudiation of identification is equivalent to repudiation which forms part of anxiety, then repression would precede repudiation in both the cases. So in both the cases of repudiation of identifications and the repudiation of wishes, repudiation appears as a functional component directed at internal psychological phenomena. Moreover, repudiation is a consequent procedure that occurs after the onset of repression. However, repudiation does not *always* seem to succeed repression.

In another sense, Freud employs the concept of repudiation as a psychological procedure or vicissitude that *can* take the form of repression. Freud instates the conception of repudiation as repression in reference to the Wolf Man’s repression of a ‘feminine attitude’:

His feminine attitude towards men, which had been repudiated [*abgewiesen*] by the act of repression, drew back, as it were, into the intestinal symptoms, and expressed itself in the attacks of diarrhoea, constipation, and intestinal pain, which were so frequent during the patient’s childhood ([1914] 1918: 80)

Repudiation (as translation of ‘*Abweisung*’), in this case, is instated synonymously with repression; repudiation takes the form of repression. In this case, it can simply be said that repudiation is a general sense of ‘refusal’ that operates in the work of repression. Laplanche and Pontalis point out that the concept of repudiation can take up the meaning of “a loose sense of refusal which may operate, for instance, in the mode of repression” (1973: 166). But Laplanche and Pontalis also point out that there exists a more ‘specialised’ or ‘specific’ meaning of the concept of repudiation, beyond a ‘loose sense of refusal’.

The conceptions of repudiation explored so far are defined by their close proximity, or similarity, to repression. There exists, however, a conception of repudiation that is not conceptually related to repression. Laplanche and Pontalis argue that Freud employs the term ‘repudiation’ as a “conscious judgement of condemnation” (ibid.). In the Wolf Man case history, Freud introduces this particular conception of repudiation when he distinguishes repression from what he calls ‘a condemning judgement’ ([1914] 1918: 80). The most striking characteristic of this conception of repudiation lies in *what it is* that is being repudiated. What is being repudiated (in this case) is not an internal psychical phenomenon but a threat that takes the form of a piece of reality external to the subject. What I mean by ‘piece of reality that is external to the subject’, in reference to the Wolf Man case history, is his repudiation of the perceived castration of the mother ([1914] 1918: 84-85). In the Wolf Man case Freud hints at something which can be imagined as being equivalent to the procedure of repudiation as ‘condemning judgment’:

We are already acquainted with the attitude which our patient first adopted to the problem of castration. He rejected [*verwarf*] castration, and held to his theory of intercourse by the anus. When I speak of his having rejected [*verwarf*] it, the first meaning of the phrase is that he would have nothing to do with it, in the sense of having repressed it. This really involved no judgement upon the question of its existence, but it was the same as if it did not exist. Such an attitude, however, could not have been his final one, even at the time of his infantile neurosis. We find good subsequent evidence of his having recognised castration as a fact ([1914] 1918: 84).

When merely skimming over this passage, it is very easy to overlook a conceptual contradiction evident in the text. In the above passage Freud seems to suggest that castration had been ‘repressed’ or ‘scotomised’. A few lines later, Freud argues that the Wolf Man’s attitude towards the *idea* of castration consisted of two currents: one of affirmation and one of ‘abomination’ [*Verabscheuung*] (ibid.: 85). If castration is an ‘idea’, then it is theoretically untenable to argue that castration can undergo repression; this line of argument comes from Freud’s later theorisations on the vicissitude of ‘ideas’. In ‘Fetishism’ (1927) Freud clearly distinguishes the vicissitude of ‘ideas’ from that of ‘affect’ (1927: 153). Freud argues that the vicissitude proper to ‘affect’ is repression; the vicissitude proper to ‘ideas’ is *disavowal* [*Verleugnung*] (ibid.). Taking this theoretical development into consideration would mean that the ‘idea of castration’ cannot undergo repression, but can only be ‘disavowed’. From the perspective of the theorisations in ‘Fetishism’ (1927), it is impossible for the Wolf Man to

repress the idea of his mother's castration; properly speaking, he would have had to disavow the idea. If the idea of the mother's castration was truly repressed, as Freud suggests in the Wolf Man case history, then there can exist no affirmative current towards the idea.²⁴ In the above quote, Freud equates 'repression' and 'repudiation'. If 'repudiation' is defined as 'a [conscious] condemning judgement' of an idea, it would make sense that a co-occurring current of affirmation is evident in the Wolf Man case history. In that case, repudiation is not the same as 'repression'; i.e. repudiation does not constitute the complete eradication of a piece of reality. Rather, repudiation is merely a judgement of condemnation, not a repression of an idea. This leaves room for a possible affirmation of the idea of castration which exists alongside a repudiating current. If 'repudiation' is the more apt vicissitude of the idea of castration (in the case of the Wolf Man), there could be serious ramifications for the manner in which we conceive of the Wolf Man's phobia. However, the 'play on concepts', so to speak, remains merely a case of speculation. What can be retained from this discussion is that 'repudiation' as a judgment of condemnation is, conceptually speaking, something entirely distinct from 'repression'. Although 'repudiation' is conceptually distinct from 'repression', there exists a specific instance in which the two vicissitudes still relate to one another.

'Repudiation' features in another one of Freud's texts which could reaffirm or indicate a 'specialised' conception of the term. In the essay 'Negation' (1925), Freud conflates 'repudiation' and 'negation'. Indications of the conflation of 'negation' and 'repudiation' can already be identified in the first lines of the text:

What he [the patient] is repudiating [*verwirft*], on grounds picked up from his treatment, is, of course, the correct meaning of the obsessive idea. Thus the content of a repressed image or idea can make its way into consciousness, on condition that it is *negated* [*dass er sich verneinen lässt*]. Negation [*Verneinung*] is a way of taking cognizance of what is repressed; indeed it is already a lifting of repression, though not, of course, an acceptance of what is repressed. (1925: 235-236)

²⁴ Strachey's translation of the term *Verwerfung* into 'scotomisation' in the 1927 article on Fetishism is highly problematic. Translating the term *verwerfung* (repudiation) as 'scotomisation' creates an issue for the reader of the English translation of the *Standard Edition*: repudiation and affirmation cannot co-occur, which is not the case. Strachey equates scotomisation to repression. Repression and affirmation cannot co-occur but repudiation and affirmation can and do operate simultaneously.

In this context, repudiation and negation are made out to be equivalent. The ‘patient’ repudiates the ‘correct meaning’ of an idea; i.e. the ‘patient’ is verbally expressing a judgment in the form of a negative statement. Correspondingly, Freud argues that negation is a ‘negative judgement’. Negation and repudiation are synonymous in this case. Both negation and repudiation are ‘no’-judgements or negative judgements pertaining to ideas (more specifically, the content of ideas). Repudiation takes the form of negation in a particular social environment (the clinical setting) as a ‘negative judgement’. There is a social element or component to repudiation: repudiation can take place within the context of a social interaction. Repudiation (in the form of negation) takes place consciously. To repudiate (in the form of negation) the content of an idea is to make a conscious negative judgement regarding the content of the idea. The notion of ‘repudiation’ articulated in the Wolf Man case history *From The History Of An Infantile Neurosis* ([1914] 1918) corresponds to that explained in the essay on ‘Negation’ (1925). The conception of repudiation espoused in both texts is that of a ‘conscious judgement of condemnation’. The establishment of this conception of repudiation does not detract from the other disparate uses of the term; rather, the conception of repudiation as ‘conscious judgement of condemnation’ is a more ‘specialised’ conception identifiable intertextually. The so-called ‘specialised’ conception of repudiation renders the term conceptually distinct from ‘repression’. If repudiation is indeed distinct from repression, then it is possible that the conception of repudiation espoused above is more akin to a vicissitude of a different kind, one that has already been hinted at earlier. It is possible that repudiation is closely related to the vicissitude of ideas in the emergence of psychosis. Given the object of this dissertation (i.e. homophobia) a pressing question needs to be answered: can Freud’s conception of psychosis, including the notion of a vicissitude proper to ideas, explain the role played by ideas of homosexuality in the operation of homophobia?

ii. The Relation between ‘Repudiation’ and ‘Disavowal’

To understand the significance of the conception of psychosis for the present study on homophobia, the distinction between ‘neurosis’ and ‘psychosis’ needs to be explored. Freud draws a stark distinction between ‘neurosis’ and ‘psychosis’ in both his essay on ‘Neurosis and Psychosis’ ([1923] 1924) and his essay on ‘The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis’ (1924). In the latter, Freud attempts to ‘amplify’ and ‘correct’ the postulations of the former (Strachey [1964] 1971: 182). In the essay on ‘Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis’ Freud

argues that the aetiology of psychosis, analogous to the aetiological elements of neurosis, can be summarised in two consecutive steps:

We might expect that when a psychosis comes into being, something analogous to the process in a neurosis occurs, though, of course, between different agencies of the mind; thus we might expect that in a psychosis, too, two steps could be discerned, of which the first would drag the ego away, this time from reality, while the second would try to make good the damage done and re-establish the subject's relations to reality at the expense of the id [...] Here, too, there are two steps, the second of which has the character of a reparation. (1924: 184).

What Freud means by a 'dragging away of the ego from reality' is encapsulated in the term *disavowal*. Freud uses the term 'disavowal' (*Verleugnung*) as indicative of the vicissitude proper to a piece of reality; in the aetiology of psychosis, as a first step in its emergence, the subject disavows (*verleugnet*) a piece of reality (1924: 184-185). In the second step in the aetiology of psychosis the disavowed piece of reality is 'remodelled' and takes the place of the original form of that reality (Freud 1924: 185). It is crucial to note that the subject's attempt to remodel reality, as the second step in the emergence of psychosis, is always 'partly unsuccessful' (Freud 1924: 186). It is on the basis of this failure to remodel the disavowed piece of reality that psychosis emerges. To axiomatise the aetiology of psychosis: psychosis emerges as a result of a conflict between the ego and the external world, where the ego is actually employed to disavow and then remodel a piece of reality to accommodate the 'id's wishful impulses' (Freud [1923] 1924: 149-151). The failure on the part of the ego to complete the process of remodelling, in service of the id, is the reason for the emergence of psychosis. The ego's failure to remodel a piece of reality is observable in the psychical phenomena which result from it:

The fact that, in so many forms and cases of psychosis, the paramnesias, the delusions and the hallucinations that occur are of a most distressing character and are bound up with a generation of anxiety - this fact is without a doubt a sign that the whole process of remodelling is carried through against forces which oppose it violently. (Freud 1924: 186)

Hallucinations and delusions, for instance, result from the ego's failure to completely remodel a piece of reality. In the Wolf Man case history there are clear elements of psychosis, not only neurosis, particularly in the instance of a hallucination the Wolf Man had at the age of five years.

The Wolf Man's hallucination consisted of an image of his finger being severed or 'cut', which is what instilled in him a great sense of anxiety (Freud [1914] 1918: 85). Freud links the hallucination to "the period in which he brought himself to recognise the reality of castration and it is perhaps to be regarded as actually marking this step" (ibid.). The hallucination of the cut finger could be the result of a failed attempt at remodelling a piece of reality, namely the reality of the mother's castration. A few paragraphs prior to Freud's quote of the hallucination, it is made clear that the Wolf Man did repudiate (*verwarf*) the 'fact' of his perception of the mother's castration; however, the hallucination is evidence that such a repudiation led to an unsuccessful replacement of her perceived castration. The Wolf Man's hallucination is evidence of the deferred effect of his traumatic encounter, i.e. the traumatic experience of the possibility of castration already observed in the 'primal scene' of parental coition. The psychotic's disavowal (*Verleugnung*) of reality can be correlated with the Wolf Man's repudiation (*Verwerfung*) of the perceived castration of the mother. Repudiation and disavowal seem to be synonymous if a comparison is drawn between what Freud describes as the aetiology of psychosis and the description of the Wolf Man's hallucination. Repudiation arguably takes the form of disavowal once it is implicated in the aetiology of psychosis. Here, once again, the versatility of repudiation as a concept can be observed. In essence, it can be said that the Wolf Man case history bears witness to another conception of repudiation: that repudiation can form part of the aetiology of psychosis in the form of a disavowal of reality. Despite the psychotic elements resonating in the Wolf Man case, it cannot be said that the Wolf Man was unequivocally psychotic. It is clear that the Wolf Man had a divided attitude towards the reality of his mother's castration. In *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* ([1938] 1940) Freud explains that psychosis is characterised by two co-existing attitudes towards reality: one that 'detaches' itself from a piece of reality and another one that recognises that same reality ([1938] 1940: 202). Psychosis emerges once the former attitude outweighs the latter in 'strength' (ibid.). In Freud's earlier formulation of the aetiology of psychosis, however, psychosis is not characterised by a divided attitude (that of affirmation and disavowal simultaneously). Rather, what can be observed is an exclusive disavowal of a piece of reality. This earlier formulation of the aetiology of psychosis would rule out the Wolf Man as a psychotic, to the extent that the Wolf Man both affirmed and repudiated the perceived castration of the mother. Freud's theorisations of psychosis as characterised by a divided attitude only became possible when the importance of the 'splitting of the ego' dawned on him. Splitting is, however, not a process limited to psychosis. To call the contents of the Wolf Man case 'psychotic' would be highly

problematic. The Wolf Man case history makes it clear that the Wolf Man had a divided attitude towards the perceived castration of a woman. The Wolf Man's case indicates a 'splitting of the ego'. But the larger question is: is the Wolf Man's phobia indicative of psychosis (particularly as it is later conceived)? If homophobia is a 'legitimate' phobia, like the Wolf Man's phobia conceived through the lens of psychoanalytic theory, then this question needs to be addressed. Before this question can be addressed, the process of 'splitting' must be investigated. Much like the Wolf Man, Djanlouka also repudiates and affirms the idea of difference or variance; i.e. both figures display a (logically contradictory) attitude towards difference (in each case respectively). So perhaps the process of 'splitting' is not limited to the Wolf Man's case but can also shed light on the making of homophobia.

iii. 'Splitting of the Ego' as a Cornerstone of Phobias

In his essay 'The Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence' ([1938] 1940), Freud sets out to discuss the circumstances under which a 'splitting of the ego' can occur. Such a splitting, he points out, emerges as a result of a 'psychical trauma' ([1938] 1940: 275):

Let us suppose, then, that a child's ego is under the sway of a powerful instinctual demand which it is accustomed to satisfy and that it is suddenly frightened by an experience which teaches it that the continuance of this satisfaction will result in an almost intolerable real danger. It must now either decide to recognize the real danger, give way to it and renounce the instinctual satisfaction, or to disavow [*verleugnen*] reality and make itself believe that there is no reason for fear, so that it may be able to retain the satisfaction. Thus there is a conflict between the demand by the instinct and the prohibition by reality ([1938] 1940: 275).

Freud further argues that the the child does not choose one 'course' over the other; rather, the child adopts both 'courses' at once (*ibid.*). So the subject develops a divided attitude towards reality: one that disavows the threat and another one that affirms the existence of that threat (*ibid.*). The simultaneous affirmation and disavowal (*Verleugnung*) of the threat allows for the drive "to retain its satisfaction" whilst "proper respect is shown to reality" (*ibid.*). The ego's appeasement of two masters, namely reality and the drive, simultaneously does come at a very steep 'price': the splitting of the ego itself (Freud [1938] 1940: 275-276). Freud continues his discussion on, and explanation of, the process of splitting by examining a particular case history.

The case history discussed by Freud in the ‘Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence’ is one of fetishism. At first, it seems as if this is an entirely new case history, the contents of which have not been discussed elsewhere by Freud. However, careful reading of this very brief essay shows that the little person Freud is speaking about bears a striking resemblance to the Wolf Man. Freud begins by explaining the little boy’s confrontation with the impression of castration:

A little boy, while he was between three and four years of age, had become acquainted with the female genitals through being seduced by an older girl. After these relations had been broken off, he carried on the sexual stimulation set going in this way by zealously practicing manual masturbation; but he was soon caught at it by his energetic nurse and was threatened with castration ([1938] 1940: 276).

There are strong indications that Freud is speaking of the Wolf Man case here. In the Wolf Man case history, it was his older sister, Anna, who seduced him by grabbing hold of his penis ([1914] 1918: 20). In addition, it was the Wolf Man’s nurse, Nanya, who threatened him with castration if he would masturbate in front of her in an attempt at seducing her (ibid.: 24). If Freud is talking about the Wolf Man in the quoted section, then the rest of the brief essay comes as an unexpected turn to any scholar or reader familiar with the case history of the Wolf Man.

Freud goes on to explain the process of splitting that occurs in the case of the Wolf Man. The ‘little boy’, in coming to terms with the threat of castration,

created a substitute for the penis which he missed in females - that is to say, a fetish. In so doing, it is true that he had disavowed reality, but he had saved his own penis. So long as he was not obliged to acknowledge that females have lost their penis, there was no need for him to believe the threat that had been made against him: he need have no fears for his own penis, so he could proceed with his masturbation undisturbed ([1938] 1940: 277).

Assuming that Freud takes up the case history of the Wolf Man in this context, the Wolf Man is made out to be a fetishist. In the case history, Freud does mention an aspect of the Wolf Man’s sexual life that could hint at fetishism. In the section entitled ‘The Dream and the Primal Scene’ in the case history, Freud mentions that the Wolf Man had, from puberty onwards, a

‘powerful’ attraction to the ‘large and conspicuous buttocks’ of women ([1914] 1918: 41). The Wolf Man had, under the sway of a castration threat, and of sexual theories of children, taken the buttocks as a substitute for the penis missing in females. Does this mean that the Wolf Man was not as much of a psychotic as a fetishist? This is a difficult question to answer. The hallucination of the ‘cut’ finger indicates elements of psychosis in the Wolf Man’s case. However, if Freud is speaking about the Wolf Man in his 1938 discussion of ‘The Splitting of the Ego’, then psychosis is not implicated in the case history. Freud argues that the ‘little boy’ spoken about in the 1938 essay did not “simply contradict his perceptions [of castration] and hallucinate a penis where there was none to be seen” ([1938] 1940: 277). Rather, the little boy ‘displaced’ the value that was originally placed on the female’s penis unto another object, as substitute for her penis, in the form of a fetish (*ibid.*). Thus Freud provides no evidence in the 1938 essay that the Wolf Man (presumed to be the ‘little boy’ spoken about) is in any way psychotic. A tension seems to unfold between the theorisation of the Wolf Man’s hallucination and Freud’s later theorisation of the Wolf Man as fetishist. The tension could be due to the fact that Freud did not revisit his own account of the Wolf Man case before writing the later essay on the defence mechanism of splitting. Perhaps Freud would have altered his original text on the Wolf Man case if he had re-read the case in light of the later theoretical developments laid out in the 1938 essay. However, this remains a case of scholarly speculation. The fact remains that the Wolf Man case history and the later 1938 essay do correlate in the details of the ‘patient’s’ experience of castration.

Further evidence can be found in the 1938 essay, suggesting that Freud was speaking about the Wolf Man in this context. What is noteworthy is that the Wolf Man is a fetishist (at least according to Freud’s later theorisations); his fetishism emerged as a result of his disavowal of castration. Understood in this way, the Wolf Man could continue with his masturbation without any interference – implying that the drive was allowed to retain the satisfaction resulting from manual masturbation. However, Freud argues that the Wolf Man’s attitude of disavowal was not the only relation he had towards reality (especially the perception of castration). Freud shows that the ‘little boy’ had another attitude towards the perceived castration of females – one which existed alongside the current of disavowal. The ‘little boy’ developed a ‘symptom’ indicative of his affirmation of female castration ([1938] 1940: 277). This symptom took the form of a ‘fear’ of the father, especially a fear that the father would punish him for his continued masturbatory activity (*ibid.*). The Wolf Man developed a ‘symptom’ of anxiety (in the form of a wolf phobia) in the wake of a threat of being castrated by the father; the Wolf Man believed

that his father had castrated his mother and that this castration was also an imminent threat to him should he dare to take her place (Freud [1914] 1918: 47). Thus in both the 1938 essay on ‘The Splitting of the Ego’ and in the Wolf Man case history, there is evidence that the Wolf Man exhibited an attitude of both affirmation and disavowal simultaneously. All indications considered, a process of splitting did occur in the Wolf Man case. Freud hints at the Wolf Man’s wolf phobia in the 1938 essay: that in the case of the ‘little boy’, he states, a ‘symptom’ emerged which signified a ‘fear’ of the father; i.e. a ‘symptom’ emerged that had, at its core, an anxiety directed at an animal (wolf) as a substitute for the father. This would point to the wolf phobia of the Wolf Man. If this is the case, the Wolf Man’s phobia is a result of the splitting of the ego as an attempt at defending himself against castration. In the process of constructing a fetish (through the process of splitting), the Wolf Man developed a phobia.

At this point, we can summarise the conditions necessary for the emergence of this particular kind of phobia. The phobia described emerged as a result of the splitting of the ego as defence against castration. The splitting allowed for a divided attitude towards a piece of reality, especially a threat of castration. More specifically, the phobia emerged as a result of that attitude which recognised a reality and showed respect to it - that is, the affirmation of the perceived castration of the woman. In addition, the phobia exists alongside a fetish, constructed in the wake of a disavowal of the idea of castration. The fetish signifies the subject’s non-acknowledgement of castration; the phobia signifies the affirmation of that ‘fact’. In the process of defence against castration (in the form of splitting) both phobia and fetish can exist side by side. The castration threat remains the central traumatic experience that causes a ‘rift’ in the ego. Fetishism is a prime example of splitting; Freud constantly refers back to fetishism when explaining the splitting of the ego and its implication in the defence against castration. Strachey describes Freud’s study of ‘Fetishism’ (1927) as a predecessor of the theorisations that would later emerge in the 1938 essay on splitting; the 1938 essay is a ‘sequel’ to the 1927 article on fetishism ([1964] 1971: 273). The latter text discusses the formation of fetishism in more detail. I wish to consider the process of ‘splitting’ as it is described in ‘Fetishism’ (1927) to get one step closer to drawing an analogy between homophobia and fetishism.

In his essay on ‘Fetishism’, Freud argues that the event which ignites the process of splitting is the ‘little boy’s’ confrontation with the woman’s lack of a penis (1927: 153). The ‘little boy’ will disavow the perceived castration of the woman because if it can happen to her, it is possible that it could happen to the ‘boy’ as well (ibid.) Once the ‘little boy’ disavows the woman’s

perceived castration, an “energetic action” is undertaken to “maintain” the disavowal (Freud 1927: 154). The ‘little boy’ retained his belief in the woman’s possession of a penis, but the value that was once placed on that particular ‘penis’ is now ‘displaced’ unto another part of the body (Freud 1927: 154-155). This ‘other’ part of the body is the fetish object (Freud 1927: 155). This fetish object usually takes the form of the “last impression” before the subject was confronted with the “traumatic impression” of castration (ibid.). It is important to note that the fetish is constructed as a result of the simultaneous affirmation and disavowal of the woman’s castration (Freud 1927: 156). Freud illustrates the divided attitude in fetishism by drawing a parallel between the fetishist and two young men who have disavowed the death of their father:

It turned out that the two young men had no more ‘scotomized’ [“*skotomisiert*”] their father’s death than a fetishist does the castration of women. It was only one current in their mental life that had not recognised their father’s death; there was another current which took full account of that fact. The attitude which fitted in with the wish and the attitude which fitted in with reality existed side by side. [...] [One of] the patient[s] oscillated in every situation in life between two assumptions: the one, that his father was still alive and hindering his activities; the other, opposite one, that he was entitled to regard himself as his father’s successor (ibid.).

The fetishist, much like the young men described, has a divided attitude towards the reality of a loss (in the case of fetishism, it is the loss associated with castration). In the ‘mental life’ of the fetishist, the woman is both not castrated and castrated simultaneously. The creation of the fetish attests to a current of affirmation and one of disavowal regarding the perceived castration of the woman. The disavowal of the woman’s castration becomes the driving force behind the identification and adoption of another object as substitute for the female penis that is missing. In addition, the very existence of the fetish object itself attests to the fetishist’s affirmation of the idea of castration. If the reality of castration were completely eradicated, there would be no need to displace the value placed on the woman’s penis onto another object. If a phobia does emerge, it is as a result of an intensified and continued affirmation of castration. It is possible for the fetish to co-exist with a phobia once the process of splitting has taken place. The construction of the fetish indicates a rift in the ego: one part that affirms castration as reality and one that attempts to feign ignorance of castration. In a literal way fetishism, as an instance of the process of splitting, explains a mode of sexuality that exists alongside “normal sexual behaviour” ([1938] 1940: 203). Fetishism is a component of sexuality; but the process which constitutes the creation of the fetish is not limited to sexuality. Freud’s account of the

emergence and operation of fetishism has also been adduced to explain other phenomena; e.g. in the case of stereotyping. Understanding the way in which stereotypes emerge and operate is crucial to any understanding of homophobia; the homophobe's stereotyping is aimed at the behaviour and lived experiences of men identifying as 'gay'.

iv. The Operation of Stereotyping

Djanlouka's stereotype about men identifying as 'gay' is one example of a stereotype that is concerned with the 'behaviour' of these men. Freud's conception of fetishism will assist in understanding Djanlouka's stereotyping and thus his homophobia. Before I can begin to discuss the form of stereotyping I have in mind, I must pause for a second to put forward a disclaimer. The argument which follows is an argument from analogy. Three known terms will be used to infer a fourth one; i.e. A is to B as Ax is to Bx²⁵. I will argue that the relation between 'repudiation' and 'disavowal' is analogous to the relation between the form of stereotyping (as the new concept I have in mind) and 'fetishism'.

The form of stereotyping I have in mind is directed at men identifying as 'gay'. Before I can establish the operation of sexual²⁶ stereotyping, I would need to first identify and then expand on the kind of 'encounter' from which this form of stereotyping originates. Since it is impossible for a subject to establish the object choice of another subject upon their encounter with that subject, it cannot be said that sexual stereotyping originates from a simple 'impression'. The encounter which sets sexual stereotyping in motion is more complex in the sense that it relies on additional information (concerning the other subject) that the first subject would not have had prior to the encounter. The information at the base of the stereotype is conveyed in the process of a social interaction. In an article entitled 'Idealization, Splitting, and the Challenge of Homophobia' (2009), Yanay and Siles give an example of a son communicating his 'coming out' to his father (2009: 339). It is not the son's experience that I am considering here. Rather, I am exclusively looking into the experiences like those of the father upon learning about his son's sexual 'inclination' or identification as 'gay'; that is, I am

²⁵ Norton argues the following regarding Hesse's account of an argument from analogy: "The source may carry properties P and Q where P and Q stand in some causal, explanatory or other relationship. If the target carries a property P* analogous to P, the analogical inference authorizes us to carry over the relation to the target system, where we now infer to a property Q* that stands in the same causal or explanatory relation to P*" (2011: 6).

²⁶ Here it should be pointed out that when I refer to 'sexual' stereotyping, I am not talking about 'sex' (implied in the distinction between the categories of male and female). Rather, I am referring to stereotyping that is specifically directed at the ideas of difference of men identifying as 'gay'.

investigating the experiences of the homophobic when confronted with homosexuality. The fathers in the study describe the encounter with their sons' professed identifications and inclinations toward object choices as a "shocking experience" (ibid.). This 'shocking experience' can be termed the traumatic encounter; however, the encounter is traumatic not necessarily and merely because the object choice is not heteronormative. The encounter is 'traumatic' because it confronts the subject with the possibility of his own variance. An effect akin to such 'trauma' is mentioned by Leo Bersani in *Homos* (1995). According to Bersani, homophobia is the response to an internal possibility of one's own 'homosexuality' or 'homosexual' wishes (1995: 27). The point is that a subject's traumatic encounter with the orientation towards a same-sex object-choice is traumatic because it confronts the subject in question with its own possible variance in relation to heteronormativity. The subject in this regard is in some respects similar to the 'little boy' confronted with the perceived castration of the woman. What is at stake for the heteronormativity-affirming subject in this encounter is the loss of his normative axis. The subject, faced with the possible loss of his normative axis, will repudiate the idea of variance associated with homosexuality.

Repudiation of an idea can take place within the context of a social interaction, unlike disavowal (which is limited to 'impressions'). A conscious judgement of condemnation (i.e. repudiation) can take place when a subject is confronted with 'variance' (especially its own). In other words, the subject is able to repudiate the idea of difference as a defence against the possibility of its own variance.

The repudiation of the idea of variance allows for the creation of a substitute for the exclusive heterosexuality of the man who identifies as 'gay'. A substitute is created for the 'gay man's' lack of exclusive heterosexuality. In analogy with the fetish, the substitute takes the form of the 'gay' stereotype. The 'gay' stereotype, like the fetish, signifies the subject's attempt at protecting a valued attribute of itself. As long as the subject does not affirm the idea of variance of the man identifying as 'gay', that subject's belief in its own exclusive heterosexuality is 'safe'. With the help of the 'gay' stereotype, the subject's belief in his own unambiguous heterosexuality is secured. The content of the 'gay' stereotype can be anything which serves the subject in its aim of defending itself against variance from heteronormativity.

Where can this defence be seen? Freud argues that the 'meaning' of the fetish is hidden from anyone except the fetishist (1927: 154). The same can (to some extent) be said for the 'gay'

stereotype, which often makes itself known in social interactions. Blunt utterances of ‘gay’ stereotypes are permissible in certain social interactions because, as Yanay and Siles argue, “all modern subjects, respond in one way or another to the authority of heterosexuality” (2009: 340). The authority of heterosexuality makes it possible for ‘gay’ stereotypes to circulate freely. The ‘gay’ stereotype can circulate, but its meaning or significance for the homophobe cannot – it remains obscure. The homophobic subject’s defence against the possibility of his own variance is not necessarily observable in the blunt utterances of ‘gay’ stereotypes. The similarities between fetishism and sexual stereotyping are not limited to the criterion of secrecy. ‘Gay’ stereotyping, much like fetishism, displays a divided attitude towards reality: a current of repudiation signifying a turning away from the idea of variance in relation to heteronormativity, and another current not characterised by repudiation, but rather by a recognition of the reality of variance.

The ‘gay’ stereotype attests to a contradictory attitudinal current that runs parallel to repudiation – that of acceptance or affirmation of variance in relation to heteronormativity. The ‘gay’ stereotype indicates that the subject simultaneously ‘respects’ a piece of reality and ‘disregards’ that same piece of reality. In this respect, sexual stereotyping is analogous to fetishism. Both fetishism and sexual stereotyping evince a divided attitude towards a piece of reality. The current of affirmation becomes manifest in the form of phobia. If the stereotyping is accompanied by phobia, with the expression of anxiety at the man identifying as ‘gay’, ‘homophobia’ could be said to be phobia legitimately so called.

Homophobia as a ‘legitimate’ phobia could take the form of what White terms ‘homoanxiety’ (1999: 82). However, this attribution once again opens up the question of repression of homoerotic wishes. This chapter has illustrated that it is ‘repudiation’ and not necessarily ‘repression’ that is implicated in the emergence of homophobia manifested in stereotyping. The repudiation of the idea of variance from heteronormativity stands at the ‘origin’ of homophobia manifested in sexual stereotyping. Thus homophobia as sexual stereotyping emerges when the potential homophobe is confronted by the idea of variance. There does, however, remain an issue of causality in accounting for the emergence of homophobia. Not all subjects will become homophobic upon encountering the idea of variance, but all homophobes who reportedly encountered difference considered the encounter ‘traumatic’. This means that encountering the idea of variance is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for the emergence

of homophobia. The repudiation of the idea of variance is an important condition for the emergence of homophobia.

However, the the analogy between fetishism and stereotyping drawn here ‘goes too far’ - that is, it strays from an argument based on concepts in classical psychoanalytic theory. ‘Perception of difference’, for instance, is a necessary condition for the emergence of fetishism. The perceived difference of the woman (in terms of her lack of a penis) can only be perceived as ‘different’ if the child had a preconceived idea or theory. The male child’s sexual theory that all beings like himself possess a penis is the bedrock for his ‘perception of difference’ in women. Fetishism emerges as a response to the perceived difference of the woman. The same cannot be said for the emergence and functioning of homophobia. In the case of homophobia, the homophobe does not *perceive* difference in the man identifying as ‘gay’ (as the child would in the case of observing the genitals of women). Rather, the homophobe *ideates* the variance of the man identifying as ‘gay’ and constructs a ‘gay’ stereotype as a defence against the possibility of his own variance. It becomes very difficult to show the link between the sexual theories of children (implicated in the emergence of a phobia and/or fetishism) and the ‘gay’ stereotypes of homophobes. Terms such as ‘the idea of variance’, ‘exclusive heterosexuality’ and ‘heteronormativity’ all stray from a strictly psychoanalytic approach to the issue of homophobia; the use of these terms point to the difficulty in connecting some Freudian psychoanalytic concepts to an explanation of homophobia. To validate (or invalidate, as the case may be) these notions would require probing social-psychological explanations of homophobia - such as issues of socialisation, for instance. This limitation regarding the argument from analogy should be kept in mind if the individual-psychological dimensions of homophobia are to remain in focus (alongside the social-psychological dimensions). To illustrate the need for limiting the analogy, I wish to introduce an example of homophobia involving stereotyping.

‘Gay’ stereotypes can be heard anywhere from television screens to song lyrics, from schools to churches. The school environment is a very fertile ‘breeding ground’, so to speak, for the expression of homophobia and the free circulation of ‘gay’ stereotypes. According to research on the question of sexualities in South African secondary schools, “more than a few learners were quoted as fearing exposure to homosexual peers...” (Davis 2015). One learner in particular is reported to have had the following to say about the ‘presence’ of homosexuality in the school environment:

Listen, if you [are] around *moffies* the whole day, if you grow up in an environment of *moffies*, you gonna be a *moffie*, because you think to yourself this is the way I should be. (ibid.)²⁷

The learner is voicing the ‘gay’ stereotype which stipulates that homosexuality is ‘contagious’ (ibid.). The ‘gay’ stereotype of homosexual contagion seems to be a defence against ideas of variance. The learner is expressing his anxiety about exposure to men identifying as ‘gay’ and the consequence of this exposure. The learner can be imagined to say to himself, ‘this *moffie* is a being much like myself, so it is possible for me to become (or even be) different as well.’ Sexual stereotyping protects the learner from the anxiety-provoking idea of variance (especially his own); in this way, the learner preserves an attribute he holds dear (much like in the case of the ‘little boy’ and the preservation of his penis). The ‘gay’ stereotype ‘remains a token of triumph over the threat of variance and a protection against it’.²⁸ This kind of ‘triumph’ takes place in the social sphere. The ‘gay’ stereotype cited above attests to the ‘social’ aspect of homophobia. Repudiation links the social and individual-psychological dimensions of homophobia. Repudiation is the first step in an individual-psychological defence against the idea of variance encountered in social interaction. The conception of repudiation as conscious judgment of condemnation has both an individual-psychological and social dimension. Again, it should be stressed that, in the case of homophobia, a current of repudiation does not exist without another current: affirmation. These two currents (which together constitute a divided attitude towards the idea of variance) are observable in the psychological life of the homophobe. These currents can exist alongside one another without contradiction. In the final chapter, I will briefly explore some examples which illustrate the co-existence of these two currents in a homophobe’s relation to the idea of homosexuality.

²⁷ A ‘moffie’ is a derogatory word for the man identifying as ‘gay’. It is the Afrikaans equivalent of a ‘faggot’. This term refers to a stereotypical characteristic attributed to men that identify as ‘gay’. This term refers to the homophobic idea that all men identifying as ‘gay’ are effeminate.

²⁸ This supposition is a play on Freud’s argument on fetishism; it demonstrates the analogy between the fetish and the ‘gay’ stereotype: “We can now see what the fetish achieves and what it is that maintains it. It remains a token of triumph over the threat of castration and a protection against it,” (1927: 154)

V

The Divided Attitude of the Homophobe

We may probably take it as generally being true that what occurs in all these cases is a psychical *split*. Two psychical attitudes have been formed instead of a single one - one, the normal one, which takes account of reality, and another which under the influence of the instincts detaches the ego from reality. The two exist alongside of each other.

Sigmund Freud ([1938] 1940: 202)

Reducing the homophobe's attitude towards homosexuality as mere bigotry and hostility towards men identifying as 'gay' could prove highly problematic and naively mistaken. No doubt the homophobe's sentiments and behaviour towards men identifying as 'gay' is an important dimension of homophobia to consider. However, what is also very important to keep in mind is the divided attitude of the homophobe towards the possibility of his own variance in relation the hetero-norm. Much like the fetishist, the homophobe's anxiety is a result of the possibility of being or becoming 'at variance'. Fetishism and homophobia share a *modus operandi* – namely a divided attitude towards a piece of reality. The homophobe's divided attitude towards his own possible variance is operationally equivalent to the fetishist's divided attitude towards the castration of the woman perceived through the lenses of childhood sexual theories.

Fetishism and homophobia are linked to each other in several respects. Both cases involve a process of 'splitting'. Extending Freud's theorisations on the process of splitting to the case of homophobia has provided a basis for the investigation of homophobic sentiments and behaviour. Freud argues that fetishism is by no means an isolated case when it comes to 'splitting': "It must not be thought that fetishism presents an exceptional case as regards a splitting of the ego; it is merely a particularly favourable subject for studying the question" ([1938] 1940: 203). Fetishism has proved to be a 'favourable subject' for the present study considering the process of 'splitting', specifically in elucidating the operation or function of homophobia. Both fetishism and homophobia are characterised by two attitudinal currents

directed at a particular idea. The homophobe, as a result of the process of ‘splitting’, has a divided attitude towards the variance that homosexuality presents from the hetero-norm. The current chapter considers some examples of the homophobe’s divided attitude. More aptly put, this final chapter illustrates, by way of examples, how homophobia ‘works’ through a divided attitude towards variance. The divided attitude of the homophobe could give rise to two opposing treatments of homosexuality. In the case of fetishism, the divided attitude (towards the castrated state of the woman as perceived through the lens of childhood sexual theories) of the fetishist give rise to such opposing treatments of the fetish:

In other instances the divided attitude shows itself in what the fetishist does with his fetish, whether in reality or in his imagination. To point out that he reveres his fetish is not the whole story; in many cases he treats it in a way which is obviously equivalent to a representation of castration [...] Affection and hostility in the treatment of the fetish - which run parallel with the disavowal and the acknowledgement of castration - are mixed in unequal proportions in different cases, so that the one or the other is more clearly recognizable. We seem here to approach an understanding, even if a distant one, of the behaviour of the ‘*coupeur de nattes*’. In him the need to carry out the castration which he disavows has come to the front. His action contains in itself the two mutually incompatible assertions: ‘the woman has still got a penis’ and ‘my father has castrated the woman’. (Freud 1927: 157)

I quote extensively from Freud’s 1927 essay on fetishism to highlight the divided attitude to the ‘reality’ (in Freud’s terms, the ‘disavowal’ of ‘a piece of reality’) of ‘difference’. The divided attitude towards perceived difference runs parallel with a bisected treatment of an object. The current (of the divided attitude) which ‘disavows’ perceived difference runs parallel with an ‘affectionate’ treatment of the object; the other current which ‘acknowledges’ perceived difference correlates (or runs parallel) with hostility towards the object. Far from being exclusive to the operation of fetishism, a bisected attitude towards objects can be observed in the case of homophobia as well. The homophobe relates to objects in a bisected manner, based on the idea of ‘variance’. In what is to follow, I will illustrate the homophobe’s divided attitude towards the idea of homosexuality and the accompanying bisected treatment (on the part of the homophobe) of implicated objects.

In *The Universal Exception* (2006) Žižek illustrates the dual attitude toward homosexuality observed in the Yugoslav People’s Army:

From my own experience, I remember the way that the old infamous Yugoslav People's Army was homophobic in the extreme - when someone was discovered as having homosexual inclinations, he was instantly turned into a pariah, before being formally dismissed from the army - and yet, at the same time, everyday army life was excessively permeated by an atmosphere of homosexual innuendo. For instance, while soldiers were standing in line for their meal, a common vulgar joke was to stick a finger into the arse of the person ahead of you and then to withdraw it quickly, so that when the surprised victim turned around, he did not know who among the soldiers sharing a stupid obscene smile had done it. A predominant way of greeting a fellow soldier in my unit, instead of simply saying 'Hello!', was to say 'Smoke my prick!' ('Pusi kurac!' in Serbo-Croat); this formula was so standardized that it had completely lost any obscene connotation and was pronounced in a totally neutral way, as a pure act of politeness (Zizek 2006: 156).²⁹

Before attempting to make sense of the soldier's seemingly contradictory behaviour, I wish to briefly explore an aspect of Zizek's formulation of homophobic behaviour. Homosociality and homoeroticism seem to be conflated in Zizek's formulation. Can homosociality be equated with homoeroticism? To anyone familiar with the work of those theorists who initially made and elaborated on the distinction between homosociality and homoeroticism³⁰ the obvious answer would be 'no'; there is a distinction to be upheld. However, there may be reasons to cast doubt on a simple differentiation between the two forms of same-sex orientation. Homoeroticism is not necessarily bound up with homosociality. The relation between homosociality and homoeroticism is not one of mutual influence. Homosociality is an aim-inhibited form of homoeroticism; there seems to be a dependence of homosociality on homoeroticism.³¹ While homosociality has its object in homoerotic wishes, homoeroticism is

²⁹ Zizek further explores this duality in the soldiers' attitude towards the phenomenon of homosexuality in *Violence* (2009). He exemplifies the workings of ideology by reference to a scenario in the Yugoslav army: "Remember how the relationship with homosexuality in a soldiers' community operates? There are two clearly distinct levels: explicit homosexuality is brutally attacked, those identified as gays are ostracised, beaten up every night, and son on. However, this explicit homophobia is accompanied by an implicit web of homosexual innuendos, in-jokes and obscene practices." (2009: 145)

³⁰ In *Between Men: English literature and homosocial desire* (1985), Eve Sedgwick interrogates the relationship between homoeroticism (or homosexuality) and homosociality (1985: 1-20). Although it is clear that there exists a link between homosociality and homoeroticism, Sedgwick still maintains a conceptual distinction between the two terms. Other authors, such as Michael Flood (2008) and Nils Hammarén & Thomas Johansson (2014) all maintain the clear conceptual and real-world difference between homosociality and homoeroticism.

³¹ In 'Men, Sex, and Homosociality: How Bonds between Men Shape Their Sexual Relations with Women' (2008), Flood argues that there is a homoerotic component or dimension to homosociality (2008: 354-355). Although Flood's argument is not necessarily psychoanalytic, he does illustrate the fact that homosociality could depend on some form of homoeroticism. So, male-male social cohesion and interaction is based on some form of homoeroticism. A similar point is made by Bullitt's in the opening chapter of his biography of Woodrow Wilson

not dependent on homosociality. In the case of the soldiers in the Yugoslav army, homosociality in the form of jokes and innuendos is based on homoerotic wishes. These phenomena describe the operation of homophobia. Similarly to fetishism, homophobia is characterized by a bisected treatment of objects ('affection' and 'hostility'), correlated with a divided attitude towards a piece of reality. However, despite the functional similarities between fetishism and homophobia, the two phenomena are clearly distinct.

Fetishism and homophobia both entail a divided attitude towards reality related to a bisected treatment of certain objects. In the case of fetishism, 'disavowal' of perceived difference elicits 'affection' for the fetish; 'affirmation' of perceived difference, on the other hand, elicits 'hostility' towards the fetish. The inverse correlation-set applies to homophobia: 'repudiation' of the idea of variance is correlated with 'hostility' towards objects; 'affirmation' of the idea of variance is correlated with 'affection' for certain objects. I wish to illustrate this correlation-set operating in homophobia with the example of the Yugoslav soldiers' homophobic behaviour and sentiments.

The man considered to be 'gay' is an object of both affection and hostility. A repudiation of the idea of variance runs parallel with the hostile treatment of the man considered to be 'gay'. Once the idea of variance (associated with the man considered to be 'gay') is repudiated, the man considered 'gay' is treated in a way that can only be described as homophobic. The homophobia of the Yugoslav soldiers stems from the repudiation of the idea of variance. Yet the vulgar jokes and 'homosexual' innuendos tell a very different story (from that of repudiation of the idea of variance) regarding the homophobic soldiers' relation to homosexuality.

as illustrated in Solms's article entitled 'Extracts from the Revised Standard Edition of Freud's complete psychological works' (2018). Bullitt, through the lens of psychoanalytic theory, points out that the 'cohesive agent' of society is the sublimation of same-sex object choice between men:

Human society itself is held together by sublimated homosexual libido, for the passivity of boys towards their fathers is later transformed into a love of their fellow men, which serves society. If human bisexuality necessarily appears at times to be a heavy burden, and the source of endless difficulties, then we must not forget that without it human society could not exist at all. If men displayed nothing but aggressive activity and women nothing but passivity, the human race would have become extinct long before the dawn of historical times, because the men would all have murdered one another. It is homosexuality—although not in its manifest form but rather in its sublimations—that ensures the continuation of a community of men, and that will perhaps succeed one day in uniting all the races of humanity in one great brotherhood (Solms 2018: 51).

Alongside the current of repudiation manifesting itself in the homophobic behaviour of the soldiers, runs a current of affirmation. The soldiers affirm the idea of variance attributed to homosexuality and, in this way, they are able to construct (and engage in) vulgar jokes, homoerotically inspired greetings and other ‘homosexual’ innuendo. By way of affirmation, homoeroticist allusions make their way into the everyday lives of the soldiers. However, it is crucial to note that the soldier’s divided attitude is not necessarily directed exclusively at the man identifying as ‘gay’. The soldier’s divided attitude is directed inwards, towards himself. What moves into focus is the manner in which the soldier views himself, and the possibility of his own variance. In other words, the homophobe displays a divided attitude towards the possibility of being (or becoming) different. The homophobic soldier’s attitude towards his own possible difference is integral to the bisected treatment of men identifying as ‘gay’. So when the soldiers relate to each other with a sense of affection and to the man identifying as ‘gay’ with a sense of hostility, they are socially expressing the divided attitude they have towards the possibility of their own difference. A similarly divided and seemingly contradictory attitude of the homophobe towards homosexuality is picked up by writers of screenplays, and worked into film episodes. Although the content of films and television shows is scripted, these forms of entertainment yield some important insights into the processes at work in homophobia (i.e. the divided attitude of the homophobe).

In 2017 a film was released to the South African movie circuit, which sparked some controversy regarding the secrecy of rites of passage from boyhood to manhood. The film *Inxeba* (2017) explores the practices of male circumcision associated with Xhosa cultural tradition. The characters in the film undergoing or overseeing the initiation process of circumcision show disparate ways of relating to the idea of homosexuality. Xolani and Vija (two male characters in the roles of ‘caretakers’ of the initiates), for instance, engage in homoerotic activity several times throughout the film. Early in the film, the two characters engage in anal sex, in a country house presumed abandoned (*Inxeba* 2017). After this display of homoeroticism, Vija says to Xolani: ‘They trust you with the softies’ (*Inxeba* 2017). Vija’s statement is not yet indicative of homophobic sentiment, but alludes to the contradictory attitude towards the idea of homosexuality. Later in the film, Vija asks Xolani whether Kwanda is a ‘faggot’ and advises Xolani not to get too close to Kwanda (*Inxeba* 2017).

Vija clearly illustrates a divided attitude towards the idea of homosexuality. On the one hand, he engages in explicit homoerotic activity. On the other hand, he expresses blatantly homophobic sentiments. A further indication of Vija's divided attitude towards the idea of homosexuality is observable in another sexual encounter with Xolani. In a darkened scene, presumably taking place at night, the silhouettes of the two figures (Xolani and Vija) are posed to kiss (*Inxeba* 2017). Before they kiss, Vija aggressively refuses the gesture; instead, he motions Xolani to perform the act of *fellatio* on him (*Inxeba* 2017). For a man to 'kiss' another man seems to be understood as an act indicative of homosexuality - hence the aggressive dismissal of the gesture by Vija - whilst *fellatio* between two men is considered an act of homoeroticism without further ramifications.

Vija's relationship with Xolani is indicative of a divided attitude towards homosexuality. There is a current of repudiation which leads Vija to relate homophobically towards those considered 'gay' or 'homosexual'. Simultaneously, Vija's interactions indicate another attitudinal current towards homosexuality – namely that of affirmation, opening to explicit acts of homoeroticism. Vija's bisected treatment of certain objects corresponds to the divided attitude he has towards the possibility of his own variance. The initiates themselves also display a divided attitude towards the idea of homosexuality. Kwanda (the character considered to be 'gay') is asked by the other initiates to show his circumcised penis to them, but he is not allowed to look at their penises. One initiate in particular refuses to show his penis to Kwanda because the latter is considered to be one 'who sleeps with men'; i.e. Kwanda is not allowed to look upon the circumcised penis of the initiate in question because Kwanda is 'gay' (*Inxeba* 2017). Kwanda can be looked at but is not allowed to 'look upon' the genitalia of other initiates. Again the divided attitude towards the idea of homosexuality is evident. Hostility towards the man identifying as 'gay' emerges in accordance with repudiation of the idea of variance; homoeroticism (in its explicit or implicit expressions) is permissible to the homophobe as a matter of the affirmation of their own possible variance. The very same divided attitude, and correlative bisected treatment of certain objects, can be observed in other on-screen scenes.

In the television series *Sex Education* (2018), homophobia is a prominent theme. Throughout the series, Adam is portrayed as a typical homophobe (*Sex Education* 2018). Adam's main target is a young man identifying as 'gay' (Eric) (*Sex Education* 2018). Adam's attitude towards Eric is expressed in severe bullying. However, in the last episode of the first season, Adam and Eric are forced by the school to clean up a storage room as punishment for

transgressions (*Sex Education* 2018). In this particular scene, the two young men engage in a fight and end up on top of one another (*Sex Education* 2018). After spitting in each other's faces, Adam kisses Eric and the engagement continues until Adam performs *fellatio* on Eric (*Sex Education* 2018). After the sexual act comes to a close, Adam threatens Eric; Adam ensures that Eric will not mention the sexual encounter between them to anyone (*Sex Education* 2018). The character who is the object of homophobic (hostile) treatment becomes the object of sexual engagement. Adam clearly has a divided attitude towards the idea of homosexuality. The repudiation of the idea of variance would explain his homophobic behaviour towards Eric; the co-existing current of affirmation results in Adam's homoerotic activity. It is through the divided attitude of the homophobe towards the idea of homosexuality that *both* homophobia and (implicit or explicit) homoeroticism can co-exist without contradiction. The relationship between Adam and Eric attests to another important characteristic of homophobia and its constitutive divided attitude: the relationship between Adam and Eric is structured by Adam's consistent oscillation between an attitude of repudiation and affirmation of the idea of variance in a given situation.

Freud illustrates the oscillation of a male patient between an attitude of repudiation of his father's death and an affirmation of the fact (1927: 156). Similarly, Adam oscillates between two currents, illustrating the point that the divided attitude of the homophobe is not necessarily indicative of two mutually independent attitudinal currents. Both currents making up the divided attitude of the homophobe are present in "every situation in life" (Freud *ibid.*). Correspondingly, a homophobe can rapidly shift between hostile, homophobic behaviour towards a certain object and homoeroticism.

In all the cases of homophobia considered in this chapter, the simultaneous affirmation and repudiation of the idea of variance takes place in the social sphere. Both affirmation and repudiation occur simultaneously in the homophobe as an individual-psychological response to the idea of variance. In the case of the homophobe, repudiation takes place in the social arena resulting in the construction of the 'gay' stereotype as a 'token of triumph' over the possibility of being or becoming different.

VI

Conclusion

Why homophobia? Some argue that homosexuality and homosexuals disrupt the sexual and gender order supposedly established by natural law or by God. Particularly feared and condemned are homosexuals whose behavior seems to be atypical; effeminacy in homosexual men [...] [is] particularly feared and disliked.

Vern L. Bullough ([2004] 2015: 1)

The male homophobe's construction of a 'gay' stereotype, as a sign of victory over the possibility of being (or becoming) different, should by no means be considered a phenomenon exclusive to men identifying as 'straight'. Men identifying as 'gay' can equally harbour homophobic sentiments directed at the idea of their own variance. The most perplexing instances of homophobia can be found in instances of 'internalised homophobia'. According to certain sociological and psychological accounts, men identifying as 'gay' can also be homophobic in the sense that they have 'internalised' prejudices, sentiments and cultural attitudes towards homosexuality (Moss 2002: 22-23). The phenomenon of 'internalised homophobia', according to Moss, "begins [early] with a feeling that you are different, and that this difference is bad and must be kept a secret" (2002: 27). 'Internalised homophobia' is described as a phenomenon combining cultural or social prejudices towards homosexuality on the one hand, and a person's 'feeling' of being different, on the other. There are, however, two problems associated with the sociological and social-psychological accounts of 'internalised homophobia'.

The first problem with sociological and social-psychological accounts of 'internalised homophobia' is related to the naming of the phenomenon. To what extent can it be said that homophobia is 'internalised'? Is it as simple as saying that social/cultural prejudices are taken in by the individual and result in homophobia? Homophobia does not necessarily emerge as a result of the internalisation of prejudices or stereotypes about men identifying as 'gay'. Homophobia does not come from 'outside' the homophobe identifying as 'gay'. The second problem with sociological and social-psychological accounts of 'internalised homophobia' is

closely related to the first problem. The term ‘internalised homophobia’ is premised on the assumption that the individual is a passive recipient of social/cultural prejudices, stereotypes and sentiments. But the male homophobe does not passively absorb prejudices and stereotypes. He is, in fact, an active participant in the construction of ‘gay’ stereotypes. At most, it could be argued that homophobia emerges and operates in relation to social processes; homophobia is the result of a complex interplay between individual psychology and social environment. Confronted in the social arena with the possibility of difference, the homophobe defends himself against any possibility of becoming different by stereotyping anyone identifying as ‘gay’. Thus homophobia is not internalised but rather emanates from the homophobe’s protection against the idea of variance in relation to the social environment. To talk about ‘internalised homophobia’ is to misunderstand the emergence, maintenance and functioning of homophobia in men. If homophobia is to be considered not simply as the result of internalising social/cultural prejudices, stereotypes and sentiments, how otherwise would it be possible to explain cases of homophobia in men identifying as ‘gay’? The concept of repudiation provides some clues to addressing this question. Repudiation remains an unstable concept in Freudian psychoanalytic theory. However, it is instructive to consider the differentiations and specifications in the formation of this concept. The ‘specialised’ conception of repudiation is that of a ‘conscious judgment of condemnation’. Interrogating the relation between repression and repudiation, it becomes clear that the ‘specialised’ conception of repudiation is distinct from that of repression. Repression does not pertain to ideas; repudiation, in the ‘specialised’ sense of the term, does pertain to ideas. Repudiation is similar to disavowal, however repudiation can take place in a social setting. It is important to note that repudiation is not the only attitudinal current attributed to homophobia. Homophobia displays two co-existing contradictory currents.

Thus, homophobia is not a phenomenon that obeys the rules of coherence and consistency. There is a disparity between the observable expressions of homophobia and explanations seeking to systematically conceptualise homophobia. Guibert’s portrayal of Djanlouka’s homophobia in *Le Protocole* shows it to be divided, displaying both repudiation and affirmation of the idea of variance. This divided attitude is redoubled in the ‘gay’ stereotype - a self-defeating ‘triumph’ over the possibility of being or becoming different. It is self-defeating because the attribute from which the homophobe tries to protect himself is simultaneously affirmed.

The conception of homophobia espoused in this dissertation allows for an explanation of various cases of homophobia not easily accounted for by exclusively social or exclusively individual-psychological accounts. One question flagged earlier on (see chapter IV) remains as yet unaddressed: is homophobia a ‘legitimate’ phobia? The answer to this last question is both ‘yes’ and ‘no’. Homophobia as a ‘legitimate’ phobia becomes a distinct possibility with Freudian psychoanalytic theory. However, homophobia (considered through the lens of Freudian psychoanalytic theory) is not ‘legitimate’ to the extent that it does not necessarily have distinct traits that could place the phenomenon in the same category as other phobias categorised in the DSM and other clinical-diagnostic categorisations. In fact, a categorisation of the male homophobe (as he is portrayed in this dissertation) would prove theoretically indefensible.

This dissertation has presented arguments pointing out that the homophobe is not some distinct subcategory of humanity. Homophobia does not refer to a set of unique traits that can be ascribed to a particular kind of person. Homophobia is not a ‘mental illness’ (or anything akin to it) and the homophobe is not a ‘patient’. Psychologists, sociologists and theorists seeking to establish homophobia as a distinct human category (or ‘species’) are preserving a longstanding tradition of ‘making up people’ (in the words of Hacking).

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