

of 1932 been the object of five different court proceedings for his "immoral" conduct. Hitler had resolved to rid himself of his chief of staff, all the more as the Social Democratic newspaper *Münchner Post* had published letters that established Röhm's homosexuality beyond doubt. Also, opponents of Röhm within the Nazi ranks and the psychiatrist Oswald Bumke had written to Hitler denouncing the SA leader and the homosexuals in his entourage as a corrupting example for the youth of Germany. One opponent went so far as to say that even intellectuals could not understand how it was that so many homosexuals occupied leadership positions in the Nazi Party. Röhm for his part proudly asserted that the homoerotic, male-bonding element within the Nazi paramilitary units had given them the crucial edge in the struggle with the Reichsbanner and the Communists.

After the accession of the National Socialists to power in March 1933, Röhm remained in Hitler's good graces, but as part of a compromise with the Reichswehr leadership, whose support he needed to become Führer. Hitler allowed Göring and Himmler to murder Röhm together with dozens of loyal SA officers on the night of June 30–July 1, 1934—the "Night of the Long Knives." It was later said, somewhat dubiously, that with Röhm the last socialist in the Nazi Party died, but so perished the quixotic hopes of homosexuals such as Hans Blüher within the right-wing, pro-Nazi groups that Hitler's rule would mean greater toleration. The regime hypocritically used Röhm's sexual life as a pretext for claiming that it was "protecting German youth from corruption" by liquidating Röhm and his clique, but a newspaper in Kassel created a scandal by publishing stories to the effect that the truth had long been known to Hitler and his chief associates.

See also *Fascist Perversion, Myth of*.

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## ROLE

In social science usage, the concept of role contrasts with that of self (or identity). In dramaturgical sociology, as on theatre stages, an actor plays many roles over the course of a career, or even on a single night. Some actors always play the same kind of character. Some are swallowed up in one role, while others have extensive repertoires of different types and do not live onstage roles when they are offstage. Similarly, "homosexual roles" are enacted in appropriate settings by persons who play other roles at other times or places. As important as affirming homosexuality may be to some individuals, or as recognizing homosexuals may be in some cultures, no one is onstage as "a homosexual" and nothing but "a homosexual" all the time.

*Theoretical Considerations.* In the basic social science introduction to the concept, Ralph Linton (1936) defined status as "a collection of rights and duties," and role as dynamic status: how rights and duties are realized in interaction. Each person in a society has more than one status, and therefore plays multiple roles. Moreover, a particular status involves, not a single role, but an array of associated roles, e.g., the "teacher role" in relation to students is not the same as the "teacher role" to administrators (or to the Parent-Teachers Association, etc.). There are overlapping simultaneous statuses so that different roles may be played even within a single setting. For instance, in a women-only bar it may not matter that one is a lesbian lawyer. Entry depends upon being a woman and of legal age. If there is a raid on the bar, the attorney role may be activated. Responding to a sexual proposition makes sexual status salient. Within this interaction, being a mother,

daughter, wife—all roles that she plays in other times and places—may not matter, although these outside statuses may affect where or whether the sexual proposition is accepted, if one of the perceived requirements of the mother, daughter, or wife role is not to bring sexual partners home. Obligations to another person not present may impinge on interaction, and may do so whether or not the woman explicitly defines herself as, say, "wife" (to herself, to others present, or to those with whom she resides).

Analysis of shifting, overlapping, and multiple simultaneous status enactment in roles easily becomes very complex. Sometimes, it seems that an abstract "situation" determines (rather than merely limits) statuses; at other times it seems that role theorists believe that any sort of role can be presented (that is, that there are no constraints of plausibility on acting in public). Phenomenological analysis can make the "local accomplishment" of even the simplest communication seem miraculous. Perhaps even more confusingly, as Goodenough noted, use of the term "role" often drifts from this definition of enacted rights and obligations to any and all kinds of statements about social categories, selves, and "personality structures." In the case of "homosexual role," discussion blithely posits psychological entities detached from any interaction, although to be meaningful "role" must be a relational term, involving relation to actors of other roles and/or to an audience. Enacting a role plausibly does not require full commitment to a role or total self-identification with it. Indeed, an individual's "role distance" may facilitate plausible performance, whereas totally embracing a role may land a person in the realm of psychopathology (Goffman). And role strain is "normal: in general the individual's total role obligations are over-demanding" as well as incompatible (Goode).

*Homosexual Aspects.* In an often cited paper which consolidates Anglo-American stereotypes into a "theoretical

construct," McIntosh (1968) posited a dichotomous homosexual/heterosexual categorization apart from any interaction and, indeed, based on no empirical data. McIntosh's "homosexual role" lacks any of the subtle multiplicities of situated meanings of role as used by classical role theorists (none of whose writings she cited). It is a functionalist, not an interactionist construct, in effect a bogeyman to scare boys away from homosexuality. What those enacting a (the?) heterosexual role expect from those playing "the homosexual role," according to McIntosh, is exhibition of (1) effeminacy, (2) more or less exclusive homosexual feelings and behavior, (3) attraction to and (4) attempted seduction of all young men, or, perhaps all men ("sexuality will play a part of some kind in all his relations with other men"). Where, when, or whether the person playing McIntosh's version of "the homosexual role" has a right to act effeminately and seduce men and/or boys is matter she does not discuss. Implicitly, this un-male "role" was enacted to/for a heterosexual male other. In some other cultures (especially Polynesian ones) in which there is a societal conception of gender-crossing homosexuality, blatant specimens of failed masculine socialization could be tolerated, because such persons provided vivid warnings of what boys must avoid becoming.

Although, as Whitam noted, McIntosh's treatment "violates the prevailing definition and conventional usage of this concept in sociology," and cannot "explain homosexuality," there are homosexual roles to analyze apart from the monster of the heterosexual imagination conjured up by McIntosh. Within homosexual interactions and relationships, complementary roles exist, e.g., mentor/initiate or sodomite/catamite occur where homosexuality is organized by age; hustler/trick or patron/protégé in class societies, especially where there are "homosexual occupations" such as dancing boys; trade/queer, hombre/maricón (in Latin America), or brave/berdache (among the

North American Indians) where homosexuality is organized by gender distinctiveness. Each of these pairs has been listed in insertor/insertee order, although sexual behavior is only one aspect of these roles. A person may play one or more of these roles without possessing a homosexual identity, any strong commitment to or preference for homosexuality. Indeed, some of the roles may not require even feigned homosexual desire.

How to perform the sexual and other rights and obligations of these roles is learned. One does not learn how to be a homosexual any more than one learns how to be a husband or a wife directly in primary socialization with one's natal family. One may learn *about* such roles, that is, learn the cultural script for each. Boys may learn about "the male role" without male role models, just as they may learn about **queers** without seeing any. Similarly, girls may hear about **dykes**. Learning about a "homosexual role" of the sort McIntosh portrayed may motivate suppressing homosexual desires, and may also motivate acting out exaggerated cross-gender behavior before realizing that such behavior is not a necessary attribute of homosexuality within a homosexual **subculture**. Some observers have discerned a transient effeminate stage in the uninitiated boy's or man's process of distinguishing societal expectations of effeminacy from actual subcultural expectations. Similarly, a **butch** phase may have made a woman's sexual interest in other women visible. Such a traditional phase of cross-gender role exaggeration may be attenuated or altogether lacking for those who, growing up with homosexual desires, are able to perceive a lesbian or gay role for themselves unmarked by cross-gender behavior and demeanor. More recently, a phase of hypermasculinity ("**macho**") has been central to socialization into some gay male worlds.

Prior to contact with other gay or lesbian people or groupings, gender exaggeration (toward either extreme of the

gender continuum) may be the only conceivable way to signal desired sexual variance. Generally, anticipatory socialization is incomplete and either ambiguous or stereotyped. Moreover, anticipatory socialization "helps only to the extent it is accurate. . . . If it is not accurate, it may actually impede adjustment, for performing the acquired role will necessitate unlearning as well as further learning" (Thornton and Nardi). The gender-crossing idiom for recognizing homosexuals, is learned in early socialization in many societies (including the United States) in which age-grading is not central to organizing homosexual relations.

"Learning about" may heavily condition initial attempts to do what is expected of a sexual partner (husband, wife, or homosexual), but there is also secondary socialization onstage in the role, as well as intra-psychic rehearsal for playing it. Gender roles (how to act male or female) are part of primary socialization in Anglo-Saxon North America, but the roles enacted in heterosexual marriage, as well as those enacted in gay subcultures are part of later learning/socialization. Breaking the externally imposed notion that homosexuality requires having to live out society's stereotypes of what "a homosexual" are is a key part of secondary socialization within gay and lesbian subcultures. Nonetheless, neophytes tend to play their preconceptions of a role rigidly, or even ritualistically (Goffman). Within gay or lesbian communities or networks, most people discard the "queer" or "dyke" role (at least as conceived in the dominant society) and learn what others involved in homosexual scenarios expect. Such expectations may be only slightly conditioned by societal stereotypes, although residues of such images may be eroticized, or otherwise unconsciously maintained.

In all cultures, whatever the dominant conception or valuation of homosexuality, a merger of self and role is not inevitably achieved. Not only is there homosexuality outside subcultures, and

behavior contrary to societal expectations, but there are individual conceptions of all roles in all societies. The process of role acquisition is not mere training in automaton-like replication of fixed roles. Human beings create meaning even when they are trying to follow a social script exactly. Conceptions of what homosexual roles require vary within as well as among societies.

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### ROLFE, FREDERICK WILLIAM ("BARON CORVO"; 1860-1913)

English adventurer, novelist, and historian. Born in London as the son of a dissenting piano manufacturer, he left school at 15, then studied briefly at Oxford. He served as a tutor and made ends meet as a poorly paid hack writer. He found a number of patrons during his career, but his lifelong attempt to convince the Catholic Church—to which he had become a convert—that he had a vocation for the priesthood developed (or rather accented) a pathological state of mind that bordered on paranoia, and inevitably led to his break with it.

In 1890 he received from Caroline, the Duchess of Sforza-Cesarini, the title of Baron Corvo, and she regarded him as her adopted grandson. While working for the firm of G. W. Wilson & Co. in

London in 1893, he invented underwater photography, but with no financial gain. To the *Yellow Book* he contributed six "Stories Toto Told Me" (1898); these legends of the saints, with 26 additional ones, were printed as *In His Own Image* (1901). A work written on commission for the money, the *Chronicles of the House of Borgia* (1901), displays his curious fund of knowledge, vivid but undisciplined imagination, and considerable prose talent. His self-deluded, self-justifying, spiritual dreams of a rejected convert who became the noblest of popes furnished the material for his best work of fiction, *Hadrian the Seventh* (1904), to which he added malicious sketches of his supposed enemies. The central character, Hadrian, though endowed with Rolfe's identity, still blurs the boundaries between autobiography, while the secondary characters, all puppets manipulated as part of the drama of Hadrian, stem directly from Rolfe's experience. Although the work is remarkable for its passages of wit and erudition, it spoils its effect by yielding to anti-socialist melodrama. The last years of his life were spent as a parasite in Venice. An idealized chronicle of the period from December 1908 to July 1909, with parting shots at his enemies, is contained in *The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole*, edited by A. J. A. Symons in 1934. To this subject matter Rolfe added a tender account of homosexual love, disguised as the hero Nicholas Crabbe's love for Zilda, a girl who lived and dressed as the boy Zildo.

Homosexuality, and more particularly pederasty, as subjects for literature, were much in Rolfe's mind while he was writing this work. Sometime in 1909 he had sent to the British pederast John Gambriel Nicholson a "specimen" of some ten thousand words, an experiment in formulating homosexual experiences as though they were his own. In September of the same year he began writing to an English visitor to Italy, Charles Masson Fox, a series of letters that may well be the most painful and the most erotic homosexual