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A Sense of Belonging:

Pre-liberation Space, Symbolics, and Leadership in Gay Montreal

Ross Higgins
Department of Anthropology, McGill University
October 1997

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This is a study of collective identity formation among Montreal gay men before 1970. Using a theoretical framework based on schema theory and discourse analysis, I show that the success of the gay movement after that date was founded on the efforts of men who identified as gay in the decades before gay liberation. In their daily lives, their involvement with gay friendship groups, and their participation in gay social life in the clandestine world of bars and other venues of gay sociability, these men created a complex web of knowledge in gay-specific schemata and discourse forms that provided the basis for a gay rhetoric to counter the social taboo on homosexuality. Using data from thirty life history interviews, I have documented in detail the men's struggle to come to terms with their difference, the influence on them of family, peer groups and authoritative discourses condemning homosexuality, the ways in which they found and entered the gay world, and the processes of learning its social conventions. I have outlined the continuous growth of the institutional foundations of the gay world, especially bars, focusing on the similarities and differences between Francophones and Anglophones, as well as those between working-class and middle-class gays in Montreal. I detail the social control exerted by police over gay men's lives and the growth of symbolic forms, including language and shared discursive themes, which the new gay spaces made possible and through which the collectivity was made manifest. Finally, I show that the increasing unwillingness of ordinary gay men to accept their ostracism led to the growth of a gay culture of resistance based on these shared schemata. The leadership of individual gay men in private and in public opened the way for the social, cultural and political transformations of the social organization of homosexuality after 1970.

Résumé

Cette thèse porte sur la formation d'une identité collective des hommes gais de Montréal avant 1970. En utilisant un cadre théorique fondé sur la théorie des schémas cognitifs et l'analyse du discours, je démontre que la réussite du mouvement gai qui a suivi cette période s'est faite à partir des efforts des hommes qui s'identifiaient comme gais dans les décennies précédentes. Dans leur vie quotidienne, à travers leur participation à des cercles d'amis gais, et à travers la vie sociale du milieu clandestin des bars et d'autres lieux de sociabilité gaie, ces hommes ont créé une série de schémas et des formes discursives spécifiquement gais, jetant ainsi les bases d'une rhétorique gaie qui contestait le tabou sur l'homosexualité. M'appuyant sur trente histoires de vie, je présente en détail les luttes de ces hommes pour accepter leur différence, l'influence sur eux des familles, des groupes de pairs et des discours d'autorité qui condamnaient l'homosexualité. J'explore les différentes façons qui leur ont permis de repérer et d'entrer dans le monde gai et je souligne les processus d'apprentissages des conventions sociales spécifiques à ce milieu. Je trace la croissance ininterrompue de la base institutionnelle de ce monde, notamment les bars, tout en mettant l'accent sur les ressemblances et les différences entre francophones et anglophones, de même qu'entre les hommes des classes ouvrière et moyenne à Montréal. J'examine les formes de contrôle social exercé par la police sur la vie des gais et la croissance des formes symboliques, notamment le langage et les thèmes discursifs partagés, que les nouveaux espaces gais ont rendus possibles et par lesquelles la collectivité se manifestait. Je montre enfin que le refus croissant des hommes gais à tolérer l'ostracisme a donné lieu au développement d'une culture de résistance gaie sur la base de ces schémas partagés. L'exercice d'un leadership individuel, tant dans le privé qu'en public, a ouvert la voie aux transformations sociales, culturelles et politiques de l'organisation sociale de l'homosexualité après 1970.

For Conrad Reny, Bernard Courte and Mark Leslie
in memoriam

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Part I. Research Objectives, Methods and Theoretical Framework

Chapter 1. Introduction

At midnight on October 22, 1977, two thousand people occupied the corner of Ste-Catherine and Stanley Streets in downtown Montreal. The protesters were gay men and their supporters, angered by the arrest of over one hundred and forty men in a Stanley Street gay bar the night before. How was it possible for a social group which had until recently existed in almost total clandestinity to suddenly make such a dramatic appearance in public life? Media and popular reaction marked a turning point in public discourse on homosexuality. The police were subjected to a barrage of editorial condemnation, and, in December 1977, the Parti Québécois government of the province moved to make Quebec the first major jurisdiction in North America to protect the civil rights of homosexuals (Beaulieu 1983). The gay political movement, founded in Montreal only a few years earlier, cannot take all the credit for this transformation. This was not simply a legal milestone, but a symbol of a much broader change in societal attitudes. Gays had succeeded in replacing the old language of oppression with a new discourse of civil rights and self-affirmation, a revolution which had deeper roots than these few years of overt political activism.

This study looks at these deeper roots, seeking to understand how the broad changes in the social organization of homosexuality in the mid-twentieth century came about. When the gay liberation movement began in Montreal with the founding of the *Front de libération homosexuel* in the spring of 1971 (Garnau 1981), the city's gay community was already old. The political groups built on a long history of community development. The problem at the centre of this investigation is to understand how the sense of community arose. I propose a bottom-up model to explain this change. I argue that political success was the outgrowth of decades of efforts at the level of individual lives, small-scale social activities and institutional development through which gay men created their own sense of belonging to a distinct social group. In their decisions about where to live, who to spend their time with, and what to talk

about, they had opened a social space which would expand into the community that exists today. Faced with social opprobrium, the constant need for secrecy and the fear of exposure, gays were forced to consciously structure their activities around their sexual orientation, but found ways to survive and even to enjoy life. In the postwar period, which is the principal focus of this study, gay men grew increasingly unwilling to accept the treatment they received at the hands of moral, medical and judicial authority. By innumerable small steps, they moved to transform the position of homosexuals in society.

In order to investigate the process of collective identity formation among gay men, I conducted a series of life history interviews with men who participated in gay life in Montreal before 1970. In analyzing the accounts of the thirty narrators, I have looked for indications of how this non-violent social change was effected. Long before the explicitly political gay rhetoric of the gay liberation period, there are indications that by participating in the mundane activities of private lives and in the conversation and the social bonds formed in the clandestine bar world, gay men gradually built a consensus of self-affirmation that made possible the emergence in the 1970s of a visible self-aware gay community. Lacking the family basis of ethnic and racial minorities, the gay collectivity faced particular challenges in forming and maintaining collective identity and transmitting it to new generations. But by studying the discursive, symbolic, emotional and economic aspects of the lives of gay men, we can obtain useful insights into the processes of collective identity formation with implications for understanding other minorities in large-scale societies.

The sense of belonging, or membership in a community, which would eventually fuel the rise of a gay political movement and the grassroots change in societal attitudes towards homosexuals, can be traced by examining the oral narratives and the complementary documents on gay life in the period before the gay movement appeared. Though rarely did the life history narrators mention an overarching social category like "community" in their accounts, their actions through time provide evidence that they actively participated in shaping the social change which has occurred. This major change in the social arrangements surrounding homosexuality was accomplished, in large part, by gay men's skills in mobilizing discourse. Even when it was not political, the gay rhetoric that they produced successfully undermined the basis for the previous ostracism and repression to which homosexuals had been subject, and emboldened younger men to stop keeping their sexuality secret.

The narrators who participated in this study were all men¹ who accepted a "gay identity." I am not undertaking to study homosexuality in general, since same-gender sexual practices occur among many more men than those who identify as gay. My concern is only with those who did make their sexual orientation to other men a central or defining characteristic of their lives. Concretely, this means that they acted in such a way that social contact other gay men was an important part of their existence. In doing so, I argue, they participated actively in the emergence of a collective gay identity. With their help, I have documented the history of the period and used this data to build a model to explain how this change occurred.

This research has three specific aims: (1) to develop a theoretical model based on schema theory and discourse analysis for understanding the process through which an openly gay community emerged; (2) to illustrate how the model can be used to clarify one particular case of collective identity formation, and, at the same time, to record and preserve the lived experience of gay men in Montreal prior to gay liberation; (3) to outline a broad framework for the ethnographic description and analysis of ongoing processes of collective identity in urban gay communities in Western societies which can serve as a basis for comparison with other cities and with other types of collectivities.

(1) *The Schema/Discourse Model*: The theory which I have found most helpful in understanding the process of collective identity formation rests on two basic conceptual tools. From cognitive anthropology, I have adopted the concept of *schema* (or knowledge structure, plural *schemata*) and the idea that these have "motivational force." From discourse theory, I have taken the concept of *genre* (the sequential patterning or form of utterances) and the understanding that language is used to express the situated points of view of social groups on particular topics, and that the ongoing contention between different groups in discourse is an important means for effecting social change.

A *schema* is a set of interrelated concepts, a cognitive structure that is constantly updated by new information. Situated at a level between that of simple concepts and the all-

¹ The changes in lesbian identity in Montreal have been discussed by Chamberland (1996). Though linked by the term "homosexuality," the two groups in fact shared few social or cultural bonds, and require quite different types of analysis.

encompassing concept of culture, schema theory provides a flexible tool for modelling specific patterns of knowledge, their social diffusion and their role in motivating action.

The schema of the self or of individual identity, for example, can be used to integrate the many details obtained from the narrators on how they discovered and came to terms with their "gay identities." But the schemata of selfhood do not simply store information. Cultures present people with a complex array of schemata of the individual self, both positive and negative. The "motivational force" of schemata, stressed in a recent collection by cognitive anthropologists (D'Andrade and Strauss 1992), relies on the desire of the individual to conform to these ethical precepts, to "live up to" the expectations of a group with which she or he has affective links. Gay men tend to encounter a marked contradiction between the expectation that they will marry and have a family, condemnation of their sexual desire, and the requirement that an individual will be honest and true to his inner nature. The negative schemata of gay identity which the young gay man has, to varying extents, acquired in childhood must be replaced, in the process known as "coming out," with a new, positive, sense of self, nurtured in social and emotional contact with others with whom he identifies.

At the collective level as well, cultural schemata of communal selves motivated and shaped the emergence of a collective identity or community. Like the schema of individual identity, the notion of "community" used here combines two interconnected meanings of the term. The first is the common-sense factual idea of community as physical space, or its metaphoric extension to urban conditions, in which residents who share social identities based on race or ethnicity regard themselves as inhabiting a shared metaphoric space, manifested in shared facilities and communications media. The second sense recognizes that the usage of "community" is never neutral, never free of ideological import. "Community" is an ideal to strive for; it is equally a schema with motivational force.

Understanding the process that led to the collective "coming out" of North American gays² requires a theory that can at once account for individual motivation and links it to the collective level, where concepts of civil rights and equality from liberal political discourse provide motives for collective action. Among the complex web of cultural messages, laden with ethical imperatives, changing views of selfhood and citizenship in the early modern

² This communal "coming out" is conventionally symbolized by the Stonewall Riots of June 1969, in New York City (Teal 1971). This marked the beginning of the Gay Liberation Movement, which has expanded and diversified into the gay movement of today.

Europe (Foucault 1983) were essential preconditions for the emergence of individual gay identity as a new kind of self. They included aspects which encouraged individuals to participate in group life, incorporating older cultural values, as Dumont (1985) points out in tracing the Christian imperative at work in liberal citizens' desire to "make the world a better place." The change has occurred in part because members of the ostracized group have been able to mobilize values drawn from the culture which promote personal honesty and being true to the individual self as well as the political theme of minority rights. Negative judgements about homosexuals in religious, legal and psychiatric discourse clearly contradicted societal beliefs in universal citizenship and equality before the law. Under hegemonic liberal political philosophy, the argument for civil rights for the gay minority became a natural recourse, especially in the United States following several decades of political discourse on the rights of ethnic and racial minorities³ and the upsurge of feminism in the 1960s.

In addition to these schemata of individual and collective identity, schema theory provides a convenient framework for organizing and understanding the other kinds of knowledge acquired through participation in gay social and cultural life. For gay men, the sharing of knowledge marks a definite social boundary, since few non-gays (other than members of the underworld or the police force) were likely to acquire detailed knowledge of this tabooed world, and thus establishes means of distinguishing insiders from outsiders. Among gay men, sharing practical and theoretical knowledge generated a sense of common cause and fellow-feeling which motivated the process of collective identity formation. Gay men joined together in creating, maintaining and transmitting the shared schemata characteristic of gay life. These shared schemata contained knowledge both theoretical and practical, as well as the specific attitudes of the gay point of view on the topics that interested them. They served to orient the lives of those who considered themselves "members" of the gay world. Study of the practices of sharing schemata thus provides an analytical tool which makes it possible to link individual and collective identities and to map the boundaries of the community.

Participation in insider conversation means more than simply sharing schemata that provide its subject matter or content. It also means sharing the formal schemata of discourse, the specific genre forms and the range of themes and attitudes expressed from a gay point of view that characterize discourse within the community. While most of the patterns of discourse used

³ Harry Hay and other founders of the "homophile movement" (forerunner of Gay Liberation) in Los Angeles in 1950 argued that homosexuals constituted a social minority (Timmons 1990:136).

by gays are shared with the wider society in which they live, some genres are particular to the gay world. Like the content schemata, use of or mastery of the discourse forms that were specifically gay was a way of symbolizing membership. Another aspect of discourse theory which I use deals with the reaction of gays to stereotyping in the media or in conversations with outsiders. The ridicule to which they were subjected, and the misinformation about homosexuals which was carried in such discourse heightened their sense of separation from society, putting them in what I call the "gay reader position." This discourse effect provided further motivation for gay men to counter the lies and break the secrecy which surrounded their existence.

In order to understand how gay men reshaped discourse on the theme of homosexuality and overthrew the monopoly of negative images in authoritative and popular discourse requires a general theoretical framework of the operation of discourse in the power relations of society. The conflicting rhetoric on social issues that characterizes large-scale modern societies has been persuasively described by Bakhtin (1981) as an unstable array of social "voices" which correspond to a wide range of identity attributes, ranging from age group to occupation to religious affiliation, and so on. This multi-voiced or "heteroglossic" discourse is the arena for playing out the non-violent struggles between social groups, whether at the interpersonal or small group level that I call the "micropolitics of discourse" or at the societal level where economic and social power are required for a "voice" to be heard and to be judged credible by social interlocutors.

Discourse analysis offers an extremely valuable tool in constructing the ethnography of a group which has been silent for most of its history. Discursively informed ethnography provides an approach that allows the ethnographer to systematically incorporate data from personal interviews with information from a wide range of popular media, official documents and other sources. The sharp differences in ideological stances on the theme of homosexuality identify the different social voices and the points of view that produce and receive them. The critical use of documentary sources opens access to past conditions, attitudes and events to supplement the memories recounted in interviews. By analysing both documents such as news stories and the accounts of life history narrators, the schematic structures underlying the discourse can be identified, and the patterns of sharing schemata provide clues to the processes of collective identity.

(2) *Gay Life in Montreal*: When the oldest participants in this study came out in Toronto in the 1920s, and when they came to Montreal a few years later, they entered pre-existing social worlds centring on homosexuality. Late nineteenth-century news reports provide strong evidence that there were already social groups and gathering places that were recognizably “gay” in Montreal by the 1880s.⁴ Thus this is not a story of origins, but of continued development for a group whose past will probably never be fully known, lost in the hidden reaches of Western history. The initial inspiration for this project was the movement-inspired gay history movement of the late 1970s (Roscoe 1992). Like women’s history before it, the aim was to recover, by astute use of disparate sources, a history that had always been suppressed, distorted and ignored. But rather than simply recover a mass of information on this lost past for Montreal, the material generated an important question, from an anthropological viewpoint, on the processes of collective identity formation. In pursuing the question of how a sense of community emerged among Montreal gay men, I have been fortunate in this study to be able to make use of the work of several previous scholars who studied gay life in Quebec. In this section I will outline three ethnographic and one historical study on which I have drawn.⁵

The most outstanding ethnographic source for this study is Maurice Leznoff’s (1954) master’s thesis, “The Homosexual in Urban Society,” the first full-scale sociological inquiry

⁴ Though the word “gay” is too recent to have been known at the time, I will occasionally use it in such contexts in order to stress the continuity between such early glimpses of collective life and the present-day community. It is not known what late nineteenth century Montreal homosexuals called themselves, or if they had a specific self-designation at all. The history of the word “gay” is somewhat unclear. Courouve (1985:111-112) cites an overtly sexual usage of the word in a late sixteenth century French poem (in which the spelling “gay” is used) in a reference to the poet’s “mignon” (favourite). Rodgers (1972:93) gives the same origin, but it is unclear how this relates to eighteenth and nineteenth-century British usages like “gay blade” (libertine) or “gay girl” (whore). Dynes (1985:58) traces the word’s history in English, noting that its first appearance in print was the entry “geycat” (“a homosexual boy”) in Ersine’s (1933) *Dictionary of Underworld and Prison Slang*. It is thought to have become common as a self-designation among American homosexuals by the 1920s, and its currency in 1950s Montreal is clearly indicated by Leznoff (1954). See below (p. 87) for its adoption by gay liberation activists in the 1970s.

⁵ A number of other scholarly studies and general writings on homosexuality are available as well. Using an anthropological framework, Ménard (1983, 1985) explored the symbolic dimensions of homosexual identity as analogous to the *berdache* as a homosexual-like role in Native American societies. He discusses the choice of this term for the title of a magazine published by Montreal’s most important gay political group, the *Association pour les droits des gai(e)s du Québec*. Founded in 1976, the association published several newsletters before launching a magazine called *Le Berdache* in 1979. Ménard suggests that it may offer a fruitful approach to understanding the trickster-like position of homosexuals in Québécois culture. A sociology master’s thesis by Dufour (1987) discusses identity formation on the basis of two life histories. Non-ethnographic scholarly work on homosexuality in Quebec includes several psychology theses, Martineau’s (1985) reading of the portrayal of homosexuals in two popular television series in Quebec, and research on literature (Denance [1987], Marullo [1974], Camiré [1986]), film (Waugh [1980]), legal philosophy (Dionne 1983), and religion (Giroux [1975]). Additional sources for Montreal gay history include Higgins (1983, 1984b, 1985c), and Sylvestre (1979). For general Canadian gay history, Kinsman’s (1987, rev. ed. 1996) book is especially valuable because it contains summaries of research published in gay and other periodicals, while Stone (1990) presents articles on a range of issues in Canadian lesbian scholarship.

into the social patterns of urban gay males in North America. The thesis provides a unique source for gay life in Montreal from more than forty years ago, especially since Leznoff supports his arguments with extensive quotes from his interviews. These provide exceedingly rare information on gay men's views on a wide range of questions concerning gay life at the time.⁶ The multifaceted, detailed coverage which Leznoff presents of his informants' lives and opinions show his informants as having a keen and perceptive interest in their lives and the gay experience. My study is intended to continue the work he began, adding a historical dimension and focusing on the specificity of Montreal which Leznoff omitted because he hid the city's identity behind a pseudonym. In particular, I make use of his chief finding of the central role of the friendship group in gay society. Friends played a key role in individual identity, and sharing knowledge and stories or other forms of discourse was an important part of their interaction.

In the second sociological study of gay life in Montreal, Sawchuck (1973, 1974) uses a symbolic interactionist framework to examine "influence of the informal subculture on the process of becoming deviant," and "to present the homosexual's conception of his social situation as he sees and understands it." He conducted his study in the years immediately following 1970, the end of the period studied here. Of greatest relevance to the aims of my research is Sawchuck's discussion of the socialization process undergone by gay world entrants in interaction with established members. After "coming out," the newcomer begins a learning process which includes the acquisition of a "homosexual ideology," or "systems of beliefs to neutralize feelings of guilt and inferiority" (1973:23). The community, he says (p. 71), "counters conventional morality" and "discounts the uninformed, prejudiced view of outsiders." This observation is close to one of the important points that I will make in this study, that the development of a positive rhetorical stance by ordinary gay men in mundane social interaction preceded and facilitated the emergence of public discourse of gay rights. However Sawchuck detracts from his purpose by presenting "the homosexual" as an abstract entity, omitting all reference to individuality and the particularity of Montreal's ethnic or class divisions. I think that the use of cognitive and discursive theory supports his view in a more satisfactory way, letting the individual narrators reflect how they came to their self-understanding and used it to organize their social lives.

⁶ Leznoff (1956) outlined the interview techniques used in his research and presented a synopsis of his findings in a second article significantly titled "The Homosexual Community" (Leznoff and Westley 1956). This became one of the most widely cited (and frequently reprinted) sources of sociological information on gay social life to appear before 1970.

The only ethnographic study by an anthropologist was Garneau's (1980) investigation of gender ideology in the adolescent labelling processes based on interviews with a small group of gay men in Quebec City. Garneau uses her informants' accounts of labelling and exclusion by their adolescent peer groups to criticize both Freud and Lévi-Strauss for their exclusive concern with children's relationships within the family.⁷ In Garneau's view, stigmatising labels from other, unrelated children can actually lead to boys growing up to be gay. Unfortunately, Garneau's preoccupation with causality leads her to look for a single determining factor, using a psychological approach which obscures rather than illuminates the complex processes that her data illustrate. Nevertheless, Garneau pioneered in using discourse analysis to understand the labelling processes for young men. Without using the term, she notes that concern with masculinity has what schema theorists would call "motivational force." Gender identity, Garneau finds, results in the exclusionary practices of both non-gay adolescents and adult male homosexuals (who re-enact the exclusions they suffered in adolescence by rejecting effeminate gays). This finding raises interesting questions in the areas of the processes of masculine identity formation and in the sociolinguistics of gay life that have yet to be answered. For my purposes, Garneau has stressed the importance of ideological influences on gay identity formation and the process of self-acceptance.

Among those who have contributed to the growing literature on the homosexuality in Quebec, only Hurteau (1991) has adopted a fully historical view in his comparison of the effectiveness of Catholic versus legal discourse in shaping popular attitudes towards homosexuals from the late nineteenth century to 1940. He traces the process of secularization of the dominant influence on the social image of the homosexual, and the development of the paradigm of "sexual orientation" within which it came to be understood. The primacy of the judicial discourse of public morality over the religious category of sin led to the eventual inclusion of this term in the Quebec Human Rights Charter in 1977, symbolizing the culmination of the secularizing trend and the success of the new gay rhetoric of self-affirmation.

The article highlighted the distinction between low socio-economic status "overt" homosexuals and their professional "covert" acquaintances.

⁷ In an earlier article, Garneau and La Berge (1978) reviewed anthropological and psychological theories of homosexuality in the light of Garneau's labelling data, and suggested the need to articulate any theory to the sexual division of labour and the social definitions of masculinity and femininity.

(3) *The Ethnography of Gay Communities*: A collectivity called the gay community now exists as a common referent in many types of political, official and conversational discourse. Gay ethnography offers one case for the study of how a community emerges when common interests are seen to go beyond the level of the friendship group. At the same time, it allows an examination of the relationship between various identity components of each individual as affiliations by class, race, gender, age, religion, language, ethnicity and sexual orientation raise contradictions that individuals must resolve. The gay "sub-culture" as a "solution to a problem" was a central tenet of symbolic interactionist deviance sociology, as Plummer (1975:134) notes, but he adds that there is a "pull" counterpart to the "push" from society that motivates people to enter the gay world. Even so, this model of the collectivity is remarkably static. The present study goes beyond the functionalist focus on the community as seen by individuals undergoing change to look at the dynamics of change on the collective level. Individuals who get involved in a community form emotional attachments with other members at the same time as they acquire the knowledge and discourse skills that symbolize their membership in it. Historically, the gay collectivity itself changed as these elements combined with the development of a gay consumer market in developing commercial institutions and with the creation of a gay rhetoric to defend them and the community in general. While the focus here is more on the symbolic than on the economic dimension of the change, I include information on the links between these two areas.

The broad similarities between gay communities throughout North American urban areas were noted by Sawchuck (1973:89), who remarks that his data illustrate "the overlapping and practically universal nature of the gay world." The characteristics of Montreal's gay community, as shown in Sawchuck's, Leznoff's (1954) or the present study, differ in specifics but conform to the general pattern described for Los Angeles by Hooker (1965) and for San Francisco by Achilles (1964) among others. In North American cities, Sawchuck notes, gay men have similar social patterns, and share a common argot, patterns of behaviour, and beliefs. Why this is so he leaves as a question for future research, and it is in an attempt to progress to a better, more general understanding of gay life that the present study is conceived. By exploring the past gay life of one particular city through the life stories of men who participated in its gay world between 1930 and 1970, I would like to move towards a more general framework for interpreting the perspectives of those who participated in changing and building a collective sense of gay identity.

The collected descriptions of the lived experiences of thirty primary narrators from a variety of backgrounds furnished data on a wide range of topics which must be considered in any thorough ethnographic study of gay life. Among these were aspects of individual lives such as influence of family attitudes, educational and religious experience, and early sexual awareness or activity on the process of self-acceptance. They also include the diverse subsequent paths the men followed as they found and entered gay society through the "coming-out" process and were socialized into its patterns and learned of its dangers. The narrators also described aspects of gay experience at the collective level, such as the use of public space and the shared discourse forms and topical areas of interest among gay men. Finally, the narrators' accounts reveal instances of individuals who played leadership roles, taking action, whether on a small private social scale or in public to address the social needs and political interests of the community.

Evidence for the existence of gay social life can be found not only in the patterns of people's lives, but also in the multiple and changing array of symbolic forms, forms of language, discourse genres, or style choices in consumer behaviour. Furthermore, the structures of gay life can be traced by looking at the institutional arrangements which accommodate it, the commercial and later political forms which have been created to meet demand from gay men. "Homosexual" (or even "sodomite") collectivities have long existed, but were not widely noted by scholars until Kinsey discovered the gay world of Chicago in the early 1940s thanks to an early informant in his sex research study (Pomeroy 1972:62-4). Homosexual behaviour was far more common than expected. Kinsey revealed that thirty-seven per cent of white American men had had homosexual experience to the point of orgasm (Kinsey et al. 1948:197). The finding stunned both the popular imagination and the scientific community. For members of the gay world, it inspired new confidence born of a sense of economic and political power in numbers (Barbara Grier, film interview, Weiss and Schiller 1984).

Lack of knowledge of the many gay institutions and large population was not surprising in a period when there had been virtually no ethnographic research on homosexuals and no mention of them in the press except when they were targeted for police action. Before 1980, the overall volume of gay ethnography, from Hirschfeld's (1990 [1908], 1920) German sociological studies of the early twentieth century (still not available in translation), to Leznoff's mid-century field study, and those of his successors, including Hooker (1956, 1961), Warren

(1974), and Sommenschein (1966, 1968), remained small. Despite the merit of their work, those envisaging research in the field today still face a major problem due to the lack of breadth and depth in the literature as a whole. There has been insufficient debate to establish central issues, requiring each researcher to map the contours of the field as a whole.

In this project, I have chosen to document in detail one city's experience with the social and cultural patternings of homosexual identity, at the same time building an interpretive and theoretical framework to facilitate future comparisons and to show how studies of gay life articulate to larger issues in Western concepts of selfhood, collective identity and community. The changes that occurred from the 1920s to 1970 were both external to the gay world (influence of the war, the Kinsey report, etc.) and internal (emergence of the exclusively gay bar as an institutional type, subsequent move to gay-managed or gay-owned gay bars, and growth of the gay political movement). It is less clear however, whether change in time can be perceived in the data concerning general group identification. Were those in the gay world of the 1930s less committed to it than those in the 1950s or the 1960s? Perhaps the latter were more numerous or more visible, but were they more attached to group life? Thus the question of the growth over time of group solidarity remains elusive and past collective action in pursuit of perceived common interests is difficult to trace because it was never documented. On the other hand, the creation of gay institutions and the reinforcement of links of solidarity which permitted them to thrive can readily be traced in text and interviews.⁸ The relationship of social class to the mobilization of cultural and political values is also elusive, though it has been possible to shed some light on the question in the Montreal context.

The study of gay life is at an early stage in anthropology, and this project has been shaped by the belief that a coherent overview will facilitate future work on more specific topics, and that general studies of many more gay communities in other cities or rural areas will be needed before a mature comparative understanding of homosexuality as a social and cultural component of Western societies can be achieved. The schema theory and discourse analysis model proposed is, I hope, sufficiently flexible to facilitate future study of the key question of how collectivities become, and remain, communities.

⁸ Statistical issues have not been addressed here, nor could they easily be addressed in a retrospective study of a field characterized by shifting definitions of categories in which individuals were free to vary their identification with the collectivity.

Plan of Presentation: The remaining chapters of Part I present the method, the theoretical framework and relevant aspects of the ethnographic context for studying gay life in Quebec. In Chapter 2, I outline the sources and methods which I have used in this research, with a discussion of issues of reliability and validity of oral and written sources. Chapter 3 presents the elements of schema and discourse theory which I use to build a dynamic model of community identity, focusing on the schemata as structures managing shared knowledge and motivating some of them to take initiative for the benefit of the collectivity. Chapter 4 presents the general social and cultural context for the rise of an openly gay community in Quebec, outlining the discursive climate in which the narrators experienced the formation of gay identity, and the political and social characteristics of Montreal in the period when the gay community emerged.

Part II synthesizes data from the interviews and documentary sources. The discussion moves from a consideration of the individual experience of acquiring gay identity and moving into the gay social world to the collective use of space and symbolic forms affirming collective identity through the initiatives of social, cultural and economic leadership. In the first section of Chapter 5, I present a summary of the individual accounts of being different because of sexual identity and the narrators' experience or knowledge of social control exercised over homosexuals. The second section of Chapter 5 looks at the narrators' use of personal social networks and private domestic space as resources which helped them organize their lives in the face of the constraints imposed on them by society. Chapter 6 presents an analytical and historical overview of public spaces which were used or controlled by gay men before 1970, analyzing the mass of information that gay men maintained on these resources and the social patterns which developed in them. These spaces fostered the development of shared symbolic forms which are the subject of Chapter 7. The symbolic aspects include language and discourse patterns unique to the gay world, and the schemata relating to gay sexuality, consumer goods and services, and audiencehood for particular stars or types of performance. Chapter 7 also analyses several specific leadership roles played by individuals (organizing group activities privately or commercially, for example) which helped to build a sense of solidarity, shared identity and common interest among large numbers of gay men and supported a new breed of gay entrepreneurs. Chapter 8 concludes the study with a reflection on usefulness of schema/discourse theory analysis for modelling ethnographic information, summarizes my findings on the relationships between ethnicity, social class and gay visibility in Montreal, and

points to areas where further work can be expected to elucidate the relationship between collective identity, shared schemata, discourse practices, and collective identity formation and maintenance. The appendices present a reference list of the narrators and graphics showing their social and personal characteristics and their involvement in the gay world, together with lists and maps of gay bars, and the full text of selected newspaper items referred to in the text.

Chapter 2. Sources and Methods

Since the mid-1970s, scholarly work on homosexuality has expanded and diversified in unprecedented fashion. The topic is challenging, especially when the research looks at the past, since until recently the strength of the taboo on the subject prevented much documentation of the lived experience of homosexuals. Like women's studies before it, lesbian and gay studies has fostered a new cross-disciplinary effort of research and theory in order to make up for the dearth of conventional source materials. Working on a "taboo" topic necessitates a creative approach to finding information, and the heterogeneous sources mobilized pose special problems of interpretation.

Within anthropology there is a tradition of privileging the understandings that participants have of their lives and their cultures. When few records exist to document experiences individuals had of a given socio-historical context, we have no access to the view from inside. For this reason, one of the main aims of this project has been to use life history methods in order to record information that would otherwise die with those who possess it. By combining a number of accounts of individual experience with written sources, a partial but focused record of gay men's experience can be obtained. The interview data relates primarily to events which occurred thirty or more years in the past. This raises the question of memory problems and the ongoing reinterpretation of experience that the life history interview format elicits. Telling their life stories requires that narrators define themselves in relation to the social matrix in which they made sense of themselves. They produce a wealth of recounted experience and some summations and evaluations of their experiences. Incoherence and inconsistency is inevitable, but attitudes and actions can nevertheless be discerned, and discursive constructions can be directly analysed.

Written documents such as news stories, testimony before commissions of enquiry, autobiographies, etc., cannot match the oral sources in providing a well-rounded picture of the lived experience of gay men in that period. They must be interpreted by taking into account the context in which they were conceived and initially received. The convergence of information from a variety of sources helps to resolve some of the problems of interpretation in building an

overall understanding of gay collective life, if not a fully representative set of individual experiences of it.

The data presented refer only to the gay male experience. Men's access to the world, cultural orientation and discourse habits underlie all the interview material, which makes the analysis of lesbian experience a completely separate issue, documented by Line Chamberland (1994, 1996), even where the two groups shared public spaces or had overlapping network connections. Here I mention connections between gay men and lesbians only to the extent that the narrators made them explicitly relevant. Gender difference in the society had significant consequences for the process of community formation I am studying. Men alone or in groups have full freedom to be in bars or on the street at night, whereas women do not. Men have the economic resources to support a diverse array of bars and other social venues in the urban space markets. But the move towards an open gay community cannot be conceived as divorced from the broader transformation, the gender realignment that took place after World War II.

The Montreal gay world developed a set of meeting places and a public persona for itself, inspired by ideas and actions in the United States, France and elsewhere, and by themes such as minority rights and individual freedoms in Western culture. For Montreal, discussion of the cultural context must take into account the unusual situation of having two contending sources for cultural orientation, French and English, two internationally prominent cultures dividing the population of one city at the same time as providing avenues for influence between them. In studying sex, sexuality, and gender in Montreal, the researcher must consider the differences and similarity of the French and English backgrounds. I will contend in this study that the influence of ideas does not stop at language boundaries within the gay world, where encounters between people of different cultures are common. This makes of the city an intercultural nexus in the international gay culture that has developed in the twentieth century.

A. INTERVIEWS

Under the leadership of Thompson (1988) and others, oral history has developed as a vigorous approach, particularly in the history of disadvantaged communities. This study shares aspects of this type of work, but the secrecy shrouding homosexual life in the past sets it apart from most local, ethnic, or occupational community histories. The objective here is to develop an anthropological, rather than purely historical, understanding of collective identity processes.

For this purpose, I have blurred the distinction between the life history interview and the oral history interview explained by Houle (1986). While my primary focus is on the collective level, I regard the process of collective identity as integrally related to the process of individual identity formation and maintenance. Discussion of individual experience is thus required in order to understand clearly the perspective from which the individuals interviewed spoke of the community, to have a better knowledge of what they meant by seeing clearly where they were coming from in terms of age, cultural and social origin, and personality. But in brief interviews, only certain limited aspects of complex urban lives can be covered, so the background information was generally limited to a small portion of the interview time and occupies less space in the account given here.

The oral sources for this study were a group of primary “narrators,” thirty men who agreed to spend from ninety minutes to several hours recounting their experiences. Their stories and explanations provided a framework for the analysis of the social and cultural change which led to the emergence of a publicly acknowledged gay community in Montreal. Additional information was obtained in other interviews with secondary narrators, as well as comments by friends and acquaintances, since the group studied is also a group of which the researcher is a member. The men interviewed were contacted through prior acquaintanceship or were referred to me by members of the community or other narrators. After many years of experience in the local gay movement, I already knew a number of people who met the minimal criterion for my research: participation in the Montreal gay world before 1970. The project generated sufficient interest among friends and acquaintances and the narrators themselves that I received referrals of others who might be interviewed in sufficient numbers that it was not necessary to advertise. The men were selected in order to represent as wide a range of ages, backgrounds and types of involvement in gay life as possible. The group included three men of immigrant origin, an English-speaking West Indian and a German fluent in both languages, as well as a man from France. Basic personal characteristics of the narrators are summarized in Appendix A-1.

Other oral sources also provided information on the gay world. Thanks to the generosity of Armand Monroe and filmmaker Lois Siegel, I obtained interview data from tapes recorded with Armand Émond, whose work organizing drag parties in the 1950s is documented in Siegel’s film *Lip Gloss* (1993). Line Chamberland kindly provided me with tapes made with lesbians who described the interactions with gay men in two bars of the “Main” in the 1950s.

Another indirect source of personal narrative was the retelling by the narrator "Gérard" of anecdotes told by a man known as "Monsieur Charles," who died before I was able to interview him. These provided unique information about early gay life.

Three of the primary interviews were with individuals who had played a public role in the gay world. Entertainer Armand Monroe and writer/editor André Dion both played important leadership roles in the development of an open gay community at the end of the period of this study.⁹ The early death of physique photographer Alan Stone cut short an exchange that was extremely interesting about the place of commercial photography in developing the gay marketplace in North America. Fortunately one of Stone's few gay models of the 1960s, Marcel Raymond, who went into the physique business under Stone's guidance, was happy to recall his experiences in an interview.

Interviews took place either in my home or that of the narrators or their friends. I strove to create a relaxed, open-ended exchange between peers or fellow members of the same social group. Typically interviews lasted 90 minutes, long enough to cover a wide range of topics, but not too long to exhaust the narrators, some of whom were elderly. With several narrators, the information they were able to provide was significant enough to warrant further interviews. Two joint interviews with couples were conducted. With one narrator, a preliminary interview was conducted in the presence of several other people who contributed both questions and information. This was then followed up with a regular interview. Several of the narrators proved to be key sources for data. These included the members of two long-term couples, one Francophone and one Anglophone, and two men I had known and discussed bar history and other topics concerning gay life in Montreal with for two decades prior to the start of the research.

Life stories gathered in open-ended interviews cover many aspects of an individual's experience, encompassing many aspects of individual adult existence in the metropolis with no apparent connection to group life among gay men. For the purposes of shaping an account which does not become simply encyclopedic, I have focused this presentation on those aspects which establish the point of view of the narrators and reflect their involvement in or distance from the emergent gay community in the city between 1930 and 1970, stressing the discursive and knowledge acquisition aspects of their experiences. This focus on the sexual and gay

⁹ Monroe is currently working on an autobiography which should supplement information presented here.

social aspects of their lives was an objective that was understood and shared by all the narrators.

In general I began by asking narrators about their place of origin, their families, and their early awareness of sex and of their own difference. Two narrators resisted this conversational trajectory, though for different reasons. One man, Trevor, was simply a private person,¹⁰ completely at ease in his gay life style, but his family was off limits for discussion. The other man, Étienne, had been estranged from his family and could only discuss them in terms of his conflict with them, because of his homosexuality. They supplied information on many aspects, but did not want to narrate the childhood developments in this early stage of the interview. Once I had elicited this background information, I asked about the narrators' entry into the gay world and then allowed them to shape the course of the discussion according to topics that arose. In some instances I asked questions about specific places or practices with a view to filling in my data on gay bars and gay discourse forms. I offered guidance in the form of questions or comments throughout the session, but as far as possible let the narrators follow thematic strands of their own selection. The theme of gay space (bars, saunas, or park meeting places, etc.) provides access to information about activities that occurred in these varying types of place. Other themes discussed in the interviews included topics the narrator's relations with his family during the coming out process and afterwards, his social networks (both within and without the gay world) as they changed over time, and his interest in gay cultural materials. In some interviews I presented the narrators with visual and documentary materials to stimulate their memories. While this did provide some important additional information, the general reaction was for the men to leaf through the pages and observe that it was interesting, so I did not pursue this approach very far.

Since this is an attempt to obtain a thorough description of the collective level of gay life, individuals here are treated as members of the collectivity and a full treatment of other aspects of their lives is not considered. The individual narrators cannot be considered typical representatives of a class of social beings, but rather as participants of diverse backgrounds in the city's gay community, which itself is considered as an exemplar of a category of urban social grouping to whose description they contribute. The diversity among the narrators in

¹⁰ A mutual friend suggested that Trevor made a cult of privacy, and used anecdotes of his personal life experiences in a very measured way. Trevor, he said, never told the same story twice but always had a story to tell for a social occasion. His skill in using discourse displacement strategies is evident in parts of the interview where he deflected questions on his family, his church involvement, and his struggle with HIV infection.

terms of age, language, ethnicity, and class and other social characteristics is shown in the charts in Appendices A-2 to A-4. They in no way constitute a sample of a posited "gay population." The existence or non-existence of a "gay population" is impossible to establish by means of a retrospective study, and is generally a matter of interpretation in the present as well. Harry (1986, 1990) has outlined the conceptual problems involved in this question of definition. What can be ascertained is that some men engaged in new social practices that had not been used before in the lives of homosexuals. They gathered in large numbers at an increasing number of bars and other commercial and non-commercial sites in the urban landscape, and they developed specific social and cultural practices that set them apart from "mainstream" society. It is the collectivity that is the object of this study, and the detailed presentation of it is intended to allow comparison to other cities with different social and cultural circumstances. Without automatically positing a unitary "gay community" in the city's past, I will focus on different patternings at the collective level that appear to be antecedents of today's self-identified Montreal gay community.

Several factors help to insure the validity and reliability of the information from this specific set of narrators. Starting with a good general knowledge based on personal experience (see next section), documentary materials, and early exploratory discussions with the two narrators whom I had known since the 1970s, I had an overview of types of experience that I sought to record. I was aware of the division between the respectable downtown bar world of Peel and Stanley Streets and the rougher world of the cabarets and taverns of the "Main," an area centred at St-Laurent and Ste-Catherine Streets. Thus, I attempted to find men who could recount their experiences in both districts, at different periods. I was not altogether successful in getting even representation of all periods, especially the earlier stages in the second area. There were other concentrations of gay experience in Montreal and the surrounding areas, and these are only partly represented. I did not, for example, find people to interview who had gone to drag balls or to the black jazz club Rockhead's Paradise, of which I learned only after completion of the interviews that there had been a significant gay presence.¹¹ Nevertheless, though there is still much work to be done to complete the portrait, I am confident that the picture presented is a solid basis for an accurate understanding of gay social life. What the narrator accounts do provide is a set of accounts, from situated points of view, concerning both

¹¹ Margaret Wescott, personal communication.

public gay life and the personal experience of living as a gay man in mid-twentieth century Montreal. D'Andrade (1995:191-193) reviews studies of the validity of ethnographic interviewing in the light of the fact that interviews involve memory problems. He concludes that "While memory is often both scanty and biased, biased memory can be used to uncover the long-term patterning of events, and scanty memories, when pooled, can be used to recover what actually happened at specific moments." While there may be gaps and errors on the level of detail, the whole matrix of information should provide a starting point for building a representation of the gay world which can be corrected and extended by further work.

Since homosexuality remains heavily tabooed in our society, the interviews posed ethical issues that are especially acute, even though discussion of the topic has become common. Aside from those narrators previously mentioned (p. 27), whose public role is a matter of record, the narrators participated in the interview on the understanding (in the form of a verbal agreement) that it was confidential and anonymous. For the public figures, aside from references to their public actions or statements, I have taken the same steps as with all the other narrators to protect the confidentiality of their private lives. Pseudonyms are thus used in all references to the narrators and to persons named by them, both in the text and in the records on which it is based.¹² Specific references to places of employment and residence and other details have been edited in some contexts to render identification of the individual impossible.

In the present research the interviewer played both insider and outsider roles with respect to the group studied. The focus on a past period of gay life, of which I had no personal experience, served to create ethnographic distance. As I have outlined in an article on the interviewing for this project (Higgins [n.d.] "Lives ..."), age, appearance, schooling, cultural interests and any one of many other specifically identifiable attributes which the interviewer presents to the narrator in a life history or oral history interview may influence the account delivered.

Three of the men interviewed were long-term acquaintances,¹³ but most I had never met. Regardless of the relationship, however, it was always clear to the narrators what relevant background I could be expected to have and what might need explaining. Since almost all have

¹² In practice, only one of the narrators thought it necessary to disguise a friend about whom he spoke with a nickname; I have supplied pseudonyms for all individuals mentioned if there was any chance of their being identified from the context of a narrator's remarks. To further respect individual privacy, I have omitted names of men mentioned in arrest accounts from various sources in the mid-twentieth century.

¹³ The two men already mentioned and another man who lived in Montreal in the 1960s, whom I met many years ago in Toronto.

continued to live in the gay world since the time about which I was asking questions, they had access to many of the same cultural referents as I did, and a sense of what I would not know since I did not enter that world until after 1970. Having prepared for the research with several years of documentary research and some preliminary interviews, I was able at some moments to establish my credentials as a well-informed observer by supplying names of bars, for example, when the narrator was unable to remember, or by demonstrating my knowledge of gay vocabulary.¹⁴

The issue of “insider” researcher has received increasing attention in recent years, but I am inclined to agree with Dunk (1991:12-15) that there are advantages to both outsider and insider research. My familiarity with the gay world was critical in generating questions and helping to orient the narrators to the kind of information that would contribute to an overall representation of the world they had experienced. I was not a complete insider, however.¹⁵ I belong to a different generation than most of the narrators, and even with those close to me in age, the difference lay in their very early entry into gay life. Another difference stemmed from my involvement in the gay movement. Unlike the narrators, my experience of gay bars was mediated by the resolutely anti-bar rhetoric of the early gay liberation movement (see p. 379). The bars were seen as alienating and the movement devoted considerable energy to opening non-bar meeting spaces, drop-in centres or cafés, where gay sociability could be free of the demands of alcohol consumption and an overarching focus on sexual pursuit. Though a few of the narrators joined groups in the early 1970s, they had all already become familiar with the bar world as a major locus of gay sociability.

Being an Anglophone had an undoubted influence on the outcome of the research as well. With the two-thirds of the primary narrators who were Francophones, there was an obvious cultural difference, though such factors also entered into the relationship with the narrators who were immigrants from Germany and Trinidad, or with the Jewish narrator from the Canadian West. It is hard to evaluate whether my ethnic origin prevented some men from accepting the request to become narrators, though the three who refused were all Francophones. Two gave health or a desire to avoid revisiting the pain of the past, while the

¹⁴ Leznoff (1956) wrote an article on the usefulness of learning the language of the gay world in order to establish rapport with the men he interviewed.

¹⁵ Shokeid, as an outsider doing ethnographic research on a New York City gay synagogue, was sharply aware of taken-for-granted aspects of the gay world that I would not have found remarkable. He recounts how he learned to cope with the hugging and kissing among the men and women in the congregation, which was at odds with his experience as an Israeli heterosexual anthropologist (Shokeid 1995:6).

third claimed he had nothing to tell me because gay life in the past was the same as today. Of course knowing they were speaking to a non-native speaker certainly had an impact on Francophone narrators, since they could not avoid taking language difference into account, though my fluency in French is such that I have very few problems of comprehension or expression. But inter-linguistic group communications follow social rules that differ with the generations in Montreal.¹⁶ Because of this, some of the older Francophones preferred to speak to me in English. On the other hand, at least one Anglophone showed signs of some irritation at what he perceived as my close associations with Francophone Montreal.

With some narrators I shared more comparable experience due to common age cohort membership, or ethnic/linguistic cultural background, education, gay movement involvement, or other attributes. Sharing some characteristic, particularly those emotionally invested like language and culture, provided access to background knowledge (factual, attitudinal, intellectual/conceptual), that smoothed the flow of information in the interviews. Shared language, in the gay context, meant two different things in this research. First, it meant the obvious division between French and English in Montreal. Second, it refers to language elements in the gay world, familiarity with terms and language habits in both English and French. Such vocabulary items and intonation patterns had to be learned in a complex pattern of usages and their appropriateness to social contexts, prestige ratings, and history. Variation in their mastery, or the fact that I was at an earlier stage in learning about gay life fostered cognitive and emotional links between myself and the narrator. Like unknown words in French or references to unknown Québécois celebrities, missing emotive links could serve as symbols of difference, sometimes useful as a talking point in order to clarify the information provided by the narrator. At times, of course, obstacles to communication become insurmountable, as the narrator struggles to express an elusive quality of his experience.

Class difference and educational difference may also have complicated the relations I had with the narrators. Bourdieu (1984:174, cit. Dunk 1991:16) has pointed to the "bourgeois" character of the formal interview. Many of the narrators were either much wealthier or poorer than myself. As with language and age differences, I think the informality of the surroundings and the relaxed approach used to conduct the interviews overcame problems that might have arisen in a setting that evoked the university or bureaucratic associations of most formal

¹⁶ Other than Heller's (1982) study of the negotiation of language choice in a Montreal hospital, I know of no sources that explore the cultural patterning of relationships across the culture gap.

interviews. Even in cases where the tape recorder caused problems, it did not become a focus of attention, and often a few comments were missed since the narrator went right on talking as I turned the tape over.

All interview research confronts the problem of rapport between interviewer and interviewee, or of personality factors that help or hinder the quality of the information obtained. In life history interviews, this factor may be amplified to the extent that the situation leads the narrator to take a critical look at his past. In at least two cases potential narrators refused interviews¹⁷ because they had no desire to bring back to life what I presume were painful memories. When interviews were granted, it sometimes required tactful overlooking of clearly contradictory claims being made by the narrators about some aspect of their past. One of the couples maintained, in summarizing their experience, that they had been "quiet all our lives," though this did not seem compatible with the accounts of sexual and other activities that few people would include under the description of a quiet life, though it may simply have referred to their discretion. In other cases, information given by a narrator conflicted with that obtained from other sources. One man, Gérard, claimed that in the early 1960s it was unheard of to go home with someone you had just met in a bar, though most of the others who told me about the period reported doing just that. This illustrates how the information collected centres in some ways more on opinions than on facts. Clearly this man saw the world differently than the others and his lived experience in it reflected his understanding of its rules.

The overall aim of the project was understood to varying extents by the narrators. For some narrators, the research project I was undertaking made perfect sense, while a minority seemed to think I was asking about a lot of insignificant details. The former clearly saw the benefit to the community of today of exploring the shared experience of the past. One narrator, Len, expressed particular insight into the problems of doing gay research. In a discussion of the date of the Montreal Swimming Club, he said:

I don't know. That would be interesting for you to go into in your research cause I really don't know. Do you know anybody who belongs to the MAA?¹⁸ Or the MAA itself might. You wouldn't want to tell them the purpose, the actual purpose of it. Because they would probably deny it. You'd have to go at it from a different angle, research on swimming in the Montreal area. But I think that might be interesting if, depending on what angle you're taking because it was certainly an important part of gay life because there were so few bars.

¹⁷ Five men in all refused to meet for an interview. In the other cases of refusal, the other reasons given were ill health, or, in one case, a dismissal of the usefulness of the project since "nothing has changed" since the 1950s.

¹⁸ Montreal Athletic Association.

Len and other narrators believed that the experiences of gay men in pre-liberation Montreal were worth recording. Two men provided introductions to their friends for further interviews. Others donated textual materials to the *Archives gaies du Québec* so that it would be available to future researchers. Like other members of today's gay communities, these narrators were interested in the development of a gay social memory in Quebec, in Canada, and in the world in general. In undertaking this project, I am inevitably making an intervention in favour of this project, but like the narrators, I believe that this is a story worth recording.

B. DOCUMENTS

Relatively few gay men who were in the gay world before 1970 have left any sort of written or visual accounts of their experience, and only a small number could be interviewed for this project. Personal documents, a source much recommended by the famous Chicago urban ethnographers (see Kluckhohn et al. 1951), are problematic for gay research, since they are all too often either not created since it is considered too dangerous to make documents that could jeopardize one's livelihood, or else they were destroyed by families when someone dies, not to mention the risks of loss or accidental destruction. Thus the written sources for this study are primarily public or official documents, including scholarly studies and news reports.

Two very dissimilar written sources provided most of the additional information for this study: Leznoff's (1954) ethnography of gay life in Montreal and the "yellow" newspapers. Leznoff's work has been presented in the Introduction (p. 17).¹⁹ In introducing the narrators' accounts in Part II, I summarize his findings on relevant topics to broaden the context of interpretation of the data they provided.

The second written source, consists of a corpus of items from a little-known type of small sensational newspaper (here referred to as the "yellow newspapers"). This particular form of publication flourished in Montreal from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s in the midst of the demographic and cultural shifts of the post World War II period. These weekly yellow newspapers were physically smaller than tabloids and more gossip-oriented, and continued to publish in large numbers in Montreal in the 1950s and 1960s.²⁰ Better than other journalistic

¹⁹ Leznoff agreed to a short interview in 1990. Though he was encouraging of my project, so long after the research he was unable to provide more than background information on his study rather than specific factual information.

²⁰ Some confusion is occasioned by the name "les journaux jaunes," a translation of the American "yellow newspapers," usually designating the entire tabloid press. In Quebec journalism history it refers to a very particular local type of small format gossip weekly, a usage initiated by Beaulieu and Hamelin (1965). Writings

sources, they provide contemporary information on popular attitudes towards homosexuality and other social issues, giving voice to non-élite ideological currents in Quebec society in the 1950s and 1960s. About seven hundred gossip items, lonely hearts ads, and feature article summaries from these publications were accumulated in a database and coded by theme, proper name, and attitude expressed. They also complement the interview data in Part II.

A smaller corpus of additional documentary materials consists of occasional items from the mainstream newspapers and magazines of the period.²¹ They can only be interpreted as a non-random, very partial assortment of such texts, whose full recovery awaits future text handling technologies. The image of gay life obtained in reading these texts in isolation is quite misleading. Repression of gay men is an omnipresent theme, as raids, arrests, blackmail, violence and intimidation figure prominently in these stories, usually written in conformity to the formulaic techniques of sensational news reports. In the narratives of gay men themselves, however, repression was a rather minor theme, highly charged but hardly a constant occurrence. The only corrective to this unduly dark portrait of gay life in the past is to ask those who lived it to describe their life experiences. The information from these textual sources was integrated into an overall chronological overview of Montreal gay history. This proved useful for quickly checking facts during the interviews and as a means of accessing information in news reports, legal changes, and municipal history for the period studied.

A final documentary source is the very small number of printed documents that record the history of the bar world in the years leading up to the gay publishing boom of the late 1960s. Guidebooks to the gay world have existed for quite some time, though it is not easy to locate copies of items known from reference lists. Some bibliographic references point to the existence of such sources in the 1950s (and there may have been some mimeographed lists in circulation earlier), the first major such publication was the *International Guild Guide* published in Washington beginning about 1960. Copies from several years beginning in 1964 were consulted for this project.²² Further information on the history of gay bars was available in newspaper interviews with prominent figures in the gay world such as bar hosts Armand

which examine this set of publications include Higgins (1990), Higgins and Chamberland (1992), and Chamberland (1989). Champlain (1986:87) suggests a link between at least some of these publications and organized crime. A study by Fontaine (1978) concentrates on another segment of the sensational weekly press, the entertainment tabloids, close relatives of the yellow papers on the Quebec publishing scene, but quite different in format and content.

²¹ These news items have been made available to me especially in collaborative research with members of the Archives gaies du Québec, and with friends and fellow scholars.

²² The "Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives," Toronto, holds a small number of such publications.

Monroe and Bobette, as well as a singer/drag performer known as La Goulue.²³ The main sources on Montreal nightlife in general are journalistic and ghost-written show business personality accounts, except some coverage in reference works like Bourassa and Larrue's *Les nuits de la Main* (1993) on bars that happened to be on St-Laurent. Palmer's (1950) freewheeling journalistic account provides an insider's view of the nightclubs and personalities of the period, but contains no mention of homosexuality. The history of jazz in Montreal by Gilmore (1988) indirectly provides an overview of nightclub history in the city, bringing together information which had previously been scattered in magazine articles (Masson 1963), newspaper features (e.g. Beaulieu 1980) and celebrity biographies (e.g. Normand 1974). The overlap between the bar world and that of theatre is attested by Hébert's history of burlesque in Quebec (1981). Visual materials such as old post cards and pictures of the city like those by news photographer Conrad Poirier²⁴ help to document the bar scene in general, with a few images of gay establishments among them.

C. INTERPRETATION AND SYNTHESIS

In this section I will first outline the procedures followed for dealing with narrator accounts that are subject to the problems of distortion in human memory, and second for organizing and interpreting the data, emphasizing the advantages of combining information obtained from a number of sources, all of which are fragmentary.

Remembering and Narrating the Past: The main source of data for this project consists of oral accounts gathered many years later of events and impressions of the Montreal gay world. Remembered life experience is not like direct observation, and must be handled with particular attention first to the distortions of memory and then to the genre effects of the recounting. Valverde (1985) points to the influence of literary models of autobiography on individual discourses on the self. Stories, as Agar (1980:227-228) explains, citing psychological work on story structure, can be modelled with methods parallel to linguists' phrase structure rules. Though Agar found that stories collected in ethnographic situations were difficult to relate to the model based on those studied in the laboratory, they nevertheless exhibited structural

²³ Monroe's own writings include an article on bar history (1981) and a series in the magazine *Attitude* in the early 1980s. La Goulue was interviewed on "her" career (Carrière 1981).

²⁴ Archives nationales du Québec, Fonds Conrad Poirier (see Brault 1994). I have also consulted the photography collections of the City of Montreal Photography Division and the National Archives of Canada.

features. They are formed by the “weight of tradition” and telling a “well-formed story” is as important to the teller on the streets as to those under scientific observation. Its organization is not under the storyteller’s control.

Content and manner of narration are influenced by differentiating factors among which gender, age, health, ethnicity, economic status are of primary importance. These and many other attributes interact with the structure of the social network in which the individual is implanted. The distance in time between the events and the telling is probably the most problematic aspect of this research. Aside from simply forgetting, or misremembering past events, narrators may shape their accounts according to changes in their thinking in the intervening years. Historically, my point of view as a member of the first generation of gay liberation coincided with changes in the thinking of the narrators. The changed social view of homosexuality would tend to affect the version of the past produced in their narratives. To counteract this tendency, in the interview situation, I attempted to transport the conversation into a past framework by beginning with the narrator’s childhood and looking at the sequential development of his involvement in the gay world. Inevitably the accounts are affected by vocabulary changes, especially the generalized use of “gay” that most of the men only began using in the 1970s, and an emphasis on minority rights that was certainly less general in the past than it would later become. It is not possible to be sure what their attitudes were towards the sin and sickness models of homosexuality which were then common: these are almost absent from the interview data collected after two decades of gay liberation rhetoric. I have outlined my understanding of the relationship between myself and the narrators in a previous section in order to make some aspects of the interview situation clear, since the way a narrator views his audience shapes the account provided.

I have not been particularly concerned by the contradictory versions of some information provided by the narrators. In the case of the interviews with couples like the Francophones Jean and Normand, for example, who disagreed about some of the things they had done (specifically, whether they had had English friends), it was clear that the struggle was not over accuracy of representation of the past but related more to interpersonal dynamics of the present. In other cases, such as Gérard’s version of the social rules in the clubs in the 1960s (p. 34), the contradiction between narrators actually enhanced the data, since it highlights the key role of personal viewpoint on the world, how much an individual’s understanding of the world

affects how he lives in it. Thus it is almost as useful to learn that someone has never heard of a particular establishment, though he did frequent another just one block away during the period when both were open for business, as to get a full account from him of the establishment he knows.

As discussed in the section on the representativity of the interview data (p. 29), more certainty regarding the actual occurrence of events or descriptions of particular places, points of view, attitudes, etc., can be achieved if there is sufficient repetition and agreement among several different versions. The interviews furnished extensive data on the narrators' backgrounds and experience of gay life. After either notes or transcriptions were made as the information seemed to warrant, the topics covered were coded using the indexing facility of the word processing software, with the progressive development of a concordance file containing venue names, and words grouped under themes like friendship, travel, family, work, and police for ease of access to relevant data. Such a system is prone to errors and omissions, but it provided a useful preliminary to the detailed reading and hand indexing of the interviews which followed. On some topics, Leznoff's (1954) thesis offers an invaluable source of contemporary data to counter problems of omission. The result is a complex portrait of what it was like to be gay from widely differing points of view. Not all of the data categories could be filled for all narrators, but the panoramic view produced by the compilation of their accounts represents, I believe, most of the salient characteristics of the gay world they inhabited. Together with the information from the yellow press (see examples in Appendix C-2) and other written sources, they furnish a richly detailed portrait of gay life in Montreal in the twenty-five year period after World War II.

Synthesis / Writing Ethnography: When considering how well the accounts gathered from the narrators correspond to a larger "reality," that is, how representative they are, the objective is to present as complete and varied an account as was possible within the constraints of the research period. In writing up that account, the representation of that "reality" is subject to a new set of constraints. These are the constraints of genre, one of the basic theoretical components of the model that will be presented in the following chapter. The written text has its own conventions, which in academic writing are maintained and enforced by the institutions of the discipline. In recent years questions about the way ethnographic authority is constructed in texts has fuelled discussion of the need to change the relationship between the ethnography

and those whose lives are represented in the ethnographic text. Inevitably, however, the discipline enforces genre conventions that almost force writers to assert authority as they lead readers along a coherent pathway through the text, to arrive at some kind of closure. In other words, a text is a linear structure and, despite the experiments and enthusiasms of post-modern theories of fragmentation and de-centring, of reflexivity and polyvocality, most writing does not wander far from the conventions that have long been in force. What is perhaps new is a greater awareness of the author's presence in the text, since the examination of ethnographic authority²⁵ by anthropologists like Clifford (1988) has made it clear that the impersonal omniscient style of some traditional ethnography misrepresents the underlying epistemological basis for the information presented.

Edward Bruner (1986) explores the conflicting narrative frameworks of anthropological and Native accounts of North American native peoples.

One story—past glory, present disorganization, future assimilation—was dominant in the 1930s and a second story—past oppression, present resistance, future resurgence—in the 1970s, but in both cases I refer to dominance in the anthropological literature, in ethnographic discourse, not necessarily in Indian experience (Bruner 1986:143).

The second, Native, story, with its stage of self-redefinition, parallels many other narratives of emancipatory struggles in the twentieth century (Mennell 1994). It is clear that a markedly similar chronological framework exists for gay men, with some important differences, as men who are both Native and gay are aware. In some ways the narrative conventions of gay liberation rhetoric were more triumphalist than Native texts. Escoffier (1992) analyses the “generations” since gay liberation began. He traces the shifts in the overarching frameworks of interpretation which have dominated gay, lesbian, and feminist discourse since 1970. Similar to the gay macro-narrative, the shift has been from acceptance of a fate decreed by non-members to proud self-affirmation. There was a sense among gay activists in the 1970s that a silence of millennia had been broken, that real change had been accomplished, while for Natives there was less to celebrate.

Dealing with a little known social group in text aimed at a general readership requires special attention to the rhetorical structure of the writing. Personal experience teaches members of any minority that one's minority status can make one appear as exotic to one's non-gay peers as any distant ethnic Other. In his ethnographic account of North American

²⁵This issue can be seen in the context of more general discourse analytic discussion of the “footing” between participants in discursive situations, as described for interpersonal communication by Goffman (1981:124-159),

bodybuilders, Klein (1993) argues that the anthropologist presenting information on a little known group ("subculture" is Klein's term) should first strive to render the people being described and analysed as exotic as possible. For the bodybuilder culture of Southern California which he studied, the exoticism he aspired to was undercut by the normalization of bodybuilder imagery that occurred with the rise of the Nautilus gyms of the 1980s, so the scene he presents does not perhaps strike the reader as particularly foreign. The same may be said to have taken place with aspects of the gay world; even the venues of public sex, the most "outlandish" aspect of the topic, have become more familiar to members of the mainstream culture. For example, the film biography of the British gay playwright of the 1960s, Joe Orton (*Prick Up Your Ears*, 1987) presented one of the earliest scenes of toilet sex in a "mainstream" feature film in English. Several years later, in an AIDS-related film, *And the Band Played On* (1994), Lily Tomlin played a San Francisco public health inspector visiting a steam bath, with men in towels in the background of the shot. Such images are only the most dramatic vehicles presenting this aspect of gay social organization, given the context of the increasing number of lesbian and gay characters in television situation comedies and soap operas, as well as the frequency of news reports and other forms of documentation on gay life reaching a mass audience. In principle the new accessibility of what television programmers and others in control of cultural media take to be a representation of that exotic creature, the "gay man" has made the broad outlines of the information presented in this study familiar outside the gay world: quite a change from the previous discursive regime in which only completely effeminate men were "safe" enough to be seen in media representation!

Despite the fact that the lives of the majority of men in the gay world had as little in common with the stereotypes of effeminacy as they do today, the basic social and cultural facts about the gay world remain obscure and exotic even to young people inside the gay world, for them as for outsiders. I do not, therefore, fully agree with Klein's rhetorical choice for the presentation of gay ethnography. It is necessary to stress that, if anything is exotic about the lives of the men presented here, this derives from the incongruous conjunction of the sheer banality of their daily existence, shared with every citizen in a large North American city in the mid-twentieth century, next to the ferocity of the condemnatory rhetoric with which religious and medical authorities castigated their existence. Since gay men's social experience is in

and for text by Dillon (1986:16-21). Foucault's well-known essay "What is an author?" (1977) brought to the fore the pragmatics of the writer-reader relationship.

spaces separated from the mainstream, the ordinariness of their lives is overlooked in the rush to exoticize and differentiate. In this study I try to present both aspects.

In this text I am using the concepts of “schema,” “genre” and “discourse community” in order to focus on the relation of discourse and knowledge structures to the emergence of community identity. Thus the presentation naturally lends itself to the kind of reflexivity recommended by the new approach to ethnographic writing. I am basing the representation on a group of particular men, chosen in part at random and in part because I knew they could help fill in gaps in the overall picture that I had of public gay life. I emphasize their situated viewpoints (in terms of class, ethnicity, and age cohort) on the topics discussed (providing summaries of their social and experiential characteristics in Appendix A-1). For some aspects of gay life, there was a taken-for-granted “reality” constructed in the interview interaction, one that progressively developed as I acquired further details which informed later interviews as the research progressed.

In Part II, I have included sufficient personal detail so that the comments of the narrators can be understood by the reader in terms of the generational, ethnic, class and other aspects of the point of view they represent. I have sorted the information into themes and organized them into thematic blocks, moving from a set of topics linking the individual’s origins and exposure to familial and institutional conceptions of sexual variation, then to his contact with the social life of the gay world and its institutions, and finally to his engagement with gay discursive and symbolic practices. Throughout the presentation I have linked the data to representations in discourse; in some places the links are quite explicit, while in others, the objective has been to record illustrative examples of the ways narrators constructed their reality in words (or more precisely, of how they did so in the interview situation), and the knowledge structures on which they drew to do so. I have specifically tried not to rely on a notion of “progress” (which was usual in gay liberation rhetoric, for example), in presenting changes to the social organization of homosexuality. I try to look at the how, not the why, of this transformation, and to frame the changes that occur as the result of human choices, not the working out of some immutable structure of the collective psyche.

Gaps in the representation are inevitable. Omissions are of two types. First, there may be missing pieces of information on institutions (bars, etc.), or institutionalized uses of public space (cruising areas, etc.), because the men I talked to didn’t know about a certain place, or

didn't think to mention it and no documentary trace of it was found. I have already mentioned (p. 30) the gay scene at Rockhead's Paradise as an example of a place I learned about too late to find narrators to describe. The second type of omission relates to the comprehensiveness of coverage of personal lived experience, relations with family, workmates, lovers and friends, or of personal habits and ways of seeing social life that depend on personality and background. I am not especially concerned with the first type of omission, since I think I have uncovered most of the important foci of gay life in the city in the period surveyed. I will indicate areas of incompleteness which other researchers may want to pursue. In view of the infinite variety in the personal experience of social life, the second type of omission can only be corrected by collecting information from ever more numerous sources. In the theoretical model for understanding collective identity, the sharing of discourse conventions and topical interests among individual members reflects the collective creation and maintenance of schemata. The range of such conventions and topics presented here can be seen as preliminary, but the model is flexible enough to permit extension in light of future research. The information presented in this study is intended to illustrate the processes as fully as possible, with the understanding that the content of the narrators' experiences in the course of their personal lives is not necessarily representative of men of their class, ethnic group, age or other social characteristics. What is presented is an array of possible patterns, emphasizing the central role played by conversational participation and emotional involvement in the emergent gay community. The sharing of forms of knowledge and conventions of language is more important from the point of view of my theory than the details of content which the men exchanged.

A final word needs to be said about language and ethnographic writing on Montreal. The bilingual nature of the city is one of its most fascinating traits, sweeping its inhabitants into a constant flux of practical responses and political reflections. A representation of the linguistic complexity of the reality being modelled makes heavy demands on the reader. I feel, however, that despite the heavy generic conventions which limit the use of foreign quotations in a text, the representation of the narrators' experiences must include examples of their ways of expressing these experiences in their own original words. This means, unfortunately, that though many readers of French will have little difficulty understanding the informational content of the quotations in that language, only those attuned to spoken Québécois will get the full richness of nuance in their words. I have chosen to leave much of the oral quality of the excerpts, making small editorial changes to improve readability. Particularities of speech in

excerpts from interviews with English-speaking narrators (p. 307) provide examples of the types of connotative meaning that may be lost in translation. I apologise for the challenge to the reader, but the translation of those particularly connotative texts is a far from easy task, and one which the constraints of this project have not allowed me to undertake. While Montreal has a character unlike any other city of its size in North America (cities where two world languages meet as uncomfortable equals are not common anywhere), I hope that the material presented here can contribute to a long-term synthesis of what gay life is and has been like in many places, a synthesis that will improve our understanding of this notable change in twentieth century Euro-American societies.

Chapter 3. Identity, Schemata and Discourse

The schema/discourse model which I use to examine the process of social change that led to the emergence of the gay community permits a detailed analysis of how discursive action by a social group develops. Members of a discourse community elaborate a set of constantly changing schematic constructs that keep track of their experiences. As active participants in discourse, they instantiate these knowledge structures over and over in everyday talk, sometimes in writing. In doing so, they express affective connections between themselves and others who share them. In deciding which schemata they will share, and undergoing the process of learning needed to acquire them, individuals come to see themselves as fellow members of a discourse community. Sharing schemata and collaboration in the maintenance of the practical and theoretical knowledge they contain constitutes social groups as “communities,” likely to be recognized as such by both members and non-members. I propose that the important rhetorical shift which changed the social position of homosexual in the mid-twentieth century in North America and other parts of the Euro-American world can be effectively modelled by a theory which unites schema theory with discourse analysis to describe how this significant cultural shift occurred. The model provides a framework for comparison of gay men’s experience with that of other minorities and the unfolding evolution of contesting voices, suggested in Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossic discourse, for understanding the social outcomes of discourse processes and the articulation between individual and collective identities.

The chapter begins with an outline of schema theory in cognitive anthropology. It then discusses the schemata of individual gay identity and compares the individual and collective perspectives on identity before examining a number of issues in gay collective identity: space, institutions, social boundaries and internal diversity in the gay community. The second section reviews relevant aspects of discourse theory and the notion of “discourse community” and then explores specific topics in the analysis of gay discourse: vocabulary items, genres, and the pragmatics of exclusion in the use of stereotypes. The final section draws together the theoretical argument that self-affirmation in discourse and action, or individual gay agency, is the foundation for the exercise of leadership, in private as well as in public, which results in

collective action. This is understood as the consequence of the motivational force of the schemata of individual selfhood and community.

A. SCHEMA THEORY

Schema theory offers a framework of analysis based on dynamic cognitive structures in which information is held and updated. The term schema applies equally to perception and memory. From the basic physical states and positions of the body to the grand conceptual frameworks of philosophy, schemata are dynamic knowledge structures through which humans keep track of the world. Schemata are the basis of discourse, since they are updatable knowledge-holding structures equivalent to Goffman's (1986 [1974]) "frames," which permit discourse participants to keep track of who is part of the conversation, who is speaking, what is being talking about, and how they situate themselves in interpersonal pragmatic and informational terms with regard to the unfolding utterances. For ethnography, recording and analysing discourse provides access to many details of cultural beliefs and social structures. This is not new for anthropology, but schematic analysis offers a way to designate a level superordinate to the concept, adding a term to the theoretical tool kit, a name for specific aspects of the broader concept of culture.

A schema is an open-ended term for a knowledge structure in which perceptually acquired information is stored and kept up to date. Its emergence in a number of branches of cognitive research, from domain-specific anthropological work on kinship terminology and as colour classifications to higher level groupings of schemata like Polynesian star mapping, is summarized by D'Andrade (1995). Schema theory is an outgrowth of the change from an approach to categories in human thought based on a list of defining attributes to prototype theory, in which categories are constructed through the identification of typical and less typical instances of their members (MacLaurey 1991:55). The development of schema theory as a set of "slots" for information concerning a particular topic was based on the view that, in the absence of specific information, people fill in the slots with prototypical "default" values (D'Andrade 1995:123-124). The notion of schema thus provides a term with exceptional flexibility, intermediate between individual concepts and the topic as a whole.

An influential application of schema theory in psychology was Bartlett's (1995 [1932]) study of memory. Bartlett used it in reinterpreting the work of earlier scholars on the perception of bodily movement, where past postures must be remembered in order to

understand the present posture and successfully complete a motion such as a tennis swing. He (1995:200) rejects the notion that schemata are simply "storehouses" for knowledge. They are not static but are "constantly developing, affected by every bit of incoming sensational experience of a given kind." His formal definition emphasizes the dynamism of schemata:

"Schema" refers to an active organisation of past reactions, or of past experiences, which must always be supposed to be operating in any well-adapted organic response. That is, whenever there is any order or regularity of behaviour, a particular response is possible only because it is related to other similar responses which have been serially organised, yet which operate, not simply as individual members coming one after another, but as a unitary mass. Determination by schemata is the most fundamental of all the ways in which we can be influenced by reactions and experiences which occurred some time in the past (Bartlett 1995:201).

Schemata organize inputs from the level of physical perception to concepts and to even broader domains of knowledge.

All incoming impulses of a certain kind, or mode, go together to build up an active organised setting: visual, auditory, various types of cutaneous impulses and the like, at a relatively low level; all the experiences connected by a common interest: in sport, in literature, history, art, science, philosophy, and so on, on a higher level. There is not the slightest reason, however, to suppose that each set of incoming impulses, each new group of experiences persists as an isolated member of some passive patchwork. They have to be regarded as constituents of living, momentary settings belonging to the organism, or to whatever parts of the organism are concerned in making a response of a given kind, and not as a number of individual events somehow strung together and stored within the organism (ibid).

This dynamism is the key to Bartlett's view of the "constructedness" of memory and its application to the corpus of life history narrations to be analysed here.²⁶

More recent psychological views such as that advanced by Neisser (1976:23) see perceptual schemata as an integral phase in the cycle of perception, partly determining what is perceived, subject to the intentions of the perceiver.

Although perceiving does not change the world, it does change the perceiver. (So does action, of course.) The schema undergoes what Piaget calls "accommodation," and so does the perceiver. He has become what he is by virtue of what he has perceived (and done) in the past; he further creates and changes himself by what he perceives and does in the present (Neisser 1976:53).

This reinforces the dynamic, experience-based conceptualization of schemata.

A schema may be conceived as a polyvalent set of "meaning slots," arbitrarily assembled and with varying detail and accuracy, that hold information centred on one topic, activity, person, or object; the term designates the specific knowledge of any content area or semantic domain, here intended to cover such things as how we cognize the set of social institutions that individuals frequent or could frequent, and all of the details of expected behaviour, dress and language required to successfully navigate the particular social situations found in them. When

²⁶ I have used Bartlett's conclusions on the tendency of remembered stories to shift to conventionalized forms or "to produce stereotyped and conventional reproductions which adequately serve all normal need, though they are very unfaithful to their originals" (1995:54-55) in interpreting an instance of this conventionalization of narrator memory in one man's inaccurate but relevant memory of the Ochsner murder (p. 181; see Higgins [n.d. "Lives..."]).

the institutions are a set of bars frequented by an ostracized category of the population, the array of choices serves as the ground for conveying messages about an individual's identification with that social category. In the next section I will outline the content and struggle over the schema of gay identity, and will discuss the more general knowledge, gay "lore," the set of practical or otherwise valued knowledge that members of the collectivity accumulate and attempt to pass on to newcomers.²⁷

The applications of the term "schema" vary widely in terms of their level of generality. They range from "simple" cases like monitoring the details of visual perception or modelling syntactic choices (Cook 1989), or at a higher level, the sequence of textual segments which defines discourse genres (Swales 1990), to still more general conceptual organizations like personal identity, which group sets of interrelated concepts or schemata together. Such general constructs have been designated by the term "cultural model" (D'Andrade 1995:151-152), based on the distinction that, while a schema can be held in short-term memory, a cultural model cannot. D'Andrade (1995:172-173) also suggests an even higher level term, "cultural theory." He uses it to distinguish the differing points of view of the natives, who can express cultural theories as sets of propositions, and the analyst, who looks for the implicit meanings in the natives' reasoning or declarations, similar to the "habitus."

The higher levels of cognitive organization, "cultural models" and "cultural theories," have not been systematically used in this study. Gay life as a whole might appropriately be termed a cultural model to designate the overall conception of what it means to be a homosexual. However, detailed examination of the internal structure of a cultural model and its application to the gay world is left for future development. I suggest that in fact there are several contending cultural models of homosexuality, differentiated by class and ethnicity, operating in Quebec and elsewhere in North America. While their features are generally well understood (especially in light of the discussion of stereotypes, p. 170), their component schemata have not been fully explored, a project towards which the present study is proposed as an initial step.

A schema may be a relatively simple set of knowledge like that which organizes an individual's perception of gay spaces, but as well it carries value orientations, such as those

²⁷ Little scholarly attention has focused on the intergenerational transmission of knowledge in the gay world, other than novels like those of Christopher Isherwood for example, where the character of Mr. Norris shares his point of view with the young in late-Weimar Berlin. His autobiography (1976) gives the background on the people behind the fictional characters. Another source is autobiographical writings such as those of "A. Nolder Gay" (1978). This topic will be addressed most specifically in the discussion of the "mentor role" which more experienced men sometimes played to new entrants in the gay community (see p. 363).

related to individual rights and freedoms. The concept of schema thus is not merely a neutral analytical category, but, a vehicle through which both individuals and collectivities act to shape their social lives. The integral dynamism with which it is conceived makes it useful in understanding social change. Coupled with discourse theory, schema theory captures the fluidity of individual commitment to various collective identities and situates them within an understanding of the deployment of discourse in power relationships. It incorporates individual action into a theory of change, making explicit the ideological strategies of the dominant social group and those who, like the gay men studied here, found ways to resist the hegemonic control of the dominant discourse.

The concept of identity intersects with schema theory in three ways: (1) the schema of individual identity, (2) the schema of collective identity, and (3) the schematic knowledge which shapes the ways people talk about their identities and a host of other themes and dictates the discourse forms to express them. These topics correspond in a general way to the presentation of the data in Part II, which begins with individual accounts of gay identity and the influence of family and peer groups and of authoritative social discourse, then looks at individual social networks and private space as a bridge to collective identification. At the collective level, this means sharing of schemata of space and places in which and through which gay discourse and action develop. Finally, the examination of the data shows the use of shared symbolic forms like language and discourse forms, shared information on topics of common interest, and the mobilization of cultural schemata of individual freedom, minority rights, and economic opportunity. The active participation of large numbers of gay men, and their support for leadership initiatives or the exercise of agency in support of common social and political goals contributes over the period of time studied to the emergence of the sense of community.

B. GAY IDENTITY AND SCHEMA THEORY

In the medical and sexological discourses the idea gradually gathered strength that "homosexuality" was not simply a category of sinful acts which anyone might commit, but that a "homosexual" was a type of person whose whole life was permeated by his or her sexual preference, whose sexuality was part of the his or her "essence" (Foucault 1976:59). This shift in usage, as Foucault pointed out, is part of a new view of individual human identity, part of a new regime of "power/knowledge" manifest in the growth of individualism after the Enlightenment, which was fostered by the efforts of capitalists to encourage the individuation

of both workers and consumers in the developing urban industrial societies of Western Europe and North America.

Concepts of "identity" and "self" figure centrally in many sociological studies of homosexuality. Some writers have analysed their data in ways that seem similar to schema theory in that they identify the self-concept, or schema of the self, as an important source of motivation for action by the individual. Leznoff outlined the general sequence for gay men, who react to the contradictions between the perceived self and the values of the community he is born into.

Through his interaction with others in a community, the sexual deviant has internalized the societal attitude towards the homosexual. He therefore looks upon his behavior as perverted and experiences shame and humiliation. At the same time this self-image is an unacceptable one, so that he is motivated to isolate himself from the larger society in favor of the community of homosexuals where his deviation is not only accepted but becomes a value. Through his participation within homosexual society, he is able to achieve a modified and acceptable self-image (Leznoff 1954:221).

Twenty years later, phenomenological sociologists Warren and Ponse (1977:276) found that their general studies of the "natural world of gays" led them to concentrate on the gay self, since they discovered that the self was a crucial focus of their subjects. In the gay community, they observe, people are "highly conscious of the management of their selves," and, because of stigmatization and the need to construct fictitious accounts of the self for non-gay audiences, "gay selves are more open for study, more observable in taped interviews." They go on to discuss the relation of gay selves to gay community, focusing on the feeling of gay men and lesbians that it is only in their communities that they can drop their masks and really be themselves (Warren and Ponse 1977:287).

I use the notion of "self-concept" as a synonym for the cognitive aspect of identity, its "referential" or "ideational" meaning in terms of an array of socially available categories for identifying the self. This section outlines some scholarship on the cognitive use of the gay identity concept, but complements this conceptual approach by stressing the emotional aspects of identity and group membership. In addition to its use in grouping conceptual material, however, schema theory argues that identity schemata have "motivational force" (D'Andrade 1992) in that they influence individual decision-making and action. They also, in my view, motivate the formation of affective links with similar others, especially when the individuals face social condemnation and have "nowhere else to turn." This view supplants the functionalist conception of earlier deviance theorists that the "deviant" community arose as a

solution to a common problem with a theory that predicts that this can occur only through action by those concerned.

"Homosexual" and "Gay" as Cognitive and Social Categories: For those labelled "homosexual," in terms suggested by 1960s labelling theorists in the sociology of deviance viewed it, initial "deviant" acts lead to a process of "secondary deviance," the formation of social groups based on the label.²⁸ This was an early attempt to incorporate detailed attention to the structure of discursive interaction into the examination of a social deviance. In an article that centred on an unconventional use of the term "homosexual role," Mary McIntosh (1981[1968]) sharply criticized sociologists investigating deviance for following psychologists in considering homosexuality as a "condition" rather than recognizing homosexuals as members of a social category.

For it is not until he sees homosexuals as a social category, rather than a medical or psychiatric one, that the sociologist can begin to ask the right questions about the specific content of the homosexual role and about the organization and functions of homosexual groups (1981:43-44).

Though the survey McIntosh presented of the gay "role" in anthropological literature and in early British history was brief, her theoretical views opened the way for a new and more fruitful approach, the theory of social construction of homosexual identity. McIntosh argued that the social labelling of homosexuals served as a mechanism of social control in two ways. First it showed clearly where the border between the impermissible and the permissible lay, and secondly, it served to segregate "deviants" and contain their practices within the group.

Since the publication of Foucault's influential *History of Sexuality* in 1976, the idea that gay identity is "socially constructed" has become the basis for a new understanding of the relation between individual identity and collective identity. In the wake of Foucault's work, which drew attention to the relationship between nineteenth-century scientific discourse in the constitution of the homosexual as a category of person, a debate developed as to which came first, the social group or the intellectual category "homosexual."²⁹ Some writers have questioned the implication by followers of Foucault that homosexuals emerged after and

²⁸ Lemert (1967). Labelling theory, an early focus for symbolic interactionist sociology, was criticized on the grounds that the proportion of "deviants" labelled was tiny compared to the size of the overall population, though Plummer (1975:21-28, 152), who conducted a major sociological study of British gay life in the 1970s used a symbolic interactionist framework which stressed self-labelling as a critical aspect of gay identity formation. This theoretical background was notably applied to the study of homosexuality in Mary McIntosh's (1968) "The Homosexual Role", which is in some sense the "founding text" of the social constructionist account of gay life in Western societies (see p. 51). Labelling theory was summarized and assessed by Prus (1983), who does not question the overall utility of grouping very diverse activities under the rubric of "deviance."

²⁹ See Altman et al. (1989) and Stein (1992) on this debate.

perhaps even because of the discursive creation of a category into which they fit.³⁰ In any case, the publicity given to the new scientific category by nineteenth-century doctors and sexologists³¹ made it easier for individuals to apply a name to themselves. It created an identity label which they could generalize to formulate a concept of the social group to which they belonged by virtue of their sexual orientation. Everyone today, on coming to awareness of sexual attraction for others of the same gender, fits that experience into a ready-made framework of identities available for adoption, of which "homosexual" is one. Consciously choosing the "homosexual" option is likely to lead the individual into gay social circles.

A broad range of discourse, conveying both official and popular ideological stances, have greater bearing on the processes of individual and collective identity than authoritative action like police, judicial or medical labelling. The medicalization of homosexuality also set up a dynamic in which official adoption of the category by institutions like the police and the military (see Bérubé [1990] for the latter) reinforced the diffusion of the new category of social identity in society at large. If labelling is understood to include individual self-labelling in the interactive, processual, and cumulative development of social identity (Plummer 1975:21), the first step is taken towards an understanding of discourse processes in the development of collective identity as well.

Language items are of particular interest in investigating sexual identities and must be carefully examined to avoid the naturalistic assumptions of everyday usage. Since the development of sexological categories in the late nineteenth century, and especially since the popularization of Freud's ideas in the second quarter of the twentieth century, popular "wisdom" has increasingly forced individuals to conceive of themselves in terms of the "scientific" framework. Adults are expected to know whether they are heterosexual or

³⁰ Weeks is often cited since he maintained (1977:4) that it was inappropriate to use the term "homosexual" in discussing history earlier than about 1880, when the anonymous urban spaces of industrial capitalist societies freed individuals from family and community supervision. In a later article, Weeks (1980) specifically links the increased attention to homosexuality by legal and medical authorities to the capitalist ideology of the heterosexual family. However he recognizes the continuity between the late nineteenth century and earlier social patterns. Weeks (1977) situates the origin of London's homosexual subculture in the "molly houses" which served as exclusively homosexual meeting places and became the targets of a public morality campaign in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Trumbach (1977) presented the information on the mollies together with an assortment of anthropological data. Bray (1982) included it in an overview of sixteenth and seventeenth century legal records of cases involving homosexuality. European gay history has become a major field of research with, for example, work on eighteenth century England by G. S. Rousseau (1987), Rey's (1982, 1987) studies of homosexual activity in eighteenth century Paris, and the wide literature developing on the Early Modern period in Gerard and Hekma's (1989) collection.

³¹ These scholars were both influenced and criticized by the first homosexual rights spokesmen, Ulrichs (Kennedy 1988) and Kertbeny (Herzer [1985]; Fera and Herzer [1990]).

homosexual. The logical middle term, "bisexual," related to Freud's stricture that humans are fundamentally "polymorphously perverse," finds scant favour among those who have structured their self-concept in terms of a bipolar opposition between "heterosexual" / "homosexual," since anyone who adopts the middle term will be seen as not really "one of us," that is, as not even potentially having an emotional commitment to the group.³²

"Gay" is distinct from "homosexual" as an identity label. An extensive literature on gay identity has been created since the rise of symbolic interactionist theory.³³ In her review of the psychological and social psychological literature on gay identity, Cass (1985) is sharply critical of the terminological ambiguities many writers introduce into the discussion by failing to distinguish behavioural and cognitive aspects of identity. She proposes using the word "identity" to designate what she terms a "cognitive template":

As part of a society that includes the social category 'homosexual', a child will learn the descriptors of such a category. Conceivably this cognitive template may be applied to self, initiating the process of cognitive restructuring that leads to identity development (Cass 1985:115).

I believe that this is a useful point to make, but I disagree with Cass in narrowing the application of the term identity to the cognitive aspects alone. The advocates of "labelling theory" in the 1960s surely over-emphasized the importance of official categorization as a means of slotting people into the deviant groupings they identified, because, at least in the case of homosexuals, only a very small number were so labelled by medical or judicial authorities, yet the number of people who included themselves in the social group based on this identity was quite large. Still these theorists included one aspect which Cass' account misses when they stressed the importance of interactions within the "deviant" group for the reinforcement of the identity.

This purely cognitive understanding of schemata for gay identity has clear limits. One result of contact with a "deviant" discourse that names a felt truth about the individual self is that it produces an emotional identification with others in the same situation. In the case of a heavily tabooed identity, social contact produces more than a recognition of "cognitive fit" into an identity category, as if logic could persuade an individual to acknowledge membership in a scorned social group, and it is essential to acknowledge the importance of the emotional side of identity to appreciate the motivational force of identity schemata.

³² Lantéri Laura (1979) and Chauncey (1982) are among the many texts to explore the history of sexological and medical discourses on sexual perversion and other themes.

³³ There has been a general abandonment of the term "gay role," for reasons explained by Plummer (1975:18-19).

Schemata and Individual Motivation: The motivational force of schemata of gay identity has two aspects. The first is related to the emotional dimension of identity, "identification" with similar others, and the effect this has on the schema itself. The second relates to the more abstract ethical precepts available from the culture on how to lead a moral or effective individual life, especially the value attached to self-realization and the expression of one's inner truth as a goal in life.

The first aspect, emotional identification with fellow members of the collectivity, is experienced differently by gays than by members of other groups. Gay identity is unlike ethnic or racial identity, or any other that is beyond the individual's control, since it is one of the few non-voluntary stigmatized identities that lead to expulsion from the family and other primary groups. Only mental illness is also greeted with as much horror on the part of an individual's significant others as manifesting tabooed sexual preferences. This leads to extreme emotional isolation of the individual, and a commensurate feeling of relief if the homosexual group proves personally congenial. This process of identification is intimately connected to the revision of the contents of the schema of gay identity. When individuals find themselves confronted with a stigmatized identity, their first perceptions of the group to which they will eventually affiliate are shaped by the same negative stereotypes that others use to reinforce their own identity as "normal." Dank's (1971) discussion of the "coming out" process explicitly tackles the relationship between accepting a gay identity and the social contexts in which individuals received impressions of what a homosexual was. In his view, coming out implies that the subject places himself in a new cognitive category, which often requires a shift in his understanding of the cognitive content of the category "homosexual" such that it is no longer based on the negative stereotypes available to him. This may entail changes in dress and deportment (see Bourdieu 1977:94, following Goffman), but the motivation for making the effort is an emotional identification of self with members of the collectivity, source of the positive remodelling of the identity schema.

For the individual, the acquisition of an identity has more often been recognized as a process of "identification," a term which recalls the psychoanalytical source of the identity concept (Mouffe 1991:80). Assuming a social identity does not necessarily equate with assuming membership in a social group. One can, for example, adopt an identity as a writer, without ever frequenting writers as a group. But in many other instances, the process of identification with the group is of central importance. For many identity categories that form

the basis of collectivities, the identification cannot be refuted by the individual; blacks or members of linguistic or ethnic minorities are automatically assigned membership. Membership is ascribed at birth and is likely to be enforced both by other community members and by the surrounding society, especially in the case of racial minorities. In the gay case, the acceptance of gay identity involves a process of identification with the gay community, and acceptance of membership that is not obligatory, since one can maintain homosexual practice without being gay. For those with gay identity, coming out (assuming a gay identity, see p. 84) is an indispensable *rite de passage* which separates those who practice same-gender sex (homosexuals) from those who belong to a social grouping on the basis of their sexual orientation (gays).³⁴

The affective aspect of identity is often overlooked in theoretical work that focuses only on the cognitive dimension, which eliminates from the model any concept of the bonds of loyalty and mutual regard that are so clearly part of identification. The formation of an emotional attachment to members of the group leads over time to a generalized involvement in a social world that cements the individual's commitment to the group. In an early American gay ethnography, Warren observed:

Stigmatization and secrecy, the closing in of the community as the centrally defining aspect of life, the spending of leisure in highly structured (indeed institutionalized) gay settings and interactions, and the development of gay relationships all promote affiliation and identification with the community, underpinned by the learning of a new world of knowledge (Warren 1974:157).

The existence of a collectivity is thus integral to the concept of individual identity, answering the question "Who am I?" and, significantly, "Who am I not?" The intensity of the emotional link among gay friends has been compared to the strength of family attachment by scholars from Achilles (1964:34-35) to Weston (1991:122). The corollary of this perspective is that the sense of belonging to a "we," the development of a "we-image",³⁵ is always based on an implicit or explicit "they" - the category of non-members. This aspect will be further discussed in a later section on the notion of community membership below (p. 65).

How the schematic constructs of selfhood motivate individuals has been the focus of recent work by cognitive anthropologists which is useful for examining this problem. Similar to the role of learning in the adoption of a gay identity, emotional commitment to a collectivity is linked to progress through the stages of knowledge acquisition in Holland's (1992) study of

³⁴ Le Blanc (1992) has revived the theory of the gay/homosexual dichotomy.

³⁵ Elias's concept of the "we-image," is outlined by Mennell (1994:177; see also the "imagined communities" discussed by Anderson (1991 [1983])).

how young American women come to acquire an identity as a participant in romance. The acquisition of knowledge coincide with the development of a new, affectively charged, sense of identity, as in Dreyfus's (1983) stages in the development of expert knowledge. Holland (1992:80-81) explains that since Dreyfus stresses the fact that at the higher levels of mastery in a knowledge system, the learner develops an emotional involvement and sense of responsibility in the system. Emotional identification occurs in the process of internalizing the knowledge system when the system which has previously been experienced "according to the instructions and directions of others, becomes a system that one uses to understand and organizes aspect of oneself and at least some of one's own feelings and thoughts" (1992:83).

The varying strength of motivation for different individuals to commit themselves to the gay world are easier to account for in light of Holland's criticism (p. 85-86) of anthropological descriptions that tend to presuppose a certain homogeneity of knowledge of cultural systems. This obscures the differences of levels of expertise, identification and salience and deflects attention from the differential distribution of cultural knowledge and power, and thus from social conflict. When the knowledge system stigmatizes members of an outsider group, an individual may resist identification and avoid acquiring knowledge about the group. The variation in individual affiliation to the collectivity is reflected in further discussions of the schema of community "membership" and the affective links of "belonging" in a later section (p. 68). The impact of media stereotyping through which powerful social institutions denigrate the outsider identity (p. 81), and the mutability of individual commitment to the gay world (p. 156), will contribute to the general discussion of the "coming out" process (p. 206).

It is the affective dimension of identity stressed in the schema theory that allows us to pinpoint a problem in McIntosh's (1981:44) examination of the contrasting strategies of "legitimation" by the gay world and the homophile movement. While members of the gay world, she observed, legitimate their lives in terms of sub-culture alone ("We don't care what the rest think about us, in terms of our sub-culture being gay is OK"), the early political activists sought, in Parsonian terminology, "total legitimation" in terms of the general social value system (both in British and American movements). Clearly many gays are quite content to live in a world segregated from the mainstream, and find that the norms that establish that segregation validate their choice (1968 [1981]:32). This view overlooks the fact that for some, the influence of other cultural values on the self-concept motivate individuals to adopt views of the group as an oppressed minority which will lead a small proportion of them to undertake

actions in defence of the group. McIntosh's analysis ignores the question of how the homophile leaders came to adopt their strategy of legitimation, a question which I think can be addressed by the theory proposed here.

The second, ethical, aspect of the relationship between schemata of the self and individual motivation concerns, in the first place, such matters as how one is supposed to act in relation to friends as well as the cultural store of schemata transmitted in the ideals of selfhood which guide human lives generally. It also includes, in the second place, a conception of the typical "life cycle" of a gay man, the stages he goes through as he ages and moves into the community and establishes relationships and acquires the schemata it requires for successful membership.

Since the emotional identification of an individual with a group is mediated by the formation of friendships with established members, the cultural constructions of friendship studied by Moffat (n.d., cit. D'Andrade 1995:131) help to understand how the schema of "friend" guides the way the emotional attachment to the group is enacted. Moffat found that Americans tend to define a friend as someone from whom you don't have to hide your true feelings, someone with whom you can be "open." Being open implies that the friend is allowed to get close to your "real self," whereas most people can only know your "social self" and do not know the private truths of the real self. Where the "inner truth" of one's sexual orientation is kept secret from non-friends, the connection to the new friendship group offers personal validation that the individual cannot seek elsewhere, and the emotional bond is all the stronger.

The "directive force" of cultural models is explored for example in a study of young American couples learning to parent (Harkness et al. 1992:169-170). They define the progress to new "stages" in the development of their child in terms of the appearance of schematized personal traits such as "independence," which is conceived of as a "part of human nature waiting to manifest itself in various ways across the life span." By "directive force," these authors mean that the concept helps to organize people's response to behaviour in culturally meaningful frameworks (1992:177). In heteroglossic society, gay men (like all other people) are motivated by a diverse set of such concepts, depending on the discourse streams to which they are exposed by family, peer group, church, school and the media.

Broad historical changes in the concept of individuality, especially those involved in the change from Protestant morality in the early to mid-19 century to the consumer culture of the late 19th and 20th centuries, underpin the emergence of "gay" as an identity label in the second half of the 20th Century. This shift is explored with particular relevance for the present

research by Fox (1991), who discusses 19th Century Protestant objections to theatre and how they were overcome by the development of a "respectable" form of theatre. Enjoying life became an acceptable preoccupation in American discourse around the turn of the 20th century. It became the motive for work as the religious motives lost their hold on popular thinking. Among the beneficiaries was the bar scene, specifically the bar entertainment scene, in which gay men found a milieu in which they could survive socially. This inquiry will show, among other things, that life for gay men socially in the 1920s was not unlike that today, if you were lucky (financially secure and mentally well-balanced). But the emergence of gay identity, individual and collective, was embedded in a broader historical trend for which the ethical texts of the past that argue for and against personal enjoyment are evidence.

In a similar vein Elias insists on the ethical dimension of the profoundly ideological term "individual":

Today the primary function of the term "individual" is to express the idea that every human being in the world is or should be an autonomous entity, and at the same time that each human being is in certain respects different to all others, and perhaps ought to be different. In the use of this term fact and postulate have no clear dividing line (Elias 1991:156).

I suggest that the development of personal conceptions of self in the ethical understandings of how life should be lived, especially in regard to heeding or rejecting the views on homosexuality espoused by social authority needs to be carefully investigated. This is a site in which the multiplicity of forms of power exercised in society find expression, as Foucault (1976:121-127) contends, in the development of scattered centres of resistance.

What are the sources of the ethical notions, including those that motivated the participation of the leaders of the early gay political groups or other types of endeavour that favoured the collectivity? Published letters provide one interesting example of the resolution of the problem posed for a respectful, conscientious upper middle class gay man in response to the authority of religion, law and medicine. In a letter written early in his relationship with Russell Cheney in the 1920s, American literary scholar F. O. Matthiessen concisely sums up the dilemma confronting a conscientious individual attempting to reconcile his personal experience of homosexual desire with the social rejection of it:

Well, when you have admitted that you are sexually inverted, what are you going to do about it? The law and public opinion are clear enough on this point. But law and public opinion represent the majority who do not either understand, or even know about the question. There cannot be laws made for a small fraction of the minority. But does this mean that the small minority must resolutely shut themselves out of one of the most beautiful experiences of life, when if they love they cannot possibly do harm to anyone except themselves, and in point of fact, as we know, they actually find a new fullness and balance to life? (excerpt from FOM to RC, [Oxford, England], Feb. 7 [1925]. Hyde 1978:87-88).

Oddly, Matthiessen's argument seems to be based on the fact that he had found love rather than on the mere question of sexual orientation, with which he was apparently never very comfortable.³⁶ Their regional origins, social class and the period in which they lived shaped Matthiessen and Cheney's understanding of how to live as homosexuals in the intellectual elite of New England in the 1930s, reminding the reader by its detail that the heteroglossic model predicts many such voices, many such pairings of topic and point of view. The ideology of the moral campaigns and moral panics that fuelled so many social movements in the United States is a component in the ethical schema of citizenship, whose importance in relation to the study of community has been underlined by Mouffe (1991), and will be further explored in the section on leadership, cultures of resistance and civil rights under community schemata (p. 88).

The prototypical gay life cycle, the second part of the motivational force of schemata of the self, is summarized by Sawchuck (1973:6-8,17-24) using concepts that can readily be adapted to the schema model. He mentions the pre-entrance phase of self-identification briefly, noting that the sequence of self-identification and entrance varies. The recognition of "subjective attraction" to others of same sex may be occasioned by or verified by a sexual encounter. Once a decision to accept a homosexual identity is made, this leads to the reinterpretation of the past in the light of new self-concept. With varying temporal sequences, the newcomer enters the bar world, experiencing fear, then launches into an initial period of sexual popularity, during which homosexuals become the entrant's "real group," and he learns about how straights and gays are different, since homosexuals are asserted to be more talented, adventurous, cosmopolitan and open-minded, while straights are boring, narrow-minded, and conventional. After the end of the period of being a "new face," the entrant settles into a "career" comprising a complex set of personal relationships and experiences. These include participation in friendship groups which vary in size and cohesion. Sawchuck (1973:25-37) proposes two "ideal types," "core" and "peripheral" gays, defined by bar attendance, but recognizes that individuals go through "cycles of affiliation." The degree of community participation is inversely proportional to "amatory success," since couples tend to withdraw from active participation.

³⁶ Katz (1983:411) quotes a reviewer of this book who claims that "Matthiessen's homosexuality was suggested if at all, only by the fact that his circle was more predominantly heterosexual than was usual in Harvard literary groups at the time and that he was unusually hostile to homosexual colleagues who mixed their academic and sexual relations."

An individual's perception of gay life changes as his "career" progresses. After the early phase of cruising and numerous and varied sexual encounters, men "get over" their concern with sexual adventure. Sawchuck models cruising as exchanges in a sexual marketplace (an analogy which I feel obscures as much as it enlightens),³⁷ thus he says, "when beauty fades," sexual partners become hard to find, leading to disenchantment and withdrawal. He recognizes that the view of younger gays that old homosexuals lead sad lonely lives is untrue (citing Weinberg [1970]). Sawchuck notes that withdrawal is also motivated by secrecy concerns and by the conflict between the time and energy required for bar-going community involvement and work obligations (Sawchuck 1973:77-80). He does not stop to inquire what those who "withdraw" actually do, what other realms of gay life they can move to, or how they feel about what has happened.

Individual versus Collective Models of Gay Identity: In the now quite substantial literature on gay identity, one finds a strong emphasis on its individual psychological component, where, however, the individual is treated as an abstraction, a case study, with limited attention paid to the individual's relationship to the collectivity. This predominant focus on the individual in academic discussions of sexuality came about only by ignoring the anthropological evidence, as Bleys (1987) points out. Despite early summaries by writers such as Westermarck (1906), Karsch-Haack (1911) and Carpenter (1921), who clearly depicted socially or culturally defined "third gender" roles such as the "berdache," "xanith," "hijra," or "mahu," analyses of homosexuality in European and American society concentrated exclusively on homosexuality as a trait exhibited by the individual.³⁸ Whether homosexuality is described as "sickness," using the medical model,³⁹ or as suffering from arrested development, the interpretation suggested by Freud and many others in psychiatry and psychoanalysis, or even as a chosen

³⁷ It was used, for example, by Pollak (1982). The focus on sexual encounters hides from view many important features of gay social life.

³⁸ For recent work on such "third gender roles," see, for example, Callender and Kochem (1983) on North American berdaches, Wikan (1977) on Omani xaniths, Nanda (1990) on hijras in India, Levy (1973) on mahus in Tahiti, and many other sources. Adam (1986) suggests a typology of institutional arrangements involving what nineteenth century European scholars came to call "homosexuality." Herdt, the best known of several ethnographers who have detailed such arrangements in New Guinea (1981, 1982) has recently proposed a theoretical attempt to go "beyond sexual dimorphism" to account for this type of institution (Herdt 1994). It is not clear whether there is any advantage to applying a master category such as homosexuality to this very different set of social relationships and cultural understandings. A new theme was added to the berdache literature by Williams's (1986a) study of a Lakota community where some men play traditional berdache roles while others identify as gay natives.

³⁹ British medical literature is reviewed by Weeks (1977). Katz (1976, 1983) presents many American primary medical sources.

“life-style” in which the individual “discovers” his or her “true nature,” the identity is something that attaches to the individual self. If any attention is directed towards its social dimensions, it usually involves an understanding that the society’s culture constitutes a passive repertoire of possible identities from which the individual chooses. In one of the earliest attempts by an anthropologist to deal with variation in human sexual practices, Ruth Benedict constructed a typology of human behaviour forms of psychological “adjustment”. This analysis envisions an infinitude of combinations chosen by different cultures in time and space, and made available to their members. She explicitly mentions the variable construction of homosexual roles” (1934 [1956]:187) and the “adjustments they require of the individual in different cultures. In academic as in popular discourse, inter-cultural differences may be recognized, but many writers imply that there is something “essential” about homosexuality, that whether in a different or disguised form, it is present in all societies, in all cultures (Boswell 1982). Ethnographic accounts of gender roles with no equivalent in Euro-American culture are thus read as equivalent in some way to Western homosexuality, and their “shocking” presence is one more piece of evidence for the unbridled sexuality or animality of non-western peoples in popular culture constructions of the ethnic other (Bleys 1987). Social and cultural change—the move symbolized by the change from “homosexual” to “gay” as the preferred identity label—is also out of reach of the individualist model. Schema theory provides a way to link the two levels.

The concept of collective identity has itself been controversial in anthropology, from the time of Malinowski’s critique of the Durkheimian “collective mind” (Stocking 1983:95). The influential authors of the theory of social construction of individual identity, Berger and Luckmann (1966:174), adamantly refuse to extend the concept to the collective level, however. Describing such an attempt as “reification” or “hypostatization,” they refuse to acknowledge any collective subjects, only the individual and society with mediating (individual) socializing agents (1966:173-174). While I reject their blanket refusal to see that a collective identity is a necessary element in understanding modern social processes, I do respect their concern with reification, and will outline below (p. 76) the way that I think my theoretical orientation avoids the dangers of postulating rigidly bounded groups that Berger and Luckmann refuse to accept. This model, I suggest, enables us to conceive of collective subjects as the outcome of the fluid and multiple activities of actual human beings.

Collective identity is a central concept in the process sociology of Elias, which analyses social processes that occur between groups, especially between those dominant in society and those who are outsiders (Elias and Scotson 1965). His criticism of earlier theories of collective identity (summarized in Mennell 1994) attacks the presumption that prior to the appearance of collective identity, there was an already formed individual identity among the people who joined together to form a group identity. A theory based on a hypothetical day of origin makes a poor model for actual human experience, which always begins in a pre-existent social and cultural context:

human beings have never, even before the emergence of the species in its present form, been solitary animals: their self-images and we-images have always—since the acquisition of the uniquely human capacity for self-reflection—been formed over time within groups of interdependent people, that have on the whole steadily increased in size (Mennell 1994:176).

Respecting this caution in my use of the concept, the distinction drawn between the individual and collective levels of identity represents two analytical moments, not a literal time sequence. Elias postulates that while individuals are affiliated to several collectivities, one in particular, their “survival unit,” will be more important than the others because of the high emotional charge on relationships within it. This study focuses on men for whom the survival unit was the collectivity based on homosexual orientation.

C. SCHEMATA OF GAY COMMUNITY

Gay men constitute a specific type of collectivity. For gays, unlike other minority collectivities, affiliation with the community is an outcome of individual decision, usually in late adolescence or early adulthood. Although this distinguishes gays from ethnic, religious, or physically defined groups such as the blind, for example, I believe that the processes by which collective identity is established and maintained show some similarities.

Popular language and the scientific literature abound in conceptual frameworks for understanding the social organization of men who make same-gender sexual attraction a salient basis in the organization of their time and affective commitments. The sociological literature in particular reveals a great number of conflicting terms which are used as yardsticks for measuring gay collective life. Among the most common terms are “subculture,” “community,” “ghetto,” “culture” and “minority,” all of which are used in popular speech as well as in academic analysis. They are often used by gays themselves (Achilles 1964).⁴⁰ Though none

⁴⁰ Note that in the text as a whole, in order to avoid constant qualifications when designating the collectivity, I have frequently used non-scientific words like “gay world,” “gay scene,” and “gay circles.” These vague

has gained wide acceptance, a variety of alternative terms have been employed: "milieu" and "circle" are common; some sociologists have come up with neologisms such as "micro-culture" (Albro and Tully 1979), "identity community" and "subgroup culture" (Krieger 1983). Even more common are references to the "gay world" (Hooker 1965; Warren 1974) or the "gay ghetto" (Levine 1979). In the following sections I present a model of the gay community in schematic terms, examining a variety of ways that the theory can be applied. I examine sociological and territorial or spatial aspects of gay community, the emotional attachment or membership which links individuals to it, and the diversity of population within the gay community.

Community as Social Fact: While there have been many differences in the exact meaning of the term "community," especially for non-territorial, socially diffuse or sporadic groupings and abstractions like "communities of interest," the term comes naturally to mind for many designations of social groups in both scholarly and much popular discourse about the nature of our society.

"Community" was used to name the homosexual collectivity of Chicago as early as 1909 in the report of the Chicago Vice Commission (cited by Burnham [1973:47]). Early ethnographers like Leznoff (1954, 1956), Hooker (1961), and Achilles (1964, 1967) all used the term, more or less as an equivalent to "subculture." Despite attempts to clarify the vocabulary, words continue to be used in imprecise ways and the problem is compounded by their widespread adoption in common speech, both inside and outside gay society. While there may be some agreement that it includes a symbolic dimension, the term "community" is used in quite different ways by different writers and groups of speakers. It presents special problems for social scientists since it impinges necessarily on their own social lives: membership in communities is not optional in our society. And since community first impinges on us in the family and wider kin and neighbour relations, it has an emotional charge. As we have seen in the preceding discussion of identity as emotional identification with others, identity often has a strong component of being part of a "we-group." Thus, while we can agree with Raymond Williams's (1983:76) observation that "community" is always a non-pejorative designation for a social group (in contrast to "nation" or "society"), the "we" behind it automatically implies

designations clearly have no claim to theoretical precision, and are commonly heard in the speech of non-specialist members of the collectivity they name.

the existence of contrasting “they-groups” so the popular notion of community attachment underlies significant social cleavages. Williams’s overview of the historical and contemporary multiplicity of meanings for which people have used the word “community” impels us to caution in treating it as a term of social or cultural analysis. “Community,” Williams writes, “can be the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warmly persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships.” He thus makes clear that a rhetorical stance is comprised in the uses to which the word is often put, and it is in this sense that I will understand it in this analysis.

Though Hooker (1961, 1965) adopted the same title, “The Homosexual Community,” that Leznoff and Westley (1956) had used, her overview of the social configuration of the Southern California gay world highlighted the institutions and facilities used by gay males, residential clustering among them, the social networks to which they belonged, and the culture or “common understandings” of these various social groups. She laid out in a more concise and complete form than even Leznoff, the research program which gay sociology and anthropology is still far from completing.⁴¹

In an examination of the concept from the point of view of sociological theory, Murray (1980) argues for the community status of the gay world on the basis of the development of its institutional complement of bars, newspapers, self-help organizations, etc. Concerned to defend the “gay community” against Simon and Gagnon’s (1967) charge that it was an “impoverished” community, Murray sets out the conceptual arguments about the designation of gay collectivities in terms of mainstream American sociological categories related to urban ecology and deviant subcultures. Using the example of Toronto, Murray compares the gay community to ethnic communities in terms of its territorial characteristics and of the more significant criterion of “institutional completeness.” This term, developed by Raymond Breton for describing American ethnic communities, implies that the more complete a community is, the less its members have to go outside to satisfy their needs, allowing the concentration of social relations within the group (Breton 1964, cit. Murray 1980:36). By Breton’s definition, the Toronto gay community meets the criteria, possessing as it does institutions of the three key types: religious organizations, periodicals, and welfare organizations, though it lacks the “familistic orientation” of ethnic groups.

⁴¹ Stall (1995) adds the important element of intergenerational relations to this ethnographic agenda.

Having defended the idea that "gay community" is an "appropriate locution" in terms of standard American sociology, Murray abandons the "entity view" of community in favour of an interactionist, "process view". Citing Suttles (1972), Murray contends that it is in its "foreign relations," "in the usual complicated dialectic of groupness and the perception of a group by others" that a community comes into existence. And part of this emergence involves the "realization ... that emergent communities are potential lucrative markets," particularly for special commodities symbolizing group membership (Murray 1980:40). Here Murray's argument seems to stray back to the "satisfying of needs" of the "entity view"; nevertheless his comments on the need to see community as creation or process and to focus on "collective identity" are close to my own aims. The interactionist account is undoubtedly the most relevant theoretical framework for any attempt to articulate the individual agent, subject or actor, to the historical construction of gender and sexual identities, a question which Foucault's concern for structure and the vast sweep of history leaves out. The mobilization of discourse in the development of common understandings and knowledge was essential to the life of the institutions that represent the public face of the community.

Community as Space: The spatial dimension has long dominated conceptions of community and provides the prototype for the understanding of the term. But students of urban life such as Wirth (1938) have long recognized the non-spatial nature of urban communities, where social links often have patterns which do not correspond to the territorial distribution of members but to the affiliations related to individual identity. Nevertheless, such communities necessarily have spatial foci, like the old neighbourhood to which the far-flung members return to meet specific ethnic or other affiliational needs. In the gay world, publicly acknowledged spatial foci were virtually non-existent in North America before the Second World War, with the exception of certain residential and commercial neighbourhoods in the very largest urban concentrations. Despite its sparsity, gay space, most notably in the form of the gay bar, played a symbolic role that was central to the development of a sense of collective identity as the number and visibility of such institutions increased in the postwar period.

While the gay community is clearly not comparable to either a territorially distinct settlement or a firmly bounded, separate part of the city, the scattered and diverse social interactions that constitute its life necessarily occur in specific physical locations, so the concepts of gay space and gay place merit investigation. For gay men, the production and

utilisation of space, in the form of the multitude of commercial establishments (documented for Montreal in Chapter 6 and listed in Appendix B-2) are inextricably linked with the knowledge of them that underlies gay conversational discourse. Bars are a common discourse topic, as men struggle to keep abreast of the scene, the bars, cruising patterns and plentiful stories about people and their lives that unfold in them. A social geographer, Castells (1983) observes, on the basis of the convergence of distributions obtained when maps of various types indicating gay male residential patterns are overlaid,⁴² that “all converge towards a largely similar territorial boundary.” He uses this convergence to classify census tracts as either gay or non-gay, and to develop a statistical model, incorporating historical data on social stratification, which shows that barriers to gay penetration of “middle-class areas” had begun to weaken in the late 1970s (1983:145-157). Castells’ approach suffers from his commitment to the notion of bounded territories, inherent in the urban ecology model based on plant ecology (see Hannerz 1980:27). This rigidity masks from view the more complex and integrated patterns of spatial use of gay life in urban areas.⁴³ He makes no reference to the clandestine use of public space, and his treatment of interaction with other groups remains undeveloped, leading him to overlook the violence which erupted in the late 1970s on the border between the gay Castro and Latino Mission districts, for example.

For a listener to understand “formulations of place” in conversation, as Schegloff (1971) pointed out, the reference style chosen by a speaker entails knowledge of the listener’s membership in common social groupings, since fellow members will understand local or insider place references that would have to be formulated differently for outsiders. Saying that a store is “by the post office” only works if the listener knows where the post office is. In the pre-liberation period, gays used nicknames for bars to protect their conversations from over-curious eavesdroppers, using insider formulations that were particularly difficult for outsiders to comprehend. The overall management of the information connected with named gay places was a sensitive issue, and the naming practices are just one facet of a complex field of schematized information and opinion about gay bars (or the local “scene”). Behind the discourse lies the set of shared knowledge structures, the schemata of bar lore, onto which

⁴² Lesbians were excluded from the study on the grounds that women have a different relationship to space than men (Castells 1983:140). The maps were based on 1) information provided by key informants who had experience in gay election campaigns; 2) data from voters lists showing multiple male households; 3) gay bars and other social gathering places; 4) self-defined gay businesses; and 5) concentrations of voters supporting Harvey Milk, a gay candidate for municipal office in 1975 (1983:145-147).

individuals, whether they are bar regulars, occasional users, or visitors, map their varied understandings and experiences, making those who choose to develop this knowledge into members of the gay community able to speak with competent familiarity about the topic of bars, having mastered a set of facts and formed opinions that few but community members would take the trouble to duplicate.

As Rotenberg (1993) observes, the meanings of spaces are historically contingent; later analysts can reconstruct them from discourse (a term he uses to designate a specific set of thematically focused utterances). Initially, he says:

As people participate in the discourse, they act on their understandings to disproportionately shape to their purposes the urban places they control. These places then enter the historical development of spatial meaning as artifacts, preserving forever after the moment when a meaning was given concrete form in space (Rotenberg 1993:xiv).

Rotenberg thus focuses on the intersection between historical discourse and social organization, as people's understandings transform the "abstract" space which is produced by economic and political institutions into meaningful "places." This provides insights into "the interactions between urban institutions, individual experience, and shared history."

The power dimension of the interaction of the relationships symbolized in spatial distribution is foregrounded by Gupta and Ferguson (1992). They utilize the space/place dichotomy⁴⁴ to emphasize the exercise of power in the hierarchically organized cultural constructions of community that organize the process by which "a space achieves a distinctive *identity* as a place." Gupta and Ferguson's observations are directed towards struggles for national liberation in which the place of the homeland is a key symbol. For the gay community, space was only fought for after the Stonewall uprising in 1969, in which the defence of gay territory took the form of violence against the police on a large scale for the first time. Prior to 1969 in New York, or 1976 in Montreal (Higgins 1985c), there was no organized mass response to defend gay space against police raids and arbitrary arrests. In earlier stages of the formation of a gay collective identity, defence of gay territory was less overt, but the increasing availability of space for gay social life in the quarter century of this study and the relative infrequency of reports of raids indicate that security was only one aspect of the story.

⁴³ A critique of the territorial view of gay subculture is made by Murray (1980:34), who stresses the unbounded nature of urban space use by various groups.

⁴⁴ The space versus place dichotomy of recent anthropological writing highlights the contrast between the physical occupation of the urban environment (space) and the rhetorical and pragmatic construction of it in discourse and action (place). Note that the two terms are assigned opposite meanings by different writers. I follow the usage of Rotenberg (1993) and Gupta and Ferguson (1992), rather than that of De Certeau (1990 [1980]:172-173), although the latter's discussion is in other respects fully compatible with the analysis of the American anthropologists.

The almost exclusive reliance on “word of mouth” to publicize the existence of gay bars in the pre-liberation period makes the rapid extension and consolidation of gay space a testament to the power of private, individual language use in changing human geography. “Who,” as Gupta and Ferguson ask, “has the power to make places of spaces?” The present study will examine to what extent gay men had that power in a detailed look at the early history of gay space in Montreal. For the pre-liberation period, political actions were not an option to defend public gay spaces, but this did not prevent the bars and other urban spaces occupied wholly or partly by gay men from being fully constructed as gay places in gay discourse.

In addition to the crucial accessibility of “gay space” for social (and sexual) encounters, the set of “gay places” constitutes a central schematic structure in the gay world. A “gay place” is a socially shared schema constructed in part through actions (e.g. going there to cruise other men), but really consolidated in discourse (telling friends you had gone there to cruise and what it was like/what happened/who you met/saw there). This kind of cooperative construction of places as “gay places” precedes any notion of “gay rights” or even “gay people.” The social totality called gay community has a spatial representation as the “gay ghetto” (Levine 1979), used in popular gay speech to refer to particular sections of cities or metaphorically to gay life as something separate from the rest of society.

Membership and Motivation: At the individual level, as we have seen (p. 55), individual gay identity is not just a cognitive category but an emotional identification with the collectivity. In this discursive context, this emotional link to community, seen from a collective perspective, leads to some notion that the individual has “membership” or “belongs” to the collectivity. When a group validates an individual’s feeling of self worth, in contrast to others which denigrate him or her, there is likely to be an emotional attachment in the adoption of a view of shared membership in a group. This feeling of belonging must, I argue, be included in the understanding of the prototypical community, since merely sharing a set of institutions, discussed in the next section, does not explain how they are maintained nor why.

Because of the deep emotional link between identity and group membership, Linda Singer points out:

Community is not a referential sign but a call or appeal. What is called for is not some objective reference. The call of community aims at response, a calling back (Singer 1991:125).

Invoking "community" aims at an acknowledgement of shared identification, of fellow-member status. In the practice of collective life, community does not tend to be used purely in reference to the facts of collective life; it is more likely to be found in the context of a statement on what it should be like, how its members should act, or how they differ from non-members. It is a term of rhetoric, not analysis. But as Singer also point out, the appeal to the commonality of membership may camouflage the internal differences of class, age, gender, etc. It may be used to obscure power relations within the group.

In the gay world, it is not clear how common it was for gay men to speak of a "gay community" in the period of this study. After 1970, militants in the gay liberation movement used the word almost automatically to designate the social whole which gay men made up.⁴⁵ At the same time, gay militants tended to denigrate the bar world in particular with the term "ghetto," in allusion to its enclosing character, its separation from the main part of society and its extraction of money from captive gay markets. Opposition to the capitalist exploitation of gay sociability is a constant theme in the gay liberation publications of the early 1970s. Carl Wittman's influential text "A Gay Manifesto" was a defining document for the first phase of the post-Stonewall movement of the early 1970s. In it the author wonders whether San Francisco is a ghetto or a 'free territory':

Our ghetto certainly is more beautiful and larger and more diverse than most ghettos, and it is certainly freer than the rest of Amerika. That's why we're here. But it isn't ours. Capitalists make money off us, cops patrol us, government tolerates us as long as we shut up, and daily we work for and pay taxes to those who oppress us. To be a free territory, we must govern ourselves, set up our own institutions, defend ourselves, and use our energies to improve our lives (Wittman 1970).

In a similar vein, Altman (1971:145) discusses the early gay liberationists ideas on gay separatism, and plans to take over certain counties or municipalities.

The rhetorical use of "community" in the early gay liberation period expressed, in accordance with Singer's view, the militants' aspirations more than an actual attempt to analyse the social form or structure of the group concerned. Community as an ideal is a schema with strong motivational force and by the end of the 1970s, the idea that there was a "gay community" locally, nationally and internationally had become commonplace. It has been taken over in general usage as a designation for a self-evident component of urban life, referred to not only by gays but also by municipal officials, health workers, policemen, etc. The diversity of usage means that as the name for a social science model, the word must be treated with care.

⁴⁵ Sharon Stone made this point in a paper given at the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association meeting, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, 1987.

Only Altman (1971) emphasizes the development of an emotional attachment to the group as an aspect of the coming out process, but he immediately colours it with a political connotation that derives more from the political context in which he was writing and the agenda of the nascent gay movement than from a careful look at sociology of gay life in a broader sense. Whether this "feeling of belonging" necessarily has a political dimension, as Altman would have it, or simply means that the individual recognizes a new set of peers and a new definition of insiders and outsiders is evidently a result of the conceptual climate in which he makes the change. Before the gay movement developed and publicized its politics, such awareness was unlikely for most, as the fact that most of the men interviewed lacked knowledge of the homophile movement attests.

Social Differentiation in the Gay Community: In addition to the social difference between gays and the surrounding society, it is a commonplace that all kinds of people are gay. Thus within the gay world, men encounter other gays who nevertheless differ from them in socially significant ways.

What is the influence of these other lines of social and cultural differentiation on the choice some individuals to replace family and kin group allegiance with sexual orientation and to forge a new social world for themselves, one that was composed essentially of other gay men? Increasing numbers of Montreal men chose to make their homosexuality the most salient strands in their personal lives in the postwar period. What impact do the other affiliations have on involvement in the larger process of emergence of institutions (mainly commercial) and a collective identity? What consequences for other social affiliations or memberships did assuming a gay identity have?

The widely varying cognitive content and the motivational force of specific schemata of people from diverse generations and backgrounds result in a social distribution of knowledge reflects differences of class, age cohort, ethnicity and race, religion and other lines of social differentiation. Sexual orientation as a line of social distinction means that, as Leznoff (1954:220) says of Montreal in the 1950s, gays were "in society but not of society." But he does not discuss the differences between gays except in terms of class, the foundation of his "overt"/"covert" dichotomy. But class was clearly no more important than ethnicity in Montreal. Here as elsewhere, twentieth century population movements have contributed to a highly diversified city population in terms of ethnicity, adding to the longstanding

French/English duality (see p. 98). Thus the emergence of gay community occurred in an already diversified population, and individuals embracing membership in it had to balance the consequences with the other valued identity components.

For members of some groups this was easier than for others, whether due to the sheer size of the population or because of the values of the ethnic community and the resources available to it to sanction individual disobedience. Thus, as discussed in the section on the selection of narrators (p. 27), it is important to see the community from as wide a range of social viewpoints as possible. The heteroglossic influences reaching individuals through the cacophony of heteroglossic social voices, especially through the mass media which emerged in fully developed form with the ascendancy of the medium of television during the period of this study. Interactions in all directions could occur, and the unity of a social grouping like the gay world was in fact as divided as the surrounding social environment to which all its members were attached. Many scholars have urged that this social reality can better be modelled as a set of gay communities, not one overarching structure.

I will discuss the ethnic, cultural and language situation particular to Quebec in Chapter 4. Here I would like to focus on the questions of race and social class in the gay world. In this study I have adopted a version of the class system most widely shared by speakers in Montreal, the three tiered set of upper, middle and lower which are a function of the degree of economic comfort of the individual.

Race in the modern American sense of Black, White, Asian, Latino, and Native is a category of discourse like gay identity, but differs in being the most visible identity in the urban landscape. Compared to contemporary American cities, Montreal was a racially homogeneous city in the period of this study. Though some information on non-white participants in gay life was collected, it was not a central issue in the narrators' accounts. Theorists of race have, however, issued the strongest challenge to the complacency of thinking of the gay world as a white world, and have been most concerned to develop a theoretical approach to account for multiple identity components in gay academic discourse. In the United States, the assumptions of white middle-class gay liberationists were challenged by writers like Thomas Dotton (1975), who wrote an angry denunciation of their racial assumptions in which "the burden of being accepted rests exclusively on the outsiders who must adapt to that which is not them." In Britain, where the racial composition of the population underwent rapid change due to postwar immigration, Mercer and Julien (1988) seek ways out of the impasse created between a gay

community that refused to look at its own exclusionary racial practices, and a black community that was unwilling to discuss issues of sexuality. In racial and ethnic minorities, collective identities are cross-cut by the distinctions of gender, class, and age cohort. Mercer and Julien assert that arriving at an understanding of the multiple identities individuals hold in mass cosmopolitan societies is not only a theoretical question but a practical imperative.

Seeking also to displace and reinfect essentialist versions of 'identity' ... we need to re-think how boundaries of race, class, gender and sexuality are constantly crossed and negotiated in the commonplace cultural construction of one's social identity (Mercer and Julien 1988:101-102).

Inter-collective relations can only be fruitfully discussed, these writers stress, by examining the "everyday sites of antagonism and conflict" in social contexts such as sports events and in the media, in music and dancing, "where actual men and women of diverse ethnic origins intermingle in the mutual construction of each other's racial and sexual identities." A complete understanding of the processes of identity formation and management profits from the representation of all points of view.

Though it is clear that many gay men belong to the working class, there is a persistent tendency to see the gay world as a middle-class milieu.⁴⁶ Few writers have followed Dyer's (1976) lead in explaining why the gay world appears so "middle class," or undertaking more general explorations of the ways in which sexual orientation and social class intersect. Is the middle-class image a media illusion, or a result of higher disposable income among single men? Is it the result of a different way of living one's selfhood in the culture of the working class (Dunk 1991) or of racial minorities (Dotton 1975)? An emphasis on consumption has long marked the adoption of gay identity, from the purchase of physique magazines in the 1950s to vacations in Key West in the 1990s, but how can consumerism be linked to the ethics of citizenship that motivates people to invest their energies in community groups making up the gay movement?

The emergence of the gay community was accompanied by a transformation of gay social structure from a simple collection of social networks by the addition of a set of commercial enterprises whose owners had interests distinct from the social networks, Kinsman argues (1987:184-185). I believe that the number of such individuals is quite small, and that entrepreneurship in the gay market is of less overall significance than the class structure of the

⁴⁶ These discussions refer in the background to the Stalinist charge that homosexuality is automatically "bourgeois decadence", made after 1934 when the Soviet Union reversed its initial legislative openness in favour of a conservative, natalist policy (Lauritsen and Thorstad 1974:68-70).

society in creating divisions between gay men. Class constitutes one of the main categories of analysis in my discussion of gay bars, but it is also a factor in such things as access to cars and cottages, two highly useful means for the achievement of personal control over domestic space if one was living at home.

This study is intended to complement other research in an accumulation of studies in many parts of the world, written from varying theoretical perspectives in order to ground a high level synthesis of studies of the gay world in relation to many types of social and cultural differentiation. Although there is a vast journalistic and political literature, and insightful fictional accounts of gay life and the interrelation of sexual orientation with ethnic, linguistic, racial and generational components of identity, there is still not much scholarly work that explores these issues. Though data is lacking on all points of view in the grid of multiple identities as they vary over time and space, the heteroglossic discourse model and the social distribution of the cognitive structures on which discourse rests offer an open framework that incorporates the possibility of outside voices gaining a hearing.

D. SCHEMATA IN GAY DISCOURSE

Acquiring an identity entails achieving mastery of the forms of language that go with it, and the knowledge structures on which they rest. In this discussion I will follow the distinction established by Swales (1990) between the formal schemata, or genres, which structure the representation of gay life in discourse, most notably in the coming out story, the narration of how an individual came to acquire his gay identity. The coming out story is an example of a gay genre, a concept which links discourse analytic concerns with form to the content schemata of the individual identity. Genre theory, as Swales shows, allows us to integrate the formal structures of utterances to their thematic structure and the points of view of participants in heteroglossic discourse. Moreover, the choice of themes is shaped by the identity of the discourse participants who must share a knowledge of relevant topics. I refer to the particular knowledge shared among gay men as "lore," as in animal lore or star lore, a body of popular knowledge.

Several specific linguistic codes are associated with the gay world. This section reviews background information on codes shared by men in the gay world, the distinctive linguistic forms of vocabulary, intonation or style of repartee, that characterize the speech of some gays some of the time. But knowledge of forms is not the equivalent of mastery of a form of

language, as Hymes (1974:51) points out in defining a "speech community" as a "community sharing knowledge of rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and knowledge also of its patterns of use." Similarly, Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982:6) stress that knowledge of "communicative conventions" is required to use forms correctly.⁴⁷ It was not enough to know that gay men called each other "Mary" or "doll" with a certain intonation in the 1950s. You had to know when, why and with whom to use this loaded epithet. Otherwise you ran the risk of saying something inappropriate, thus exposing your ignorance or violating values held by the community, which could undermine your claim to membership or your prestige in it. The knowledge of codes and usages was an essential part in understanding the pragmatic role of discourse, how it could be deployed to achieve social purposes, discourse as a form of action. Finally, one of the pragmatic objectives accomplished in gay discourse is the accumulation and maintenance of shared knowledge, building schemata that become projects of the collectivity, like knowledge of the bars or of opera singers. These knowledge structures and the procedures by which they are controlled by the community are one of the clearest signs of the existence of a gay community.

Discourse Theory: By "discourse," I mean linguistic production of any kind: utterances or grouping of utterance. In large measure, Foucault (1971) constituted "discourse" as an object of scholarly attention, but he was primarily concerned with one highly specific type: authoritative discourse, the discourse socially licensed to determine what is true - judicially, medically, scientifically constituted social structures with the final "say." Despite this orientation, Foucault's analysis of power (1976:121-135) recognizes the use of oppositional discourse at all levels, with incessant conflicts that transform and overturn them. Power, he says, implies resistance, which is never external to power. Foucault rejects sorting discourse into dominant and dominated; instead, he argues for a view which sees a multiplicity of discursive elements interacting to determine discursive strategies: what is said and what is hidden, who speaks, and in what context. While discourse is an instrument of power, it is also

⁴⁷ There have been several studies of the gay speech community and gay rhetoric. Hayes (1981b:28-42) unfortunately focuses on labels. In his article "Gayspeak," (1981a), Hayes refers to this language as a "special dialect" of the "gay subculture." James Darsey (1981), in "Gayspeak: A Response," criticizes the use of subculture only because Hayes has not seen its implications. He has not, says Darsey, included in the concept the knowledge that it actually contains. Neither author attempts to relate subculture to a theory of subcultures or to systematically articulate their concept of gay language to prevailing sociolinguistic or communications theories. Studies closer to the concerns of the present research are the study of specifically gay discourse patterns

an obstacle to power. It is a point of resistance and the starting point for an opposing strategy. In the case of sodomy, for example, the increasing controls over and categorization of sexuality in the nineteenth century awakened opposition and the claim of naturalness by people categorized as having sexual practices that were deemed unnatural (1976:133-134).

For linguists and discourse analysts, "discourse" is quite a different object of inquiry than it is for Foucault. Linguists, for example, focus on the micro-structuring of discourse in terms of trans-sentence devices for directing the hearer's attention to the ideas the speaker wants to stress, the pragmatics of daily life, the voice of command as executed by intonation, etc. Systemic grammar sees utterances as the product of speakers or writers making choices among "systems" of options at levels ranging from that of realization (the sequencing of phonemes or graphemes), to that of ideology, the choice of topic and the expression of a given point of view towards it.⁴⁸ This study focuses only on the ideological level of systemic analysis, recognizing that a multi-level application of the theory to gay identity and community processes would greatly enhance our understanding of the changes which I am investigating. What the systemic theory shares with Foucault is an emphasis on individual agency in the use of discourse, a theme which will be developed in the following discussion of the ideological content of discourse and the theory of discourse communities and their active role in shaping and judging utterances and discursive genres.

In his analysis of the thematic content and ideological use of discourse, Lemke (1988) incorporates three key concepts from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) into the broad framework of systemic grammar. *Heteroglossia* is the diversity of speaking practices in any community, the variety of social voices or points of view. The *dialogism* of texts draws attention to the fact that writers are always aware of voices other than their own and that these voices speak through their texts or stand ready to reply to them. Finally, *intertextuality*, a term derived from Bakhtin's work by Kristeva (summarized by Angenot 1983), refers to the idea that meanings in a community exist through relations of texts; they are not necessarily explicit in one text but develop against a background of recurrent text-types. Systemic theory, as Lemke explains, specifically counters the common supposition that meaning is a property of

in cooperative dinner party group repartee by Leap (1993, 1996), and Morris's (1993) discussion of gay repartee among opera fans.

⁴⁸ Best known from the work of M.A.K. Halliday (see Eggins 1994), systemic grammar traces its intellectual roots, notably the view that meaning derives from the context and social function of language in use, back to Malinowski. Given this genealogy, it is not surprising that the theory lends itself well to an anthropological

texts themselves. Instead he argues that, while language offers a broad range of semantic resources, the creation of meaning can only properly be described in a general semiotics of social action, within which language is but one mode. Meaning is an aspect of human lives, social activities and the practices of a community, not just of speech and writing. The social semiotic system includes a community's recurrent "saids" and "dones." The thematic content of a text and its function as discursive action must be understood against its intertextual and contextual background—the other texts with which it shares its themes and the activities that intersect with the themes expressed. Since the same themes are incorporated differently into texts produced by different social groups—like the homosexuals and homophobes in Lemke's example—the theory of thematic/heteroglossic discursive combinations offers a framework for the analysis of the social construction of ideological oppositions, alliances, and co-optations.⁴⁹ When combined with the notion of the motivating force of schemata, this theory provides a model powerful enough to account for the oppositional discourses that combat hegemonic ideological attempts to control the behaviour of non-dominant social groups (see p. 91 below).

Bakhtin's "heteroglossia," the multiplicity of social voices in contention, coupled to the theory of schemata, helps to explain the different responses of individuals to the ethical stance of the various streams of discourse to which individuals are exposed. While the promotion in dominant discourse of the schema of the autonomous individual may supply some people with the self-confidence to live life as a member of a despised social category, others may respond to the more negative messages regarding homosexuality, and thus be inhibited from identification with the collectivity based on sexual orientation. The latter group's point of view is not presented here, since the narrator group was recruited to reflect the viewpoint of gay-identified men. This fluid model of the ideological aspects of discourse allows us to conceive of the "voices" in heteroglossic discourse as unbounded social groupings, created and struggled over in time, and thus to avoid the dangers of reifying collective identities feared by Berger and Luckmann (1966, see p. 61). Discourse, whether the contemporary newspaper accounts of homosexual arrests and scandals, or the authoritative statement of moral positions condemning

exploration of the social role of discourse. See J.R. Firth (1957) and Hasan (1985) for assessments of Malinowski's contributions to linguistics.

⁴⁹ Warnings of the danger of co-optation have long been issued by gay writers. For example, in a paper critiquing the commercial, class-based notion of "gay ghetto," Desnoyers and Roy (1981:19-20) linked the concept of "community" to the familiar "community of interests," and pessimistically conclude that this leads inevitably to the co-optation of the notion of "community" for profit. See also Renaud (1982) for a condemnation of the negative impact which the institutionalization of concern for gay identity among social workers and other professionals in Quebec has had on the sense of gay community.

homosexuality, or the positive accounts of their lives offered by the narrators, using a specific method of analysis, such as that adopted by Lemke, allows the schemata of individual and collective identity to be uncovered.

The methodological tools for understanding the relationship between the two levels are improved by the addition of the notion of "discourse community," which was used by Lemke (1983) to identify the situated points of view of the collective participants, or "social voices," in heteroglossic discourse. Swales (1990)⁵⁰ relates it to the creation and management of discourse "genres." He identifies two precise attributes of discourse communities which I have used in the present study:

The acquisition of genre skills depends on previous knowledge of the world, giving rise to *content schemata*, [and] knowledge of prior texts, giving rise to *formal schemata* (Swales 1990:9-10).

In its relation to content schemata, discourse is, he says "epistemic or constitutive of a group's knowledge" (Swales 1990:21). The second type of schemata is that of genres, prototypical forms of discourse. The discourse community that creates a particular genre, maintains it and adapts it over time.

Genres themselves are classes of communicative events which typically possess features of stability, name recognition and so on. Genre-type communicative events (and perhaps others) consist of texts themselves (spoken, written, or a combination) plus encoding and decoding procedures as moderated by genre-related aspects of text-role and text-environment (Swales 1990:9).

In keeping with the cognitive perspective, his understanding of genre is based on a prototypical approach, rather than on the traditional presence or absence of a specific set of characteristics.⁵¹ This method allows genres to be defined on the basis of a combination of purpose and form (Swales 1990:48-52), but the underlying characteristic of genres both in literature and in more mundane texts is the recognition of the social purposes that motivate their creation and maintenance. This flexible definition makes the concept highly relevant for the analysis of oral discourse as a manifestation of communities. Using the discourse community and genre concepts, Swales connects discourse practices to the knowledge structures that a social group develops and maintains and to discourse types, the set of forms employed to communicate habitual meanings within a social grouping, which exhibit characteristic patterns that are accessible to analysis.

⁵⁰ Working in Applied Linguistics, Swales's interest in schema theory was designed to improve methods for helping second language learners to master the conventions of professional discourse communities.

⁵¹ D'Andrade (1995:117-120) situates the development of prototype theory by Rosch as a major step in the development of schema theory and later connectionist models in cognitive anthropology. He considers "schema" as a set of "slots" to be filled in particular "instantiations" of the schema, with prototypes as instantiations which fill the slots with "default values" (1995:123-124).

Community conventions thus exert control over what will be recognized as a valid instance of a genre and what will not. Rejected instances may be either failures (jokes that are found unfunny) or considered to express an outsider's view of a topic. Conforming to the rules is thus a test of loyalty, a marker of group affiliation. Equally important is the relation of genres to knowledge about the world and about previous texts, on which skill in their acquisition and use depends (1990:9-10). Such skill is a measure of an individual's prestige in the discourse community.

The fact of their existence in gay discourse (discussed in Chapter 7) supports my contention that there is indeed a social entity creating and maintaining its own discourse schemata and knowledge structures concerning themes of interest to the collectivity and that this social entity can usefully be modelled as a discourse community. Since the pragmatic functions of speech were pointed out by Austin (1962) and developed in Searle's (1969) work on speech acts, the analysis of the social functions of language has primarily been concerned with examining how particular tasks are accomplished by performative utterances. Certain utterances are said to have "illocutionary force" because they accomplish social actions such as apologizing, congratulating, swearing an oath, marrying people, etc.). Other utterances which produce unintended social consequences, such as annoying the listener or arousing doubt about what is said, have "perlocutionary force" (Levinson 1983:226-242). These pragmatic performative functions constitute an important part of daily interaction. But "idle chatter" is seldom recognized as a means of acting socially through language. The adoption of the schematic/discourse model extends the performative analysis of discourse since in simply "talking about" selected themes "idle chatter" helps to constitute and maintain the body of social customs and orientations that underlie the discourse of the community and instantiates the genre forms which belong to it. Idle conversation is a channel for the transmission of knowledge and value orientation among members of the community. Access to specifically gay knowledge obtained through such channels is an advantage to an individual who wants to function in the gay world. Survival information circulates at lightening speed when raids occur, or when physical violence threatens.

In this examination of gay life, I have broadened the applicability of the term "genre" beyond that proposed by Swales. While his formulation focused on written genres maintained by academic or professional discourse communities, it is essential to consider oral genres for an

analysis of the gay community, where written communications were extremely scarce before 1970. While oral discourse conventions and situational usage may not correspond as neatly to the model as his consideration of the research paper genre, it is essential to regard them as an important ethnographic feature to be examined in any social context. The discourse community model, with its inclusion of both formal and content schemata, is compatible with Lemke's analysis of the thematic/point of view pairings in heteroglossic discourse as community members draw on the knowledge to produce utterances in conformity with the genre-governed formal patternings of discourse. I find it a promising theoretical perspective from which to understand the relations among the wide range of discourse practices which characterize gay life.

Gay Codes, Genres and Knowledge: Use of special linguistic codes among gay men has long been recognized: Bullough (1976:610) cites nineteenth century and early twentieth century examples of the incomprehensibility of gay language to outsiders. A good example of the symbolic importance of language knowledge is provided in a methodological essay by Leznoff (1956), in which the ethnographer describes his problems in establishing rapport with the men he was interviewing until, following Kinsey (he developed a technique for putting them at ease by going over terms from a list of gay "argot"). By displaying knowledge of the gay world's language, he demonstrated to them a serious commitment, a willingness to conform to the group's conventions, a sign of at least provisional identification or sympathy with gay life.⁵² Leznoff's (1954:124) recognition of the importance of sexual narratives in the cohesiveness of the group of gay "overts" is a step towards recognizing a specific set of genres in use in the gay community.

Heteroglossic discourse communities are united (and divided) not only by communicative (or discursive) conventions but also by the knowledge stored and processed in shared schemata, the subject matter, the common content with which members are encouraged to be familiar. New members not only acquire forms of speech but orientations to particular topics, some of which are survival-oriented (essential for dealing with the practicalities of the social world they are entering), while others might be termed recreational. Thus the specific topics on which information is acquired and developed in the gay world include not only such matters as

⁵² Leznoff's perceptive discussion of the many gay signalling systems such as those used in cruising (looks, conversational gambits, choices of clothing, etc.) are presented in later chapters.

finding the bars, knowing how to dress for success, recognizing different types of danger (of arrest, disease, robbery or violence),⁵³ but also less practical matters such as interests in specific singers or types of music, gossip about community figures, etc. The core members of this discourse grouping (some of whom, it should be noted, may not even be gay themselves) share schematic knowledge that fosters a shared point of view in the face of the larger society's discursively constructed thematic interests and orientations, and thus help to develop a sense of common identity. One way this identity can find expression, even in extremely repressive times, is as a public or audience which comes together for particular artistic, literary or even religious occasions. Studying the growth and function of "gay publics" devoted to certain singers, clothing design, cooking, Broadway, opera, etc., as well as consumers supporting gay-specific interests like resorts, sex information, etc., provides a means of investigating through concrete indices the history of collective identification processes. Individuals remember concerts attended, vacations taken, and books bought, which were manifestations of their affiliation with the collectivity. One might extend this analysis even to the upsurge in interest in studies of lesbian and gay history, like the present study, since they too have material impacts in publishing, travel to conferences, and so on.

The shared knowledge of the knowledge networks does not have to have a specifically gay referent. Opera is not a particularly gay-oriented form of entertainment. Yet the opera world could barely be imagined without the presence of gay men as designers, dancers and audience (Morris 1993; Koestenbaum 1993). Whether the gay contingent is socially visible or not in a given context, for the gay world as discourse community, the conversations after the show, the arrangement for dinner and an evening at the theatre, or showing off in opera talk in a bar. The opera interest provides a topic of neutral conversation on which common ground can be found between two people from widely separated social spheres of origin. Rules controlling admission to social circles in which specific cultural knowledge of a particular type is generally required may be waived for those who are young, cute or otherwise persuasive and/or endearing, but they eventually will have to keep up with the dialogue or be unable to maintain social presence (Grube 1986).

⁵³ The "queen role" in Leznoff's (1954:104) ethnography has an explicit component of teaching survival information to new members. The "queen" of the group of overt homosexuals undertook to keep an eye on the younger members of the group when they were in a gay bar, and sent a warning when the innocents were in danger of talking to a cop or going home with a man known to be violent or crazy.

Stereotypes: Ostracism and Identification: Stereotyping is one of the most widely noted aspects of discourse on homosexuals. Before 1970, and even afterwards, media portrayals of homosexuality relied heavily on stock characters, the “screaming queen” and the “bull dyke,” both of which are targeted for their inappropriate gender characteristics. Used throughout the mass media, they are expected to reinforce negative responses from the audience and to lead to social action that will not favour the lives of those they target.⁵⁴ Adam (1977) describes how stereotypes function by suggesting that members of a denigrated group are both weak and immoral. Using stereotypes, writers or speakers seek to establish connections in the reader’s or hearer’s mind between the group being attacked and other rejected groups, such as the frequent link made between homosexuality and prostitution. As Dyer (1984:31) explains, media representations of gay men dwell on their feminine attributes, the incongruity between their dress and behaviour and the expected, “appropriate” gender behaviour of “normal” men, and through this limited iconography immediately signal homosexuality to the spectator.

A dynamic theory of stereotypes which seeks to get beyond the merely classificatory level of analysis and emphasizes process is that proposed by social identity theorists Hogg and Abrams (1988). These social psychologists base their analysis on an understanding that stereotypes are cognitive categories that are not just the “cognitive templates” proposed by Cass (1985; see p. 53) but linked to affective identification with a social group, with a feeling of membership or belonging. Since categorization applies as much to the self as to others, self-stereotyping underpins an individual’s understanding of himself or herself. As schematic representations of social groups implicating membership, the stereotypes of the in-group tend to be favourable, while derogatory stereotypes will be applied to outgroups. While for many scholars, stereotypes are simply convenient tools used in all cognition, Hogg and Abrams recognized that they have not only a cognitive function but also a value function. For a “value-laden” category, relevant to one’s own value system and self-conceptualization, there is a tendency to preserve and heighten intergroup distinctiveness in accord with Tajfel’s (1981) “accentuation effect” (Hogg and Abrams 1988:75). This means that disconfirming instances are unlikely to undermine belief in the stereotype (e.g. men’s negative opinions of women’s abilities are not shaken by the knowledge that there are successful women). This theory of

⁵⁴ “Stereotype” is a word which has gained wide currency outside academic circles since it was first used by Lippmann (1922) in the 1920s in the sense of a simplified negative portrayal of social outgroups. Its ubiquity in human perception is often overlooked by a desire to condemn its use in inter-group conflict. I argue here for a

stereotypes is useful in that it gets beyond the purely cognitive association of social categorization involving the self and points to its emotional component, social identity as a sense of "belongingness," to use the rather awkward term proposed by these authors. It incorporates the same impetus or motivation that is important in the schema/discourse model used in this study.

Discourse, Knowledge and Motivation: The Gay Reader Position: Texts construct their readers, as writers incorporate their intended audience in structuring the communication at the time of composition. As described by Bakhtin (1981), the repertoire of social voices available to the writer is vast. The heteroglot nature of each person's social surroundings in modern urban society provides roles and identities that not only differ in the authority they are accorded but that evoke differing emotional colorations, mythic figures, and so on. Kindly grandmothers and gruff authoritarians are stock characters that exist in the shared symbolic universe of groups and subgroups. Stereotypes are the essence of the shared stock that can be invoked by the writer. The expectation is that the reader will share the same set of understandings as the writer. If not, the message received may not be the same as that sent. Critics have tended to be very optimistic about the successful outcome of the act of reading, theorizing the reception of texts in ways which allow virtually no autonomy to the reader (Gervais 1991). They presume that the writer and reader schemata invoked to interpret the text are fully congruent. "Subtexting" is possible however, since members of minorities of various sorts do not share fully congruent symbolic patterns. Minority schemata overlap to a very large extent with those of the dominant (hegemonic) culture, but vary in specific areas of specialized knowledge and attitudes related to functional purposes unique to those with minority status. Types of interpretation not activated for the majority by a situation may be crucial to effective performance of function and may be relevant to actual physical survival such as in the case of racial attacks.

As members of an invisible minority, gay men came to expect to have to translate the framework of many texts into terms that made sense to them. In cases where the text addressed the topic of homosexuality, the construction of the reader (almost always as a non-gay with a negative attitude towards gays) made visible the social division which set the gay

deeper examination of the place of stereotyping in relation to other aspects of human cognition, without which attempts to "eliminate stereotypes" will fail since they are part of the way cognition works.

world apart from the rest of society. In an analysis of media coverage of a murder and related events in Montreal in the mid-1950s I have examined this subject in more detail (Higgins 1995). Two elements in the news reports at that time can serve to illustrate what I call the “gay reader position” (Kress 1989:35), which is an aspect of the idea that gays constitute a discourse community. For example, in 1956, knowledge that Peel Street was home to gay bars must have been widespread among gay men, who would have no trouble inferring that reports of unusual arrests of men in the area might mean gays had become a police target (given background knowledge that such harassment was common practice). This ability to use intertext to fill in content might motivate a gay reader to decide not to go out, or to discuss with friends to find out if Peel Street was too dangerous to visit for a while.

Inaccuracies and misinterpretations in media accounts further highlighted the differences between personal knowledge and cultural discourse for a gay reader. As a boundary marker the inaccurate depiction had both illocutionary and perlocutionary force, in Austin’s terms. Its illocutionary function was to set gays apart as social others. But from the gay point of view, it had a perlocutionary function of promoting gay solidarity. Aiding the development of a the feeling among gay readers that they belonged to a distinct social world, and thus heightening their sense of collective identity was surely unintended by the journalists. Sometimes stereotypic portrayals presented homosexuals as acting in common, as though there was a vast homosexual conspiracy. Accusations that the gay world can act as a corporate group, with a coordinated sense of direction, were especially wild when there were no local gay political groups. For gay readers, these flights of fancy only reinforced a sense of invisibility and of being a target of wild attacks.

The perlocutionary effect of much mainstream media discourse in creating the gay reader position led, as it did for other social minorities, to the phenomenon usually called “subtexting” (see p. 82), the creation of a variant reading of a text other than that intended by the author, because of the reader’s membership in a social group not part of the text’s intended audience.⁵⁵ It led to a heightened sense of irony (p. 337), with the consequences noted by Sperber (1975:127), who observed that the use of irony as signifier depends on shared symbolizing, and thus shared beliefs, and also shows the motivational role of texts in creating and strengthening

⁵⁵ Subtexting is used in a somewhat different sense by Vygotsky (1966:149-151) who attributes it to the originator of method acting, Stanislavsky, who urged actors that they needed to find the thought behind a text “to understand another’s speech it is not sufficient to understand his words—we must understand his thought.” For gays and other minority reader, finding the other’s thought was often all too easy.

interpersonal links between members of a discourse community by making their shared point of view visible to fellow members. Kress succinctly makes the connections between schemata in discourse and the shift in collective self-image of an oppressed group:

Once discourse is taken to be an item for observation rather than something we think we already understand, the focus returns to the social distribution of knowledge and values. Only in terms of their differing individual schemata for storing information and emotion do readers acquire their capacity to refuse the position allotted to them by a given discourse (Kress 1989:36).

In other words, exposure to adverse discourse motivated individuals to see themselves as part of the outcast collectivity. Identification with the collectivity provided them with the means to reject the condemnation of mainstream discourse and construct an alternate definition of themselves. This socially dispersed access to discursive power advocated by Foucault also lies at the heart of the heteroglossic discourse model.

E. GAY AGENCY

The gay minority came from the silence of universal opprobrium and, through initiative and perseverance, redefined its relationship to society in more favourable terms. This narrative of success of course owes much to the parallel narratives of other minorities in the political history of the United States, but its inscription there must give rise to caution in interpretation of the changes outlined, since the political narrative may subsume equally important aspects which are not emphasized in the frame of reference. Analysts of political discourse tend to evaluate only the public initiatives and rhetoric of social groups, neglecting action in the private sphere. In examining agency in gay discourse, I use the heteroglossic discourse model to argue that public rhetoric develops out of and depends on private discourse. Without individual acts of self-affirmation and the development of political consciousness within small social groups, political rhetoric cannot be effective at the community level. When a gay social milieu had emerged that favoured the creation of private discourse, the conditions were created that made it possible for political leaders to attract significant numbers to the gay cause.

Affirming and Proclaiming Identity: Coming Out Individually and Collectively: Cultural theories that gay men share with other members of the North American society include social types like the "self-made man," the "underdog" who wins in the end, and many others. Western literature, mythology and popular media are filled with narratives of men triumphing over adversity, leading some gay men to view the adverse conditions of their lives as something

that could be changed by struggle. Such narratives incorporate a teleology of progress towards better conditions.

The objective truth of this meta-narrative of a steady march towards a better future remains debatable. What is important here is that the trope was available in the culture and could readily be mobilized by those whose words and actions shaped the emergence of the gay collectivity as a real social community. We act because we believe that we should “take charge” of our lives, and sometimes because we think that our actions can make a better world. But when narrators recount their actions, their conformity to this narrative trope may obscure the actual events behind the story.

The attack mounted by gays on a narrow segment of the dominant ideology of the “sex/gender system” (Rubin 1975) occurred in parallel with moves toward self-redefinition on the part of American blacks and women. Like these important changes it must be understood in the context of the post-war emergence of the United States as world leader and the effects of the war itself on American social arrangements and conceptions. Central to this analysis is the increased adoption of the concept of civil rights for minorities, as discussed above. Gay individuals came to reject the way they were portrayed in the psychological literature as isolated case studies (and the still persistent Christian view that they belonged to a particularly reprehensible category of sinners). Largely unaware of the earlier efforts along the same line conducted by the large German gay movement of the 1920s described by Steakley (1975), American homosexuals began after 1950 to see themselves in terms of a “minority” suffering a very stringent form of persecution, and resolved to set up a movement to achieve justice for themselves, thus recasting the pre-Nazi focus on law reform in terms of a much broader concept of democratic freedom: the attainment of the homophile movement’s goals was taken to be necessary to the pursuit of the American ideal of freedom not only for the members of the persecuted minority themselves but in order that American society as a whole live up to its ideals.

Gay counter-stereotyping of heterosexuals does not seem to have received any scholarly attention, though it certainly has a role as one of the “boundary maintenance” devices of the gay world. More common are analyses of gay anti-straight humour, as in Cavan’s (1963) discussion of the means used to protect a gay bar (their “home territory”) from invading heterosexual “tourists,” in which there are aspects of stereotyping (straight equals boring). One might say that there is an element of stereotyping in the following joke:

How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb?
Only one, but the light bulb has to really want to change (Goodwin 1989:34).

Here psychiatrists are characterized as (stupidly) obsessed with "curing" homosexuals. This is a retort to the perception that the psychiatric profession was anti-gay. While this joke follows a pattern shared by many groups, it is used for specifically gay purposes here, expressing the "situated point of view" (Lemke 1988) of those whose lives were affected by the profession. It represents gay resistance to a powerful social institution that was perceived as hostile to gays.

Though a few leaders of the American homophile movement (see p. 125) were publicly "out" as homosexuals through exposure in the media, it was only after 1969, with the arrival of the gay liberation movement that the act of coming out took on a new and very central symbolic function as it became a major political tool in the strategy of movement militants (D'Emilio 1983:235). Public disclosure of sexual orientation by as many people as possible was used in a campaign that was designed to overcome the stereotyped picture of gays in the media and in social settings. As a militant theoretical stance, coming out was the distinguishing mark of the gay liberation movement, the idea that separated it from its predecessor the homophile movement.⁵⁶ While Altman (1971:15), one of the movement's earliest theorists, implied at one point that coming out might simply refer to sexual initiation, he stressed that its significance lay beyond sexual acts. He defines the term not only as a self-identification but as a recognition of membership in a stigmatized minority (i.e. as political consciousness), so that, as Escoffier (1985:144) observes, coming out gave political meaning to a personal psychological process.⁵⁷

By means of "zaps" or guerrilla theatre actions in which people's hidden sexual identity was revealed to unwitting bystanders, radical groups in the gay liberation movement participated in a broad effort to change the image of gays.⁵⁸ Gay identity in the early 1970s adopted the feminist tactic of consciousness-raising groups⁵⁹ to counteract the frequently heard complaint that gay men had no role models and had to invent themselves. This attitude betrayed an

⁵⁶ Watney (1980); for the original statement, see the "Gay Manifesto" by Wittman (1970). Kyper (1978) provides a useful summary of the political view of "coming out" and other issues in the early years of the gay liberation movement.

⁵⁷ Blasius (1994:215) points to the importance of coming out as a change in relation to others through an act of volition, which makes manifest the possibility of personal and collective agency that he calls a new lesbian and gay ethos.

⁵⁸ I recollect an anecdote from a Vancouver activist about a zap he had participated in there in the early 1970s. The group boarded city buses at successive stops until one of their number got on and shouted "Are there any queers on this bus?" whereupon the others waved their arms and cheered. It was a tactic designed to bring gay invisibility to a clamorous end.

⁵⁹ Several early Montreal activists have attested to the existence of such a group in Montreal in about 1972.

ignorance of the past that would only be corrected later in the decade with the emergence of the grassroots and academic gay history movement (Katz 1976; D'Emilio 1983; Roscoe 1992). Escoffier (1985:146) attributes the rejection of the idea of a pre-existent identity to the contrast between ethnic identity and homosexual identity. As a result of the politics of coming out, since 1969, increasing numbers of lesbians and gay men have made themselves visible, mounting a challenge to the old stereotypes.

An important symbolic step in this type of transition is often a change of name., as pointed out in Elias's "outsider/established" theory (Mennell 1994:183). The outsiders impose the adoption of a new group name they have chosen, replacing the old one which the established had imposed. Following the examples of changing from a name (often on chosen by outsiders) to a new name expressing pride in membership, "homosexual" was replaced by "gay" much as "Negro" became "Black" then "African American," "girl" became "woman," and "Canadien français" became "Québécois." By 1980, even in French media, the use of the word "gay" or "gai" had taken on its homosexual meaning. By this shift in vocabulary, society took note of a new sociological and cultural reality in its midst. Post-Stonewall activists stressed the need to detach the identity from the exclusively sexual connotations of the term "homosexual." They favoured using the word "gay," arguing that it was better to use terms originated by those whom they designated than "scientific" vocabulary imposed from above, by medical authorities (Teal 1971:44).⁶⁰ This counter-ideological thrust achieved notable success in redefining the conception of homosexuality as a valid sexual option. This was true for those who applied it to themselves and for the general public as well.

By the start of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in 1981, the assumption that there was a "gay community" was well-enough established to permit early institutions of the gay movement to become allies of government agencies through the network of treatment and prevention organizations created in response to the health crisis (Rayside and Lindquist 1992). This public recognition began even before the epidemic. It indicates of a radical change in Western culture, a turning away from the homophobic silence of the past.

⁶⁰ Similar arguments were used for *schwul* in German, according to Herzer (1985:18-19). As Teal (1971) emphasizes, young militants dismissed the word "homophile," used by activists in the 1950s, as an apologetic euphemism. Even before Stonewall, radicals at the 1968 North American Conference of Homophile Associations (NACHO) had pushed through a motion adopting "Gay is Good" as a slogan of the movement (D'Emilio 1983:199).

With the rise of the gay movement, the negative conditions surrounding gay identity have decreased in intensity. Few today are unaware of the alternatives, whereas thirty years ago, most homosexuals felt alone until they found their way into the gay world. Though access to the gay world may still pose a problem and emotional difficulty in accepting one's difference remain, there are now coming-out groups and gay youth groups in all major centres as well as many printed sources of information on the gay world, including practical guides to how to enter it.

While in this study we are not concerned with state formation as such, the global framework urged by Elias (1991:163) is necessary for a fully elaborated model of the changes to the social organization of homosexuality. Though often considered an American (or North American) export, gay liberation could not have gained a following if it did not have meaning for homosexuals in other countries. American and European homophiles of the 1950s maintained close contacts and there was a complex interaction of events and personalities in several states. In recent years, gay identity and gay communities have arisen in many states outside the European and English-speaking areas where it began.⁶¹ The present study seeks to document the changes in Montreal that were part of this large-scale cultural and social change, and thus contribute to an understanding of group identification and action at higher levels of synthesis. Future work will examine the varying arrays of schematic and discursive conditions which prevailed in a wide range of such local cases, and what consequences they had for collective identity and leadership.

Leadership, Cultures of Resistance and Civil Rights: In what sense do individuals act to "make the world a better place"? This phrasing suggests the motivation of bourgeois philanthropists creating institutions to care for the needy, but the exercise of power in the manifold relations of daily life offers just as much scope for action with a view to benefiting one's group. Such mundane acts as suggesting an outing to friends, hosting a party or arranging a blind date are conscious efforts to better the lives of the primary friendship group, the basic level of experienced community. Speaking in a way that gives voice to a gay point of view lends substance to the larger social community in which the friendship group is embedded.

⁶¹ Trevisan (1986) gives the point of view of a native gay activist in Brazil. Murray (1987) and Parker (1991) present research on the social organization of homosexuality in Latin America. Of special interest is the growing literature on the diffusion of gay identity to non-European societies such as India and the rise of local research and publishing on the topic (Devi [1977]; Ratti [1993]).

At every level, people act on the ideas they have about how things should be, and the experience of oppression is one area of life where things could obviously be better. Thus the motivational force of schemata for at least some gay individuals is the struggle with heterosexual hegemony, using tactics from humorous put-downs in private conversation to joining a group devoted to the struggle for individual civil rights.

In the model proposed for this study, community is seen as the ongoing product of a social process, an objective of joint action, not an entity in itself but an ideal to work towards, a moral imperative or a Christian virtue (Singer 1991), a conception of citizenship (Mouffe 1991), and a purposely orchestrated, participatory edification of the “we-image” (Elias 1991). The importance of sin diminished as modern secular scientific rationalist ideologies replaced religion as a guide for individual self-understanding. At the same time the inapplicability of the sickness model with which official discourse, notably in psychiatry, sought to replace religious morality was perceived by some homosexuals. Gradually, a new paradigm emerged in the middle of the twentieth century. Civil rights became the dominant framework for modelling the self and the collectivity of homosexuals. In American political discourse, with its strong tradition of ethnic and racial minorities claiming their rights, the “gay minority” has gained increasing acceptance, as it has in all the liberal democracies except England. But as with other groups, gay successes are sometimes seen as lip service or tokenism backed by little real analysis of the group’s problems and uncertainty as to how political gains translate real social acceptance.⁶²

An interactional term, “minority,” depicts the collectivity’s relations with the larger society and opens the way to a discussion of leaders, representation, modes of participation, and internal stratification. “Minority” is used as a synonym for “gay world” or the collectivity. This seems to be the sense in which Montreal writer LeDerff adopted it in a gay liberation book published in 1973:

Pendant longtemps, je me suis cru différent des autres, ... jusqu’au jour où je réalisais que, loin d’être unique comme je le croyais, je faisais partie d’une minorité que je découvrais de plus en plus importante, une minorité où chaque métier, chaque religion, chaque classe de la société était représentée (LeDerff 1973:13).

Numerically, people for whom “gay” is an important self-label make up a small but significant segment of the population, a situation perceived as similar to that of ethnic, racial, and religious

⁶² Echoes of the homophile movement’s ideas were heard in Montreal in the 1950s, but there were no groups. See the section on political leadership in Chapter 9 (p. 377).

minorities. Despite scholarly criticism,⁶³ the concept of minority rights has been at the centre of efforts to change the social status of homosexuals as gay rhetoric has mobilized this schema, one of the key terms in the vocabulary of twentieth century liberal democracy.

An early advocate of seeing the individual's self-conception as part of a process of collective identity formation, that of social class, was Gramsci:

Critical understanding of self takes place therefore through a struggle of political "hegemonies" and of opposing directions, first in the ethical field and then in that of politics proper, in order to arrive at the working out at a higher level of one's own concept of reality. Consciousness of being part of a particular hegemonic force (that is to say, political consciousness) is the first stage towards a further progressive self-consciousness in which theory and practice will finally be one. Thus the unity of theory and practice is not just a matter of mechanical fact, but a part of the historical process, whose elementary and primitive phase is to be found in the sense of being 'different' and 'apart,' in an instinctive feeling of independence, and which progresses to the level of real possession of a single and coherent conception of the world (Gramsci 1971:333).

The phrasing of the last sentence of this quotation has a striking resonance with gay self-experience. It incorporates a directness of action, an understanding that those who recognize that they occupy subordinate positions will act to change their status; in this, it is characteristically Marxist. But the model leaves out the cultural dispositions that will motivate that action, since social discrepancies in comfort and power are nothing new. Why do people act to better their situation? Where does the vision of a better life come from and how does it achieve social efficacy, convincing sufficient numbers of the right kind of people to act to institute its teachings? Marx had no explanation for his own motivation. He made a crucial contribution by bracketing out the cultural dimension, a step which the late twentieth century investigation of the cultural construction of gender has in particular rendered problematic, since the definitions of male and female gender clearly rest on a base that is not purely economic. As Dunk (1991) points out, the actual cultural forms of, in his study, the working class, are not determined by the economic, though he argues that the class foundation is the ultimate explanation for the behaviour of the friendship group he studied. Though women are not part of his study group, his theory would include gender along with class as an inextricably linked aspect of notions of individuality and identity. In this study, I would like to show how the same can be true when an individual's sexual orientation is a central defining aspect of self.⁶⁴

⁶³ Laferrière (1975:72-75) pointed to the role of social science as a normalizing framework for the assimilation or exclusion of "sexual minorities." He argues that in considering homosexuals as a minority, the dominant order encompasses them, like other minorities such as women and racial groups, within a paradigm that facilitates their assimilation through the application of a concept of normality derived from psychoanalysis. He stresses the arbitrariness of definition of who constitutes a minority society, under the control of the dominant group. I argue in this study that this is not entirely true, and counter-definition has had some success in the case of gays.

⁶⁴ Ironically, for Dunk's informants, *not* being homosexual was a defining element of self (1991:95-96).

Gay culture plays an important role as a basis for political consciousness. Cohen and Dyer (1980) observe that:

Culture is part of that more conscious process of making sense of the world that all political movements are involved in. This process is the social group's production of knowledge about itself and its situation. Cultural production is more orientated to the affective, sensuous and experimental, whereas theory and research are more concerned with the analysis of situation, conjuncture, strategy and tactics—but both are forms of knowledge.

Drawing on the analysis of youth subcultures in Britain in the 1970s by Hebdige (1979) and others, Kinsman (1996:404) identifies gay culture⁶⁵ as a “culture of resistance,” in an analysis of culture which is built on the experience of members of the gay and lesbian social groups in struggle against “heterosexual hegemony.” Using this Gramscian concept, Kinsman sees gay culture as the solution to the contradiction between gay men’s self-experience and the values of an all-encompassing heterosexual society. In my view this approach places an unfortunate emphasis on cultures as coherent wholes, while the heteroglossic discourse model opens up the discussion to a wider diversity of practices through which members of subordinate or excluded groups assert their agency in more ways than those that can be labelled acts of “resistance.” In the early 1950s, C. Wright Mills (1963[1950]) published an analysis of “circles of opinion” in which individuals paid attention to the views of an “opinion leader” in reacting to media messages concerning daily events, fashion, and politics. Mills stressed that the circles of opinion frequently voiced strong resistance to media pronouncements, an early formulation of the notion of “culture of resistance.” Wulff (1995) has outlined some criticisms of the “culture of resistance” model in the study of youth cultures, observing that the model concentrates on the most extreme types of cultural expression, ignoring subcultural practices that permeate the larger social sphere, and emphasizing conflict as the organizing principle for subcultural activities when they can serve a variety of social outcomes. In the present study, I note instances where some type of overt “resistance” can be observed, but am concerned to document the ordinary daily level of lived experience among gay men.

At the other extreme from activism, it appears, is capitalist investment. There are, however, links between initiative in the political domains and the growth of commercial interest in the gay market. For bar owners and other entrepreneurs, the growth of the gay community means the growth of their customer base, since community membership is often symbolized in specific patterns of consumption. This means that entrepreneurs share at least some of the

⁶⁵ For an interesting look at the concept of gay culture, with an assessment of the impact of Anglo-Saxon gay thinking on Italy, see Cucco (1986:41-45).

goals of the movement. The politics of minority rights are never in the end completely divorced from material interests. Gay community, Kinsman (1987:185-192) notes, is an idea that has been consciously fostered by those who have benefited most from the growing gay visibility since the 1970s, i.e. political leaders, entrepreneurs and professionals. He emphasizes the important role played by social differentiation in shaping how the "community" is conceived, due to the different discursive resources and strategies available to those with different class and cultural origins. Surprisingly little has been written on the commercial underpinnings of these new political groupings.⁶⁶ In this study I want to use a broader understanding of leadership than these official and commercial roles, linking the undertakings in bar ownership or cultural performance to the pleasure of entertaining friends, building the basis of group solidarity without which leadership on the broader scale would not have succeeded.

F. INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE GAY IDENTITY: SCHEMATIC AND DISCURSIVE LINKS

In this chapter, I have outlined a model for describing the process of social change in the social organization of homosexuality that rests on the concepts of schema, discourse and power. The schema and discourse theory presented here integrates two dimensions of individual and collective identity, the cognitive and the affective. In cognitive terms, individual identity involves categorization or classification in an identified social group, while in affective terms it consists of the emotional links which are forged by a group as an element in affiliation for many collectivities. Collective identity is the result of an ongoing process in which discourse plays a key role. As a discourse community, gays take their place among the multitude of heteroglossic voices in society. Individuals find themselves at the intersection of discourses emanating from a range of sources. Exposure to various discourses is linked to the social position which people occupy, but can also be shaped by individuals seeking out discourses based on their felt needs or simple curiosity. The process operates to simultaneously and continuously separate and unite individuals into social segments according to the circumstances and purposes of the participants. In the discourse communities, language behaviour and other symbolic systems are governed by formal schemata like genres and content schemata to provide a framework for expressing interpersonal communication among

⁶⁶ Significant new work has appeared too recently to be covered in this discussion. Examples of this new scholarship can be found in social geography (Bell and Valentine 1995) and the economics of the gay market (Wardlaw 1996).

members. The shared conventions regulate who has recognized membership in groups with sharp boundaries like those of the gay world. They enable individuals to signal membership or their aspiration to be a member and the collectivity to respond as individuals evaluate the messages and act to include or exclude the newcomer.

In this study, the concept of identity is treated as an equivalent way of expressing the idea of membership in a community rather than as an aspect of individual life in isolation. I contend that it is not possible to have a "gay identity" without the existence of a "gay community" because having an identity as gay involves the individual in a process of learning the knowledge and formal conventions of discourse in the community. It is not just an abstract concept that gay identity possesses motivational force. In the coming out process the individual is strongly motivated to acquire the shared schemata of the community in order to participate meaningfully in its life. The emotional bond that comes with membership makes this a natural and important task to be attended to. An observation by Sawchuck (1973:21) shows that coming out can sometimes be explicitly constructed as a ceremony, or rite of passage, by the more experienced participants. The new entrant was formally congratulated, and given information and guidance on how to behave in the gay world so that he would have more control over the situation.

A young man entered the gay bar accompanied by another young man with whom he was living at the time. The entrant's partner was a habitué at the club. They sat at a table and about five minutes later were joined by four other habitués who were all friends of the entrant's partner. The young man was introduced and it was mentioned that it was his first time in a gay club. One friend said, "Oh, so you're making your début?" All attention was focused on the newcomer. There was a great deal of joking, story telling, and laughing, in the course of which the habitués translated the terms they were using, and explained the events that were transpiring in the bar around them. When other friends approached they were introduced to the newcomer and informed that it was his 'début'. Some offered congratulations in a joking manner. At one point the entrant and his partner came over to the bar, at the suggestion of the partner. At the bar, the partner instructed the newcomer regarding his social demeanour: "You're talking to these guys like they're the people at school, and they're not! You can't come on too friendly or they'll think you want to make it with them. You've got to be more cool" (Sawchuck 1973:21).

This excerpt illustrates the important use of discourse forms such as stories and the use of guide and mentor roles by the participants to smooth the entrant's passage into the gay world.

In the long term, the expression of the gay point of view which grew up in gay social discourse provided the basis for challenging social rejection. It emphasized the pursuit of the collective interests such as the achievement of civil rights. This point of view is expressed by Sawchuck:

By affording the participants the opportunity for free and continuing interaction with other homosexuals, the gay bar contributes to the continual realization and reaffirmation of a common gay perspective (1973:40).

Here I aim to investigate the process in greater detail than he did, focusing on the discursive forms and the informational and symbolic content shared by gays. The motivation at the collective level to undertake political action for self-defence is built on the everyday expression of opinion in private circles over a period of decades. Individuals applied the surrounding culture's values and precepts to their own situation and built a climate of opinion that led to a sense of membership in the collectivity, in other words, recognizing it as a community.

Individual agency in social change is an integral part of the heteroglossic schema/discourse model in that it explicitly casts speakers/members in a potentially creative role. As every speaker is at the intersection of a several discourse communities, individuals can serve as go-betweens, making new links among participants and bringing about changes in the overall system through their discursive practices.⁶⁷ Another advantage of the schema/discourse model is that it can be related to social networks, since the conventions of the community are taught, reinforced and transformed through network links. Lacking the boundedness of concepts like "subculture," the model allows the necessary conceptual flexibility to accommodate the varying degrees of individual identification with and participation in the gay world. Using this model, we can maintain a view of the individual that realistically reflects the complex and dynamic web of simultaneous memberships in multiple discourse communities.

But there is a problem in assessing the relation between social power and this broad analysis of multi-centred discourse with its struggle for control of social definitions. How powerful can the counter-discourse, the discursive practices of resistance that engage other social voices in a dialectic, actually be? Can it act in a way that the social environment responds? Can alternatives to the dominant discourse really change old entrenched views and values? Gays and lesbians in mid-century Euro-American societies mobilized themes from the dominant liberal discourse favouring individualism and personal freedom, non-prosecution of victimless crimes, and the need for personal honesty. This strategy has achieved notable success in influencing public attitudes. For the most part, this success came after 1970, when the gay liberation movement was able to emulate the progress made by other groups (especially women and African Americans). It was not a simple and unequivocal triumph, since this progress led to a reaction from the new "religious right" in the United States and traditional

⁶⁷ A gay example here would be Harry Hay, who transmitted the practices he learned in the American Communist Party to the founding group of the homophile movement (Mattachine Society) in California in the 1950s, though his emphasis on secrecy and a cell structure was later rejected by the non-communist members (D'Emilio 1983).

Conservatism in Britain, but the change has nevertheless been remarkable. With this study of the developments which preceded the breakthrough, I hope to contribute to our understanding of what would follow.

Gay collective identity is a product of a process of social identification which transcends the immediate level of the friendship group and the interrelated friendship groups of which the individual has personal knowledge. It must exist in some form in order for the social grouping to take collective political action or to build up an array of social institutions serving its needs. But what are the limitations of using schema theory to delineate the process of collective identification?

The ongoing creation and maintenance of schemata is the means by which communities are made manifest. Schemata can be uncovered by analysing the discourse contents and forms of the collectivity. Since they are elaborated in discourse and used in governing action, schemata express the intentional orientation of individuals towards a shared collective identity. Their historical presence can be traced long after the period when they were produced, as Connerton (1989) notes in his analysis of social memory. For the first of Connerton's two types of memory practices, the inscribed (1989:72), schema theory can readily be adapted to the view that knowledge structures underlie discourse. His second type of memory practice, the incorporating, is not so easily accommodated however. Those aspects of culture, Connerton's work suggests, which become habitual skills incorporated into unconscious bodily performances, like Bourdieu's (1977) "habitus," cannot be fully accounted for by an ad hoc all-purpose cognitive ordering concept like "schema." This suggests the limits of the usefulness of schema theory in an overall theory of culture, how to deal with the knowledge that has become "second nature," in Elias's (Mennell 1994:177) suggested equivalent for "habitus." Unlike collectivities in which membership is automatically acquired at birth, gay identity is never "second nature" for the individual, and always passes explicitly through consciousness, however diffusely, before being internalized and unconscious. The use that I make of the term "schema" is largely heuristic therefore, in an exploratory application to individual identity and gay collective identity processes which I believe demonstrates its value, but leaves open the possibility that other approaches will complement and correct it. Before turning to the data on gay life in Montreal, the next chapter presents a brief outline of the social and cultural context of Quebec in the mid-twentieth century which influenced the emergence of the local gay community.



Chapter 4. The Study of Homosexuality in Quebec

The chapter provides a brief overview of the social context for the emergence of a self-identified gay community in Montreal, and an outline of Quebec gay history. After a brief examination of the important social changes in progress in the postwar period, I will present information on the legal status of homosexuals and the cultural climate in which most of the narrators grew up and assumed a gay identity. The chapter ends with a summary of ethnographic issues raised by previous scholarship and a chronology of early gay political organizing as a background to the discussion of political leadership in Chapter 7.

A. SOCIAL CHANGE: 1945 TO 1970

The individual and collective experiences of homosexuals in mid-twentieth century Montreal and the changing status of homosexuality as a topic of public discourse must be seen against a background of a broad transformation of Quebec society, summed up by Lamonde and Trépannier (1986) as the arrival of modernity. Major demographic, political, economic and cultural change occurred in Quebec, as it did elsewhere during the World War II period. In the two and a half decades after the war, Quebec moved from conceiving of itself as the leading centre of French Canada, one of the “two founding peoples” of the Dominion of Canada, to a vision of itself as a separate society, an entity unto itself, little known in the other provinces and master of its own destiny. This is the sense of “*maîtres chez nous*,” the slogan of the *Révolution tranquille*. In this section, I will briefly discuss these broad changes, as an introduction to a closer consideration of Quebec society in relation to homosexuality.

The history of colonialism and conquest has left a lasting mark on Quebec and on Canada, affecting relations between the “two founding peoples,” as well as those left out of that formulation, that is native people and immigrants from other cultures. The bitter divisions that attracted most notice in the period before and after World War II in Quebec centred on the changes in the triangular relationship of Francophones, Anglophones and immigrants, mainly of European origin, in cases such as the problem of adapting the linguistically and religiously

based school system to the arrival of groups who did not fit into the framework.⁶⁸ While the proportion of Francophones has remained fairly stable since Confederation, ranging from 75 to 80 percent of Quebec's total population and about 60 to 65 percent on the island of Montreal, the overall composition of the population has undergone significant change. This is because of the arrival of immigrant populations which were neither French nor British in origin, with the result that those of British origin, increasingly concentrated in the Montreal region, represented a declining proportion of the English-speaking population there (Linteau et al. 1986:266).⁶⁹ In this study the focus is largely on members of the two dominant cultural groups; with limited information on the experiences of members of ethnic or racial minorities. Immigrants who identified as homosexuals aligned themselves with either French, English, or both cultural groups.

The most striking feature of the social structure of Quebec, especially that of Montreal, is the dualism of its institutions, networks and geographies. The overlap between affiliation to cultural and linguistic groups on the one hand, and religious affiliation on the other, is well known. Because of its dual structure, the city has had two interconnected but separately identified elites since the British conquest in 1760. The shifting balance between the two is of less interest here than the effect on how homosexuality was dealt with.⁷⁰ In her discussion of immigrant assimilation in Quebec, Meintel (1992:85, citing Anctil [1984]) maintains that a "double majority" exercises a weaker power of assimilation than a unitary majority. The arrival of new groups and the growth of the city, Linteau (1992:164) observes, contributed to the breakdown of the nineteenth century approach to social control by dividing the two major ethnic and linguistic groups into separate institutions. This weakening of social control might explain a less strict control over morality, as Lacoste (1958:79) suggests, since both major groups feel they have minority status, and thus do not feel responsible for society as a whole. Can this help to account for the apparently greater "tolerance" of homosexuality in Montreal than in other cities of comparable size in North America? I will point to some aspects of the

⁶⁸ Magnuson (1980:81-83) relates the gradual changes made to incorporate English-speaking Irish Catholic into the French-speaking school board structure, noting the striking example of the *de facto* classification of Jews as Protestants for the purposes of school board jurisdiction (and tax revenues) in 1930 (p. 84-89).

⁶⁹ The difference between ethnic origin and language complicates discussion of the composition of the population, since surnames are not a sure index of ethnicity. In the nineteenth century, more Anglophones had assimilated to the Francophone population than the reverse, including the many whose Irish surnames give no hint of their linguistic or ethnic affiliation (Linteau et al. 1979:66). See Drouilly (1996) for detailed cartographic representations of the shifts in population from 1951 to 1991.

narrators' comments on ethnicity, geographical mobility, and other aspects of the cultural divide which indicate how individuals in practice navigated this set of overlapping dichotomies.

Quebec's population was more than half urban at the 1921 census (Linteau et al. 1979:410). The massive move to the city of rural French-speaking families continued throughout the middle of the century, but a thorough change of mentality was not brought about overnight, as the collection of essays on the coming of "modernity" in a variety of literary and cultural fields by Lamonde and Trépannier (1986) shows. Only after the war did the people come to see themselves as essentially urban.⁷¹ This shift occurred in spite of the condemnation by the clergy, reluctant to see the development of workers as a class (Lamonde et al. 1982:134), of urban lifestyles, especially those involving recreation. Thivierge (1991) illustrates how the clergy concerned itself with the regulation of such details as the clothing worn by women. The declining influence of the Church, coupled with the opportunities that city life afforded for anonymity, loom in the background of the changes examined in this study.

Differences in the education system highlighted social differences between the two cultural groups in Montreal. Magnuson (1980:100-101) cites the 1962 Tremblay Report on education to state that in 1953, only 6.7 percent of Quebec's male Catholic population between the ages of thirteen and twenty were enrolled in the elite *collèges classiques*, the only avenue to university admittance for Francophones. Thus it is not surprising that higher education was much less accessible for Quebec Francophones in the 1950s, at about 3.7 percent of those of university age, much lower than the 9.4 percent rate for Anglophones (Magnuson 1980:100-101; Lacoste 1958:203-208). Another index of the discrepancy is found in the total endowments of the province's two leading universities in 1962, McGill (\$84 million) and the Université de Montréal (\$2 million), which affected the support for graduate work and thus the career possibilities for the Francophone group as a whole (Magnuson 1980:101).

Even in this period of tight social control, there were structural changes at work in the development of popular communications media that undermined clerical authority. As Lavoie

⁷⁰ One interesting aspect of language use is the increase in bilingualism noted between 1961 and 1981, especially among native speakers of English, of whom a majority is now bilingual. In the latter year, by the criteria used for the census at least, 92.5 percent of the population can speak French (Linteau et al. 1986:545-546).

⁷¹ This demographic and cultural shift is eloquently illustrated in Michel Tremblay's cycle of novels, *Les chroniques du Plateau Mont-Royal*. The novels (*La grosse femme d'à côté est enceinte* [1978], *Thérèse et Pierrette à l'école des Saints-Anges* [1980], *La duchesse et le roturier* [1982], and *Des nouvelles d'Édouard* [1984]) tell the story of three generations. The grandparents arrived in Montreal in the 1920s and the children and especially grandchildren were completely urbanized. The same characters reappear throughout Tremblay's theatrical and fictional output, providing a panoramic portrait of Montreal's working-class Plateau district and the "Main" of the 1940s and 1950s.

(1986) observes, the emergence of the Quebec popular press from about 1880 onwards meant that groups outside the traditional Francophone elite of priests, doctors and notaries gained access to public attention for the first time.⁷² By the late 1940s, the challenge to clerical control over what subjects were proper for media discussion grew ever stronger in the popular weeklies, evidenced, for example, in the relish they showed in sensational reporting of a 1950 raid involving men in women's clothing (Higgins 1990). Even *Montréal-Matin*, a daily newspaper owned by Duplessis's governing Union Nationale party (Bourdon 1978), published a vivid personalized account of how "Pauline," the "queen" of the ball, had the party celebrating "her" engagement to another man ruined by the raid. Such coverage itself constituted a challenge to the Church authority simply in its use of the sensationalist techniques of the tabloid press, against which the clergy and the *Ligues du Sacré-Coeur* fought a vigorous but losing battle in the 1950s (Fontaine 1978:73). After the upheavals of World War II, the appearance of the sex-obsessed yellow newspapers can be seen as a sort of "counter-discourse," with explicit anti-clerical content and the first regular coverage of lesbians and gays (though most of it was extremely negative).⁷³

Though Montreal had had a Francophone majority since the 1860s, the period covered in this study was still one in which the use of English was predominant in business and public discourse. The struggle to establish French as the dominant language in public life, which has transformed relations between the two major cultural groups, was just beginning in the new postwar situation. The analysis of cultural identities in Quebec lies beyond the scope of the present work, but later discussions of the clienteles of bars in different parts of the city, for example, are interpretable only with reference to the language and cultural politics of the period. The centre of the city was culturally English in concrete visual terms (Levine 1990). Nevertheless, as my interviews show, many Francophone gay men used it as their primary leisure district, coping in their own individual ways with the exclusive use of English in signs, menus, and interactions with sales people and waiters were in English.⁷⁴

The fluid identities and multiple forms of belonging reported by the young Montrealers of immigrant origin studied by Meintel (1992) support the processual, linguistically-mediated view

⁷² No overall synthesis of Quebec press history and the related areas of printing and distribution is yet available, though Beaulieu et al. (1973-1990) have furnished an essential reference guide. Robert (1983) provides details on clerical control over the publishing industry through the book orders for the religious school system.

⁷³ For studies of these weekly gossip papers, see Chamberland (1990) and reports on an analysis of *Ici Montréal* (Higgins 1987b; Higgins and Chamberland 1992).

of group belonging that I have used in understanding gay identity. Such an approach is also the basis of Daveluy's (1994) investigation of speech communities in the Montreal area.⁷⁵ Further research is needed to relate an individual's decision to participate in the gay world to the range of constraints and problems faced by members of different immigrant communities. The small size of ethnic communities is also a factor, since regardless of the culture's view of homosexuality, social control over members was easier than in the larger communities. But the supposed anonymity afforded by size was lacking even for English Montrealers, whose members were aware of how easily their activities could be discovered by their parents, as one of narrator's account indicates (p. 144).

In political life, Quebec was long governed by the socially conservative Duplessis government. In the years between the end of the Second World War and the election of the Quebec Liberal Party led by Jean Lesage in 1960, major changes were occurring almost unnoticed. Though the name "la grande noirceur" is commonly applied to these years, current historical writing tends to reinterpret them as the time of preparation for the vast changes which would be put into effect by the new government in the 1960s, the secularization and modernization of the state that is called the *Révolution tranquille* (Behiels 1985). In the 1950s and 1960s, a significant symbolic change occurred as well, most evident in the replacement of "French Canadian" by "Québécois" as the most common self-description of members of the Francophone majority of Quebec.⁷⁶ This new designation signified a whole new outlook, especially on the part of young Francophones. The political relations between the four-fifths of the province's inhabitants whose native language was French and the English-speaking minority which held the key economic positions, have dominated public affairs ever since.

For Francophones in Montreal, the central factors behind the cultural resurgence of the 1960s and 70s was the revival of Quebec nationalism at the same time as American influence led to a local interpretation of the "counter-culture" and its vocal support for freeing

⁷⁴ Linteau (1992:475) illustrates the visual dominance of English with a picture of unilingual signs by photographer Conrad Poirier.

⁷⁵ The latter author has edited a special issue of *Culture* which presents the work of a number of scholars focusing on such topics as the relationship of language to ethnic affiliation.

⁷⁶ I have not been able to date this change precisely, but in conversation it has generally been attributed to the publication *Parti-Pris*, a group whose role in the cultural changes of the 1960s is described in *Québec Underground*, vol. 1, p. 96-99. This section begins, "Canadien-français, connais pas! Québécois, voilà ce que nous sommes." The word was not invented at that time, having been used in the yellow newspaper *Ici Montréal* in the 1950s; it originally referred to a resident of Quebec City.

sensuality.⁷⁷ Though explicit gay references were rare in both contexts, the inclusion of a gay contingent in a nationalist demonstration in 1971 followed the opening of an alternative discourse in French on homosexuality in the pages of the magazine *Mainmise*, beginning with an article in its first issue in 1970 on a gay American filmmaker. Though scarcely significant in overall terms of quantity, the magazine's occasional mentions of homosexuality in a matter-of-fact informative style provided the first presentations of the topic to a generation of Québécois hippies and freaks. Among those influenced by the articles were some leaders of the gay movement in Quebec, whose beginning marks the end of the period I have covered in this research.

B. HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE LAW

Homosexual behaviour was illegal under the Canadian Criminal Code until 1969.⁷⁸ The most important legislation for the regulation of homosexuality was the amendment to the Criminal Code in 1890 to bring it into line with changes introduced in British law by the "Labouchère Amendment" of 1885 which created the offence of "gross indecency" (Sylvestre 1979:17-18; Weeks 1977:14-21). While gross indecency was the statute most commonly used in arrests of homosexuals, Hurteau's (1991:96-106, 152-156) outline of the legal framework for the arrests indicates that many other laws could also be used as circumstances warranted: municipal bylaws on cross-dressing, liquor and fire department regulations, etc. Enforcement of the law was quite variable, as Hurteau's research in the judicial archives makes clear. For example, though he found some cases of arrest for sexual activity at the Midway Cinema as early as 1929, Hurteau (1991:162) noted a sudden increase of cases at the same venue in 1955. From notes in the court documents, it appears that the cinema had hired the Broderick detective agency, who worked with the police in an attempt to eliminate sexual practices on the premises.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ The selection of texts from the underground and student publications between 1962 and 1972 presented by Renaud (1973) show the influences and inflections of the nationalist student revolts and the rise of the hippie counter-culture.

⁷⁸ Gigeroff (1968) outlines the legal history concerning sexual offences of all types in British and Canadian law. Overviews of criminal and other legal dispositions affecting gays in Quebec were presented by Caron (1981) and in a special issue of *Les cahiers du droit* edited by Deleury (1984).

⁷⁹ In 1929, a sixty year old tailor was sentenced to a five year term for having sex with another man at the Midway Theatre. The younger man got a much lighter sentence (Hurteau, personal communication). Hurteau's findings on nineteen arrests at the Midway in 1955 show that only two were married, and all had French surnames except the two Italians. Fifteen of the men were in their twenties or thirties. Eleven listed their occupations as labourers or named unskilled jobs, while three were skilled workers and two were nurses (and one was not specified). This pattern may reflect the Midway's location in the poor working-class area around the Main, particularly in view of the near exclusivity of French names. Other cinemas where men were arrested for

Narrator accounts presented in Chapter 5 indicate that police raids were designed to meet arrest quotas, partly through mass arrests, but also through the use of entrapment procedures. An entrapment arrest is the subject of a remarkably sympathetic yellow newspaper story about the arrest of André X., who met two policemen in a tavern on St-Laurent, and was convinced to go to a rooming house where other police officers were waiting to arrest him. Luckily for André, there had been no specific conversation about the reason for this trip, so he was acquitted.⁸⁰ But not long afterwards, the same paper took a less sympathetic view when it urged that a particularly effeminate Italian stool pigeon should be used to entrap gays (*Ici Montréal* 1957.02.23:11).

The testimony of a city official in the early 1950s made it clear that arrest statistics were the result of police policy rather than an increase in the real level of crimes committed. Jacques Fournier, Senior Prosecutor for the City of Montreal, testifying before the Royal Commission on the Law Relating to Criminal Sexual Psychopaths (McRuer Commission) in 1956, shed light on policy decisions leading to police efforts to control the gay presence in Mount Royal Park. The commissioners asked him to explain the change in numbers of complaints brought to court for gross indecency that are shown in statistics he has submitted to the inquiry. While the number of charges in 1953 and 1955 were 65 and 75, for 1954 they rose to 311. Fournier explains:

We have the privilege to have a mountain right in the middle of the city, but it is too convenient, and the homosexuals were going there, and for a number of years some of them were arrested, but great work has been done to get rid of them at that place so that in 1954, we will say, the police took action to get rid of them on the mountain. Now where are they? They are not on the mountain. The mountain is a solitude, and during the summer those people were there. A boy was killed, Benson, about ten years ago on the mountain.⁸¹ So there you may have the explanation of the difference in the figures for 1954 and 1955.⁸²

In answer to continued questioning on the reasons for the considerable yearly variation in charges laid, Fournier explains:

No, they [the crimes] were out of the mountain, and they were committed in the theatres. In most of the cases coming to court those people were going to small theatres, and in the toilet rooms they were doing the extraordinary things that they did do.

sexual acts included the Dominion in 1936, the Century in 1937 and the Monkland (in an English-speaking area far from downtown, in 1946 (Hurteau 1991:162, personal communication). See p. 246 for narrator accounts and other documentary sources on cinemas as sex venues.

⁸⁰ "André, qui voulait aller en chambre avec un de nos constables, a été acquitté." *Ici Montréal* 1956.12.01:24.

⁸¹ See p. 107 for details of this murder.

⁸² National Archives of Canada. Royal Commission on the Law Relating to Criminal Sexual Psychopaths. Testimony of Jacques Fournier, Q.C., Senior Prosecutor in the City of Montreal, p. 975-994. Exhibit No 43 (appended to p. 978): Complaints under Sections 136, 137, 138, 141, 148, 147, 149, 158 in Montreal/ Offences charged for the years 1953, 1954, 1955.

But the questioner was apparently able to read between the lines of this testimony, since he commented that the results merely reflected special police attention to this type of offence during that year. This policy had some success, as the following yellow newspaper item attests:

Chassés de la "jungle du Mont-Royal" et des petites salles de cinéma du "red light," les homosexuels de Montréal tentent de se trouver ailleurs leur pâture. Ils ne semblent avoir de la chance car on les a aussi chassés de Sept-Îles, de Baie-Comeau et de Labrieville. L'autre jour, à bord de l'autobus Forestville-Québec, la grande "Pauline" se plaignait que "la côte Nord n'est pas raffinée du tout et, ma chère il ne semble pas y avoir de 'boys' imberbes par ici" (*Ici Montréal* 1955.01.29:12).

The shift of police attention to movie theatres such as the Midway, on St-Laurent, for which Hurteau's research provides the details, is thus explained as an artefact of the changing administrative priorities of the police department and its political masters. Administrative practices such as these, as Fournier made clear, were inevitably short-lived efforts that led to the arrests of several hundred people, with major disruption of their individual lives as a potential result. But they left the gay use of the space unchallenged in the long run, since bureaucratic imperatives meant that resources could not be devoted to these campaigns in a sustained way. Their impact on sexual activities on the mountain was minor, as later reports and, indeed, its current popularity attest.

Documentary sources provide insight into sporadic operations by police against gay men in other parts of Quebec as well. One was a series of raids in small centres near Montreal: St-Jean-sur-Richelieu in 1964, where a series of arrests resulted in extensive press coverage.⁸³ In St-Jérôme, police intervened, but did not make arrests at a "wedding" between two men in the fall of 1960. The police encircled the house where the festivities were taking place and gave the participants until midnight to leave the area.⁸⁴ Another story about a police investigation of homosexuals in the same Laurentian town from a yellow paper two years later alludes to a scandal there twenty years previous, as well as mentioning gay scandals in Buckingham, St-Gabriel de Brandon, and Drummondville.⁸⁵

A sense of the climate of public and official opinion in the 1950s is provided by analysis of the media campaign for stricter action against "sex deviates" in 1956 following a wave of brutal heterosexual rapes in Hamilton, Ontario. While nothing in the comments of two Members of Parliament that touched off this campaign had referred to homosexuality, the response of Justice Minister Garson reflected popular understanding of the term when he redirected the

⁸³ "Arrestation de présumés homosexuels à Saint-Jean." *La Presse* 1964.01.24:13.

⁸⁴ "L'événement mondain de l'année: Tous de blanc vêtus, Roger et Florent se sont marié(e)s sous l'oeil de la police." *Nouvelles Illustrées* 1960.10.15.

discussion to focus on homosexuals. After pointing out that the Criminal Code provides for indefinite detention of sex criminals, and only needs to be applied (a provincial responsibility),

Garson concludes:

If one goes back through the history of music and literature, one will find that some of the greatest masterpieces in those fields have been written by sex deviates and that in point of fact we are enormously indebted to them for what they have handed down to their fellow men (*Montreal Gazette* 1956.01.26:27).

Obviously the reference here is not to great writers and composers who were also rapists, but to homosexuals—an illustration of recourse to the stereotype of gay sensitivity and culture.

Finally, in 1969, consensual sexual acts between two individuals of the same sex, committed in private, were decriminalized by the adoption of the Omnibus Bill, debate over which had elicited Prime Minister Trudeau's famous declaration, "The state has no business in the nation's bedrooms."⁸⁶ The proposed legislation occasioned broad public discussion of homosexuality. The legal and judicial debates of the 1960s focused on the question of whether it was appropriate to declare men who had more than one conviction for consensual sex with another man in private to be "dangerous sexual offenders" subject to indefinite detention under the Criminal Code (Kinsman 1996:257-262). In these debates, the early Canadian homosexual rights groups (notably the Association for Social Knowledge of Vancouver, led by a lawyer, Douglas Sanders) took an active part (1996:240-248; see p. 126). Finally, in Kinsman's summary (1996:252-278) of the parliamentary and media debates which led up to the adoption of the Omnibus Bill, he notes the fierce opposition of the Cr ditiste Members of Parliament (most of whom represented rural Quebec constituencies) who spoke out against "perversion" and the "threat to the family." On the other hand, as several narrators indicated, the decriminalization of homosexual behaviour meant a great deal in symbolic terms, in giving Canadian homosexuals a more secure basis for their social identities, and less to fear from the police.

C. THE HISTORICAL AND DISCURSIVE ENVIRONMENT: QUEBEC MEDIA AND CULTURE

Insights into the context of interpretation for the narrators' accounts of gay life in the earlier part of the twentieth century are obtainable primarily through reading the newspapers and other periodical literature of the period. In addition, a very small number of novels, films,

⁸⁵ "Guerre aux tapettes   St-J r me." *Ici Montr al* 1962.06.02:3.

⁸⁶ Gigeroff (1968:209-210). Again Canada followed the legislative lead taken by Britain, where following the recommendations of the Wolfenden (1957) report, homosexual acts were decriminalized in 1967 (Sylvestre 1979:12).

and other cultural works dealt with the theme of homosexuality. In newspapers and other media, the enforcement of the taboo on discussion, silencing and rendering the homosexual collectivity invisible, was the usual response of the mainstream media, though they did report crimes and scandals, as well as the emerging scientific discourse on sexuality and its regulation under the judicial system. Meanwhile the vigorous sensational press made homosexual references and allusions one of its regular themes, in treatments that sometimes adopted a sympathetic stance or expressed overtly favourable opinions towards gays. Occasionally items also appeared in the mainstream press which made humanistic pleas for tolerance and understanding for homosexuals, but on the whole open discussion of the subject was extremely limited until the very end of the period studied. On the other hand, novels and other cultural works provided some of the most open and favourable discussion of the topic of homosexuality, though almost all of these were from foreign sources, notably from Britain, France or the United States. Specific instances of the various aspects of media treatment and cultural productions related to homosexuality will be reviewed in this section in order to ground the discussion of the discursive framework for the narrators' accounts of their experiences in Part II.

Moral Exhortations and Silence: The discursive climate in which men had to come to terms with their homosexuality was dominated by expressions of moral condemnation by clergymen, teachers, politicians, and judges. Hurteau (1993) relates anti-gay sentiment to the ideological reinforcement of concepts of masculinity in Quebec through a close reading of judicial and moral or religious writings. He (Hurteau 1991:140) also mentions a sermon by the Bishop of Montreal from this period in which, without naming it, he accuses the Midway Cinema of being a veritable school of homosexuality.⁸⁷

Access to alternative discourse was extremely limited in the mid-twentieth century. Church and police opinions were joined by medical and psychiatric opinion in condemning homosexuality as sin, crime, or sickness. These authoritative voices dominated in the contest among the heteroglossic voices that constitutes social discourse. However not all subjects are susceptible to such exhortations. Many people in society reject its basic authorities or remain oblivious to the moral points they teach. Some of the narrators proclaimed, at least in

⁸⁷ "Sermon prononcé à l'oratoire du Mont Royal," 19 mars 1954, *Mandements des évêques de Montréal*, p. 2085.

retrospect, that they had felt mainly irritation at having been forced to dissimulate something that they themselves had always simply taken as a fact of nature.

From the point of view of an individual life, the self-experience of sexual orientation interacts not only with authoritative discourses on sexual comportment but with the culture's values like honesty and truth, especially about being honest with yourself and true to your nature. Those who took the moral teachings of their civilization seriously faced an insoluble dilemma. Being gay confronted gay men with a choice between lying to themselves about who they were or being honest, sincere and authentically themselves. The latter position was supported, by the 1940s at least, by a massive array of authoritative voices, ranging from radio dramas to Broadway songs, to the morality of American life presented in the films of Hollywood. But the most plentiful source of images of homosexuals was in the news reports, where negative social attitudes were reflected in stereotypes, and even more often in silence which masked their existence.

News Reports on Homosexuality: Gay society had existed in a recognizable form since the 1880s in Montreal, though before the 1920s information is too scarce for evaluation.⁸⁸ This overview of items from newspapers is intended to make available a range of images of homosexuality that had social currency in Montreal at the time narrators were establishing personal identities as homosexuals and the community was taking shape. Scattered news items from mainstream papers that have come to light portray the homosexual as child molesting monster, as in reports on the murder of a child in 1945, and as transvestite, as in the arrest and trial reports from the 1950 "masquerade" party (mentioned above), and in numerous minor references in the tabloid and yellow press.⁸⁹ The Benson murder of 1945⁹⁰ was recalled a few years later in a story in the first issue of the "yellow newspaper" *Ici Montréal*:

⁸⁸ A number of research paths are available to improve this gap in our knowledge, mainly from the tabloid press and personal memorabilia, but the information will never be as rich as that for the period for which we have systematic personal accounts.

⁸⁹ The three types of publication are identified mainly by physical format: mainstream newspapers like the *Gazette* or *La Presse* consist of large folded sheets; tabloids like *Montréal-Matin* are smaller in format, though the large sheet *Herald* is included on the basis of the sensational reporting style it shares with this type of publication; finally the "yellow newspapers," the term used to refer to a specific type of small format weekly or biweekly papers. The line between the latter two publication types is not sharp, as some papers such as *Midnight* and *Le Nouveau samedi* seem to occupy an intermediate position. There are also other categories of tabloids - crime (*Allô Police*) and entertainment (*Echo-Vedettes*) which have flourished in Quebec but which have not received extensive scholarly attention. See however Fontaine (1978) and the insider accounts of *Midnight* by Lantos (1972, 1973).

⁹⁰ Hustak (1992). The rape and murder of nine year old Johnny Benson in February 1945 shook the city because it was the first child murder since 1906. Writing a series on sensational murders called "The Scene of the

Le meurtre atroce du petit BENSON effectué sur le Mont-Royal n'a pas été oublié. Les autorités policières viennent de donner ordre à tous les policiers qui ont à surveiller le Mont-Royal de tenir l'œil ouvert sur les homosexuels qui y rodent continuellement (*Ici Montréal* 1952.06.14:2).

The writer is confident that readers will recall the case, such was its impact. Contemporary accounts of this murder await investigation for the light they can shed on police intervention in space used for gay cruising.

In an interview, Janette Bertrand (1987), now a well-known television personality, says that when she began her career looking after the "advice to the lovelorn" column of the *Petit-Journal*, in the late 1940s, she received "tons" of letters from homosexuals. This suggests that in postwar Montreal, the subject of homosexuality was not only becoming a matter of public concern, but that individuals felt confident enough to put on paper their feelings about it and send them to a public figure asking for advice. She did not say what proportion she responded to in print. This change in the discursive environment surrounding homosexuality reflected the increased discussion of the subject resulting from military campaigns against homosexuals in the ranks, especially in the United States (Bérubé 1990), as well as the publication of the Kinsey report (1948) showing that there were far more homosexuals than had been imagined.

The most effective means used by the media to control gay men and lesbians was to make them invisible through silence. In this they were of course simply respecting a widespread taboo. Silence can take several forms. In analyzing the coverage of the 1956 murder of a gay man, André Ochsner, I noted (Higgins 1995) the conspicuous failure of the two English-language daily newspapers, the *Montreal Star* and the *Gazette*, to include a sentence from the police bulletin, reproduced in French-language papers, in which Ochsner was identified as a homosexual. I believe this omission was due to the consistent portrayal of him as a thriving businessman, assimilated symbolically to the English community, and thus his reputation was to be protected. Another type of silence is evident in *Le Devoir's* frequent omission of such references, but this is consonant with their overall avoidance of criminal material. Similar editorial policy may explain the omission of reference to the awarding of a grant by the Canadian Social Science Research Council to support Leznoff's work in Montreal in the French press. A final example is the lack of overt reference to homosexuality in all the

Crime," Hustak states that the police "rounded up 150 known or suspected homosexuals and held many of them for several days for questioning." The Benson murder was referred to not only by Fournier, but served as inspiration for an undated dime novel, *Le vicieux de la montagne* (Verchères n.d.) in which the child victim survives and which has little direct reference to homosexuals other than to say that the mountain is frequented by pervers. Published in the late 1940s, the novel was one of a large number of cheap weekly novels then produced by Quebec's remarkably vigorous "paraliterature" industry (Bouchard et al. 1984).

coverage of the Masquerade Raid at the Lion d'Or in 1950. Despite descriptions of the drag that 37 of the 376 people arrested were in, none of the papers actually names homosexuality as an issue in this rather hilarious story of found-ins at an unlicensed party.⁹¹

Exposé reporting became very common in the 1950s and had its exponents in the Montreal mainstream and tabloid press. An early issue of the tabloid *Midnight* contained a full page article on homosexuality, signed "Ex-cop," which recommends psychiatric treatment at the Allen Memorial Hospital for those afflicted. A 1954 front-page story in the *Herald*, published to coincide with a police effort to "clean up" the wooded north-eastern section of Mount Royal Park known as the "jungle," illustrates sensational journalistic techniques.⁹² Attention was drawn to the sexual activity on the mountain by a banner headline, "Crime and Perversion Breed in City Jungle." The portrayal of sex in the park is fragmentary and focuses more on the journalist's fear than on actual incidents. Of greater significance is the side-bar entitled "Five Face Charges in Jungle Roundup." Though usually thought of as an exclusively male domain, one of those charged with "indecent" was a woman with a "lengthy police record." High bail was set for the four accused men, all of whom have French names, and whose addresses are also published. One was from Sillery, Quebec, and the rest from Montreal. The item also offers a rare description of a gay tavern on St-Laurent near Ste-Catherine. The men in the tavern do not conform to the feminine stereotype: one is "a man in a yellow corduroy shirt with a face like a cadaver" while another is "an old man with a grizzled face who looked like a sea captain." Only the "flashily dressed Negro" approaches the conventional image of a homosexual. In describing the mountain itself, the journalist mentions only two gay incidents he observed on his two apparently brief visits. In one, he opened a covered box beside the tram line and found himself "face to face with what the law calls 'indecent exposure'" and in another a man came up, asked for a match, and suggested "going for a walk." The reporter's fear as he left the area after this invitation, while the other followed him, is not clearly due to a physical threat from the man but perhaps the mere idea of what he had proposed. But he saves his ultimate weapon for the last sentence: "But suppose tonight a child wanders too far into the brush and encounters him." Aside from its recourse to the usual stereotypes of femininity and

⁹¹Newspaper coverage is analyzed in Higgins (1990).

⁹²Walker (1954). The term "jungle" was apparently common police parlance, since Hurteau (1991:161) cites three cases from the summer of 1954 in which it was used by the officers testifying.

child molestation, the article denigrated homosexuality further by associating it with alcoholism and violence.

The yellow newspapers (see p. 35) paid far more attention to the subject of homosexuality than other media before the late 1960s, but the attitude they maintained towards it was highly ambiguous. Line Chamberland and I have discussed the stereotyping of lesbians and gays in the Montreal yellow newspapers of the 1950s (Higgins and Chamberland 1992). The use of language items such as “third sex” and “invert” in the yellow newspapers suggests how lasting an impact the late nineteenth century pseudo-scientific discourse had on the popular image of homosexuality. The latter term fit well with the perception of homosexual effeminacy.

Two humorous “*potins*” (gossip items) further reflect the assumption of gender inversion. One ironically reflects on the curious misallocation of gender for the French words for homosexuality (*homosexualité* for men, *le lesbianisme* for women (*Ici Montréal* 1956.11.03:19). The second taps into public awareness of the Kinsey study:

Supplément à l'étude sexuelle du Dr. Kinsey: les femmes respirent en dilatant le thorax, les hommes en dilatant le ventre sous la poussée du diaphragme. Or, les fiffs respirent comme les femmes, et les lesbiennes-masculinisantes comme les hommes (*Ici Montréal* 1957.01.12:19).

Gender-mimicry stereotyping is central to the image of both gay men and lesbians in these publications. To build up the stereotypic image, *Ici Montréal* periodically gossips about one Ramona, who hangs out at the Café St-John on the “Main” (St-Laurent) and will take on all comers, male or female, who invade her turf (*Ici Montréal* 1957.01.26:18). Another item assures readers that she “had more scars than a veteran of the Foreign Legion” (*Ici Montréal* 1957.02.23:18). Similar items stereotyping gay men were even more common, as many quoted elsewhere in this study and in Appendix C-2 indicate.

Small physical size is often one of the cross-gender attributes associated with gayness in these publications. “*Petits messieurs*” is the most common phrase used, but one also finds “*petits amis*” and “*petits mâles*.” Some reporters delight in stressing the bulky masculine physiques of some of those to whom they are pinning this label to heighten the incongruity. The usage relies on common stereotypic associations with feminine helplessness, a central theme in the image of the female carried by the same media. Accurate reporting is clearly not the issue with items like these:

Deux frères homosexuels, dont les prénoms sont Hesdras et Léandre, sont régulièrement en quête de “petits amis,” tard le soir, en face d’un club de nuit de Rosemont. Nous savons que la police les a à l’œil et s’appête à les prendre le sac dans les mains... (*Ici Montréal* 1956.12.01:18).

Certains petits messieurs se permettent tout à CBFT. C'est ainsi que Jacques Languirand y a invité Raymond Lévesque pour y annoncer, ni plus ni moins, son "Théâtre de dix Heures" (*Ici Montréal* 1957.01.26:18).

The latter item is an instance of the occasional "outing" of named individuals as homosexual practised by the yellow press. Another newspaper report of the trial of four transvestites convicted for indecent acts at the Café Arlequin in 1962 (previously mentioned) includes the detail that the courtroom was full of "*beaux petits mâles*" for the occasion.⁹³

Journalistic reliance on stereotyping is also found in the mainstream press. In reporting the 34 arrests for obscene language that the police carried out under during the Ochsner murder investigation, the leading French daily *La Presse* published all the names and addresses of the accused, a fact that may have contributed to the suicide of one of them. The *Herald* made quite clear the fact that those arrested were gay. It says that police "allege the men were making snide if not completely obscene remarks to passers-by," then continues:

Morality cops stressed the suspects were not leather jacketed youngsters, but older men dressed in neat if somewhat chi-chi clothes (*Herald* 1956.01.23).

For the English-speaking readers of 1956, the word "chi-chi" in this context is an indirect but unambiguous way of the saying that the men arrested were homosexuals. The "too carefully dressed" stereotype is well exemplified by this item.

Reports on the Incidence of Homosexuality: Occasional media stories gave an idea of the number of homosexuals there were. In 1960, well-known author Yves Thériault wrote in his weekly column "Pour Hommes Seulement" about a woman who had written to complain that her husband had gone back to his homosexual ways. Armed with statistics for which he gives no source, Thériault vigorously denounces not only male homosexuals but also lesbians. He maintains that the incidence of homosexuality is even higher in the small cities of Quebec, reaching 27 per cent.⁹⁴ News coverage of a court case involving obscene films in February 1965 provides insight into judicial thinking about the incidence of homosexuality.⁹⁵ The relatively severe sentence meted out in the case is justified by the judge since:

Homosexuality has shown a big gain in Montreal in recent years and is still increasing. The showing of such a film could further aggravate the problem by making new adherents to the cause of homosexuality among impressionables and those with latent homosexual tendencies (*Montreal Star* 1965.02.06).

⁹³ "Quatre homosexuels, arrêtés au Café Arlequin, sont condamnés." *Le Nouveau journal* 1962.03.20.

⁹⁴ Yves Thériault "Pour Hommes Seulement." *La Patrie du Dimanche* 1960.07.31.

⁹⁵ "Distributeur de films condamné à \$1,000 d'amende." *La Presse* 1965.02.04; Williams (1965).

The journalist goes on to bolster the claim by quoting statistics from the police morality squad. The numbers of homosexuals convicted are given as 25 in 1960, 53 in 1961, 105 in 1962, 141 in 1963 and 166 in 1964. Lieutenant Jean Belzile, second in command of the squad, refused to estimate the total number of homosexuals in Montreal, but reveals that the police have “some 300 or more names of known homosexuals in our files, but most of them are the type who’d get tangled with the law anyway. There are hundreds, perhaps thousands more who have never got into difficulties and are unknown, officially, to us.” This number is ludicrously small when one considers that a raid like that experienced by Gérard at the Tropical in December 1964 would have brought in at least one hundred names. The often used accusation that homosexuals pursue sexual encounters with children was the theme of a 1965 tabloid feature, “L’homosexualité en progrès: Une menace pour nos enfants,”⁹⁶ which says there are 300 homosexuals, in contrast to the 12,000 quoted in the *Petit-Journal* (1968.09.01; see p. 182).

The police almost always presented its actions against the gay world as the result of a sudden discovery of information previously unknown. This portrayal of official naïveté is contradicted in a 1965 article (see p. 123), in which high-ranking officers are quoted as saying that there are at least half a dozen spots where homosexuals gather, and that all are under close surveillance, but, as one explains, “We haven’t the authority to do a thing, however, unless the occupants get out of line, and they are very careful to observe the proprieties, at least when we’re around.” The fact that raids and other actions against the gay establishments may have more to do with municipal politics and the protection racket (see p. 299) is kept firmly out of sight in this glimpse into police thinking.

Science Reporting: Another theme in news media coverage of homosexuality was a “scientific” one which underlay the ready association of gay men with other types of “sex perverts,” notably pedophiles. Hurteau, for example, cites two educational books from the postwar period in which the author, without using the word “homosexual,” associates gays with sex maniacs who prey on young men (Hurteau 1991:125-126). The emphasis in this literature is firmly on the “sickness model” of homosexuality. In an optimistic article, Ken Johnson (1948) includes a report on the success achieved by Dr. George Henry, a Cornell psychiatrist. He cites the case of a mother who dressed her son as a girl and taught him “such housewifely duties as cooking and sewing” and thus made him a homosexual. But with the

⁹⁶ *Le Nouveau samedi* 1965.03.20:1.

doctor's "friendly treatment and sympathetic understanding, ... Gene realized how his background had led him into an abnormal life and was put on the path to recovery." A later paragraph illustrates the full force of stereotyping when homosexuality and age combine to produce child molestation:

Dr. Henry points out the importance of dealing with such cases when they first come to light. "Many sex variants are not dangerous to the community when they are youthful and attractive," he says. "They form relationships with others of their own age who are similarly twisted." But as they get older and their youthful beauty disappears, they inevitably force their attentions on those who are least able to resist them—usually children (Johnson 1948).

The journalist here presumably relates what the doctor actually believed, illustrating the incorporation of widely held stereotypes in the production of authoritative, supposedly scientific discourse. In order to further his point that only science can help against sex offenders, Johnson concludes the article with an attack on the adequacy of law, citing the Kinsey report (published in 1948) claim that full enforcement of existing sex laws would result in 85 percent of American men and boys going to jail.

More than any other text, the "Kinsey Report"⁹⁷ helped to transform homosexuals' sense of themselves by making them aware of their numbers. But the simple fact that the report opened public discussion of homosexuality was important enough, since it led to media reports and conversations that did not focus on arrests, but rather on the legal treatment and civil rights of the gay sexual minority, which Kinsey supported.⁹⁸ A local paper printed an American syndicated column by Dorothy Thompson (1948) attacking Kinsey's claim that the sample he interviewed represents the population of white American males. She raises issues that would haunt discussions of the sex researcher's results for decades, but the author reveals her real concern in a sentence near the end of the piece: "Dr. Kinsey's report, while it may be corrective of attitudes having no relationship to reality, also holds the danger of being used to justify unbridled license." The piece does not mention the stunning figures on the prevalence of homosexual practices among those interviewed, and the reviewer's main praise is for the book's revelation of the different concepts of "decent" and "indecent" held by the middle and

⁹⁷ Kinsey et al., 1948, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. The report's impact was reflected in the immediate publication of popularizations by Ernst and Loth (1948) and Geddes and Curie (1948). An ongoing controversy erupted over the adequacy of Kinsey's sampling technique. Harry (1990) summarizes methodological criticisms of Kinsey's often-cited finding that "10 percent of the males are more or less exclusively homosexual ... for at least three years between the ages of 16 and 55" (1948:651). More recent studies, including Harry's, have reduced this estimate by at least half, but there has been no satisfactory resolution of the problem of investigating an invisible population, whose total size remains controversial.

⁹⁸ See for example, the obituary ("A Tribute to Dr. Kinsey") from *One*, the best known homophile magazine (Pedersen 1956). David Leahy kindly provided references to local responses to the Kinsey Report have not been able to undertake an extensive search of other Montreal publications to supplement these findings. No reviews were found in French language papers *La Presse* or *Le Devoir* in February 1948.

working classes. A book review by D.S.S. MacKenzie (1948) takes a more positive view of the limitations of the research, which, the author points out, are acknowledged by Kinsey, who saw this as a preliminary phase of a much larger project. Mackenzie also omits any reference to homosexuality, but concludes by observing that: "The aim is worthy, for sex is an honourable thing, and one that can and should be discussed frankly, if there are to be sound minds in sound bodies today." In the French press, the only reactions that have come to light were in the Jesuit publication *Relations*. Both of the articles, summarized by Hurteau (1991:169-170), attack the hedonism and naturalism of the American study as a threat to the Quebec family, and one author cites it as another of the many manifestations of "the pagan immorality of decadent American society."⁹⁹

"*Understanding the Homosexual*": Several examples will be given in Chapter 5 of the reactions of narrators to positive and (more often) negative portrayals of homosexuals in the media and in literature, film, etc. Some periodical literature of the 1950s did make timid gestures towards "understanding the homosexual." *Tous les secrets de l'amour* (vol. 7, 1953), a small format, popular sexology magazine with wide distribution, included a more positive evaluation of homosexuality, at least to the extent that they adopted a calm reasoning tone and contradicted the stereotypes:

L'idée que les hommes invertis ont des caractéristiques féminines et les femmes, une apparence masculine, est absolument erronée. La plupart des homosexuels, hommes et femmes, ont les caractéristiques, l'apparence et le physique de leur propre sexe, et leur anomalie peut être décelée seulement par leurs réactions et leur comportement (p. 53).

Nevertheless this type of enlightened report did nothing to prevent the ongoing recourse to the stereotypes. In the summer of 1955, a magazine published from the same address as the yellow paper *Police Journal*, included an article entitled "Réflexions sur l'homosexualité" along with a short story, "Le grand obstacle," about a woman who is engaged to marry a homosexual.¹⁰⁰

The article promotes the Freudian view of homosexuality as "arrested development" but takes pains to attribute the failure of individuals to attain maturity to parental attitudes and encouragement. The result of immaturity are outlined thus:

Ces gens ont tendance à demeurer enfantins dans toutes leurs réactions: ils sont souvent déprimés au moindre choc, ils sont impulsifs et très dépendants. Ils s'accrochent à des aventures avec des personnes de leur propre sexe, sont facilement jaloux et la gamme de leurs émotions est très aiguë. Leurs réactions exagérées paraissent souvent ridicules à l'être normal. À cause de leur dépendance ils deviennent facilement alcooliques et même criminels (p. 13).

⁹⁹ Blondeau 1949; D'Anjou 1951.

¹⁰⁰ "Réflexions sur l'homosexualité." *Histoires vraies* 384 (été 1955).

The article recommends understanding of this disease and treatment by psychiatrists. The accompanying short story is clearly conceived to exemplify these ideas. The woman describes her fiancé as “si gentil, si délicat.” “Ce n’est pas le genre d’homme qui s’intéresse aux choses sales et huilées comme un moteur!” Raised without a father by a mother described as “close-binding as possible,” Charles has only consented to the engagement under pressure and keeps postponing the wedding. Eventually the woman’s older brother gets suspicious and tracks Charles to a homosexual bar. But Charles was too weak to come and face her himself to end the relationship. Later she hears that he has taken to drinking.

Positive images are rare in the 1950s and before. Then, any discussion was in some way positive simply because it brought the topic of homosexuality into the open. It would be a long time, however, until the major media took serious steps towards presenting a picture of what homosexuals were really like to the public, and incidentally to homosexuals themselves. In 1964 *Maclean’s Magazine* took a step in that direction with a two-part article by Sidney Katz, guided throughout by pioneer Toronto activist Jim Egan (Katz 1964b; Champagne 1986-87:6-7; Egan 1987). This article, with its challenge to traditional thinking on homosexuality (ghost-scripted by Egan), was reprinted in an abridged translation in *Le magazine Maclean* (Katz 1964a). At the end of the 1960s, with feature articles beginning to appear more often in the American press, local publication followed suit. For example, the newsmagazine *Sept Jours* (1968.12.14:17-19) argues for tolerance since a “cure” is impossible. In another cultural form in the 1960s, the popular comedy group “Les Cyniques” made the “third sex” a theme of many skits in the mid-1960s, attacking not so much gays as society’s hypocrisy towards them.¹⁰¹ Other than this, and occasional mentions on radio or television, and in newspaper coverage of culture, the cultural domain itself was the only source for gay men seeking positive reflections on who they were.

French and English Literature, Film and Theatre: The cultural context in which homosexuality was lived included very different traditions for Francophones and Anglophones. Francophones were aware of the existence of a literary tradition dealing with homosexuality to which many of the language’s most prominent authors contributed. In contrast to writers in English, French authors had, since the 1840s at least, openly expressed tolerance for varieties

¹⁰¹ *Ici Montréal* 1965.10.02:1, 8-9.

of sexual behaviour, as the well-known story of Verlaine and Rimbaud illustrates. In the interviews, some narrators recalled reading these works, despite restricted access to them due to the Catholic Church's index,¹⁰² since some educated, affluent Montrealers acquired them on trips to France and copies circulated locally. In the 1930s, there was a "Proust Circle" which met at the Ritz Carleton Hotel, led by *La Presse* literary critic Marcel Valois (pen name of Jean Dufresne; see Valois 1964; Felteau 1983, vol. 2:131; see also Brunet 1970:199-202), illustrating the important influence and close ties to the Parisian literary world in Montreal. For Anglophones, homosexuality was situated in an entirely different literary tradition, one whose history was haunted by the trials and death of Oscar Wilde at the turn of the century. Narrators read Wilde's biographies, and also a range of fiction by lesser known British writers (such as Angus Wilson, Christopher Isherwood, and Mary Renault), and Americans (Gore Vidal, Tennessee Williams).

The earliest-known Québécois fiction with a gay theme was the 1944 novel, *Orange sur mon corps*, by André Béland, though the topic was mentioned only in a single chapter.¹⁰³ In the 1950s, a second novel by "Robert de Vallières" promoted tolerance and sympathy for homosexuals, though rather ambiguously, since the author presents a very Catholic perspective on homosexuality as an evil to be struggled against. This book, *Derrière le sang humain*, was the subject of considerable media attention when it came out in October 1956.¹⁰⁴ In his review, noted critic Roger Duhamel (1956) summarizes his sympathy with the book's aims and disappointment with its means. Duhamel notes two main weaknesses in the novel. He finds that the main character's generally lucid understanding of his "predicament" makes his belated "conversion" to heterosexuality seem unconvincing. Duhamel's knowledgeable assessment of the improbability of a "cure" for homosexuality in his review lends weight to the affirmation in the yellow press that Duhamel was a friend of the author.¹⁰⁵ The only English

¹⁰² Toupin (1977:43-45) relates that when he was young, it was possible with the right connections to gain access to the forbidden books kept in a section of the city library called "L'Enfer."

¹⁰³ Summary by Armand Laroche (1983); for reviews and appreciation, see Bourassa 1982. Interest in Béland has been revived following Laniel's (1991) portrayal of him as a pioneer of erotic literature in Quebec, and the book was reissued in 1995.

¹⁰⁴ Notably a full page report (with eight photographs, depicting a host of Montreal literary celebrities as well as the author and his mother) on the book's launch at the Mount Royal Hotel ("Lancement spectaculaire d'un volume canadien!" *Nouvelles et potins* 1956.10.20:26).

¹⁰⁵ This and other gossip items concerning the book in the yellow newspapers are presented in Appendix C-2.

novel known from the 1950s (Sanderson 1952), is the story of a love triangle at McGill University which ends in tragedy.¹⁰⁶

Other cultural forms also brought local gays a reflection of themselves. In theatre, the opening in 1949 of the play *Les Innocentes* (Hamelin 1961:67; *La Presse* 1950.04.01:61), a translation of Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour* (produced in New York in 1934), may have marked a new openness in Montreal theatre for the subject of homosexuality. In the same year, Jean Desprez,¹⁰⁷ successful writer of radio dramas, wrote and produced a play called *La Cathédrale* with a troupe of the best-known young actors and actresses.¹⁰⁸ For the first time a homosexual character was presented in a serious Quebec play. Ravaged by the critics but attracting a record crowd to the Monument national, the play disappeared after its brief initial run. Not until the plays of Michel Tremblay at the end of the period of this study was there a beginning of a collective self-affirmation in literature. Tremblay provides an accessible vision of this world in which his principal gay character, Édouard, gets his start as "La duchesse de Langeais" (1970). In *La duchesse et le roturier* (1982), Édouard frequents world of burlesque theatre and the author describes the overlap between the show business world and life on the "Main."¹⁰⁹ The theatre professionals regarded him as an incompetent amateur, but made no effort to condemn his feminine persona.

Film portrayals of homosexuality included *Tea and Sympathy* (1956) and *Victim* (1961), a remarkable story of a gay man's resistance to blackmail, while in Quebec cinema, Claude Jutra's *À tout prendre* (1963) and Lord's (1965) film version of Jasmin's (1961) novel, *Délivrez-nous du mal*, the story of a man who murders his lover, are among the notable early films with gay content mentioned in Waugh's overview of the subject (1980, see also Waugh 1988).

These rather sporadic productions, and the irregular access to novels or films from abroad, would not seem to offer much encouragement to local gay men coming to terms with their identities and attempting to make sense of their lives. They were, as some narrator accounts

¹⁰⁶ There are undoubtedly other works that could be discussed here. See, for example, Schwartzwald's (1992) account of homosexuality as a polemical theme used by writer Berthelot Brunet in denouncing the corruption of the collèges classiques, and Martin's (1991) gay reading of the work of Patrick Anderson, a Montreal poet and writer who lived mainly in Britain.

¹⁰⁷ Pen-name of Laurette Larocque-Auger.

¹⁰⁸ On *La Cathédrale* by Jean Desprez, see Saumart (1965:29-33); Legris et al. (1988:125); Hamelin (1961:48).

¹⁰⁹ In much of Tremblay's work, characters are found in more than one text. Thus the Duchesse de Langeais is the name of a play (1970), but the main character, whose real name is Édouard, is a central figure in the novels in the series "Les chroniques du Plateau Mont-Royal" and also appears in the film *Il était une fois dans l'est* (Brassard 1973).

will show, highly sought after by those with a strong interest in finding them, and even those that were not read formed part of a developing body of writing that helped to fix gay identity and the existence of the gay collectivity in the minds of those who learned about them.

D. LANGUAGE, SOCIAL TOLERANCE AND GAY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Two issues related to Montreal's cultural dualism are the specific gay language practices in Montreal and in Quebec and the role of bilingualism among Montreal gay men. Garneau (1980) made language items a major element of her study of gay men in Quebec City, but her data is based on a very small number of informants, and she generalizes a typology of effeminacy they reported without sufficient caution, in my view. Lapointe (1974) includes a fascinating list of vocabulary items related to homosexuality in Quebecois French, but his quick overview cannot provide adequate information on usage.

While it may be true that French and English divide Montreal's gay world, in another sense there is a unity across the language divide. The analysis presented here focuses on the schematic underpinnings of discourse. Thus the sharing of gay discourse topics between Francophone and Anglophone in Montreal will be an important theme in the presentation of the data.¹¹⁰ In addition to ethnographic issues related to the Francophone/Anglophone division, other symbolic dimensions are influenced by the cultural divide, such as interest in literary and other cultural works, including the notable gay fascination for certain forms of music and certain performers.

In large urban centres, such access is facilitated by the existence of a set of public institutions to visit (Plummer 1975:164-165). The history of the "institutional completeness" of Montreal's gay community differs in interesting ways from that of most other cities.¹¹¹ While Montreal has long had a larger number of gay bars than other places with similar population, and a reputation for nightlife that has long attracted gay tourists, other types of institutions such as publishing ventures and political groups appeared comparatively slowly, giving the overall impression of a less developed community.

¹¹⁰ This does not mean there is no tension. A letter to a Toronto gay newspaper (Thivierge 1975) attacks Anglophone dominance in the Quebec gay movement. See also my accounts of relations between the two groups in the history of the Montreal gay movement (Higgins 1985a, 1985b).

¹¹¹ Murray (1980) used this standard, developed for the analysis of immigrant ethnic communities, to assess the "community" status of gay men in Toronto.

The search for an explanation for the institutional “underdevelopment” in Gay Montreal has long preoccupied gay leaders, concerned to recruit members for their organizations. Explanations for the lack of enthusiasm for political commitment have generally been couched either in terms of the language barrier, which produces a “cultural lag” of several years between Francophone culture and ideas circulating in English-speaking North America, or as a result of the “tolerance” of Quebec society, which has meant that people have not felt the urgency to organize. Another interpretation points to difference between Protestant organizational culture, with its emphasis on self-governing associations, in contrast to the Catholic approach of clerically supervised movements. The issue of militant involvement arises in a period after the time frame for the present study, but I will present data on Francophone and Anglophone differences where possible in order to contribute to the ongoing debate and place it in a broader context of community involvement of all types.

A closely related topic in the ethnography of homosexuality in Quebec is that of social tolerance. In 1977, the province of Quebec became the first major North American jurisdiction to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in its Human Rights Charter. Montreal is widely viewed as one of the least violent, most tolerant cities for gay life and other minority lifestyles in North America (Noël 1989). Men like myself who have come from English-speaking areas share a perception that there is less anti-gay violence and less verbal abuse in Montreal than in other cities of its size. In Québécois culture, both elite and popular, from theatre to television, gay themes have a prominence without parallel elsewhere. On the interpersonal level, from my own experience, the frequency with which gay men are invited to spend Christmas, etc., with their lovers’ families, even attending family reunions or birthday parties as a couple, is another striking indicator that this is an interesting question to explore. In the only study which attempts to explain this “greater liberality” of Quebec in support of gay rights, Rayside and Bowler (1988:652) attribute it to the ferment of the Quiet Revolution period and the contestation and radical mobilization which characterized it, though they offer no concrete proof of his claim.

In discussions among movement leaders which I have participated in over the years, three types of explanation have been offered for the difference many gay men observe when contrasting Quebec’s overall treatment of homosexuals to that encountered in English-speaking North America. The first is simply that tolerance regarding sexuality is part of Latin culture. In France this is reflected in the absence of anti-homosexual measures in the Napoleonic Code and

in the respect accorded to writers like Colette, Proust, Gide and Genet. The second explanation might be called the “competing hegemony” theory. In Montreal after the British conquest in 1760, two elites with differing religious and cultural traditions had to collaborate and compete to impose hegemonic moral authority over the entire society. Sometimes their efforts simply interfered with each other with the result that neither side achieved complete success in imposing its vision of social order, so some condemned behaviour managed to “slip through the cracks”. This accords with the view that Quebec society is more tolerant because the presence of two groups led to a heightened acceptance of difference in the population. In the third explanation, the role of the Catholic clergy as arbiters of morality entails a certain passivity on the part of their parishioners. This is seen in the generally lower rate of participation in voluntary associations in Catholic societies.

Garneau (1980:93) offers another type of insight into this question, as well as some actual data (confirmed by some of the narrators in my study). She indicates that her interviewees spoke of “niaiseries,” “enfantillages,” and “jeux de fesses” to describe childhood sexual encounters with other children of both sexes. These are seen as “natural,” “inevitable” and “without interest” by their parents (p. 96). Despite the tolerance towards homosexuality that such data reflect, this is not the attitude concerning homosexuality presented by the dominant moral discourse. Negative attitudes are easily discernible in the newspapers of the period. Journalists in both the mainstream papers and the yellow press make easy use of negative stereotypes of gays and lesbians which they clearly expect readers to understand and share. In 1956, for example, newspapers approvingly reported demands by opposition members of parliament in Ottawa for permanent preventive detention of sex deviates, to which the government replied that such changes were not required since the law already provided for preventive detention.

E. EARLY QUEBEC GAY HISTORY

Information on the social lives of those who preferred same-gender sex in Montreal is quite sparse before 1900 and tends to be from legal sources.¹¹² For the French colonial period,

¹¹² In this collection of facts that have surfaced about homosexuality in Quebec history, it is important to note that they have been found at random, not as a result of systematic search except for Hurteau’s exceptional work in the judicial archives. Documents of this type have an overwhelmingly legal cast, concerning criminal or lowlife themes, that were not necessarily particularly present to the gay men of the day. Scandals and arrests were the only occasions when the details of their lives were recorded. In setting out the background documentation here, I

Sylvestre (1983) relates, in an accessible but unscholarly form, cases of soldiers accused of “the worst crime” in 1648, and “sodomy” in 1691. The 1648 story comes from the Jesuit relations and concerns a soldier in Montreal whose life was spared when he agreed to become the colony’s first hangman (Lalemant 1908 [1648]:102-105). The second case is a much more clear-cut one of homosexual behaviour between an officer and two soldiers, also in Montreal. The officer was sent to the galleys while the soldiers were reprimanded (Boyer 1966:333; Séguin 1972:343; Sylvestre 1983:41).

Early news items and court records point to two outdoor cruising sites. The Champs-de-Mars, a military parade ground behind City Hall, a favoured spot for an evening stroll, and not only for heterosexuals, as two news items, from 1869 and 1886, indicate. The earlier item “Served Him Right,”¹¹³ relates a case of vigilante-style violence against a man having sex with a boy after midnight on the Champ-de-Mars. A policeman passing by was about to intervene when a group of youths arrived and gave the older man a good thrashing, and the policeman decided to let it go at that. This report gives the impression that attitudes to policing were quite different at the time, since the policeman thought informal sanctions were sufficient punishment for a sexual act committed in public, and the newspaper offered no objection. A few years later, in June 1886, another item¹¹⁴ shows that if increased police patrols were assigned, they were not successful in discouraging homosexuals from frequenting this fashionable promenade spot. Significantly, the item is the story of an arrest through police entrapment on the Champs-de-Mars. The Champs-de-Mars was thus a regular summer evening rendezvous for men who based at least some of their social activities on their sexual orientation to other men. The other early cruising site was the park on St. Helen’s Island, where Hurteau (1991:159) reports several gross indecency arrests from the last decades of the nineteenth century to a peak during the First World War.

hope to make it clear by the contrast with the richness of the interview data that the text-based image of the gay world is highly inaccurate and that only the testimony of living narrators can supply a corrective.

¹¹³ “Served Him Right.” *Montreal Evening Star* 1869.07.17:2, reproduced in Appendix C-1, with two other stories of arrests from the same month. This was an apparently isolated burst of attention to homosexual activities, either on the part of the police or of the press, since Kathryn Harvey, who kindly informed me of these items’ existence, did extensive research in the newspapers of the period but found no other similar reports. This supports Hurteau’s observation that there was no serious effort to police homosexual crimes in late nineteenth century Montreal (assuming they were being committed), unless they involved violence or minors (personal communication). Some of the prosecutions he found do confirm our suspicions that there were such sexual acts going on.

¹¹⁴ “L’association nocturne.” *La Presse* 1886.06.30:4. Reproduced in Appendix C-1. See analysis in Higgins (1987a).

A historical glimpse into a gay friendship group at the end of the First World War is the account by Elsa Gidlow (1986), a San Francisco lesbian poet, of her youth in Montreal.¹¹⁵ By setting up a literary discussion group at the end of the First World War, Gidlow met a diverse group of poets and artists. One was Roswell George Mills, nineteen year old gay journalist at the *Star*, whom she described as “blond and elegant.” They became lifelong friends, though they lived on opposite sides of the United States. In the short time they were in Montreal, Gidlow got to know Mills’s gay circle, though they both participated in a network of creative people, homosexual and accepting heterosexuals. The autobiographic writings and personal papers which Gidlow left¹¹⁶ offer one of the only sources on Montreal lesbian and gay history in the decade before the earliest oral information presented here, and will be referred where relevant. What is noteworthy here is the mix of heterosexual bohemians with gay men and lesbians in this artistic milieu, and their keen interest not only in the literature of Rimbaud and Verlaine, but also those of the early British gay activist Edward Carpenter and sex researcher Havelock Ellis. Their lives overlapped with those of the oldest narrators, whose stories occupy the chapters of Part II. In the remainder of this section, background information on the two major types of gay institution, bars and political groups, will be outlined.

Gay Bars: The role played by bars in narrators’ lives and in the life of the gay community is the subject of Chapter 6. Here I will outline the documentary sources which have contributed to the building of a complex data set related to the Montreal bar scene, and the difficulties which arise in dealing with information on this type of establishment. The lore of bars is a type of shared knowledge structure that unites many segments of the gay community across social barriers and through time. A historically significant development occurred when publicly sold, specifically gay, printed materials that became available in the 1960s to help travellers find their way to gay spots in cities they were visiting. For earlier periods, documentation is rare. Montreal gay bars are little described in fiction. In “Robert de Vallières’s” novel *Derrière le sang humain* (1956) there are two bar scenes, both extremely negative portrayals of the people in the bars. The novel’s protagonist, Jacques, undertakes to visit these bars in the course of his work with a Catholic organization fighting juvenile delinquency. He describes them as:

Ces boîtes de nuit louches achalandées alors par les petits messieurs fardés... La salle regorgeait de gens de toutes les classes: pédérastes, homosexuels, lesbiennes, bisexuels, curieux, vicieux,

¹¹⁵ Elsa, *I Come with My Songs: The Autobiography of Elsa Gidlow* (1986).

¹¹⁶ Gidlow papers, Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California Archives, Gidlow papers.

prostitués mâles et femelles, trafiquants de narcotiques, touristes et, peut-être aussi, un honnête homme, qui se serait aventuré là par ignorance (p. 66-70).

The novelist quotes snippets of bar conversations full of feminine names and bitchery. The three young men whom he chooses for his case studies have all been driven to homosexuality by women, mostly their mothers. De Vallières does not provide significant clues to the locations of the bar, but the novel nevertheless gave rare public expression to the fact that such places existed. None of the major autobiographical sources (Toupin 1977, Lavallé 1978, Conte 1980, Lorrain 1985) covering the postwar period were by men who liked bars, while another by Martel (1981) contains only a few references pertaining to the late 1960s.

Before the appearance of gay publishing ventures, the yellow press in Montreal served as a means of access to the hidden world of gay bars and other venues (Higgins and Chamberland 1992). Reading the yellow newspapers, especially *Ici Montréal*, one concludes that the writers had intimate access to the gay milieu. Despite the heavy-handed moralizing, items such as these make it plain that the writer not only knew what he was talking about, but that he was also aware that publishing the item would enable people looking for a gay social life to find it.

On the whole however, the most important channel of communication for bar publicity continued to be word of mouth. Gay men learned not only where the bars were, but how to find out. Once in the know, bars in any city became easy to find. Before gay publications were created to facilitate bar access for outsiders, gay men relied on their friends and acquaintances. This oral construction and maintenance of a knowledge set was beyond the understanding of municipal officials, according to this news item:

André Tessier, QC, chief attorney of the Municipal Court and legal advisor to the Police Department, said these night spots are apparently known to most homosexuals coast to coast. "And if they don't know they soon find out in some mysterious way all their own," he said. "We've seen them get off a plane or train and a few hours later have spotted them in the nearest night spot favoured by their kind," he added (Williams 1965).¹¹⁷

However, the intensity of regular surveillance of gay men implied in this quote belies the stance of naive ignorance on the part of the authorities that this item asserts.

Perhaps the police were unaware of such guidebooks as the *International Guild Guide* (p. 36), which listed eight restaurants and bars under Montreal in its 1964 edition, thirteen in 1966. Such guidebooks were still relatively new and little known even among gay men in the 1960s, but they would gradually replace the old mimeographed pages some people had access to

¹¹⁷ "Judge's Observation: Says Homosexuals on Increase here." (*Montreal Star* 1965.02.06).

before, and supplement the old reliable word of mouth fashioning a new communication channel for gay information.

The varying numbers of bars listed in the guides may reflect actual changes in the bar scene, of course, but the quality of their information is only as good as the guide's local sources of information. Lists are thus often incomplete and must be assumed to always contain inaccuracies. A more reliable source, the Toronto magazine *Gay*¹¹⁸ was being published at precisely this time. The July 15, 1964 issue, for example, featured an ad for the "Down Beat Club—A club with the type of entertainment you like—also visit our world famous Tropical Room" (*Gay* 1[7], 1965.07.15:12). Two weeks later, however, the paper complains:

On a recent visit to Montreal I was surprised to see how the "Downbeat" has changed. Come on Solly; fix up that stage and get rid of that third rate orchestra. I also paid a visit to "Le Jazz Hot" to see Miss Guilda, a REAL SHOWGIRL! Monroe is not at the Tropical anymore by the way. She's in California they tell me with a snicker... (whatever that means?) (*Gay* 1[8] 1964.07.30:4).

Unfortunately this publication had a short life-span of only about two years, and even in that period it has not been possible to consult all of the issues published. The Toronto publishers of the magazine had undertaken one of the earliest well-financed ventures into general gay publishing, a market that would explode in the 1970s.

When local gay publications began to produce their own lists at the beginning of the 1970s, they were much closer to a total description of the actual scene. None of the issues of the late 1960s tabloids, either general publications with gay columns or the pioneering gay-only papers, are available for examination. In the first "serious" gay magazine published in Montreal, *Le Tiers* (first issue September 1970), a centrefold map shows the location of ten bars, taverns and restaurants, plus one sauna, one sports centre and an associated store, and one dating club. And these were only the businesses that chose to advertise. Two other taverns are mentioned in the magazine's nightlife column.¹¹⁹ By the late 1970s, Montreal had a "bar magazine" of a style and format that had become commonplace in North American gay communities. *Attitude* and its successor, *Fugues*, furnish a much more comprehensive, often visual record of "club life" than had existed in the days when gay men relied on word of mouth alone to keep track of where to go for a drink. They record in detail, through their ads and photos of bartenders'

¹¹⁸ Later called *Gay International*. See Kinsman (1996:248-250) on this and *Two*, another Toronto gay publication of the mid-1960s. See also Miller (1991) *Our Own Voices* for an overview of Canadian as well as international gay periodicals.

¹¹⁹ *Le Tiers* 1(1971.09):34-35, 45.

birthday parties and such, the story of the move of the centre of Montreal's bar scene from the old downtown to the "Village de l'est" or "Gay Village" after 1980.

A New Institution: The Gay Movement: This study ends in 1970, a date chosen because the following year Montreal's gay community joined others in North America by creating its first gay liberation group. This section provides background on the political organization of gays, looking first at the influence of early homophile groups elsewhere and then at local organizing efforts for which records are available. Since several narrators spoke of their exposure to the ideas of the international gay movement during the period covered by this study, I will assemble an outline here which will facilitate presentation of the interview data on gay political organizing in Chapter 7.

In the early 1970s the first generation of gay liberationists in their early twenties had little inkling of their collective past.¹²⁰ It was partly due to the work of early gay historians like Lauritsen and Thorstad (1974) and Katz (1976) that gay militants became aware of what had gone before, and convinced of its relevance to understanding the basis for the contemporary gay rights movement (D'Emilio 1981, 1983). Steakley (1975) revealed the existence of a large and vigorous gay movement in Germany in the 1920s, publishing a large number of magazines and with a total membership in the tens of thousands. The German movement had little impact on North America, with the notable exception of a group founded in Chicago by Henry Gerber in 1924, which was quickly suppressed by the police (Katz 1983:418-421). Gerber continued his contacts with men interested in defending homosexual rights for the rest of his life.¹²¹ In one letter Gerber says he made a one-night stopover in Montreal in 1935, and met some homosexuals there, but was disappointed in not seeing anyone at the bar he visited.¹²² The creation of the American homophile movement in California in the early 1950s was clearly known to at least a few gay men in Quebec. Letters from Montreal readers were sometimes published in the Los Angeles-based *One* magazine, including a letter offering sophisticated comments on an ongoing debate in the magazine (1953.10).¹²³ The main objectives of the American groups were to stress that homosexuals constituted a social minority, and thus to

¹²⁰ Adam (1987) provides an overview of the history of the lesbian and gay movement.

¹²¹ Katz (1983:553-566). Gerber corresponded with a Canadian man who waged a solitary campaign to spread the ideas of the "homophile movement" that emerged in the United States at the end of the 1940s in the Toronto newspapers (Champagne 1986-7; Egan 1987).

¹²² Egan papers, Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, letter from Henry Gerber (Feb. 7, 1951).

work for legal reforms and to counter discrimination and police targeting of gays while building an image of respectability by dressing carefully and presenting themselves as professionals. Their central strategy was one of education, in collaboration with doctors, psychologists and members of the clergy.¹²⁴

In France, *Arcadie*, (a group that published a magazine of the same name beginning in 1954) shared the same general strategy of the American homophiles, but emphasized literary and religious or moral discussions. At least a few Francophone gay men in Quebec were aware of its existence, as indicated by a donation received by the Archives gaies du Québec of copies of this magazine and its less cautious predecessor, the short-lived *Futur*, which the donor said that he had received from an older friend who had bought them on a visit to France in the early 1950s (see Bach 1982:70; Girard 1981:31-38).

While Toronto's yellow newspapers, such as *Flash* and *Justice Weekly*, were by 1950 publishing letters and then an increasingly voluminous flow of articles from Jim Egan, an independent writer inspired by American homophile trends, the Montreal yellow press contains few references to the homophile movement. Its existence is acknowledged only in a 1957 item on the seizure of *One* magazine by Canadian customs officials (p. 194) and a fanciful account of a purported gay conference in Montreal in 1964 (p. 127).

In the mid 1960s, inspired by groups in existence in the United States since the early 1950s, there were attempts to set up homophile organizations in Canada as well. The most successful of these was Vancouver's Association for Social Knowledge, which existed from 1964 to 1968 (Kinsman 1996:230-248). There were other such efforts in Ontario. News reports from Toronto indicate that a "Homophile Reform Society" was to be set up, and that Temiscamingue MP Arnold Peters (NDP) was preparing a private member's bill that would decriminalize homosexuality.¹²⁵ A further organizing effort in the Ottawa area was reported in June 1965. The founding of the Canadian Council on Homosexuality and Religion mirrored a similarly named project in San Francisco, which had attracted media attention there when ministers attempted to block a police raid on a gay New Year's dance at the beginning of 1965 (D'Emilio 1983:193-194). The Ottawa group's objectives were to promote education and to

¹²³ *One* 3(8, 1955.08):20; *One* 4(7, 1956.10/11):38; *Mattachine Review* 9(8, 1963.09):31. The latter comments "I wanted for such a long time to read such a magazine."

¹²⁴ See for example an outline of the Mattachine Society's program in its publication *Mattachine Review* 2(1955.03/04).

¹²⁵ *Toronto Star* 1964.07.25; *Globe and Mail* 1964.07.25; Sylvestre (1979:20).

lobby politicians and its membership included a Catholic priest.¹²⁶ Kinsman (1987:155) summarizes the history of this group. Little seems to have come of these initiatives, but they mark a new phase in media discussion of the topic of homosexuality.

The history of attempts to form gay political organizations in Quebec in the 1960s remains somewhat obscure. What may well have been the beginning of this push was a student group that is said to have been founded at Laval University in 1960. No details of this initiative are available beyond the fact that it was quickly suppressed by university officials.¹²⁷ The earliest indication of an attempt to organize gays politically in Montreal is probably fictitious. It is a cover story in a yellow gossip paper entitled "Congrès d'homos" (*Jour et nuit* 1964.03.22:1, 8-9), recounting a purported meeting in an East End motel of 150 homosexuals. It is, of course, possible that such a conference did take place, but the lurid tenor of the report inclines the reader to believe that it was simply a fictitious story, transplanting to Montreal events that were taking place in the United States (where such conferences were attracting a certain amount of media attention), as an occasion for anti-gay humour. In a mock-solemn tone, the journalist reports that alcohol was banned from the meeting because if they drank, the homosexuals present, including the women, would not be able to keep their hands off one another so the meeting would be disrupted. Ludicrous as this report is, the presence of the title in large black letters on news-stands across the city opened a discursive field that had not previously existed. Without needing to buy the publication or read the article, Montreal Francophones were exposed to the concept of homosexuals organizing politically.

Evidence of a new willingness of news media in Montreal to discuss homosexuality comes from the newsletter of the Association for Social Knowledge. In March 1965, the group received a call from CBC-TV in Montreal. They hoped to find a member of the ASK executive living in the East who could take part in a show on homosexuality. The president, Doug Sanders, was invited to come to Montreal for the show, but this initiative also fell through.¹²⁸ A few years later, there was an effort to set up a group in Montreal witness a more substantial effort to open a quasi-political gay space. Documentary sources indicate that a man named Paul Bédard founded a homophile group in Montreal in 1967 or 1968, but little was known either about Bédard or his group. Bédard may or may not have been using the name

¹²⁶ *Globe and Mail* (1965.06.02, 1965.06.28); Sylvestre (1979:20-21); Kinsman (1996:238-239).

¹²⁷ This information was found in a student paper by Denys Fournier at the Université de Sherbrooke in 1974, which included a brief history of the Quebec gay movement (Denys Fournier. "On les appelle homosexuels." [1974]. Archives gaies du Québec. Fonds LeDerff / FHQL).

"International Sex Equality Anonymous" (ISEA) when he first started a social club for homosexuals on Cherrier Street, probably in 1967. News items¹²⁹ reveal that it was equipped with a dining room, bar and conference halls. The news clippings also revealed that after one of the club's members was arrested, Bédard too found himself accused of gross indecency and contributing to juvenile delinquency. The member had been using the club to recruit customers for a network of young prostitutes.¹³⁰ Bédard was acquitted of all charges in September 1968.¹³¹ He is mentioned again in the spring of 1969 as the owner of a new club downtown, but then closed it a month later.¹³² In June of 1969, Bédard was interviewed in *La Semaine*, welcoming the adoption of the Omnibus Bill, which decriminalized homosexual acts between consenting adults in private. Finally, the most important documentary source of information on Bédard's activities is a September 1969 article in *Weekend Magazine*,¹³³ in which he claims that the ISEA has 4,000 members and that his group was affiliated with the North American Conference of Homophile Associations.¹³⁴ Bédard also says that his downtown club has reopened (as the Gemini on Guy Street, at a site that later housed other gay clubs) and promises that the group will publish a magazine; however there is no evidence that it ever did, and there is no further information on him. Further details of this story will be presented in Chapter 7.

In the following chapters, I advance the argument that the gay movement and the current gay economy were only able to take root in a society where many individuals had begun to affirm their identities as homosexuals and/or gay men, and to see themselves as members of a larger whole or community. The emergence of this unprecedented collective self-awareness among those who shared this sexual orientation paved the way for the dramatic changes of the 1970s. In Montreal the first gay liberation group met in March 1971 in response to a call launched by gay members of the collective that published Quebec's major "counter-cultural"

¹²⁸ ASK Newsletter 2(3).

¹²⁹ In the collection of the Archives gaies du Québec

¹³⁰ "Ceux qui voulaient un jeune garçon n'auraient eu qu'à choisir parmi des photos cataloguées." *Le Nouveau Samedi* 1968.08.31:3-5.

¹³¹ "Le président des homophiles acquitté." *Montréal-Matin* 1968.09.17.

¹³² "Homosexuals form local club," *Montreal Star* 1969.04.21; "Restaurant replaces Gemini Club." *Montreal Star* 1969.05.24.

¹³³ William Spencer.(1969) "Canada's Leading Homosexual Speaks Out." *Weekend Magazine* 1969.09.13:6-8. A good indicator of contemporary attitudes to homosexuality was a report in the same day's issue of the *Star* to which *Weekend* was a Saturday supplement, that half of the Canadian papers that carried the magazine had ripped out the pages containing this story ("Papers Object to Story about homosexuality." *Montreal Star* 1969.09.13).

¹³⁴ A check with the Kinsey Institute, which holds the association's archives, showed only directory references to the ISEA, nothing to substantiate its membership in NACHO.

magazine, *Mainmise*. Some of the men interviewed for this study were participants in this group, and their accounts will also be presented in Chapter 7. In the same period at the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s, there was a new impetus to publish newspapers and magazines by and for gay men. The advent of political groups and a public voice for homosexuals marked a major change both for gay men and for the society in general, one which I hope others will be motivated to tell in detail with the work presented here as background.

Part II. Identity, Space, Symbolics and Leaders in Montreal's Emerging Gay Community

Chapter 5. Difference and Discourse: Individual Identity and Action

Finding out that one does not fit into the socially defined category of "normal" is an unwelcome discovery. The consequences for the individual of recognizing in himself the tabooed sexual desire for other men are shaped by the values of his community and the authoritative social discourse to which he is exposed. The management of a "spoiled identity," as Goffman (1963) termed it, varies over the course of the life cycle, and reflects the individual's choices about how to organize his social life, and thus his identity or self-concept. This chapter outlines the narrators' accounts of how they discovered that they were "different," what influence family, peers, and the immediate social milieu in which they lived had on the process, and how it was inflected by authoritative institutional discourses. In this study, the narrators were all men who would resolve this conflict in favour of desire. They all came to accept their sexual orientation as a basic aspect of the self. The process of identity formation varied widely, but all reached a point at which, rejecting the negative influences, they "came out" and entered a social world composed of men who shared their sexual orientation.

The process of identity formation reflects the schemata of selfhood offered in the broader culture, shaped by ethnicity and social class as well as generational and geographic differences. It includes the schema of "gay identity," which the men in this study came quickly or slowly to apply to themselves. With excerpts from the interviews, I will illustrate how these gay men arrived at a positive self-image by linking themselves to discourse networks and friendship groups with other gay men. The narrator accounts show how they learned from, participated in, and contributed to the ongoing process of collective identity formation based on their mutual affective links and their shared involvement in the construction and maintenance of specifically gay schemata. These schemata, of which the shared understanding of the "coming out" process itself is a good example, store collective knowledge and values for survival and

enjoyment. They also include the formal schemata which shape the discursive forms used in expressing gay points of view. In the period of this study, the shared schemata of the gay world began to emerge from clandestinity and an increasingly “audible” gay voice began to be heard in the heteroglossic discourse of North American urban society and in particular that of Montreal, as did those of many social minorities in the 1950s and 1960s.

The personal stories presented here reflect the experiences of a small, non-random group of men who identify (or have identified) with the gay world. They illustrate the variability of experience even among men who share a sexual orientation but nevertheless arrive at an identity based on it. They document the influence on identity formation of early sexual experience, sex education, family, adolescent peers and the social milieu, as well as experiences with religious and educational institutions and the stereotypic negative images of gay life available to the narrators in the media and cultural works such as novels or films. Following the presentation of influences in childhood and adolescence, I will examine the coming out process, the social experience of finding and learning about the gay world. Once in the gay world, men learned, sometimes from bitter personal experience, about the various forms of social control that could affect them, including violence, police arrest and other measures. The individual experiences of these controls illustrate further the constraints on the development of the collectivity founded on gay identity. The chapter ends with a discussion of the ways the narrators protected themselves from social opprobrium and led the type of life they wanted by gaining control over their own domestic space and affiliating with gay social networks.

An overview of the experiences of the narrators is presented in Appendix A-1. With another group of men, the range of topics might be different, but the collective concern with certain gay themes (some of which must be shared by most gay men) is a key element in unravelling the strands which led to the emergence of an open gay scene in the city. Many segments of the gay world not covered here undoubtedly have discourse practices and forms of their own that are well worth study, but in this initial account, I want to present a framework for the analysis of the experiences of ordinary gay men on which future research can build.

A. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND SCHEMATA OF IDENTITY

The personal experience of sexual desire, early sexual experience, family, peer group and the narrators’ youthful social milieu helped them to form a self-concept that included their

sexual orientation. Some men said that they came easily to self-acceptance, while others did so after a period of moderate self-doubt, and a third group only accepted their homosexuality after considerable resistance. The variability of the ways in which the acquisition of a schema of the self including homosexuality is outlined in this section. These varied patterns illustrate how different are the ways of fitting same-gender sexual attraction into an individual life.

1. Sexual Awareness and Experience

The initial stage of the interviews dealt with how they came to awareness of their sexual "difference." Each narrator was asked to describe his childhood, when he noticed that he was attracted to others of the same sex and how he understood it. Sexual experience in childhood and adolescence was an important factor for many of the men, and a few received sexual education. The initial construction of schemata of homosexuality and gay identity are difficult to reconstruct, but a few men provided insights into their experience of this process.

Influenced no doubt by the popularization of Freud's notions of the importance of the family in individual sexual development, they found it natural to explain their coming to awareness as different, and eventually as gay in terms of their early lives. Aside from two narrators who were reticent about their families, noted in Chapter 2, most of the men interviewed, when asked for memories of childhood, sex education, sexual activities, and so on, could produce accounts which gave every indication of being honest attempts to describe experience, and were mainly noteworthy for the diversity of experience they reflected.

Sometimes narrators recalled their awareness of difference simply in terms of the desire that they felt or the sexual experiences that they had while quite young. One man, Arthur, for example, said that his earliest memory that gave him an inkling of his sexuality resulted from feeling sexually aroused while watching a young married neighbour who went around shirtless in the summertime. Another man, Jacques, reported that at age three he had felt such excitement at seeing a soldier from a nearby camp urinating against a fence that he asked his older brother whether men could be called beautiful. His brother said yes, but warned: "Ça se dit pas." The retention of these youthful memories indicates that they were milestones in the development of sexual identity for these narrators. Jacques emphasized that when he reached adolescence, it wasn't simply a question of gayness that troubled him, but the relationship between sexual orientation and the acceptance of himself as a sexual being, something which all adolescents face:

C'était assez mystérieux, indépendamment de l'homosexualité. [C'était] une sexualité découverte par accident. A 11 ans, j'étais assez précoce, un dimanche après-midi, je lisais dans ma chambre, j'ai senti quelque chose, une éjaculation. Personne m'avait prévenu. Les garçons faisaient des blagues ou dessins, mais moi, je rentrais dans moi-même. C'était la surprise de ma vie, au moins de la semaine.

Both can cause problems for those that have been raised with a strong sense of guilt about anything sexual.

Among the narrator group, however, there were some whose sexual sophistication at a young age would have surprised him even more, since several narrators related sporadic or regular sexual experience at an early age. For the most part, sexual contacts were with other young people, but one had been abused by a priest at his school, while two other men had gone willingly, along with some of his friends, to the home of middle-aged neighbours for sex. Several narrators recalled having sex with brothers or overnight guests who shared their beds. For some there was a period of activity quite young, which came to an end, and they only resumed sexual activity as adults. A few others became active young and thereafter maintained sexual participation, while a larger number had sporadic sexual experience as adolescents, but did not really become sexually active until adulthood. Interestingly, most of those for whom self-acceptance was classified as unproblematic had been initiated into sex before they were fifteen.

This was the case for the oldest narrators. Percy began his life story with the words, "I got started with a cousin of mine." His initiation into sex took place in about 1916, in Grimsby, a small town in southern Ontario, when he was about nine years old.

I grew up with the gay world right to begin with. ... So I've been gay for about eighty years. ... A cousin of mine ... came in. He was five years older than me, and he was a minister's son, and gay. So he brought me out, basically. He used to spend the summers with us. Then, of course, when the summer was over, I was looking for somebody else then.

Though Percy was the oldest narrator, he was the youngest to develop a self-concept as sexually oriented to other men. He went on to recount his successes as a cruising teenager in the village of Grimsby during the First World War. Once, as he triumphantly recounted, he even had sex with another boy under the pulpit in the church during a banquet.

Having acquired the schema of sexual possibilities with other men, Percy was motivated to learn how to find others, and never stopped having sexual contacts in public school, high school and university.

I even had a friend in Toronto—we used to like to play cards, my mother and father and he and I. And then, I was 18, I guess, ... and we used to fondle one another under the card table while we were playing cards with my parents.

In his mid-eighties at the time of the interview, Percy enjoyed recounting his sexual exploits, and had a number of anecdotes to tell that will be presented in later sections.

Walter's story was remarkably similar to his lover Percy's, though he was a few years younger and from a lower rather than upper middle-class family. He was brought up by an aunt since his own mother died at his birth. The aunt had a retarded stepson who used to threaten Walter, but who also took him off into the woods to "fool around." This went on for a few years. Walter recounted how this boy would go about sex when the two were alone in the house.

He'd go downstairs, and come upstairs with cream in a teaspoon or a big spoon and some sugar, and he'd have me take my pants down, and he'd dip my pecker in the cream and then put sugar on it and then go to town on it. And he did that, oh, I guess for a long time.

With this initiation, even after he was back living with his own family, Walter continued to seek sexual contacts. These he found among his schoolmates:

In public school, I was playing, horsing around in public school. I was getting up in the 12, 13 years old. I was beginning to get pretty active. So my mother (step-mother) used to watch me a lot. And I never played with the boys, never played football or went for any of those kinds of sports, but I was playing with the girls across the street or my sister, and I used to get along okay. But there was one character at public school—we used to like to go into the woods every so often. He'd come home with me after four o'clock, and we'd hike off to the woods. Mother used to suspect something there, because I didn't like the boy at all. Anyhow, he taught me a lot of tricks.

His family intervened when his sister complained that her brother and another boy disappeared for long periods when they were playing hide and seek, but only by forbidding Walter to play with him again. Walter was a ringleader in his peer group as they played hooky, and taught the others what he had learned from his cousin.

After school, with my own little group from the school, we used to be able to get to the race-track, Thornecliffe Racetrack. We'd go across the fields—I was always playing hooky in the last two grades. ... My little gang and I, three or four of us missing when the races were on. But between the school and Thornecliffe there was a big open field, and grass used to grow about that high. So we used to have our own little area in there, and we used to go and take our pants down and show each other what we had, and what we could do. Then from there, we'd go off to the races.

Never very fond of school, Walter was encouraged to leave school as soon as it was legally possible, and set out to work. When he left school at sixteen, his sexual adventures broadened, as we will see in the later section on coming out.

Charles also had pre-teen sexual experience with peers, but he was the exception among those to whom this happened, since it did not smooth his path to accepting his sexual orientation. He said he felt different early in life, not only because of his sexual orientation, but because he felt he had nothing in common with his family. Growing up in a small working-class Francophone community in northern Ontario, his interest in literature, music and dance set him apart from his brothers, who were all athletes. He was always the most undisciplined,

unable to share a room in the overcrowded home. And he had sexual interests and activities with other boys.

J'ai toujours eu des rapports sexuels avec les garçons. J'ai toujours été intéressé. Je savais que c'était mal si les autres le savaient. Ça a pris du temps avant que je me sente coupable. J'aimais ça. Moi, c'était plus une pulsion, une passion.

One of his earliest sexual memories was his attraction to a cousin who was already an adult.

À 8 ans, il y avait un cousin vivant en face, dans l'hôtel de mon grand-père, travaillant là. J'étais littéralement fou de lui. Je faisais tout pour le déshabiller. Je voulais voir son sexe. Ça doit être embêtant pour lui, même des agressions. C'était très troublant pour cet homme mais il était jamais méchant avec moi.

Like most of the narrators, Charles had no sex education, at least from his parents.

J'ai jamais eu d'éducation sexuelle. On n'a jamais parlé de ça, mais comme j'avais des grands frères, j'ai eu beaucoup d'informations sexuelles. C'était pas ce qu'ils disaient mais que je les ai vus faire. Je les ai souvent vus se branler. Ils faisaient pas exprès, mais. Excepté une fois, mon frère, juste plus âgé que moi, l'a fait devant moi.

In many cases such as his, the informal channels of sexual learning were much more effective than the formal silence. Charles began to have sexual experiences with schoolmates when he was still in primary school.

J'ai été amoureux de garçons pendant des années. Y'en a avec qui j'ai baisé pendant des années. Vers les 4e, 5e années avec un gars—on faisait ça chez eux. Je le suçais; il adorait ça. On jouait. Un jour, il a décidé que c'était fini.

This pattern continued when he was at the local collège classique in Northern Ontario.

Au collège, y avait un gars avec qui j'avais des relations sexuelles assez régulièrement chez nous le soir. Une histoire à sens unique. C'est pas vrai que c'est toujours la même chose. Il y a beaucoup d'hommes straights qui sont gais. J'en ai connu beaucoup dans ma vie. Celui au collège, je rentrais presque tous les soirs ou quand il avait accompagné sa blonde, il venait chez moi et on allait baiser dans la voiture de ses parents. J'ai souvent été amoureux de gens comme ça. Beaucoup de gars qui refusaient le rôle.

Unlike some of the other narrators, whose early sexual involvements gave them self-confidence and a lack of concern with guilt, sexuality remained problematic for Charles. His concept of himself as sexually involved with other men did not lead to an identification as homosexual or gay until much later, as discussed in the section on therapy (p. 176).

One of the narrators who had sexual experiences with adult males was Martin, whose initiation by a neighbour while he was very young gave him his sexual sophistication in his mid-teens.

Déjà à 15 ans j'étais un vieux de la vielle. Parce que à l'âge de 6-7 ans, ... en avant de chez nous sur la rue Hochelaga, il y avait un monsieur Z. Moi j'ai 6-7 ans, lui il avait peut-être 40 ans, pour moi il était vieux. Pis je me souviens j'avais été chez lui avec un de mes petits chums pis M. Z. nous avait pogné le pipi. Pis on a eu un fun noir avec ça. On a trouvé ça le fun, tellement qu'on est retourné chez M. Z. Fait que c'est lui qui m'a [initié].

He went out of his way to distinguish his experience from those undertaking lawsuits against their childhood abusers, showing little patience with their point of view.

Dans mon cas, tout ça c'était du miel ça a glissé comme du beurre à 7-8 ans. Pis à 10-11 ans on parlait qu'il y a des messieurs qu'il fallait faire attention, il y en a qui sont dangereux. J'ai été averti, c'est même pas mes parents mais d'autres gens. ... Ça me faisait rien de me faire toucher par quelqu'un. Jamais je me suis posé des questions sur ma sexualité.

Martin would later be the only narrator to earn his living from sexual photography and acting as an escort.

Donald received some formal instruction on sexual matters from his headmaster in Trinidad, who was mainly intent on convincing his pupils that masturbation was "dirty." However Donald was more influenced by his peers and felt ashamed of his slower physical development.

All my friends, they had all had their hair and puberty. I had nothing. I was small and thin and sickly. I was a late bloomer. And they were all jerking-off like crazy. But I only depended on wet dreams. Then finally, one special friend said, "What are you scared about?" and he showed me how to do it. And then from then on, I became quite adept.

This sexual openness may have reflected differences from other narrators because of Donald's Caribbean upbringing. Through his peers, Donald also had some sexual experience with an adult.

[With] about three or four other friends—we used to go over to this man. He was a half-cousin or something of my mother's. We all called him Uncle Billy, and he used to fiddle with us, but I didn't really enjoy it and wouldn't take part, whereas my other three or four friends loved it.

Donald, who already knew that he was deeply attracted to other males, was ill at ease in a situation where his peers, all of whom grew up to be straight, were just after easy sexual release and adventure. He nevertheless came to self-acceptance without particular problems at around age twenty.

One of those who did not find it so easy to adopt a gay identity and life style was Gérard, whose first-hand account of his rape by a teaching brother at his residential school makes explicit the discrepancy in power between priest and schoolboy, and the effect on the boy's religious outlook.

J'étais croyant. J'allais à la confesse. Je me masturbais pas. A cette époque je connaissais pas ça d'ailleurs. ... J'avais été initié à ça à 12-13-14 ans. Tu vois un frère, Frère Etienne, qui me faisait coller la joue sur sa joue, qui me donnait de l'affection, qui disait que c'était bien. Il a commencé à me flatter. Il m'a expliqué comment était faite une femme, par où sortaient les bébés. Il commençait à me toucher. Il sortait même mon pénis et le flattait. J'étais enfant de chœur et je trouvais ça très compromettant parce que lui était le maître des enfants de chœur.

The brother used his authority and pretended to be giving him sex education to force the child to commit what was plainly sacrilege:

Et dans la sacristie, il se mettait à genoux devant moi, pis me faisait asseoir sur sa cuisse, pis commençait à me caresser. J'étais très mal à l'aise avec ça. Je trouvais que c'était pas normal, pas tout à fait orthodoxe. ... Mais moi je le touchais pas. Je venais en érection nécessairement, mais il y avait pas de masturbation du tout. C'est la première fois. ... J'avais toujours peur d'être pris. Mais comme c'était mon professeur aussi. Je voulais pas me le mettre à dos.

As he later learned, the same man seduced other boys at the college. The man later left the order under a cloud. Gérard was also the only man who received much information from his family, since his mother was a nurse. He resisted defining himself as gay, despite having unusual opportunities to do so in his middle and late adolescence. This incident of sexual coercion may have played a big part in his sexual reticence.

Several men had sexual contacts in late adolescence which led directly to their entry into the gay world. Through another boy, Jean met an older man in the Montreal neighbourhood where he lived.

Then I was introduced to a retired teacher who was a pederast. I was 17 or 18, still studying as a boarder. I met this teacher. This was through my cousin. The teacher was recruiting young men in lanes around his house on the pretext of doing little jobs around the house. He invited them and made a pass at them. My cousin was brought by a friend. He was offering drinks. I enjoyed that, couldn't afford them and had no place to get them. We were too young. He would not insist on having sex. It might have happened only twice in 5/6/7 years. He was not that interested—just enjoyed the company of younger people. That was how it started.

Jean viewed this man as a means to an end, and his objective was information.

I was interested in learning how homosexuals acted, wanted to meet someone my age. Eventually he introduced me to someone. We got along well for a year, until I met him [his lover Normand].

Again this early beginning seems to have contributed to a relaxed attitude towards sex and sexuality. It is striking that the members of the two long-standing couples in the narrator group all had sex at least in their late adolescence. This may have contributed to their tolerance for outside encounters and enabled them to last as a couple.

Len grew up on the South Shore of Montreal and had a number of sexual encounters in parks as a teenager in the late 1940s. That was how he found out that there were gay bars and it occurred to him that these could lead a social life organized around sexual orientation. One of his partners told him about the Tropical Room on Peel Street (in 1950, when he was about 20). It took him several preparatory drinks in a nearby non-gay bar to get up the courage to climb the stairs to the bar. Once there however, he became a regular, formed a circle of bar-going friends and made sexual contacts. His story of his entry into the gay world, his "coming out," thus followed a very common sequence of (a) awareness of desire (b) public sex (c) learning of and entering the gay community.

A quite different initiation into sex was reported by Louis, who grew up in a Francophone village north of Montreal. Louis provided me with part of his taped autobiography, which included the story of one of his first sexual experiences. One Sunday afternoon in his early teens, his best friend led him on a mystery expedition whose destination turned out to be a

remote farmhouse, where they settled into a tree with a view of the farmyard and ended up spying on Frankie, an 18 year old boy from the farm, as he masturbated in the yard.

C'est le premier homme que je vois complètement nu. Dès la fois que je l'avais vu dans la boutique à mon père, en culottes très courtes, le torse mouillé dans maillot blanc, j'avais reçu un choc sublime. Une voracité qui m'agace totalement. Frankie avait ensuite envahi la zone nocturne de mes rêveries.

Aware of each other's orgasm, this shared guilty secret drove the two friends apart. This, Louis explained, was the result of the confessional system to which they were subject (see p. 161). Louis knew even then that he was attracted to other men, but he was also aware that his sexual interest was not shared by his friend.

The uncertainty Normand felt about his sexuality when he reached the end of his secondary schooling was another widely shared pattern.

I was going out with girls but I wasn't that interested. I was looking at boys more than girls, but didn't realize I was really homosexual till age of 18-19, outside of one little friend in Montreal with whom I masturbated, more out of fun than anything—no love.

Having sex "just for fun" meant there was no identity commitment involved, and was a well-known pattern among younger gay men in Montreal, where the storage "sheds" or "hangars" that stood between row houses and lanes to hold fuel oil provided secrecy for the sexual explorations of children.¹³⁵ Normand waited a long time to come to terms with his sexual orientation, an example of the uncertain course of identity formation for teenagers. Despite childhood sexual experience with another boy, it took him several years to figure out where his interests lay.

Then at 18, I met a fellow who was bisexual. He brought me to a party at an older man's who was homosexual, who introduced me to another older homosexual. But I was not interested. I was interested in him. ... I always tried to hide it. We went out with girls on double dates. He was handsome and intelligent. I was going out more because of him than the girls.

Normand preferred to follow his attraction than to enter a gay world that had no interest for him. Like many other gay men, Normand rejected the identity thrust on him.

I wanted to quit the gay life. I wanted to be straight. I didn't accept at all being homosexual. I was trying to go out with girls.

His bisexual cousin told him that he was not homosexual because "I didn't have many manners or pink collars or things."¹³⁶ Later in his story, Normand stressed how hard he had "fought against" his homosexuality." This way of phrasing his position emphasizes the view that homosexuality is something within that has to be taken into account by the individual. This cousin was always busy going out with girls, while Normand was looking for something more.

¹³⁵ Information was obtained on these practices from friends from Montreal who grew up in the 1950s and 1960s.

¹³⁶ "Manners" here is a mistranslation of "manière" (having or showing mannerisms), a stereotypic attribute of homosexual men in both English and French cultures.

So I started to go out a little, even though I was not too interested in sex. I wanted to meet somebody and fall in love. Finally it did happen, in a tavern. ... Then I met Jean and we fell in love.

The full story of their meeting is presented in Appendix A-5. His adolescent sexual experience helped him to clarify what he wanted in life, and once he entered the gay world, he moved swiftly to find a permanent relationship.

2. Self-Acceptance and Family Support or Opposition

How were individuals influenced in the processes of defining their identities by various forms of social control wielded by the family and other people with whom they had immediate personal contact? Most of the men interviewed kept up a relationship with their parents throughout their lifetimes. Ostracism or self-exile from the family of origin is not especially common among gay men. On the contrary, active involvement with elderly parents and with nieces and nephews is frequent.

Though the group of narrators cannot be construed as a sample on which to base a rigorous conclusion, the experiences of narrators certainly seem to indicate how beneficial family support, whether open or unspoken can be in maintaining a positive self-image for a gay man. For all the narrators, who were in general men who had successfully survived in the gay world, there was a tendency to maintain relatively good relations with families. When families knew of the sexual orientation of their sons, they could either reject them, intervene to change aspects of their behaviour, accept them as long as there was no discussion, or openly acknowledge this part of their identity. The range of possible responses is great, but not unlimited. Not many of the narrators experienced anything beyond mild unexpressed regret of mothers and fathers.

All four partners in the two couples who have been together for decades enjoyed the tacit approval of their parents, and three of the four men came to accept their sexual orientation with few problems, while the fourth, Normand did so after more hesitation. Walter's father wouldn't allow him to leave home before he turned twenty-one. Though he was encouraged to bring the men he was seeing to the family home, judgment was passed on them so that some were not allowed to enter and had to be entertained on the front porch. When Percy came along, he was welcomed into the home, however, and this made it easier for Walter to leave home to live with him. Walter interrupted his story of meeting Percy to explain his family's

attitude to other friends he had brought home. Though his parents permitted those they liked to stay over in his bedroom, others were rejected if they didn't like the look of them.

My father kept his eye on me very carefully, and some of the people that I'd go to bring in the house, my father'd take a look and say, He can't come past the front door. If you're going to see him. He's got to stay on the steps outside. He's not getting in the house. And, of course, those affairs would end very quickly, naturally.

Once they were a couple, both Percy and Walter's families accepted their son's lover without reservations.

In the meantime, I had met Percy [and he] was accepted right away. ... and I was going out to Percy's home. His mother and father had a little farm out of town. I used to go out there each weekend, and I was so ill, basically, that I used to go out there, [and] the first thing Percy's mother would say [was] "You look awfully tired. Come in here, and when supper's ready, I'll call you." She'd take me to the living room. Put me into the chair I'm still sitting in—my easy chair in the living room here. She'd put a blanket over me, and pull the blind down, and say, When dinner's ready, I'll come and get you. I did that for weeks.

When it became clear that Walter wanted to go and live with Percy, his parents agreed but set certain conditions. They said:

We'll have to see if Percy wants to have you—take on the responsibility. We think you're a sick boy. ... You have Percy come, and we'll talk to him.

They wanted Percy to take Walter to his doctor, because they were afraid that he was dying of exhaustion.

After Walter had recovered his strength sufficiently, and both had vacation time, they went on what they saw as their honeymoon trip to the Maritimes in 1933, the year before they moved to Montreal. Percy drove his car and Walter lay on the front seat with his head in his lap while Percy's mother and aunt sat in the back seat. No more direct and vivid a form of tacit acceptance could be found.

In the other longstanding couple interviewed, the family reaction, while not negative, was not as actively positive as the Toronto couple's parents, and thus was more tolerant than accepting. Jean's mother died when he was a baby, so he was raised by his grandmother and his father was a stranger to him when he came to Montreal to live with him at fifteen or sixteen. While his family didn't actively support him, his father's acceptance amounted to a form of support.

I wasn't interested in girls after I met the first friend with whom I could go to bed—no question about my homosexuality. I met him at 17, 18. I had slept over and my father was mad. He asked me if I had been sleeping with a man or a woman. I said, "I've been sleeping with a man and liked it very much." That closed the whole question, the secret. Otherwise I would never have told him, but I came out to my father.

Jean's father never mentioned the subject again, and only his silence signified tolerance.

Normand's family also left their acceptance implicit. The lovers explained that after they met,

they hesitated to move in together because Normand was the youngest and could only have justified leaving home by getting married. But as the years passed, the family came to expect the participation of his lover at family get-togethers.

Even though they knew about it, I'm pretty sure they never mentioned it and I never did and everything stayed nice and quiet. They loved Jean. They acted very nicely.

This attitude was manifested for example, when the family went to Miami, they would invite Normand and Jean for a week and rent a place for them to stay. Still, said Jean, they had joked that one day Normand would have regrets.

For not being married. [They said,] "Right now you're young, you enjoy yourselves, but one day when you get old, you'll see." He wasn't right on this one.

This tacit approval from both sides was similar to that experienced by Walter and Percy, another common factor in the two longstanding couples.

Other families also preferred to "officially" not know that their son was gay, but their continuing interactions with him were a sign of tolerance. And many of the men saw no need to confront their parents with the spoken confirmation of what they must have suspected. Trevor continued to live in the family home long after coming out, but his sexual orientation was never discussed:

They were too polite and old-fashioned. You just don't discuss those things. I did come home so that was enough.

Len's story was similar. Though the parties he threw while his parents were away left obvious scars on the house and garden, they never questioned him. This kind of discursive avoidance points to the tremendous social force of language. Since Len left his homosexuality unspoken, his parents could pretend they didn't know, or that there was nothing to know. This was a form of tacit support for their son. Most of the acceptance offered by families was tacit. It was also more likely to be clearly shown to men who had long-term relationships, in which case social acceptance was given expression by means of participation in family events.

For most narrators, since homosexuality had never been a topic of discussion in the family when they were young, most of the information they had acquired in coming to terms with what they were experiencing came from other sources. For Alvin, however, there was one occasion when the subject came up. This story illustrates the complex, long-term intertwining of social meanings, work and family relations, spanning distance and time:

My uncles had a business in Winnipeg, but then opened a branch in Edmonton where I had an uncle at the time. My uncle employed a young man related to an aunt by marriage—really not part of the family. ... I was working in the Winnipeg office. This man was in Winnipeg on a business matter, and I looked at him—this was before I had come out. I looked at him and thought, this one looks pretty nice. I liked him. A year or so after that, my father told me that that particular individual had been in a homosexual sex scandal in Edmonton. This was in the early 1940s. Apparently,

there was some kind of homosexual ring in Edmonton. I can't remember the details, but the police had got wind of it and this individual had turned state's witness, saying he really didn't know what was happening or what he was into.

Much later, in the late 1970s, because of the family connection, Alvin ran into the man in question in Vancouver. Without actually putting it into words, they made it clear that they understood that both were gay.

Though Jacques was one of those who only came slowly to self-acceptance, his problems were not the result of family hostility. His older brother confirmed in adulthood the open-mindedness he had shown when agreeing that men could be beautiful as a child. When Jacques came out to him, his response was: "Je te souhaite simplement d'être heureux." Encouraged, Jacques talked to his father.

Mon père, je lui ai dit une fois quand on est allé prendre une bière à la taverne. Je tenais à lui le dire et il avait la même réaction que mon frère: "De tous mes moutons, c'est toujours le plus noir que j'aime le plus, le plus noir du moment." Les 2 soeurs, ça a fini par se savoir. Elles ont fini par accepter. Ça a fait mal, mais ils ont fini par comprendre que ça expliquait bien des comportements extérieurs.

Such open encouragement was rare, but certainly contributed to an individual's sense of self-worth.

Another man who found at least some support for his difference in his family but nevertheless remained troubled by it for many years was Charles. His difficult relationship with his brothers has already been described. He was verbally defended against them by his mother.

Mais elle, ma mère le savait depuis toujours, parce qu'elle disait toujours "Laissez-le tranquille, parce que Charles il aime pas les femmes." Je suis sûr dans sa tête, elle savait pas ce que ça voulait dire mais elle comprenait. Elle a bien vu. J'avais beaucoup de copines. Je sais pas comment elle savait.

He nevertheless felt like an outcast in his family, and had a very distant relationship with his parents after he left home.

A more complex situation regarding the relationship of a supportive family and other social influences was reported by Gérard. His experience of coercive sex was his first contact with homosexuality, but there was also open discussion in his family that signalled the existence of individual men in the community who were different.

Mais certaines personnes avaient certaines manières chez nous, 2 ou 3 vieux garçons particuliers. D'autres [se sont] mariés pour se cacher. ... On savait que [il y avait] certaines personnes. Ils étaient ridiculisés—c'était des personnes maniérées, des cas très isolés.

Gérard's report is one of the few references to the social existence of homosexuals in the interviews. The message he read from this labelling and stereotyping of men in his small hometown in eastern Quebec was that this can hardly have reassured him, since it showed that

homosexuality led to social ostracism. Gérard was also one of the few narrators to receive any explicit parental explanation of sex. Asked about sex education, he said:

J'ai eu une éducation religieuse, bien disciplinée. J'ai su des choses par ma mère, par des éducateurs, des frères, vers 10-12 ans mais j'avais connu des jeux de fesses quand j'étais jeune, nécessairement dans les étables et champs. On jouait au docteur 6-7 ans. Les gens étaient pas plus scrupuleux que ça, mais c'était pas des choses qu'on abordait ouvertement.

His mother, who was a nurse, gave him a book on sexuality and human reproduction, and explained to him where babies came from. With all these conflicting influences, including discussions with peers discussed in the next section, Gérard would not make any move into the gay world until he was a university student in Montreal in his early twenties.

One form by which some families attempted to exert control over their gay sons was by insisting that they consult a psychiatrist, as in the case of Arthur and Patrick, though both of them had rather favourable experiences of therapy (p. 177). In exceptional cases, families acted more even more vigorously to oppose their sons' homosexuality. The only instance of really active family interference in the living situation of a narrator was related by Oscar, who was perhaps not coincidentally the narrator whose family had the highest social standing as well as one of the oldest narrators. In any case they seem to have had access to information about his associates and acted to force a change in his behaviour.

I suppose the closest [he came to having a lover] was with the fellow who gave me the drawing [of a young man]. [An] English chap. He had an apartment, shared with someone, on a pal basis. He used to come and sleep at my place. I had two bedrooms. He'd sleep four, sometimes five nights a week. That went on for a year, then let me tell you, one of my family actively intervened. The only time anyone in the family has ever done that. They simply told me off one day.

His father explicitly voiced the family's concern:

He said, "What's that fellow doing living at your place all the time. We have heard that he is a homo."

The message was heard loud and clear by Oscar, who was himself quite conservative by nature, with his army lawyer background and his work as an administrator in a major Montreal institution. He thought it was a fairly common occurrence: "This is what one ran into." Since this is the only such instance of active family intervention,¹³⁷ it seems that his assumption that such things were still common is inaccurate, though it is quite in keeping with the values and beliefs of a man who still maintained his adherence to the "sickness model" of homosexuality. In this dry, almost impersonal story, Oscar says that his parents had ended the closest gay relationship he ever had, and that he acquiesced in this intervention. From his point of view, it was the intervention of fate.

¹³⁷ Leznoff (1954:56) presents a rather similar case in which a man's mother opened his mail and found out he was gay. Oscar had no idea how his family would have learned about his relationship.

Another explanation is the close-knit nature of the Montreal English community, in which Oscar's family were prominent. Native Montrealers of both cultural groups felt pressure from the proximity of their families. Eugène stressed the inhibiting fear of disclosure to family for French-speaking native Montrealers, explaining that the most active militants in the city's gay movement have been from elsewhere.¹³⁸ Within the smaller English-speaking community in Montreal, narrators whose families lived in Montreal, adopted a number of different strategies to avoid having their families learn of their homosexuality. Oscar was not the only native Anglophone Montrealers to point to the control exerted by the social milieu, in which their families were likely to hear "talk" (gossip) about their sons. The constraints felt by English Montrealers were powerful, since they saw themselves as part of the small, interconnected English-speaking community. Probably many men shared the attitude of Donald's lover Evan, whose family was in Montreal. Without any specific action by the family, their presence and the expectation of a negative reaction from them made gay men cautious. In Evan's case, Donald said this made him "very guarded."

This fear of family and community reaction led men to structure their lives to avoid exposure. Étienne's relationship with family was especially difficult, as much because of his own fears of how they would react as of active rejection on their part. Thus the estrangement was partly of his own making.

Là, j'ai obtenu une bourse. ... J'ai aménagé avec un gars, [un] coiffeur, près de l'U de M. Ça a été le drame chez mes parents. Mon père dit, "On quitte la maison quand on se marie." C'était effrayant. Ils osaient pas en parler aux oncles-tantes. Sans savoir, ils soupçonnaient.

He moved out of the family home at 18, and though he returned for one year somewhat later. Once he got a job, Étienne left home for good. He reported one of the most difficult relationships with family of all the narrators. At the centre of his descriptions of these tense relationships is a problem of labelling.

Hors de question que je puisse parler de ça à mes parents—impensable. La perspective de me retrouver face à ma famille élargie par exemple, lors d'une mortalité. ... Je m'imaginai au salon funéraire avec tout ce monde là sachant que je suis gai. Je paniquais. Malgré tout ça je suis parti de loin. Ça m'a pris énormément de temps et est-ce que c'est fini ça, c'est pas encore fini.

Étienne's problematic relationships included his brothers and sisters.

Mes deux jeunes frères sont devenus des étrangers pour moi. Je les voyais jamais. Mon frère plus vieux avec qui j'avais quelques affaires, quand je le voyais, je lui parlais pas. C'était une situation insupportable d'aller en famille, voir ma grand-mère, entre autres.

¹³⁸ This judgment should not be accepted unproblematically, especially since its author himself reiterated throughout the interview how concerned he was about family, university or employer reactions to his homosexuality, but nevertheless got fully involved in the city's first gay liberation group.

He does not want to put into words who he is, or for his family to have the word "homosexual" in mind when they see him. This is the reverse of the more frequent situations of tacit acceptance, where "not putting into words" is the family's (not the gay son's) strategy for negotiating the discursive hazards of the situation.

J'ai tout coupé, j'ai gardé mes distances le plus possible. C'était impensable que je puisse leur parler de ça. Il fallait que je me retrouve, que je vive ma vie. Je m'étais dit qu'il fallait que je m'en sorte tout seul sans compter sur personne. J'ai changé de quartier. J'ai déménagé dans l'Ouest. J'appelais ma mère de temps en temps mais je laissait passer des mois sans les contacter. J'ai coupé les ponts avec les amis. J'en ai revu quelques uns après mais j'avais plus d'intérêt. Mon monde était le monde gai, mes nouveaux amis.

Étienne makes explicit that his rejection of his family and the entire milieu of his youth is counterbalanced by the new connections he made in the gay community.

Étienne's case is exceptional, and even he did maintain some communication with his parents. Some of the other narrators were much more closely involved with their families, even contributing directly to their financial support or assuming a caretaker role (normally played by women) with aged parents. Percy, for example, provided for his parents when his father went bankrupt for the second time. Since gay men had no commitments to children, gay men also were available to play a caretaker role when parent became elderly. Oscar's step-mother, for example, lived to the age of 102 in a downtown apartment building near his. He was fully responsible for her in the latter decades of her life. Len has also assumed a caretaker role with his parents, since he has always lived with them. Though such a degree of family involvement was rare, almost all the narrators remained closely linked to their families.

There was, however, a wide range of variation among the narrators over whether to tell their families that they were gay. Sometimes only certain family members were selected for this confidence. Arthur's decision to tell his sister, but not his brothers, may be a common pattern. He said in the interview that one of his brothers had recently spoken to him about gays as though he had no inkling of the relevance for Arthur, a story which was echoed by Oscar whose brother had still not figured out his sexual orientation when they were both in their seventies. Arthur was also one of several men who mentioned having an uncle who they considered "suspect." The presence of older unmarried relatives could bolster a young man's sense of self confidence, since he could see that the family had not turned the other relative out.

The variety of comments on the relationship between families and the development of a gay identity is further complicated, as many of the accounts cited here have shown, by the inter-relationships with other influences like peers, religious commitment, geographic origin and

ethnicity. In all cases the men in this study came to see themselves as having an identity that in some sense had to be negotiated with their immediate families. This was so even where families were supportive, since the men were quite aware that they were keeping silent about an important aspect of their selves, or moved to explicitly reveal it to their parents and siblings.

3. Peer Groups and Social Milieu

As the comment on pink collars by Normand's cousin indicates, members of a young man's peer group could make comments that influenced, or were meant to influence, an individual's sexual orientation. While this was an instance of recourse to stereotypes in interpersonal discourse, the interviews also furnish several references to unambiguous social labelling practices similar to those which Garneau (1980:34) placed at the centre of her analysis of identity formation. Garneau's informants reported that their peer groups followed a system which categorized some boys as "sissies" (*"menettes"* or *"tapettes"*) or "fags" (*"fifis"*).¹³⁹ She finds the cause in the exclusion of effeminate boys by their peer groups because of their physical weakness, or preference for domestic tasks. Garneau suggests that the adolescent peer group has as much influence on behaviour and identity as parental guidance or institutional discourse. Her account incorporates a processual model, since the labels are applied in progressive stages with each new age grade that a boy enters in the process of reproduction of the Québécois conception of virility. In the second part of her study, Garneau (1980:60) finds that such categorizing is carried over to adult gay groups, which practice the same exclusion of effeminate men, a finding confirmed by some narrators in the present study (see p. 301).

Gérard's exposure to labelling of homosexuals in his small town has been mentioned above. Another story from earlier in Gérard's childhood also illustrates the rigidity of such categorization in an even smaller community. He reported a regional label used in his grandparents' village of 3,000 people in the Lower North Shore region. There was a man in the community who was labelled with a special term: *"menette à queue."*

[Il] y avait un garçon à côté de chez grand-papa qu'on appelait *"menette à queue"* au lieu de *"fifi."* Peut-être parce qu'il faisait la vaisselle, à manger, des activités de femme, cuisait des tartes, aidait sa mère à faire le ménage. *"Fifi"* existait pas au Saguenay, c'était *"menette à queue."*

This man in his twenties worked, Gérard thought, as a clerk-secretary at a garage outside of town. He interpreted this usage as follows:

C'était péjoratif. On reconnaissait qu'il rendait service à sa mère. Quand il sortait, c'était pas as-tu vu untel, c'était as-tu vu la *"Menette à queue"* Une expression [qui n'était] pas liée à la sexualité,

¹³⁹ Translating such terms is, of course, not a straightforward matter, so the English equivalents should be treated with caution.

selon moi. Je pense pas. [Il avait] des manières efféminées, délicates et il portait des fois un tablier pour aider sa mère. Selon moi [il travaillait] dans les papiers—comme un commis, une sorte de secrétaire—à l'extérieur [du village], dans un garage.

The term “menette à queue” is apparently a variant of the general term from eastern Quebec that Garneau discusses. In all particulars, Gérard's account agrees with the data gathered by Garneau. The label is affixed on the basis of physical delicacy and a tendency to undertake domestic tasks, hand work normally done by women. This man's employment in secretarial work further amplified his identification with this role. These observations offer a starting place for a detailed study of such terms, one which would have to take into account variation in time and according to region, but which should also try to go much further than Garneau's taxonomy in showing how such labels were used and what their long-term effects were. Gérard stressed that it was the man's involvement in women's tasks that led to the labelling.

Another instance of labelling was related by Louis, who also grew up in a small town. He said that in his town north of Montreal in the early 1940s, there was a scandal when a local man was caught with a youth and labelled a “serin,” a synonym, explained Louis, for homosexual.¹⁴⁰ Pending further research, we do not know to what extent this kind of folk taxonomy of labels was current among urban Francophones and among Anglophones, or how much change time has brought in adolescent labelling practices.¹⁴¹

The labels used were quite varied, though there was consensus around “fifi” and “tapette” among Francophone narrators. In spoken rather than media Québécois French, the most common word for homosexuals was undoubtedly “fifi,” as Lapointe (1974) maintains. It was frequently used in the yellow press, for example in a letter from a reader protesting an article that had implied that males nurses were all gay: “Les infirmiers ne sont pas tous des fifis” (*Ici Montréal* 1957.02.16:2). In the early 1960s, a cover story in *Ici Montréal* filled the front page with the words “Fifis versus Homos” (1962.06.30:1). The article sets up a distinction between the effeminate fifis and the masculine homos, a contrast rarely made in popular discourse.

Charles related the vocabulary learned when he was in elementary school in northern Ontario. It was as a young pupil that he was labelled “fifi” by his peers, though later in college he was not a target for such labelling. He said that the word “tapette” was not used, nor were “menette” or “moumoune.” The only term he recalled was “fifi.” Charles had first-hand

¹⁴⁰ Literally “canary.” In Québécois gay slang, “serin” is usually applied to a young man with a sugar daddy.

¹⁴¹ The geographic diffusion of these terms and labelling practices remains largely undocumented, despite Garneau's (1980) innovative work on labels in Québécois French.

experience of labelling. His peers at a northern Ontario Francophone primary school called him a “fifi”.

Au sujet de cette sexualité, je pense que je l’ai toujours su, ne sachant pas comment faire, mais j’ai vécu en le cachant, mais tout le monde le savait. Dans le fond j’étais le dernier à savoir ce que tout le monde savait. ... J’étais perçu comme une petite fille dès que j’étais petit. Comme homosexuel, je sais pas mais ils osaient pas, même eux, utiliser ce vocabulaire. ... Plus tard au collège, me suis pas fait traité de fifi ni d’homosexuel, au secondaire, par exemple. C’était au primaire.

When he went to the collège classique, he acquired a different label because of the open way he talked about sex:

Au collège, on m’a dit que j’étais un obsédé sexuel. On m’a souvent traité de ça. C’était vrai. Au niveau du discours je pouvais pas le cacher. Dans la pratique je savais que j’étais pas plus obsédé qu’eux parce que j’avais des preuves de mes camarades.

This implies complicity greater than would be expected in someone who had been labelled for the purposes of exclusion. By changing school level and type, Charles managed to redefine himself as a sexual sophisticate, eliciting his schoolmates’ admiration for his sexual experience.

Eugène explained his understanding of the meaning of “fif,” (also pronounced “feuf”), which is not simply a variant of “fifi.” According to Gameau (1980), in contrast to “fifi,” which was used to control behaviour within an adolescent peer group, “fif” is applied to an outsider/seducer, a danger to peer solidarity within the group. But Eugène commented that this latter usage was rarely meant as something negative. Gérard did not mention this distinction, saying simply that the words he knew for homosexuals when he was in his early teens were: “Fifi - pas le mot tapette, pas gai, ni homosexuel (c’était trop raffiné). Fifi ou feuf”

The most common term used by adults to label homosexuals is “tapette.” As Louis summarized:

C’était le vice caché dont on ne parlait pas, ou si on en parlait c’était à mots couverts, il y avait surtout les mots péjoratifs de “fifi.” Ici dans Montréal ils emploient le mot “moumoune.” Ça c’est plus récent. Moi j’ai jamais entendu le mot “moumoune.” Le mot “fifi,” ou “homo,” ou “tapette.” Mais c’était surtout le mot “fifi.”

This seems to indicate an evolution towards the use of “tapette” in public discourse among adults in the 1960s, while the “fifi”/ “feuf” pair continues among adolescent boy groups.

“Moumoune” has little distribution except as a “cute” word for gay. The Parisian French term “pédé” or “pédéraste” apparently had little currency in Quebec. None of the narrators recalled hearing it and this yellow newspaper item implies that the reader will not understand what the word means:

Un des plus grands chansonniers de Paris, un péde (faites-vous expliquer), viendra à Montréal après les fêtes. On dit qu’il est sensationnel (*Ici Montréal* 1956.10.13:11).

It is not clear who the reader might turn to for the explanation.

Labelling is only one limited form in which a young man's milieu can influence his understanding of gay identity and its social positioning. In addition to the other contacts with homosexuality Gérard had in his eastern Quebec hometown, he also got to know several young men while working in a resort restaurant. In this group there were some who told him stories of homosexual adventures and gossip about the local gays.

J'ai appris en 1964-65 (je travaillais l'été chez nous) qu'il y avait des personnes qui venaient à Québec ou à Montréal pour faire des voyages—sortir un peu plus, vivre un peu plus pendant une semaine ou deux. ... A Matane, un de ces messieurs avait des relations avec un jeune et l'autre venait de temps en temps à Montréal pour faire des sorties.

One of these acquaintances was François, who had a boyfriend, but had also had sex with girls and even knew some local lesbians. He claimed to have been present for a remarkable demonstration of gay sex at an apartment in their town in the late 1950s.

Ils avaient fait l'amour, des femmes ensemble, avec tous jeunes arrangé autour du lit pour voir comment ça se passait. Et après les hommes ont fait l'amour ensemble et les lesbiennes étaient aux alentours aussi pour voir comment ça se faisait.

Another co-worker, Daniel, told Gérard about his sexual experiences in a Montreal movie theatre, which will be presented in the section on cinemas in Chapter 6. The openness with which Gérard's peers discussed homosexuality was exceptional, possibly encouraged by working as restaurant service personnel, in contact with the entertainers who visited during the summer.

The influence of peer groups was not as benign for most other narrators. The main lesson most of them drew from it was the need for secrecy, the need to keep knowledge of their homosexuality from their peers and avoid labelling. Martin understood the need to maintain a heterosexual image to fit in with the peer group he entered at a neighbourhood weight-training gym where he started working out in his teens. Like other gay teenagers, Martin found it expedient to go out on dates with girls.

A 15-16-17 moi c'était autant les gars que les filles, parce que les filles c'était important, dans les années 60 faut que tu voit les filles debout aussi, ton image c'était. Mais l'image c'était pas tellement mon image. C'était de pas me faire achaler par les gars toujours me faire dire t'es jamais avec les filles. J'étais avec les filles, je fourrais les petites filles. Ça me dérangeait pas cette affaire là. Pis dans la suite de ma vie sexuelle, c'était la même chose, j'allais avec des femmes aussi mais c'était le business, mais j'ai toujours préféré [les hommes].

Having discovered his homosexuality at 13 or 14, Jean also said he had tried to show the expected interest in girls.

I was not attracted to girls—had to force myself to show interest. I made a point of making dates, but didn't like it.

Before about 1960, this technique was also frequently used by adult gay men who had women friends to use as "cover" for social occasions (p. 200).

The exclusionary force of labelling, or more commonly the fear of being labelled, has long fuelled a steady migration of gay men from rural areas and small centres to large cities. Leznoff provides extensive data on this matter, both statistical and anecdotal. Some of his informants had experienced extreme pressure from neighbours in small communities (Leznoff 1954:56). The overview of the geographic origins of the narrators (Figure 2, p. 402) shows that many grew up in small places. Even after men had arrived in the city, the fear of being labelled, of having it known what you were by others without your control, was very menacing. This was particularly so with others who were from the same place, but who were not gay. Donald's only comment on religion was how it saved him from a marriage he and the woman would almost certainly have regretted.

To discover you are gay and be in Trinidad is not happy situation. You try not to admit it to yourself. You have to keep getting involved with women. I was engaged, about to be married. Fortunately for her sake, it didn't come to pass.

The woman's parents refused to allow her to marry a Protestant. The experience motivated Donald to leave Trinidad however, as it gave him reason to believe that he could not live a gay life there.

Then I decided Trinidad was closing in on me. I wanted out. Couldn't get to the States—that would have been the ideal. But Canada, because of Commonwealth, it was easy. You see, by that time I had had some little gay skirmishes in Trinidad, but with Americans who were working.

When Donald came to Montreal in 1952, he lived in a rooming house full of other West Indians, where he continued to feel intense pressure to conceal his sexual orientation just at the time he was finally gaining access to a large urban gay scene:

I got all tarted up, then went to the bar. It was very hard, because I lived in boarding house with guys from Trinidad, Barbados, Jamaica. All at McGill. I was the only poor one working and the only one gay. They asked, where are you going every Saturday?

Evidently he wasn't so afraid as to curtail his activities, but he was nevertheless conscious of the danger of exposure. Once Donald had teamed up with Evan, he remembered how easy it was to hide their relationship from Evan's heterosexual roommate:

At first, I stayed at the boarding house and he had apartment with a straight Australian who had an MG. When I went over, we'd get into it at the back [of the apartment]. There was a lane where he parked. You heard him coming. You could get dressed and be ready to leave—"Oh, Peter, sorry I missed you again!" All these little acts you had to put on!

Later the couple got their own place and moved into new social worlds where, though they socialized with neighbours and co-workers who were not gay, they knew there was no threat since these were "wise straights."¹⁴²

¹⁴² Goffman (1963:28). Donald did not actually use this common slang term.

In one instance, a man's neighbour overtly signalled hostility to homosexuality, or at least to the public display of it in his suburban community. For Len, living with his parents on the South Shore, this problem resulted from his habit of taking advantage of his parents annual vacation to invite a group of friends home after an afternoon at the Montreal Swimming Club.¹⁴³ Sometimes these parties spilled over into the back yard, where they were quite visible to the neighbours.

We went to the Montreal Swimming Club and I used to invite people home for supper from there. And we'd have twenty people on the back lawn and one night we had all of this food. I guess we ate out there, and then dusk came. And we had music of some sort, we were dancing on the back lawn. And a snarky neighbour had a spotlight and shone it on us. You know, which was really unnecessary and I'm sure he told all the rest of the neighbours. I was never a friend of those people after that.

But clearly this sort of behaviour had little impact on Len, though he had a theoretical understanding of the dangers.

But inviting people back from the Montreal Swimming Club, that was a bit risky because, I know one queen, he'd kill me if I called him a queen, he thinks, he's still after all these years under the delusion after all these years that he's straight, you know, that he's butch. I can't understand how some of these people can resist for all these years, under this delusion. But the fact that he was at my house and not his house, he arrived sitting up on the back of a convertible saying the queens are here. And the people across the street were sitting out.¹⁴⁴ And I used to accuse them in later years of selling tickets when I was entertaining.

This story indicates that he had such confidence in his social standing in the community that letting the neighbours know he was gay, at least implicitly, did not really threaten him. Though he agreed the entire neighbourhood must have known what his parties were about, he was more concerned with respect for the norms of behaviour in the gay world, not the actual consequences on breaking secrecy:

I mean things like this were completely uncalled for, right? I mean you can have people and they can quietly drive up and come around to backyard.

He followed this comment with another rule of behaviour which had been breached:

I think that was the party where we all ended up in the house, yeah when the guy shone this spotlight on us we all ran in the house and I know someone found their lover in a cupboard with someone else. ... Well that was par for the course in those days.

Despite all this, it seems Len experienced no significant consequences, whether from his parents or from the neighbours. If his parents ever heard of the incidents from the nosy neighbour, they never mentioned anything to their son, and none of the neighbours called the police. Len still lives in the same house today. For most men however, the fear of ostracism was as strong an incentive to conceal as if they had actually experienced such social sanctions,

¹⁴³ See p. 237 for information on this institution.

¹⁴⁴ He added that he had slept with only two of the three sons of the family across the street and commented, "I must be slipping."

and they simply did not have parties that would make their sexual orientation visible in the neighbourhood, or chose to live in the anonymity of a downtown apartment building.

A final story of the influence of a social milieu on the formation of gay identity concerns an elite Francophone cultural circle in a regional city. Ernest felt that he had always received support for his sexuality not from his family, which he saw as hostile, but from the cultural milieu to which he had access while still a child in the literary world of Sherbrooke in the 1950s. By age 5, he said, he had already decided to be a poet.

Dans le milieu de la culture, il y a toujours eu des marginaux, des célibataires, vieilles filles, vieux garçons, qui enfin cachent beaucoup de gais.

At his collège classique, there were gays among the priests, whom he said he could identify, having learned the signs, even though they did not engage in sexual contacts with the students. This claim to knowing the codes may be an artefact of memory, but Ernest's early work as a child actor did expose him to a certain openness about sexuality that was not general in society.

Et certains comédiens avec lesquels j'ai travaillé, on savait qu'ils étaient gais—les remarques, les farces qu'ils faisaient, les compliments les dévoilaient. Ils pouvaient même parler d'eux au féminin. Mais il y avait tolérance, acceptation. La loi ne les rendait pas fragiles, le milieu les protégeait.

But he also had the occasion to see that not all milieux were as tolerant. He recalled a case in the Sherbrooke region when local scoutmasters were accused of indecent acts with scouts in the early 1950s.

Ce qui se vivait à travers les louveteaux, les scouts. À 6-7 ans tous les directeurs ont été démis et chassés avec interdiction. On avait découvert que c'étaient des gais.

This report of a scandal being hushed up may be compared to another scandal a few years later in the same city.¹⁴⁵ Ernest also learned about social justice and homosexuality when he lost a favourite teacher due to homophobia. He said: "Les autorités ... menaient une lutte sourde contre les gais, de la persécution." Aware of his own attraction to other boys, Ernest's schema for homosexuality included an early understanding that it was subject to dangerous social sanctions and must be hidden.

As he grew up, weekends in Montreal led to expanding horizons in the cultural world, but also in the gay scene. His move to the city was a natural outgrowth of his literary interests, which defined his networks in Sherbrooke as an adolescent, but in fact, the two worlds were

¹⁴⁵ *Ici Montréal* published a news feature with a front page title: "Clubs de jeunes homosexuels de 8 à 13 ans à Sherbrooke." (*Ici Montréal* 1957.02.23:1, 11.). The article explains that Sherbrooke social service authorities are investigating 60 youth clubs that they suspect are "nests of vice," hotbeds of "shame and perversion." These youths meet in private homes, when parents are away, and actively recruit new members to initiate into vice, sometimes using a Scout uniform for cover. The journalist calls on parents and police to increase their surveillance.

interconnected. He knew a world of gay men from many walks of life who shared an interest in cultural works.

Les gais étaient coiffeurs, dentistes, notaires. Il y en avait qui avait beaucoup d'argent, qui se sont arrangés pour pouvoir inviter qui ils voulaient. Après des concerts, des gens recevaient à bar ouvert. Il n'y avait presque pas de sortie de théâtre, de concert qui se termine pas chez un de ces gens-là. Même des femmes qui tenaient salon—envie d'être Gertrude Stein. On sortait le lundi, mardi, jeudi. ... Des activités tous les jours. Sinon à Sherbrooke, on venait à Montréal.

These occasions for hospitality at the homes of wealthy local patrons of the arts were Ernest's first experience of covert socializing in the gay world. He explained how, while he didn't think Francophones were inclined to form groups for political agitation in the way that Anglophones were, the former were quite adept at using other organizations to open space for gay sociability in 1960s Sherbrooke.

Mais il pouvait exister une association des amis par exemple de la galerie d'art Université de Sherbrooke, et la moitié seraient des gais et des lesbiennes. Et aux événements du groupe, ils pouvaient être les trois-quarts. Il y a quelque chose qui peut se vivre là. Mais à aucun moment, quelqu'un qui ne l'était pas aurait été exclu.

As we will see in Chapter 6, this type of subtextual redefinition of an institution to make it respond to gay needs characterizes several types of institutions, as well as less spatial opportunities like that described here.

4. Schemata of the Self and the Perception of Categories of Identity

This sequence of awareness of homosexual desire followed by sexual encounters followed by socialization into the gay world was far from being universally shared by the members of the narrator group. Involvement in the gay world takes a variety of forms, which do not necessarily follow a set time sequence. They can also show varying degrees of intensity. As Neisser (1976) stresses in his discussion of the schemata of visual perception, a schema is a process; its contents are constantly renewed in response to new information input. It is the same for a higher-level schema like gay identity. The term comes to mean different things to different people, so that not everyone who accepts the identity label feels identification with all others who do so. This makes defining what is meant by "gay community" difficult.

The variety of experience reflected among the small and non-random group of narrators testifies to the diversity of social experience in large-scale urban industrial societies. Many social points of view jostle each other in the economy of city space. Faced with the problem of negotiating a tabooed identity, the diversity of points of view resulting from religious and cultural orientations affects the choices made among the various patterns of engagement with the gay social world. The most uniform aspect of the early lives of the men interviewed was

the near total absence of parental sex education or discussion of homosexuality, which was characteristic for members of the age cohorts born in the first five decades of the twentieth century. Even those who were given explicit information about sex, received none on same-gender sexuality. They built their understanding of their identities on the reflections on it received in family comments, religious discourse, educational discipline, and the media image of stereotyped homosexual effeminacy. But many of the narrators had access to information that tended to disconfirm the stability and boundedness of the category of gay identity, since they knew people who didn't fit in one way or another.

Several accounts highlight men's experiences with the misalignment between personal experience and the culturally proffered categories of heterosexual and homosexual. Even in the absence of negative influences in a man's immediate social environment, the difficulties of self-acceptance were great. The conflict between being homosexual and conforming to cultural expectations of masculinity is clear in the story of Alfred. He had known that he was sexually attracted to other men while in the military, where he had had an intense but non-sexual friendship with a fellow officer. Nevertheless, though he had social contact with gay men from the time he immigrated to Montreal from France in 1956, he did not come to terms with his sexual orientation for another three years. On the boat that he travelled on, he had met Belgian gay men who took him to the Tropical Room soon after arrival. But when they contrived for Alfred to spend the night in the same bed with a man he met there, Alfred threatened to beat him up for trying to touch him. The threat of violence is an assertion of the proper masculine response, mobilized to deflect attention from the internal struggle that this approach had intensified. When Alfred did finally come out, he had a brief relationship with a man who then became a friend. Even after the man moved to Vancouver, Alfred visited him, but their friendship cooled after his friend met and married a woman in Oregon. For his circle of friends in the Montreal gay world this was evidence of the mutability of categories of identity and their relationship to desire and other factors which they could only speculate about, like the desire for paternity or the avoidance of stigma, which would motivate the abandonment of gay life.

In practice as well as in discourse, "gay" is not always a stable identity, and is not a prerequisite for engaging in homosexual acts. Though he was the initiator of sexual activity with Percy, his cousin did not end up being "gay," as Percy expressed it seventy years later.

See, my cousin was five years older than me. He was the one that taught me everything. He was a real queen—I mean sexually. And his brother was too, to a certain extent, but he got married.

Well, they both got married, but then the older one, the one that brought me out [had] no children. He didn't get married until he was quite aged.

This may mean he was just going through a "homosexual phase," but the story illustrates a important point about gay men's experience of the category "gay": that it was subject to many variations and permutations.

Several other narrators were exposed to a conflict between behaviour and ostensible categories. In Trinidad in the 1940s, Donald and one of his closest friends bought a car. He recalled a couple of sexual experiences with this man, but concluded that it was because his friend was "over-sexed," and treasured the memory of the "little secret thrills you had growing up then." While he attributes these "thrills" to the time, it seems more likely that the place, Trinidad in the 1940s, offers an equally good explanation. Later in his life, Donald about a visit to a rough restaurant he and his friends liked to frequent in the western part of downtown (see p. 257).

One very good-looking guy had his head shaved bald. Tom went in and their eyes locked. He was at a table with a set of his buddies. Tom says to us, "See you later." He writes phone number, goes to the can, stops at the table and gives the guy the paper. The guy called him the same night. Wild sex. They've been seeing each other ever since. Johnny. He's even lent Johnny to me. And he's married, has a family. And lives in the Point [St-Charles].

Knowledge of such circumstances served to make gay men wary of the identity categories concerning sexual orientation. This man probably would not recognize himself under the label gay, but had no problem with same-gender sex. Contact with such people was intimate but did not involve shared identity, and so could heighten gay men's awareness that they shared more than sex with other gays, they shared cultural values and orientations in which Johnny had interest.

Donald also liked to play on the ambiguity of categories in the physical contact he found on streetcars, though he was the only narrator to mention this type of sexual "thrill." Though he could easily walk home from work, Donald said:

some nights I'd see a nice crowd. I'd get in a nice crowded streetcar going to Atwater. Have a transfer, and transfer to one going back east. And usually at Atwater you got a lot of hunky French Canadians and Italians—working men—and I'd go all the way down to St. Lawrence, groping. Finally, I'd come back.

His lover Evan could tell, he said, when he'd been on one of these rides by his "glazed look." It wasn't exactly sex so it presumably didn't count as infidelity. These stories were freely circulated by Donald and his friend John,¹⁴⁶ but it seems unlikely that Johnny or the men on the streetcars spoke of it as openly to their friends. This exemplifies the diffused awareness among

¹⁴⁶ John was a British man who took part in the initial interview with Donald. He lived mainly in Toronto in the 1950s, but visited Montreal often after meeting Donald and lived here for a year in the early 1960s.

gay men that people were not as simple to classify as the dichotomy of gay and straight suggested.

Pierre, whose early life corresponded roughly to the linear progression of coming out, later followed a very different, very individual path. As he now recounts it, his gay identity was based on adolescent sexual contacts with other day students in his collège classique, inspired, he said, by the homosexual content in the Greek texts they studied, the misogyny of the priest-teachers and the totally homosocial environment. Pierre entered the gay world in the mid-1960s, falling in love with Gilles, a fellow university student who took him to the gay bars. Though the queeny behaviour of this man's friends embarrassed him, he spent years going to bars and otherwise socializing with them. They liked to go to the taverns on the Main.

Gilles et ses amis à lui, étaient gais et avaient toutes les manières. Moi, j'en avais pas. J'avais toujours ma propre ambivalence. A ce moment-là, je croyais pas que j'avais d'ambivalence sexuelle. Je croyais que j'avais trouvé ma voie sexuelle. Mais j'avais cette ambivalence sociale là. Le monde, c'était pas le monde gai pour moi. Pour eux, oui.

He threw himself into the nascent gay liberation movement in Montreal in the early 1970s, but gradually withdrew from it because he disliked the ghettoization, the feeling that the movement was cutting him off from society in general. His last gay relationship ended in the late 1970s. Since then he has had several girlfriends and no longer has any sexual interest in men. Aside from two former lovers, he no longer socializes with gay men. The stories of Johnny and Pierre are examples of the types of personal experience that became topics of gay discourse, since they were interesting variations on expectation. In fact, despite the availability of such evidence, gay men act as if they believe gay identity as a relatively "solid" aspect of the self, at least for themselves, while others might experience it differently. This belief is the foundation for the social institution building and the symbolic elaborations that characterize the gay world as something apart. That some individuals could change their relation to gay life and reorient their sexuality over the course of the life cycle was not a reason to abandon the collectivity.

B. AUTHORITATIVE INSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSES AND THE INDIVIDUAL

What were the effects of realizing that one was actually or potentially a member of a social category treated with contempt and condemnation in interpersonal and media discourse? How can an individual, whose self-esteem and sense of integrity depend on them, contravert these authoritative discourses or at least ignore their relevance for his life? In this section I will look at the interview data in order to understand how external influences, discourse or action by non-gays, interacted with their move to redefine their self-concept as gay men. Religious and

ethical precepts are the oldest source of the condemnation of homosexuality, as Foucault (1976) has shown and are the first institutional discourse examined here.

In Quebec the influence of religion was structurally integrated with the educational system for Francophones who grew up before the reforms of the 1960s. Thus the second type of institutional influence, that of educational institutions, spoke with the same voice as the Church. Especially for those narrators educated in the *collèges classiques*, the evils of homosexuality were explicitly and vigorously attacked by the teaching priests in a campaign against intimate friendships. However some of those who attended residential schools, both Francophone and Anglophone, were initiated into sexual experience there. In universities, the experiences varied. Some narrators entered the gay world through social contacts made there, while others were afraid to act on the sexual impulses until they graduated. For the three narrators who studied psychology, university education posed a sharp question because of the discipline's role in the social control of homosexuality.¹⁴⁷ They had to reconcile their own self-understanding with their instructors' definition of it as a form of mental illness.

The third type of authoritative discourse influence which I will examine is the impact of media and cultural works. Narrators provided many examples of reactions to the coverage of homosexuality in the media and the influence of portrayals of gay men in fiction and other works of art. They reported on the influence on them of reading popular psychology and sexology, as well as scholarly literature and personal accounts like autobiographies. The final type of institutional discursive influence will be an examination of several narrators' experiences with psychotherapy, the only aspect of the medical institution which figured significantly in the interviews.

These are only some of the themes that could be addressed in examining the role of powerful institutional discourse on individual lives. It is intended not so much to make generalizations about homosexual experience of individuals, but to illustrate the wide variety of influences and responses to them that highlighted differences even among members of a rather small group of gay narrators. Their personal narratives, and the indirect accounts of lives they

¹⁴⁷ McIntosh (1981:33) made one of the earliest and strongest statements regarding the role of academics and practitioners in enforcing social control through labelling:

It is important therefore that sociologists should examine this process objectively and not lend themselves to participation in it, particularly since, as we have seen, psychologists and psychiatrists on the whole have not retained their objectivity but have become involved as diagnostic agents in the process of social labeling.

include attest to the fact that significant numbers of gay men came to accept a view of themselves as belonging to the gay community. Their courage cannot be underestimated. By adhering to a tabooed minority they confronted the full weight of ostracism and became the thing so much institutional discourse sought to eradicate and deny. In order to understand how this was possible, I will emphasize also the countervailing influence of other discourses in Western culture that contributed to the process of gay identity formation.

1. Religion and Ethics

For many homosexuals, religion poses one of the most serious obstacles to self-acceptance.

A dramatic quote from one of Leznoff's informants illustrates this:

The church made me conceive of myself as a monster. You are not a monster when you realize that you are not alone. When you can throw over these ideas and the church with it, you have reached a stage of maturity (1954:66).

The problem posed by the obligation to confess regularly for young Catholic men who felt sexual desire for other boys was mentioned by many narrators.¹⁴⁸ Another man that Leznoff interviewed summed up the problem:

To obtain absolution one has to sincerely regret past sins and resolve not to perform them again. I knew however, that I would so that I felt that, for myself, confession was a sacrilege. At about the age of 18 or 19 all the kids were marched off to confession once a week. It occurred to me that I was piling sacrilege upon sacrilege. I was worried I was sick and was tormented by the thoughts and fears of eternal damnation. I used to trick my family into allowing me to miss mass and used all kinds of deceptions by telling them that I was going to early mass, when I would spend the time in the park reading. They have never found out that I am no longer a Catholic. When with the family, I go to church. But I have decided that my life is my own to do with as I desire (Leznoff 1954:66).

This is a clearer statement of self-determination in the face of an authoritative institutional discourse than most of the narrators in my study offered. The interviews nevertheless offer many specific statements on the ethical problems posed by religion. For Protestants and the one Jewish narrator, the discussion centred less on concepts of sin than on general ethical questions, being true to or discovering who they really were.

One narrator who mentioned religious reasons for his resistance to accepting his sexuality was Étienne. He spoke repeatedly of his difficulties in accepting his sexual orientation. His religious training through college included retreats at St-Benoît-du-Lac, at which sexuality was discussed, but not homosexuality specifically. His parents had made no attempt to give him a sexual education.

D'après mon père, la nature faisait son devoir. Il y avait rien à faire. Ça allait de soi que pour cette classe privilégiée à laquelle j'appartenais, à faire des études prolongées. Ça aboutit à l'Université.

¹⁴⁸ For an overview of the religious discourse on homosexuality, as well as related issues of gender, defence of the family, etc., see Hurteau 1991.

C'est là où ça a commencé. Je savais pas où aller parce que je pensais seulement au sexe. Ah oui. J'avais des relations sexuelles assez fréquentes avec mon frère [de] 4 ans de plus que moi.

While some adolescents are quite secure in their disregard for the teachings of religion, others are much more vulnerable. In school in the late 1950s, Étienne tried to get help from a priest about his attraction to one of his friends, but with little success. He fell in love with Stéphane at first sight.

Il y avait pas de connotation sexuelle. C'était pur. Je me trouvais pas différent. Je vivais ça spontanément.

Gradually he became part of the same social group. At parties, he danced with the girls and kissed them, but his eyes were only on Stéphane, and he knew that this obsession was not what he was supposed to feel.

C'était l'origine de ma conscience de l'attraction pour les hommes. Je m'inquiétais; ça me préoccupait. J'étais pas comme les autres. Pas normal. ... Je viens d'un milieu catholique très pratiquant. La morale se réduisait à la sexualité. Il y a juste une façon de faire l'amour. ... J'avais le sentiment d'aller à l'encontre de ce que je devais faire—une marginalisation par rapport à mon milieu, la dévalorisation de soi. Pour être homosexuel, je pensais qu'il fallait vivre à part. Je pensais que je devais le payer en me marginalisant, en me méprisant moi-même. Dans ma tête, c'était une déchéance.

Sexuality posed an overall problem which neither his teachers or religious advisors nor his psychology professors would help Étienne resolve. Like Louis, he spoke of the priests who tried to instill fear in the boys on religious retreats, but when he told his spiritual advisor of his attraction, the latter dismissed it. "C'est pas grave. C'est normal à ton âge." This he found completely unsatisfactory, so he went to another confessor. The other priest was even less receptive, saying that he didn't want to hear about that kind of thing.

The importance of the confessional and the prohibition of masturbation was a theme that several Francophone Catholic narrators included in their accounts of accepting a gay identity. For Arthur the "*maudit système*" of masturbation then confession, masturbation then confession was remembered less in terms of guilt than as a practical headache and a running joke. Long aware of his attraction to other boys, at about age 17 Arthur confessed it, and his frequent masturbation to his spiritual advisor at the collège classique.

C'est évidemment ridicule parce que j'allais à la confesse, et quand on allait à la confesse en théorie on doit regretter de pécher et on doit aussi promettre de ne pas le refaire, mais moi je voulais pas promettre de pas le refaire. Je voulais le refaire pis je regrettais rien. Alors c'est un peu ridicule. Alors pour pouvoir communier il fallait que j'aille à la confesse. C'était un jeu de fou. A moment donné j'ai arrêté cette histoire là.

Here a Francophone narrator echoes precisely the reaction of Leznoff's (presumably) Anglophone informant cited above, worried about piling sacrilege upon sacrilege. He ends

with a statement that at a certain point, he decided not to worry about it any more, when he resolved this inner conflict as a result of therapy (p. 177).

Louis also felt little concern with the threats of eternal damnation with which the Church surrounded the subject of sexuality. Though at age twelve, he said, he took religion very seriously, he was not impressed by the Church's attempts to scare adolescents into conformity:

Tu retrouves les fameuses retraites paroissiales où on nous envoyait en enfer à tour de bras, t'si. Voyons les prédicateurs. Me souviens d'un homme rondet qui faisait vibrer les voûtes de l'église. Mais moi j'ai jamais fait problème psychologique.

His problems, he added, were all caused by other people. While a teenager subject to parental and religious authority, there was a practical dilemma for Louis to solve. He had to confess, so he needed to figure how much to reveal. After the afternoon of sexual discovery with his friend Fernand (p. 138), he was worried they would be ordered not to be alone together if they said too much. This worry put a damper on their friendship.

Believing that he would become a priest, two women friends of the family paid for Louis's education at the Séminaire de Montréal until 1950. At the municipal library in 1948 he met a defrocked priest, "le père Albert," who was then setting up a Montreal branch of "L'Église de la raison," an organization which Louis said had been founded by Talleyrand in 1790. Louis says he joined in 1951. He produced a text which he says relates a meeting of 200 people in a downtown hotel in January 1953 at which homosexuality was discussed. Meanwhile he had begun to explore the city's nightlife. Louis' unusual relation to religion culminated in being named "pope" of "L'Église de la raison," though he says most of the members are now dead.¹⁴⁹ He summarized his view on the relationship between homosexuality and the church by saying that the churches ought to be the place where gay consciousness begins since they are at the origins of the problems of homosexuals.

At age seventeen, Émile was the object of a clumsy attempt at seduction by a retired neighbour, an event that only intensified the struggle he was carrying on within himself over his sexual orientation.

Dans ce temps-là, j'étais, je dois dire, croyant ou pieux. Je priais beaucoup. J'avais une croyance dans la Sainte-Vierge, la pureté. J'étais en crise. J'avais des confrères de classe qui avaient eu des choses avec d'autres, mais j'osais pas moi parce que j'avais peur.

¹⁴⁹ Since I have no other sources on this group, I simply report what I learned in this interview, since it reflects one man's account of how he overcame the religious condemnation of homosexuality. If confirmed, the meeting in the early 1950s would surely have been the earliest large public forum at which the question was debated in Montreal, and an example of the kind of leadership displayed by some gays despite the opprobrium they faced.

He told his parents, who threatened to take measures against the man, who disappeared rapidly from the village. Émile reflected on the experience:

Mais, ça dérange dans la vie d'un jeune, ça met des doutes. C'est sûr que j'avais une tendance homosexuelle mais c'est comme si on provoquait le cheminement de quelqu'un. Ça vient tout déranger. Pis moi, j'ai prié pour lui et il est mort le jour de l'Immaculée Conception.

Later, another man in a different village where they moved after his father's death tried to seduce Émile with pornographic playing cards.

Et moi, je réagis. Mais, il me les remet, mais il me surveille pis il voit bien que je suis bandé, puis il vient me le pogner. Moi, je l'ai traité de ce qu'il y avait de pire. Il avait commencé par le mauvais bout. Un peu comme avec une femme. S'il avait commencé à me caresser, là probablement, il m'aurait eu. Mais il a commencé par la fin pis il a tout dérangé.

This seems to indicate he was more concerned with being treated with respect than having a problem about being homosexual. He would not, however, act on his orientation until several years later, after he had started working in a hospital in Montreal.

Of all the narrators, Gilles had the closest relationship with institutional religion. His family stressed the importance of moral and religious values, but he said that his parents were not prudish. His involvement in organized religious activity began in early adolescence.

J'embarquais dans les valeurs religieuses; à 12 ans, responsable de l'Action catholique dans l'école. À 14 ans, je demandais de rentrer dans les Pères blancs, mais on m'a refusé à cause de ma santé. Dès 9 ans, j'avais décidé d'entrer en communauté et partir loin, comme missionnaire.

In his family, four of the nine children became priests or nuns. The others are all involved in some aspect of social or political activism. He himself became a leader in the diocesan Action catholique by age 16, but he still had to face his own sexual nature.

J'ai été très actif, mais c'était dans un rôle. Je priais beaucoup. Mon seul problème sexuel était la masturbation. On nous enseignait que le plaisir c'est défendu. Un plaisir, c'était une punition. Toutes mes amitiés au collège étaient mal vécues. J'étais terrorisé d'être homo. Pis il y avait le maudit système: masturbation, confession, masturbation, confession.

Gilles interpreted his sexuality as an obstacle to be overcome towards realizing his religious vocation. His fear of homosexuality was based on the knowledge that girls meant nothing to him. He also had a few adolescent sexual contacts. In his large family, the children shared beds. The brother he slept with and he masturbated each other one night when he was 16.

Mais le lendemain matin, je lui ai dit, troublé, "Je regrette ça." Lui, s'est mis à rire. C'était des cochons dans mon objectif, de ma vocation. C'était un échec.

After another incident sharing a bed with a visitor to the family home, Gilles said:

Ça s'est passé chez moi, en vacances d'été, vers 18 ans. Il venait peut-être d'Abitibi. Ses parents étaient amis des miens. Je me suis réveillé vers 5-6; l'impulsion est montée. J'essayais de résister; j'ai commencé à le toucher; il a pas réagi; je l'ai masturbé. Ça est resté là. Quand ça été fini, je me suis dit que j'en aurais pour la vie avec ce problème-là. Le problème de sexualité, mais je voyais pas d'autre chose que la vocation.

Though he began a noviciate with the Dominicans, this ended when he fell in love with a fellow novice. Discovered by his superiors for violating the rule forbidding one novice from being in another's cell, Gilles was treated with kindness and respect. This liberal order agreed to pay for psychotherapy which in the end led to his decision to leave the order for civilian life with his lover. This was a temporary situation. After a year together, his lover announced that he was leaving to marry a woman, and Gilles decided to follow suit. He spent the next twenty years being married to a woman and raising a family. He came out at age fifty, and went on to assume a leadership role in a gay association in the 1980s.

For Ralph, an Anglophone Catholic from a small town in the Ottawa valley of western Quebec, religious guilt made him postpone trying to deal with his sexuality until he was in his late twenties. Though he reported feeling guilty about masturbation, he was one of the narrators who discovered the male imagery available, even in his small Ottawa Valley town, in the form of physique magazines (a consumer product which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7):

I would have been 12 or 13 maybe when I started buying a little magazine called *Vim*. I remember I used to buy them and masturbate and throw them out and think I'll never do this again. You had to be very careful. There was no place you could stick them in a family of that many children. It was very open. I had no private bedroom.

A deeply religious man, Ralph came to Montreal in the 1950s to attend a fashion school against the wishes of his father. He spent a decade suppressing his desire for other men, immersing himself in his studies and then his job and filling his spare time with Catholic charities and parish work.

I denied my homosexuality from when I came to Montreal until the age of 29. I was totally asexual. I got involved in work, parish volunteer work. Even today I have to be careful that I don't overdo that, because I did that as an obsession at one time.

Perhaps unknowingly, the form of his involvement was one that almost seems "natural" for a gay man, since it was work that is socially identified as feminine.

When I was 29, I knew it was just boiling. I knew there was something wrong because I was just too attracted to the male body, but not doing much other than the odd time masturbating and thinking of it. But it was just done and forgotten. But I was getting more and more troubled, ... I was getting more exhausted trying to conceal it. Working hard and always doing something.

The story of how his first attempt at cruising led to an entrapment arrest will be related in the section on police actions against gays (p. 184). Afterwards he resolved to enter the gay world and started to go to the bars. Unlike the other narrators who abandoned religion when they decided to accept their sexuality, Ralph tried to fit together aspects of his old life with his new identity in order to deal with the guilt he felt. One result was simple overwork.

For five years, I lived my straight life all day long and was still dabbling in this volunteer work for the Church. My biggest problem was hanging onto religious beliefs, which was very important to me, and being homosexual at the same time. So if I did have a real good wild weekend, I thought, "I'd better do a lot of church work this weekend." So I did that for a long time until I really burnt myself out.

This period ended when he met a man with whom he shared a relationship for ten years.

During the interview, Ralph offered unusually explicit comments on the ethical dilemma of a young gay man. He thought it would have been easy if he had fallen in love young, because then the two lovers would offer each other support and not care about the opinions of their parents or others. Since that didn't happen ("never admitting, letting myself be in love and never meeting that person"), he didn't feel a strong reason to come out. Unlike most other men, who seem to have decided to come out in order to be true to themselves, Ralph here seems to be saying that external, interpersonal factors were more important, though in speaking of his involvement with his new crowd at the Café Apollo just after his entry into the gay world, he expressed a more conventional view, that his life as a gay man was his "real life":

And yet I did that very secretly. It was my life. It was who I was about, and yet only certain people knew.

Ralph's reflection on his path seems to be cast in terms of slow progress towards gayness, a slow fitting together of the pieces. In the end he arrived at a self-concept in which his social involvement in gay society allowed him to be "who I was about."

None of the Protestant or Jewish narrators related religion to guilt about homosexuality in the same way as the Catholics did, since the institutions of their religions did not have practices comparable to confession. Some narrators, though immersed in a religious life through their backgrounds, did not mention it as a factor in their identity formation process. Though the interviews with Walter and Percy covered many topics, religion never came up until they casually mentioned that they had been active members of the congregation of a large downtown Protestant church, where Walter's name was listed among the members who served in World War II. Though Len was brought up in a churchgoing family, he made no reference to religious qualms about his sexual orientation. Similarly, Trevor only mentioned the problems religion posed for gay men in telling the story of his friend Jack, whose drinking he saw as motivated by Catholic guilt over his sexuality. His way of explaining it made it clear that he regarded Catholic guilt as rather exotic, not something he himself had experienced. These accounts illustrate the more diffuse but still constraining influence of popular morality, more than specifically religious influence that Catholics felt in making individuals aware of the

condemnation of homosexuality. Religious practitioners making their own choices about the dogma of their institution would later provide the membership for the plethora of gay and lesbian religious groups within and without the established churches.

2. Education

Compared to Quebec society as a whole (p. 99), the narrator group is skewed to those with higher levels of education, or of education in elite institutions. Sixteen of the thirty narrators were university graduates, and a high proportion (eleven out of seventeen) Francophone narrators had studied at a "collège classique," the élite secondary schools of the period before the Quiet Revolution. Two of the ten Anglophone narrators had attended private secondary schools. Eight of the Francophones had attended university, a slightly higher percentage than among the Anglophones (five narrators). The group does include men with much less education, however, and it will be seen that limited educational achievement could be counter-balanced by later social influences, as in Walter's case, while high educational achievement was no guarantee of remaining in the middle class, as Alfred's and Pierre's stories both show.

Educational experience had a direct influence on the way the narrators experienced their sexual orientation in two particular ways. It provided some men with access to sexual experience in residential schools, at the same time as it exposed them to the negative views on homosexuality promoted by the school authorities. For a few their educational experience also gave them access to writing on the subject, especially for those in the "collèges" where Greek literature was studied, in which the homosexual content was censored but known, thus allowing them to conceive of other ways of looking at the subject in the history of Western civilization.

For the Francophone narrators who had attended a collège classique, there was support for the association of boyhood loves and residential schools which is well established in the popular imagination. This idea had achieved notoriety in French literature with the publication of Peyrefitte's novel *Les Amitiés particulières* in 1946, and especially after a film version appeared in 1964. In the late 1960s, Peyrefitte was well enough known in Quebec to be interviewed by *Liberté*, one of the leading literary reviews (Peyrefitte 1967). The words "particular friendships" in the title were those used by the clergy in charge of the schools in their attempts to discourage overly intimate connections between the pupils, meaning anything from intense

friendships to sexual contacts. The school obliged each boy to have a "*directeur de conscience*" and enforced the requirement of the weekly confessional. The institutions reacted energetically against cases of sexual activity, expelling students (which might have serious consequences for their career possibilities, since these institutions produced many of the future professionals of Quebec society).¹⁵⁰

Jean told a story of life in a collège classique in the 1940s, in which it was not necessary to have sex to suffer the repressive consequences of suspicion of homosexuality.

When I was there, I had "une amitié particulière." He was a year older. I was madly in love with him and he was madly in love with me, but it was pure—no sex, just pure crazy love. When the priests realized what was going on they threw him out of college.

It was the older boy who was considered responsible for violating the rule against "special friendships." When Louis arrived at his collège classique, the Séminaire de Montréal in the early 1940s, he became aware of both the attractions and the dangers of engaging in too-close friendships. He fell in love with someone he would later meet in the gay world, and he knew the dangers, since he recalled a case of seven or eight fellow students who were expelled within twenty-four hours of being discovered having sex. Gilles related another story of a priest who was eliminated from a school because of his activities with boys.

En troisième année, un nouvel enseignant est arrivé. Un grand slim. Il faisait la direction spirituelle à [ceux de] 15 ans. Il nous amenait dans sa chambre. Il nous mettait sur ses genoux et nous berçait. Une fois, il a ouvert sa valise, et sorti une revue porno. C'était une atmosphère comme si t'avais deux vies: le bon garçon et le rejeté. Il y a jamais eu d'attouchement sexuel clair. Mais ça chuchotait dans le collège et il a été renvoyé. C'était sûrement un pédéraste.

Several men were not aware of the sexual activity around them until later.

Jacques grew up in western Quebec, near Ottawa. He described his social origins as modest. Like others of his social class, he was able to go to a collège classique because he was a good student. Jacques spent eight years as a *pensionnaire* at his school. He was the baby of the family, destined for the priesthood in a system which he retrospectively labelled "brainwashing." A majority of his classmates joined the priesthood, but only three remain in the clergy today, following the massive desertions of the Quiet Revolution period. But Jacques

¹⁵⁰ Hurteau (1991:119-120) documents the determined efforts of the religious and educational authorities to combat this problem. An article by a Jesuit (Girouard 1948) mentions, among other situations requiring improved surveillance, the dormitories where "les lits sont tellement rapprochés qu'il suffit d'étendre le bras pour se donner la poignée de main de «bonne nuit et bons rêves." Hurteau (1993:55) also cites Caron (1943) and Frère Jacques (1949) to show that the problem was not confined to the upper classes but occurred in reform schools as well. A story of scandal and expulsion from a collège classique serves as the point of departure for André Béland's novel *Orage sur mon corps* (1944). An earlier religious novel for adolescents, Paul-Émile Farley's (1929) *Jean-Paul*, is mentioned by Schwartzwald (1992:91) for its denunciation of an unhealthy friendship. Schwartzwald also cites a text in which Berthelot Brunet also denounced the "*amitiés particulières*" in the religious schools.

never entered the noviciate. His father fell sick and he was obliged to earn a living. When Jacques had come to terms with his sexuality, between the ages of 21 and 24, he looked back at his years in college in which he had not a trace of sexual experience. He found out from his friends that they had been having sex together and with priests all around him, but, as Jacques summed up this tale of regret, "Moi j'étais bon élève. J'obéissais."

Arthur was another man who expressed keen disappointment at what he had missed by being an "*externe*" rather than a "*pensionnaire*" at his school.

Donc j'ai rien fait sexuellement à St-Jérôme, sauf que je me masturbais évidemment, énormément, en pensant à tous les beaux garçons qu'il y avait au Séminaire. Et je regrette une chose. C'est de ne pas avoir été pensionnaire au Séminaire, parce que si j'avais été pensionnaire, là il serait passé des choses. Parce que plusieurs années par après je travaille à Radio-Canada, je rencontre un garçon qui était un peu plus jeune que moi, qui était au Séminaire, et je travaillais avec lui. ... Et là, il m'a raconté qu'il se souvient pas d'avoir passé une nuit au Séminaire sans avoir baisé, soit avec les curés, soit avec les élèves.

This point of view reflects the later gay man's interest in sexual culture looking back on the missed opportunities of youth more than what he actually experienced in school.

Lower middle-class students at public school had no such opportunities, though Walter and Percy's reports of sexual experience with peers included references to classmates. Harry was the only Anglophone to attend an elite school, and he reported open sexual activity and a crackdown on it by the school authorities. His sexual experiences, he said:

started in a cabin in the woods north of Montebello[my school], then a school of fifty boys. ... I went there when I was twelve and it was during this winter that I was taught how to masturbate by my fellow students and so sex [was] pretty active in that school among a select group of people.

He remembered sex with one particular student from a prominent family who also had extensive sexual experience with girls. The crackdown came in December:

And then I got caught fucking, a whole group of us. Somebody snitched on us. We were called in by the headmaster's son and given this little lecture about—. It was retarded. He didn't know what he was talking about. And I was more careful about fooling around with the other students after that. Some of them backed off. They got really intimidated by the call-in. I don't think my parents were told about this. We were just given little lectures and told to lay off.

The punishment in this case was much less severe than in the Catholic schools, and Harry is clear in maintaining that it had very little effect on him. The next year his parents sent him to high school in Ottawa, where he had no further sexual experiences connected with school and learned about street cruising, toilet sex and the gay bar at the Lord Elgin Hotel.

For the men who attended university, there were several reports of meeting other gay men and being introduced to the bar world, as discussed below (p. 211), but none reported any other relation between their sexual orientation and the educational institutions they attended. But for two of the three men who studied psychology, the discipline's negative view of

homosexuality was an issue which they had to deal with. As Bérubé (1990) has shown, the Second World War, marked a change in the institutional responsibility for homosexuality, with psychiatry and psychology now in charge. The sickness model replaced the emphasis on sin and immorality as the official discourse for categorizing sexuality in this period, which saw considerable institutional growth for psychology and psychotherapy. One of the pioneers in the professionalization of psychology in Quebec was Reverend Noël Mailloux, Director of the Institut de psychologie at the Université de Montréal, in February 1956. His extreme hostility to homosexuality is evident from his testimony before the Royal Commission on Criminal Sexual Psychopaths (McRuer Commission). Mailloux misinterprets Leznoff's (1954:201-209) discussion of how individuals are socialized in homosexual society as an indication that homosexuals pose a major social danger since they must constantly recruit new members by seducing adolescents.¹⁵¹ The extent of his misreading becomes clear when he refers to Leznoff's finding that members of friendship group do not have sex with each other:

There is very little sexual activity in the group or among the members of the groups who are openly recognized as homosexuals. They meet together in the same places, the same restaurants, and that sort of thing, but they tend to seduce younger boys, usually around eighteen—sixteen, seventeen, eighteen to twenty—and to have love affairs with them, some sort of relationship they call a marriage, and that sort of thing—the whole vocabulary is there, and so on—but as soon as this boy becomes known by the group or is introduced in this society somehow, the sexual relationship tends to disappear, because there are too many dangers of jealousy and all that sort of thing (p. 125).

The affirmation that young boys are seduced is a complete fabrication, since Leznoff only discusses the need to find sexual partners outside the friendship group, whose members were all opposed to sex with minors (Leznoff 1954:153).

Mailloux's negative view of homosexuality was forcefully expressed in his teaching as well, according to the accounts of the two narrators who studied psychology at the Université de Montréal under him in the late 1950s. One man, Étienne, had to deal with the discipline's negative attitude to his sexual orientation both in the literature and in the classroom:

Rendu en psycho, on en parlait pas beaucoup. C'était associé à la maladie mentale. J'avais accès aux livres. ... Krafft-Ebing, les Allemands, les cas cliniques. Plus je lisais plus je prenais panique. Il y avait rien pour m'aider ou me conforter. Le père Mailloux en parlait en classe. Il l'associait à la schizophrénie, la paranoïa. C'était jamais présenté comme manière d'être mais comme maladie mentale grave. Quand t'es comme ça pis t'entends ça tu te dis, "Me semble j'suis pas si malade que ça." Ça m'a pas aidé dans mes études. J'ai quand même réussi, ... mais la difficulté, c'est que je me sentais pas digne d'être psychologue. Je le méritais pas, je me punissais, je voulais m'exclure.

This difficulty in resolving in practical terms the contradiction between the "official" viewpoint and the inner feeling that the experts were wrong was not even alleviated by a year-long

¹⁵¹ National Archives of Canada. Royal Commission on the Criminal Law Relating to Criminal Sexual Psychopaths, Report of Private Sessions, Montreal and Toronto, February 1956, p. 124-125.

relationship with a professional psychologist from his department in whom he had confided. Though he says they weren't in love he enjoyed the relationship and the self-confidence it gave him, but nevertheless stressed the painful difficulties his sexual orientation has caused him up to the present.

Another psychology student faced the same negative attitude in the department, but managed to find more favourable books to read. Unlike Étienne, Eugène would leave psychology for another scientific field; his main concern was to keep secret his homosexuality in order to avoid sanctions and successfully complete his degree.

Je craignais me laisser voir comme homo et perdre mon admission à l'université. Au département de psychologie, si on savait que quelqu'un était homo, il ne pouvait pas faire psychologue. J'ai payé mes cours en travaillant l'été; J'avais la crainte de me faire arrêter et que les autorités me dirait que je n'étais pas digne de faire carrière universitaire.

Eugène had been reading about homosexuality since he was fifteen, when he made the decision to see the world on his own terms. He didn't want to let himself be influenced by novelists like Gide, Proust and Montherlant, but to use his own observations to understand it, so he refused to read gay fiction and concentrated on scholarly work. Studying at the Université de Montréal gave him access to the library and thus to psychology journals, but he reported being afraid to take them out for fear of revealing himself and jeopardizing his status.¹⁵²

Other popular academic writing that Eugène liked was the widely read anthropological work of Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict, which supported, in his reading, a tolerant attitude to homosexuality.

J'ai failli m'en aller en psycho après mes études. Je m'intéressais aux causes de l'homosexualité, mais j'ai jamais eu besoin de voir des psychologues, etc. J'ai compris que la norme, c'est la polysexualité.

The differing response to the psychological literature reflected in the stories of Étienne and Eugène indicate the caution with which one should assume the impact of such texts. Combining their stories with that of Gérard, who only came to terms with his sexuality when a group of his fellow students in the same psychology department took him to the Tropical (p. 214) casts doubt on the effectiveness of the control of Reverend Mailloux and his colleagues over their students, and points to its declining influence on students in the 1960s.

Ironically it seems, not reading the psychological literature was the best route to self acceptance. For those discouraged by readings in which they had sampled the "expertise" of

¹⁵² Like reports cited below that just walking down Peel Street would make it obvious to others that the narrator was gay, Eugène's fear that taking out a volume where one article among many dealt with the subject of homosexuality would enable others to divine his secret exemplifies the constant exaggerated fear with which men lived.

scientists whose work simply clothed popular prejudices in the mantle of objective truth, there was liberal anthropology to put their orientation in context. Or, as we will see in the section on narrators' experiences with therapy, having the good luck to meet a psychiatrist who went against the prevailing negative authority of his profession and adopted a humanistic approach.

3. Media, Scholarship and Cultural Works

At a later stage in the life cycle, narrators of all education levels had access to the vast range of newspapers, magazines, books, movies, radio, and television that brought a flood of information to the population of an urban centre like Montreal. Only some of the media available to contemporaries has been preserved, so most of my comments here concern printed materials, although a few narrators mentioned movies and television programs they had seen that related to homosexuality. When asked whether they read about homosexuality, the narrators expressed a wide range of relationships to the published literature. Some confined their interests to literary works, while others were attracted to various segments of the psychological, anthropological or biographical works that were widely available in mass market paperbacks. Still others lacked the motivation to read about homosexuality at all, and those that did reached widely differing conclusions. All, however, derived from the literature a heightened sense of homosexuality as a conceptual whole, a scientific schema which encouraged them to see themselves as part of a cultural or social whole based on their sexual orientation.

What impact do negative stereotypes in the mass media, scholarly or popular analyses, or in cultural works have on an individual's sense of self? What exposure do individuals have to or positive images refuting them? How does the stereotyping contribute to an increased sense of attachment to the gay collectivity? Of particular importance in connection with stereotypes and role models is the fact that these concepts entered popular and educated discourse in the twentieth century. This meant that the analysis of stereotypes is available to members of the stereotyped group as an arm against the practice. With this knowledge, some gay men could mount a counter-discourse, in gay conversational practice much along the lines of Mills's "circles of opinion" (see p. 91) to combat the barrage of negative images carried in the press and other media. Jointly laughing at or arguing against such anti-gay points of view that gay men were exposed to in interpersonal and institutional communications was of central importance, I argue, to the construction of a collective sense of identity, as discussed in the

theoretical account of the “gay reader position” (p. 82). While the concept of stereotype is not limited to negative images, popular usage emphasizes this understanding of it. In this section I will discuss interview data relating to the processes of stereotyping in mainstream newspapers, including tabloids and in the small yellow newspapers that flourished in Montreal in the 1950s and 1960s.

The importance of media silence as a technique for rendering homosexuality invisible, and thus exerting control over it, has been discussed (p. 108). Among the narrators, the only man to explicitly comment on this silence was Eugène, though all undoubtedly noticed the lack of reflection of their experience. Eugène was also the most influenced by the yellow press, which was the only place where gays were talked about to any great extent. He said it was never discussed on Radio-Canada or in the newspapers, other than *Allô Police*, which had lurid stories like “Les homos s’entre-tuent.” As he notes, these references were almost always negative. Eugène’s account makes clear what effect the negative stereotypes in the yellow press could have on the processes of individual identity formation. He read the Montreal yellow papers extensively as a teenager. He says:

A 15 ans je me rends compte que j’étais un homo pour toujours. Je croyais être le seul à Montréal, sauf dans les petits journaux à potins où on parlait des folles. *Ici Montréal*. C’était dans mes lectures de second ordre. Je me rendais compte du milieu de tavernes, piscines. A 15-16 ans, c’était pas le monde que je voulais voir. Je me suis pas marié. Je suis fier de pas avoir fait ça pour les apparences. ça aurait été malhonnête. Y’était pas question pour moi de devenir folle. J’avais horreur de ça!

Eugène’s relationship to the media stereotype was clearly quite complex. His horror of effeminate queens may have been a factor in his delaying coming to terms with his sexual orientation (though by his account he was mainly worried about being expelled from university if he was found out). But when he did decide to act, he used his familiarity with the stereotype to find his way to a place where he could meet non-stereotyped gay men, whose existence he seemed to have divined. Eugène’s reaction on entering a gay bar for the first time (p. 212) echoes a familiar gay theme. One glance around the room brings a radical disconfirmation of a lifetime’s accumulation of stereotypes, with possibly dramatic effects on the individual’s “sense of belongingness” since he realizes that much of what is said publicly about homosexuals is false, that his group is the subject of a campaign of lies.

Internalizing the stereotypes, being noticeably effeminate for example, was a fear that haunted covert gays, since they were aware of the danger of giving themselves away if they moved in the wrong way or wore clothing that was too flashy. Normand was as aware of the

markers of homosexuality as his bisexual cousin who referred to “pink collars.” He said, “I always tried to hide it.” But this statement indicates that Normand himself considered there was a definite “it” to hide. This is a concrete example of what he meant by his comment about “fighting against homosexuality.”

But not all readers absorbed the intended message, especially men at a somewhat later stage of the life cycle who as adults integrated into a gay friendship group, read, and reacted to the stereotyped media messages. Donald recalled how he said that he and his lover Evan bought publications like the Toronto paper *Justice Weekly* virtually every week just for laughs. Their all-time favourite headline, since it presented the most ludicrous misconception about homosexuality, was a front page headline from the Montreal tabloid *Midnight* in the late 1950s which warned: “Army of Lesbians Marching on Snowdon: Mothers Keep Your Daughters Inside.”¹⁵³ The derisive laughter with which they responded shows how little stock adult readers, with solid personal knowledge of the gay world and the emotional security of the friendship group, were likely to set in such journalistic extravagances.

The only example of a relationship between mainstream press stereotyping and a narrator’s account of his experience similarly illustrates the wide gap between the self-awareness and the portrayal of homosexuality offered to the public. Alvin’s personal version of one of the January 1956 arrests for obscene language (p. 183) did not include much detail other than the fact that his name was somehow omitted from the published list of those arrested, eliminating the direct threat of being fired as a homosexual. He did not remember the murder which led to his arrest, nor the stereotyped reporting of himself and his fellow arrestees as wearing stereotypically “chi-chi” clothes (p. 97). His point of view serves to remind us of how irrelevant the reporting of such stories is likely to be to gay men. No one could take seriously the discussion of snide remarks and overdressed arrestees, and evading such markers of homosexuality was easy (as the discussion of fashion in Chapter 7 will indicate).

While some readers could turn pejorative media misportrayals of homosexuals into an means of self-affirmation by making them into targets of collective scorn, there were also intentionally positive images of homosexuals available from the culture if one knew where to look. In terms of seeking out information or fictional portrayals of homosexuals beyond the mass media, the narrators varied in the extent they desired to know what had been written

¹⁵³ Unfortunately there are no known collections of *Midnight* to confirm that this was actually the headline.

about homosexuality. Some, like Oscar, read a biography of Oscar Wilde. However, Oscar was influenced more by having a friend who was a (heterosexual) psychiatrist, who confirmed his conviction that homosexuality was a sickness. He asserted this point of view very strongly in the interview. Though only Walter actually read the Kinsey report (which he described as “boring”), it seems likely that many of the men were aware of the news coverage of the report, with its indication of a large population of homosexual men. Even Louis, who was hanging out at “existentialist” cafés like L’Échouerie at the beginning of the 1950s, was quite vague about the discussion of such topics there.

One narrator answered the question of what he had read by dramatically going to his bookshelf and pulling out a copy of the French translation of Donald Webster Cory’s *The Homosexual in America* (1951). Jean said, “Ce livre a été ma Bible. Publié en 1952, c’est le livre le plus favorable de l’époque.”¹⁵⁴ The book was probably the first to present to a mass readership the idea that homosexuals constituted a minority, thus reinterpreting the subject in terms of this major theme in American political thought. Its psychological content focused on adjustment and condemned the half-truths prevalent in the professional literature. Furthermore, Cory sets homosexuality in historical perspective, discussing the work of Magnus Hirschfeld and Edward Carpenter as well as literary figures like Proust, Hans Christian Andersen and the more recent fiction of Gore Vidal, and others. However, the book failed to convince Jean of one of Cory’s main points: that homosexuality was not an inborn trait. Asked if he had been concerned with the theory that homosexuality is a sickness, Jean answered, “Oh no, you’re born with it. Has to be that way.” He went on to offer a justification for homosexuality as a means of counteracting the “population explosion.” The rhetorical stance thus taken is a good example of the way a gay point of view, developed in mutual gay discourse over many years, becomes the fixed view of one man, and strengthens his sense of himself as a normal, ethical human being.

Most of the books available were much less encouraging than Cory’s (1951) pathbreaking popular defence of homosexuals as a persecuted minority. Other available works on the subject were psychological in orientation (and even Cory relied on an “abstract individual” to frame his account of gay life). Some narrators voiced an explicit ideological rejection of their views, dismissing them out of hand. Donald responded to the question about reading with the

¹⁵⁴ It was also the most widely available book in English that dealt positively with homosexuality.

words: "I wasn't interested. I just knew that's the way it was." Trevor's rejection of psychological expertise was even more explicit:

I can remember in grade five breaking my arm and going out and buying skin books [or] physique magazines. ... Here I had the practice, and then following with the theory? Not too much point to it! I read a few gay authors, but to sit down and read psychological analysis of such and such aspect of homosexuality, no.

Occasionally the authority of medical expertise could be challenged in the media. For example, a feature article from 1965 (later reprinted in one of the earliest gay liberation papers), in which Hermine Beauregard (1965) interviewed neuropsychiatrist and psychoanalyst J. B. Boulanger concerning the "cure" for homosexuality, was printed bearing the sceptical title "On peut en douter."

While we cannot be sure to what extent gay men in general formulated explicit rejections of popular portrayals of scientific condemnations of homosexuality, Alvin's reading of the psychological case history literature would surely have disappointed its expert authors and illustrates the type of oppositional reading practices that gay men developed. He was fascinated by the personal stories which, he said, primarily made him want to find out how to meet such people. His account included a detailed explanation of the context for this reading, which illustrates the concern with secrecy. He read them only at the library, never bringing them home, where they would have attracted the attention of family members. Alvin exploited the resources available to him in Winnipeg in the 1930s, and set about devising a protective strategy without any social contact with other gays, to help himself get around the taboo. Understanding his point of view fits into a broader analysis of popular attitudes to official science. He did not approach the discipline of psychology full of respect for its scholarly expertise, but rather he wanted to skim it for information as the least sensational type of textual accounts he could find to help understand what he was experiencing. The recalcitrant attitude of men like Alvin to the claims of scholarly authority helped them to reject all authoritative discourse which undermined a positive self-image for gay men. For them, the dynamic between text and reader was quite different than for those who aspired to become members of the academic professions that produced the negative discourses, as we have seen in the section on psychological education.

Nevertheless, one of the psychology students, Étienne was also an ardent reader of gay fiction as well as scholarly volumes. Disappointed with books written by doctors, he was introduced to the world of gay literature in English by the *Bengal Lancer* with whom Alfred

and he shared an apartment in the early 1960s. The older British man had a lot of gay novels in English. Étienne said:

Je les ai tous lus. Je me suis régalé à lire tout ça. Et en plus, j'ai découvert toute la littérature française par Alfred. J'ai tout lu à peu près ce qui pouvait s'écrire en termes de romans gais à l'époque.

This included both women and men writers, including Violette Leduc, Peyrefitte (his preferred author), Montherlant, Gide, and Genet. He comments that he had read with enormous pleasure, drawing sustenance from the books which were helping shape his sense of identity and strengthened him to deal with the problems homosexuality entailed. This is one example of a young gay man being mentored in gay life by an older man, which will be described in more detail below (p. 363). The other psychology student, Eugène, supplemented the negative professional literature by reading accounts of the civil rights debate resulting from the Wolfenden Commission on prostitution and homosexuality in Britain in the early 1950s. One book he recalled as having made the most impact was Peter Wildeblood's (1957) account of his unjust arrest and conviction in a wave of homosexual arrests in Britain in the wake of the gay Soviet spy scandals of the day.

Il aimait les mâles parce que c'étaient des mâles, alors par ce livre je me rends compte de l'existence de gens semblables avant d'aller dans les clubs.

Thus he obtained a broader understanding of what it meant to be homosexual, countering the emphasis on effeminacy that he found in the yellow press.

Harry and his circle of friends at and around McGill in the mid-1960s were also keenly interested in all sorts writing of that dealt with the theme of homosexuality. He read "anything I could get my hands on" with a circle of friends, including writer and journalist Jean Basile¹⁵⁵ together with a literature student from the Université de Montréal that he was having an affair with. Despite the serious interests which they shared, Harry concluded by saying, "We socialized mostly. We were having a good time." This background familiarity with the work of self-affirming homosexuals like Gide no doubt bolstered his courage when he became involved in one of the earliest gay groups in Toronto at the end of the 1960s.

Finally, a few narrators managed to obtain copies of the little-known new homophile movement publications that appeared in the United States, France, the Netherlands and Scandinavia in the 1950s and 1960s. Here the positive portrayal of homosexuality was a

¹⁵⁵ In 1966 Jean Basile wrote the play *Joli tambour*, in which he wove into a fictional, non-gay drama elements of two cases of sodomy in New France that Boyer (1966:330, 333) had revealed. He was a member of the group that produced the magazine *Mairmise*, which was instrumental in the creation of the first gay liberation group in Montreal (see p. 377).

political priority, and criticisms of other media portrayals were common.¹⁵⁶ Arthur had a collection of these, especially the European homophile publications that also published male photography. Étienne was more attuned to the new gay press than any other narrator. He had been going to New York regularly since 1960, and had read *Arcadie* (founded in Paris in 1954) and knew the work of the Mattachine Society, founded in California in the early 1950s, which had a New York branch from 1955 (D'Emilio 1983:89-90).

J'allais à New York régulièrement et j'étais abonné à *The Advocate* dès le départ—pendant 7-8 ans. Je lisais ça régulièrement, je savais ce qui se passait.

André Baudry, the head of the group *Arcadie* which published the magazine, visited Montreal at the end of the 1960s and was interviewed on Radio-Canada, according to Étienne. Other such diffusion of ideas of homosexuals as a minority or as having other particular social characteristics occurred at the time of the debate of the "Omnibus Bill" which decriminalized homosexual acts between two adults in private in 1969.

Since the group of narrators is more representative of the educated minority, it is somewhat surprising to find that only a few individuals made use of the written materials available on homosexuality in order to deepen their self-understanding. Like Jean's disbelief of one of the central arguments of the book he called his "Bible" on homosexuality, this raised the question of how to evaluate the impact of the written word on readers. From Cory, Jean learned to think of gay men as a social minority, regardless of the alternative theory of the cause of homosexuality he espoused, and by a variety of means so did other narrators. These discursive influences would have had little meaning had they not had social experience of the actual gay world against which to understand and evaluate them.

4. Therapy

As recipients of therapy from psychologists and psychiatrists, narrators seemed to fare better than as students of the discipline. The officially negative attitude of the psychiatric profession was contradicted by the experience of two of the narrators, Jacques and Arthur. During the few years Jacques spent working in Ottawa before he came to Montreal, a woman friend to whom he had confided his sexual orientation and his problem accepting it recommended a psychoanalyst. Although he had begun being active sexually, his encounters had no social consequences, and he still thought of himself as the only gay man in the world.

¹⁵⁶ See for example the collection of writings from *One* magazine (Legg 1994).

He explained that his Catholic upbringing was the major source of his problems. He had therapy for three or four months.

Elle avait 72 ans, une juive convertie au catholicisme. Je me libère du carcan religieux, devient libre d'abandonner une pratique qui me convenait pas. Elle m'a expliqué que l'homosexualité existait depuis toujours. C'était une femme étonnante pour 1954 à Ottawa.

With her help he was able to conquer his guilt and construct a positive self-image.

Arthur was seventeen when he began therapy at the suggestion of his spiritual advisor at school. As it turned out, he was quite fortunate in the type of treatment he received. His advisor warned him that the psychoanalyst was a Jesuit, which made Arthur hesitate, but eventually he agreed to see him. The man immediately gained his confidence by assuring him that being a priest would not influence the nature of their relationship:

Il m'a fait une bonne impression. Il dit, "Je ne suis pas prêtre. On parle de religion si ça t'intéresse." Je venais toutes les semaines. Ça coûtait \$1. Pendant 3 ans. Je le pense gai. Il voulait voir mes petites revues culturistes. Après trois ans je laisse tomber. Je déménage à Montréal et reprends le temps perdu. ... En ville j'ai baisé. Ça me dérangeait pas; j'ai laissé tomber la religion. Je vois maintenant que c'est ce que visait le jésuite.

His life changed when he moved to Montreal and ended his therapy. He had sexual encounters and stopped being religious. His concluding remark does not likely meant that the priest-psychiatrist had encouraged him to abandon the Church, but that his main intention was to encourage Arthur to accept himself

Patrick's psychiatrist, to whom he went in his mid-teens at his parents' insistence, was not as favourable to homosexuality, but Patrick managed to profit from the encounter on his own terms. He was horrified when the doctor immediately tried to put him on tranquilizers, and decided to go through with the therapy as a means of learning about psychiatry. When he felt he had gotten all he wanted out of the exchange, he ended his therapy. His self-possessed awareness of his own goals was a characteristic of other episodes he recounted (see p. 310).¹⁵⁷

Even though he was older than Patrick, Charles did not have his resilience and it took him longer to conclude that his therapy with an Adlerian psychiatrist in Chicago in the late 1960s was not benefiting him. He attributed his decision to go into therapy to the negative living situation he was in with gay roommates who could not accept being gay. This reinforced his long-standing ambivalence about his sexuality. He spent eight months seeing a male psychoanalyst who insisted that his problem was in his head and that he could change. One day

¹⁵⁷ Interviews with several Quebec psychologists and psychiatrists on a record made in the 1960s (Delmas n.d. [1968 J]), reveal a less favourable climate of opinion. The makers of the record also interviewed Patrick (confirmed in my interview with him), who by the late 1960s was already expressing a very critical view of psychiatry.

he decided he could no longer take it, that homosexuality was not the problem he was trying to solve.

Il y avait un problème mais je savais pas où il était. Ce n'est qu'en venant à Montréal en 1968. Tout a sauté. J'ai pu vivre ma vie dans le milieu homosexuel avec des homosexuels d'une façon à moi. Mais reste que c'est un monde très difficile pour moi. Je connais peut-être trop de monde straight. Ils peuvent dire qu'ils comprennent mais ils comprennent à rien.¹⁵⁸

Looking back, Charles described his therapist as "truly monstrous" because he thought that homosexuality itself was the problem. He could not accept the politicization of this private aspect of himself

C'était pas que je l'affiche mais que je l'affirme. Même socialement, que je vive ça dans mon milieu, de vivre ce que j'étais sans que ce soit une revendication ou quoi que ce soit.

Charles saw that his problem was not being gay but having to actively affirm his identity to the world. Nevertheless, by his style of dress and his cultural and leisure pursuits, he is identifiably gay.

Charles did not seem to develop the same emotional ties to the gay community as easily as some other narrators did, though he belonged to a gay friendship group. From his childhood sexual encounters to well into adulthood, he regarded his sexuality as something problematic and did not share the point of view of men like Martin or Donald who regarded their sexual orientation as an inner truth, an aspect of themselves with which they had to deal in order to live their lives. Even Oscar, whose views seemed extremely negative to younger gays, still conceived of homosexuality as something inherent in his being. Though the experiences of therapy leading to self acceptance was reported not only by Arthur and Jacques but by Gilles as well, it seems to counter the overwhelmingly negative impression one has of the profession's attitudes towards homosexuality and homosexuals in the 1950s. Future work may reveal in fuller detail the ways in which professional therapists actually responded to homosexual patients, supplementing our understanding of the production of discourse with a better knowledge of its actual impact. The examples presented here suggest caution in assuming that psychologists and psychiatrists uniformly upheld the official condemnatory attitude.

C. SOCIAL CONTROL

Usually some time after entering the gay world, narrators learned about the different forms of social control to which their new identity could make them subject. Under this heading I

¹⁵⁸ The interview with Charles took place a few months after his long-time lover had left to convert to heterosexuality as a result of Freudian therapy, which left him struggling to maintain his own equilibrium.

have grouped the narrators' accounts of interventions made either in words or in actions by self-appointed or institutional social agents. These could take the form of beatings or other violent acts by other men, though the interviews provide only a few direct or indirect accounts of attacks. Much more data was collected on police arrests and milder forms of harassment like lengthy identity checks in bars. A variety of other forms of social control were exercised by state administrative bodies, notably censorship of materials dealing with homosexuality, and the fear of administrative sanctions, especially dismissal from employment was a constraining force for many men. Although the state could and did take more dramatic actions against homosexuals, the most effective, most broadly felt form of social control is delivered by people in one's immediate circle of acquaintance, family members, co-workers and bosses, or neighbours living in proximity. But here also the perception of hostility towards homosexuality that gay men gathered in jokes and insults heard in daily life made gay self-restraint the most powerful form of social control.¹⁵⁹

1. Violence

An instance of informal violent sanctions is recorded in one of the earliest newspaper articles on Montreal gay history. The item "Served Him Right," described in Chapter 4 and quoted in Appendix C-1, shows that physical attacks on homosexuals are nothing new, and the title indicates editorial favour for violence as an appropriate response to homosexuality. A yellow newspaper item from the 1950s makes it clear that violence had not disappeared:

Un homosexuel habitué de la vespasienne du carré Philip a reçu d'un passant un coup de poing qui l'a envoyé au pays des rêves (*Ici Montréal* 1956.12.29:17).

Not many of the narrators told stories of physical attacks, however, though they knew of some. Len attributed the absence of queerbashing to the general low public awareness of homosexuality. This perception was not entirely accurate, since violence did occur. It is generally thought that there is less homophobic violence in Montreal than other North American cities, and the absence of information from the narrators would seem to bear this out.

On the other hand, social class was related to exposure to violence and the desire to avoid it. Donald and Louis both referred to a restaurant west of downtown with a very rough clientele that included some gays where fights were frequent, but as middle-class men, it was not a place they frequented very much. On the other hand, as discussed below (p. 283), it was

¹⁵⁹ This point was powerfully made for the first gay liberationists in the widely read pamphlet *With Downcast Gays* (Hodges and Hutter 1974).

the lower-class atmosphere and danger that attracted some of the other narrators to places like the Altesse tavern. It may be significant that in these stories fights took place in places with mixed gay and non-gay clientele. In gay establishments themselves, violence does not seem to have been common, since it was only rarely mentioned by narrators. This is not to say that all-gay places were free of violence. Although I did not collect information on such incidents in this study, I personally saw a few violent fights in a gay tavern in Toronto in the early 1970s.

One of Leznoff's (1954:172) informants gave a detailed description of the type of robbery gay men were subject to when secrecy precluded reporting the crime to the police. A very similar incident was related by Émile, who had picked up a man on the street near the Altesse Tavern and brought him to his apartment for sex.

Et après que la chose est faite, je vois qu'il change d'attitude et il s'habille lentement. Pis, quand je vois qu'il est pas parti, je trouvais ça bien bizarre, je viens pour y tendre la main. Pis il me dit, "Je veux avoir de l'argent." [Sur une table] y avait un téléphone pis mon 10 piasses. Chais pas pourquoi j'avais mis mon 10 piasses là. J'ai dit, "J'en ai pas." Il dit, "Si t'en as pas, moi je vais en trouver."

The man refused to believe that Émile had no money and began ransacking the apartment.

Meanwhile Émile was thinking that the man would get what he deserved, and prepared his own attack.

Je savais que dans mon frigidaire, y avait une bouteille de vin qui avait un verre de vin parti dedans. Je fais semblant de rien. J'ai ouvert le frigidaire, j'ai pris la bouteille de vin et je me suis arrangé pour le frapper non sur le dessus mais juste ici sur le—où c'est mou. J'ai jamais trouvé le fond, le vin a revolé partout. Il a lâché un cri de mort. Le vin se rependait à terre. Je venais pour le pogner. En faisant ça—moi j'étais en chaussettes. Alors il a levé son pied, m'a donné un coup de pied sur l'épaule—j'étais en robe de chambre—j'ai glissé. Lui, il a eu le temps d'ouvrir la porte et se sauver. Moi, je suis parti après, une chaussette dans un pied, pas de chaussette dans l'autre.

Outside, Émile lost sight of the attacker, but when he ran into the man in a restaurant several months later and threatened to call the police, the other fled. This aggressive response was probably not very common because, as Leznoff suggests, most men were too afraid of the consequences for their reputation, or less inclined to take such aggressive action than Émile, whose openness about his sexuality on the job is discussed in Chapter 7 (p. 320).

Though there was some danger of attack from individuals, another major source of unofficial anti-gay violence was, Alfred explained, the police themselves. Even when they were not making arrests, officers are reported to have made a regular practice of gay bashing, knowing, like the other robbers and attackers, that gays made easy targets and were unlikely to report the incident. This view was supported by a comment made to Émile by a close friend who had been married to a policeman.

À l'époque, les policiers faisaient beaucoup de descentes. Ils se faisaient un plaisir de venir tabasser les homosexuels. Mais je connais [une femme qui] est divorcée d'un policier de Montréal.

Pis lui il arrivait de ces soirées, pis il lui racontait ce qui s'était passé. Il disait, on en a battu 2 ou 3 à soir, c'était le fun. Pour eux-autres, c'était un plaisir.

It took some time before this woman overcame the conception she had formed of homosexuals as a result of this exposure, and accepted Émile as a friend. Another form of police abuse was blackmail according to Alfred, who had observed it at first hand although it happened to a friend of his:

Il y avait un cas épouvantable. Un copain amène un gars chez moi. Le gars sort son badge de police. [Il] se faisait payer, sinon il l'aurait amené en cour.

There is no evidence that blackmail by police officers or others was very common.¹⁶⁰

One narrator recalled a sensational murder, which had occurred in January 1956. I have made an detailed analysis of the press coverage of this crime (Higgins 1995). In brief, André Ochsner, a young Swiss watch importer, was killed in his apartment by a man whom police eventually identified as "one of those who lures deviates then robs them."¹⁶¹ The murderer had put barbiturates in his drink, then smothered him. In the course of the investigation, the police found that the victim had been a regular patron of the Tropical, so they questioned customers there and then proceeded to conduct a wave of arrests in and around the bar. Indirect accounts of several other gay murders were obtained from narrators. Knowledge of cases where men died in robberies or as a result of homophobia served to reinforce the need for caution and secrecy.¹⁶²

Gay suicides reflect the force of social opprobrium on individuals, and are thus considered a form of anti-gay violence. The attention paid to the topic in gay discourse indicates the seriousness with which it was regarded and led narrators to reflect on the possible reasons a gay man might have for taking his own life. One clear case in which arrest and shame led to suicide was that of a doctor who was one of those arrested for obscenity in 1956 in the wake of the Ochsner murder. The reaction of Dr. Horst Kohl is an indication of the strength of the taboo against homosexuality. Even without specific circumstances, gay men tend to assume that the difficulties of living as a homosexual is likely to have played a role in any gay suicide, as Trevor did when a co-worker whose gay parties he liked to go to in the 1960s, later jumped

¹⁶⁰ The only other report of police blackmail was an unsubstantiated and rather incoherent allegation made by a witness before the Royal Commission on the Law Relating to Criminal Sexual Psychopaths (McRuer Commission), v. 8 p. 137-147, testimony of Axel Otto Olson, Report of Private Sessions, Toronto, Feb. 13, 1956, 3:50 PM).

¹⁶¹ *Herald* 1956.01.28:2

¹⁶² A murder in suburban Montreal, in which a man was killed by his wealthy lover in February 1964, is related by Proulx (1991).

off a bridge in Toronto.¹⁶³ This may not be a warranted assumption in particular cases, but its availability in gay discourse is another indicator of shared schemata.

Such schematic understandings were evident in the version of a probable gay suicide that occurred in Walter and Percy's social circle during the war. One night when Percy was at the Peel Tavern, someone came in and announced that a man everyone knew had fallen to his death during a gay party. They never ascertained whether it was suicide, an accident or even murder, but this death provoked considerable emotion and speculation among those who knew the man, as Walter's comments indicate:

We knew the guy. He was a very nice lad, but apparently something went wrong at the party, and either he got disillusioned about his lover, or maybe jealousy and that, so he said, I'm going to commit suicide, and maybe that's what happened. But the thing was hushed up because they could never prove that's what happened.

Here the underlying assumption is that it is hard to make gay relationships work. Percy's account of the night it happened serves as a indication of the community feeling which existed among the Peel Street bar-going gays at the time, united against a hostile world that caused such things.

Another man, Étienne, was having an affair with an otherwise heterosexual man who suddenly shot himself, a suicide that he attributed to the man's conflict over his sexual identity. While these data cannot lead to a conclusion regarding the relative frequency among gay men compared to other segments of the population, it is clear that when they occurred, they tended to be understood in terms of a common theme in gay discourse, that it was not easy to live with the social rejection that being gay could cause or could lead one to fear.¹⁶⁴ This understanding built an emotional bond between those who shared it.

2. Police Actions against Gays

Short of murder, the worst consequence of living a gay life was getting in trouble with the police. Only a few of the narrators had direct experience of police arrest. Most of them had, however, been in raids where police officers checked the identification papers of everyone in a bar and added their names to the municipal police's registry of "deviates."¹⁶⁵ In this section

¹⁶³ A more direct connection with police actions was made by Louis, who recalled that the series of raids in the "clean-up" that preceded Expo 67 led to suicides, but no confirmation of this has been obtained.

¹⁶⁴ In some quarters, suicide was considered the appropriate way to react to being gay, as indicated by a famous quote from King George V: "I thought people like that killed themselves" (Rofes 1983:viii).

¹⁶⁵ See above (p. 112) for an item from the *Petit-Journal* quoting a police official's statement that there were 12,000 homosexuals in Montreal, at least that that was the number whose names the police had on file.

attention will focus on a few cases where the actions of the police played a role in the identity processes of individuals.

Though Len was in clubs during raids, he was never arrested, and supposed that the police came looking for people who had been involved in "back room" sexual activities. He was quite aware that identification checks were simply a means of harassment which became less effective over time.

They often asked my name and one time the cops came and they went around and asked everybody if they were married, which you know—what's that got to do with anything? But this was one of their harassment tactics. ... By the time the 1970s arrived, we weren't really that worried about raids and things, I don't think. Not the way we were in the 1950s and 1960s. They used to just arrest people for really no reason, for "congregating for immoral purposes." I think was what they used.

Knowing which law was being used was not important; feeling the pressure was. Gérard's traumatic encounter with the morality squad who collected identifications of all the customers on his first visit to the Tropical (see p. 214) was one of the many such police visits. Other raids on the same bar were reported by Patrick. Raids or the fear of raids formed the backdrop to public gay life in the period studied here, and continued in the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁶⁶

Police often resort to pretending to be homosexuals in order to entrap homosexuals and gay men into performing criminal acts. The practice had been used for a long time (for a case from 1886, see pp. 121 and 420). Another case located by Pierre Hurteau (1991:160) gives details of an arrest on the mountain in the summer of 1936 that resulted in a year in jail for a 27 year old bachelor. The court record and police deposition give an unusually detailed account.

Sur la montagne aurait attaqué le constable Gauthier (en civil) pour lui sucer la verge.
Interrogatoire: Q. Que s'est-il passé? R. On était en devoir, moi et Keeler, on marchait dans le 2e chemin de la montagne: on n'était pas ensemble, on était supposé travailler pour ces causes-là. L'accusé est arrivé à moi, il a dit "Do you have a cigarette?" ... R. Il a dit "Do you have a cigarette?" J'ai dit "No." ... Il a dit "Nice weather." J'ai dit "Yes." ... Il a dit: "You know I don't like women. I like a man myself." Il a dit: "I like to do something with another man. There is plenty of place." Il a débouonné le pantalon du policier et pris sa verge.¹⁶⁷

In other cases, the policeman played a more active role in provoking someone to commit a criminal act, or the accusation could be invented out of nothing.¹⁶⁸

A good example of police entrapment was Alvin's story of his arrest for using obscene language in January 1956:

I was arrested through entrapment—met a man in the coat check line at the Tropical. He opened conversation asking if there was a show at the Tropical. ... I said the only show was given by the

¹⁶⁶ Charges were dropped against most of those arrested in a raid on the Kox/Katacombs bar in 1994, and the police chief said public that arresting those who had not been engaged in illegal acts had been an error (Gadoua 1994), a distinctly different outcome than that of previous raids.

¹⁶⁷ 1936.07.02, R. v. Harry Bertman

¹⁶⁸ Hurteau (1991:161) says it was regular police practice for plain clothes officers to work in pairs and cites testimony from a 1954 case of an arrest on the mountain in which the policeman explained how it was done.

customers. [He] said he could put on a good show in his room on Stanley Street. I said "OK." I think he was a decoy. Passing a laneway below Sherbrooke, two men stepped out and arrested me. They didn't say what I was accused of. I was held at No 1 station overnight; but not in a cell. A friend bailed me out on Sunday for \$25, which was a lot in those days. I was concerned about my job. I had to go for a court appearance Monday so I told them a personal emergency had come up. I arrived at work after 11. My name was left out of *La Presse* by a quirk of fate.¹⁶⁹

Alvin's court appearances continued for several months until a test case was thrown out. Then he found out just how persistent the police were prepared to be.

At the next court appearance, first my lawyer told me I had grounds to sue, then he came back and said I would have to sign a release promising not to sue or they'd hound me till they got something on me.

The final detail indicates the powerlessness that gay men felt in dealing with the police when they had to face the institution with only the support of their friends.

Donald provided information on a number of other entrapment arrests, including his own. These were more typical than Alvin's arrest, since they took place in toilets and parks. The use of entrapment tactics was more common in Montreal than in Toronto, according to John. Donald was arrested in the washroom of the Laurentian Hotel:

And this guy kept following me, and I thought he really was interested. And he displayed his and I displayed mine, you know, both aroused. And then his buddy came in and flashed his badge and then took me down, the whole bit.

He was taken to the police station, where the officer in charge said, "Not another one!" On the whole he was not treated badly, but the police made one threat: "Won't your boss like to know what you've been up to tonight?" Through a friend he managed to contact an older gay lawyer who argued: "Are you going to ruin this man's career when he was provoked into displaying himself?" As a result, the case was dismissed. Later Donald's lover and another friend were arrested on separate occasions in the toilets of the Honey Dew on Peel Street.

One narrator learned about this type of social control on homosexuality before he had entered the gay world. Ralph had been aware of his sexual orientation for almost ten years before he decided to do something about it. So in the spring of 1969, after an evening of shopping at Morgan's Department store, he allowed himself to be tempted by two handsome men who cruised him on Ste-Catherine Street. He followed them into the public toilet that was then underground in Phillips Square, but when he went and stood at the urinal between them, they immediately flashed their badges and took him back to the police car. But the officers were not finished, so they simply handcuffed Ralph to the outside door handle, leaving him to undergo the gaze of strolling shoppers on a busy downtown street while they went to entrap

¹⁶⁹ This version is a composite of two separate tellings of this story. For the full context of the Ochsner murder and the obscene language arrests, see Higgins (1995).

others. Later that night, in custody at police headquarters, he told himself that if he could survive this experience, coming out as a homosexual surely wouldn't be that bad.

A notable feature of the accounts of many arrests was the arbitrariness of the police in choosing whom to arrest, and how they paired up the men in making accusations of having committed illegal acts. There was good agreement among narrators on the arbitrariness of who received accusations in the cases of the Puccini bar and Colonial sauna raids. As Étienne expressed it:

On t'accusait faussement d'avoir pogné le cul. On a vu l'arrestation de 30 personnes; on les mettait en paires, deux par deux. Il y avait la parjure des policiers sans hésitation.

Étienne and several others also witnessed a raid on the Tapis rouge, a bar on Dorchester (now Boulevard René-Lévesque)¹⁷⁰ in the early 1960s. A number of other raid stories follow, in order to illustrate the way gay men experienced and recounted these incidents.

The raid at the Tapis rouge took place at an unknown date between 1960 and 1962. This was the first raid Eugène had been in. Suddenly the lights went up, he recounted:

C'était un affaire de protection. Cinq ou six policiers vulgaires et arrogants—un client reçoit une tape sur la gueule. On avait pas de droits civiques; on était à la merci de [la police].

Patrick said there had been twenty-five arrests for gross indecency. The police protection racket alluded to is discussed in more detail below (p. 299). Concerning the flagrant invention of the accusations, Eugène observed that the kind of behaviour of which the men were accused was unlikely given the prevailing climate of fear:

On était tellement craintif, nous, de ce genre de choses là, qu'on se touchait pas. Dans ce temps-là, il y avait pas de danse, les gens se tenaient pas par la main; les gens s'embrassaient pas. C'était le grand maintien. T'avais l'impression d'être dans un club social. Il y avait un esprit de répression beaucoup plus fort de la part de la police.

In presenting this story, Eugène weaves through it an interpretation of the unjust, arbitrary, and repressive character of official policy. Eugène used the rhetoric of minority rights and universal justice to condemn gay oppression, drawing on such earlier raids to build his case.

One narrator was arrested at a sauna. In the spring of 1962, Étienne was at the Colonial Steambath. His story provides the strongest condemnation of police procedure:

Mais là, un soir, j'étais là [au Colonial]. Il y avait une salle noire en haut, où tout se passait avec une trentaine, une quarantaine de gars. J'étais étendu sur un divan de cuir. A un moment dormé, les lumières s'allument—c'est une descente de police. Pis y avait des policiers partout, tout le tour. T'as l'air fin. T'es tout nu—la panique totale. Et j'étais le premier à qui on demande le nom, l'adresse, l'occupation et puis va t'habiller et dans le panier à salade pis au poste de police. La nuit en prison et le procès. Pis là, il a fallu trouver un avocat.

¹⁷⁰ Henceforth I will use the new name to simplify references to this street.

Luckily Étienne had contacts who put him in touch with a civil rights lawyer, and he was not subject to financial stress because of the long series of court appearances. Dragging out the procedure was actually part of the defence strategy:

Il a fait traîner tellement les choses pour que ça devienne tellement complexe que le juge dise à un moment donné, "finissons-en." Puis c'était fini. Ça a pris 18 mois. Fallait que l'on comparaisse tous les mois en cour. Chaque fois, il y avait un détail technique qui a fait que c'était reporté. Je sais pas trop ce qui s'est passé mais un bon jour le juge a dit, "Allez-vous en. C'est fini." Pis, financièrement, ça m'a presque rien coûté.

Altogether there were fifteen men arrested; the police did not arrest everyone present. It was standard police practice to adhere closely to a quota system at the time. The aspect that most disgusted Étienne was the arbitrariness of the accusations, which had no connection with what the men had really done.

Ils ont inventé de toutes pièces les accusations. Ils m'ont accusé par exemple d'avoir fait un 69 avec [un ami] avec qui j'avais étudié—avec qui j'ai jamais eu quelque relation que ce soit.

This in itself was a flagrant violation of the principles of justice upheld in liberal democratic ideology. What followed for his friend, whose family was well connected with the legal establishment, provided another indication that the system for the administration of justice was far from equitable.

Lui s'en est tiré—son père connaissait un juge. Il s'en est sorti plus vite. [Il est] parti dix ans aux États-Unis. Sa famille voulait pas qu'il ait de contacts avec moi.

Some of the other accused were much more severely punished than either of these men however.

Il y en a eu devant moi qui ont eu deux ans de prison. Il y avait quelque chose d'initiatique—m'a fait réfléchir sur la répression. C'est un des facteurs qui ont fait que j'ai été militant plus tard.

It would be interesting to know how many other men in the 1960s were motivated to seek information, to discuss gay politics and eventually to participate in gay political groups by having such experiences, or hearing about them from their friends. Mobilizing official ideologies of justice and rights by publicizing their violation in police actions became a rhetorical stance shared by gays in private discourse before it was made a major thrust of gay movement discourse.

Insofar as the arbitrariness of state action against gays was not just linked to protection rackets, it may simply have been the consequence of the police quota system which meant they were required to make a certain number of arrests and no more. The quota system was a conspicuous feature of the raid on the Puccini, a Victoria Street bar, in 1963. Better documented than the Tapis Rouge raid, the arrest of twelve men was reported in the

mainstream newspaper *La Presse* (1963.07.22). In Eugène's version of this raid, to which he was not a witness, he reiterated the emphasis on the arbitrariness of the accusations:

La police faisait irruption. Ils arrêtaient pas nécessairement tout le monde. J'avais un ami qui s'est fait prendre là, accusé d'avoir pogné le cul à son voisin à qui il avait même pas parlé. Ils les accusaient de choses qui étaient pas survenus mais c'était la justification. C'était du harcèlement. ... C'était chacun pour soi. C'était un désastre personnel pour celui qui se faisait arrêter parce que, ce qui manquait—il y avait pas d'organisme pour dénoncer ça. Alors la police avait la partie facile. Tout le monde était pris individuellement; tu pouvais pas t'en plaindre à qui que ce soit.

Alfred narrowly missed being arrested in this raid. He too stresses the arbitrariness of the accusations and the importance of solidarity among friends.

Une autre fois, j'étais à un autre endroit qui a pas duré longtemps, le Puccini sur la rue Victoria. Je descends au bar, c'était un sous-sol aussi. Pas mal de monde assis au bar. Un gars qui me cruaisait à côté. On décide d'aller chez moi. ... Pis, j'avais un ami qui était là avec son amant, un photographe américain.

The friend called him the next day asking for help finding money for bail for his lover who was picked up in the raid only a few minutes after Alfred had left.

Ils ont ramassé une cinquantaine de personnes. Il dit, "Moi j'étais avec mon amant, je leur ai dit, 'Je veux monter dans le camion moi aussi.' Ils voulaient pas de moi. J'ai dit, 'Ecoutez. C'est mon amant. S'il a fait quelque chose, on l'a fait ensemble.'" Il a été jusqu'au poste de police dans le Vieux Montréal. Ils n'ont pas voulu l'arrêter. Impossible. "Non, non, non. On en a assez comme ça."

This is a clear statement of the quota system. The police had miscalculated though, as Alfred put it, since one of the men arrested was a millionaire from the United States who urged everyone to plead not guilty and promised to pay for lawyers. By the early 1960s, the spirit of resistance was clearly growing among gay men. In this case it seems the accused were successful. The outcome of the trial was not only acquittal but, in Alfred's words:

Quand l'américain a payé pour tout le monde, le juge a déclaré que la police a été dégoûtante, inventer des accusations comme ça.

Three weeks after the raid, a letter signed "A.C." was published in *La Presse* (1963.08.14:4).

In what must stand as one of the earliest public defences of gay civil rights to appear in the Montreal press, the writer accuses the police of perjury. At the trial, Judge Pascal Lachapelle is said to have called police testimony "erratic" and dismissed all the cases linked to this raid.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless the police would continue to take arbitrary action against gay establishments for another two decades.

Another focus of police attention was one of the most popular of the early downtown gay-managed bars, the Quatre Coins du Monde on Stanley Street, (described p. 295), which several narrators mentioned as the target of more than one police raid in the "clean-up" before Expo

¹⁷¹ A summary of this case was used as an example in a brief presented by the *Association pour les droits des gais du Québec* on policing in the gay community to a public enquiry (ADGQ 1979:50).

67. But the picture of the raids there that emerged from the narrators' accounts is more complex, as suggested by the account of the numerous arrests of the owner of the Quatre Coins, Maurice Duclos, given by Trevor:

Oh that was fun! I don't know why they used to do that. I think it was probably more crowd control than anything else. As the evening would wear on, the owner of the place, Maurice Duclos, would get more and more loaded, drunk. And the police would show up and everybody would gather on the street and the paddy wagon would come and finally, the crowd would gather and some of the crowd would be coming down from the Hawaiian Lounge and the Esquire Show Bar. So the street would be just packed. And then they'd bring out Maurice Duclos. They would never arrest the clients. Just Maurice. And to the cheers and the ovations of the crowd, they'd throw him into the paddy wagon and drive him off. He'd be back about an hour later. I couldn't quite understand that. But there was never anything going on at the 4 Corners.

Though the other narrators did not provide a specific instance of a customer being arrested at this bar, Trevor's rendering of it as a light-hearted romp seems a little unconvincing since the man actually did face charges. It was nevertheless echoed by a story told by Harry.

I must have gone to the Tropical before I went to France because I remember walking up and down Ste Catherine trying to find someone to fuck with, and one night coming down to Stanley and there was a whole crew outside the Tropical and there had been a raid. And I didn't realize this at first. ... I was very naive. ... There was a whole bunch of people, all leaning outside on the balcony ... who'd come out the window, because it was up on the upper level and some people were dancing for the crowd and joking around and amusing people in the crowd who were applauding. ... And there was a raid going on inside!

For those being arrested, the situation was usually more dire than it would be for a bar owner like Maurice Duclos, whose major risk was losing his license. Otherwise the warnings of raids delivered to Alfred by the sympathetic Algerian bartender (p. 299), would have been of no use.

No doubt there were many other raids in Montreal gay bars during the period covered by this study. Several were mentioned by narrators, and have been discussed elsewhere. More could be traced through research in newspapers or court records. Not long after he entered the bar scene, one of the narrators, Gérard, had a unique dual perspective on the raids both as a student in criminology who was privy to advance information about raids, and as a gay man for whom such forewarnings were of crucial personal interest. I asked Gérard whether, after his first encounter with the police at the Tropical, he had ever had another such experience.

Non. Mais je courrais pas après. Je savais qu'il y en avait dans le temps de l'Expo. Y avait eu des descentes. ... J'ai vu des descentes par exemple quand j'étais en criminologie après 67-68-69. Il y avait des amis qui nous avertissaient: "C'est vendredi, il va y avoir des descentes ce soir; une sur Ste-Catherine, pis l'autre à un autre endroit; faites attention."

These friends were fellow students with contacts in the police force. Gérard went to watch the raids from a safe distance, and the information proved correct. Some of the raids were for indecent performances by transvestites at a club near Bleury and Ste-Catherine. From this account it seems that many people knew in advance about raids. At the end of the 1960s, or early in the 1970s, Gérard came very close to being caught in another raid.

Une fois je me souviens d'être sorti du Taureau d'Or et d'avoir rencontré les policiers à la porte. Pis j'étais ben content d'être dans l'escalier et de pas avoir été obligé de remonter.

Several other narrators mentioned having seen raids at this club as well. Some of Sawchuck's (1973) respondents provided information on raids in the early 1970s, showing that the policy of arbitrary arrests continued, and gives the pretexts used by the police: being under age, dancing too close, or drinking while standing. One provides a dramatic narration of how such arrests were made:

They come in sometimes and look around, but when the morality squad comes, that's bad. They pick you, you and you (*gesturing*) (Sawchuck 1973:50).

The different actions of the ordinary police patrols, which might make arrests, and the morality squad, which came specifically to fill their arrest quotas, reflects a division of labour in the police department which continues to the present.¹⁷²

For men to dance together was inherently offensive in the eyes of the police and the municipal administration. In a report of the trial of men accused of dancing together at the Café Arlequin in 1962,¹⁷³ one of them claimed that he didn't know the man in his arms wasn't a woman. The judge refused to believe this since the police said there had been "*épanchements amoureux*" on the dance floor. Trevor had a colourful explanation for the ban on gay dancing at that time:

You couldn't dance in the bars. That was called mutual masturbation by the police. It was bizarre when you think of it. Even if you were not actually touching.

This was at the Hawaiian Lounge. But the ban was not all-encompassing and could be modified thanks to payoffs to the police (see p. 299), as we will see in Armand Monroe's story of how he got permission for gays to dance together at the Tropical in 1957, which will be told in the section outlining his career (p. 281).

When Harry finished his degree at McGill in the spring of 1966, his only gay friend there suggested going out to celebrate:

We went to this dance club, and we all knew that in the spring the police raided the bars and cleaned up for summer, in Montreal. Nevertheless we insisted on going. There were people dancing. We stood up to dance, and of course there were police sitting at the tables, and all of a sudden they raided. They announced there was a raid, charged everyone, we were taken down to the police station in Old Montreal and locked up in a big holding cell and they made a big do about his having Chapstick and teased him about his lipstick and we were let out on—I don't think we had to put up bail.

The crowd scenes that developed outside the Elbow Room in 1965 were similar to what happened when Maurice Duclos was arrested a few years later at the Quatre Coins.

¹⁷² The morality squad was restructured in the early 1960s on the advice of international experts in an effort to overcome the problem of corruption (McKenna and Purcell 1980:140-141).

¹⁷³ "Quatre homosexuels, arrêtés au Café Arlequin, sont condamnés." *Le Nouveau journal* 1962.03.20.

The same thing [happened] the time when I got busted in this club. We had to run the gauntlet between this whole group of people just watching us being taken out of the club to the paddy wagons.

Harry and his friend were represented by a lawyer who treated them well, and managed to get an acquittal partly due to a police error, but mainly, he thinks because they were middle-class university students. "It was a horrible experience," he concluded.

Louis thought that there had been an intensification of the harassment of gays by the police after Drapeau's return to power in 1960. He also accused the administration of following a systematic policy of publishing the names of those arrested, a practice that he termed "*la mise au pilori*." This happened even under the first Drapeau administration, as shown by the publication in *La Presse* of the names of the men arrested with Alvin in 1956 (p. 183). The exposure that could result from arrest led to fears of being fired, scorn from neighbours, and ostracism from the family. It continued into the 1970s, when gay activists managed to convince the newspapers that such public exposure when one has simply been accused of a crime meant penalizing potentially innocent people.¹⁷⁴

Several narrators told stories of problems which they or their friends encountered trying to keep their legal difficulties secret, making excuses when they had to appear in court. Donald told the story of a friend who had been gay first, then decided to marry a social worker from an outlying town on the south shore. The friend however remained active in the gay scene and managed to get arrested on the mountain. Since they had moved to Ontario to be near his wife's mother, he was forced to resort to elaborate fabrications to explain his need to be in Montreal for court appearances, and only later learned that his wife was a lesbian (not that that would necessarily make her more understanding). Émile summed up the period with a dramatic comparison:

Pis tout ce monde là se cache. Tout ce monde là a peur. Tu vas avoir par exemple des bonshommes comme un qui s'appelle Monroe qui faisait du stage. Eux-autres avaient l'air de s'en foutre parce qu'ils avaient rien à perdre. Pas de réputation à perdre. Ça se faisait vivre par Pierre, Jean, Jacques pis tandis que nous, on vivait constamment sous une peur terrible. Une crainte constante. C'était on pourrait dire comme dans un pays communiste. Fallait surveiller à qui on parlait pis tout ça. Y a eu quand même une bonne période.

His final comment reminds us that while there were negative sides to gay social life, they were usually not its most prominent feature. All of these arrest and harassment narratives were common features of the period, since the warnings they contained were of vital interest to

¹⁷⁴ Groups protested especially after the suicide of a man arrested in an Ottawa prostitution case in March 1975 (*Body Politic* 18, 1975.05/06:6).

those who frequented the bars and saunas. In Chapter 7, I will argue that they constitute a gay discourse genre, a specific type of story told with an emphasis on the injustice of police action.

3. Military and Administrative Measures

The state and other institutions such as businesses and schools have a wide range of administrative resources at their disposal to enforce the ban on homosexuality. This may consist of actually depriving someone of employment, or simply failing to promote them. On the collective level, the control over gay bars and other institutions could be maintained by measures less dramatic than police raids, but equally as effective.

Very little has been recorded about the experience of gay men in the Canadian military during the Second World War. Oscar, one of the other narrators who served in the military during the war, had trained as a lawyer and, as a Canadian army officer in London, England, was called on to serve on courts martial, but never in a case involving homosexuality, although he was aware that such occurred.

In wartime I only heard the subject mentioned two or three times in an official way. The few remarks on an official basis were about individuals who were detected and charged accordingly under military law.

More than other narrators, Oscar had a negative view of homosexuality. During the war, while people like Alvin were enjoying the sexual opportunities of blacked-out London, Oscar had just one sexual encounter with an American officer in a hotel in London.

Both of us had far too much to drink. I was staying in the hotel, he was not. Full of hospitality, I invited him up to my room.

Like many others, Oscar was not willing to risk his position in the army to explore a sexual orientation he was not happy with anyway. He only had one other contact with gay life during his army days:

I remember going to another exclusive London hotel in the blackout and being astonished to realize that the bar—what the atmosphere was. It was exclusively officers. My sixth sense told me this was a gay bar. I hastily skedaddled, mildly horrified.

He described himself as a “late-bloomer,” having waited until he was in his thirties before beginning to have sex with other men.

Walter’s service was unusual, since he spent the war working in a hospital in Newfoundland. He provided an interesting, detailed account of his service experience which is presented in full in Appendix A-5. On the whole, the small number of cases Oscar encountered and the lenient treatment of Walter’s offence when he was discovered incoherently drunk, performing fellatio on a line-up of drunken sailors at a military bar in Newfoundland, point to a

concern to keep as many soldiers in uniform as possible. In addition, what appears to be a monolithic institutional anti-homosexual policy practice is revealed in Walter's account to be highly contingent for its execution on the attitudes of individuals in the system. Some, like the officer who understood that gay soldiers made good hospital orderlies, may pursue objectives other than those defined officially.

For civilians, the pressure on gays was not usually as clear as military policy. Fear of job loss as a result of exposure was an ever-present possibility as Alvin stressed in his account of his arrest. One of his co-workers lost his job, though, it was not clear to Alvin whether the reason was his obvious effeminacy or because he was an alcoholic. While the latter may have been the immediate reason, Alvin observed: "The fact he was gay may have helped to decide to get rid of him." Alvin's comment indicates that being gay always made employees feel more vulnerable. Although the narrator group fared relatively well in their jobs (the only clear case of firing of a homosexual was a teacher that Ernest remembered having had as a child), the fear in most lines of work meant that gays tried to be model employees. Even today, Eugène maintains a very low profile in the scientific laboratory where he works, convinced that the revelation of his sexual orientation would be all it would take for the company to dispense with him. Even in situations like Alvin's, where his boss hinted that he knew about his orientation, there was the likelihood that other candidates would be considered first for promotion. In Alvin's case, his sense of security encouraged him to stay where he was since he thought other departments might not be so congenial. This self-imposed restriction on his career meant that he had secure employment all his working life, but denied himself the possibility of rising to higher levels. In effect, he defined his working life as secondary, and accorded primacy to his gay social life and interest in music.

The relationship between administrative bodies, including the police, and the new institutions serving the urban gay consumer market, bars and saunas in particular, contained a contradiction that the authorities were unable to resolve. In a capitalist economy, businessmen enjoy the support of the state, and the solidarity of other businessmen, particularly when it was in their financial interest. Social values which only allowed heterosexuality in individuals gave way to the rise of the gay consumer. Unlike the authorities in other cities like New York (Chauncey 1994) or San Francisco (Achilles 1964, 1967), Montreal police and the administrative bodies controlling liquor licences do not seem to have targeted gay bars for closure except as part of the larger campaign to re-establish the observance of closing times

and controlling other violations. The results of the raids on the Tapis Rouge and the Puccini may have included their closure by scaring off the customers, but there is no actual evidence to support this speculation, and the fact that the owner of the Tapis Rouge, Maurice Duclos, later opened another bar seems to indicate that he did not suffer permanently from the raid.

Reading the news accounts of gay bar owners' liquor permit problems suggests that they arose largely due to underworld connections (p. 372) rather than to the fact that the clientele included gays. The gay presence in a bar was used to justify charges that owners or managers were tolerating immorality in some reports (e.g. Café St-John, *Dimanche-Matin* 1964.10.11), and the homosexuality of its customers was a factor in the case of the Arlequin aux Deux Masques, accused of having permitted indecent acts on the premises (*Montreal Star* 1967.04.22).¹⁷⁵ The Down Beat (Tropical Room), was refused a permit renewal in May 1963 (*Montréal-Matin* 1963.05.29; *Montreal Star* 1963.05.29) on the grounds that it was "improperly kept." More detailed study of the use of various liquor and fire regulations¹⁷⁶ would be required to unearth a pattern, if one existed, in the actions of state agencies against gay bars. It must be borne in mind that whatever desire existed in the minds of municipal or other authorities to act against such establishments, the effects were felt more by the owners than by the customers, who, as in New York and San Francisco, quickly found new places to spend their time and money. Despite these controls, the gay bar market expanded continuously throughout the period of this study. Often the raids were part of an image politics on the part of the authorities, as in 1954 when the vast increase of arrests for public sex was an acknowledged policy adopted by municipal authorities interested in appearing vigilant against offenders (see Fournier testimony, p. 103). In fact the policy was short-lived: as with bars where business as usual resumed following a raid, the parks never lost their appeal for those seeking sexual contacts.

Another type of official control was that exercised by Canada Customs, and this did affect the lives of individuals to the extent that it cut the flow of information about the growing homophile movement in Europe and the United States. In March 1957, the book *Homosexuals Today*, published by the homophile magazine *One* in de Los Angeles, was

¹⁷⁵ The lawyer for the Arlequin argued that similar clubs in the area of St-Laurent and Ste-Catherine were allowed to operate unmolested. The club's owner, Oscar Bourgon, announced in court that he was changing the entertainment policy from male dancers to country and western music to "get rid of the homosexual element."

¹⁷⁶ In my own experience, police often cleared gay clubs accused of exceeding the permitted number of customers in the 1970s and 1980s.

refused entry to Canada (*One* 5[3, 1957.03]:22). This decision was apparently based solely on the fact that the book dealt with homosexuality. Its rather staid contents included a list of homophile groups and magazines in the United States and Europe with statements of their objectives, histories and cultural activities, and articles on censorship, travel and research on sexual behaviour. *One* itself was also censored, as a yellow newspaper indicates:

La revue *One*, consacrée aux homos, ne passe plus la frontière, au grand désappointement des petits messieurs. Souvent, elle était retournée ou confisquée, mais maintenant elle est simplement refusée au pays. Il y a dans la dernière édition un éditorial très violent contre notre pays, dans lequel on s'en prend particulièrement au clergé (*Ici Montréal* 1958.10.18:7).¹⁷⁷

As noted above, there were nevertheless some Montrealers and other Canadians who were able to keep in touch with these early gay political groups.

Gay photography was another target of the censors, who defined it to include virtually any image of a naked or semi-naked man (see Waugh 1996). As an avid collector of physique photography, Arthur was always at risk when he returned to Canada after trips to Europe or New York, but the only time he encountered a problem was when he mail ordered a magazine from the United States. He did not bother contesting the notice that goods he had received were considered obscene, and thus lost the money he had sent for the publication. Harry grew up in both Ottawa and Montreal, so he was aware of a discrepancy in the morality enforced in Ontario and Quebec regarding what pictures were held to be more indecent, "cheesecake" or "beefcake."

I used to before that buy one of those physique mags, the small one, it wasn't *Western Model* or one of those. ... Those used to be much more available in Montreal than in Ontario. In Ontario you couldn't see those at all. *Playboy* they would not sell in Quebec. *Playboy* you could not get in Quebec. *Playboy* you could get in Ontario, but what you got [in Quebec] was physique magazines, which you couldn't get in Ontario. It's all contradictory.

For Protestant Ontario, it was "beefcake," pictures of men, that were the most reprehensible, while Catholic Quebec acted to preserve the image of modest womanhood, a discrepancy which rendered visible the cultural constructedness of moral stances. Further information on censorship of physique materials will be presented in Chapter 7 (pp. 356, 368). Censorship, whether police raids on photographers or controls on the importation of serious literature or documentation, is an aspect of the social control of homosexuality (and sexuality in general) which awaits a fully documented study. It is one of the main tools that the state has kept in

¹⁷⁷ A masterpiece of the "potin" genre, this item manages to combine information about censorship with anti-gay rhetoric, Canadian nationalism, and an implied defence of the clergy who were leading the campaign against *Ici Montréal* and the rest of the "presse ordurière" at the time this item was written.

place to the present, whereas in other areas, the logic of the consumer market has transformed the former veiled hostility into open collaboration in quest of tourist dollars.¹⁷⁸

4. Social Control and Gay Identity: Motivating Resistance

One of the key insights offered by gay liberation theory in the early 1970s was that self-oppression was a more effective form of social control than all of the violence and official repression combined.¹⁷⁹ The climate of fear in which men lived, and the self-protective restrictions on their lives have been mentioned in several places above. Len sums up the attitude of ordinary men faced with the danger of arrest or other forms of police pressure:

It was always there. There was always an element of anxiety, shall we say, for me anyway. But then I was also told also that they have to actually catch you in the act to do it so they can accuse you of all sorts of things but unless they catch you in the act the onus is on them to prove it.

In the 1950s and 1960s, being gay meant, as he put it, "living dangerously." Étienne spoke passionately about the psychological effect of being arrested soon after coming out, indicating the consequences for identity of such state interventions:

La nuit en prison, je braillais, la culpabilité montait. Quand naïvement, t'embarque là-dedans, tu découvres la répression très forte. Quand t'es pas équipé mentalement, intellectuellement, pour pouvoir surmonter tout ça. A cette époque-là. Aujourd'hui, c'est différent, à cette époque y avait pas grand chose.¹⁸⁰

Despite the danger, however, many men like Len continued to patronize the bars, resigning themselves to being questioned and documented, while hoping to avoid being the target of arbitrary arrest. The arrests were doubtless intended to serve as an intimidation, to keep gay men in line, but their actual effectiveness had limits in the face of individuals' desire for the shared self-affirmation of public sociability. In the aftermath of the Ochsner murder and the wave of arrests near the Tropical in which Alvin was charged with obscene language, he said:

There were so many arrests people were afraid to go out. A friend suggested since I had a big apartment, I should have a party and get everybody to bring a friend and a bottle. So I did.

This is the type of gay resistance that men with control over private space could mount. The importance of solidarity among friends was also prominent in Alfred's story of the raid on the Puccini in which he narrowly missed being arrested in 1963. For some men, Étienne, Alfred and Eugène, the actions of police would inspire their later participation in the gay liberation movement.

¹⁷⁸ For the past three or four years, the City of Montreal and companies like Air Canada have helped sponsor Montreal's participation in the huge "circuit parties" (now held at the Olympic Stadium, Montreal's largest indoor venue) hosted by the "Bad Boy Club of Montreal."

¹⁷⁹ See Hodges and Hutter (1974) for the best known statement of this understanding. It is significant that this text was chosen for translation by the gay student group of the Université Laval in Quebec City in the late 1970s.

¹⁸⁰ Lévesque (1978) gives a personal account of a man arrested at Truax bar in 1977.

After entering gay life, men quickly became familiar with the various types of police actions used against them, and organized their lives to minimize the danger. This task was simplified because the raids tended to occur at specific times of year, as Harry's acknowledgement that his arrest came in the spring, a time when they knew it was dangerous to be in the clubs. This seasonal hazard was explained as part of an administrative philosophy that the city should be "cleaned up" for the summer tourist season, and before major events like Expo 67. It was just another in a complex lore of recounted misadventures, told with an emphasis on the injustice of such state actions, that was an important part of gay discourse among those who were themselves at risk. Being true to the 'real self' that was gay meant affirming in action, e.g. by walking into the bar, that the risk was worth it.

A periodization of types of police interventions emerges from the materials gathered, although most of the changes occurred later than the period under study. LeDerff (1973:58) points to the importance of the decriminalization of homosexuality in the Omnibus Bill of 1969 as the main factor explaining the change in the pattern of arrests. Alfred maintained that the police ran into problems when they tried to make arrests because the judges threw out more and more cases. In the early 1970s, after the closure of the Hawaiian Lounge by the Quebec Liquor Commission,¹⁸¹ there seem to have been fewer police raids for several years until 1975, when the raid on the Aquarius Sauna marked the beginning of a new phase of police efforts against gay meeting places with the use of bawdy house legislation for the first time in Montreal.¹⁸²

By the late 1970s an effective gay movement had taken shape in Montreal, spurred more than anything by the efforts of police to continue the arbitrary arrests and harassment of the past (Higgins 1984a). In October 1977, the *Association pour les droits des gai(e)s du Québec* called for a midnight demonstration following the arrest of nearly 150 men at Truxx; two thousand people occupied a downtown intersection and obliged police to simply re-route traffic. With the first major outpouring of condemnation for their actions and defence of gay rights in newspaper editorials, the police and municipal administration were forced to reckon with the new reality of gay political power.¹⁸³ Though the change occurred gradually, there is

¹⁸¹ *Le Tiers* 2, 1972.01: 27.

¹⁸² See Russell 1982 for an analysis of this legal innovation. McLeod (1996:39) reports however that the legislation had already been used in a raid on a Toronto steam bath in 1968.

¹⁸³ The Truxx demonstration is credited with being the catalyst to the decision of the newly-elected Parti Québécois provincial government to amend the Quebec Charter of Human Rights to include "sexual orientation" as an illegitimate ground for discrimination (Beaulieu 1983). It resulted in the publication of a collection of

no doubt that the social control over homosexuality that was once considered necessary no longer is. In the context of a radically changed sexual morality in the society generally, police efforts are now less aimed at stigmatizing individuals as homosexuals but rather at controlling public and commercial sex, in toilets, cinemas, etc., or with hustlers.¹⁸⁴ Since the mid-1980s, governments have been happy to collaborate with gay groups in the fight against HIV infection and AIDS, pouring funds into the movement in unprecedented amounts. Though individuals continue to fear exposure, either as gay or as HIV-positive, in many practical ways the taboo on homosexuality has been lifted. These changes began, I suggest, in the private and public gay discourses that were developed by men who saw the contradictions in the official ideology and, strengthened by new recognition in the economic sphere, asserted their right to exist in the face of stigma and sanctions. Problems remain, but the climate of opinion on homosexuality has undergone a remarkable shift beginning in the period studied here.

D. GAY SPACE, SOCIALIZATION AND NETWORKS AND AGENCY

In this section I will describe how the narrators acted to change their social relations as they arrived at adulthood and gained access to personal domestic space, how they assumed a gay social identity by coming out in the gay world, and how their long-term social relations with gay men and others reflected their commitment to this identity. The first aspect to be considered, private space, is available to any adult who can afford it in the urban capitalist land market, but the individual must negotiate familial restrictions to obtain it. It is not a prerequisite for the development of a gay social life, but without it there is nowhere to go to meet friends or sexual partners except public space, so men who remained in the family home had to find other solutions in order to have sex in private. Finding one's way into the bar world made access to gay social life available and led in most cases to the building of a network of gay friends. Narrator accounts of their discovery of the bars and the social connections which they established will serve as a basis for the discussion of general long-term network links. The section looks ahead to the systematic presentation of gay use of public space and the establishment of exclusively gay bars in Chapter 6, and to the symbolic constructs of the gay world which will be the focus of Chapter 7.

reactions by men who were arrested and well-known show business and literary personalities (Benoît et al. 1978).

¹⁸⁴ The law against common bawdy houses was used against bars like Truaxx, Bud's and Kox/Katacombs, but it has fallen into discredit (Fleming 1983; Russell 1982; Gadoua 1994).

Finding the bars, at a time when their existence was obscured by taboo and silence required some ingenuity. Once in the bar world, the individual embarked on a learning process of getting to know the new social environment. This meant more than simply learning where they are and when to go to particular ones. It meant acquiring the communication codes that operate within them, governing sexual contacts and social possibilities. Long-term gay social relationships of three types can be distinguished: brief encounters, friendships and acquaintanceships with gay men. These were interrelated in each individual's life with other ongoing social relationships with non-gays, including lesbians and non-gay women and men, family members, co-workers, and neighbours. They varied widely among the narrators, reflecting choices that each man had made, in circumstances not of his making, about how to structure his life.

1. Gay Private Space

One basic technique for obtaining a measure of control over one's life is to obtain private space. Everyone needs to live somewhere, and the control over domestic space that was available in a modern urban centre in the mid-twentieth century was a way of avoiding the dangers inherent in public gay space. The desire to have the freedom to spend both social evenings and romantic nights with whomever they chose motivated men to gain control over their own living quarters. Having an apartment of his own not only gives a man freedom to decide on his activities without the supervision of his family, but makes it possible, depending on size and location, to offer space for sociability to his friends. Leznoff (1954:100-102) noted the importance of "Robert's" apartment for the social functions of the "overt" group, who met there regularly for socializing, when they weren't at a bar, and whose members could resort to the space it afforded for sexual encounters and even for emergency housing when they had no money.

Where individuals lived, and who they lived with, had a direct and obvious impact on their possibilities for bringing people home. Len, for example, continued to live in the family home on the South Shore, resorting to hotels, motels or the homes of his sex partners for places to go for sex. For others, even having an independent living situation did not guarantee non-interference. Oscar had lived in Alberta and the United States after serving in the army, so it was less of a break for him to establish his own apartment when he returned to the city, though this did not spare him one of the most direct family interventions in his private life (p. 144),

ending an affair with a man. Donald says that Evan was also quite aware of the proximity of his family, and explains by reference to the small population of English Montreal.

Other families took a much more relaxed attitude. Trevor moved in and out of the family home in Outremont throughout the 1960s. As he put it, his parents didn't discuss his sexuality because "they were too polite." He seems to have managed his social and sexual life simply by going to other people's places, and he quickly developed a wide circle of friends so that this was feasible. Much earlier in a French-speaking family, M. Charles, whose story was recounted to me by Gérard after his death, seemed to have an unusually favourable living situation.

Jeune prof à l'École Plateau, il a changé de nom. Son père était parti—sa mère était divorcée; il restait avec ses soeurs. Ça a toujours été très libre chez lui. Quand quelqu'un appelait pour M. Leblanc, c'était un contact gai; s'ils utilisait son vrai nom, c'était le prof.

He no doubt still had the practical problems of where to meet sex partners.

Moving out of the family home, for those who came from Montreal, was not necessarily easy. For two Francophone native Montrealers, moving out of the family home became an issue. Both Étienne and Normand encountered opposition when they wanted to leave home since their families considered that that was something a son should only do when he married. Étienne's family were quite explicit about this (p. 145). His determination to have his own domestic space was of course part of his revolt against family control over his sexuality and his tense relationship with them in general. The question of whether or not a man could or would live alone or with another man was resolved in a complex interaction of factors including emotional relations with family (which may also have been important for the decision to leave the region of origin for those who were not from Montreal), financial independence and the access to other venues for sexual experience and sociability.

Self-acceptance was also an important factor in the choice of living space, as the stories of Ralph and Gérard illustrate. Neither man was from Montreal and thus had a free choice of where to live, but both stayed with families or landladies who supervised them in similar if less intimate ways than their families had, effectively blocking the possibility of developing gay social contacts at home at a time before they were ready to accept a gay identity.

For the narrators from outside Montreal, and for those natives who were able to move out of the family home, the options ranged from living with a lover, sharing space with

roommate(s),¹⁸⁵ or living alone. The interviews furnished a wealth of complicated information about these arrangements, which here will only be discussed in terms of the practical difficulties men living together faced at a time when such a pattern was not "normal." Donald's lover's straight Australian roommate (p. 151) was a minor difficulty in the early stages of their relationship, but they soon managed to move in together. But Donald and Evan found it financially difficult to maintain an independent living space together. They lived in a series of small apartments near the store. At the same time they did seem to get along, since one of the stories about the women they went out with for cover involved the ski shacks they rented together for several years where they "skied like fiends."

From Mackay Street we sort of went up in the world and moved into a very nice little apartment on Crescent Street. It was in the house of a retired French doctor with a dream of a son, but it was the size of this room with a kitchen and bathroom. Nicely carpeted. We had it fixed very well. And one bed here and one bed there for appearances. Then we found that was too confined. You couldn't leave things around [or] the place looked a mess.

They later moved to Bishop Street apartment where they made friends with their neighbour, a Danish woman who was a weaver. This was the period when they felt most distant from gay society. The need for separate beds was not intended to fool such intimate friends, though Donald reported that with this neighbour the topic of being gay "never came up" in conversation.

Hiding from roommates was probably quite common, but Alvin reported a situation that contrasts with it. Though he said he had rather limited social contacts with heterosexuals, Alvin did end up renting a room to a straight man, which became the basis for a lasting friendship.

I had at that time a large apartment with two spare rooms, and I used to rent them out. Back in 1959, one of the rooms was available, and I absolutely had to rent it out. Somebody presented himself and was willing to move in, and I discussed it with the person staying there, who was gay and much more astute in sizing up people than I, and he said, he's not gay, but I'm sure he'll be okay. So he moved in. And a couple of weeks after he moved in, he said to me, "Look, I know you're all homosexuals here, but don't let me cramp your style." And he stayed with me until the following year, when he moved to Ottawa. But we kept in touch, and we're still very good friends. His wife knows all about me, and no problem at all. I'm always being invited to stay there.

The outcome of such meetings is a function of personalities as much as it is related to social categories. With someone else, the result might have been less positive.

With gay roommates these worries were not relevant, but there could be the usual difficulties of sharing domestic space with someone. In the early stages of his relationship with

¹⁸⁵ Note that "roommate" is an ambiguous word which may mean simply someone one shares an apartment with, or a lover. See p. 307.

Normand, Jean had a roommate, Fernand, for whom he did a lot of extraordinary favours. The roommate did not want to go to gay bars:

He didn't want to go out. He was in the closet. So we went out until 10:30 or 11 and met a young boy and invited him. But sometimes instead of introducing him to Fernand, we'd have a good time, the three of us.

This roommate does not seem to have been particularly grateful, since he complained about Jean's constant presence in the apartment, which eventually convinced the couple to get another place for themselves alone. In general the narrators did not discuss their roommates in any detail, which seems to indicate that it was a part of life that they just took for granted or considered too similar to present patterns to be worth remarking on.

Certain parts of the city were favoured by gays when they chose where to live. Almost all of the narrators opted for areas close to downtown, or in the Plateau district north of the "Main." Ernest characterized the Plateau as a neighbourhood that had been home to writers and artists, as well as lesbians and gays, for many years. He lists several well known writers as examples.

Ici Nelligan et Bussi res¹⁸⁶ vivaient vers 1900. Il y avait des gens autour de Jean-Jules Richard¹⁸⁷ au carr  St-Louis. Robert de Roquebrune¹⁸⁸ vivait au Carr  St-Louis. Il y a toujours eu une mixit  culturelle, toutes sortes de marginalit . Il y a eu de grands intellectuels anglophones au Plateau. Tous des gens que dans les petites villes on pointe du doigt.

The proximity of the district to the two bar areas, and its location between Mount Royal Park and Parc Lafontaine made it an attractive choice for many. The other documented concentration of gay residence was on the western side of downtown, in the small residential streets from Crescent west to Atwater. Donald and his lover always took apartments on streets in this area, and Walter and Percy lived for many years in a penthouse apartment on a small secluded street nearby.

Having a car was a tremendous asset to those who wanted to escape from family control or to extend the range of gay space to resort areas outside the city. In Len's case, the relative distance of his South Shore family home was offset by the fact that by car it was only a ten minute trip across the Victoria Bridge to the bars of downtown Montreal. Car ownership enabled others, like Eug ne, to get to Laurentian cottages. Though he remained in his parents'

¹⁸⁶ Quebec's national poet,  mile Nelligan, has long been associated with homosexuality. Valli res (1981) sums up the factual situation. His friend and fellow poet, Arthur de Bussi res, is clearly depicted as a homosexual in the film *Nelligan* (Favreau 1991). Condemine (1972: 111) reports that Bussi res's sister burned two cases of his personal papers after his death, a common form of censorship besetting the study of Quebec gay literature, according to Ernest.

¹⁸⁷ See p. 360.

¹⁸⁸ Writer and biographer of Berthelot Brunet.

home until age 28, he found a weekend solution to the problem of a place to have sex and an independent social life:

J'ai acheté un chalet. Je montais à Ste-Adèle dans les Laurentides le vendredi, descendais le samedi soir et remontais; on voyageait saoul. Il y avait quelques hôtels clandestins (blind pigs) dans le nord; à Morin Heights, j'oublie le nom. Le chalet permet de cruiser à volonté et ramener quelqu'un; [il] me donne une entrée de conversation. J'amène des amis avec visiteurs, etc.—des fois 6 ou 7 personnes—souters, pot, de beaux parties, bananes flambées. C'était des parties chaleureux, pas des orgies, pas entre amis ni avec leurs amis. Une fois me suis fait voler mon score par un ami: "Queue bandée n'a pas de principe." Il y avait aussi un beau mexicain que j'ai rencontré au Taureau d'Or en hiver. C'était merveilleux de faire l'amour devant le feu, prendre une marche dans la forêt. Au milieu de l'Expo 67, j'avais le bras dans le plâtre. J'étais pas capable d'aller à l'Expo. Donc les amis m'amènent des étrangers dans le nord, une dizaine en tout.

For six narrators with the necessary financial resources, buying or renting a cottage was a way of enhancing a lifestyle, while for others, knowing someone who could invite them to a weekend in the country was a pleasant advantage of being gay. Donald recalled that at one time in the 1960s, he and Evan had been part of an extended social circle of gay couples who all had cottages within a few miles of each other and visited regularly throughout the summer.

For Normand, buying a cottage was not just an agreeable improvement to his style of life; it meant being able to get around his family's reluctance to have him move out. As the youngest in his family, it would have been very difficult to move to his own apartment without getting married. In the end, buying a cottage with his lover Jean provided him with a "smooth way" of leaving home, and after that the two of them lived together in the city as well. Cottages and the cars that were essential to having them were thus key tools in the attainment of private gay space outside the control of family.

Within domestic space under their independent control, gay men could create the social situations they wanted. Even more than in the bars, discussed in Chapter 6, at home with a group they could "let their hair down" (the expression recurs over and over in Leznoff's thesis and in my interviews). Few gay parties attracted as much detailed attention as the 1957 New Year's celebration hosted by a Laval Street resident. The event somehow came to the attention of *Ici Montréal* and provided one of their most sensational cover stories dealing with homosexuality: "Rue Laval - 40 Homos fêtent le nouvel an dans une orgie inimaginable." Actually the events described in the article which occupies three inside pages are relatively "imaginable":

Il y avait de tout dans cette salade homosexuelle, et nous en avons connu les détails scabreux, en écoutant une "tapette" qui racontait le tout à sa "chérie," un soir de janvier, dans un club de Montréal.

Monsieur X, the host of the evening, is not named in the article but his address is given as 383_ Laval, which should have made him quite easy to find. There is a detailed description of the guests, including two butch lesbians, the food and drinks that were laid on, served by a waiter from a tavern "dans la vie" (i.e. a gay tavern) - who is described in minute detail. There were several drag acts, capped by the "Banana Boat Song" performed by the host, who was dressed in nothing but a banana peel. Afterward there were a number of couples who took turns in the bedroom. The article ends with the pronouncement that if the neighbours had known what sort of guests had arrived in the many late-model cars blocking the street, they would certainly have called the police (*Ici Montréal* 1957.01.26:1, 12, 14, 16). The article is the most extensive exposé of gay life in the corpus of yellow newspapers I have studied, and gives a rather credible account aside from the mock-scandalized rhetorical flourishes, but has yet to be confirmed by anyone who attended the party.

The concern for the neighbours' opinions and reactions to a visible gathering of gay men caused problems in that they led men to practice self-restraint by keeping their gatherings small or in heading off hostile gestures by outsiders. Patrick mentioned this as a major restriction on the freedom he and his lover felt to host parties in their downtown apartment. Though Len always lived at home, and so had to confine his "gay life" to the bars downtown, friends' places or rented rooms, in the summer when his parent were on vacation, he liked to invite friends from the Montreal Swimming Club back to his south shore family home (p. 152).

That was the biggest thing in the house. Cause I think I had about twenty people. It was marvellous, everything worked.

Having so many people in a suburban bungalow could lead to a number of types of problems, including nosy neighbours. At one party,

someone found their lover in a cupboard with someone else. ... Well that was par for the course in those days. Anyway, while they were in the cupboard they trampled all my mother's shoes. It was sort of bad news. Then I used to, invariably when I entertained when everybody left, I went out to the bars. Leave the house an absolute disaster. It would take days to clean it up. I remember once my parents were coming home I had to take a day off work to clean up the house. Then I got hell for having big parties. It was too hard on the house. Little did they know. At least twice I had to have the wall to wall carpet cleaned before they came home because people. ... There was one person in Montreal who still goes to parties and when he gets drunk he puts his cigarette butt on the floor and scrunches it out with his foot whether you've got Indian broadloom or parquet floors or anything. And I don't whether anyone has ever told him; he just doesn't get invited many places.

Remarkably, he seemed to take all these problems in stride, since he continued to host parties and to participate actively in gay social life. Regular party hosts like Len were what I will call "convenors," an important leadership role for the fostering of gay community which will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Parties could mark significant stages in the individual's acceptance of a gay identity, as Étienne showed in recalling the details of his first gay party:

Dans ma classe (à l'université) il y avait un Américain, Jack, qui venait de finir son service militaire. Il avait été en Corée et il avait une bourse à l'U. de M. Je me suis lié d'amitié avec lui. Il était très curieux de savoir qui j'étais, à me faire parler. ... C'était la première fois que je me confiais à quelqu'un, mes désirs, mes amours pour Stéphane. C'est quelqu'un qui m'a fait connaître le milieu gai de Montréal. Avec lui j'ai eu ma première relation sexuelle "voulue," mais c'était sans goût. Il me plaisait pas plus que ça. Lui a fait un party chez lui, le 7 janvier 1959. J'avais fait du ski avec Stéphane. C'était mon premier party gai, la découverte. La première fois où je me trouvais uniquement avec des gars gais.

Jacques had a different reason to recall a particular dinner at a friend's, since that was how he met his lover Martin. This story illustrates the importance of parties in the functioning of gay social networks, since the dinner was held at the apartment of a friend they had in common:

Il m'a invité pour une soirée et il partageait son appartement avec quelqu'un qui travaillait avec Martin. Alors il était invité aussi. On s'est juste parlé comme ça en général. On était 5 ou 6. Martin nous a offert de nous ramener chez nous. J'étais pas le dernier. Il m'a laissé à ma porte; il avait donc mon adresse et il m'a demandé mon numéro d'appartement. Le lendemain j'avais une note dans ma porte me demandant rendez-vous à tel endroit, à telle heure. Le lendemain il est venu. Il a apporté des fleurs.

This was the beginning of a relationship that lasted for twenty-two years, ending only with Martin's death in 1989.

Parties in private homes provided not only an escape from social control, but might also represent and active challenge to the control that society tried to exert over gay sociability, as shown by Alvin's post-arrest party (p. 195). Wearing drag was an extremely visible marker of homosexuality, and thus hosting an event attended by men in women's clothing was also a public declaration of identity. Although Leznoff's research consisted in large part of attendance at house parties, he says no occasion ever presented itself for him to attend "a drag," so he presents a description of one from a letter that he was given (which Alvin says he wrote) describing a party that took place in Edmonton (Leznoff 1954:117-118). In fact the social gatherings which Leznoff attended were not parties in the usual sense; the members of the "overt" group almost always gathered at the home of the group leader for evenings of jokes and gossip, not the sort of special occasional event that is generally termed a "party." Some of the narrators did attend parties at which drag was worn, but among the relatively well-educated, affluent narrators, these were not especially common.

Because of the danger of visibility in residential neighbourhoods, the bars, where there was a distinct but less likely threat of arrest, public gay space was used on occasion by almost all men. The existence of public gay meeting places meant that the exclusionary practices that were used over private space were inapplicable. Len explained how he established his network

of friends in the bar world and how that mixed with people he had relationships with, inviting them or getting invited to social events through these contacts. But, he said, not everyone was “right” for the parties of a given social group, or thought that the group was “right” for them.

And evidently every once in a while you’d meet someone and sort of, I mean some people that I had affairs with I could take to the parties and still integrate them with my long-term friends. But some of them weren’t interested in that, you know, because “they’re a bunch of faggots you hang around with” (sarcastic tone).

These men, Len was saying, were interested in having sex but held the same negative stereotypic view of the gay world as most heterosexuals at the time. Another comment on social exclusiveness in gay parties was a group for which Eugène made up the name “Umbrella Set” in the 1960s:

Ils tenaient des parties sur Côte-des-Neiges. C’était des gens dans le high life—the “Umbrella Set,” des folles distinguées. Ils se croyaient plus distingués, surtout les anglais. Ils se tenaient autour de Armand Monroe—des vedettes comme lui, le comédien du Tropical.

Calling these people “folles” does not imply that they did drag, but that they adopted camp style in order to dramatize themselves. The story reflects the way distinctions of class and occupation imposed throughout society were repeated in the gay world. These were perceptible in some instances of exclusive friendship groups, but reports of these practices were balanced by the view of several narrators that the gay world could serve as an avenue of upward mobility thanks to the relative ease of inter-class social contacts in bars and other gay venues, providing contacts and mentors to those with ambition.

The importance of social gatherings in private homes for meeting the affective needs of the participants is clearly shown by Ralph’s quick absorption into a social world after he came out. After seeing the film *Boys in the Band*, Ralph says he “wanted to be one of those characters.” What appealed to him was the closeness:

like in an actual family. I identified with those friends. They had a sense of humour, the way they treated ageing—bitchiness, like a family. Having brunch together—to me brunch is like going to church.

As one of the most religious narrators, the reference to church indicates how seriously he meant it. Parties served an important function in the development of a sense of gay collective identity, since they brought together large numbers of people and provided a forum for the transmission of information and the formation of shared values that would reinforce and extend what was possible in the commercial venues and prepare the ground for the political attitudes of later years. They were not the only result of gay control over domestic space, but an important one. For the party-givers, the people who did the work and footed the bill, the decision to hold a party could only be born out of commitment to the group invited. Parties

described by Trevor were exclusively gay, as was the "*orgie inimaginable*" on Laval Street, a clear indication of the social commitment of the hosts to opening a space for gay sociability.

2. Socialization: Patterns of Affiliation

The choices for a man experiencing sexual desire for other men are captured by Leznoff's (1954:73-89) typology of modes of gay world participation. Aside from his overt/covert distinction, he sorts gay men into three categories. The first type, "participating homosexuals," took part in both public and private aspects of gay life, while the "restricted participants" met mainly in private homes with occasional visits to bars. The third type, "non-participants," visited gay institutions only rarely to meet sexual partners, but formed no social links to other gays. Non-participants did not identify as gay, and thus are not discussed in this study. Both categories of "participant" went through the process of "coming out" or identity formation, and chose the form of their social involvement. In this section I will examine the narrators' accounts of coming out and the learning process they went through in conceiving of gay life as a social world in which they could find friends, emotional support and information necessary to successfully manage their new gay identity.

There were a number of paths to the establishment of a network of friends in the gay world. Sometimes gay friendships begin with casual sexual encounters, so a section is included on "one-night stands" and their role in gay social life. Not all of the narrators could provide a simple answer to the question of how they had joined gay networks, and the answers of those who could exhibited a wide variety of approaches. These approaches included meeting people through work or school, through early contacts in gay bars or cruising on the street, and through the use of newspaper advertisements. Several of the narrators entered a relationship with a mentor, usually older than themselves, who "showed them the ropes" of the gay world. For some, the relationship was more egalitarian, but there was still a reliance on someone serving as a guide. Mentors and guides are two rather general roles which show a certain commitment to passing on information about the community, and thus look forward to the discussion in Chapter 7 (p. 373) of leadership roles that promoted the development of gay collective identity.

Walter was one of those who found his way into the gay world through meeting people at work. His step-mother unintentionally set this process in motion by helping him get a job at

Simpson's, a Toronto department store. He started as a parcel collector, a job that gave him many new social contacts.

You push carts all over the store, gathering up the stuff, and hitting everybody on the heels. So [while] I was pushing carts around, I began to meet some of the clerks in the store. So then I began to get entertained, because apparently, I was a good-looking kid. ... And I started getting invitations out, and learning some of the tricks of picking-up and so on.

One of the things he learned about was park cruising, in Queen's Park, behind the provincial legislature building. Through these activities he met older men who actively contributed to his socialization.

So I used to meet some very interesting men at that time. Of course, they'd take me to their apartment, do whatever they wanted me to do, and I was being taken—educated then for good restaurants. They used to like to take me to fancy restaurants and teach how to use the knives and forks properly, and how to conduct myself in a good restaurant, and they were always bringing me nice fancy ties and shirts and things, because I like clothes. So the family occasionally would question where I got all of my clothes from. I said, well, I was getting them from the store. I still knew people in the store—they used to buy them themselves, and I'd pay them at a discount. So he swallowed that for a long time, I guess. Then he got very suspicious. And then I got into a very, very gay crowd, where we got into the question of going in drag—beautiful clothes and so forth, so then, of course, I had to start getting some beautiful clothes, too.

This would have been in about 1928 or 1929 (see p. 342). His socialization into the gay world would eventually lead to his meeting with Percy and the beginning of their lifelong love affair (see Appendix A-5).

While a few men like Pierre, Patrick and Charles entered the gay world in company with other men they knew at school or university (p. 211), only Étienne and Harry formed a lasting social circle with fellow students. An American student at the Université de Montréal took Étienne under his wing and invited him to his first gay party. The same man took him to the Down Beat bar for the first time, but they did not remain friends for long, since he expected sex. Harry's more intense social and intellectual relationships with other McGill students has been mentioned above (p. 175).

Much more important as a way of finding friends, Len emphasized, were the people he met in bars and had sex with. Once he had met a few people the networks he entered snowballed:

I sort of had one group of people that were friends and another group of people I sort of had sex with. ... Some of them I still have as friends. I nearly always went to bed with them when I first met them. You know friendship develops from there or nothing. Then once you knew a few people, they introduce you to other people and. ... Try to sort out the worthwhile people from the non, you know, there were a lot of trashy people and a lot of hangers on.

Some of the people that he met didn't find the kind of people Len hung around with to their liking, calling them "faggots" because they were too identifiable as gay (p. 205). This difference over "obviousness," frequently linked to lower social class, will be one of the lines of demarcation among bargoers as well, as will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Alvin related how difficult he found it to make friends in his first years in Montreal, after he arrived from Winnipeg in 1948.

I didn't start to meet people until I'd been in Montreal for a couple of years. As I mentioned earlier, I was shy and hesitated to speak to people, but I got into conversation with one person at the Tropical. We had a common interest in music—he was married incidentally. He had a wife and child. We became friendly, and through him I met some people gradually, a circle of friends.

Eugène also found a gay circle of friends and acquaintances in the bars, meeting a first friend at the Lutèce, who in turn introduced him to a number of other men who went there (p. 212):

Ce soir-là j'ai rencontré quelqu'un qui m'a montré les autres clubs. Un espèce de *social climber* qui m'a présenté ses amis. Y'en avait un avocat maganné, qui voyait une religieuse, une psychanalyste, obsédé par l'argent.

Later he spoke more favourably of those he met, noting especially the mixing of classes and types of people as a positive aspect of gay life.

L'avocat rencontré au Lutèce me présente à 10 personnes; j'ai rencontré des gens réfléchis, stimulants intellectuellement. J'ai des amis de toute condition sociale. Ça c'est un aspect intéressant de la vie gaie.

As discussed below (p. 215), the bars were not for everyone, but for those who were comfortable with the particular type of sociability one or another of them offered, the bars were an important centre for the formation of friendship groups.

Cruising in places other than bars was a necessity for adolescents like Patrick, whose history of network formation can serve as one example of a more general pattern found among those interviewed. Once he had learned how to pick men up at Central Station (p. 310), he eventually gained admission to the Tropical where he acted, he says, as a kind of "B-boy,"¹⁸⁹ and being hidden backstage among the performers' dresses or on the roof during raids. Eventually Patrick's parents sent him to school in the United States, where he continued an active sexual life with young people of both genders. Once he returned to Montreal, he built a social group on the basis of previous contacts, focusing on bar life except during periods when he had a lover. In the 1960s he travelled extensively as an employee of a Hollywood star, returning to Montreal at the end of the decade and resuming his busy social life.

Another man who met his first lover through street cruising was Charles, whose troubling childhood awareness of difference and active sexual life might have been expected to ease his entry into gay society, but did not do so. Only when he went to Paris to do graduate work did he begin to connect with a social world centred on homosexuality.

En Europe, j'ai été dans des bars de travestis—mon premier séjour. Après ça a été correct. Ça m'a pris du temps à découvrir les bars et le monde homosexuel comme tel. J'ai jamais vécu dans le

¹⁸⁹ Patrick's term, modelled on "B-girl," indicates a person who works for the bar chatting with customers and encouraging them to buy him or her expensive drinks, to help out with the establishment's profits.

monde homosexuel et encore aujourd'hui. Mais si j'ai beaucoup d'amis, je vis pas uniquement dans ce monde-là. Pour moi, y a pas que ce monde-là.

His initiation came about through meeting a lover, which happened in the street:

J'étais très seul. Un jour dans la rue. J'étais en train de virer fou. Un jour, j'ai arrêté une voiture dans la rue pour prétendre lui demander une direction. ... On est parti dans l'appartement de sa soeur qui était en vacances et on a commencé une amitié mais [aussi] une aventure sexuelle très compliquée et très longue qui s'est effilochée au cours des années quand je suis revenu en Amérique.

Eventually his lover moved to North America also, and both men ended up in Montreal, where they remain best friends. As Len and others reported, people that one had met for sex early in the process of socialization into the gay world often turn into good friends. The same is even truer of ex-lovers, as in the case of Donald and Evan and Charles and his friend.

Another contact technique which Leznoff mentioned was want ads (usually for shared accommodation). Only one narrator had experimented with them. Donald tried out the possibility of meeting someone through a such a means at least once, but with unsatisfactory results.

There used to be an ad that would appear—I think it was the Wednesday *Montreal Star*. It always would say, Share living quarters, Dorchester Blvd.—every week! Once I phoned and went, but he just turned me off. It was very cheesy. I didn't bother to look at the bedroom.

In these ads, words like “musical” were likely to serve as euphemisms for “gay” in the 1950s; though none of the men I spoke recalled having used it, they recognized it and some provided similar expressions (see p. 307). Interest in music or similar cultural tastes may have been a coded reference to homosexuality in the personal ads however. Research in the yellow newspapers of the 1950s shows that in their personal columns there were quite explicit attempts to find other gays or lesbians (Higgins and Chamberland 1992). “Aimant tout ce qui est beau” was only one of the more general ways of portraying oneself as a non-macho; others included references to musical or artistic tastes, or the give-away reference to physique photography.

Célibataire de 31 ans, 5'3" châtain, yeux gris, aimant la lecture, la musique et le ciné, désire correspondants honnêtes et sobres (*Ici Montréal* 1953.02.21:12).

Jeune homme qui n'aime pas la solitude, 5'8," 135 lbs, tranquille, bon, belle apparence, bonne situation, cherche un ami avec les mêmes défauts! 16-24 ans, aimant plaisir et affection. Réponse assurée à photo, que je rendrai avec la mienne (*Ici Montréal* 1957.02.02:23).

That these ads were easy to recognize as gay contact devices is confirmed by Donald's recollections of the banter between himself and his friends over ads that they didn't answer in a yellow paper published in Toronto:

We used to kid each other that we saw your ad in *Justice Weekly*, but that was just kidding. Some of the gay ads that would appear were really something.

But for others, they must have been quite serious and important vehicles for meeting new people. Alvin, for example, did not find it easy to meet people in bars. Since he also had a serious interest in music, he placed an ad in the *Montreal Star* looking for people who wanted to play with others, but this did little to widen his gay social contacts (p. 317). In the long term, by using ads and sometimes overcoming his shyness in bars, he gradually did acquire a gay social circle.

Several of the narrators mentioned particular people who guided their early explorations of the gay world. Alfred met an older man, a Bengal Lancer who acted as his mentor in the gay world, solving the problem of obtaining domestic space at the same time as he got an education on gay life.

Mais je me suis accepté un jour. J'étais dans l'avion; Je revenais du Labrador en 59. Entre Baie-Comeau et Québec je me suis dit OK, cette fois, il faut que je décide ou je vis ou je meurs. Si je vis je vais vivre gai. Je vais faire un décor d'abord; trouver un travail facile qui demande pas trop d'énergie, pas d'émotion pour que je sois libre et je vais sortir et je vais me libérer. Ce que je fis. J'ai trouvé un anglais avec qui j'ai habité un grand appartement dans l'Ouest. Un major de l'armée des Indes, un Lanceur du Bengale. Un gars remarquable qui avait 20 ans de plus que moi. Lui aurait voulu qu'on soit amants, mais moi non.

When Étienne and Alfred became close friends, Étienne also profited from the Bengal Lancer's experience (p. 174). Another mentoring relationship was that between Louis and "le père Albert," mentioned in the section on religion. Since Louis also learned from other people, this example serves as reminder that the mentoring role can be divided between many people. The novice can seek help without entering a relationship complicated by emotional dependence and loyalty, if not an overt sexual connection. With someone your own age, the relationship was much more between equals discovering a new world together.

Donald's relationship with Walter was also rather like that of protégé to mentor. When Percy was away in Hamilton, Walter lived at Sherbrooke and Bleury. He got to know Donald, who lived nearby. They had a Saturday shopping routine, during which Walter teased Donald because he had been brought up with servants and wasn't used to carrying parcels:

So I'd be laden down with things. I'd say, "Oh, we must have some flowers for the weekend." He said, "Flowers! How are you going to carry them?" So I wouldn't tell him he's going to carry the flowers. So I used to make a pick on gladiolus or something big. So I'd say, "I guess I can't carry any more. Here, you gotta carry the flowers." Oh, he used to fume and fuss about it for a while, but he got into the kick of it. He'd say, "Well, we don't do this at home." I'd say, "Well, you're not at home now, you're here, this is your home now, you gotta do as we do here."

This blunt-sounding warning to the immigrant could be carried off because the two knew the gay connection they had overrode social differences. But Donald's recollections of these

Saturdays differed radically from Walter's. As a young man finding his way in gay life, Donald was struck by Walter's commitment to style:

[Walter] had nice apartment on Sherbrooke. I abhorred their group of spinster ladies they kept up the farce with. ... Not even a drink. A little glass of sherry. You went shopping [for food], but you had to buy flowers or a floral arrangement for the week.

This preoccupation with style bothered Donald, and irritated Evan, Donald's new lover, to the point that his friendship with Walter and Percy cooled for a few years. Their disagreement was voiced in the language of furniture styles: Donald and Evan saw themselves as "Swedish Modern" while they despised Percy and Walter as "Victorian." Style schemata frequently serve as a medium for the expression of inter-generational conflict, in which the young reject the styles of their elders (see p. 337). Mentor-protégé relationships usually come to an end when the protégé feels he has nothing more to learn, unless the participants succeed in redefining themselves in relation to the other. Donald remains in fond communication with his old friends, but came to a point in the 1950s when he stopped seeing them much.

Not all the narrators aimed at building specifically gay networks. Ernest said that he did not consider himself as much a part of the gay world as most of the other narrators. His most immediate social connections were among writers and artists, where people's sexual orientation was of secondary importance to their talent. But there had always been gay people in the circles he frequented, starting from the literary and cultural circles of Sherbrooke. The tolerance of this particular milieu is illustrated by the fact that even one of its heterosexual members, writer Gaston Gouin, provided Ernest with connections to gay literary people in Montreal.

Il avait des amis gais comme des amies lesbiennes et des amis straights. J'ai vécu avec lui. Je suis souvent monté avec lui à Montréal en voiture. Par lui j'ai connu le monde gai à Montréal et toutes sortes de monde, le FLQ, RIN—les premiers milieux du nationalisme étaient gais.

The overlap between the gay world, literary circles and the Quebec nationalist movement remains to be explored systematically (see, however, Schwartzwald 1991). Clearly the mentoring relationships discussed here are not an exclusively gay pattern.

3. Finding the Bars

For isolated gay men, which means the majority not lucky enough to have an automatic social entry into gay social life through school, work, sex partners or literature, finding the bar world could pose a major problem, since there were not many ways to find out where they were. Alertness to subtle clues could help, as Alvin's stories of wartime experiences in Toronto and London illustrate:

I was stationed at that time in Toronto. And somebody whom I knew from Winnipeg was posted to the same unit where I was. He had the bunk next to mine. He happened to mention one day that he had been to a certain steam bath in Toronto and he said, "Yes, that place was full of homosexuals." So a few days later, I felt very tired, and I thought perhaps a steam bath would do me good. So I asked him where he went. He told me, "Take a private room and you'll avoid the homosexuals"—which is of course ... not what I had in mind.¹⁹⁰

Once he was transferred to England, he received another useful clue. One of the men he shared his accommodations with went to see a movie in which a certain stream was said to have been started "by fairy tears."

He said that if that was true, then there should be a waterfall at Piccadilly Circus. Well, I just filed it in the back of my mind, and shortly after, I was posted to London. So I took myself off to Piccadilly Circus, but I couldn't see anything. I didn't know what to look for. But a few days later, I approached Piccadilly Circus from a different direction. I was on the bus that left me off directly in front of a doorway that was marked "Men Only." I was quite curious about that, and I went in, I went downstairs, and I found myself in London's most notorious gay pub, and I got into conversation with one of the patrons there, and explained that I was new to the Life. And so he gave me a quick course on London gay life, the main centre being Leicester Square. And so I took myself off to Leicester Square, and I have never in my life seen anything like it, because it was lined on three sides with men, shoulder to shoulder, and that's, you might say, where I found gay life. I found out about the pubs in London and I was launched.

Being "launched" in London meant that he made contacts who were able to guide him to gay places in Canada, so by the time Alvin came to Montreal he had no trouble finding the gay world, since word of mouth was already quite international, at least among Canadian military personnel serving in Britain.

Although he had found his way into a small gay social circle in his late teens, Jean had to overcome an unusual obstacle in order to get into the bar world:

After I met that friend at the teacher's and we spent a year or two—I heard or I knew there must be places where we could meet others. My friend was keeping me for himself, but I picked it up in a conversation. I wanted to find out by myself so I went to the place. This was the place we could meet people like us.¹⁹¹

After this inauguration, Jean frequented the downtown bars until he met his lover Normand in one of them a couple of years later.

Another avenue by which the bars could be located was through reading the yellow newspapers, though this was used successfully by only one narrator. After five years at university, where he felt the need for extreme caution lest he endanger his status, by November 1960 Eugène was ready to do something about his sexuality. Having read the yellow newspaper *Ici Montréal* as a teenager, he knew about the Tropical Room and the Peel Pub, but like many others, acting on the information required a strenuous effort to gather his courage:

Je pensais que le fait de passer sur Peel—[les gens sauraient]. J'avais peur de rentrer à la taverne St-Quelque chose. Un vendredi, je vais dans une autre taverne pour me dégèner. A la taverne [gaie], j'ai vu sortir une folle avant de rentrer. Deux folles. Fait que je les ai suivies au Lutèce. Là, il y avait des hommes, pas seulement des folles. Enfin "du monde comme moi." ... Ce soir-là en

¹⁹⁰ He identified the establishment as the Toronto City Steam Bath, long since demolished.

¹⁹¹ The Carrousel on Peel, later the Tropical Room.

sortant du Lutèce, une folle m'a cruisé. Je voulais confirmer mon homosexualité et j'avais des doutes que les hommes masculins me tendaient un piège. La folle était sûr.

So he went home with the queen, who undressed too quickly and ended up giving him a false phone number, quite a disappointment when Eugène had been expecting true love, and an abrupt lesson in the sometimes harsh realities of interpersonal etiquette in the gay world, where this type of duplicity is a common way of avoiding unwanted entanglements,¹⁹² but after that he went to the Lutèce regularly on Saturday and fell in with a circle of bar friends.

Another yellow newspaper reader was less successful in putting the access information they contained to effective use. The information was not always as precise as the name and address of a bar, so tracing the clues required greater astuteness than Étienne could muster in his teens when he read that there were homosexual hangouts near the corner of Ste-Catherine and Metcalfe Streets. Despite several trips to that corner, he never found the Dominion Square Tavern a minute's walk away. At that age he had not acquired the skill of identifying gay men (now popularly known as "gaydar").

Having already some familiarity with the gay world's codes made it much easier finding the bar scene. With previous experience in Trinidad and New York, Donald had no trouble getting into the bars after locating gay fellow workers at a downtown department store when he came to Montreal.

At Ogilvy's there were two very obvious young gays. And they asked me one night after work to go for a beer. And I went to—it's now the Peel Pub, but it was just a tavern then. And they were sort of conspicuous. I didn't feel too easy with them. And they said, "Oh, we only came here because we're with you. Because if we came alone, we'd probably be hissed at and called at"—because they had plucked eyebrows and things like that. ... It must have been to the tavern in the Mount Royal. But they said, "We don't normally come here." So I said, "Where else is there to go?" "Don't you know, doll?!" (There were lots of "dolls" and "marys," etc.) "Right across the street upstairs is the Tropical." So that's how I found them.

Getting "clued in" in by insiders in this way was one means of access but was only available to the lucky few.

Once one had learned the codes, direct observation and following people, or simply asking, could be quite effective as a way of finding bars in a strange city. After a few years experience in the Montreal gay world, Jean and Normand were able to locate gay places easily when they travelled, as when Jean's job as a travelling salesman took him to the Maritimes. He said that in the 1950s, there were no gay bars in Nova Scotia, only two taverns in Halifax and two more in Sydney, with gay sections. The couple used a similar technique on their visits to New York, where police raids meant that the bar locations changed constantly. Even further afield than

¹⁹² See section on gay sexual culture in Chapter 7.

Halifax or New York, the same technique was effective. Trevor told a story about a trip to Brazil where he met some Dutch gay men as an example of how one could easily cope with coming into town cold and not knowing where the bars were:

You could find it real easily. Just follow the queens on the street or something. I remember stopping these two on the street and saying "Excuse me where's the local gay bar?" They were all insulted. "Do we look gay?" Then the silliness of it hit them and they broke out laughing, and said, "Come on we're going ourselves."

This confidence in being able to find the gay scene in an unknown city was born of a familiarity with the signs. The investment in learning them was an essential ingredient to social success.

Several narrators stressed the feeling of relief they felt when they went to a gay bar for the first time. Charles was taken to his first gay club, the Perchoir d'Haïti, by a school friend from the University of Ottawa in about 1952.

J'avais un copain qui était de Montréal et je venais à Montréal avec lui les fins de semaine et j'étais allé avec dans un bar. La première fois de ma vie où j'ai été dans un bar. C'était le Perchoir, ... un club très bizarre. Je sais pas si c'était uniquement homosexuel. C'était sombre, beaucoup de gens. ... J'avais 20 ans ou 21 ans probablement et c'était très bizarre, très secret. Je me rappelle encore la première fois de l'atmosphère bizarre. On avait l'impression de faire quelque chose de très marginal. C'était assez grand. Il y avait beaucoup de monde. Les gars et les filles dansaient ensemble et des garçons et des garçons, les filles aussi. C'était, comment je dirais ça, c'était louche, c'est ça. Mais c'était très agréable d'être là. Je me rappelle, j'avais peur d'y aller. Mais une fois là, c'était très agréable. C'était la première fois où je pouvais être sans cachette avec d'autre monde. Avec beaucoup de monde sans que je sois contesté.

This feeling of being able to relax for the first time is common to stories gay men tell of entry into the bar world.¹⁹³

Gérard did not enter the gay bar world until classmates from university took him to a bar that they promised he would find "interesting." This proved to be the Tropical, and the first visit was almost too interesting, since there was a raid that night and his name and address were taken down for the morality squad's files.¹⁹⁴ Although shaken by the experience, Gérard continued to explore the gay world. He did not like the Tropical, but preferred to go to the Hawaiian Lounge, where he appreciated the shows given by Carole Breval. He said that he liked them because of his own past experience as a performer, and that he just went and watched, hardly talking to anyone and never making a sexual contact. He insisted that the mores of the early 1960s precluded casual sexual encounters (one had to be introduced and meet several times before getting to that stage). Underlying this view is the notion that there is a social body which sets such rules. With this, Gérard was in the process of identifying, since he wanted to conform. However his account of sexual mores in the bar world of the 1960s is

¹⁹³ See similar stories from Laurent, p. 378, and Ralph, p. 221.

¹⁹⁴ This was common practice at the time as the 1968 *Petit Journal* item (p. 112) demonstrates.

quite at variance with the stories of several other narrators. Perhaps he did know a group of people who held sexually conservative attitudes, but whether completely illusory or grounded in social fact, the image which he held of the social group was sufficient for Gérard's identification with the gay world. Later in life he would assume a leadership role in a social services gay group.

A very different experience of bar world entry was reported by Ralph, who very quickly became integrated into a warm social network and was quickly socialized to gay language and customs. Several months after his entrapment arrest and his decision to accept himself as gay, Ralph visited the Peel Pub, which was widely known as a gay bar at the time, he said. Though he didn't talk to anyone, he overheard a conversation at the next table about an anticipated visit to a bar called Bud's on Stanley Street. The next weekend Ralph visited Bud's, but knowing nothing of the habits of the gay bar world, he went at four o'clock after an afternoon of Christmas shopping. The bar was almost empty, but there was a man who he started talking to. After the place filled up a little, they went to dance. The man told Ralph about another bar called the Apollo on Park Avenue near Laurier, and eventually they proceeded there. Here his new acquaintance had a lot of friends, including the bartender and the waiter. That night Ralph met a group of people that he still remains close to twenty-five years later. He was so elated that he forgot the purchased gifts, left sitting next to the bar in Bud's, but Ralph concluded this narrative with the observation that "it was worth it."

Like Eugene, Trevor learned the gay world was not always so welcoming a place. By his mid teens, Trevor had progressed from cinemas to cruising in Dominion Square downtown. There he met an older man who invited him to have a beer at the Peel Pub.

It must have been a Friday night. The place was just packed. I was amazed for two reasons. First of all seeing that many people and also the fact that nobody gasped and nobody looked twice. I just sat down and had beers.

At sixteen, Trevor thought he deserved more attention, but this lack of attention paid to them strikes many gay men on entry to the gay scene. Having arrived at a resolution to an intense personal crisis, they have to cope with the fact that this is not considered especially interesting by others who went through it all themselves long before. To really gain entry to gay conversation they find that they must now set about learning how to deal with a new set of social and discursive conventions.

Although the bars were in many ways the central meeting places of the gay world, by no means all gay men went regularly or found them congenial. Lorrain's (1985) autobiography

relates the life of a ballet dancer who had no use whatever for the bar world. One narrator, Oscar, came to reject the bar world after joining Alcoholics Anonymous. Oscar was never very comfortable with his sexual orientation and relied heavily on drinking to deal with it. He began frequenting the gay section of the tavern in Calgary's Palliser Hotel while working in that city in the 1940s, and later went to some Montreal gay places during visits to his family. By 1954, his job had taken him to Texas where he finally succeeded in joining Alcoholics Anonymous and has seldom been in bars since. Despite the fact that in his eyes this means that he has not lived in the "gay world," he has always had a network of gay friends and lovers, and in recent years has worked to establish gay AA groups in Montreal. In his mind this rejection of alcohol precluded identification with the gay world for many years. He conceived of bars as central to having a gay identity, so he was not comfortable with it, but eventually welcomed the chance to help others who were gay and alcoholic.

Another man was equally adamant in rejecting the bar world, but for quite different reasons. Arthur was outspoken in his dislike of bars but maintained an active identification with the gay world by other means. At first Arthur had followed the classic linear trajectory of gay world entry, until he went to a bar for the first time.

Alors moi, je ne bois pas pis je ne danse pas; alors les bars, ... ça m'intéressaient pas beaucoup. ... Alors je suis allé dans quelques bars. Et puis je n'ai jamais rencontré quelqu'un dans un bar; mais pour une raison très simple. C'est que j'étais très mal à l'aise dans ces endroits là.

He had an explanation for his lack of success by the fact that he was ill at ease in the bar environment. He also recalled his horror when the lights went up at closing time to find himself alone having spent the evening looking at good-looking young men.

J'étais un peu gros, et ça, j'avais aussi un complexe parce que j'étais gros pis je me disais [que] c'est peut-être pour ça.

After this depressing initial contact with the bar world therefore, he withdrew and concentrated on using street cruising techniques, of which he was quite proud, to make sexual contacts (see p. 235).

4. Brief Encounters, Gay Friendship Groups, Couples and Other Social Contacts

In the life experience of several narrators, early adult sexual contacts ended up becoming lifelong friends. Even after the initial period in the bars, some men continued to form friendships with people they had met through casual sex. Other men became acquainted with a set of people through bar encounters or through social introductions by mutual friends. By whatever means, the narrators established and maintained a social life with a set of regular

companions in a pattern of social occasions like bar outings or house parties. Leznoff's (1954) central finding is the key function in the gay world of the friendship group, the shifting set of friends and acquaintances with whom the individual shared his life in the gay world. Not all men who participated in the gay world belonged to a friendship group, but most did and for them it was a defining aspect of their social being. The friendship group was crucial for questions relating to gay issues of survival and rejection of the taboo on homosexuality. I argue that the friendship group is an instance of Mills's (1963) concept of the "circle of opinion." The sharing of the points of view in many interconnected friendship groups locally and internationally coalesced in the postwar period into a collective self-awareness and desire for change. In concert with other cultural and economic factors, this desire led to the creation of a public gay voice and the shift in the conceptualization of homosexuality in Western societies after 1970.

Brief encounters, or "one night stands," are related by many narrators, and here I would like to assess the impact of short-term sexual contacts on the individual's gay social connections and self-concept. Casual encounters might lead to different types of long-term relationships, more often friendship than couple formation. Such meetings do not necessarily occur in the anonymous alienated urban space projected by media accounts. Rather, if participants identify as active members of the local gay scene, a rather small social world of several thousand people, parks, toilets and the street were simply venues where paths might cross of men who already knew each other from the bars. In public sex venues there were other types of participants: some only desired sex, while others were there looking for social contact as well.

One man gave several examples of men who had become long-term friends through sexual or bar connections. Even though when Donald met John in the 1950s, the latter lived in Toronto, the two men remained in close touch, exchanging visits and living in the same city when John spent a year working in Montreal in the early 1960s. Earlier in life, Donald's friendship with Walter had also been the result of an overnight adventure, not between Walter and Donald, but with a third man. As Donald explained, one night in the early 1950s he was at the Tropical.

I met a young doctor from Ottawa. He used to come and kick up his heels in Montreal on the weekend. And at the boarding-house where I was staying, chicken pox had gone through the whole house. None of us had had it as children and everyone got it. And I was the last one to come down with it. I met Steve [the doctor] and went back to wherever he was staying because I couldn't bring

anyone where I stayed. That was on Saturday, and on Monday night my spots came out. So I was mortified—an intern spreading it all through the hospital in Ottawa.

His concern for public health was to have long-term effects on his social life because it put him in touch with Walter.

And I knew I'd seen him speak to this older man at the bar and, in typical gay bar fashion, that same guy had given me his phone number. So I said, I have to find out how to get in touch with Steve. So I phoned this number and explained what had happened. So Walt said he wouldn't give me his phone number in Ottawa. He said "I will call him and let him know." Fortunately he never got it—but I don't know if he spread it to the whole hospital. And from then, Walt—the next week—when I got better, he started to phone. I enjoyed the attention.

Usually the friendship is between the actual participants, but here the doctor from Ottawa disappears from the story, and, after a brief affair, a friendship was born that continues today.

The frequency of these brief encounters differed not only because of differences in looks and personality, but also age and profession. Étienne recalled with some satisfaction his early years of success in meeting sexual partners as a good-looking young "new face" in the clubs. Len reflected how after an initial binge, he slowed down the frequency of sexual encounters after a few years on the scene.

The first people I met there I went home with. I mean in those days if you met someone invariably you went home with them and we didn't have all the problems we have today.¹⁹⁵ I mean I used to go home with people three and four nights a week and that was not considered unusual when I was in my twenties.

He seems to say that sexual mores have changed, have become more complicated, but it is also possible that this is another result of getting older and slowing down. Sometimes men met as casual sexual partners became friends, or at least bar acquaintances. Of course there is no way of knowing in advance whether a meeting will lead to a lifelong friendship or just a one-night stand, though the law of averages favours the latter. Given the relative smallness of the gay world in absolute terms, a chance meeting could take place years later that would redefine the significance of a given encounter.

With few exceptions, the narrators' stories supported the central importance of the gay friendship group. For both "overts" and "coverts," Leznoff's (1954:92) placed the friendship group¹⁹⁶ at the centre of his analysis of homosexual sociability, though his data were strongest for the lower-class "overts." The relationships within the friendship group are normally not

¹⁹⁵ i.e. before AIDS. Len's description of the patterns of sexual activity of his generation closely resembles what I observed in the Montreal bar scene of the mid-1970s.

¹⁹⁶ He also uses the term "clique." Leznoff and Westley (1956:263) conclude by saying that the homosexual community "consists of a large number of distinctive groups within which friendship binds members together in a strong and relatively enduring bond and between which the members are linked by tenuous but repeated sexual contacts." As we will see, inter-group relationships have more than sexual content, though that is important for young gays especially.

sexual, and a sort of incest taboo prevails among the members (Leznoff 1954:114-116).¹⁹⁷ The overt friendship group differs structurally from the covert group because it is centred on a central member, whose apartment was the group's "headquarters." Following the usage of group members themselves, Leznoff (1954:97-109) defines this man as "queen" one of the gay leadership roles discussed in Chapter 7 (p. 363). If gay identity, as opposed to homosexual sex, entails involvement in a community, then the means of involvement was through friends. This was especially true before the 1970s, when alternatives such as drop-in centres were created. Men with different personalities naturally had a wide range of approaches to friendship, but the links to friends were the primary channel for socialization into the gay world and involvement in the ongoing process of learning and contributing to the shared conversational and informational schemata on which it centred.

In addition to the women they got to know as neighbours, Donald and Evan formed a long-lasting friendship with a man they met in the apartment building where they first lived together. This friendship resembles in many ways the mentor-protégé relationships previously referred to.

There was one older guy who moved into the Barrymore [their apartment building] while we were there. Frank [was] a very nice man. He was incredible. He was very distinguished-looking, but you wouldn't call him handsome. If he went, came into a room, you noticed him because of the way he carried himself. And he would go to the Kiltie¹⁹⁸ and sit at a table (he never went to the bar) and would nurse one beer all night, and probably leave with the pick of the bar. And we used to say, "Why don't you—we're willing to pay [to] have a course on how to do this." He'd laugh. He was really a good friend. He's dead now.

Among the friends Eugène met through the lawyer at the Lutèce (p. 208), he recalled one man with whom he had a short sexual relationship before becoming friends.

J'ai rencontré un amant qui était journaliste, critique musical. Lui était prêt pour avoir un amant mais moi, j'avais besoin de voir ailleurs. ... Il m'a introduit au ballet, aux concerts.

This type of guidance exemplifies the "guide" role in gay social life, similar to but less intense than the relationship between a social newcomer and someone playing the mentor role. Both of these informal roles help to familiarize the newcomer into the cultural preoccupations and social customs of gay society. It was through meeting at a bar that Étienne and Eugène became friends early in the 1960s. They spent time together in the city and at Eugène's cottage in the Laurentians. During Expo 1967, Eugène had a broken arm, so he remained at the cottage and counted on Étienne and other friends to pick up visiting foreigners and bring them to him. Towards the end of the decade Étienne and Eugène began to go to New York and

¹⁹⁷ Achilles (1964:34) observed the same taboo among her informants in San Francisco as well.

¹⁹⁸ The Kiltie Lounge in the Laurentian Hotel, where gays normally sat only at the bar.

Provincetown together. Through Étienne and his friend/mentor Alfred, Eugène was aware of the homophile movement and the beginnings of the gay liberation movement in 1969. In the early 1970s, the two friends made an annual trip to New York for the Gay Pride march at the end of June. They worked together in Montreal's first gay liberation group, the *Front de libération homosexuel*, founded in 1971. This friendship group focused on homosexuality as a topic of discussion in a different way, but just as intently, as Harry's university circle in the 1960s.

Even photographer Alan Stone, who did not openly identify himself as gay in the interviews, and whose connection to the gay world was primarily through the camera lens, and subsequent publication or sale of his photos to gay men, did have a small number of gay social contacts, including his model "Martin Reid," and Stefan, who was a painter, who knew several of Stone's other models. For several years in the 1960s, these men participated in a social network, accompanying Stone on photo shoots to the countryside around Montreal, or at evenings of drinks and talk.

Problems sometimes arose between friends over sex partners or lovers, as when Eugène lost his "score" to Étienne, or, with more serious result, when a friend seduced a young man Len was having an affair with and broke up the relationship. As a result he lost both lover and friend and required several years in therapy to re-establish his sense of self-worth. These stories, and the distance that was created between Donald and Walter when Donald met Evan illustrate the changes in friendship groups over time. When he entered the gay world, Émile fell in with a group whose activities were almost exclusively centred on drinking. He looks back on this time with the eyes of someone who has become very active in Alcoholics

Anonymous.

Mais en général ce qu'on faisait, on était un groupe qui—y avait Henri, Michel qui était infirmier à l'hôpital avec moi. On était une douzaine et on se donnait rendez-vous et on se réunissait là [au bar]. Et c'est sûr à cause des *shifts* que je faisais, y avait des fins de semaine où je pouvais pas aller parce que je travaillais avec les malades. Pis les fins de semaine où je pouvais pas aller, j'imaginais qu'il y avait ben du fun.

His emotional attachment to the group is clearly stated.

C'était pas drôle, je me sentais tellement triste de voir qu'eux autres pouvaient s'amuser et moi je devais travailler. Pis la semaine d'après, je retournais pis ils disaient "Ah, t'étais pas là la semaine passée. Tu nous a manqué." Pis là, ça me faisait du plaisir de me faire dire que j'avais manqué au groupe. Moi je trouve que c'étaient des gens attachants qui faisaient partie de notre groupe.

This bar-going group lasted for about two years. Though he looked back on that period with affection, Émile also stressed the negative aspects associated with drinking in the group. He

mentioned that you could not trust the word of someone else. He recalled one man who could have been the man of his life had he so desired, and another with whom the roles were reversed. Though a drinker himself, Émile tried to “save” the latter from the bottle. He has now lost touch with these people, leading him to conclude that they were drinking buddies, not really friends.

Alcohol served as the basis for two kinds of friendship relationships, those based on consuming it and those based on abstaining. Émile’s drinking buddies were like the friends that Normand and Jean had before they joined AA. They found that to successfully stop drinking, they had to change their friends. For the first time they noticed that when drinking was the focus of attention, the non-drinkers present had a hard time because the others didn’t notice the lack of food, and were starving. Like Oscar, when they stopped drinking they began to make friends with other gay abstainers. These two patterns were not the only basis for these men’s social relationships, but they were profoundly influenced in the organization of their social lives by their relationship to drinking.

Many gay friendship groups like Émile’s either focused on going out to bars together or included it in the routines that shaped the time they spent together, but did not centre on drinking but rather on the social life of the bars. Pierre mentioned that he would never have gone to the Altesse tavern alone, but only with a group of friends. Ralph also built a social network through a bar (p. 214), but unlike Émile, many of the men he met on his first visit to the Apollo Café are still friends.

It was the most wonderful night of my life. I woke up next morning with no guilt, but wondering how can I connect with these people. I never asked for phone numbers.

Of course it was easy to find them again by going back to the Apollo.

So I made a whole group of friends from the Apollo. They even had Tuesday night social dancing lessons where we learned the cha-cha and the merengue and the pasa dobles. It was like a social club. We’d bring things. You’d bake a cake, and somebody’d bring popcorn.

Ralph enjoyed this social interaction and missed it so much after he withdrew into a couple relationship several years later that he eventually gave up his lover to return to it.

Some men’s gay social networks were very extensive. Leznoff mentioned that Robert, the “queen” of the overt group had three thousand names in his address book (Leznoff and Westley 1956:263). Gay friendships could also extend over considerable distances, especially for middle and upper-class gays who travelled. Immigrants to Canada automatically had close ties in distant places. John, for example, travelled back and forth between London, England and Toronto, with regular trips and a one year period of residence in Montreal. Alvin’s job took

him to various parts of Canada (some of his letters are quoted by Leznoff) and he was always careful to get introductions to local gay men so that he could have a bit of social and hopefully sexual life while he was on the road. Stefan's first experience of gay life was in the social circles and bars of postwar Berlin, but then he lived in Vancouver briefly before settling in Montreal. His parents lived for the rest of their lives in the communist German Democratic Republic and he has maintained close connections with German artistic and theatrical circles. Even without travelling, Patrick developed a far-flung network while still in his teens by meeting someone in a local bar who took to making regular visits to Montreal to see him. His later travels to California and to Europe in company with a major Hollywood star added a more cosmopolitan component to his networks. Many of these long-distance friendships were the result of gay travel (p. 348) or migration, as in Stefan's, Donald's and Alfred's contacts abroad, and Alvin's extensive network in the Canadian West. Of his contacts in the Canadian West where he travelled for work, Alvin said:

what impressed me was that people were so friendly and welcoming a stranger—in part because I was a new face in town [that was] relatively small compared to Montreal.

When he arrived with his letter from a mutual friend in Montreal, he had no problem finding social activities among the local gays.

I have illustrated several aspects of friendship here, since "friend" is the primary status gay men have with each other. I believe that the stories cited here show how important friends were for gay social life. It is through friends that men "learn the ropes" and keep abreast of developments affecting their lives. News of bar openings, warnings about the danger of raids or violent pickups, and samples of the latest gay slang all come to the individual through his discourse network. The links of friendship are the ones he will pay the most attention to. Although Eugène resented having Étienne move in on the man he had picked up, it did not end their friendship. It became an anecdote of their friendship instead. While conflict over a pickup was unlikely to jeopardize a friendship, the relationship between friends and lovers could be more complex. Pairs and groups of friends make up the gay community, while lover relationships remain a highly desired but more difficult type of relationship to achieve. Friends sometimes facilitate the beginnings of couples, and for many, they are there to console lovers when the break-up comes.

Lover relationships were at the centre of some men's lives, while for others they were either not desired or never achieved. Among the narrator group, there were two longstanding

couple relationships, one of which began more than sixty years ago, and the other more than forty. In my own experience and in the stories gathered in the interviews, such relationships are relatively uncommon. Many more of the narrators have had relatively long experiences in couples, with durations ranging from a few months to over twenty years, while still others have been loners for most of their lives. One of the longstanding couples, Percy and Walter, who are also the oldest narrators, met in Toronto in the early 1930s and celebrated their sixtieth anniversary a year after they were interviewed. The story of how they became a couple after a card party hosted by Percy is presented in full in Appendix A-5. Both had become part of a gay circle whose meeting place in the early 1930s was a downtown restaurant and a common acquaintance (with whom both had had brief sexual relationships) introduced them. Aside from the period during the Second World War while Walter served in the army, and another five year separation in the early 1950s, when Percy's company transferred him back to southern Ontario, their relationship has always been the central focus of their lives. More than during the war, the second separation was a time when both men had serious relationships with others and there was a danger of permanent break-up. Jealousy may have played a stronger role than their narrative of the past reveals, since the negative aspect now seems less important than celebrating their long life together. On their sixtieth anniversary, I asked what advice they would give to young lovers. Walter answered:

The only thing is to just accept each other, accept their faults, don't get into—if you have an argument, walk away from it. And just be patient with each other. Have fun with other people, if you want to have a little sex on the side, OK. But don't do it in front of each other. If you bring someone home, use separate rooms.

This openness, patience and caution kept them together despite more or less constant outside affairs on both sides. Being together seems to have given them confidence to play the role of “convenor” or host (p. 364), bringing people together in parties and dinners and maintaining a wide social circle.

The other two men who have been together for a long time are Jean and Normand. Before giving his account of how they met, Jean quoted from something he had recently read:

Nous nous cherchions avant de nous être vus. Je crois par quelque ordonnance du ciel. Il existe une sorte de prédestination des âmes.

Their meeting does seem somewhat miraculous, since it was facilitated by a man they both knew, who by coincidence passed along Normand's phone number to Jean before they had met. The detailed account is presented in Appendix A-5. Jean and Normand never had an exclusive sexual relationship, partly because Normand's work as a salesman took him out of

town all the time. The parties they held in their cottage in the Laurentians were not so much oriented to talk as those hosted by the other couple, but were mainly for drinking and sex. When I asked if they had had problems because of jealousy, their answers did not immediately concord. Jean denied there had been any, but Normand disagreed, and added that Jean was "the jealous type." Jean pointed out that Normand had had less occasion for jealousy, even though at other moments in the interview, it was clear that Normand's work as a travelling salesman gave him the chance to pick up hitchhikers for sex. At the time of the interview, they were looking forward to going out to celebrate their fortieth anniversary at a gay restaurant in Florida, where they spend several months each year. Based on the experience of these two couples, it seems that the security of a long-term relationship is an enabling factor for playing the "convenor" role, though interpreted in quite different ways.

The interview with Jacques was dominated by the memory of his lover of 22 years, whose death a year previous was still very much on his mind. His account of earlier experiences in the gay world appeared structured as a preliminary to this relationship. After his positive experience of psychoanalysis, he moved to Montreal and began meeting men at the Tropical and other bars, and had had one sporadic relationship.

Mais à 29 ans, je tombe amoureux d'un comédien, mon premier grand amour qui dure 6 mois.

Puis il me laisse tomber; ma première grande peine d'amour. J'ai mis trois ans pour m'en remettre.

This is a fairly common pattern of long and short term involvements, unusual only for the length of time Jacques took to get over it. Then in the mid-1960s he met Martin, an American man several years younger than himself.

Enfin à 35 ans je rencontre un homme de 31 ans. On a passé 22 ans et demi ensemble. Il est mort il y a un an d'une crise cardiaque. On a eu une aventure de 22 ans. Non, pas une aventure. C'était le plaisir de faire des choses ensemble, de papoter, les voyages. Ce qui me manque le plus, c'est le compagnonnage, pas le sexe.

The story of their courtship and the difficulty of maintaining a relationship while living in different cities are explained in the extended interview excerpt in Appendix A-5. Jacques emphasized in his account the closeness he felt to his lover's family after Martin died, despite the fact that they were religious conservatives from the southern United States.

Unlike the two long-term couples discussed above, many like Jacques and Martin tended to withdraw from active bar-going, at least for a while.¹⁹⁹ Donald also mentioned that he and his lover Evan stayed away from bars for several years after they met. They took part in a dinner

¹⁹⁹ The lesbians in the community Lockard (1986:93) studied called this withdrawal by couples "disappearing into the sunset."

party circuit with a group made up of gays and lesbians, but no one ever mentioned the subject of homosexuality. Such withdrawals were often temporary, since break-ups inevitably led people back to the bars. In any case those who withdrew usually maintained some contacts in the bar scene, as Leznoff (1954:99, 194) observed for both couples and single men who disdained the bars for one reason or another.

Ralph's account of his only long-term relationship highlighted the conflict it created in his sense of who he was. They met one day when he was shopping on St-Hubert Street.

He came home and he became my lover and we lived together for ten years. I got out of the bar scene. We built a house up north, a cottage, and we became very domestic. But I kept missing my friends, this family that I'd built up. But he started his gay life very young. Like one of these who started at eleven. He had a lover when he was thirteen, an older man. So he did his partying very young.

Because of his past, Ralph's lover Marc-André was very anti-club, and even anti-gay, he said. They socialized mainly with his lesbian friends. During the relationship, Ralph dropped out of his Church work, though he continued to attend services. Marc-André was also very anti-Church, but despite the tensions, Ralph was very satisfied with his life.

Then I had this complete life. And I felt complete. I had a home life. Although my family didn't accept the fact that there was always this man answering the phone. They couldn't come and visit because he's there. And that was trouble. ... I had friends that would come, mostly lesbian friends with their girlfriends. It was always couples. Marc-André always had this fear of a single person.

Ralph felt stifled by the couple-dominated social life that his lover imposed, and longed to return to the camp humour and easy warmth of the "family" he had met in the bars. Their restricted social life separated him from the group with whom he felt most at home. He felt like he was devoting his life to following the sales at the local supermarket.

I felt like I was losing my identity. When I talked about it and it became an issue then Marc-André was very uncomfortable and he left.

After the break-up, his lover moved away for several years, but then returned and now works for Ralph's company, another lover relationship that led to an enduring friendship, and Ralph now describes Marc-André, not as his best friend, but his "best brother."

With no children or economic dependence on the other, and in an ideological climate that laid more and more stress on individual "self-realization," especially for professional men, the compromises required to keep a couple working may begin to seem too much. Given the prominence of jealousy in the discourse of love and relationships in North America, and the emphasis on sexual conquest in gay sexual culture (p. 323), the question of fidelity and jealousy inevitably arose in gay couple relationships. Percy told a story of one short-lived friendship that ended with a dinner party. Looking at a group photo of gay men celebrating a birthday in

1949, he recalled that one of the men had a boyfriend, and he and Walter had socialized with this Francophone couple.

We were at a dinner party at his boyfriend's one night, and he and I got our arms around each other, and were having a real kissing—just sexual kissing—time. And his boyfriend—we did it right there—we weren't going off in the corner or something to do it. His boyfriend never saw us after that. Neither one of them.

Some couples tried to live by strict rules to avoid jealousy. Donald and Evan maintained a strict monogamous relationship for the first few years.

We had policy. If you wanted to do it, that was as good as doing it. Just cruising someone was as bad as doing it. Then one day, fed up with my job, I wanted a new one. I had been for an interview and stopped for quick turn at the Kiltie washroom. I was standing at middle urinal, so whoever came, I was bound to have good view of. And who should come but Evan. I recognized it! He said, "We'd better talk at home."

This was the beginning of the end for their relationship. After that, Donald said, there was tension because he always told his "pick-ups" that he had a lover, but Evan refused, and eventually he found a new lover. Their relationship lasted six years, after which they continued to live together for another six years, and they have always remained close friends.

Finally, some men expressed negative views on having a lover, often as a result of unfortunate experiences. Though Eugène began his life in the gay world with the assumption that he would have a lover (p. 212), he later questioned the desirability of having one. He recounts this destruction of his desire for a lover:

Les amants, au début mon modèle était d'avoir un amant. C'est trop difficile. La liberté est plus importante que la stabilité du couple. Je me rends vite compte que je suis polygame. J'ai eu des expériences de blessures dans mes premières années. Finalement je décide que le désir d'avoir un amant était névrotique. J'ai eu de mauvaises expériences avec la possessivité des amants près de la schizophrénie. J'avais un ami psychopathe—il était prêt à me tuer—il se couchait avec un couteau; c'était vers 1974-75. Ça me guérit du désir d'avoir un amant.

An early disappointment with an alcoholic (p. 327) also turned Trevor against couple relationships. "Always a bridesmaid, never a bride," as he sardonically summed it up. This opinion was not shared by most of the other narrators, despite negative experiences. In the gay world, as one of Leznoff's informant points out, the sexual culture of the "chase" is an obstacle to couple formation:

They keep dreaming of marriage but can never form one because they lack the intelligence to forgo the pleasure of the chase for a less glamorous personal relationship. Everything becomes secondary to the chase. They adopt whatever safeguards they can in their day to day living, and won't openly associate with someone swish. Eventually they become more and more isolated from society as more and more of their time goes to the search.

The gay discourse community is crossed by these two conflicting points of view on couple relationships. It would be useful to look in closer detail at how men conceive of themselves as sexual and romantic participants, along the lines of Holland's (1992) research on young women learning this identity, in order to document more fully schemata like the "chase" and "lover"

through which the self-image and possibilities for action are understood. Such concepts join with "drinking buddy," "score" and "friend" in mapping the gay social world for the individual.

For most narrators, the web of relationships with other gay men was embedded in a larger set of social connections with other people, lesbians and heterosexual men and women.

Ongoing contacts with families have been mentioned above, and overlap with gay and non-gay social links through work or leisure activities, and I suggest that the latter, especially when the individual's sexual orientation was known to the non-gay friends, helped to secure his sense of identity as a gay man.

In the light of the fact that lesbians and gay men tend to inhabit separate social universes, it is unsurprising that few of the men interviewed had extensive social contact with lesbian women. Some men reported that they knew no lesbians, while others had casual social relations, engaged in social contact for the sake of appearances, worked with lesbians, or had lesbian family members. In the 1950s, Percy and Walter became friendly with an Australian lesbian couple in their downtown apartment building simply because they mutually "figured each other out" during elevator rides, and eventually asked them in for a drink. The four spent quite a lot of time together, even making home movies of each other, though a pall was thrown over their friendship by misogynist remarks that a gay friend made to the women at their New Year's party. This outburst reflected the intentional exclusion of women from their lives practised by some gay men. This practice had its counterpart among lesbians, which ensured that the social worlds of gay men and lesbians overlapped very little. Nevertheless some men like Ralph's lover Marc-André had extensive social relationships with lesbians. It was only through him that Ralph got to know many lesbians. At the time of the interview, Trevor had a close relationship with two lesbians who belonged to his church, a relatively new development in his social life. He saw a recent convergence in interests between gay men and lesbians and found support from these women during the years before his death.

Living and working in ordinary situations, most of the narrators had extensive social relationships with heterosexuals. There were various types of connection with unrelated heterosexual women. Some had virtually no social contact with them, while others had many women friends. Some had women friends for rather instrumental reasons, using them as "cover" when they went out to restaurants, etc. Donald and Evan liked to be with women partly for this reason, but also enjoyed their company. Ernest's literary connections were

mainly with heterosexuals, but in the open milieu this led to his developing a gay network without having to enter the gay world as such (although he did go to bars as well).

J'ai connu des milieux où on ne cultivait que des amitiés gaies. Moi, j'ai plutôt vécu dans des milieux où c'étaient des valeurs culturelles qui présidaient. On savait, on connaissait les valeurs particulières, les orientations de chacun, mais cela enrichissait le groupe. Les gais étaient tolérés. J'ai été privilégié dans le sens où j'ai pas travaillé en usine, des milieux où les gais étaient mis au ban et j'ai vu que les grands créateurs c'étaient les gais, y compris les femmes.

In the social ferment of the mid-1960s, Étienne joined a circle of very close heterosexual friends who maintained a weekly meeting at which they taped their conversations, in which they discussed politics and other topics including sexual and gender relations. Though he thought these people knew him very well, he was still aware of the difference in his relations with them and with other gays. As he told them, "Il me manque la dimension gaie avec vous-autres. [Je] me sens encore tout seul." The themes and discourse conventions of the gay world differ from those of the surrounding society and this led many men to feel that they could only realize important aspects of themselves in social contact with other gays.

Some gay men had more than friendship relations with the heterosexual world, having belonged to it before coming out. One of the narrators, Gilles, had been married for twenty years between his first gay relationship and his re-entry into gay life after 1980, and had children. Another gay father was Ralph's childhood friend Dave, whom he had shared an apartment with in Montreal, and who only accepted his own homosexuality many years later, after marrying and having several children. Later, as a gay man, he met another man with children, with whom he set up house. As Ralph said:

They're in their tenth year together. Between them they have 5 children all living with them and a full family of grandparents. Both families accept it, though at the beginning it was awful. But time cures everything.

Though only one of the narrators had children, several had been close to marriage when they were young. These varied examples of the patterns of social contact which gay men had with the non-gay world illustrate the diversity of experience among the narrator group, and show that they were by no means uniquely focused on the gay world for social contacts. In this study, however, it is the gay world links that receive attention, since it was here that the men collectively built a sense of community, while their relationships with understanding heterosexuals served to bolster their rejection of the overt taboo and social controls they faced.

E. INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSES TO HETEROSEXUAL HEGEMONY

In the media and in popular stereotypes, gay life is cast as night life, of a life led in the shadows, clandestine, the "twisted path." The impetus to secrecy was much stronger than it is today (and it is still quite strong in most sociocultural settings in North America outside of a few square blocks in the centre of major cities). Despite the clandestinity, access to space gave gay men the freedom to develop in discourse a gay way of seeing the world that did not centre on contesting the non-gay, however, but on simply living as gay. In this chapter I have presented a variety of aspects of gay life in postwar Montreal from the individual perspective, giving voice to men whose stories, descriptions and explanations come from their personal knowledge of the milieu. Outside the gay world, there is little sense of the ordinariness of gay lives. In all but the sexual sphere, gay men must deal with the same range of issues as any other adult resident of a large urban centre: shelter, job, food, friends, family, and entertainment. Like others, gay men hear the negative cultural message concerning homosexuality, but unlike others, they also perceive homosexuality in themselves, creating a discrepancy that must be resolved or buried from consciousness.

The set of experiences of this small group of men show how varied the response to the challenge of being homosexual could be, and more personal stories would surely extend the range of observed variation and add new factors to those studied here. I have been concerned to show these differences between men of different generations, classes and ethnic groups in order to emphasize that despite this diversity, all but a few of the narrators came to define themselves as members of the gay community and felt this was a permanent aspect of their social and sexual beings. This sense of self in relation to sexuality, when directly alluded to it, is expressed as an intrinsic aspect of self. The clearest example was the motive for Ralph's break-up with his lover, which he attributed to feeling that he was losing touch with his "real self." The same view is supported by the matter-of-fact self-acceptance behind Donald's "I just knew that's the way it was," and a similar view expressed by Trevor. Though most of the narrators made no direct reference to this topic, the actions they took to organize their lives around their sexual orientation reflected its importance in their self-definition.

The disjuncture between an individual's sense of self as moral, healthy or contributing to society and the taboo and harsh verbal condemnations, informal and formal sanctions which society exercised against homosexuality before 1970, left the individual with a problem. For

the men interviewed here, with some exceptions, the solution was to affiliate socially, cognitively and emotionally with other gay men. For a few this choice was fraught with problems, while a few others were inspired to actively build a sense of the group by serving as guides or convenors of social occasions, or to take action in the name of the community in the cultural, political or commercial domains. This chapter outlines several narrators' experiences in establishing themselves in autonomous adult households with control over their own domestic space and with a network of friends and acquaintances in the gay world. The development of a public spatial framework will be the topic of the next chapter, before the concluding chapter unites the symbolic dimension as one of the avenues for the exercise of agency in the friendship group or leadership at the community level which I have begun to sketch here.

Subject to the multiple discourses of Western society on being authentically who you are, and to the moral discourse urging honesty and openness in human relations, gays face an insoluble dilemma, a "spoiled" identity. In order to combat the negative self-image that a concept like spoiled entails and attain a healthy positive self-regard, every gay man must, if he is at all self-reflexive, contest the mistaken or maliciously distorted views of homosexuality, and thus must also contest the authority of the institutional and personal sources of discourses presenting them. He must conclude that, after all, he is a better judge of what is what than the priest, doctor, judge or father who has never seen the gay world, and never known gay people. Authoritative discourses are heeded more by those with higher social status, The working-class milieu provided a much more tolerant environment than the middle class. Working class disregard and contempt for authority, especially the police, made another point of convergence with the gay viewpoint. This was made into social practice in the spaces like the lowlife cabarets that gays shared with working class and other devalued groups shared, as discussed in Chapter 6, and contributed to the development of a self-aware, positive collective image among gay men.

Chapter 6. Gay Community Space

Spatial schemata loom large in the gay community. By occupying space the community expresses its existence, at least to those who know where to look. In this chapter I will look at the development of the gay community in Montreal in terms of territory, locality, physical space, and the struggle to occupy social space in the modern city. Space offers a means by which to examine the juncture between the individual and collective perspectives on the schematic structures which underlie gay discourse and practice. When individual narrations are compiled a community history emerges, with gay places as landmarks in time and space which serve as foci for other stories (about the people who were there, the staff attitudes to gay customers, sexual conquests and mishaps that took place there, etc.). The compilation offered here is a start, but still an incomplete move towards a "complete" account of space use for gay purposes outside the domestic, residential sphere. It is not so much the precise details of the various venues for meeting sexually or socially that bar lore is important for the emergence of community identity, but rather the process of constructing shared knowledge about them. Narrators' accounts of their experiences in the bars and other gay spaces have already been referred to in various contexts. Here the overall range of spaces occupied by gay men in pursuit of leisure activities related to their sexual orientation, described in the narrators' words, are grouped in analytic fashion.

Several classificatory systems intersect in discussing gay spaces. The types of sites or institutions (bars, parks, saunas) can be located physically in different parts of the city. The purposes for which gay men used them (cruising, socializing and having sex) also distinguish the spaces, though these purposes may change over time, or different narrators may have different opinions on what a particular space was used for. Most importantly from the point of view of this study of the emergence of a sense of gay community, spaces can be classified according to how exclusive they were. Outdoor cruising areas were almost always public, that is heterosexual, space. Indoor space that was exclusively gay was in little evidence in Montreal in the 1920s, as far as the very limited information available for that decade indicates. Shared spaces were indoor spaces where a proportion of the clientele were there because it was a "gay place," but may be further classified depending on whether the heterosexuals present were

aware of the gay presence ("wise" in gay slang), or not. Finally, the social characteristics of the gay men who frequented gay places can be specified, according to ethnicity, class, age cohort and effeminacy.

Throughout the twentieth century in Montreal, there have been ever more numerous indoor venues defined as "gay places" (spaces identified in gay schemata as locales for gay cruising, sociability and/or sexuality). For educated and affluent gay men, the prototype of the trend toward the "gay bar" was the opening in 1952 or early 1953 of the Tropical Room on Peel Street, which Leznoff says was frequented by many "coverts." Though both the Monarch Café on Ste-Catherine East and the Lincoln on St-Denis near Mont-Royal had sheltered an exclusively gay scene since the 1930s, the class distinction which is central to the discussion that follows meant that those spaces were not appealing to middle-class gays in the same way that a downtown gay club was.

Outdoor spaces were mostly used for cruising or sexual activities. They include streets, parks, toilets, and movie houses. In addition, there were several cases when the space of institutions like sports facilities was redefined for gay purposes, which included socializing. Indoor spaces where sexual activities could take place included toilets, rooming houses and saunas, usually shared with heterosexuals, but the emergence of the "gay sauna" is as important as that of the "gay bar," and occurred at about the same time. Indoor spaces used for sociability ranged from the usually shared occupation of certain restaurants or coffee houses, to public drinking establishments of different types: taverns, cabarets or night clubs and bars. All types tended, with a few exceptions, to be shared spaces in the early decades of the twentieth century, but some establishments in all categories were redefined as exclusively gay space after mid-century.

The corpus of narrator accounts will be examined from both the individual and the collective perspective in terms of a schema which I will call the "bar horizon." A gay man's bar horizon is the overall set of sites for gay sexuality and sociability that he knows about at any given time; it is the map of spaces that had been defined as gay places, and the social distinctions of class, ethnicity and age cohort which were coded into the range of choices known to an individual at a given time. A similar "cruising horizon" could also be defined as the schema of places where an individual knew he could meet others, and a "sex horizon" is the

places where he knew he could find partners for public sex. These represent the spatial aspects of a more broadly conceived gay sexual culture, discussed in Chapter 7 (p. 323).

From the collective perspective, the “bar horizon” (the most specific and widely shared of the horizons) that was developed by collating information from many sources is far broader than most individuals attempt to know, and aims at a kind of factual accuracy which is less required in the affectively charged (based on likes and dislikes) individual schema of gay places. The collective application of the “bar horizon” schema reminds us that the reconstruction of patterns of past use of spaces in the city by gay men is an ongoing task, given the very large number of such establishments that have existed, and the complex significations they had for people of many social viewpoints. The mass of data in the collective bar horizon remains inert, lacking the affective charge of individual knowledge (though serving a role in collective memory). Only personal anecdotal detail really brings a bar to life, and retrospectively, it is not possible to attain more than a few glimpses of what the place was like.

Aside from their role as objects of a knowledge structure, bars and other establishments function as discursive spaces where conversation is the norm. Bar-goers engage in a vigorous exchange of simultaneous meanings, mobilizing a wide range of communicative coding conventions, and I will argue that the access to exclusively gay indoor space was a prerequisite for the emergence of a gay collective voice in Montreal to be able to work out points of view and rhetorical strategies for confronting prejudice and violence. Police interventions may limit the forms of use or end access to certain spaces. Public media may be mobilized to shame participants and submit them to the control of observers, so that the danger of exposure or physical violence limits the use that can be made of some spaces. Despite this limiting factor, Montreal gay men managed to secure increased control over a range of spaces. Once established, public gay spaces become symbols of the existence of gay collective life, points of reference which bolster the development of a self-conscious community. Within them, relaxed forms of sociability arise, talk and dancing take the place of a simple focus on furtive sexual practices, resulting in the development of a discourse community with its own cultural understandings.

Increasingly, initiatives that benefited the development of collective identity also revealed the commercial viability of the new gay market. Notable among these commercial initiatives was the opening of gay bars and gay saunas, precursors of the rapidly multiplying gay spaces

and services of the 1970s and later. One conversation recorded by Sawchuck in the early 1970s testifies eloquently to the attitude of gays to their spaces, and the willingness to give forceful verbal expression to their right to exclusively gay space. When a heterosexual couple from out-of-town tries to talk their way past the doorman at a downtown club, a gay customer standing nearby tells them:

Look man, there are over two thousand straight bars in this city. This bar is for homosexuals. It's *our* bar. Why don't you go to one of your own bars? (Sawchuck 1973:53).

The rhetoric of gay rights gained strength from such declarations and in the 1970s, gay political groups appeared and quickly established an entirely new type of gay space, the office/drop-in centre.²⁰⁰ These will be discussed in the section on community leadership in the next chapter.

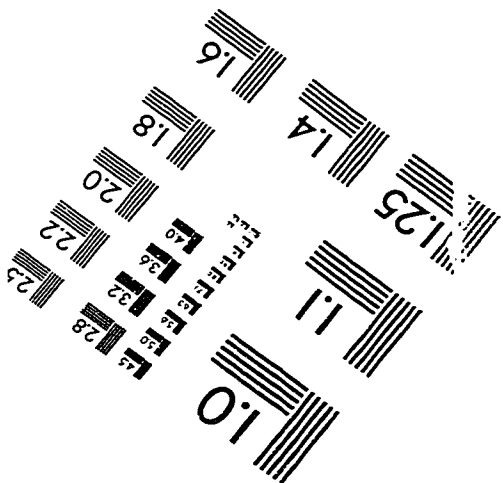
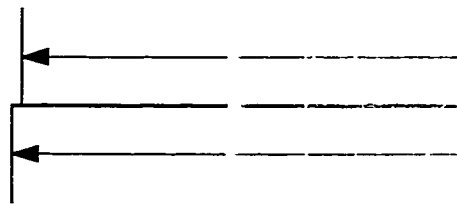
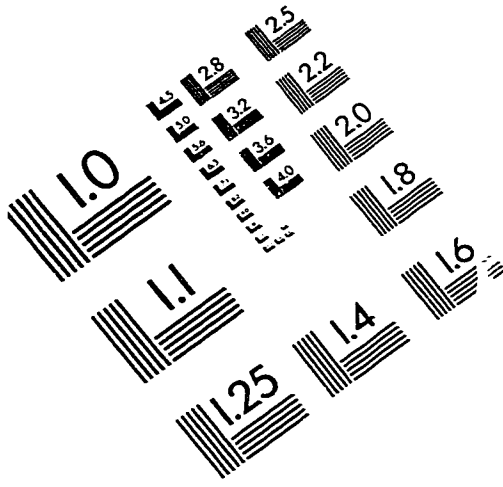
The creation of a gay discursive universe began in the private spaces previously discussed (p. 198) long before the emergence of the gay bar, but the latter has one characteristic that earlier closed gay space lacked, public accessibility. This meant that for the price of a beer and a little conversational skill, anyone could establish social contacts. The typology and chronology of bars and other gay spaces thus link the account in the previous chapter of individual awareness and discovery of the gay scene, and the discussion in the next chapter of the discourses they encountered and the leadership some of them took in talk or in action to promote community.

A. REDEFINED PUBLIC SPACE: CRUISING, SOCIABILITY AND SEX

Openly accessible outdoor spaces have long been used clandestinely by gays for meeting people and/or having sex. In addition to the streets, parks, toilets and movie theatres, gay cruising took place in department stores and shopping complexes, as well as in institutions like the YMCA. Once one knows what to look for, it is relatively easy, even in a totally unfamiliar city, to figure out likely meeting places, and the same procedures existed everywhere for the covert exchange of gay meanings in spaces defined by heterosexuals. Meetings rarely relied on the visibility of effeminacy, but rather more subtle visual cues, such as attention to dress, or behaviour, such as pretending to window shop. Leznoff (1954) gives a thorough account of the use of coded language, often centring on the then secret meaning of the word gay, in a series of stages of self-revelation and testing of the other to ascertain not only sexual

²⁰⁰ In the fall of 1971, the *Front de libération homosexuel* (FLH) established a storefront office on St-Denis Street near Sherbrooke (Archives gaies du Québec Fonds FLH).

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orientation but also interest. The following sections outline interview data on the cruising and sex horizons of the narrators, supplemented with information from other sources.

1. Cruising and Socializing in Public Space

Long before the development of other meeting places for men attracted to other men, the streets of urban areas were an obvious place for eyes to meet and understandings to be reached. Leznoff gives a masterful description of street cruising technique, from the direct stare to the “courtship dance” (a term he attributes to his informants) to the eventual verbal contact. One of his informants explains:

I can't really tell you how someone cruises. If you are walking along the street and someone looks you straight in the eye then there is a possibility he's gay. You follow that up by half turning your head as you pass and if he does the same thing you might stop and look in a store window. If he is interested he will do the same thing. Sometimes it gets pretty complicated and you end up following the person or being followed a couple of blocks. The easiest way I have found is to go into a restaurant for a cup of coffee and sit at the bar. That is just about the perfect bet. If he is really interested he will come and sit down beside you. Then you can easily start up a conversation (Leznoff 1954:159).

Gay messages are passed by discreet violations of the codes governing eye exchanges, as well as clothing and gestures. The “dance” of pretended window-shopping confirms the intuitions of the first glance. Such cruising could be carried out without attracting the notice of others present in the space, and a potential partner could be tested by dropping hints, including use of the word “gay” itself, which was then known only to insiders (Cory 1951:116-117, cit. Leznoff 1954:167).

Some of the narrators in the present study gave versions of street cruising that are quite similar to those that Leznoff recorded forty years ago. Donald told how it was done:

You look at one and then pass him, and look at another and he passes you, and it goes on. Finally conversation, or you get tired and you have to go home.

Arthur, who disliked bars, believed he had a special talent for street cruising. He recalled one incident that helped to convince him of this ability early in his cruising career.

J'avais été voir un film ... et en sortant du cinéma, je me souviens très, très bien, y'avait beaucoup de monde c'était un dimanche après-midi en été; il faisait très beau. Moi je me revenais vers l'est et il y avait un petit garçon qui s'en allait vers l'ouest. On s'est zyeuté. Je me suis retourné. Il s'est retourné. On a encore marché un peu. Je me suis retourné. Il s'est retourné. Je suis revenu, je lui ai parlé, je l'ai invité. Il est revenu ici. On a baisé. Et quand c'était fini il m'a dit, “Toi t'es un drôle de numéro.” Je dis, “Comment ça?” Il dit, “D'abord t'es pas du tout mon genre physiquement, mais t'a un façon de regarder le monde que tu m'as eu.” Je dis, “Ah bon.”

He didn't mind when he made a mistake because he enjoyed the consternation of the heterosexuals who seemed to suspect what his look meant. Since he didn't frequent the usual gay haunts, Arthur's friends were mystified by his sex life.

Et très souvent d'ailleurs mes amis disaient, "Mais si tu vas pas dans les bars où est-ce que tu rencontres ton monde?" Bon je parlais des toilettes où la rue. Mais eux, la rue c'était très rare. Je veux dire, mais moi je dirais, la moitié des gens, c'était soit les toilettes ou la rue. Voilà.

This indicates that street cruising was not a system that worked for everyone. Arthur even offered a step-by-step analysis of how his look worked:

Moi j'ai l'impression que quand quelqu'un me plaît et que je le regarde, c'est très clair, sans dire un mot. Et si la personne est intéressée et gaie, il va catcher, et à ce moment là, il va répondre. Un petit sourire ou quelque chose. Sinon on va passer outre.

This mobilization of shared codes for recognizing someone's potential and actual sexual interest without arousing too much suspicion on the part of others is an example of the symbolic structures presented at greater length in Chapter 7.

Given the climate of Montreal, street cruising was not necessarily always practical, so indoor locations had to be found where sex partners could be met. For gay men the construction of Place Ville-Marie—the beginning of the "underground city" noted in Canadian architectural history—thus had a special meaning. The same approach as used in street cruising worked well here. Though Oscar described himself as "not a cruiser or a prowler," he sometimes met people using the window shopping technique, but indoors.

In one or two instances, I suppose it was cruising. I have a friend that lives across the street. We met in the corridors of the Mount Royal Hotel, both gazing into Henry March's window—the haberdasher's. We were both of an age. I'm seven or eight years older. He's a Francophone—lived in Paris for a few years—a French-Canadian.

Aside from the technique, this shows that long-term friendships could be born of such casual encounters. Sawchuck (1973:63-66) further elaborates the "mechanics of cruising" with the window shopping technique by pointing out that one of the participants must take the initiative to speak to the other or both go home alone. Once conversation begins, one must make a proposition, such as a direct invitation to go to his apartment. Reflecting the changing gay sexual culture of the early 1970s, Sawchuck also notes that there may be need to establish what will be done sexually because some men have specialized sexual preferences.

Other indoor spaces, especially those like Central Station where there were active toilets, were used by men who had no interest in toilet sex or toilet cruising. Patrick's coming out story (p. 310) was set in the station and Pierre cruised there or in Place Ville-Marie while he was a university student. Some stores had a very discreet gay ambience when men who worked there were familiar faces on the club scene. Oscar mentioned seeing a man whose face he recognized from the Hawaiian Lounge just after the war behind a counter at Simpson's over a period of several decades. Percy also ran into one of his old acquaintances—someone he had met during his years in Hamilton—working in the same store. Narrators also mentioned

knowing libraries and bus stations as meeting places. Harry, who had had gay sex at his boys' school in the Gatineau Hills, found it easy to meet men when he set out to explore gay life in Ottawa and Montreal in his mid-teens. He explained how he knew where to cruise:

You just read it. My first contact in the streets was—that I can remember—was being in Classics Books when that used to be on Ste-Catherine. And somebody cruising me there and I went home with this guy. ... Anyway the guy sort of held hands behind the cab, this was the back seat so the cab driver couldn't see in the mirror, so I was cool, all of the age of 14.

These stories make it clear that any downtown space where people congregate and where there are reasonable pretexts for lingering may be redefined as gay space on the spur of the moment by two men who decide to cruise.²⁰¹

Long-term redefinition by gays of some specific institutional spaces led to intense gay public presence in some sports facilities, for example. Whether constantly or according to a specific timetable, in these spaces gays could even be so numerous that anyone present would have noticed that it was a location of gay sociability.²⁰² Narrators gave details of such institutional redefinition at two well-known athletic institutions, the Montreal Swimming Club on St. Helen's Island, and the YMCA on Drummond Street downtown. Unlike the brief exchanges for meeting sexual partners, such institutional space could serve primarily as social space, substituting for bars or restaurants.

Socializing was the dominant function of one of the most notable instances of redefined institutional space, the Montreal Swimming Club, a "men-only" private club in a surprisingly visible spot, overlooked by the Jacques Cartier Bridge and enjoying a magnificent view of the river and the port. Descriptions gathered from many of the narrators confirmed its importance as a place for casual socializing, meeting people, and to some extent, outdoor sexual activity. The institutional history of the Montreal Swimming Club began in 1876 when it was founded for athletic and charitable purposes, to give working class boys a place for healthy exercise.²⁰³ The facilities were described as "spartan." Collard insists that no discrimination was practised at the club, whose founders included both Francophones and Anglophones, and whose membership was evenly divided between the two groups. A short trial period with women

²⁰¹ See Clark Taylor's (1986:126-127) analysis of reasonable pretexts for hanging around the lobby of a movie theatre in Mexico City.

²⁰² Taylor (1986:130) explains how the social balance in Mexico City cruising locales can tip towards a dangerous redefinition when homosexuals become "too" predominant.

²⁰³ Collard (1976a, 1976b). See also the short history by Prévost (1956).. To protest the danger to the club posed by the construction of the eastern access ramps for the Jacques Cartier Bridge, Joseph Archambault (1957), retired judge and honorary president of the club, wrote a newspaper article saying that it would shame the city to close the club. The city of Montreal Archives have an extensive dossier on the Montreal Swimming Club, including photographs. The McGill Rare Books collection contains the booklets published for the club's fiftieth and seventy-fifth anniversaries.

members in the 1880s was judged a failure (because separate changing facilities cost too much), so from then until the club's demolition in 1966 to make way for the La Ronde amusement area of the world's fair, Expo 67, women were never again admitted.

Percy and Walter provided the earliest picture of the club as a gay venue. Though he had not been there much because he was away in the Army during the war, Walter said it was:

Oh, very gay—wild. I think they were even trying to make it sort of a nude place, but the police stopped it, because people from up on the bridge could look right down on that little section of the island.

They could not recall how the place was administered, and had only a vague idea of how long it had been there. They did say that most of the site was uncut grass, though there was a small beach. Though they had not been very fond of the place, since they were not interested in swimming, they also said it was a venue for sex in the early 1940s. Though fully involved in gay life elsewhere, Percy kept his distance from the scene at the Montreal Swimming Club.

Used to be a gay crowd there, I know, but I didn't mix with them. But when I went—I'm funny about that—I used to go up to the other side, so I was more alone, by myself. Nice place to go in the afternoon to sun, but then I was working. I couldn't go during the week. It would have to be Saturday or Sunday. So I wasn't there that often. And I didn't care for the—there was too many kids running around naked. I mean kids 12, 13, running around, and they made quite a bit of noise, so I wasn't interested. And they'd run around with nothing on—specially where the lockers were. ... They were there to be sucked off and that, and play around, sure. I saw them doing it, but I wasn't interested.

Walter claimed that the police had stepped in to clean the place up, but no other narrators had been there so early, and I was not able to confirm or disconfirm this account.

In discussing bars, Percy and Walter expressed dislike for obvious (effeminate) gays, and this may explain their lack of interest in the Montreal Swimming Club. When Émile visited the club in the 1950s, he found two kinds of gay men there:

Y avait la grande folle qui s'énervait, les poignets cassés, pis le foulard dans le cou. Pis y avait les autres qui étaient en retrait qui regardaient ça, qui trouvaient ça ben épouvantable mais qui étaient plus calmes.

This shows that the gay presence there was visible for all to see. At about the same time, Len was starting to frequent the club, and made no negative comments about those who were there.

That was fun. You could actually swim in the St. Lawrence but you had to be quite a good swimmer because there's a strong current around there. And they had one fairly big raft you could swim out to and then some satellite rafts around you could swim out to these others. ... It was lovely grass [that] sloped down to the water. You just lay, bring your towel or blanket and lie on the grass. And a few flower beds, it was very pleasant, and never that crowded. ... And it was, I don't say it was a hundred per cent gay, but pretty close to it. There were very few straight people. Of course maybe I just didn't pay any attention to the straight people, I don't know. But it was a nice place to go.

By this time it seems, there was no trace of the sexual activities reported earlier, though commenting on this topic led Len to mention other redefined institutions where sex did take place.

They had changing rooms, but I don't think there was ever any messing around. Not like Vic Tanny's and the health clubs, it wasn't that sort of thing. It was just gay people that went there. We used to go very often from there to the Monarch or the Zoo.

The last remark emphasizes the social aspects of the club for Len. It was a place to meet in the afternoon before moving on to a bar or to someone's place, as mentioned in the discussion of Len's parties at his South Shore home (p. 152). On the other hand, Donald and John went there to cruise; they said the club's attraction for gays was "primarily because of the bodies." The sunbathing was not nude but "as small as you could go." The showers could be "interesting" mostly as a place to make contact and arrange to meet later. Before its disappearance, the club was clearly one of the most popular outdoor gay meeting places in the summer.

The Montreal Swimming Club had a mixed ethnic clientele, despite Len's memory of the club as an Anglophone enclave. When in 1992 *La Presse* published pictures taken at it with an erroneous caption, they received indignant letters from two Francophone members, one of whom said he had been club president in the late 1940s.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, when I mentioned the Montreal Swimming Club in a talk to a local gay discussion group, one of the members came forward to say he had photos taken there in the 1950s. In a subsequent interview, Henri showed me his snapshots²⁰⁵ and identified himself and his friends, all Francophones, shown lounging on the grass and taking campy poses for the camera, confirming the club's function as the site of uninhibited gay socializing.

Among other instances of institutional redefinition, one frequently mentioned was the residences and sports facilities of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), which served as both a sexual and a social venue. In gay circles everywhere, the YMCA is known as a good place to stay, as well as a sports facility, and often cruisy.²⁰⁶ One man described the Montreal YMCA as "pretty raunchy" in the 1960s, while Émile observed that "le Y

²⁰⁴ *La Presse* 1992.07.15:A9; *La Presse* 1992.07.21:A9.

²⁰⁵ now in the collection of the Archives gaies du Québec.

²⁰⁶ For example an article that appeared in a Philadelphia gay magazine in 1964 following the arrest of a prominent White House aide in the washroom of a Washington YMCA includes the following:

"Many persons, even among the most enlightened, simply do not understand what kind of 'indecent gestures' can occur in the men's rooms of the Y.M.C.A. throughout the world. News releases have been specifically uninformative and few dare mention homosexuality directly." (*Drum* 1964.12:29).

The writer implies that gay people do know.

fonctionnait.” Though official histories of the institution may overlook its role as a gay cruising spot, from the gay point of view the Y’s many branches throughout the world were a basic point of reference, and not only because of the services they were intended to provide. As sports facilities and residences for travellers, these institutions provided a point of contact between visitors and the local gay scene. Donald and Evan met many of the men in their dinner party circle through the YMCA, where they exercised. And later, after their break-up, Evan met his new lover there too. But they knew people who went there for other purposes:

One guy we knew ... lived with his mother, a widow, and he would check into the Y on a Friday night and spend the weekend doing the floors. Because you could go up and down between the floors.

He told his mother he was going skiing. Their term for this activity was “trawling” and the YMCA was one of the best spots for it. The presence of sexual activity in the sports installations downstairs was mentioned by Gérard, who used to go to the steam room at the Y in the early 1960s.

Moi, j’aimais ben ça. J’étais étudiant. J’avais un rabais. Pis y en avait certains qui se masturbaient dans les bains. ... Certaines personnes, je les rencontrais par après dans les clubs.

In an institution like the YMCA, the process of social redefinition as gay space probably varied considerably with factors like the time of day and the actual mix of people present. Only when a large majority of those present were gay did the space really change character. Nevertheless gay contacts and even sex could go on discreetly on the sidelines in such places.

A wide assortment of non-athletic institutions were also redefined as gay space or at least used as a meeting place by some narrators. A couple of times Jacques was successful in cruising at the Art Gallery in Ottawa, for example. Like department stores, museums offer opportunities for lingering in public space rather than passing rapidly through, which opens up the chance to use eye contact to meet other people. In summer there was the beach at Oka, mentioned by Walter and Percy as a gay rendezvous, and the Plattsburgh beach just across the border in New York State was a venue for sex and socializing. Armand Monroe reported that dog shows were good places to cruise, or at least to see and be seen. Donald emphatically agreed and spoke of the dog shows and obedience classes he and Evan had gone to. He explained how useful dogs could be for meeting other men. As a friend of his said, “Queens are always raising dogs.” Dog ownership required the investment of time, but, as Donald explained, taking them for walks downtown was a way to meet other men walking dogs, and the animals provided a convenient conversation opener.

Creative redefinition of public space could be practised wherever the occasion presented itself. The codes for mutual recognition, discussed in the section on street cruising, could be brought to bear in any environment where men gave each other hints of interest. Institutional redefinition only seems to have occurred at a few centrally located sports facilities.

2. Sex in Public Space

While broadly similar to the redefinition of open public space for cruising, the use of outdoor venues for sexual activity without social exchange did not require a gay identity, and so these sites attracted men for whom the bars or the swimming club were too gay, but who nevertheless wanted to have sex with other men. These places also attracted some men who were perfectly at home in the bars as well. Parks, toilets and movie theatre sex will be outlined based on the narrators' accounts and the scattered news items that contribute to a general view of this institutionalized practice. Thus the "sex horizon" of men who participated in public sex did not involve many of them in a collective knowledge project in the same way that gay men's, community-specific bar horizons did.

Depending on their size and location and the time of day (and the season), parks may be places for cruising only, or may also be a venue for sexual activities. Many of the narrators told stories of cruising and/or sex in parks, however, and this kind of venue was most likely the oldest type of place where men met sexual contacts. Since park cruising practices were similar to those used in the streets, the focus here will be on the sexual practices in such spaces and their construction in gay discourse. The documentary evidence (see Appendix C-1) proves that these practices had been known in Montreal since the late nineteenth century. Pierre Hurteau (1992, personal communication) has shown an apparent shift of gay park patterns in the early decades of the twentieth century, moving from the sites on or close to the river up to Mount Royal Park. Percy and Walter began visiting the mountain soon after their arrival in Montreal in 1933. Percy recounted meeting one man who ended up bringing home and introducing to Walter. This encounter was lucky for Walter, who was then running a small-scale leather-working business out of their apartment. The man proved to be a prominent couturier through whom Walter got contracts to make purses to match the shoes of his wealthy customers.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ Details of this story are presented in Higgins (n.d. "À la mode...").

Business deals are not the normal outcome of park sex, however. Most often parks were the site of one-time sexual encounters with little or no talking.

For several younger men, park sex gave them entry to the gay social world in the 1950s and 1960s. Len began his sexual career in parks on the South Shore, and learned of the bar world in a conversation through someone he met there. Trevor claimed to have organized “circle jerks,” getting older boys to masturbate together in the small school he went to when he was only in grade six. He discovered sex on the mountain some time later and then progressed to cinemas like the Rialto on Park Avenue near where he lived. While Pierre was still in school he was having sex with other adolescents in parks, as well as in the woods behind the family cottage, but none of them was connected socially to the gay world. The discovery of sex in Parc Lafontaine was the beginning of a new phase in Pierre’s sex life, since he returned many times after discovering what went on there:

J’ai eu mes premiers contacts sexuels adultes au Parc Lafontaine. La première fois était tout à fait par hasard à 17-18 ans. Je me doutais absolument pas de ce qui se passait là. Je suis allé à la Bibliothèque et pour me reposer je suis allé me promener dans le parc et je suis retourné par la suite pour rencontrer des gens avec qui avoir du sexe. Ça s’est passé dans les buissons où j’avais été entraîné par un gars qui connaissait manifestement les lieux.

But another man who was also in his late teens told the story of how a few years later, having heard or noticed that there were sexual activities, was walking in the park on the lookout for something when he was stopped by the police who warned him to stay out of the park.

Arrests could take place in parks without sexual activity. Because of its proximity to the downtown bars and restaurants frequented by gay men, Dominion Square was a well-known place to cruise. The 1956 murder victim, André Ochsner, had been picked up for loitering in Dominion Square a few months prior to his death. He was acquitted, but the park is characterized by the paper as “un endroit où s’amorcent de nombreuses rencontres entre homosexuels” (*Allô Police* 1956.02.05:7). Twelve years later Alvin, whose first arrest had followed the Ochsner murder (p. 181), had another brush with the law as a result of a visit to Dominion Square:

In the 1950s the main outdoor cruising spot was Dominion Square. There were no hustlers or drugs then, it was safe. But in 1968, I was out doing a little cruise in Dominion Square (which was much busier at that time than it is now). I had given up and was leaving park, waiting to cross Peel and go home when two detectives came up and arrested me for loitering. A friend who had been arrested came and bailed me out and recommended a lawyer. The lawyer wanted to challenge the by-law. I was worried that success would put my name all over the papers but told him OK go ahead and gave him a retainer. His argument on the by-law was thrown out. The trial was all in French except for questions to me. The lawyer made an impassioned plea—why can’t a person take a walk in the park? Eventually I was acquitted, but the case had dragged on for over a year.

The use of municipal park closing bylaws and similar regulations seems to have been directed almost exclusively against gay men.

In the late 1950s extensive changes were made to Mount Royal Park, partly to facilitate police surveillance, as one newspaper put it:

Plus le Parc Mont-Royal sera facile d'accès, plus la surveillance de la police sera facile, comme on l'a vu dans le cas de la "jungle" maintenant nettoyée (*La Presse* 1958.05.21).

While the yearly number of convictions for homosexual offences that Hurteau (personal communication) found remained very low from the late nineteenth century to the end of the Second World War, with fewer than five arrests each year (with larger numbers in only three widely separated years), it suddenly increased to 37 in 1946, perhaps as a consequence of the Benson murder (p. 107). Though the arrest rate returned to less than 15 per year, it increased again in the mid-1950s as a result of the campaign as a result of the administration's decision to devote police resources to the clean-up of Mount Royal (see Fournier testimony cited p. 103).

Another sexual venue where arrests were frequent was public washrooms, in which some of the narrators had extensive experience. It is not, however, a venue exclusive to men with gay identity, as is clear in the report of a police officer (*Journal de Montréal* 1983.04.01:7) who says those arrested for gross indecency in toilets were often married men, fathers, with occupations ranging from factory workers to businessman to presidents of large companies. More than parks, toilets were accessible at all times of year. In discourse, toilets were not as important as most other sex venues, since the code-sharing that was found there, described by Humphreys (1970) and Delph (1978), was mainly gestural. Montreal toilets where sex took place cover a broad range of geographical locations and physical types. All the personal accounts I gathered deal with downtown sites, though news items in more recent years would suggest that suburban malls often have toilets that serve as sex venues. For climatic reasons, Montreal does not have outdoor toilets such as those that are famous in Paris (see for example Barbedette and Carassou 1981:37, 76), but a make-work program in the 1930s however led to the construction of "vespasiennes" in Place d'Armes, Place Viger, Phillips Square and other parks, many of which became sex or cruising spots.

The best documented toilet was the underground vespasienne in Philips Square, near the major department stores.²⁰⁸ This was the scene of Ralph's coming out/arrest story (p. 184) in

²⁰⁸ See yellow newspaper item (p. 179), and the indirect reference in another item presented in Appendix C-2. Like all of these toilets this one was closed towards the end of the 1970s, though it is still presumably preserved for archeological research, the stairway having been filled in for a flower bed.

1969, and was the place where Arthur met his first “trick” in the late 1950s. He explained the network of toilets all over downtown and the East that he knew about.

Y'avait les toilettes des cinémas, évidemment, ... et y'avait des toilettes d'hôtels—comme par après l'hôtel de la Place du Canada; ensuite, il y avait la Gare centrale, ça c'était des toilettes qui marchaient; Terminus d'autobus Berri, ça, ça marchait, c'était des endroits. Alors ceux que—quand les bars fonctionnaient pas, ben c'était là.

A similar sex horizon was outlined by one of the secondary narrators, Thomas, who said there were two distinct toilet circuits, east and west, towards the end of the 1960s. In the East there were the toilets in Kresge's at Ste-Catherine and Amherst, Dupuis Frères department store, the bus station on Berri, and the Palais du Commerce opposite. Downtown he knew the washrooms of the bus station at Dorchester and Drummond, the Laurentian Hotel, Central Station, Place Ville-Marie (shopping mall), the vespasiennes in Dominion Square and Phillips Square, and the washrooms of the Dominion Square Tavern. Many washrooms had attendants and, in at least one instance, this employee was complicit in protecting the activities going on. In the 1960s, Percy and Walter went often to a non-gay bar in Place Ville-Marie, and visited a nearby washroom where the attendant served as lookout while men had sex.

He'd look inside, and if somebody was having an affair at the latrines, he would warn any person coming in. He'd let people have their affair. He didn't care. Maybe he was getting paid or something.

Not all washrooms had such security, and other narrators mentioned several arrests.

Another man with more experience in this sort of cruising than most of the other narrators was Donald, who clearly enjoyed recounting this aspect of his life, though he was aware his stories made him seem sex-obsessed. In the 1950s, he and his lover Evan were both fond of visiting the toilets (“doing the cans”) of a department store on Phillips Square floor by floor, all of which could be “interesting.” Once his lover reported that he had run into a business acquaintance in one washroom, only to encounter him again a few minutes later on another floor. The other man shrugged ruefully, “I guess we both have weak bladders.” Donald was arrested by police entrapment in the toilet at the Laurentian Hotel, down the hall from the Kiltie Lounge, in the early 1960s. His case was thrown out after his (gay) lawyer convinced the judge that he had been provoked into an illegal act by the police officer who exposed his erection at an adjacent urinal.

Downtown restaurants known for their toilet sex scenes included those of restaurant chains. As Donald put it, “All the Honey Dew's were notorious!” Leznoff (1954) called the Peel Street Honey Dew “Collier's Restaurant” and gave a precise picture of its functions, both social and sexual, as a gay meeting place. Both Donald's lover Evan, and Art, a friend of

theirs, were arrested in the Peel Street Honey Dew's washroom. The latter story shows how entrapment worked:

The cop said something to him in French, because although Art was an Anglophone, he looked French. He was French on his father's side. And the guy said, "Show me it" and Art said, "J'ai peur," and the guy said, "Oh, you've nothing to be afraid of." And as soon as he did, that was it.

Also known for toilet action was the Cordner's chain of restaurants (which apparently were like New York automats). There was a Cordner's on Ste-Catherine Street and another on St-Jacques, described by one narrator as "big two storey restaurants with gay bathrooms that were still there in 1955."

Many other restaurants also had toilet scenes. A downtown restaurant was targeted in a yellow newspaper item:

Beaucoup de "petits messieurs" au restaurant St-Moritz, rue Ste-Catherine ouest. On dit qu'ils boivent surtout du lait HOMO-généisé (*Ici Montréal* 1956.11.03:19).

This may have had something to do with its "active," or as Patrick put it, "working" toilets. In August 1961, four men were arrested at the St-Moritz.²⁰⁹ Nearby at the Western Lunch cafeteria, Donald said people went into the washroom and "came out with a smile." Further east was the El Dorado cafeteria at the corner of Clark and Ste-Catherine, close to the bars of the "Main." Patrick knew of it because it was one of his hangouts before he was old enough to go to bars:

It's had toilet action ever since I can remember. I still have friends who go there. This is one of the places where I could go to as a kid.

All of these establishments were close to areas with bars and other institutions frequented by gays.

Though the silence and impersonality of sexual encounters in toilets depicted by Delph (1978), was the rule, narrators' accounts highlight the weakness of Delph's depiction of these sex venues as totally divorced from other gay code-sharing practices.²¹⁰ While not the usual expectation of such encounters, verbal communication was not impossible. Donald began lifelong friendships with men he met in the toilet in the supermarket in the basement of a downtown department store that he described as "very kinky"²¹¹ at lunch time," noting that heterosexual men had no such opportunities.

²⁰⁹ *Montréal-Matin* 1961.08.10; *La Presse* 1961.08.10. Judge Roland Lamarre said, "C'est un repaire de corruption et il y a assez longtemps que j'en entends parler," and urged police to close this "endroit de perdition" for good. Two more men were arrested there the next day.

²¹⁰ In another text (Higgins [n.d. "Baths..."]). I discuss the social links between public sex and gay sociability.

²¹¹ See p. 307 for the usage of "kicky."

For some men, toilet sex offered a major or minor focus for sexual outlet. Others required more privacy, security or romance. None of the narrators related meeting lovers in toilets, though some made lasting friendships as a result of such contacts. But other venues, both for sexual and social activity, were far more important for the growth of collective identity. Though some men spoke openly of this form of public sex, it was not an exclusively gay practice and talking about it was not respectable, as Leznoff indicates (1954:143). One final twist in discourse on such sex venues was provided by Eugène, who told an anecdote of gay resistance to arrest. He knew a man who was caught by a railway policeman in the washroom at Central Station.

Un ami s'est fait arrêté aux toilettes du CN, mais comme il était costaud, il attache le policier au lavabo avec les menottes et se sauve.

Though in practice such escapes were no doubt rare, this story of outsmarting authority is the type of gay theme whose elaboration by story-tellers will be discussed in Chapter 7. For most, as Delph (1978) makes clear, the schematic construction of toilet sex was more oriented to the gestural codes and the knowledge of locations to find "action."

Closely associated with toilet sex, in terms of anonymity and ease of access, is sex in movie theatres, with the difference that movies charged admission. The most likely types of movie houses that served as sex venues were those showing triple features or sex cinemas. Both were places to cruise as well as sites where sex took place, whether in the washroom or in the theatre itself, where it was open to public gaze. A yellow press article in 1953, "Dans les confidences d'un placier de cinéma," advised readers that any young man who went alone to a movie theatre ran the risk of meeting charming, attentive "men." The article goes on to explain in detail how the pick up is made and calls for increased surveillance (*Ici Montréal* 1953.04.18:5). Public sex practices in two adjacent movie houses on St-Lawrence Boulevard, are recalled by Albert Gagnon, former manager of the Midway theatre in a surprisingly frank newspaper interview from 1974.

On y présentait autrefois des films de second ordre, des Tarzan, des films d'horreur. Ça coûtait pas cher: \$0.35 pour voir trois films. C'était amusant de les voir faire. Un même gars pouvait revenir cinq ou six fois par jour. Il entrait, descendait dans la salle. Si la pêche était infructueuse, il ressortait et allait faire un tour au Crystal pour revenir un peu plus tard au Midway. On a arrêté des gérants de banque, des prêtres. Il y en a même un qu'on a ramené à l'évêché (*La Presse* 1974.07.15).

Gagnon claims that by changing the name to the Cinema Eve, and increasing the price, they were able to change the clientele, but this is contradicted by an item from a 1962 newspaper which reports another arrest story, then continues with a comment by a judge that the Midway

was famous for the action in the theatre, not the action on the screen (*Le Nouveau journal*, 20 mars 1962). The longstanding pattern of cinema sex was confirmed by a man I met in Montreal in the 1970s, who met his lover at the Crystal. He began to frequent the movie houses at age fourteen, and went to both the St-Laurent establishments as well as the System on Ste-Catherine Street downtown. Others spoke of sex at less centrally located movie theatres including La Scala, on Papineau near Beaubien in the 1960s, and the Rialto, on Park Avenue.

Movie theatres and restaurants with toilets where sex took place were also centres for prostitution, and the only mention in the interviews of cinema sex was linked to commercial sex. Though prostitution is not a central theme in this study, I will include a summary of information here, since it has several connections to these public sex spaces and codes used by those who frequented them.

The provision of sexual services for money is likely to have as long a history in the Montreal gay world as elsewhere. A little to the west of St-Laurent was the Northeastern Restaurant, one of several establishments in the vicinity where male prostitutes met their customers in the 1940s (Hurteau 1991:165). On the "Main" itself were the Silver Game Land, where a man was arrested in 1943 with two adolescent male prostitutes, and the Toronto Restaurant, where two others were arrested for gross indecency at a table in 1949 (Hurteau 1991:164-165, personal communication). Commercial sex is usually carried on as the unorganized offer of sexual services by young men on the street, or in movie theatres, restaurants or bars.²¹² In a feature article "Homosexuels par intérêt" from 1956, unusually well-documented for a piece in one of the yellow papers, the journalist includes an interview

²¹² Historically the use of closed space for commercial sex seems to have been rare. There is one early report in a historical newspaper article on Montreal's Red Light district, that among the other houses of ill repute that existed early in this century there was one for homosexuals (see Appendix C-1). The only mention in the interviews of gay men in brothels shows them acting less as regular prostitutes and more as volunteers ready to step in should need for their services arise. It was a story told to Gérard by his friend "M. Charles," who died before I was able to interview him, probably about the 1920s:

Il me contait qu'il allait à l'Ecole Normale—il était étudiant et ensuite professeur au Plateau—et que le dimanche après-midi il sortait avec des garçons bien habillés, la cravate etc., et qu'il s'était fait ami avec les prostituées. Il m'a même montré des maisons dans le Vieux-Montréal, rue Sanguinet etc. Les prostituées avaient rien à faire. Les matrones acceptaient que les gais aillent là pour deux raisons: d'abord c'était pas compromettant. Dans la cuisine arrière, il y avait du coke, un juke-box et une fois par semaine, les prostituées avaient le droit de danser, s'amuser, avoir du fun avec des gais c'étaient pas dangereux. Et les tenancières gardaient toujours quelques gais dans les maisons parce que des matelots ou des commis voyageurs parvenaient pas à venir en érection, fait que la tenancière gardait des gais, qu'a passait et ça marchait. Pour ça, y avait de plus en plus de gais dans les maisons. Charles m'a dit qu'ils avaient passé des centaines de personnes lui et ses copains.

with a hustler who affirms that he is only in it for “la business,” and explains how he gets picked up in taverns.²¹³ The same approach is reflected in a recorded interview with a male prostitute (Delmas n.d. [1968]) who describes how he meets his customers in restaurants, bars, or on the street and goes with them to tourist rooms. His territory is restricted to the Main, and he expresses disinterest in the new gay clubs then opening downtown, since he thinks they would not be good places for business.

One narrator indicated a link between gay sex in movie theatres and prostitution. Gérard’s story about a friend who attended the same small town collège classique sheds some light on the Midway from the point of view of a non-urban adolescent.

Bernard vivait avec son père, sa mère était décédée. Il avait des activités homosexuelles. Il me contait ça. Mais seulement quand il venait ici en ville. [En] 58, 59, 60, il venait l’été pour des vacances. Il m’a parlé du cinéma sur St-Laurent, près du Crystal. Le Midway. Oui. Il allait se faire sucer—‘scuse le terme—le samedi après-midi par des messieurs. A Matane il y a trente ans on parlait pas tellement anglais. Il m’a conté qu’un monsieur l’a amené dans sa chambre assez miséreuse pis lui dit, “Take off your pants.” On savait pas ce que ça voulait dire. On pensait naïvement que ça se faisait de façon plus romantique. Une approche un peu plus délicate. Le monsieur lui a donné \$2. Il nous contait ça. Il était content—un peu vicieux—très content d’avoir fait ça.

Two dollars in 1959 was a bargain, since the yellow newspaper story from 1953 set the rate at five or even ten dollars. The story hints at the romantic preconceptions that these young men had about sex, and their brutal destruction in an initial contact with the actual practice of anonymous sex.

None of the narrators that I interviewed mentioned having paid for sex, except Pierre, who met them mainly in Dominion Square. Louis reported seeing male prostitutes in a rough restaurant on Ste-Catherine near St-Marc, and the absence of prostitutes was one of the things that pleased him about the Tropical Room. This was contradicted, perhaps for a later period than Louis meant, by Harry, who described the range of customers he saw at the Tropical in the early 1960s.

Some rough dykes, some queens, oh yeah, fairly mixed but fairly. You had your street gays, you had your hustlers. ... I remember at one point I was sort of courting one when I was at McGill, I’d go over there buy him a drink but I never got in his pants. I thought he was the bee’s knees at some point.

Alvin and Arthur thought that in the early 1960s, there were not as many hustlers in Dominion Square and Parc Lafontaine as there were later. One rather specialized kind of prostitution

This isolated experience reflects the social overlap between the gay world and that of prostitutes, whose paths crossed in the cabarets of the Main.

²¹³ *Ici Montréal* 1956.11.03:24. In this article, the journalist explored the same territory that would later be documented by sociologist Reiss (1961) and the “hustler narratives” of John Rechy (*City of Night*, 1963) and Samuel Steward, who published many stories under the name “Phil Andros” in the 1960s (e.g. Andros 1982 [1966]).

seems to have revolved around gyms where bodybuilders trained. Photographer Alan Stone said of the guys he saw:

A lot of models were callboys. You looked at a lot of guys in Billy's gym [Billy Hill], and they spent all day working out, had good clothes, car. They had a sugar daddy somewhere; let's not kid ourselves.

In the late 1960s, new forms of organization emerged in the provision of sexual services for money such as escort services and masseurs, for which advertisements appeared in the newly created publications aimed at gay readers. Like their heterosexual counterparts, which also appeared in this period of the "new morality," these services developed out of the earlier form of prostitution, which continued alongside the new. Unfortunately, little data was gathered on the topic of prostitutes in the gay world, so further interviewing would be required to learn more about these earliest sellers in the market whose emergence in other spheres is documented in Chapter 7.

Often connected with prostitution, but used by ordinary gay men needing a place for sex, were tourist rooms and some downtown hotels. Newspaper stories of arrests also indicate the use of tourist rooms by gay men. The report on the suicide of Dr. Horst Kohl in January 1956 provides a glimpse of how people proceeded:

Il était une heure et vingt du matin quand nous l'avons appréhendé, nous a révélé le lieutenant Lequin. Kohl s'appretait à monter dans une maison de chambres avec un homme qu'il avait sollicité à l'intérieur d'une boîte de nuit de la rue Peel (*Le Petit Journal* 1956.01.29:35).

Trevor mentioned that the fact that some establishments rented rooms by the hour, which made them relatively affordable, imitating the sarcastic "Is that for the whole night?" of the desk clerk at the Vines Tourist Rooms on Drummond Street. Many of the other narrators related having visited the Vines as well, often when they were quite young. Armand went there at age fourteen, with a stranger he met on the street. It was the first place that Ralph was taken by a man he met, as was mentioned in Chapter 5. Pierre was a regular at the Vines while in university. When he picked someone up they might have several choices:

Soit chez la personne, soit je louais un tourist-room, soit je l'aménais chez mes parents qui étaient souvent absents, en voyage ou à la campagne. J'avais une de leurs autos. Beaucoup dans un tourist-room, sur Drummond qui s'appelait The Vines. Ça existe encore. J'étais étudiant, assez libre de mon temps. Je rencontrais souvent Place Ville-Marie, Gare Centrale, Carré Dominion, parfois des commerciaux. On allait là, à The Vines.

As well as going to the Vines, Patrick had fond memories of another tourist room:

I mean we went to them [tourist rooms]; that's where we had sex. Everybody was living with their mothers. The one I remember vividly was on St-Denis below Ste-Catherine or maybe even below Dorchester. The woman who ran it was named Josie and she used to also sell us booze. I mean I would really spend weekends there. My friend would pick me up in Ville St-Laurent and I would bring my record player and records. It would become our home for the weekend. And we'd go out from there but leave our clothes there.

In many of these stories, it is clearly not just the lack of a place to go that motivated the choice of a tourist room, it was because it was safer for the older man if his partner was under age. Going to this neutral anonymous space also precluded the possibility of theft or even blackmail, since the partner found out less about one's life.

It wasn't only for anonymous sex that people went to tourist rooms. Normand and Jean, who are still together more than forty years later, began the sexual part of their relationship in such places, as Jean explained:

We didn't have an apartment. We were both living at home and had to meet most often on Saturday, early in the afternoon, and sit down for many beers, then rent a room.

The drawbacks of going to such places included catching crabs, as mentioned in Chapter 7.

Of course for those who could afford it, hotel rooms were available for those lacking private space for sex. Some people resorted to them even when they had their own place. Normand and Jean told a wild story of a weekend of sex and drinking at the Queen's Hotel with Jean's cousin and author André Béland. They checked in with nothing in their suitcases but grapefruit juice and pure alcohol. But some hotels didn't really welcome gay guests, or at least their overnight companions, as this story of Len's indicates:

I got to go home with people who were staying at the Laurentian. ... I never had any trouble at the Mount Royal Hotel but at the Laurentian they had house detectives. I went home with someone one night and a half hour later bang, bang, bang on the door—I got thrown out. They were fanatics.

In his opinion, it was not so much because they were losing money but on moral grounds that the hotel management were so vigilant.

They didn't hassle the prostitutes, they just hassled us because this was a sign of the times so I mean gay people were you know, having sex in their hotel. If you were straight it didn't matter what you did. But I guess that went with the times.

Institutions where you could rent rooms cheaply, ideally by the hour were essential for gay men in the age of clandestinity, or until they were established in their own private space. These institutions would always remain a form of shared space, unlike saunas, in which there was an evolution from shared to exclusively gay space.

Turkish baths, or saunas, as Montrealers usually call them—regardless of the technical niceties—also offer a place to have sex for people who live at home or with a roommate, or don't want to risk being beaten or robbed by someone they bring home. But their main attraction their attraction was as a place to meet sexual partners easily. The following discussion focuses on downtown establishments, but these are not necessarily the only places where homosexual activity occurred as arrests in the 1970s also were reported in outlying districts. The way saunas changed from shared facilities to gay institutions is clearly shown by

the fact that in 1976, when ninety men were arrested at the Neptune Sauna on Lagauchetière Street, the community responded by setting up a new gay liberation organization, the *Association pour les droits des gai(e)s du Québec*, which became the main political group for the next decade. These spaces had become part of gay territory, which was now a symbol of collective identity that the community for was ready to defend.

In the 1950s, Montreal saunas attracted the attention in the city's yellow press, particularly an item signed "Jacques Moutier" (1956) entitled "Des repaires du vice."

C'est d'instinct, quasiment, que les homosexuels (ou hommes aux hommes) se retrouvent un peu partout dans le monde. Quand ils ne savent pas où aller pour trouver de leurs pareils, ils consultent les pages jaunes du téléphone sous les rubriques de "Bains" ou "Bains turcs" ou de "Massages." Loin de nous la pensée que tous ces établissements sont conçus et exploités en vue de favoriser ce vice; même les mieux tenus, cependant, et les mieux surveillés, sont propices aux recherches et aux trouvailles d'homosexuels. Comment en serait-il autrement quand les hommes qui fréquentent ces établissements se coudoient nus, peuvent se regarder, s'apprécier, se faire des signes et se parler, et se donner des rendez vous s'ils ne peuvent pas se livrer sur place à leur vice infâme? (Moutier 1956).

Although he is against closure as a solution, the author calls for increased surveillance by the authorities to end this scandalous phenomenon. At the same time, in typical yellow newspaper style, he lists the names of relevant institutions in Athens, Bucharest, Sofia, Istanbul, Budapest, Vienna, Berlin, Rome, London, and New York, that travellers should avoid, concluding that there existed a worldwide "secret civilization" of baths and swimming pools. He then gives indirect clues to the equivalent institutions in Montreal.

Rues Stanley, Peel, Coloniale, St-Laurent, il y a de ces bains qui, sans peut-être que leurs propriétaires le veuillent, servent de lieu de rencontre à des homosexuels qui s'arrangent, s'étant vus et connus là, pour se rencontrer ailleurs s'il leur est impossible de consommer leur crime contre nature à cet endroit même (*Sentimental* 1956.12.22:12).

With the yellow pages, it was no doubt simple for interested readers to find the addresses of these establishments.

From this newspaper, the sauna on Coloniale Street would have been particularly easy for people to find in the telephone book since it was called the Colonial Steambath. Founded early this century,²¹⁴ the Colonial also attracted the attention of another yellow newspaper. A 1962 report of a raid on the establishment in 1962 is given in Appendix C-2. This unusually detailed description of the functioning of a sauna is also interesting for its ending, which fatalistically admits that such institutions will always be around. Étienne, who was arrested there in 1962 (see p. 185), offered this general description of the establishment.

Au Colonial il y avait une grande pièce en haut, avec des divans au milieu de la pièce, pas de chambres, une petite lumière rouge. Il y avait beaucoup de monde; c'était très populaire. Ça allait jusqu'en 1969, 1970. Une salle d'orgie comme au Club, un peu plus retenu à cause de l'époque,

²¹⁴ according to a report by Dennis Marinakis (CBC Newswatch, City Beat, 1989).

mais ça tombait assez vite. La découverte des saunas—ça commençait—ça débloquent, là au Colonial, c'était un avant goût de ce qui s'est passé dans les saunas plus tard, à New York et ailleurs.

Several narrators had visited this bath house in the 1950s. Jean denied that raids had occurred in those years, but his lover disagreed. They did agree that the “orgy room” was “incredible,” and provided some insight into the long-term history of such an establishment.

It's been there for years. Gay in early 1940s, but had peaks, up and down, not regular. I went for many years every week or two—without having anything, just watching.

Donald and John have another kind of reason to recall the Colonial said, “Friends we have made at the Colonial baths we're still friendly with now.” For some gays at least, sociability could develop in such establishments and could lead to enduring friendships.

One other example of how a schematic representation of sauna was constructed in the discourse of gay friendship group. The Lusignan steambath was mentioned by Donald, Étienne, Armand, and others. It was a small peripherally located establishment named for the side street near St-Antoine and Guy Streets (where the building still stands as a private dwelling), and rather unusual in its physical set-up. Instead of the usual large room for relaxing with public access to the steam rooms and/or sauna, here there were private cubicles. As Normand explained, you went there instead of a boarding house. Even the steam was in your own space, so it was not a place to meet people, just to bring them for sex. This description was confirmed by Armand, who said the Lusignan was:

the oldest steambath in Montreal. By the time I got there it was dilapidated but showed a certain “raffiné.” You had your own shower, steam room and marble slab for massage when the masseur came in. It was owned by Polish people. I used to go there with tricks.

Donald added one detail that indicated this establishment could be a place to meet others nevertheless:

You went into a private little room. But some of the rooms had connecting doors, and if you were lucky, you could join. It's probably still there.

The unusual features of this sauna seem to have made it a favourite with many narrators.

Other saunas that the interviews mentioned were not known from printed sources. Donald and John reminisced about saunas in the 1950s and 1960s, recalling the Westmount Health Club, located on Sherbrooke near the boundary between Westmount and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. The place was described as “quite small but quite kinky.” In the 1960s Ralph went to a sauna on Park Avenue near where he lived before coming out:

Near Bernard there was a Turkish bath. I was drawn into there a few times. It was small—probably things went on but I was not aware—I was stimulated but hadn't accepted [my homosexuality] yet.

This is likely the same establishment briefly mentioned by John, and may have been the Park Health Centre, 5331 Park Ave., listed in the 1962 city directory. The same source lists the Downtown Health Club on Stanley and several others.²¹⁵

Another aspect of sauna use that Donald commented on was as a place where couples went together, though for him it only came towards the end of the relationship.

When I was still with Evan. Sometimes together, then talk about who we'd been with and discuss different ones. By then, it was waning. We had to have stimulation.

This is further evidence that the reputation of such places as the exclusive domain of anonymous, alienated sex cannot be taken as explaining the full range of their social functioning for those who were aligned with other aspects of the gay world.

Donald and John claimed that the only non-gay saunas were in major downtown hotels. Although other establishments were not ostensibly gay, it was clear that the management knew what was going on and made no attempt to stop the sexual activity. These narrators stressed the importance for the history of saunas as exclusively gay space of an innovation in the physical construction of the sauna interior with the invention of the roomette. Previously most institutions had been like the Colonial, with a large room for relaxing, as well as the sauna and steam room. They first encountered the new small enclosed spaces, supposedly for relaxing, in New York at the well-known Everard Baths. This trend seems to have arrived in Montreal around 1960, though the narrators could not give a precise date. Building hallways full of small roomettes meant stretching the ostensible health motives of sauna goes, so when owners began remodelling their establishments in this way, it represented a major step toward acknowledging that they were businesses serving the gay market. Here we are clearly at the border between the clandestine redefinition of a public institution by gay men and the emerging perception by small businessmen of the potential market niche gay men constituted.

The role of the sauna as an exclusive indoor element in gay sexual horizons occurred at the same time as the sexual revolution that swept the Euro-American world in the 1960s. For Eugène it was saunas in New York rather than Montreal that played a key role in his quest for sexual liberation. At first he had shared the condemnatory attitude of general morality to these places.

On parlait du sauna Coloniale à Montréal dans les journaux jaunes, mais il y avait des descentes. Je n'allais pas là. Je croyais que c'était trop dépravé. Je connaissais aussi un bain turc—descentes régulièrement. Je connaissais des journalistes, etc., arrêtés là.

²¹⁵ One of these may be the unnamed downtown sauna for which we have the report of a raid in November 1962 ("Des 'petits amis' sont pris à des jeux interdits par la loi." *Dimanche-Matin* 1962.11.18:2).

On a visit to New York, though he discovered the sauna world happened by accident.

Je manquait de chambre d'hôtel; on me convainc d'aller au sauna. Je me sens libre d'être homosexuel pour la première fois—sans surveillance; je faisais ce que je voulais dans le respect de l'autre; on pouvait refuser les avances.

He quickly learned the codes and practices that are particular to these institutions (Delph 1978). Trips to New York three, four or more times a year became part of a routine that he shared with Étienne and other friends.

C'était la première fois qu'on avait tout le sexe qu'on était capable d'avoir en 24 heures. La chaleur humaine. Faire l'amour pendant 2-3 heures dans l'obscurité sans voir l'autre. Les hétéros n'ont jamais la chance de laisser libre cours à leur sexualité.

While he also went to the Colonial, Arthur's attitude to the baths in New York City was similar to Eugène's:

A New York j'allais aux bains, jamais dans les bars. [C'est inutile] si on rentre pas dans les critères de beauté. OK. J'allais seulement avec un ami pour prendre un verre. Au bain—le Broadway Arms, sur 49e près de Broadway—il y avait films porno. J'avais un plaisir fou avec des noirs et des asiatiques. Je suis très blanc. Les noirs me sautaient dessus. Les contraires s'attirent.

His comment on meeting men of other races reflects the fact that they were few in number in Montreal in those years. For some narrators it was easier to learn as tourists or residents of other cities about the attractions of saunas, gaining insights that would later be put into practice back in Montreal, and extending the schematic knowledge of places and practices of the gay sexual culture over distance and the Canada/US border.

B. SHARED AND EXCLUSIVE VENUES FOR GAY SOCIABILITY

Generally invisible to outsiders, gay society, minimally consisting of extensive, intertwining gay networks with tens of thousands of participants in any large urban centre, has existed since the late nineteenth century in North America. Little by little a transition occurred from private space and the clandestine redefinition of public space to the creation of gay public space. The primary avenue was the sharing of eating and drinking establishments with unaware or accepting heterosexuals. The urban economy of the hospitality industry forms the backdrop to this discussion and the changes which occurred in it just before and during the period of this study had an impact on the changes related here. The increasing specialization of bars and changes in the economics of nightclub entertainment contributed to the emergence of the gay bar as a distinct type. In the remainder of this chapter, I will outline how public space for gay sociability became increasingly available in Montreal,²¹⁶ and examine how the many different

²¹⁶ One informant suggested that the municipal regime of Mayor Camilien Houde consciously pursued a policy of keeping Montreal an "open city" of brothels and gambling rooms in order to compensate for the westward displacement of the centre of the Canadian economy. The moral climate which led to anti-gay actions like the

types of gay men who brought their own orientations in the heteroglossic discourse streams of the surrounding culture came together in such spaces to forge a new social voice, that of the gay community.

1. Restaurants and Cafés

Eating establishments were always shared space before the rise of the “gay restaurant” in the 1970s. In Montreal a diverse range of such places have been used for gay sociability, as well as those already noted as sites of toilet sex. There is a gradation from eating places where there were incidentally gay customers to those where the gay presence was an observable fact, so that the concern with visibility that constrained the lives of most of the narrators was less strong. The social acceptance, or at least tolerance, that they found there indicated that some people at least were willing to overlook their orientation and accept them as fellow customers in a public space.

The story of the 1869 raid on Moïse Tellier’s shop on Craig Street (Appendix C-1), brings to light the earliest trace of indoor space devoted to gay sociability or sexuality in Montreal. This establishment is the ancestor of a large number of public eating and drinking establishments that have given shelter to “gay” socializing.²¹⁷ Tellier’s shop was probably not patronized exclusively by customers with unusual sexual interests. It would not be for many decades, until the 1950s, that entrepreneurs were able to market the space they had to a population defined almost exclusively in terms of sexual orientation.

Most of the Montreal restaurants that served as gay hangouts, especially late at night, were in the downtown area. One of the earliest on which I have information, the Samovar on Peel Street, was actually a supper club, one of the city’s most important night clubs from the 1920s to the end of the 1940s. It will be described with other bars. Some restaurant chains were particularly favoured. In the 1950s, these were the Honey Dews and Cordner’s both of which have been mentioned above because of their active toilets.

Leznoff’s (1954:181-183) description of “Collier’s Restaurant,” the Peel Street Honey Dew shows in detail that only a contemporary account can bring, the social and sexual dynamics of sharing an eating establishment where the gay presence was inconspicuous, except

arrests of 1956, and other raids is conveyed in Plante’s (1972) first-person account of how he “closed” the city’s vice centres in the early 1950s.

²¹⁷ “An Abominable Assault.” *Montreal Evening Star* 1869.06.08:3. In terms of the period, it might be more appropriate to say “proto-gay” or “sodomite” socializing, since the item applies the latter label to Tellier. We do

late at night when unaware heterosexuals were less numerous. A woman informant who started working as a waitress in her late teens in one of the downtown A&W's at the end of the 1960s had her eyes opened to the gay world because it served the same after-bar function. She said that the restaurant was full of "pimps, hookers, and gays" including many in drag late at night.

Among the independent restaurants, the Diana Grill, at Peel and Ste-Catherine, nicknamed the "Last Chance" by Alvin since it was open after the clubs closed at two. He mentioned that an "old queen" worked there, who helped to create a gay-positive atmosphere. Percy also described it as a place to go after being at a bar, but had a personal reason for remembering the restaurant in a negative light:

I remember the name. I think I was there one night with somebody, and the person I was there with picked up somebody in the washroom or something. Anyway, the evening went to pieces. I left.

Patrick, whose debut on the scene was long before he reached the legal bar-going age, had a whole network of places to go when he couldn't sneak into a bar. He and his young friends frequented the early European style restaurants on Stanley Street in the late 1950s: Carmen's, Diane's, the Pam-Pam²¹⁸ and the Riviera. They especially liked the Traymore Cafeteria, which became a gay tavern called the Peel Pub after about 1958. He said that Traymore's was:

a self-service place and you could hang around over a cup of coffee or tea for hours and hours and hours and HOURS. Many people going to the Tropical would stop by at Traymore's.

His description of the Monterey (successor to the Diana Grill) points to the importance of location in determining a place's gay popularity.

But [the Monterey Restaurant] wasn't particularly gay. It was just gay because anything at the corner of Peel and Ste-Catherine just had to be gay.

In the late 1960s, after Patrick had started working as a bartender, his favourite restaurant was Britton's on Ste-Catherine West. It was presided over by a waitress named Cécile, who acted as a sort of den mother to the gays who were regulars there.

How far back did it go? Definitely late 1960s, like from 66 onwards. I mean Cécile worked there. Cécile is a waitress and she was very protective of the gays. And in the late 1960s, when I was working at the Taureau [Taureau d'Or], 1968, 69, 70, it was the after bar hangout, the pre-bar hangout, the during the bar hangout for the West End, and you felt really good there because Cécile would strong-arm anybody who gave you any trouble. Out!

When Cécile changed jobs, her fans followed her.

Cécile moved to ... a restaurant that's taken over from this one. Well the crowd has gone from the Britton to that restaurant.

not know to what extent Montrealers in 1869 thought that such labels identified a distinct category of person or a lifestyle, or whether they had other names for themselves.

²¹⁸ At the Pam-Pam, according to John, there were so many homosexuals you "had to fight them off."

This restaurant then became something of a gathering place for people working in all the bars, and, like the “old queen” at the Diana Grill, the gay customers were actively welcomed by a member of the staff.

Near Britton’s was another, tougher, restaurant on Ste-Catherine near St-Marc that Louis visited. Scene of frequent fights, it was likely the same place that Donald and John described as:

A notorious place, ready for rejects. Tom B., who is also at McGill, always claimed he’d submit a paper on the geriatrics and characters there. Strange people used to go. Vicious fights used to go on. It was full of weird people—men and women—like the bar in Star Wars.

They said it was not really very gay, and that the gay men who went were very working class. They were not hustlers, and were often not exclusively or even mainly gay, as Donald’s story of Johnny, a bisexual man from Pointe-St-Charles with whom one of his friends had a sexual relationship, indicates (see p. 156). Most significantly, this is where Louis first heard of the gay bars in the East, the Monarch (the “Zoo”) and the Lincoln, which shows that in shared space, a gay men could find paths for entry to the few exclusive gay spaces that existed, adding the first key element to their construction of the schemata of gay places.

Another type of eating establishment where gays felt at home were the “existentialist cafés,” home among artists, writers and dancers. Louis spent a great deal of time in this sort of establishment in the early 1950s, in particular at l’Échouerie, la Petite Europe, and El Cortijo, all of which were in the area of Sherbrooke or Pine and St-Laurent. At l’Échouerie he met a dancer with whom he had one of his first relationships. Charles described these café, where he was taken to by a friend in his first ventures into Montreal nightlife in the mid-1950s:

Des endroits sombres et—toujours avec Jules. Il connaissait beaucoup, lui, le milieu homosexuel à Montréal. L’Underground homosexuel.

Though he didn’t remember the names and locations, he remembered the atmosphere and the feeling of freedom he had there.

On allait là pis on parlait pis on fumait beaucoup. On bavardait, on était très libres d’être ce qu’on était.

Later, when Charles was living in Montreal, he went to a similar place, the Chat Noir, which he described as:

un bar assez interlope, je pense, pendant assez longtemps. C’était sur Sherbrooke, près de Jeanne-Mance. Y a un immeuble qui est ovale, mais l’autre à côté, en bas, y avait le Chat Noir, un bar très connu. Y avait des homosexuels, mais c’était pas vraiment un bar homosexuel. Mais y en avait beaucoup. Comme toujours, y avait tous les gens que se rassemblent dans les boîtes de nuit—tous les oiseaux de nuit.

These were places with very mixed clientele, most of whom considered themselves marginal to mainstream society; artists, beatniks, poets and philosophers had no problem with gays, at least as drinking companions.

An item from *Ici Montréal* indicates that it was not just in the downtown area that restaurants served as gay meeting places:

Au restaurant à l'angle de Frontenac et Ste-Catherine, on n'a jamais vu tant d'efféminés. La plupart de ces jeunes tapettes ne cachent pas leur petit jeu et parlent librement de leurs amours. L'un disait l'autre soir qu'il préférerait regarder la lutte à la TV, que ça coûtait moins cher, mais qu'il donnerait bien \$2 pour un beau mâle d'occasion. Le patron est découragé (*Ici Montréal* 1957.02.23:18).²¹⁹

It is not possible to guess how many others like it existed.

The ambiguity of restaurants as gay signifiers is illustrated by a story of Alvin's. On a visit to his family in Winnipeg, the conversation turned to homosexuality. Alvin's brother, with whom he had never discussed his sexual orientation, said that the Swiss Hut (at Bleury and Sherbrooke) was gay. Apparently on a visit to Montreal he had seen men wearing lipstick there. Though Alvin lived in that neighbourhood and ate at the restaurant, he said that he never saw any gay men there. Of course with thousands of gay men and a finite number of restaurants, it was not unusual to meet people in any given spot. A reference to an unidentified restaurant by Percy makes the point even more clearly:

There was also a very good restaurant about the same distance on the other side of St-Denis, upstairs on the south side. We used to go there. And it was—it was and it wasn't. You could go there and meet somebody, or you could go and there wouldn't be anybody. It was always full.

Thus restaurants were often ambiguous as gay venues, a feature which was also found in bars before the 1960s, when gay customers shared their space with others. But in bars the pattern was more sharply defined. People will eat anywhere, but they can be much choosier about where to drink, so it is not surprising that it was bars that would eventually become the focus of exclusively gay social life.

2. Parties in Rented Halls

One of the first forms in which gay men took exclusive control of public space was by occasionally the renting of public facilities for gay parties with paid admission. Drag parties were fixtures of gay social life, vividly portrayed by Michel Tremblay in plays like *Hosanna* (1973). Leznoff (1954:117) stresses the central role of drag parties in gay social life. There is an important difference between having a party in domestic space, however, and renting a

²¹⁹ This is an example of the way yellow journalists' attacks on gay life frequently provided access to it for people who wanted to find their way into gay circles. See Appendix C-2 for others.

public hall, obtaining a liquor license, and selling tickets. In this section I will present what is known about such entrepreneurial activities in Montreal. The information is limited, and it is difficult to speculate about how common such events actually were. They overlap with the bar world in that sometimes the rented space was in a bar, and sometimes similar events were held by bars, as is likely the case with this *Ici Montreal* item:

Le titre de Miss Montreal chez les homosexuels serait passé à Patricia, la grande dame du Boulevard St-Laurent (*Ici Montréal* 1953.03.14:11).

But other events were clearly held in non-bar space.

On Saturday March 18, 1950, police arrested nearly four hundred people attending a “masquerade party” in a rented hall at the Lion d’Or bar on Ontario Street East.²²⁰ It was the largest liquor raid in Quebec since 1936. The revellers, including more than thirty men in female clothes, were held overnight and charged as found-ins at an unlicensed party. The importance of this story is that it gives a little insight into who organized such events. From the remarks about the lengthy investigation of the group of it seems at least plausible that this was not the first event organized by these “undesirables.” This fits with my overall understanding that, before fully gay commercial institutions emerged, there were occasional, semi-commercial activities organized by informal leaders and that these served as steps toward the creation of a self-aware community from the ranks of private friendship networks and party-goers as well as making the economic possibilities of the gay market visible to entrepreneurs. Maybe the “undesirables” in this case formed such a core group of quasi-entrepreneurs, self-selected leaders working to obtain physical spaces in which gay social life could develop. The increased public face of this community, evidenced in this story and in the coverage in *Ici Montréal*²²¹ made it possible for more of Leznoff’s solitary participants in the gay life (who had not taken gay identities), to participate in some of its social manifestations.

²²⁰ See Higgins (1990) for a full analysis of this event and the coverage it received in the press.

²²¹ The “queen” of the 1950 party, Pauline, enjoyed a mysterious reincarnation when several years later *Ici Montréal* published a bizarre full page article entitled “Le monde fantastique des homos: Le mariage (à retardement) de Thérèse” (*Ici Montréal* 1957.02.16:24). This piece tells of a drag queen and her man who were arrested at their wedding ceremony. In custody at the police station, the couple, overcome by their frustrated drive to consummate the marriage, ripped off their clothes and had sex right in the station, protected against intervention by the authorities by their friends, who formed a protective circle around them. Without the original story as a clue, Thérèse’s story had just seemed one more inexplicably bizarre item from the pen of a fifties scandal sheet writer. In its new context, however, it tells us something very interesting about how events get recycled when the paper is short of copy and the deadline is near.

The only direct account by an organizer of gay parties in rented halls is that by Armand Émond, interviewed for the film *Lip Gloss* (Siegel 1993),²²² who says that he first dressed up as a girl in 1948 or 1949.

Well I dressed up because there was a guy in Montreal, he ran a place, and he did some masquerade dances. And we used to know that guy. That was a house that we used to go there, and my gosh, the door was open 24 hours a day. And that was the place that we'd meet all friends. It was at the Polish Hall on Prince-Arthur, [the] first time I dressed up as a girl. I was grandiose, all in white, the American Beauty colour. When I arrived there everybody was talking, "Oh she's beautiful. She's beautiful." I was 19.

Here the non-bar space is converted into an exclusive gay space for sociability. The unnamed host apparently was in the habit of organizing such events, and inspired Émond to imitate his initiative a few years later. Feeling that gay men needed social outlets, "because in those days we didn't have no hall, we didn't have no place to go," Émond, then stage manager at the Bellevue Casino, one of Montreal's leading night clubs, approached restaurant owner Butch Bouchard to rent a hall to hold a "masquerade ball."

Me, I rented the place and I told him there's going to be a big masquerade party and I'm working in the Bellevue Casino and I bring you all the girls from the Bellevue Casino. So he was very interested to rent the place for me. But when he realized there were more men dressed up as girls than girls, he was very upset, so the year after, he refused to rent me the hall again.

Nevertheless this seems to have been just the first of three such parties, as Émond continued:

So from there I went to Prince-Arthur Hall, and I was lucky because that was one of the men from the Liquor Commission Board that he gave me a special permit for that. That was a very bad period. ... I went to Salle Prince-Arthur, I rented there and had a big party there. And the other one was on Park Avenue. I don't remember the name of that place.

The details here are confused, but it is certain that at least some of these events did take place, since Armand Monroe confirmed the story. Émond described the party and what it required:

All the boys who used to come, they dressed up the way they like it. I take any kind of people. They dressed any kind of way they want to, and we used to have a fabulous time. That was free for all. Today we don't need to rent some hall because they do have all the hall they need. But those days it was very complicated. We need a special permit and we need protection from the cops. Because those days was not exactly legal. That's still not exactly legal, but those days was worse. Because they take, you know, the morality was doing a case on anything who was passing the limits. Those parties were gay parties and three-quarters of the guys who dressed up, they used to dress like female impersonators, or comedian or any kind of costume they like to.

It seems clear from this that only one of his parties was at Butch Bouchard's restaurant, yet Émond claims that he was not responsible for the raid which took place there:

Every year I used to do masquerade party and I used to have a nice crowd. And all my friends used to come with some new friends and they were interested because there was some different thing every year and the place was bigger and bigger and bigger. So one year, I decided to go to Europe for three months and a half. And what happened, I tell another guy, another friend of mine to take

²²² Lois Siegel graciously provided me with a tape of the preliminary audio interview with Armand Émond, conducted by herself and Armand Monroe. Chronological information is presented in a rather confused way, so my understanding may not be entirely accurate. I am convinced, however, that Émond has the wrong decade, and in fact held his parties in the late 1950s. This dating is based on an account that combines several contradictory tellings in the source material.

over, but he didn't have the right permit, and he make a masquerade party and he was raided. So all the cops arrested all those gay boys dressed up as anything you want—they got it on their body.

Armand Monroe, however, remembers Émond having been in charge when the raid occurred.

I was having Halloween at the Tropical and a queen called Armande had a private party at Butch Bouchard's. There was a big snow storm. They raided Butch Bouchard's. There were queens flying out the windows. That was about 1959.

Whatever the facts of the matter, the significant points to be noted is that one man saw a need for gay social space and had the courage to attain it. Though heterosexuals were present at some of these events, they still marked a significant move to the opening of permanent, exclusively gay spaces.

It is possible that such parties were not uncommon in the past, despite the lack of information available now (not surprising due to their clandestine, transitory nature). Especially at Halloween, and perhaps at Mardi Gras and Mi-Carême, gay celebrations are traditional (p. 328). These parties were very much the precursors of the gay dances of the 1970s, and the Halloween dances that became major fund-raising events for movement groups in the 1980s. Their distant descendants are the giant gay "circuit parties" of the 1990s (Lewis and Ross 1995). In commercial terms, however, they are and were totally overshadowed by the financial clout of year-round eating and drinking establishments, none of which were under gay management or ownership before the mid-1960s, even the ones that had been made into exclusively gay social space. The courage, perseverance and imagination of those who staged such events should not be underestimated, nor should the importance of this opening of gay-controlled space for sociability in the emergence of gay community. This and other types of leadership in the development of the gay community and its institutions will be further examined in Chapter 7.

3. Shared Bars

There can be little question that the most important commercial space for gay social life was that offered by "public drinking establishments." While saunas were associated with sexual activity and restaurants almost inevitably attracted a non-gay clientele, as establishments requiring a minimum amount of cash as the only condition for admittance, bars were the one type of establishment where, in post-war North American cities, homosexuals could gather and talk in relative exclusivity and security.

Because gay bars are so central from the point of view of individual experience, in the eyes of gays, non-gays and researchers, the bar world tends to be taken as a condensed symbolic

representation of the gay world. But the limitations of this view were pointed out quite early by Hooker (1956), whose social and professional acquaintance with gay men led her to realize that gay social life took place in a far more diversified range of social settings. Hooker recognizes the primacy of bars, but maintains that the public institutions represent only the "tip of the iceberg" and that the secret and private activities of social friendship groups are fundamental to understanding the whole community. This is the view adopted here. It contrasts with the view expressed in Achilles' ethnography of San Francisco gay bars in the 1960s, in which she arbitrarily limits membership in the "gay community" to the small group of bar owners, waiters and hard-core regulars who inhabit an almost exclusively gay milieu. (1964:31-33).²²³ The complex webs of social relations and discourse sharing that spread in gay society occurred both in bars and in private space, and the bar scene is not coterminous with the gay world.

As a major port and as a city known for its free-wheeling nightlife from the 1920s boom until after the Second World War, Montreal was seen as one of the best places in North America for gay nightlife. Donald and John agreed that men in cities like Toronto thought of Montreal as an exciting gay travel destination. Donald, the Montrealer, dismissed the Toronto gay scene as "deadly," consisting of "three buildings on Queen Street [that] were called 'Fairyland.'"²²⁴ Louis said that people came to Montreal from far and wide, including Toronto, to sample its pleasures, especially after the opening of a new style of gay bar, the Tropical Room, in the 1950s.

Bars were important, not only in the practical sense that they provided space in which social life could develop, or because the existence of such commercial spaces for the exclusive use of gay men clearly symbolized the existence of a gay community, but also because they provided a venue for the development of other symbolic dimensions that helped give concrete meaning to the term community and a sense of attachment to its members. As Sawchuck says:

By affording the participants the opportunity for free and continuing interaction with other homosexuals, the gay bar contributes to the continual realization and reaffirmation of a common gay perspective (1973:40).

²²³ A useful source from the point of view of a heterosexual bar owner is the personal account by a woman who ran a southern California gay bar in the 1950s (Branson 1957).

²²⁴ For Toronto gay history see Crawford's (1984) bibliography and other publications of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, conference papers presented by David Churchill (1993, 1994), and summaries in Kinsman (1987, 1996). Oral history research on Toronto has been reported briefly by Grube (1986).

Bars provided a forum for (and for a few entrepreneurs they were a vehicle for) the exercise of community leadership in the articulation of a distinctive gay point of view. I argue that this rhetorical practice served as the proving ground for arguments that would later be voiced in the open political arena by gay liberation groups. Such symbolic elaboration could begin in shared space, but became much more feasible once exclusively gay social space had been achieved, where the image of a gay collectivity could be represented concretely by the floating population of regulars and occasional drinkers, locals and tourists commingled in an exchange of conversation that crossed many boundaries of class, nationality, ethnicity and age.

In the course of the interviews with the primary narrators who contributed to this study, there were mentions of over one hundred bars and taverns in Montreal where significant gay socializing took place before 1970. Information about bars is quite complex and the use of interviews to gain information about them after several decades presents further difficulties, since people's memories, especially for dates, are often foggy, and the convoluted naming conventions for bars in popular discourse merit detailed study on their own. In addition the whole topic of bars is overlaid with judgmental attitudes, both a view of bars themselves as inescapably depraved, or otherwise devalued, and a view that derives from the fact that bar choice is a marker of personal identity. Choosing a bar makes a statement about personal identification. It is not only the choice of going to a place identified as gay, of great symbolic value to the individual, but also what social meaning is coded in the contrasts between establishment within the set of choices available. In other words, from the individual bargoer's point of view, the bars available to the individual constitute a meaningful schema for personal identity that meant taking a position in the class, ethnicity and age groupings of the various clienteles of the different bars.

The grid of meanings conveyed by choices of gay bars coincides with the larger meanings of Montreal's social geography. Gay geography reflects the traditional "two solitudes" coding of city districts, equating the East with French-speakers and the West with English, and overlaid with the low-class Main contrasting with the respectable Downtown. This perception of geographic meanings is neither necessarily very accurate, as we will see, but remains a staple of the city's self-concept. It frames the geographical divisions used in discussing the bar horizons of the narrators, which primarily reflect the east-west dichotomy. "The Main" and "Downtown" are used here as terms designating the two poles of the gay bar scene, supplemented by three other designations discussed below. Ste-Catherine Street forms the axis

between the major bar zones: Downtown extends from Bleury to Arwater, while the Main includes the area from there east to Amherst Street, and includes the old "Red Light" district. Downtown were the fancy clubs, businessmen's taverns, etc., while in the East, the "lowlife" clubs of the "Main" mixed with some prominent nightclubs like the Casa Loma, but the street life was by no means as classy as in the West.²²⁵ The first supplementary geographic designation is the South (my term) including Old Montreal, the Griffintown area along St-Antoine West, the port and the park on St-Helen's Island. The second is "Outlying," for bars located elsewhere within the city, and the third is "Regional," designating bars outside Montreal, mainly in the Laurentians. Bars in cities ranging from Calgary to New York were also discussed by the narrators.

Factual data on bars is easier to collect than shifting attitudes and differences of perception of social meaning. However bars were continually opening and closing, and frequently changed their names,²²⁶ leading to a complex data set. A basic categorization by type of establishment, uses general terms "tavern," "bar," and "cabaret" or "nightclub" (the latter two have live entertainment) in a simple taxonomy representing a more complex (and fluid) reality of legal and perceived types.²²⁷ Changing addresses do not necessarily signal a major change in the establishment, since it might only mean that a different door, perhaps on another side of the building became the main entrance. Sometimes former names were revived after years or decades, at or near the same address. Bars also changed clientele or mix of clientele, which makes "gay bar" an even harder label to use accurately before about 1965. At any one moment, a given establishment might have several distinct clienteles which occupied it at

²²⁵ These divisions correspond to Gilmore's (1988) discussion of the Montreal geography of the colour bar, which kept black musicians from playing in clubs downtown, while black orchestras were the big draw in the clubs of the Main. The other site of black bar life, west of downtown along St-Antoine, may have had some gay life as well; at least a *Gazette* photo of Rockhead's Paradise shows a black transvestite in the club. (Concordia University Archives P-023, Fonds Alex-Robertson). Boulevard Saint-Laurent, the "Main" (referred to as "Main Street" by older Anglophone narrators), was the dividing line between the French East and the English West. The expression "East End," prominent, for example, in the *Herald's* (1950.03.20) front page headline "376 Arrested in East End Montreal," reflected this ideological geography as of 1950. Reducing a dozen or more neighbourhoods covering a vast territory to one term, the writers manage at once to ignore the substantial English-speaking populations who have always lived in the East, evoke the unknowable otherness of the Francophone majority in the city and the province, and construct, by implicit contrast, an "ourselves" in the West (never "west end" which would expose the absurdity of what is lumped together), who would never venture into a lower-class area where such sordid goings-on are prevalent ("east end" is a favourite in accounts of fires, murders, bizarre robberies, etc.). This particular reference has lost little of its currency; though political change and demographic shifts have radically altered the context, the ideological thrust remains.

²²⁶ Often bars continued to use the matchbooks or coat check number tags of their predecessor, much to the confusion of customers and future researchers.

²²⁷ Bar types are named according to popular usage rather than the official terms of the liquor licensing authorities. Sub-categories include brasseries (the latter began at the end of my period), piano bars, and hotel bars.

different times of day on different days of the week. Given the volume of material available, it will not be possible to document the gay bars of Montreal completely. My intention will be rather to reconstruct, in a way that no one at the time could have imagined doing, the bar scene as an object of lore whose construction and maintenance fed into the process of gay collective identity formation before 1970. A summary of analytical information on bars, restaurants, etc., is given in Appendix B-2. The account here is ordered by chronology and the divisions mentioned, and linked to the schema concept by means of the individual narrators' bar horizons, their personal schemata for keeping track of the range of choices available for social activities.

Shared space, often in the bar or tavern of a large downtown hotel, coexisted with a few exclusively gay spaces from the 1930s to the early 1960s. They were the norm for most men who frequented the "respectable" or middle-class end of the bar spectrum. For lower-class establishments, cohabitation of bar space was also very common, as in Michel Tremblay's (1982) vivid portrayal of the nightlife of the "Main" and the Plateau Mont-Royal district in the late 1940s.²²⁸ His account of the "poulailler" (hen roost) or gay section of a bar on Mont-Royal East is not based on one particular real bar but on a general pattern of bars with a few gay tables. In Montreal, the pattern of shared bar space extended even to neighbourhood taverns according to the evidence of Michel, whose father told the family about the "tapettes" in pastel pants with their fingers covered with rings who sat in a section at the rear of the Taverne Turgeon on Ontario Street east of Pie IX (almost in the suburbs) in the mid-1950s. I know of no such reports for other cities in North America, where gay space was always in the anonymous bars of the downtown area.²²⁹

Hotel bars were one of the most common solutions to the problem of where to socialize in the years before exclusively gay establishments were common. Presumably the transience of the clientele made them less dangerous, since local people whom you might know from another social context were much less likely to drink there. In some ways they bore an aura of being not quite "of" the local scene, detached somehow, outside and therefore unseen. The characteristic pattern, with gays generally sitting or standing at the bar itself and non-gay

²²⁸ He based it on information obtained in conversation with older gay men (Michel Tremblay, personal communication).

²²⁹ On arrival here in the mid-1970s, I was surprised by the existence in the East of gay taverns like Gambrinus (on Ontario at Wolfe) and the Taverne Ste-Catherine (Ste-Catherine at Papineau), long before the development of the gay "Village de l'est" in the 1980s.

customers at the tables was repeated by several narrators. Such a pattern is typical of smaller centres (Oscar described how it worked in a large hotel bar in Calgary in 1946). Speaking of hotel bars, one narrator, Len, quoted a maxim of the gay world of the 1950s and later:

You can go into almost any bar in the world, they say, a Hilton bar anywhere in the world, and you're going to find another gay person. And I've found that to be true any place I've been to a Hilton Hotel in Florida and in Mexico. You know I have not travelled the entire world but if you're just looking for a place to go thinking you might meet someone, a Hilton bar is pretty safe.

In several cases, from the Piccadilly Room of the Mount Royal Hotel to the Kiltie Lounge at the Laurentian, not to mention the bar at the Ritz-Carleton, the pattern was the same. Gay men assumed that most of the "normal" customers were blissfully ignorant of the establishment's hidden duality.

An account in the yellow press of gays and lesbians in an otherwise non-gay establishment is reported in an unidentified Notre-Dame Street club, where their presence is just one aspect of the "étalage éhonté de débauche qui existe dans un grand nombre de cabarets métropolitains" denounced in the article "Vice dans les cabarets":

D'autres endroits se spécialisent dans la clientèle d'homo-sexuels et de lesbiennes. Nous connaissons un cabaret de la rue Notre-Dame où existe une section de tables spécialement réservées pour ce genre de clientèle. Nous avons pu y observer certains manèges qui ferait rougir n'importe quel dur-à-cuir, exemple: des baisers qui non [sic] rien de fraternel s'échangeant entre les clients mâles sans parler des propositions qui sont faites aux nouveaux venus et cela, tout particulièrement, dans la salle de toilette (*Ici Montreal* 1953.05.09:3).

Patterns of interaction in some of the establishments where gays shared space with others will be discussed below. The other customers in these places, if they were not blind to the presence of gay men there, had knowledge of gay life beyond that of the vast majority of people in those years, a fact which gays anxious to protect their security found disturbing.

Bar Horizons in the 1930s and Wartime: The earliest bar horizons, sets of bars frequented by particular narrators, are not well-documented. In the area of the Red Light district between St-Urbain and St-Denis, Sherbrooke and René-Lévesque, until the clean-up of the early 1950s, there were many brothels and gambling houses. The area contained many bars as well. Traditionally, as I was informed soon after my arrival in Montreal during a tour of the bars of the East given by Pierre in 1976, the Café Monarch had always been "le bar gai du Red Light." Before the Monarch there was another gay bar across the street, according to the interview that a student filmmaker²³⁰ made with Gérard's friend "Monsieur Charles" several months before his death. This well-known story-teller said that he had been going to the Monarch

²³⁰ François Dagenais personal communication.

(also known as the Eagle) since the end of the 1930s and that he had heard that before the Monarch, there had been a gay club across Ste-Catherine Street²³¹ from it in the late 1920s. Following a murder, this club was closed by the police and the Monarch was allowed to open to replace it on condition that it be well-lit and well-maintained.

To the west, the "respectable" downtown bar horizon comprised several taverns, two nightclubs, and the elegant Piccadilly Club. The Mount Royal Hotel Tavern, located on the lower level, south side of the hotel and the Peel Tavern, almost directly across Peel Street, comprised the downtown bar horizon of the 1930s. The taverns in the area tended to be more exclusively gay, at least in the latter part of the day, than the hotel bars and nightclubs. The oldest narrators, Walter and Percy, reported that they had heard that the Peel Tavern had already been gay for some years when they started going there, so it seems plausible that this cluster of gay nightlife had existed since the early 1920s.²³² The only other information on this early period is a reference to a "blind-pig" frequented by artists, gay men and lesbians in the late 1920s²³³ and a mention by American homophile activist Henry Gerber of his unsuccessful effort to locate the gay scene in a visit to Montreal in 1935.²³⁴ There is no information on earlier periods.

In the early 1930s, when they arrived in Montreal, Percy and Walter joined the gay social circle of the Piccadilly Club in the Mount Royal Hotel, so respectable that a membership card was required. They had already been initiated into the gay scene in Toronto, and quickly settled on the Piccadilly Club as their regular drinking place.

Yes, when we first came in '34. We got quite well known, because we used to go there a lot. And on Friday night, we used to meet two, three, four or half a dozen of us would meet there, then we would go out someplace afterwards and have dinner. They were all gay.

He recalled meeting prominent people who were gay and went there, including a high official from the municipal administration.

During the war, Walter and Percy (the only narrators who knew the bar scene before 1946) saw dramatic changes in bar patterns. Percy, who remained in Montreal throughout the period, seemed perplexed by questions about where gay men went.

Oh, you could pick up people anywhere, practically. I mean the bars and that. A good place to pick up was the tavern on the east side of Philips Square. ... That would be a good place. ... There was a door at the back. You could go out into Philip's Square. Anyway, that used to be a good pick-up place. Also the tavern on Dominion Square.

²³¹ On the site later known as Fougères électriques.

²³² The Mount Royal Hotel opened in 1922 (Garceau 1990:48).

²³³ Bruce Russell, personal communication, based on an interview with an artist.

²³⁴ Henry Gerber letter to Jim Egan (Feb. 7, 1951), Egan papers, Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives.

(Today the Dominion Square Tavern is still a gay gathering spot in the evening.) Walter, meanwhile, only got to see the scene early in the war and then during leaves from the army. He described the atmosphere.

All the bars became very gay—very wide-open. Anything went—anything usually goes in wartime. They're not all—they weren't necessarily gay. These kids that would hang around gay bars just for the hell of it. Sometimes they'd go out with somebody and that. It was just mostly the excitement of going around and party and people in uniform. Some of the parties, the crowds weren't even gay. They were just noisy: people drinking and carrying on.

The mass displacements and changes of habit brought by the war disrupted the normal categories of life, tore people out of familiar surroundings, and opened them up to new experiences. Living in one of the major ports through which troops passed en route to Europe, Montreal gays were well placed to enjoy the changes, in a pattern that resembles the one described by Bérubé (1990) for San Francisco.

Like many Anglophones of the generations before the 1970s or 1980s, Walter and Percy spent very little time on the Main, in the eastern part of the city. One of the most famous venues, the Monarch, then known as the Eagle Restaurant, was the setting for several dramatic anecdotes, including one wild wartime story told by Walter. Only during the war did Percy and Walter travel east to drink. All the bars in the city were full of soldiers. So, Percy emphasized, it didn't matter where you went. Walter went to the Monarch, which he knew by its nickname "The Zoo," with some of the men from the Black Watch Regiment in Montreal, which he had just joined.

Well, during the wartime, you'd get your own clique together. Some would be in uniform, and some not. We used to get some of the Black Watch boys up there, and we'd get a table that would hold maybe ten or twelve, and it was all a circle, and used to—one of the gay members used to get down on his hands and knees and get after the boys that had their kilts on, and do a job on them in the bar. He'd crawl around and do everybody they could. I don't even remember who it was now, but he was a real little faggot.

This was clearly a well-honed anecdote from Walter's repertoire, told with relish. He continued with a description of a unique institution in the establishments of the "Main," the washroom attendant:

And the washroom—the door was always wide open. They couldn't be bothered keeping it closed, because it was too active. And there used to be a woman that was looking after it. She'd stand outside the door, and if it got too crowded, she'd say, You'd better wait your turn. Then when two or three came out, "Okay, you can go in now." She knew what was going on—couldn't care less.

This marked quite a departure from the quiet drinks before dinner at the Piccadilly Club which formed the main focus of Walter and Percy's life together at other times.

4. Postwar Bar Horizons: Social Class and Spatial Exclusivity

After 1945, a period of increasing institutional development marked the commercial gay bar world. The bar market was still divided into East and West, with internal differences in each area, especially in the downtown clubs that discouraged overt display of effeminate homosexuality. The trend toward exclusivity in the use of bar spaces by gays was the most significant long-term characteristic of the period.

Downtown Bars: Immediately after the war, the downtown bar scene began to diversify. Since the establishments in the Peel Street area constitute one of the two main concentrations in which gay life started to become visible in Montreal, several of them will be examined in detail. In the late 1940s, the Piccadilly Room and Mount Royal Hotel Tavern, together with the Samovar nightclub and the less classy Peel Tavern across the street, and Hawaiian Lounge²³⁵ (decried by Oscar as “a noisy and obstreperous sort of place) one block west on Stanley Street, constituted a tightly knit gay section downtown. On Peel, the gay establishments were all within 100 metres of each other.

The clothing worn emphasized the respectability of the establishments and their patrons. They were frequented by educated narrators of both languages. Alvin described the Peel Street scene as he found it after his arrival from Winnipeg in 1948:

When I came, one of the most popular spots was the Mount Royal Hotel—the Piccadilly Lounge—a large lounge. At the bar there was where the gay people hung out. It was strictly stand up, and the rest of the place was quite straight. And in those days too, people used to dress far more formally than they do now. I remember putting on my best suit and going to the Piccadilly, and also to the Tropical. One walked in off Peel and there was a big lobby, and at the right end at the back towards Metcalfe Street, there was the Piccadilly Lounge. But at that time it was a very nice crowd that went there.

As an Anglophone with small knowledge of French, most of his gay social life would be spent in this area.

But Francophones were also well represented in the downtown bars. Jean and Normand describe the Peel Street scene at about the same time. Jean, who had met someone through the local neighbourhood group in which he came out (p. 212), explained how he found his way there in 1948 or 1949. This is how he learned about the Carrousel (discussed below).

But that place burned down in 1950, so we were meeting in other places. We had the Monarch, but I didn't like it that much. I didn't go often. There was the tavern, the Peel Tavern.

Here his preference for the downtown scene over the East (the “Main”) is clearly expressed.

²³⁵ This is the first of several incarnations of the Hawaiian Lounge in the same building on Stanley south of Ste-Catherine, upstairs from a club known at various times, including the present, as the Chez Paree.

After their wartime ventures into the East, Walter and Percy returned to their preferred haunt, the Mount Royal Hotel's Piccadilly Club. They enjoyed the social group they knew there, but also stressed how important respectability was for them. They reported, with evident satisfaction, that the bartender at the Piccadilly Club refused to serve certain customers who were "too obvious." Walter explained:

The gay boys didn't sit at the tables, 'cause it was all tables around there, too. But the gay crowd would all stand at the bar. And if it got too many people there, the maitre d' would come and tell you, the place is getting crowded, you'd better go and sit down. That's where Percy and I used to go. We knew the bartender very well. He was a very nice chap. And he couldn't stand some of the gay boys that came in—he wouldn't even serve them.

This comment reveals some of the divergences among gay men that could result from the sharing of bar space with non-gays. They may have tolerated queeny behaviour and shrill talk in private, but in the public space of the bar, anyone might notice.

Walter and Percy built close relationships with waiters. Several times in the interviews they recalled how the bartender at the Piccadilly Club would loan them champagne glasses for parties.

He knew we were gay, naturally, because we'd talk to some of the other boys. But some of the other boys he wouldn't even serve. They were too obvious, too noisy.

Percy explained their philosophy:

Yes. Walter and I don't think we've ever been obvious. We were discreet. Sure, we knew the people, and would—we never would not talk to somebody if they talked to us. But we didn't make the approach to all this type of thing, because I was in business, and there were business people there, too. I mean not around the bar, but at the tables. So I was very discreet in most of the places I went to, and Walter was the same way. We knew the people and said hello, but that's about as far as it went, and the bartender knew what we were, but he knew also that we didn't bother about the other people around the bar.

We will return to a discussion of the relationship between "obviousness" and factors of class and ethnicity in summing up the section on bars. Other hotel bars continued to have similar functions as the Mount Royal bars in the postwar period.

At the Samovar, Carl Grauer had been the featured Master of Ceremonies from the late 1920s.²³⁶ Under his benevolent eye, a gay clientele mixed discreetly with the other well-heeled patrons. As photos by Conrad Poirier show, the Samovar was a chic nightclub that attracted a cosmopolitan clientele. It was, according to a newspaper article on Grauer, one of the best clubs, though couturier Gaby Bernier's biographer describes this club, where Gaby liked to go dancing in the early 1930s, as having "the reputation of being rather raffish and risqué" (Guemsey 1982:76). Perhaps the club was "risqué" because it already had a gay clientele, as

²³⁶ "Sans Carol, le Samovar ne serait plus ce qu'il est." *Petit-Journal* 1948.03.14.

we know it did a decade later. The small section off the main room (the part that would later be the Tropical Room) was already a specifically gay room when it was part of the Samovar.

The bar was a symbol not of gay life but of affluence for Alvin, who reminisced about his first visit to Montreal during the war:

What was ironic was that in my Air Force days in Montreal, which went from November 1943 to August 1944, there was a very popular nightclub—in those days night clubs were the thing—it was called the Samovar. In those days I was getting paid very little, and I used to look at the Samovar and think, “One day I’ll be able to go there,” not realizing that it was one of the most popular gay places in Montreal, and it later became the Tropical and then PJ’s.

Oscar also found the Samovar attractive because it was more refined than the Hawaiian Lounge, but stressed the danger of exposure that going to either place could pose in the early 1950s because they were mixed spaces:

I was not out of closet. At that time I went to, was aware of, bars like the old Hawaiian Lounge and the Samovar. Both were mixed and consequently you had to be careful of whom you might bump into late at night. The patrons were not all of same persuasion; they might be accompanied by wives etc. From the late 1940s on into 1960s, it was not an easy world in which to live if you had a certain sexual orientation. I suppose there were a few completely liberated souls in some parts of Montreal. Most of us had to be very careful indeed.

He continued in an attempt to present a vivid description of the Samovar.

My memory of the Samovar is that it was up above, up side stairs to two upper floors, one a restaurant an agreeable place as I recall. The best people often seen there, damn them!

Not surprisingly the “best” gays frequented the place as well. At the time, he said, he was completely unaware of the gay places further east.

For Walter, during Percy’s long absence when he was transferred to Hamilton for the first half of the 1950s, the Samovar was a favourite haunt.

I had some very interesting people there, while Percy was living in Hamilton. I met a chap that’s a singer and dance boy. I still have his photograph. The Samovar was a legitimate bar and restaurant, but then they had a second bar off the side which you could come through from the main restaurant, and go into that—which was the gay bar, and it’d be so packed solid. You could hardly move in it. And the maitre d’ was just as mad as the rest of them. He used to come in and join the parties. Then, if it would get too noisy, he’d come in and tell them, “Quiet down, quiet down.” Oh yeah, we’ve been to the Samovar, to the restaurant—not gay, but some of our normal friends—we’ve taken them.

There is obviously confusion between the names of the bars which occupied the same building, since by late 1952 the Samovar had been renamed the Carrousel, and then its smaller section had become the Tropical Room, while the larger part was the Down Beat Club. Walter’s description does make it clear that the layout and customers of the two parts of the bar had not changed much. Certainly Walter and Percy knew when the Samovar closed, because the “mad” maitre d’, Carl Grauer, was a friend of theirs. They have a photo of themselves and him at a table with several other gay men at Grauer’s new club, the Bucharest on St-Laurent in January 1949. It is not known whether the Samovar was still open after Grauer’s departure. It

is hard to say today whether the access to this rather elegant night spot came about simply because of its location in an area where other drinking establishments already attracted gay customers, or whether the presence of an ebulliently sociable master of ceremonies, who happened to be gay himself, played a big role in making gay men feel welcome.

The other major downtown nightclub of the postwar period was the Hawaiian Lounge. This is the most likely candidate for identification as Leznoff's "Red Room," the only bar not on his map of "Easton's Gay Centre" (1954:162a).²³⁷ Oscar found himself there by accident for the first time in 1946.

Just after the war, I was down on a business trip from Calgary—had just moved in there, and had no gay experience at all. Someone in the party I was with, around midnight, suggested we go to the Hawaiian Lounge. So we arrived and I remember being astounded. I didn't know such a place existed! It was not exclusively gay.

This conclusion was possible because he already had a good idea what gay men looked like and how they acted. In the club there were:

various young men who could hardly be anything but gay—by their actions, their voices, their deportment. And something that is extraordinary is that up until a couple of years ago, I regularly saw one of them who worked in one of the department stores. He didn't know me. I looked at him. He was one of the survivors.

Normand and Jean frequented the Hawaiian as well, and theirs is the fullest description of it in the early 1950s. They said that the same show was presented there night after night for years. Normand recalled meeting quite a few friends at the Hawaiian before he and Jean became romantically involved in 1950. He said the performers were not gay.

But the spot was 90 percent gay. There was a bar in the middle you could sit around, tables on each side and also at the entrance a balustrade—it was higher when you came in then 3-4 steps down to the lounge and a theatre (stage), a small one for the 2-3-4 artists every night. But always the same two were there.

When reminded of the raids on the Hawaiian Lounge conducted by Pacifique Plante during the morality campaign that led to the Caron Enquiry of 1954 (Plante 1972; Brodeur 1984),

Normand recalled the reason they stopped going there.

That's it. Prostitutes came in and I stopped to go there and they closed the place down. But this was before 1950. In 1948, 49, it was a nice place.

As a result of Plante's campaign and the election of reforming Mayor Drapeau, the Hawaiian Lounge seems to have been closed by the mid 1950s. But a decade later another club with precisely the same name would open at the same location. It was not an exclusively gay space either.

²³⁷ In an interview thirty years after his research, he was unable to recall its real name. This identification would be consistent with the fact that his informants were mainly Anglophones. The other possible candidate is the Monarch Café.

The remembered bar horizons of the narrators in this period show how difficult it is, without documentary support, to retrace the exact chronology of these establishments. When the Samovar closed, as previously mentioned, a new club called the Carrousel²³⁸ opened in the same space for a couple of years. Together they offered the following portrait:

- [N] The Carrousel was one of the nicest bars, where you had low chairs with low coffee tables. A small bar, room enough for 100 people or less, maybe 50 or 60.
- [J] A quiet place with background music, a lounge, not a tavern.
- [N] They would pass hors d'oeuvres and canapés.
- [J] Before they started to sell beer in the aisles—you know, “ice-cold beer.”

The latter practice was, I believe, at the Tropical, which opened in the same space in 1952.

The transition to the Tropical was apparently the result of another fire, since Jean said that the Palm Café on Bleury, where he and Normand met in December 1950, was “temporarily operated by the Carrousel because it had been burnt.”

Its successor, the Tropical, was only partly distinct from its neighbour, the much larger Down Beat Club, where well-known nightclub acts performed, as they had at the Samovar. Between the two there was a communicating door. When the two clubs became more closely integrated, after the opening of the Tropical Room, Jean and Normand found it much less to their liking and found other places to go:

- When the Down Beat came in, this is when we stopped. So it was Carrousel, Tropical, then Down Beat, then they opened up with next door. That's when they started with “ice-cold beer, la bière.”
- The waiters came around just like at a ball game. There were so many people it was jammed.

This account shows how fluid and indistinct the memory of the clubs could be, since the picture of the Carrousel that Normand and Jean present appears to merge into their memory of its successor. Len offered an explanation for the way confusion over bar names arose when I asked if he knew the Samovar.

- That was just before my time. It was called the Down Beat but their tags for the check room had the Samovar on them. Things like that they don't bother changing when they change the name. So I knew of the Samovar.

In some respects, the information shared among gays could be imprecise on details, but not on the crucial point of where to go.

In addition to the bar, three downtown taverns were mentioned as gay hangouts in the postwar period: the Peel Tavern, the Mount Royal hotel tavern and the Dominion Square Tavern. Alvin recalled that it was at the Peel Tavern that he had seen an Air Force officer he had admired greatly while in the service during the war:

- When I was in the air force—by that time I had met some gay servicemen—one of them told me that the corporal who had been in charge for part of my basic training and who was immensely

²³⁸ Spelling from the *Gazette* 1965.10.28; this corresponds to that used by a famous Parisian club where female impersonators performed (Slide 1986:151).

popular, was gay, and I couldn't believe it, because he exuded such a masculine personality. But when I came back to Montreal, didn't I run into him!

He described the Peel Tavern as a very ordinary tavern, a long, narrow space full of tables, with a door to the lane at the back and very garish fluorescent lighting. He also describes a cruising technique that someone like himself, who really didn't like taverns, could use:

Since I'm not a beer drinker, and I hate sitting and not doing anything, I didn't often sit down. If it looked like it might be worthwhile staying, I would sit down and order a coke. And, of course, in those days too, I was far more reticent and shy than I am now. I've since learned that, look, if you're interested, go and say something to the person you're interested in. He's not going to kill you. ... I would sit at a table next to someone I'd like to get in talk with. Or if it were pretty crowded, I'd sit at any table where I thought I'd like to get into conversation. Some people are happy to go and drink their beer, even if nothing happens. I don't drink beer, so it didn't seem worthwhile.

It seems likely that when the Peel Tavern closed in about 1958, the Peel Pub²³⁹ opened in the space formerly occupied by the Traymore Cafeteria. One of the most explicit items giving access to the gay world was published shortly before it closed:

Quel est ce grand fifi de la taverne Peel qui était à habiller son petit ami des pieds à la tête, vendredi soir dernier, chez Harry Gold? (*Ici Montréal* 1958.09.20:7).²⁴⁰

For Louis, the transition from the Peel Tavern to the Peel Pub was a step up:

Le Peel Tavern en face de l'hôtel Mont-Royal était plus ou moins intéressant; c'était pas très élevé. Mais au Peel Pub, il y avait des gens plus instruits.

This comment reinforces the class/education preoccupation of at least some of the narrators who participated in the downtown bar scene. But it was not only the east-west dichotomy that conveyed meanings about social status through bar preference. Within the downtown bar scene there was a gradient of prestige and "obviousness," as the contrast between the two taverns facing each other across Peel Street illustrates.

The Peel tavern was a place where Jean and Normand drank, but they really preferred the tavern in the Mount Royal Hotel across the street. They recalled its heavy furniture and its nice British atmosphere. Normand described the pattern of their visits there:

This is where we spent all of our Saturday afternoons. We had a few friends we met there, around two o'clock until dinner, then we'd meet again in the evening. ... A very enjoyable place. It was like travelling like salesmen—people from outside Montreal and people from Western part of city, not the East End.

Jean added that when they could afford it, they also went during the week. This Francophone couple's preference for an English middle-class drinking establishment is striking. Len described the tavern:

That was the Saturday afternoon spot to go. It was real—it had great long tables and benches around the outer walls and you know some other chairs but big tables. I think the motif was sort of

²³⁹ The Peel Tavern is frequently confused with its successor the Peel Pub, though the two did not occupy the same space.

²⁴⁰ "Petit ami" here means "boyfriend," following conventions of the use of diminutives in these publications. See discussion of Adam's theory of stereotyping, p. 81.

stable, you know, horses, there were pictures of horses and I think they had dart boards, whether they were real or not. But it was trying to give the pub atmosphere. That was taken over very unceremoniously and made into an Air Canada ticket office, the entire place.

Another important aspect of the Mount Royal Tavern was mentioned by Donald in the story of how he was taken to his first gay bar by two obvious queens he worked with at Ogilvy's Department Store (p. 213). They said that normally they couldn't go there because they were too "queenly" for the place and were only able to go there that time because they had someone as manly as Donald to escort them. The intersecting lines of class and deportment (as Oscar put it) separated the gay bar scene, even within the relatively small downtown horizon of the late 1940s and the early 1950s.

There have been a few bars and taverns frequented by gay men in the intermediate zone between downtown and the "Main" from time to time. Jean and Normand were fond of going to the St-Regis tavern (on Ste-Catherine near Bleury, still in existence today but not known as a gay spot). Here there was also an compromise between respectability, social class, and obvious gayness. The latter was not permitted. The interior design was tasteful; the couple remarked especially on the futuristic mobiles that complemented the solid oak furniture. They liked the personnel and the fact that the customers were more restrained.

and polite waiters, good service—not the roughnecks—not too many roughnecks there. A better class of people, and 50/50 gay. Not 100 percent gay—during the night. During the day, less than that, but after 5 or 6, 50/50. A nice place.

Jean thought there was more of a difference between types of people in the respectable and non-respectable bars. Normand added that even in the practicalities of beer drinking: educated people drank beer by the bottle, not by the glass, he said. The customers didn't carry on the way they did elsewhere.

[N] No, no. They're more reserved. It's more interesting for me. You had to be reserved or they would tell you off, get you out of there.

[J] The St-Regis you couldn't get too wild.

People there were better dressed and customers were expected to be "more reserved," as Normand put it, adding that this made it more "interesting" (attractive) for him. Customers who weren't "reserved" got thrown out. Clearly middle-class gay men were willing to go along with the enforcement of discretion, and thus a separation of drinking establishments by class, an important clue to the intersection of class interest and life with a secret identity. But they would not long tolerate this kind of supervision from heterosexuals in their leisure activities, and Jean and Normand spent just as much time in exclusively gay company at the Mount Royal Hotel Tavern.

Bars in the East: During the 1950s, the pattern of shared space continued in the area of the Main, and in most of the downtown drinking places as well. This section begins with a discussion of the context in which the first Montreal “gay bar,” the Tropical, opened, and how it changed the way gay men thought about their public spaces. The contrast between the two parts of the city is one of ethnicity, but more importantly of class, and the discussion opens the question of the role of middle-class men in shaping a new kind of exclusively gay space for sociability.

The concentration of bars and other establishments in the area called the “Main” attracted a mixed clientele depicted in many of the plays and novels of Michel Tremblay. In the yellow press, the presence of gay men and lesbians was frequently mentioned in short gossip items, quite possibly fictitious, of which the following is typical:

La tapette Rolande aime beaucoup la publicité. On peut voir son nom et son numéro de téléphone écrits sur les murs des toilettes dans toutes les tavernes de la Main (*Ici Montréal* 1958.09.20:7).

The control exerted by organized crime over clubs frequented by gays and lesbians in the area was made clear another item from the yellow press:

Roger Dubois, le boulé de St-Henri, ferait la guerre aux homosexuels dans certains cabarets de la métropole (Blue Sky, Monarch). En voici un qui n’a pas froid aux yeux. Il ferait sûrement un excellent maître d’hôtel dans l’un quelconque de ces cabarets (*Ici Montréal* 1957.02.02:18).²⁴¹

We can discount the notion that the Dubois gang actually intended to drive out their gay customers, especially from the exclusively gay Monarch in 1957. This item can be better read as a mild twitting of the gang for serving a gay clientele. Their interests in the drinking establishments of the area continued into the 1970s, as shown in the report of the *Commission d’Enquête sur le crime organisé* (CECO), which mentions their interest in the mostly gay Montreal Tavern and other establishments.²⁴²

One gay drinking spot in the eastern part of the Main was the Café de la Paix Tavern, on Ste-Catherine near St-Denis. For Normand and Jean in the early 1950s, it was “our place.” A quiet tavern visited by businessmen until the end of the afternoon, it had no music or other pretensions. By late in the afternoon, its customers were mainly gay:

It was a gay tavern, but without music—a real tavern with the smell and everything of a straight tavern.

Though not as interesting as the St-Regis, Jean concluded that it was not a bad place “for the time.” This was almost certainly the same place that constituted Percy and Walter’s only

²⁴¹ I believe that “boulé” is a phonetic rendering of “bully,” a term in *joual* which language researcher Denis Boullé has encountered in other contexts (personal communication).

²⁴² Commission de police du Québec (1976:113-117, 155-156). See also Desmarais (1976:101-113).

exception to their faithfulness to the downtown bars, since they liked to go there even after the war. Walter explained:

We were never interested in going east in Montreal, except that place on Ste-Catherine St., basically. There was a tavern that was gay on the south side of Ste-Catherine, just this side of [St-Denis]. We used to go there. And it was—it was and it wasn't. You could go there and meet somebody, or you could go and there wouldn't be anybody. It was always full.

This is additionally an example of shared space, with a clear indication that the extent to which a particular establishment was "gay" could vary unpredictably.

Jean and Normand knew of the other taverns, but did not go to them much because they were too low class. These included the Taverne Plateau, the Montreal Tavern, and the Taverne Altesse, all of which were near the corner of Ste-Catherine and St-Laurent. Of another tavern even further east along Ste-Catherine, they said:

Also there was the Taverne des Immeubles at Ste-Catherine and St-Hubert. It was a gay tavern, but never 100 percent.

All of these taverns exhibited the pattern of shared space. Gay men were accepted in them as fellow customers by the other working-class men who drank there.

Aside from the Monarch, the area around the corner of "la Main et la Catherine," especially south of Ste-Catherine on St-Laurent was (and still is) full of bars where various clienteles mix and drink in apparent harmony. This world formed the centre of Michel Tremblay's drama and early fiction, in which one of the main characters is Édouard, whose drag name was "la Duchesse de Langeais" (p. 117). Many other clubs, like the Midway Café, Peter's Café or the Canasta, as well taverns such as the Alouette or the Montreal Tavern, were frequented by gay men, who made up only one contingent of a widely varied social spectrum among the customers, along with middle-aged heterosexual couples out for their Saturday night on the town, butch lesbians with their femmes, and transvestite or female prostitutes and their customers.²⁴³ This heterogeneity is attested by a visual document, the National Film Board production *Boulevard St-Laurent* (Zolov and Beaudet 1962), in which gays, including three middle-aged drag queens, are seen at tables mixed in with other types of customers watching the strippers and comics on the stage. A more focused study would be able to document the personal points of view of those who knew such places to preserve a more complete record of this unusual scene in which many social worlds entered into contact.

²⁴³ My knowledge of these establishments originated in a guided tour of several of those mentioned by Pierre in 1975 or 1976. By that time, however there was a "real" gay tavern, the Bellevue, on Ste-Catherine. Appendix B-2 contains lists of bars in the eastern and western concentration areas in the 1950s and the 1960s.

Coverage in *Ici Montréal* contributed to the lowlife reputation of one cabaret on the Main, the Café St-John (later the Saguenay), on St-Laurent near Lagauchetière Street, identified by some as the prototype for Tremblay's seedy cabaret. Stories about the Café St-John and its famous customer, the lesbian Ramona, were discussed in the section on stereotypes in the yellow press in Chapter 4 (see p. 110). As Armand Monroe described it, this club was:

the hole of holes of holes, but a fun place to go. You wouldn't be harassed. There were murderers and thieves who would as soon cut your throat, but it all blended very well.

Visiting the Saguenay several times in the mid-1970s, I observed that it had not only the washroom attendants of the Monarch, but also an usher who led customers to their tables (in a nearly empty bar) and also required a tip. The entertainment ranged from the usual lip-synching to a transvestite fire swallower. I was told at the time that it had once been a much livelier place, but by 1976, this bar had fallen on very hard times, and would close before the end of the decade.

Meanwhile, exclusive gay social life on the East still had its centre at the Monarch Café, which probably holds the record for longevity among Montreal gay bars.²⁴⁴ But it had already been a gay place for twenty years. Though it has since closed and the building has been demolished, the Monarch was still open at the time of the interviews in 1990. The Monarch was the first bar Armand Monroe went to in the early 1950s, and he said that the only major change was that part of the building had burned down (in 1962).²⁴⁵

It was always on the second storey. They have the same wooden floor as 35 years ago and the bathroom is just the same. [They had] a piano player named Lucien, who once in a while would get up and sing badly. On Sunday afternoon, it was jam packed until about 10 years ago [ca. 1980]. In the back was a pool table. They had Halloween parties. Before the fire it was twice as big.

After he discovered the Tropical, Armand Monroe went less to the Monarch. Another description of the club will be given in the section on the 1960s below.

The Main was not exclusively Francophone, a point on which Armand Monroe insisted, and which Len confirmed with his story of the times in the 1950s when he met friends at the Montreal Swimming Club and then adjourned to the "Zoo" for drinks.

We used to go very often from there to the Monarch or the Zoo. We were always treated like royalty. They had contests that the guy used to play the piano and if you could guess the name of the song you got a free beer and that sort of stuff.

²⁴⁴ Throughout this period, the Lincoln Tavern and the Café Lincoln, on St-Denis at Mount Royal, had served an exclusively gay evening crowd drawn from the Plateau district and further afield since the late 1930s or early 1940s, according to comments made by people I talked to there in the early 1980s.

²⁴⁵ The fire is discussed below (p. 282). I visited the Monarch a number of times with Pierre and other friends in the mid-1970s. It consisted of a front room about thirty feet square, containing tables and a dance floor, and a little-used, huge, back section.

They went there as an alternative to the new exclusively gay space downtown which was their usual place for evenings out. Like Walter and Percy's visits to the Café de la Paix, it provided a change and a glimpse of another side of the gay world, but it did not affect their primary allegiance to the respectability of the downtown scene. However, the expression "treated us like royalty" suggests they were viewed as outsiders by the overwhelmingly Francophone majority of the clientele. In fact the gay spaces in both provided one kind of bridge between the two solitudes, and a partly shared gay culture that evolved in them.

Exclusive Gay Space: the Tropical: After 1952, the downtown scene added a new exclusive gay space in a real bar, not just a tavern, with the opening of Montreal's most famous gay club, the Tropical Room, already mentioned as the club which took over the small section that had been part of the Samovar and Carrousel. Now it was operated separately and, for the first time, downtown Montreal had a bar that was unequivocally gay. The Tropical was almost certainly the club the writer of this "*potin*" from the yellow press had in mind:

On prétend que les homosexuels de langue anglaise ont maintenant leurs rendez-vous particuliers dans un club situé dans le voisinage de l'hôtel Mont-Royal (*Ici Montréal* 1953.03.07:8).

This item suggests an opening date in late 1952, though its assessment of the language of the customers is deduced from the dichotomous schema for ethnic geography for Montreal, and is contradicted by the accounts of several Francophone narrators who went there. The item constitutes an access hint for the gay world, providing a clue to help those seeking entry into the gay world without appearing to support it.

Leznoff described the Tropical in his 1954 thesis, calling it the "Burning Flame." With his focus on the friendship groups private socializing, he provides unfortunately few details on the bar scene. One comment though stresses the enforcement of the boundary that made this space exclusively gay.

At the "Burning Flame" the patrons are exclusively homosexual and the doorman refuses admission to obviously heterosexual patrons (1954:161).

The views of some of his informants underline the class distinction between the Tropical and the "Red Room" (where members of the Overt group ordinarily went). The Tropical's customers, says one of them,

go over to the Red Room sometimes, but we don't have much to say to each other and the same thing happens when we go over to the Burning Flame. We just might say hello (1954:77).

Within the downtown scene, however, the Tropical itself was seen as too low class and risky by some of the other men. A dentist in Leznoff's Covert group was thankful that he had met his lover and didn't have to go to the Tropical.

If I hadn't met him then I would be mixed up with the rest of the homosexuals that you see at the Burning Flame and I would be worried that some day my name would leak out and I would be associated with homosexuals. That would ruin my career (1954:83).

Clearly the speaker held the establishment and its patrons in low esteem. It was nevertheless extremely popular and known throughout eastern North America. According to Louis, the Tropical was one of the factors that made Montreal an interesting tourist destination for Torontonians, Bostonians, New Yorkers and others. Louis visited it throughout its existence, preferring it to places where the customers were less "refined."

The Tropical Room was part of a larger nightclub called the Down Beat, and at times both names were used in discussing them, as well as the names of previous and subsequent clubs in the same building. Len explained:

It was adjacent to a night club called the Down Beat and under the same management. And the Down Beat had good nightclub shows and there was a separate stairway up to each one but there was a large door between the two and as the evening wore on, twelve, one, two o'clock in the morning this door was opened and you could sort of wander into the nightclub area.

Len reinforces the information from Leznoff on the presence of a doorman, which made this somewhat protected gay space:

There was someone at the door named Peter, who was the doorman and he did a pretty good job of sorting the people out. Although when there was a line-up to get in you know, you crossed his palm with silver, you could get in. Otherwise you wouldn't, which I thought was a rotten way to run a bar.

Ironically, from the gay point of view, this protection was supplied by the heterosexual management and staff.

[Peter's] nickname was Alice, and I saw him around town until about ten years ago. ... [H]e was a good head if he got to know you, when you weren't a troublemaker. You know, there were always troublemakers in these places. It was his job to keep them out.

The feminine nickname is a marker of affection, since it includes this man in the gay world. This description illustrates the way gay men made the personnel of their public spaces into characters of discourse. It also sheds light on the practicalities of running a successful gay bar. Sawchuck (1973:56-57) describes the manager of a gay bar as an agent of social control who sets standards of behaviour for customer that were enforced by the staff, at the same time as guaranteeing as far as possible that disruptive outsiders would not invade gay territory.

Supplying gay entertainment was a major innovation, and Louis and several other narrators attributed the Tropical's popularity to its host, Armand Monroe.

Au Tropical les spectacles étaient intéressants. Les anglophones préféraient les endroits francophones. Le spectacle de Monroe, était comique, très bilingue. Monroe a introduit le français très olé, olé. Pis il y avait des danseurs, de très beaux spectacles—surtout l'Halloween.

Monroe initially saw the Tropical as the polar opposite to the Monarch, the first gay bar he knew. While working in a buttonhole factory as a teenager, Armand Monroe found his way into the public gay world.

I met a young man who worked on another floor, who took me to the Monarch. I discovered my first gay bar (the Monarch) at 18, in November with a friend from the factory. We went early, there was, nobody there. But then we got into the swing of things.

His account of making a significant journey uptown to the Tropical reflects the exoticism of the downtown scene for a young working-class man from St-Henri:

I heard about the Tropical. ... On January 1, ... I went to Monarch, then walked to Peel with [two friends] and went to the Tropical. I didn't stay. It was very different from the Monarch. At the Monarch, everybody sat down, but the Tropical had an American style bar with people standing three deep. We didn't stay and I vowed never to return. But I went back 4 or 5 months later and stayed for thirty years.

He had a photograph taken of himself flaunting in the doorway of the Tropical in the summer of 1955 to mark this transition. Monroe, by this time a department store salesclerk, adapted well to the Tropical, taking on an informal role as entertainer, singing whenever someone started to play show tunes on the piano that stood in one corner. Because of his obvious talent, about two years later, he was hired to run the entertainment in the "big room" (the Down Beat) next door, as the two clubs were merged into one huge gay space. Many narrators recalled with enthusiasm the shows that he put on at the Tropical/Down Beat in the 1950s and early 1960s, and then at PJs, its successor in the same space from the late 1960s until it ceased to be a bar about 1990.

The job that Monroe was offered by the manager of the Downbeat/Tropical, Solly Silvers, was to select and emcee a program of entertainment in order to fill the big nightclub space adjacent to the much smaller Tropical Room. As Len put it, "Eventually the nightclub business ground to a halt, so the gay bar took over the entire bar." Shifts in the night club industry had made standard live shows unprofitable.²⁴⁶ Monroe explained that the Downbeat management "first tried strippers and that didn't work, so then they tried the gays." He began to host a weekly round of bingo games, films, singing (Monroe did not lip-synch, he used his own voice), and drag shows. On weekends they brought in the girls performing at another of the owner's clubs, the Chez Paree, a block away on Stanley. But Armand Monroe had agreed to take the job on one condition—that owner Solly Silvers allow men to dance together.

²⁴⁶ Gilmore (1988) discusses the negative effects of this change on jazz musicians.

"Impossible," was the answer. He went ahead nonetheless, and six or seven weeks later, Silvers came into the club one Sunday while the show was on and told Monroe to announce that he had gotten what he had asked for. "The queens went wild," he reports. For the first time in Montreal in the summer of 1957, men were able to dance together in public without fear of arrest. This story seems to indicate an agreement between the club and the police (see p. 299 on police payoffs).²⁴⁷ Whatever the facts were, the openness of the Tropical led some men to conclude that it was run by the underworld. Eugène observed:

Au Down Beat c'était l'endroit dans les années 60 à Montréal où tu te sentais à l'aise, où tu te sentais protégé. C'était définitivement la pègre qui était là. ... C'était barbare un peu, sauf que c'était un bel endroit; c'était intéressant; c'était divertissant. ... Pis les gars osaient; il y avait un coin "backroom" en arrière où on se poignait un peu. C'était l'endroit où se faisait le plus les choses en dehors des règles.

Sexual activity was certainly not the Tropical's main attraction, however; it was the possibility of being gay publicly, of belonging to a world apart, and the quality of the entertainment that drew men there. The significance of Monroe's innovations and the cultural leadership he exerted in the developing sense of gay community will be further discussed in the next chapter (p. 374).

5. The Expanding Bar Scene of the 1960s

In the 1960s, the same bars that had existed throughout the 1950s continued in business with no sharp break. But as the decade passed, it became clear that the Tropical was the model for a new type of bar that had an exclusively gay clientele to tap the new middle-class market that the Tropical had revealed. Later, this exclusivity in public space was reinforced as all-gay personnel was added, and late in the decade, some bars were opened under gay management or by gay owners. In the area of the Main, there was little change in the short term. The new developments took place downtown, and the new places that opened were all much more respectable than the bars and taverns of the East.

The Main in the 1960s: The Café Monarch was a venerable institution in November 1962 when it was hit by a fire in which one customer died.²⁴⁸ Half of the building was demolished,

²⁴⁷ Silvers had already been the target of gang violence at the Chez Paree, in a dispute over protection outlined by Champlain (1986:122). After the fire, a news story maintained that it was an act of vengeance against Silvers, whose prosperity had irritated certain of his business rivals ("La police saurait qui a mis le feu au Downbeat." *Dernière Heure / le Petit Journal* 1965.10.31).

²⁴⁸ "Le feu fait un mort dans un club de nuit." *Allô Police* 1962.11.04:26.

but the bar continued in the remaining sections. Pierre went with his friends a few years later and gave this description:

Le Monarch, tel que je l'ai connu—il y avait un grand escalier large qui menait au deuxième. Bas de plafond. Le plancher en bois avec des planches; des tables à 4 personnes. Y avait des nappes sur les tables au Monarch. C'était très fréquenté la fin de semaine—on danse au juke-box—j'ai jamais vu d'orchestre. C'était bien tenu. Les fauteurs de troubles étaient exécutés en bas de l'escalier, c'était pas ben long. Y en a à qui appelait ça le Zoo à l'époque.

The customers were of an older age group. The Monarch had a dance floor where a sign I observed in the mid-1970s forbade slow dances.²⁴⁹ Pierre explained:

Oui, oui, oui, ils voulaient pas avoir de troubles avec la police. C'était une mesure de protection pour l'escouade de la moralité. Comme aujourd'hui, avec les affiches sur les drogues. Mais les plains ont duré le plus longtemps au Monarch.

Pierre was shocked by attitudes of his university student companions, who looked down on the bar's other customers with unadmitted class prejudice: He believed that the origin of the Monarch's nickname, the "Zoo," lay in contempt for others, saying it had also been a name given to other establishments "considérés comme au bas de l'échelle." Whether an expression of contempt or an ironic self-reflection by gay men on the diverse and not always elegant variety of people who make up the milieu, the name "Zoo" conveyed equal parts of humour and recognition of the low social status of the bar and its patrons.

The Altesse Tavern was one of the most important in the "Main" area. The Altesse also held a strong attraction for Pierre, who listed all of the taverns where he and his friends liked to go to in the mid and late 1960s: the Plateau, the Bellevue, and the Montreal Tavern, but especially the Altesse.

C'étaient les places gaies—à l'époque le mot était pas employé. C'étaient les endroits qu'on fréquentait, ... C'était excitant, hein? Une place comme le Hawaiian Lounge ou l'Altesse. Ça mettait du piquant dans la vie. C'est ça qui me manquait à moi, à l'époque. C'était une culture souterraine, la culture gaie qui a précédé 70-71, qui était une espèce de tournant.

He and his friends went often to the Altesse. He said that he would not have gone alone.

There were several fights there every week. Pierre explained his long-standing fascination with the underworld that these places gave him access to:

C'étaient des trous, dans ma vie à moi, ça m'a toujours attiré. Les premiers bandits j'avais connus, j'avais 5 ans, 6 ans. Pis durant toute ma vie ça m'a fasciné. Pis encore aujourd'hui. ... C'était difficile, les lieux, pas comme dans les années 80. Aujourd'hui, ils sont très policés, que je sache.

He described it as a large square space with a high ceiling. Its clientele was mixed, but mainly gay. Some of its customers were "grandes folles dangereuses,"²⁵⁰ who were involved in some of the bar fights.

²⁴⁹ "Défendu de danser des plains."

²⁵⁰ "Drag queen" is only a vague approximation for this term from the hierarchy of terms for effeminate men that Pierre used (*petite folle* / *folle* / *grande* / *grande folle*). Garneau (1980:51) reports an even more complicated set

C'était pas rien ces batailles-là. C'était pas de la marde. Faut dire que ce quartier était populeux. Il y avait une confrontation entre la population et—. L'Altesse, c'était pas une place de tout repos. Par contre, il y avait un des plus beaux juke-box en ville. Pis moi, j'aimais ça, les juke-box. J'aime ça encore, ça la belle musique, pour se faire gai, tsé.

The drag queens were not actually in drag, though many wore jewellery. They had "des manières" and used what Pierre called "le langage assez vert," quick-witted, biting, sometimes malevolent humour. Pierre's fascination with the life style of the underworld make him exceptional compared to most of the narrators, though others like Eugène liked the mixing of different social groups that went on in gay clubs, as will be summarized at the end of this overview of bars.

Émile too was fond of the Altesse, partly because of the danger he felt there because you never knew what kind of person you were dealing with:

Y avait une espèce de challenge là-dedans. ... Je trouvais que c'était bizarre, c'était mystérieux. J'allais là quelques fois. J'aimais ça. Je regardais ce qui se passait. D'abord, t'avais des ex-détenus qui se tenaient là, qui attendaient juste leur proie là. Pis, se faisaient payer leur bière pis d'autres choses.

Pierre echoed the attraction or the mystique of marginality:

Y avait beaucoup quelque chose de très marginal dans l'homosexualité à l'époque. Chais pas si c'est resté. Ça doit. Mais y avait l'attrait du danger. ... Du moins en tout cas, c'est ce qui m'attirait pis je devais pas être le seul parce qu'il y en avait ben qui n'étaient pas gais dans leur vie sociale mais qui étaient homosexuels, et pis qui allaient dans ces places-là.

The picture which emerges from these descriptions is of an increasingly gay emphasis in some of the mixed bars around the Main. However, the major social change in the gay world was being effected downtown, shaped by the middle-class educated gay men who made the growing exclusively gay bar scene a success. Some men, however, were still drawn to the old-style, working-class shared spaces of the Main, with their atmosphere of danger and mystery.

Downtown Bars: Downtown the taverns were also mixed, but became gayer and gayer as the day advanced. In the early part of the evening, or after work, downtown taverns were the place to go. Alvin flippantly compared the clienteles of the two main downtown taverns in the 1960s.

At the Peel Pub, I would say it was twenties maybe up to forties, whereas at the Dominion Square, it attracted the older crowd—thirties and up—and a great deal of the up.

For Ralph, the Peel Pub provided the key to his first sexual encounter and also his entry into the gay social world. He had fought long and hard against accepting his sexual orientation, (p. 184), then following his entrapment arrest, he decided it was time to get on with it.

I had heard people talk about Peel Pub as gay, so I set off and at about 4 PM one day I went in. ... I met a gay man at another table. I remember the way he looked. He was like the police who arrested me—gorgeous. The guy said he had a room at the Vines, but couldn't afford another night. In the end, I paid for the hotel. I felt a mixture of excitement and fear at same time. He begged me to stay but I thought if I stayed something bad would have happened.

But Ralph had also overheard a conversation at the next table about the busloads of Americans who would be arriving for the American Thanksgiving weekend, and a big party that was planned at Bud's.²⁵¹ He was impressed with their loudness and the openness with which they spoke. When American Thanksgiving came, he found his way to Bud's and from there into an extensive network of gay friends.

Going to the Peel Pub was also a turning point in Trevor's life, but at a much younger age. As a teenager he learned about the cruising in Dominion Square and ended up being taken to the Peel Pub by a man he met there when he was sixteen or seventeen. He saw this man several times, but he was really too old for him. The trip to the Peel Pub had given Trevor the key, however and afterwards he easily found his way into gay society.

Probably I just went back to Peel Pub and from there followed the crowds. Being a very crowded place. ... It was a great bar. First of all, being very crowded on weekends especially meant that, you got put at a tables so you probably ended up talking to the people at the table. So that made an instant bit of socializing. They also had a fair good afternoon crowd who'd stop in and have a couple of beers after work. Two drafts 20 cents plus a tip. It was nice, convenient to everything. You could walk in, have a couple of beers, meet friends and so on.

Having begun my contact with gay society in Montreal at the Peel Pub, from my own experience of the officious heterosexual waiters at this bar in the mid-1970s, I asked Trevor how he remembered them, but he took their side, pointing out that they had to deal with "a lot of deadbeat queens" who "used to sit there for hours." My own impressions of the Peel Pub were less rosy than Trevor's, but it was still the main early evening place to go in downtown Montreal in 1975.

"Blind pigs" or illegal bars, by their very nature had to lead a discreet existence, so they have left few traces. A search of judicial archives or news reports would only turn up those that were raided. Only two of the narrators spoke of such establishments. They were both men who worked in bars, and were thus more likely to hear of "blind pigs," the local term (in both languages) for unlicensed after-hours clubs. There is one early report of a blind pig. In an interview with an artist, Bruce Russell (personal communication) learned of one that was frequented by artists in the 1920s, where the clientele also included gays and lesbians. Patrick

²⁵¹ This Stanley Street bar would have a long career as a centre of downtown gay life. In the 1970s it became known as a leather bar. It closed following mass arrests in June 1984 ("Razzia dans un club gai, 188 hommes arrêtés." *Journal de Montréal* 1984.06.03:1, 3).

reported going to one such underground bar in the late 1960s, and Armand Monroe gave a capsule history of another illicit club he visited in the same period.

For a month or two on Stanley, they opened a key club for gays—a private club that lasted 2 weeks. They raided it very quick. I went there once, then the next night they raided it.

Only drinking took place in these clandestine establishments; there was no sexual behaviour. Likely there were other places like these, but their discovery and a better understanding of how they operated would require access to more oral accounts.

While the taverns downtown had become exclusively gay in the evening, the hotel bars were still popular mixed drinking places in the 1960s. A very popular bar was the Kon-Tiki Room, which opened in the Mount Royal Hotel in 1958.²⁵² The “Polynesian food and drinks served in authentic South Sea Island atmosphere” that an early publicity post card boasted was not what attracted most of the gay men there. For Len it was an occasional stop after work.

I worked for many years on the South Shore and I lived on the south shore so a couple of times a year I would get dressed up and come to town at five o’clock for drinks at the Kon-Tiki. Very often meeting someone for dinner but once in a while I would just come to town on my own and I never had to have dinner alone, going to the Kon-Tiki and very often ended up going to bed with the person. You know it was sort of an adventure.

He described the bar and its interior, which featured a little stream with a waterfall. Len also described the way the management handled the covert gay clientele.

The bar was usually crowded that’s why I had to rush there at five o’clock and they had very comfortable bar stools, you know the rattan with nice backs on them. ... There must have been twenty or so [stools]. ... They would always try to sit you at a table. Sometimes you had to sort of fight to. ... And they used to let you stand like two deep at the bar at times, like as the evening wore on. They were sort of fussy at cocktail hour. As I say I didn’t go there—I went there off and on for a long time but I know people that were there almost every night of the week.

Trevor, about fifteen years younger than Len, was also an occasional (and rather disdainful) visitor to the Kon-Tiki.

Nine times out of ten there was a dreary tired old crowd sitting there. But once in a blue moon it used to be interesting. ... I would walk in, have a beer, “What am I doing here?!” Then head over to Stanley Street.

The generational difference between Len and Trevor meant that the younger man was clearly unwilling to put up with the strictures and fussiness of the management, and had a stronger attraction to exclusively gay spaces which, by the early 1960s, were becoming more numerous, and where the younger clientele concentrated.

Another hotel bar that gay men went to was the Kiltie Lounge in the Laurentian Hotel on Peel Street, where Trevor looked in some times, but rarely was tempted to sit down and order a beer. Donald went to the Kiltie Lounge more often, partly because of the attraction of the

²⁵² *La Presse* 1958.11.04:22.

nearby cruisy washroom mentioned above. Frank, an older man whom Donald and Evan met as a neighbour, managed to cruise the Kiltie with great success, even though he violated custom by insisting on sitting at a table, not at the bar. Len was also aware of the Kiltie Lounge, but not particularly fond of it. He did recall a woman organist who played there, who seems to have been a topic of conversation among his friends then and an object of collective memory since. Donald framed his account of the bar as the scene of some memorable good times with Frank, who acted as a mentor to him and his lover. Among other factors, differences in age, and thus in the social purposes they had in going to bars, meant that different men held widely differing images of bars.

As the 1960s progressed, there was a shift in the concentration of the downtown bars towards Stanley Street, away from Peel. Trevor described a typical night out on Stanley:

It was in the in 1960s. ... My route became—mine and many others—to hit the Peel Pub. ... Last call would be about a quarter to twelve or so; we'd dash over to the Quatre Coins du monde ... situated on Stanley behind the Windsor Hotel. That was fun. ... Then you'd leave at quarter to 3, rush to Hawaiian Lounge, the idea being that if you got in before last call, they wouldn't kick you out till quarter to 4 or 4.

Here we see that his bar horizon is not simply a list of places, but a pathway connecting them on a time schedule. Trevor stressed how important it was for the bars to be close to each other, since it allowed you to "hop" from one to another.

The Hawaiian Lounge was the subject of somewhat conflicting accounts from different narrators. The Hawaiian was an old-style bar with a mixed clientele where real singers alternated with lip-synching drag performances. Pierre suggested that it reopened after a long period in the mid-1960s, when the Tropical closed. Narrators' estimates of the percentage of customers who were gay varied considerably, but all agreed that, unlike the cabarets of the Main, the interior of the Hawaiian Lounge was characterized by a fixed spatial separation by type of customer,²⁵³ which made it possible for sexual activity to occur in the gay section.

C'est ça, oui, c'était à l'arrière, à l'avant y avait les tables pis le stage tout à fait à l'arrière. Y avait le bar pis entre les deux y avait une section où y avait pas de tables et où les gais se tenaient debout pis à la faveur de l'affluence, y avait des contacts physiques. Jusqu'à quel point ça allait, je le sais pas. J'y allais pis ça m'est arrivé de me faire tâter et de tâter les gars là.

Trevor explained the layout of the bar in detail and gave a colourful description of the gay action in the part he called the "choir loft" (because it was raised and in the back).

It was mixed down front. And all the gays up back in this big feely groping crowd. That was interesting. I remember being there one night and you were so packed in that you used to shuffle. You used to sway back and forth. One number was there and all of a sudden: "Mon pantalon!

²⁵³ Here, according to the accounts gathered, the interior geography was simpler than that at the Ponts de Paris, a St-André Street lesbian bar of the 1950s described by Chamberland (1993).

Mon pantalon!!”²⁵⁴ At some point they got her pants down around her ankles and the crowd shuffled and she shuffled right out of her pants. That was classic.

Harry’s memory of the Hawaiian Lounge coincides with the two previous narrators on some points but diverges on others:

Practically right after the Tropical burned down, the Hawaiian Lounge opened and it was all the staff from the Tropical who were at the Hawaiian Lounge and then they had drag shows, mixed drag shows, I mean lesbians and men doing women, they did have that kind of mixture. But it was always a bore when the drag shows came on because everyone had to sit still.

He did not remember any sexual activity, but was more taken with the style of the management:

What I remember was they had the old style. ... Montreal clubs always had washroom attendants in those days, most of them, and this old fuck would have all the pieces of gum laid out and lift your coat while you’re standing at the urinal and you always had to give the fucker some money. It drove me crazy.

He didn’t think that under such close supervision there could have been much sex happening in the washroom. He also recalled the waiters as being very intimidating. They took the view, as he put it that “If you weren’t drinking and you weren’t spending money, get the fuck out.”

The attitude of the waiters to the gay customers in a mixed club could be quite exploitative and abusive when it suited them. Trevor’s account of the way the Hawaiian Lounge treated its gay customers who dared to dance has already been mentioned (p. 189), but the apparent inconsistency between forbidding dancing while allowing sex on the premises does not seem to have occurred to him. Though the gay scene at the back was too obvious to miss, the “straight” segment of the bar’s clientele “got off on it,” Trevor thought. “Nobody left, the place was always packed.” In the end, the Hawaiian Lounge lost its liquor license and closed in late 1971 (*Le Tiers* 2[1972.01]:27). It served one last time as the set for the movie *Il était une fois dans l’est* (Brassard 1973). The differences these versions reveal are recognized features in gay discourse on the bars. One doesn’t always expect friends and especially acquaintances to like the same places, since everyone has their own taste. Agreement on where to go contributes to the solidarity of a friendship group, but the consensus may be disrupted by changes in the available set of bars or disagreements that arise. Bar horizons, like other schemata, are processes, not fixed entities. Divergent views can be accommodated between friends because what is shared is the process of knowing, not just the contents of the knowledge structure.

²⁵⁴ Transcription cannot do justice to the desperate cry that Trevor imitated here. This was clearly an oft-told tale from his repertoire.

Gay Bars in Other City Districts and Throughout Quebec in the 1960s: To the south of the "Main" was another part of the city where gay men went to mixed working-class taverns. This was in the port, where sailors crowded to drink while their ships were docked. This reflects the long-standing fascination of gays for sailors (sailor images were a staple of the physique magazines discussed in Chapter 7). Narrators were only able to fill in some details of the end of the period when ships stopped in Montreal's port, before container ships eliminated the large crews with shore leave in the city's harbour and the St. Lawrence Seaway meant that they could unload further inland. One establishment that drew gay customers in the 1960s, and, in the 1970s, became an exclusively gay place, was the late nineteenth century harbour-front tavern Joe Beef's, named for its famous proprietor.²⁵⁵ In the mid-1960s, Trevor was taken to Joe Beef's by the same man who had introduced him to the Peel Pub a few weeks earlier.

[Joe Beef's] was wonderful at that time. I was a little overwhelmed by it at that time because it was a little rougher. That was interesting. ... So these [sailors] used to be in there and they livened up the place, and there was the local crowd, the local queens and everything else. The place would be hopping. In its final years, essentially gay bar. It was probably 90 percent in the 1960s. It must have mostly been weekends.

He recognizes with his last comment, that assessing how gay a bar was may depend on when you went there. The gay fascination with sailors is confirmed by Harry, who described going to Joe Beef for "seafood fantasies" in the 1960s.²⁵⁶ Trevor didn't go back to Joe Beef much though, until later, and eventually it closed in the early 1980s (*Gazette* 1982.04.15). Another of the old taverns in the port also became gay at the end of its life. After meeting his guide to the bar scene on his first visit to Bud's in 1969, one of the places Ralph was shown was the Neptune, across Place Royale from Joe Beef's. It became a favourite spot of his.

It's a shame that's gone. It was such a historic place. I used to be grateful just to sit at those oak tables. It was very friendly, funny, with a nice waiter or barman. There was a mix of straight sailors who accepted campy gays and butchy gays. ... It was so authentic. On one wall there was a wood sculpture of Champlain.

The Neptune dated back to 1813,²⁵⁷ and had always been frequented by sailors. In the last few years before its disappearance in 1977 or 1978, it was listed in gay guides and advertised in gay publications.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ See DeLottinville (1981/82) for full details of this history. One interesting detail is that in the dormitory above the tavern, men slept two to a bed and, apparently in the interests of hygiene, the proprietor insisted that they be naked.

²⁵⁶ See p. 315. This term is also used in a contemporary cartoon in the Toronto magazine *Gay International* (no. 14, June 1965, p.22), which shows two men at a table in a bar looking at two groups at other table, one of young men and one of sailors. One man asks the other "Are you having chicken or seafood tonight?"

²⁵⁷ *Petit Journal* 1955.12.18

²⁵⁸ *Ciao!* 1973.05/06:17; *Gay Times* 1(5, 1975.09); *Le Gai Québec* 1(5, 1975.10).

At the very end of the period covered by this study, a club located well away from the downtown and East End concentrations attracted a gay clientele for several years. The Apollo Café was on Park Avenue near Laurier, in a part of the city lacking other gay attractions except for one little-known sauna and a bar called Valentin that existed briefly on Mount Royal Avenue near Park in the mid-1970s. The Apollo was a prominent location for only one narrator, Ralph, as mentioned in the account of his entry into the bar world in Chapter 5. His description of the bar and its clientele reflect his interests as a clothing designer, as well as gay fashions of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Inside it was very cosy, sleazy. I'm attracted to sleazy bars, not people. It was cosy, with red and orange lights. It felt okay to be there. I loved the sense of humour, the funny one-liners, and learned to separate that from the bitchiness, the hurtful humour.

He described the interior, which was painted black.

That was the fad. The Apollo was the most quétainish room, really awful. In those days it was painted black. And the whole back wall—the bar was in an L shape—was done in shag orange fluorescent rug, imitation fur. It was blinding. And the ceiling was done with paper plates, real cheap ones, in lime green and orange. They were spray painted in these fluorescent colours creating a strange ballroom effect. At Christmas we stapled tree branches on top of plates, and hung icicles from them. It was very effective and fun to do.

He became one of the regulars, among whom a family-like feeling developed. The social backgrounds varied widely.

[There were] all different people. I met insurance agents, seamstresses, window decorators, bar people like waiters. There were professional dancers—they gave the lessons there. Also taxi drivers, artists. ... They were mostly French but spoke English. Sometimes there were Americans—it was a big deal if they were in town.

He stressed that the most important distinction was for effeminacy.

It was important not to be effeminate. There were effeminate types at the tables. The butches stood around.

At the end of the period studied here, gay men were leaving behind a concern for the mere existence of their clubs and moving on to new sound and lighting technologies that caused a revolution in the bar business and ushered in the era of discotheques. Ralph stressed the consequences for gay fashion (p. 346). Ralph's stated attraction to "sleazy bars" seems to have been satisfied by the homelike atmosphere of the Apollo, far from the hard-core sleaziness of the underworld bars of the "Main."

Outside of Montreal, bars and other gay attractions began to open in many regions during the 1960s. Many were in the Laurentian resort area north of the city. In some cases the gay clientele may have simply invaded an existing establishment, as one yellow press item asserts:

Les hôteliers du Nord sont emm... jusqu'au cou avec les homos qui envahissent leurs établissements à un rythme poignant! Quand les homos s'installent quelque part, les gens normaux ne reviennent plus. C'est donc assez inquiétant pour le chiffre d'affaires (*Ici Montréal* 1958.10.18:5).

This “*potin*” has the merit at least of reflecting the underlying importance of the commercial nature of bars. The invasion of the “homos” is not attacked on moral grounds (though this may be a background factor), but rather for its negative influence on profits. But it is more likely a deliberate attempt by bar management to reach the new gay clientele, as Len’s story of a Morin Heights bar in the early 1960s indicates.

We used to go up north, drive up north fifty miles to a bar where we could dance. In Morin Heights. There was a bar up there where you could dance on Friday and Saturday night.

More information on this and other commercial ventures into providing space for gay sociability will be presented in the section on gay business leadership.

One source of information on places that gays frequented outside the city in the 1960s is the listings in the *International Guild Guide* (p. 36). These testify to the presence of gay hangouts, or at least recognized cruising places in a number of small centres. This publication, the first widely marketed commercial gay guidebook, was updated annually. In 1964, it listed only Montreal gay places, a total of eight entries. In 1966, with better sources of information, they added five more Montreal bars, ten in Quebec City, and one in Hull. By 1968 there were also entries for Chicoutimi, Sherbrooke and Trois-Rivières (“Three Rivers”), while in 1969, Shawinigan appears with four entries, suggesting a local contact had suddenly been made by the editors.²⁵⁹ The gay marketplace, at least for drinking establishments, was in full expansion.

Since the period covered in this study, the spatial concentration of Montreal’s version of the “gay ghetto” (Levine 1979) has shifted away from the two primary centres, the “Main” and the area around Peel and Stanley Streets, that have been described in this chapter. Now it is in the “Village de l’est,” or “Gay Village,” that the majority of gay men of both language groups congregate to drink and dance (see Remiggi 1992, 1993). Businesses serving the gay market span a wide range of city districts, but the largest concentration is in parts of the city like the Centre-Sud (where the “village” is) and Plateau area just north of it. The Plateau is a traditional area of gay residential occupation, which attracts the commercial interest, as do the concentrations of Anglophone gay men in the western part of the downtown area. The steady growth of gay establishments between 1945 and 1970 accelerated thereafter and the diversification of types of business aimed at the gay market has created a highly complex and varied Montreal gay scene.

²⁵⁹ The collection of guidebooks was consulted at the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

6. The Gay Bar as Institution

Several general aspects of the gay bar as a social institution will be summarized in this section. The first part looks at bars as social centres where staff and regular customers maintained ongoing social interactions. Secondly, I will discuss the bars as businesses, focusing on the move in the late 1960s to gay control over these vital social spaces in response to new customer demand to correct the problems of the past. An important aspect of the operation of the establishments was their relation to organized crime and police corruption, which will be considered in the third part. Finally, I will outline the general patterns of relation between ethnicity, social class and bar clientele.

Staff and Regular Customers: While the mere existence of a bar and its location and hours of occupation were the basic facts of the schemata gays elaborated around these establishments, the people who worked in them had a direct impact on the way customers perceived a place. In gay bars certain waiters became famous, either because gay customers liked them or detested them. One item from the yellow press hints at such attitudes:

Dans certaines taverne de la métropole, les waiters sont engagés plus à cause de leur beauté plastique que de leur expérience. On sait que les taverne ne sont fréquentées que par des hommes... (Enfin presque!) (*Ici Montréal* 1956.12.29:4).

Some men commented on how unfriendly the heterosexual waiters could be in the 1950s.

Though he was welcomed by the management for his "work" getting older men to buy him drinks, Patrick disliked the waiters and the way they interacted with the gay customers. Harry remembered one particularly unpleasant member of the staff of the Tropical:

There was this terrible, terrible waiter, and I remember him standing there with a beer can and him taking a big look at the beer bottle and if it was empty would insist you would either buy or get out.

Patrick got along with the staff there fairly well, but did have some negative memories. Eugène also expressed a critical view of the relationship between staff and customers at the Tropical.

Les proprios, les waiters, c'était pas des gais, c'était des vieux. ... Ils te toléraient. C'était pour la piastre, évidemment. Si quelqu'un faisait pas l'affaire on le garrochait en bas de l'escalier.

At the time, of course, the Tropical held a unique position in the gay bar scene. Without competition, they could treat the gay customers however they liked.

Some customers got on well with the heterosexual and homosexual staff. A bar regular like Len developed personal relationships with bartenders and waiters, as well as the doorman mentioned previously.

I was always flirting with the bartenders. I think that's what the regular people go to a bar for I mean. As when, you know, you get really well known you can get messages through them and they

tell people you were in or you weren't in. You know it became sort of clubby. I used to be out all the time.

Since he was in the bar three or four nights a week, Len got so familiar with the staff that he could sometimes drink on credit, a rarity in the bar business.

Regular customers in a bar belong to a small, rather self-enclosed social world, but one which extends between all the overlapping bar networks making up this world. Connections between bar regular form highly efficient channels for the diffusion of information, a fact which new ventures must capitalize on to achieve initial commercial success. Len's story of the bar in Morin-Heights is a good example of this since it, like all the gay bars at that time, it depended on word of mouth publicity for its success. At the Piccadilly Club, one of Percy's favourite stories (he told it several times) was about borrowing champagne glasses from this bartender. Another topic that Walter and Percy mentioned several times was how much they liked to go to places where the waiters knew them. They preferred going to places where they were so well known that their drinks were automatically served to them as soon as they came in.

Regular customers could also become the object of gay discourse among other bar-goers. The gay world had its share of eccentrics, and they were portrayed in vivid or scathing descriptions and anecdotes, evoking shared past acquaintance with the character involved. Donald recalled people he had seen at the waterfront tavern Joe Beef and in other gay venues.

We used to see one big black buck with pressed hair, very obviously gay. Once at Joe Beef's, we were just going to go in and he arrived by taxi with his coat. It was summer, but he had his coat draped over his shoulder and just got out of the cab and drifted in. But he didn't close the door. He expected it to be closed after him like a real queen. In those days there were a lot of characters. There was another man who used to dress in riding boots and carry a crop. And he would whack his leg [while] having a pee at a can. He got a lot of friends. Another walked around the streets with two chows with purple fittings.

The last example, the man with the dogs in purple fittings, shows that recognition of such characters was not based solely on isolated sightings in the bars, but the same people might turn up on the street, especially for someone like Donald, who lived for a long time in a residential area (Tupper Street, west of downtown) with a dense gay population. Donald was more aware, perhaps than most people as a fellow dog-owner, but implied that the purple fittings would have been too effeminate for himself.

Gay Enterprise in the Bar Market: The 1960s saw the consolidation of the gay market, as new entrepreneurs followed the lead of the Tropical Room. This commercial expansion was just one part of a growing attention to the potential of gay consumer demand which will be

discussed more fully in Chapter 7. In the bar world, one of its most important consequences was the move to gay control over such spaces, now not only in the social control gay customers exerted in the older establishments, but the full control of gay managers and bar owners.

While the Hawaiian Lounge continued until 1971 with an old-style approach, catering to gay customers unfriendly heterosexual waiters in space shared with a large heterosexual clientele, a revolution was beginning elsewhere downtown. After ten years of predominance as a gay club, the Tropical faltered in the early 1960s, just as new ways of thinking about gays as bar customers, responding to a new generation of gay customers who disliked the way they had been treated by many clubs, led to a new policy of hiring all gay staffs and later gay management. By the late 1960s, there were also some clubs that were gay owned. The change began in 1962 when Armand Monroe transferred his show from the Tropical Room/Down Beat to a smaller place called the Lutèce, on Crescent Street. His customers followed. Monroe proudly recalled his initiative in hiring an all-gay staff for the bar.

It was the first time in Montreal that the queens came in and saw an only-gay staff. Ever after I hired only gays. Upstairs it was called Chez Armand. I filled it in one night—there was no other place to go. I threw the straight staff out and replaced it with gays. It had been a French restaurant and a *boîte à chansons en haut*. ... The place was very small. There was standing room only. That's where I did Marlene for the first time. It was so successful upstairs they opened the downstairs gay as well.

His run at the Lutèce lasted for about a year, after which he returned to the Tropical, which was closed by a serious fire in October 1965 which left only the part which had been the Tropical Room standing.²⁶⁰ Newspaper reports state that the fire was due to arson, and linked it to inter-clan rivalry for the nightclub market.²⁶¹

After the fire, these smaller premises first housed short-lived straight clubs but they didn't pay off so then owners Ralph Cabeto and Solly Silvers decided to reopen a gay club. They brought back Armand Monroe, who had spent the mid-1960s in California, to manage and host the new PJ's, a position he retained until the bar closed at the end of the 1980s. Again Monroe insisted on hiring gay staff. He showed me a photograph of the new club's staff, androgynous in lamé kaftans, saying that the outfits were "similar to what I wore on the street in the late 1950s." From this bar Monroe reigned as "Queen of the West," as he jokingly put it, while Bobette, who worked at the Bellevue Tavern, was "la Reine de l'Est."

²⁶⁰ Today occupied by a Mexican restaurant.

At about the same time, a bar called the Tapis Rouge was opened by Maurice Duclos, a gay man in a hotel on René-Lévesque at Mackay in the western part of downtown. It didn't last very long but was recalled by several narrators as the site of an important raid in about 1962. Étienne and Eugène said that its customers were mainly Francophones in the early 1960s, and that everyone wore jackets and ties. Despite the formal dress, Eugène cited this bar as one instance of the theme of class mixing in the gay world.

C'était un club de nuit, un piano bar; on portait habit et cravate, comme au Lutèce. Mais il y avait un mélange de classes sociales. Chez les homos, tout le monde parle à tout le monde.

Harry didn't mention social class when I asked him to describe the Tapis Rouge, but using the date of his return to Montreal after an absence in the early 1960s, he was able to state that it was still open in the fall of 1963.

At the Tapis Rouge, you went down the stairs. There was a hallway, There were two rooms, vaguely that I remember, it wasn't that big, it was sort of dumpy, like somebody's rec room, except that it had red carpet on the floor. It was called the Tapette rouge. ... It was in the basement. The entrance was on the street off Dorchester. You went down into the basement, two smallish room.

The Tapis Rouge was the first establishment, as far as is known, of owner Maurice Duclos who would later one run of the most important gay clubs of the late 1960s, when a full-fledged "club scene" emerged in Montreal. Whether the raid witnessed by Étienne and Eugène (p. 185) led to its closure is not known.

Two or three years from the closing of his Tapis Rouge, Maurice Duclos opened another bar, the Quatre Coins du Monde, on Stanley Street, a short distance south of the Hawaiian Lounge. The exact date has not been determined, but the Quatre Coins' primary period was in 1967, since several narrators associated it with raids that occurred in the months preceding the opening of Expo 67 (p. 188). Nevertheless, most narrators reported having rather pleasant memories of the Quatre Coins. Some said it was a really good place to cruise. Harry liked it for several reasons:

I remember the beer was quite expensive, \$1.50, quite a bit of money in those days. I enjoyed going, it was pretty safe there, and I must have been pretty successful sexually as well.

The Quatre Coins is one club that is readily mentioned by most men who were out in Montreal in the late 1960s. There were raids, but it is not clear how many men, other than owner Maurice Duclos, were arrested. Duclos became a well-known figure in the gay world.

In the mid-1960s, another gay man, Fernand Bastien, also opened a series of bars, most of which had the name Chez Fernand, indicating the personal relationship of the owner/manager

²⁶¹ One news report states that "le premier policier ayant pénétré dans l'immeuble redescendit les escaliers en vitesse en criant: 'Gasoline, gasoline!' Ses traces de pas sentaient d'ailleurs l'essence à plein nez!" (*Petit Journal* 1965.10.31).

to their operation. In all he ran four bars under that name from about 1967 to 1983, and may have worked at or owned others. Unfortunately, though several narrators mentioned Chez Fernand, none dwelt on it as a place of special significance, so the information available on his late 1960s initiative is largely from the gay guide books of the period.

Another important bar, whose appearance marked the shift to a whole new era when gays owned and managed bars as a matter of course, was the Taureau-d'Or, on Drummond Street north of Ste-Catherine. For Pierre its opening also indicated the beginning of a sharper class differentiation within the bar scene, although, as we have seen, this is more a matter of personal perception by Pierre and his friends, something that applied to their own generation, since the pattern had been established long before. His views will be summarized more fully in the concluding section on social differentiation in the bars. Here it is sufficient to note that the opening of the Taureau d'Or marked the beginning of a new phase in bar evolution, as far as Pierre was concerned.

Le Taureau d'Or—Ça, ça cruise plus. Vers 1967, quand le Taureau d'Or a ouvert dans l'Ouest, Oh là, c'était apparu comme de meilleur ton que la Main. Y en avait des gens qui n'allaient que dans l'Ouest, d'autres que dans l'Est.

Pierre may have appreciated this bar because of his perception of its greater "cruisiness" since for him, the Tropical wasn't a good place to cruise. Again, this makes clear the relativity of bargoers' evaluations. When you are twenty-two and out on the town, you have a different relationship to the set of night-spots than you will a few years later. However the bar marked a different sort of turning point. It was the first establishment opened by André Laflamme and Lorne Holiday, who thus began a career as gay entrepreneurs.

About a year after the Taureau-d'Or opened, Laflamme and Holiday, bought a building containing two bars, the Tunisia and Le Cachot, and the Anjou Restaurant, on Drummond Street near René-Lévesque. Patrick, who worked there as a bartender, tried to recall whether the Taureau opened in 1967 or 1968. The date is significant, he said, because it marked the opening of Canada's first discothèque, as a revolution was about to unfold in the bar industry.

It can't have opened in 67. Because the Tunisia, the Anjou had existed before, but the Tunisia's decor came from the Tunisian pavilion at Expo. They bought the Tunisian pavilion and slapped it into the Tunisia. ... It was just an extraordinary bar. It was also the first discotheque in Canada. It had flashing dirty pictures on the dance floor, and you had leather poufs and brass tables and even hookah pipes in the beginning till they got rid of them because people were ripping them off or something. The decor was splendid.

The complex had initially been for heterosexuals, but Laflamme and Holiday bought it a year later.

They bought the whole building and the three places went gay. ... Le Cachot was pretty much like Le Mystique,²⁶² it was the Sunday place.

Laflamme and Holiday became the first large scale gay entrepreneurs, and continued to expand their investments in gay establishments by later opening the Milord bar on Stanley, the Aquarius Sauna on Crescent Street and then the Neptune Sauna on Lagauchetière.²⁶³

Finally, the story of Bud's, a previously mentioned bar which opened beside the Hawaiian Lounge in the 1960s, illustrates that even without gay ownership or management, some establishments were able to attract a loyal gay clientele. Bud's may have been the successor to a bar called the Village, which was the lounge of the Chez Paree, though in an adjacent building. In either 1964 or 1968,²⁶⁴ it opened as Montreal's first denim and leather bar, as described by Trevor:

Then Bud's opened. I'm not sure of the year. I have the impression that it opened for a while then, closed then opened again, or something. [I saw it] whenever it opened. I mean it was between the Four Corners and the Hawaiian. I wouldn't have missed that! Again it was a mixed bag. More toward a levis crowd. Leather was still not a big thing in Montreal, I don't think. Levis and plaid shirts. A few leather people. I think it had a big crowd Sunday afternoons.

As we saw in Ralph's coming out story (p. 214), Bud's was a focal point for gay life in the late 1960s. With pretensions to being a leather bar, it signalled a move to internal segmentation of the gay bar market, a trend which would become definitive in the late 1970s.

While non-gay managements and owners could meet the new consumer demands of gay bar-goers, they did so in a changed context, in competition with those that were clearly gay-controlled. It is worthy of note, in concluding the discussion of gay-controlled space, that the new pattern emerged in the downtown area, not in the East, but that the gay entrepreneurs and managers were most often Francophones. The careers of Armand Monroe, Maurice Duclos, Fernand Bastien, and André Laflamme (whose partner Lorne Holiday was Anglophone) show that there was a strong Francophone presence in this market. While further research on their activities could expand the sketch presented here, the salient fact of the move to a new definition of the gay bar as a space where gay men not merely were tolerated but which functioned self-consciously as part of the community, its core institutions, was an achievement

²⁶² A basement club on Stanley north of Ste-Catherine that also opened at the end of the 1960s and is still in business today.

²⁶³ A rare insight into the profitability of the new gay businesses was provided by Laflamme and Holiday's testimony before the commission enquiring into the 1975 fire that destroyed the Aquarius and killed three men. With an initial investment of \$12,000 in 1971, they reported annual profits of \$100,000 (*Gay Times* 1(6, 1975.11:3).

²⁶⁴ In 1984 the bar displayed a banner that said it was the 20th anniversary, but there is no documentary confirmation of this date.

for which they deserve a great deal of credit. It marked a significant new phase in Montreal gay history

Bars, Crime and Corruption: Like any business, bars had to make a profit, and to be planned and managed with business skill. Without having interviewed those directly involved in the gay bar business, this aspect cannot be adequately documented. Some comments on the relationship between the allowed maximum number of customers were made by Armand Monroe, who had managed clubs. Beyond that however, was the tricky business of attracting and keeping a steady clientele. A very difficult aspect of the business, and one on which little information is forthcoming, is its relationship to the underworld. Was the image real or did it simply reflect the social stereotyping that associated homosexuality with prostitution and other forms of degradation?

Though some narrators were sure that organized crime groups operated some of the most important gay bars, they were not involved enough to supply much information.²⁶⁵ When Charles first went to the Perchoir d'Haïti in the early 1950s, he remarked:

[Il] y avait beaucoup de marginaux là-dedans, de toutes les sortes. J'imagine qu'y avait même la mafia.

The image of underworld connections was strong in some places on the Main, but even in the area between the two gay concentrations there were places where the social mix in some bars struck some of the narrators as involving underworld characters.

What struck several observant narrators in the 1960s, however, was the prevalence of police payoffs. Though the problem of police corruption is thought to have decreased after the Caron Commission's report in 1954, stories of continued police corruption did exist. An article in Péladeau's first major newspaper, *Nouvelles et Potins*, linked the obscenity arrests in and around the Tropical in 1956 to police protection.²⁶⁶ Sawchuck (1973:58) observes that standards of behaviour required by different bars varied widely, depending partly on management's relationship with police. He reports that in the early 1970s it was widely rumoured that there was a "system of illegal taxation" on gay bars, which were said to be under the control and the protection of the underworld. Whatever the truth of this, he insists, the

²⁶⁵ Especially relevant is testimony before the CECO (Commission de police du Québec 1976) in the 1970s. See also Champlain (1986:122.) on nightclub wreckings.

²⁶⁶ At the time this accusation was made, the tabloid paper was defending itself in a libel suit brought by an officer of the morality squad, so it may not be an "objective" source (Chabot 1986:57-58).

important points are that it was perceived as being the case, and that for successful bar operation, the management must have a working relation with the police.

A few narrators supplied specific information on this the "illegal taxation" of gay establishments, but it concerned the police protection racket, not gangsters. Eugène recalled how obvious the protection payments to policemen were at the Hawaiian Lounge in about 1966.

C'était un endroit protégé—caméra TV à l'entrée; il faisait des paiements aux détectives qui buvaient à une table; pendant qu'il y avait tellement de mouvement dans le "meat-rack"²⁶⁷ qu'ils faillaient jeter les détectives à terre.

Patrick and Arthur also confirmed these allegations. Harry also recalled the highly visible visits of the police to collect their money from the proprietor of the Quatre Coins.

The other place on Stanley [Quatre Coins] was in the basement too but it was bigger space and it went a lot longer and there was a kitchen in the back. And it was there that the police would go and receive their payoff—the plainclothes police man—then walk out. Anyone could see what happened. I mean if you were near the back, there were swinging doors, and you could see it. ... I mean, I remember knowing, being introduced sort of peripherally to the owner. He was supposed to be Mafia. Any gay bar owner was supposed to be Mafia at that point. Probably were, in terms of paying.

With only sporadic comments on the practice, it is impossible to see exactly how the system worked or to know its history. Whether the frequent arrests of Quatre Coins owner, Maurice Duclos (p. 188), were only for show is not clear. Alfred knew that the bar was warned of raids by befriending an Algerian who worked as a bartender there.

Un jour, dans un autre café, le Quatre Coins du Monde, je connaissais le barman—qui était pas gai d'ailleurs—mais très beau gars, très sympathique, un algérien. Puis un jour je descendais là pis me fait signe—non, reste pas. Va-t'en. Je suis parti aussitôt. Le lendemain, il me dit, "Non, ils me préviennent. La police m'appelle pour dire qu'il y aura une descente. Alors tes amis, tu les préviens."

Similar warnings had been issued to the Tropical a decade earlier when Patrick and his underage friends were going to there. Sometimes they would be stopped at the door by the doorman, who said, "No. Not tonight. Come back tomorrow." That meant, Patrick explained, that the bar had been tipped off that there would be a raid. This little known side of the relationship of the police, or some of the police some of the time, reinforces if anything the economic aspect. Gay space, like all urban space in capitalist society, is a form of consumption. The process that occurred in changing the social organization of homosexuality in Montreal in the middle of the twentieth century was facilitated by the growing recognition of buying power.

²⁶⁷ See Trevor's description of the "choir loft" sex "shuffle," p. 287.

Class and Ethnicity of Bar Clienteles: Among the comments by narrators quoted in the foregoing overview of bars were several which indicated that differences in clientele were a key factor when gay men chose which of the available establishments they preferred to drink and socialize in. One of the things that Eugène found most interesting about gay life was the mixing of social classes, of respectable and lowlife types.

Au Tropical Room et au Tapis rouge, t'avais la possibilité de rencontrer tous les strates. J'y ai vu une vedette de la télévision, des écrivains. J'ai été scandalisé quand un "André Gide canadien français" m'a pogné le cul au Tropical. C'était la démocratie du sexe. On était amené à voir tout le monde. Là j'ai eu des rencontres au hasard que autrement je n'aurais pas eues. J'ai dansé avec un futur ministre au Tropical.

Louis did not share this attitude to social mixing. His and Eugène's comments are an example of two diametrically opposed readings of the same bar.

Le Tropical, grâce à Armand Monroe, ça avait un cachet. Sans ça les bars étaient dégueulasses. Pleins de commerciaux, de gars qui sortaient de prison. Des rapports sexuels sur place. Plus tard, c'était le free for all.

Although there were some references to language and ethnicity as factors affecting who went where, the more significant line of demarcation was that of social class, disguised behind criteria of education and refinement (or being too "obvious") by those who preferred the middle-class world of the Peel Street clubs. On the other hand, some well-educated and "refined" men (especially Eugène and Pierre) had a strong attraction for the "rougher" "lowlife" environment of the "Main," or the overt sexual action of the Hawaiian Lounge.

Oscar was explicit in his preference for the discreet and respectable Samovar over the Hawaiian Lounge. Walter and Percy went along with the Piccadilly Club's refusal to serve the "obvious" gays, while Donald's guides to the tavern in the Mount Royal Hotel said they could only go there since they were with him, a masculine looking gay man. Even between the downtown bars there was a status difference, as comments by Leznoff's informants about the Tropical (p. 280) indicate. Len confirmed this view of the relative statuses of the Tropical and the Piccadilly Club. He agreed that some people wouldn't go to the Tropical because it was too lowlife. In contrast:

They would consider the Piccadilly was quite elegant and very reserved. I mean they were not openly gay although I think one of the bartenders there was gay but I knew a couple of older people—I mean like when I was in my twenties, forty was old right. So I had one friend from St Lambert who was in his forties who used to take me there for drinks and he was known. Actually I brought him out. He was about 29 and he didn't know anything about the gay bars really. You know, sex is one thing, bars are another.

Here we see how the bars constitute a paradigm which, constrained by the management's choices about whom to serve, provided gay men with markers of social standing and choices about the display of homosexual identity. The bars, in other words, constituted a knowledge

structure or schema for the communication of meaning about social identities. This type of shared knowledge structure was, I argue, one of the key constitutive factors in the emergence of a sense of gay community in the postwar period.

The same kinds of social distinction are clearly reflected in Leznoff's dichotomy of "overts" and "coverts." He quotes the latter as frequently referring to the overts as "riffraff." The unproblematic twinning of low class and obviousness no doubt merits fuller scrutiny. We can not rule out the existence of wealthy gays who, unlike Oscar, did not care what people thought and so might be counted as obvious and hung out in the lowlife bars of the Main. For most working people and middle-class professionals in particular, the display of markers of homosexuality that were readable by heterosexuals was a luxury they could not afford.

Language and class were strongly linked in the Montreal of the postwar period, though not co-determined. Like the individual bars, parts of the city were coded in a hierarchical schema in which the two factors intersected in a complex way, but whose underlying logic set up two contrasting sets of identifiers, in which the East was classed as lowlife, French-speaking, and full of overt gays, the West was seen as English, respectable and safe for covert gays.

The actuality of these cognitive structures should not be taken as a necessary determinant of social behaviour, but it was a mental map dividing the city in two that guided the choices of gay men. There was always much communication across these overlapping sets of boundaries, but no blurring of the social meaning of the categories. With time, the opening of the gay club scene in the West meant a shift away from the East. Speaking of the late 1960s, Pierre summarized the contrast from the point of view of a middle-class Francophone with a passion for lowlife:

Y avait tellement de gais sur la "Main"—ça débordait. Pis aussi, parce que la base des gais de la "Main" était du même milieu social que les autres usagers de la Main. C'était lowclass, hein? Quand le Taureau d'Or a ouvert dans l'Ouest, Oh là, c'était apparu comme de meilleur ton que la Main. Y en avait des gens qui n'allaient que dans l'Ouest, d'autres que dans l'Est.

As previously noted, here we are dealing with perceptions and points of view rather than hard facts. He himself continued to go to places in the East, but also explored the new clubs downtown.

The traditional Anglophone view was represented by Walter and Percy. After being accepted into the top of the hierarchy at the Piccadilly Club in the 1930s, they evinced little interest in going east, to the "Main" except during the war years when Montreal's social/geographic schemata were transformed by the presence of hundreds of thousands of

military personnel involved in the war effort. After 1945, they resumed their practice of staying downtown, with a few visits to the Café de la Paix on Ste-Catherine near St-Denis as the exception.

For educated middle-class Francophones like Alfred, Étienne and Eugène, the English-identified bars of downtown were more attractive than the drag queens and underworld scene of the East. From their accounts and others, it is clear that in most bars, especially the Tropical, the Hawaiian Lounge and the downtown taverns, the majority of the clientele was always Francophone. For working-class Francophones, the clothes, manners, and conversational skills of the middle class were essential tools for social survival in the "refined" world of the Piccadilly Club, the Samovar or the Kon-Tiki, while at the Tropical, social conventions were less demanding (though there was a dress code). The downtown taverns were also arranged in a hierarchy, with the St-Regis requiring the most restraint and the Dominion Square tavern the least. Not enough information was obtained on the various taverns of the "Main" to outline their internal differentiation, but it is certain from Pierre's and other narrators' comments that the exclusive gay club of the Main was much less dangerous.

While the drinking places of the "Main" were overwhelmingly Francophone in clientele, English speakers were not unwelcome. Since they were not bilingual and most regarded the area with alarm, middle-class gay Anglophones rarely went. In contrast, according to Louis, there was at least one downtown bar where Francophones were not welcome. I asked Normand and Jean if they could confirm this opinion. Normand remembered vaguely a tavern where he had some feeling of not being welcome. "Not hostility - they just didn't care about you," he said, but could not remember whether this place was on Drummond or Stanley Street. On the whole, however, there was clearly very little separation by language in the bars in the downtown area. Closer questioning of men like the narrators about exactly who talked to whom, and in what language, would be required to fill out the picture of linguistic/ethnic relations in this gay space. It may be taken for granted that the pre-eminent status of English in Montreal carried over into the gay world of downtown, while the cafés and cabarets of the "Main" were very predominantly frequented by French speakers. The mental maps of the occupants of each of the class and ethnic positions of Montreal gay men underlay their "bar horizons" of gay men, though the details of these cognitive structures were filled in through the vagaries of experience and in reaction to other influences in addition to cultural and class affiliation. One notable difference in gay bars is the access they afforded working-class men

who were not effeminate to socialize with middle-class men. While class mixing was a feature of large entertainment clubs like the Casa Loma, and visits to lower-class establishments for entertainment had long been recognized (as "shumming," see Erenberg 1981:252-259), a bar like the Tropical, where conversation was the most important social activity, was notable for its accessibility to all except the very effeminate. Language and cultural overlap occurred in a few specific domains of gay discourse, outside of which they remain as separate as elsewhere in the Quebec society of the time.

C. SPACE AND GAY COMMUNITY

The wide-ranging evidence of gay occupation of space, especially public space in a city like Montreal, demonstrates that the tabooed collectivity found ways to take over, whether by sharing or by claiming for their exclusive use, a wide variety of spaces for social and sometimes sexual activities. As gay men came to conceive of them as "gay places" (i.e. as meaningful spaces) they combined the spatial and practical attributes of location and accessibility with the symbolic and emotive connections of collective identity and membership. In addition to the purely physical aspect of space or territory for gays to inhabit, the emergence of such venues provided a location for action and for the expression of meanings that would, more than any other factor, be constitutive of a sense of community among men whose only apparent link was their preference for sex with members of their own gender. Gay space became territory, the defence of which would be a rallying cry of the movement in the 1970s.

Men who went to the most popular form of gay space, the gay bar, were customers in an exclusive, protected space. Despite (partly because of) the occasional police intrusions, this new openness in gay sociability led to the emergence of a sense of common belonging, a feeling of community. It was a type of social venue that was accessible to all, limited only by the ability of those on the outside of the "gay world" to find their way "in," and by the fact that these commercial establishments were geared to the sale of alcoholic beverages. Narrators related many stories of police actions against gay spaces. Their efforts against sex in toilets, parks, cinemas and saunas did not stem from a coherent effective policy, as the city lawyer's testimony in the 1950s (p. 103) shows. The prevalence of police corruption cannot be adequately assessed from the few stories of these narrators, though there is little reason to think

they were wrong, and that even in periods of "clean-up" there were relationships between the police and the bar scene that had nothing to do with law enforcement.

External action against gay space was far from being the only factor that encouraged the emergence of a sense of collective identity. In Chapter 7, I will outline many ways in which gay men used the bars as a setting to create their own meanings, to bring to fruition initiatives of a more purely symbolic type, such as the further development and wider diffusion of gay language and discourse forms, and the wide variety of themes that were specific to different segments of the gay world. These discourse patterns were based on knowledge structures of many kinds around which the gay community crystallized in an ever more apparent way up to the emergence of a vocal political movement in Montreal in 1971.

The term "bar horizon" has been used in this chapter to mean the mental representation of the local set of bars frequented or heard about by a bar-goer, someone holding knowledge about it in common with others. The personal view affords a perspective on the overall set of knowable facts about gay spatial practices, a set of schemata of which no one had a comprehensive picture. I have used the terms "gay world" and the more specific "bar scene" to represent this totality. By compiling information from a number of well-informed narrators, I believe I have sketched the general contours of the gay spaces that existed in Montreal in a preliminary outline on which future work can build.

This schematic portrait of bars reveals them as elements in a larger structure which symbolized the individual's attachment to the gay community, his adoption of gay identity, and his position in terms of the three major social distinctions which I have examined: class, ethnicity and overtness as a gay man. The overall data structure can be filled out with additional research using corporate and official records, oral histories with entertainment industry personnel and other informed sources. Gay bars are seamlessly integrated to the overall "hospitality" industry and the economics of leisure practices of urban North Americans. While gay bars occupy a rather specialized niche in North American business history, their creation had major implications for the development of gay community. There was an entrepreneurial response, partly legitimate and partly underworld, to serve the gay market, but it met symbolic needs as well. In the next chapter, I will examine the multiple symbolic schemata that developed in the gay world, for which the mastery over space was a prerequisite.

Chapter 7. The Symbolics of Belonging and the Building of Community

The gay community manifests its existence in a variety of symbolic forms, knowledge structures and patterns of meaningful actions that unfold in the spaces discussed in the last chapter. Knowledge about a wide range of actions and topics of discussion are shared in collectively maintained schemata whose existence is, I argue, the main manifestation of the gay community. Not only are these shared language and cultural systems expressions of collective identity, but they also offer a channel for the exercise of leadership. In undertaking deliberate actions that fostered the development of a self-aware gay community, individuals or small groups symbolize their affective attachment to the larger collectivity. Leadership roles constitute a particular type of schematic construct, a patterning of behavior that results from a decision to commit time and energy to building the collectivity by passing on its shared knowledge or by acting to furnish opportunities for sociability, opening spaces where the community can further expand and develop.

In a time when gay men received overwhelmingly negative messages in authoritative discourse, media and cultural portrayals, the sharing of alternative discourse in the protected spaces that were becoming more common and more exclusively gay as the postwar period progressed, provided a source of positive self-images that made it easier to survive the stigma of homosexual orientation. Gay men listened to fag jokes, got stared at on the streets, heard and read denunciations of themselves in official discourse, were arrested, beaten and murdered because of their sexual orientation in the period of this study. Signifying practices like these are still current in the 1990s. Today however, there is a collective response, an alternative set of signifying practices which have eliminated the near-monopoly of homophobic discourse. How this alternative set of practices arose is the focus of this study.

In this chapter I will suggest that the central process through which gay men emerged as a community in the third quarter of the twentieth century was through a slow build up of shared knowledge structures or schemata, which provided symbolic vehicles for increasing numbers of men to identify with the social group founded on sexual orientation and to resist the controls and obstacles placed in their way by the surrounding society. I will argue that individuals

participated in this process to varying extents, related to their social backgrounds and network possibilities, and that the private acts of community affiliation were as important to the long-term success in changing the social position of homosexuality as were the public leadership roles played by a much smaller number of people. For reasons of space, only a selected subset of such practices will be discussed and illustrated with material from the life history interviews and other data.

A. SHARED SCHEMATA

Coming out, in a social rather than a psychological sense, means affiliating cognitively and emotionally with the gay community through a process of socialization. In his 1954 study, Leznoff wrote in detail about the process of "learning the ropes" that gay men undergo once they decide to come out. In this clandestine world, the new entrant does not know what to expect. The gay world can be a difficult social environment, in which successful functioning can only be achieved through a process of learning. In Chapter 5, I discussed socialization from the point of view of the relationships between the neophyte and others from whom he learns. In this section I will look at the content of his learning the types of knowledge, whose particular schemata must be acquired for success in the new sociocultural domain.

1. Language and Discourse Forms and Practices

Linguistic practices lie at the heart of the symbolics which are the base of gay community affiliation. In learning and using the language and discourse practices of the group, the individual proclaims his affiliation much more publicly than in the private sexual acts which are commonly thought of as characterizing gay life. Illustrations of specifically gay language practices²⁶⁸ can be found throughout this study, and I will only attempt here to briefly review the areas of language which a fuller study would have to address.

Lexical and Prosodic Features of Gay Speech: Specifically gay lexical items (such as the use of the word "gay" itself, or the equivalent French expression "*il marche*") have only been documented in Quebec to a limited extent, as reported in Chapter 4.²⁶⁹ Another expression indirectly identifying someone as a homosexual was Jean and Normand's "*Il est à la mode.*"

²⁶⁸ Other semiotic systems such as eye contact rules should be included in this discussion. Leznoff (1954:156-160) provides an insightful comment on this and other aspects of gesture in the gay world.

²⁶⁹ The major sources on gay language in Quebec are Lapointe (1974) and Garneau (1980) for French, while Leznoff (1954, 1956) remains the most important historical source for usage in English.

These expressions allowed discreet references to others to be made in public spaces like restaurants without outsiders understanding what was being said. In English, “smart” was a similar fashion-inspired code word for homosexual reported by Oscar. These and other terms that actually name the collectivity will be discussed in more detail in the section on membership (p. 359). Several additional aspects of gay usage were discussed by the narrators. Vocabulary and syntax together relate to the prevalent practice of feminizing names and pronouns (discussed more fully in a later section on camp behaviour). Thus, in a story told by Alvin, the pronoun choice in “She’s one of us” was a sign not only of the affiliation of the person referred to but of the existence of the gay community itself. To the well-known usages of “mary” and “queen,” Donald added “doll” while Trevor contributed the critical comment “not pretty,” using an adjective with feminine connotations. In addition to characterizing people, there were specifically gay ways of describing places. Donald and John used the term “kicky”²⁷⁰ in speaking of a sauna, while Patrick sometimes described a place as having “very working toilets.” Some narrators used the more conventional “active,” and Harry was one of many narrators who described certain places as “interesting” (often with an exaggerated pronunciation) whether they were toilets, bars, or street corners where one could cruise. Percy and Walter, the oldest narrators, whose gay language had been acquired in Toronto in the 1920s, had usages no one else shared. For them to “do a job on him” meant to perform fellatio; to “have an affair” with someone meant “have sex,” a much more restricted than its current meaning. Other narrators used two words still in current use, “roommate” and “chum,” which both serve as euphemistic ways of referring to lovers, since their basic meanings disguised the true nature of the relationship.²⁷¹

Cultural interests shared by gays are naturally reflected in the specific vocabulary of the gay world. In current usage, for example, “He’s a friend of Dorothy” as a coded way of saying someone is gay, deriving from gay men’s fondness for Judy Garland, whose character bore that name in the film *Wizard of Oz*. In the period covered by this study, Stefan wasn’t sure the reference to Dorothy was in use. Instead he cited a Canadian variant, “friend of Mrs. King,” a reference to Prime Minister Mackenzie-King, a bachelor living with his mother and thus viewed

²⁷⁰ Sawchuck (1973:46) glosses this word as “avant-garde,” but in his context (wearing ‘kicky’ clothes is frowned on in a mixed club by both straight and gay customers), as well as in those cited here, the meaning is closer to “sexy.”

²⁷¹ “Roommate” is used in this way in both English and French, while “chum” is the standard word for “friend” in current Québécois French, and is used in the sense of “boyfriend” for girls as well as gay men. “Chum” is also current among Montreal Anglophones due to language contact.

as potentially gay.²⁷² In Québécois French a similar expression makes reference to a purported gay holiday, the Onze Août (August 11, based on the resemblance between the stereotyped lisping gay pronunciation of “*11 août*” and “*on joue*,” though no one can explain why this particular instance of effeminate speech should be significant).²⁷³

One specific area where gay lexical practices served a functional purpose was in the nicknaming of bars. Louis produced an extended list of nicknames, sometimes several for one establishment, explaining that nicknames were needed so that men could talk about where they had been without fear of giving themselves away. But Harry’s casual reference to a nickname for the Tapis rouge (the Tapette Rouge, “the Red Queer,” also “the Red Fly Swatter”) derives from camp humour as much as to any concern with secrecy. Like some friends of mine,²⁷⁴ Harry seems to have known people who always had a way of “sending up” the places and people they talk about, as well as asserting membership in an in-group who could catch the reference.²⁷⁵

When Harry lived in England in the 1960s, he was exposed to what he took for an intentional effort to develop a secret gay language. His friends there taught him a few expressions in Polari (or Piccadilly Polari). His British friend Sandy:

talked a gay talk that I’d never heard from anyone else, sort of a gay slang in London. And the only phrase I can remember was “*carpe* [?] *la capella*” (“see the hat”), a combination of Spanish, Italian and English, sort of a gay argot in London at the time, among queens. I was just fascinated. Maybe it was a spin-off from Cockney which is all based on sound too. It sounded like what you were saying or was borrowed from other languages. It was quite funny. There were wonderful things.

Though he did not recall the name of the language,²⁷⁶ Harry was interested in it as an expression of gay collective existence.

Prosodic features, intonation and other aspects of pronunciation merit study, if only to investigate the reality between the stereotyped gay pronunciation which is targeted by this yellow newspaper item:

Trois homos, Gary, Raymonde et Claudette, ont bien amusé la foule, dimanche soir, à Thetford, pendant l’intermission, à la joute de baseball entre Plessisville et Thetford. Les «ma chère», «tous», «nous», «voiiyons» revolaient de tout bord et de tout côté (*Ici Montréal* 1958.08.09:7).

²⁷² His actual sexual orientation was not really important; the expression claims him as a symbol because of these characteristics.

²⁷³ This is clearly a Québécois expression, since only in Québécois French is the final “t” of “août” silent. In France the joke doesn’t work. This was pointed out to me by Denis Boullé.

²⁷⁴ Kent Biggar (personal communication) has a nickname for virtually every bar.

²⁷⁵ Encapsulated in the “gay”/“homosexual” dichotomy in the language practices of some gay men discussed above (87). See the comment by homophile movement founder Harry Hay in *Word is Out* (1978:244).

²⁷⁶ Recent publications by Miller (1995:293-295) and Stewart (1995:197) provide an explanation for this reference. McArthur (1992:790) explains that Polari was spoken by “sailors, itinerants, people in show business and some homosexual groups.” This gay argot became public knowledge in England through its use in a BBC radio comedy program that was popular during the 1960s (Gregg Blachford, personal communication).

Among the narrator accounts, one story shows that speaking “too well” could be taken as a sign of effeminacy by heterosexual men. Speech style gave Émile away at his new job for the city. He blamed his over-enunciation²⁷⁷ on his experience in a theatre school.

Alors, pendant un an et demie, ça a été l'enfer parce que moi je sortais d'une école de théâtre. Je faisais attention à ma diction—“ici et là,” pis en 1957, [en prononçant] “ici et là,” tu passais pour une belle tapette.

The expected pronunciation at that time was “icitte.”

On a more general level of the style of gay talk, Leznoff (1954:126) provides an example of a verbal exchange that exemplifies the bitter wittiness that interpersonal conflict within the overt group could produce.

Louis: You couldn't hold on to any man if you tried.

Dollard: You know that Pete left because he was offered a better job in Toronto.

Louis: I know doll, but of course you had nothing to do with his getting sick of your lousy routine.

Dollard: Not at all dear. As a matter of fact I know plenty of people who would be dying to sleep with me. Including yourself.

Jeff: You're just jealous because you couldn't hold on to Pete and we're still together. You know that's true.

Louis: Oh let the whore rave on. Me sleep with her. I'm no lesbian.

Dollard: Jeff was not always so butch my dear.

Robert: Now girls, put away the hat pins and let's settle down to a nice quiet evening.

Leznoff says that after this incident, “in which Jeff loyally supported ‘his wife,’ Dollard and Louis were not on speaking terms for a month.” Robert, the central figure or “queen” of the overt group, here exercises a calming role to allow the group to continue functioning. Some more light-hearted examples of this discursive style will be presented in the section on gay humour.

A broad study of the language aspects of Montreal gay life is needed to do justice to the complexities of a city with two dominant natural languages which contribute to a set of gay language practices that to some extent transcends the boundary between French and English. In the gay world, in addition to the specific linguistic and knowledge structure evidence discussed above, there is clear evidence for the active creation and maintenance of discourse practices in social interaction as a means by which members constitute the community around them.

Coming-Out Stories and Other Genres: Patternings of conversation according to topic and illocutionary force, i.e. how what is said affects social relations between listener and speaker), characterize different aspects of gay society and gay social occasions. In Chapter 3, I discussed

²⁷⁷ Cory (1951:32) mentions over-enunciation as a characteristic of gay talk, and thus a way of signifying gay identity to those with the discursive socialization to recognize it.

the usefulness of “genre” as a category of schema, and its underpinning by the discourse community that creates and maintains it. Bar conversation among friends, pick up routines, refusals, humour, sarcasm and declarations of eternal love all rest on a schematic substructure which gives them linear linguistic form. In addition to varieties of conversational form, there exist certain particular genres of discourse, especially the coming-out story, the autobiographic account of one’s discovery of self as gay, and/or entry into gay sexual practice and society. Other genres involve accounts of sexual exploits or humorous recountings of ignominious failure. Like heterosexual couples, gay couples have a “how-we-met” story. Examples of this genre, collected from long-term couples, are presented in Appendix A-5 but are not further analysed here. The interviews also contain traces of what might be properly considered gay folklore, since an example of an urban legend, with the characteristics of a cautionary tale concerning public sex, was provided by one narrator.

The “coming out story” is a gay conversational genre, which has also become a rather common written genre since the advent of the gay liberation movement.²⁷⁸ For the individual, it is the central text of gay identity and, as we have seen in Chapter 5, every gay man has an account of his initiation into gay sex and his socialization in the gay world. Biddy Martin (1988) stresses the constitutive role of autobiographic self-accounts, for the community as well as for the individual. Her analysis focuses on lesbian autobiography, where coming out into an autonomous community of women has a different social meaning than it does for gay men, whose maleness gives them automatic access to public space that women did not (and do not) enjoy under the sex/gender system in place. Nevertheless the coming-out accounts of lesbians and gay men rest on some shared experiences and assumptions, such as their tendency to explicitly or implicitly reject the sin and sickness models of homosexuality in favour of some more positive account of the variability of human sexuality.

The schematic structure of the coming out genre, as well as its importance for gay men’s self-concept, can be clarified by examining two versions told by the same man seven years apart. In earlier research on Montreal gay history, I interviewed Patrick, who began his

²⁷⁸ “Coming out” is not a recent expression, though its history is hard to trace. It is included in Legman’s (1941) listing “The Language of Homosexuality.” Legman defines “come out” as “To become progressively more and more exclusively homosexual with experience.” He links it to the expression “to be brought out,” meaning “to be initiated into the practice of homosexuality.” A 1965 listing, *The Guild Dictionary of Homosexual Terms* gives this definition: “Come out (v.): To become increasingly more and more aware of one’s own homosexuality by acts and experiences; not to be confused with “brought” (or “bring”) out, which means the ‘first’ or nearly first act of homosexuality which leaves the way open to ‘come out.’”

discussion of the bar world with an account of his introduction to the gay world by cruising Central Station while still very young. This is the first version of his coming out story:

I have a friend who I came out with—I mean we came out together. [At age] 11 or 12, we used to come downtown, in the little trains from Ville St-Laurent, and we were told—his mother anyway, warned him about dirty old men who picked up young boys. So naturally the next day we went to Central Station and I picked up a guy named “Ralph Ebert,” who also happened to have debauched several other kids I later met, ‘cause that was his shtick. But I picked him up. I remember going up to this man who walked by and just looked at us ... St-Laurent faggots and he just walked by and gave us a look and I said “That’s one, that’s one!” And I walked after him and I asked him for a light, a twelve year old with a cigarette hanging out of his mouth! And he lit my cigarette and walked away and I ran after him and then I asked him for the time and he gave me the time. And he walked away and stood somewhere else and he looked at me and I went up to him and asked him for another light and he lit and he turned around, and as he turned around I just threw my butt on the floor and stepped on it and I said “Excuse me,” and he turned around and I said, “Could I have another light?” I mean, I was determined!

In the interview for the present study, conducted seven years later, Patrick told the same story as follows:

A couple of friends whom I’d met from school—and we all obviously had the same leanings. ... It was [at] Central Station, because we were from St-Laurent. We used to take the little train into Central Station in Montreal, and there were gentlemen who used to cruise the station. And I was determined, I really was determined! The first time I picked somebody up—and I picked him up! A guy passed by and kind of looked at us, and so “He’s one, he’s one, he’s one!” And I was pushed, being the more daring one of the bunch, or the stupidest, I don’t know. I was pushed into it and I went up to him and asked him for a light. And he gave me a light and walked away and I followed and asked him for the time. And he gave me the time and walked away. I could see he was interested. I think he was just scared shitless of somebody so young. And then I stubbed out my cigarette and pounced on him again and asked him for a light once more. And I must have gone through three-four cigarettes in half an hour of heavy cruising before he opened conversation. And he took me to a room which smelled of a room that he kept just for such purposes. It was a rooming house, but not one of the check-in check-out type. He had a key. And there was somebody there, an older fellow, who couldn’t have been a day over sixteen or eighteen [laughing], I don’t know, who was there. And he told him to skedaddle while we did our thing. It was rather OK in fact. It was a lesson. And I found out later that he was responsible for a lot of people I knew coming out. But yeah, for years after we were talking about our first one, he was the first one for many people my age. I know them. And then we went—that was my first experience and I had to recount everything to my friends. And the next day we went again—Was I in school that day? No. We went back the next day and I picked up somebody else, with whom I had a running relationship for about two years, three years.

A few observations may be made in comparing these two texts. In the second, more relaxed telling, the first difference lies in the expansion of the friendship group from two to an unspecified larger number. The fact that it was Patrick who took the initiative, convincing the reluctant older man to have sex with him, remains unchanged. The details of the rooming house are also new, but most significant is the addition that he immediately recounted his experience to his friends, transforming it into a discursive form in a story that he has doubtless retold hundreds of times since. His comments on the telling of the “first one” among his peer group is a clear indication of the importance of the coming out story for young gay men. In schematic terms, the coming out story conforms to general narrative conventions, with the added feature that the conflict resolution which provides its climax is founded on an

understanding of sexual identity as pre-existent, waiting to be put into practice. The dénouement of the coming out story is a period of learning and exploring gay life, emphasized in Patrick's second version.

For Leznoff's overt group, the narration of sexual adventures was at the heart of group interaction among the "overts," providing a means by which members competed for status by proving their sexual conquests (Leznoff 1954:124). The narrow focus on conquests sounds suspect to today's reader. Leznoff may simply be reflecting the kind of shock expected from a well-brought up researcher when confronted by a situation where the rules governing thematic choice were less anti-sexual and where a humorous tone predominated. One of Percy's favourite anecdotes began with an aside to Walter, "I should tell Ross about the chap I had in the navy." This, together with the fact that this was the first of several re-tellings of this anecdote in the course of my interviews with this couple, attest to its status as an "oft-told tale." Percy had forgotten where he met the sailor, but he picked him up in a club while Walter was away in the army.

Anyway, I had a chap. He was in the merchant navy, and he only got to Canada about once in six months, then he'd be on furlough or whatever for quite a while. And he'd been so long at sea, that when you went to bed with him, he wanted five affairs during the night. He was really a sexy person. Periodically, he'd come and stay with me. So one night, I had a friend from New York staying with me—in just the one bed. He was sleeping with me. He was gay, too. ... I had to get up in the morning and go to work, of course. So, after we'd gone to bed, the doorbell rang ... This was my sailor. I didn't say anything to my friend from New York, but after I let him in, I went to bed with the sailor on the chesterfield in the living room, and he had to have five affairs during the night. So in the morning, I said to this sailor, Now, after I leave, you go in and get in bed with the chap in the bedroom, which he did, and nearly killed the chap from New York with the amount of affairs he had—another five. That was quite—he was really sexy. Anyway you wanted it as long as he could have it. He was just a small chap, too, but he knew sex from one end to the other.

Walter reacted to this telling by relating that the man had turned up the night he was discharged from the army, but when Percy introduced him, the sailor fled, never to return (much to his regret). The story typifies the interested and amused way Percy and Walter talked, when interviewed in their eighties, about their own and each other's sexual adventures over the course of their long relationship.

I have reproduced this story-telling interview segment at length in order to make plain the conventionalized features it has acquired through many recountings. Among other things, this story illustrates the kind of storytelling that was based on gay sexual culture. Since these were not taken as necessarily having deep emotional and symbolic significance, they were often the source of hilarious, overtly embroidered anecdotes. They could also serve as raw material for themes like "how strange people are" or "how stupid people are." Anticipating a fuller

discussion of gay narrative and other discursive genres, I believe Leznoff is right in assigning them a central place in the construction of a "we-feeling," but errs in thinking that sexual conquest is the main or only theme, since stories superficially readable as narratives of sexual conquest, may in fact have a far more complex thematic structure in the hands of expert language users.

Since sex practices were less important than more community-related issues in this research, I gathered relatively little material on them in interviews. One way in which the two topics intersect, however, is in sex-related folklore. Compare Goodwin's (1989) versions of this legend with that given by Donald. Goodwin presents his story as an example of gay men's fear of being attacked, saying also that it is "probably the most common one in current circulation in the gay community." The story was collected from a New Yorker in the early 1980s:

I just thought of one story about the gay who went into a glory hole—that is a john which has a hole cut in the partition in the crapper, OK?—and he stuck his cock through the hole and was well massaged by the person on the other side, who then stuck a hat pin through his cock, preventing his exit from the hole (quoted by Goodwin 1989:64).

Goodwin also cites an earlier, very similar version which his informants said was going around in Chicago at an unspecified date. He quotes another version with a different twist from Iowa City in 1952 or 53:

There was a drugstore in Iowa City with stairs inside to a bathroom in the basement that people would come in off the street to use. There were two stalls or a stall and a urinal with a glory hole. Gays would meet there, and the police would harass them. One day an undercover cop went in there, and this gay man recognized him. He'd been lying in wait for him, so when the undercover policeman stuck his penis through the glory hole, the gay man stuck a hairpin through it and went upstairs and told the policeman, "Your friend is waiting for you" (quoted by Goodwin 1989:106).

As someone with an active experience of toilet sex, Donald had heard a more violent variant:

There was one awful glory hole in Morgan's [Department Store] in front. Gruesome story. Two-seater can. Some enterprising person had cut through the steel. Some guy's cock was chopped in there. We avoided it like the plague.

The legend of the bloody glory hole is sufficiently well established to have served as the basis for a gay detective story (Goodwin 1989:105).

A final example of a gay discursive form is the gay ancestor and hero story. One obvious means of expressing pride in gayness is to claim that well-known historical figures were gay. Thus Michaelangelo, Alexander the Great, Lawrence of Arabia, and others are included in the illustrious forerunners, as in Rowse's *Homosexuals in History* (1977). This type of conversational thrust sometimes says more about the current identification of speaker and hearer than it usually does about the historical personage under scrutiny, since the speaker

seldom makes any concession to the different historical and cultural setting in which the forerunner lived out his sexual or other identity. Such assertions can be made on little evidence and thus they say more about the speaker's view of collective identity than about the figure named as gay. Interest in contemporary singers and writers like Trenet, Gide²⁷⁹ and Genet, gave gay men an opportunity for seeing positive images of gay men succeeding, unlike the media portrayals of monsters and victims of scandal.

Humour, Exclusion, and Solidarity: Humour has two interrelated but distinct functions, boundary maintenance and group solidarity maintenance, which are elicited by different sets of social and discursive situations. Sociability, and nearly continuous conversation which is its main component, is, as Fowler (1985:65-66) explains, essential because "continual speaking affirms and reconstitutes the group's values and the individual's status and roles." Friendship or larger social group discourse not only functions to maintain inner coherence for the group, but also serves to demarcate its boundaries, since outsiders do not use the same forms in the same way. Since the life history interviews were conducted on the understanding of common membership between myself and the narrators, boundary humour was not elicited, though Ernest recalled that in the Sherbrooke society of his youth it was "*de bon ton*" to make anti-gay jokes. Most of the narrators' jokes were of the solidarity type, serving a discourse function of maintaining shared schemata or knowledge structures for the social group, as well as simply providing amusement. Because the form of my primary data is life history interviews, I did not collect standard formally structured jokes, so I can only discuss humorous anecdotes in conversation. Here the connection between humour and other types of discourse is easier to see than in the case of highly formal jokes. Humorous anecdotes clearly fit into a continuum of amusing stories, retellings of media accounts, and entertaining accounts of personal lived experience. In formal terms, the structure of anecdotes means they are likely to be longer than the few lines of the standard question and answer joke or the set-up and punch line joke. They function on the basis of humour as emergent meaning created in the interaction between teller and listener.

One outstanding humorous anecdote of Trevor's had previously been recounted to me by a friend of his, with some variation. In discussing the range of gay bars in Montreal when he

²⁷⁹ André Gide won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1947.

came out in the early 1960s, he mentioned Joe Beef's waterfront tavern, which gay men liked because it was full of sailors. The ultimate dream was to be invited onto a ship to spend the night. He had heard this story, he said, directly from the person it happened to.

This drag queen and a friend of hers were down there one night and they got invited back by some of the British sailors, and they were on the ship and she said, I don't know, at one point during the night I heard all these bells clanging and everything else, and I didn't think twice of it. But she woke up the next morning and looked out the porthole to see the skyline of Quebec going by. So there's a pilot comes on at Quebec to take the ship from Quebec down as far as Father's Point or Pointe-au-Père. So her and her friend had to get off on the pilot boat looking none too pretty and all the crew waving on the deck and once they got into Quebec City to make their way back to Montreal. They were not pretty.

In formal terms, the beginning and end of the anecdote are clearly marked. Interestingly, Trevor left out one detail that his friend who first told me the story had included. This was an addition to the last part of the story: They had to make their way back to Montreal in drag and without any money.

This is how an anecdote moves from personal story to folklore. As it circulates an anecdote maintains its theme and the point it makes (here the ludicrous situations that queens get themselves into because of sex), but successive retellers, or in one person's successive retellings, it may evolve in the direction of making it more effective as a story, in this case by adding the final line about the lack of money. What this means is that as well as looking at the knowledge structures that relate to the thematic content, we need to bear in mind the genre schemata, the formal characteristics demanded of a story in a given culture, which reshape retellings both for original narrators with the passage of time and even more so for subsequent narrators. The latter may be more concerned with making the story work in a social situation in order to enhance their prestige as raconteurs or to make a moral point.

For this particular story, the thematic content most relevant to understanding how the creation and diffusion of an anecdote works to reinforce gay community feeling consists, firstly, of the reference to sailors. One of the primary iconographic fixations in gay imagery up to the late 1960s was sailors, until the United States Navy stopped requiring its men to wear their uniforms when on shore leave. The increased awareness in society of gays as a social category may also have led to a decline in the availability of what another narrator called "seafood fantasies." Reference to this theme thus implies an acknowledgement of the shared fondness for sailors, or at least the knowledge that this was a "gay thing."

A second way this and many stories contribute to a sense of collective belonging is that they are about the gay world. They enshrine the life experience of men who participated in gay

life in a conversational genre. With Donald, humorous anecdotes were an explicit part of the version of gay life that he wanted to record. He struck me as a man who had always gone about his business in a serious but good-natured way. He laughed as he spoke of how he and Evan, his first lover, now both in their seventies and living in Toronto, still like to play a game about gay world characters they had known in the old days in Montreal: "I'm thinking of ...". One of their favourite characters was an Anglophone named Henry, who only liked thin French men:

And we'd just say, isn't that something! ... All he liked was little French madames, and he would get one, and practically—and you'd see this poor guy getting plumper and plumper and plumper. Henry sort of fed him, fed him, fed him. He used to force-feed his numbers. If you started to put on weight, Evan said, "Oh, you're trying to get into Henry Nelson's bed!" That was a definite no-no—to put on weight.

For people like Donald, humour permeates a great deal of social interaction. When, in the initial group interview with Donald and John, I asked for information on a particular sauna, it led to a spate of verbal jousting between the two old friends over John's (reputed) predilection for a certain "type" of man:

[?] One I'd like to know more about was a sauna on Lusignan Street.

[D] Oh yes! I know about that one! It was run by a great big—Oh, John would have gone crazy about this one—

[J] A hairy brute, was he?

[D] No, it was more the big dumb Slavic type.

[J] Oh, oh, thanks a lot!

[J] Give me a dumb polack any day!

In word play of this type, the objective is just to be clever. The speakers are not concerned with content (i.e. derogatory Polish stereotyping), only with reasserting old railleries. These same men had read tabloids or yellow papers like *Midnight* and *Justice Weekly* and delighted in teasing each other about imaginary ads they had placed in one of these papers, imputing to the friend the lurid sexual proclivities of the ads (see p. 209). Unlike anecdotes, repartee doesn't even pretend to present reality accurately. It is hard to say whether John did have a penchant for Slavs or whether he was just playing his role in the conversational sequence initiated by Donald.

Later in the group interview, the topic of education was raised, which for Donald immediately led to the subject of public sex in university washrooms, and the telling of another anecdote, this time in outline form. Throughout the narrative, John contributes "back channel" encouragements, over-emphasising his British accent by imitating Cockney:

[D] I got a new job in '55, and went back to school at night.

[?] Did you have a problem with the accounting exam?

[D] Yes. It was hard to be gay and go to Sir George so much. I would go to the library with best of intentions.

[J] Took the poor cow years to—

[D] [in a mock-aggrieved tone] Took me forever to get that fucking degree. But my friendships are long-lasting. Tim Elton, [who was] in one of my classes there, was married. Still is. [We had] many an enjoyable study period there. One night he wore my shorts home by mistake.

[J] [flatly] She noticed.

[D] We said we'd been at the Y exercising. He'd spin some fabulous tales.

This shows how a group of old friends maintains patterns of humorous interaction over decades, and recycles old themes as an affirmation of their mutual commitment and of their place in the gay world.

Another humorous anecdote from the interviews was a story Alvin told about his attempts to make friends in Montreal after moving to the city.

You see, when I arrived in Montreal, I had an interest in music, and I wanted to meet people, and so I placed an ad in the *Montreal Star* looking for people interested in music. I had two replies that were kind of productive. One was from a man who I would judge was in his 40s. He ran a printing business. ... He invited me to come to his office, and then we went to his home on the South Shore. It was Mr. This and M. That. We were being very formal with each other. This was in the fall of 1948. And periodically he would call me, and we'd go out to his place. He had a grand piano. He sang, I used to accompany him, and then in May of 1949, he changed the routine.

Instead of picking him up at the bus stop on a week night, the man asked Alvin to come on Sunday afternoon and told him how to walk to his house.

I arrived there and walked to the house—he has a veranda—and when I arrived there I saw a number of his younger friends sitting there and knitting, and it turned out one of them was somebody I had already met. Then it was explained to me that he couldn't figure me out, and after talking with his friends, they decided to have this little set-up, so that based on my reaction to their knitting, they would be able to judge whether I'm gay or not. But, as it turned out, as I was walking up the path to the house, one of them said to the others, "You can put away your knitting, girls. I've had this one." So we became immediately on first-name terms.

The use of "girls" express the shared identity of these men, and "this one" indicates Alvin's inclusion as a member of the group.

There are many themes in the stories gay men tell each other. Given the importance of concern with the police in gay men's lives, it is not surprising that another narrator had an anecdote about one policeman's misadventure with handcuffs (p. 246). Without detracting from the importance of how humour functions in demarcating social boundaries, I would like to emphasize the broader function of maintenance of the shared schemata of the in-group that these examples suggest.

Secrecy: Even as they made the transition to gay identity and joined gay social groups, individuals had to become experts in the rules of secrecy with which their new peers governed their sexual orientation. Some schemata were not to be alluded to in the company of non-confidants. The code of silence, or secrecy and discretion, has been dealt with by everyone who has addressed the topic. In Leznoff's (1954:73) ethnography, the relation of the individual

to the code of silence was the basis for his division of homosexuals into two major categories: the "overts" and the "coverts." Leznoff and later writers refer to Simmel's (1950) analysis of secrecy, in which many of its different forms are considered, but there is little structural similarity between the gay world and secret brotherhoods and other forms of secrecy.

For most gays, secrecy was a relative requirement. Absolute with respect to work, it could be less rigidly enforced in some social settings (some family members might be "in the know" for example), notably the supposedly "protected" space of gay bars or other gathering spots. Secrecy was motivated by the internalized guilt induced by moral teaching that homosexuality was wrong reinforced by the awareness of the shame one would experience if one's homosexuality was revealed to inappropriate audiences. If self-imposed restrictions of morality did not motivate an individual to comply with the secrecy code, external pressure could reinforce it. The fear of ostracism by family, friends or neighbours, loss of residence or employment, verbal abuse, or violence that could lead in some cases to death were the forms of internalized social pressure, and the possibility of sanctions was real. (The adoption of gay liberation's "coming out" strategy was a break with the logic of the regime of secrecy under which gays lived.)

The "code of secrecy" affected closeted gay men's use of language, as well as other signifying practices in gesture, clothing and posture. An important aspect of socialization into the gay world was learning the rules and techniques of secrecy. New entrants have to learn how to deal with situations that arise, and each generation tends to retain the rules they learned, even when circumstances change. Fear is still a factor for older gay men today. It may have motivated some of the potential narrators whom I approached to refuse to be interviewed, and certainly shaped the responses to a number of questions by some of the others. One man, though he works in a gay service group today, was careful to give pseudonyms to people he mentioned, even when a simple pronoun or just using a first name would have ensured total discretion. Others were content to rely on my assurance that the interviews would remain confidential and that the material would be used anonymously. Some younger men feigned horror at not getting proper credit for their witticisms.

For Leznoff (1954, 1956), writing in the early 1950s, secrecy played a central role in his distinction between "overts" and "coverts." His interviewees were divided into these two groups, with the professional status coverts living in terror of being embarrassed in front of colleagues or other respectable people by one of the overts, whom they frequently referred to

as “riffraff.” In an interview Leznoff related that he was subjected to considerable pressure from McGill professors who learned about his research and did everything to dissuade him from continuing because they felt it threatened their secrets.²⁸⁰ The effects of the violation of secrecy could be extreme, as shown by the suicide of Dr. Horst Kohl following his arrest and the publication of his name in the newspaper (p. 181). As the crime tabloid *Allô Police* expressed it, “Il n’a pu affronter la honte qui entachait son nom par suite de son arrestation.”

The interview data include many illustrations of the secrecy imperative. Donald, Percy, Walter and Patrick all mentioned that they had cultivated a circle of women friends, mostly heterosexual, in order to have cover for shows and restaurants. Arthur took a lesbian home to meet his family, though he didn’t continue the practice long because a cousin of his announced to the family that he was gay. When Donald and his lover withdrew from gay society, their social world included lesbians and other women who gave them social cover. Donald said that the felt need for this declined throughout the 1960s as things opened up. Donald also cited a story that shows that it was not only women who served as “beards” in this way. When a man from a well-known family who worked in a leading cultural institution became his ex-lover’s lover, the three of them would go out together since this very closety man believed that two men together were suspicious, while three were just buddies. This included not only restaurants and shows but vacations in Ogunquit, Maine and skiing trips to Austria. At another point however, Donald said that his not being married led workmates to speculate about the reason behind it, but that in the 1950s the possibility of his homosexuality simply didn’t occur to them.

Percy, one of the older narrators, insisted that as a businessman he always had to be discreet. He was firm in his support for the bartender at the Piccadilly Room of the Mount Royal Hotel who refused to serve some of the people there because they were too loud and obvious (there were non-gay customers at the tables). In the 1950s, Percy went to Hamilton, in southern Ontario, to open a sales office for his company. He managed to pick up a few people at the bar of the same hotel where the new office was located with no apparent breach of discretion. Another of his stories indicates the ambiguities of keeping the secret. Despite his cautious nature, after his return to Montreal Percy involved his lover in office parties so that

²⁸⁰ This is similar to the story told by Jim Egan of an attempt to stop his collaboration with Sidney Katz (1964b) for a *Maclean’s Magazine* article in which a prominent older gay man took him to dinner and tried to get him to stop revealing information to the journalist (Jim Egan interview with Robert Champagne 1986/87).

after a few decades they had a semi-official status as the regular hosts of these affairs. Some of his colleagues must have at least speculated on the nature of their association.

Secrecy at work was not universal, although only two of the narrators in "regular" jobs explicitly came out to their workmates. In the 1950s a municipal employee, Émile, got a job with the city. This was where his over-enunciation (p. 309) betrayed his homosexuality.

Ca fait qu'il a fallu que je me batte pendant un an et demie pis au bout de ça je leur ai fait une crise. Je leur ai dit, "Je suis peut-être une tapette, j'suis peut-être un suceux de cul, j'suis peut-être un mangeux de merde, mais moi je trompe pas ma femme comme vous faites, pis achevez de m'écoeurer."

He was encouraged to take this radical approach by a man he met who had a clerical job for the police department.

C'est que j'ai essayé de jouer le rôle du gars qui l'est pas pis ça a pas marché. ... Mais j'avais un chum qui travaillait à la police. On s'est rencontré dans un bar pis on s'était parlé de ça. On a découvert tous les deux qu'on travaillait pour la ville. Lui la même affaire. Il m'a dit, "Moi, je vais te montrer comment ce que j'ai fait, comment que j'ai procédé, pis ça leur a fermé la gueule à tout le monde. C'était [de] pas essayer de dénier, ça c'était de l'avouer. Si tu penses que oui, c'est correct. C'est ça, pis ils vont se fermer. Crissez-moi la paix, fichez-moi la paix. Ça a fini là." Fait que je fais pareil.

One of his colleagues was emboldened to make a sexual advance, which he ignored since it would have created problems for him in later conflicts at work. Despite being out with his colleagues, Émile still faced certain risks because he was gay, and like most employees, found it prudent to maintain a rigid separation between his work life and his private life.

Two narrators who worked for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (Radio-Canada) had little to fear from the discovery of their homosexuality, though neither deliberately announced that they were gay. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, or Radio-Canada, has long had a reputation as a haven for queers (in Montreal French, it is called "Radio-Tralala"). Arthur got a job at Radio-Canada in 1961 and described the atmosphere as "particular." He explicitly contrasted his work environment with that of friends in workplaces like Hydro-Québec. In his office, everyone gradually found out or figured out that he was gay. On his floor, he said, between fifteen and twenty percent of the employees were gay, though it was an administrative department, not one involved in more gay-associated creative work. At social functions with co-workers, there were a few who acted in ways that made their homosexuality obvious, Arthur himself did not do this. His real social life was confined to gay circles.

Alors on préférait être avec des gais ou des gens qui savaient, pour lâcher notre fou ou notre folle, raconter des histoires de cul, des farces; parler de queues et d'enculage. Aux parties straights, eux parlaient de cul, mais nous on osait pas.

Arthur's comments show that even in a tolerant environment, gays were still very cautious and found they could not fully relax in mixed company.

In a later period after the beginning of gay liberation, one of the narrators, Harry, adopted "radical drag" as a means of consciousness raising when attending official functions relating to his job in the art world, another domain in which there was little threat of anti-gay sanctions. Finally, one of the narrators occupied a unique position in the gay world. Armand Monroe, as master of ceremonies at the Tropical Room, the leading downtown gay bar of the 1950s was necessarily out at work; he was one of very few people in the city whose employment depended on his gayness, and his stage manner and commentary played this up to the maximum.

Secrecy separated gays from society, and made them constantly alert to the possibility that others dissimulated key aspects of their personal lives, most importantly that they might be gay. On the other hand, this awareness of the subtextual meanings of texts made gay men conscious that they needed to keep firm control not only of their words, but of the ability of their hearers to read meanings into them that might endanger the secret of their sexual orientation. Leznoff (1954:169) affirms that, "Since most heterosexuals assume the heterosexuality of others, and see them in terms of this assumption, only the obviously effeminate are identified." But, he concludes, the homosexual knows that others hide behind masks just as he does, and that occupation, class position and marital status do not imply heterosexuality. This important lesson must be learned by anyone entering the gay world. Secrecy itself thus has a schematic structure, coding the avoidances and risks that daily interactions carry when one is keeping part of one's life hidden from family and co-workers.

In discussing subtexting and the gay reading position (p. 82), I suggested that gay men bring to their reading of certain texts an extra context or intertext which enables them to obtain information from news stories because they have access to specifically gay schemata such as bar locations. One example of this was the warning that knowledgeable gay men could read into vague reports of raids on a Peel Street bar in 1956 that they might run the risk of arrest if they went to the Tropical Room (p. 183). One frequent use of subtextual readings was to identify other gays from subtle cues, whether or not these were intentionally dropped. When his nephew mentioned that he usually stayed at the YMCA when he travelled, Alvin's ears pricked up. One time the family was in town for a wedding and Alvin took the opportunity to gather more information:

When he was at the wedding here, it was a week before I was to go to Provincetown for a week but I had heard that he had been to Provincetown a short time before and I said "Just a minute. I

understand you were in Provincetown. Where did you stay?" And he named one of the most notorious gay guest houses, so I knew.

By combining his knowledge that YMCAs everywhere were places where gays congregated with new information derived from his own experience of Provincetown (itself a signifier of gayness), Alvin was able to achieve virtual certainty that there was another gay member of his family without any open discussion of the subject.

But in conversation with fellow workers, neighbours, subtextual abilities could work against gay secrecy if one revealed aspects of experience which were uncommon. While it was relatively easy to restrain oneself from excessive discussions of opera, or to replace masculine with feminine pronouns, other types of conversational material might contain hidden dangers so it was always necessary to stay one step ahead of ones listeners to avoid letting the secret out. Trevor spoke of how he learned to censor his accounts of vacation trips to his co-workers because they would too easily notice oddities in the range of his social contacts, because of the tendency for contacts in the gay world to cross the usual boundaries of social class, ethnicity and race, or because of the way gay men can enter close contacts with people in distant places either through network connections or simply by meeting them in the protected world of gay bars. While Trevor loved the way "doors open to you being gay that wouldn't open in normal circumstances," his heterosexual listeners would ask:

"How did you *meet* these people?" And under normal circumstances, your path would probably not cross with those people, anywhere from a longshoreman up to a neurosurgeon. That aspect, that movement in gay circles was so easy, be it within the city, within different social levels in the city. Or travelling! You know straight people go on a trip and never see or talk to anybody. That's it. Gays can go on a trip and say, "Oh! I met this person and I met that person. I was in Wichita and went to a big drag bar." But you wouldn't tell this to straight people. You might say, "I was in Wichita and met these people. We did this and we had a dinner party, and we went to this place and that place." And they'd say, "I've been to Wichita, and I never got to do all those things. How did you do it?"

As a result, he learned to suppress this type of story so as to avoid the inevitable questions about how such contacts were possible. In Trevor's case, this desire for discretion was not really to conceal his gayness, but to avoid confusing the listeners and thus having to make tedious explanations of information that gay listeners would find ordinary. It seems to stem from an awareness of the boundary created by differing experience.

This overview of language practices has explored the schematic structures which characterize the gay world ranging from the level of vocabulary and pronunciation to higher forms of discourse organization in genres like the coming-out story and in patterns of gay humour, to the pragmatics of gay secrecy. This provides the basic framework which the

following sections will fill in by an examination of the topics and themes that gay men address and maintain through their discursive practices.

2. Lore: Topical Schemata Shared by Gays

By the term "lore" I mean the specific knowledge structures or schemata that gay men developed jointly, content which was woven into general conversations or used in particular genres or to achieve specific pragmatic ends. The set of public gay meeting places, constitutes an important body of gay lore. Few outsiders²⁸¹ possessed the detailed knowledge of bars and other establishments, of who went where and when to go, that was basic survival information for members of the gay world. The skill or lack of skill of several men in finding their way to gay bars by recognizing other gays ("gaydar") was mentioned earlier (p. 213). In his explanation of this ability, Jean made plain what he thought recognizing other gays depended on. He listed two characteristics: watching other people and the way they looked at him, and looking at the way they walked. A third factor, styles of dress, is discussed in the section on style (p. 337). Other gay-specific knowledge involving cruising practices and sexuality, or gay relationships, are summarized as "gay sexual culture." Specific conventions for gay social occasions and the aesthetic and cultural interests widely shared in the gay world (like opera, orchids, show tunes or dog breeds) were not gay-specific but were widely disseminated in society. Such topics can be deemed part of gay lore because among some gay men these and other such topics occupied an important proportion of conversational activity, and building knowledge in these domains was a means of asserting one's adherence to the gay community and competing for prestige in the friendship group.

Sexual Culture: By "gay sexual culture" I mean a wide range of knowledge and practical skills that gay men use to identify each other, to signal sexual interest or disinterest, the elaborate structures of politeness that govern sexual interactions, and the sets of expectations they bring to interpreting common situations, patterns perceived in gay relationships and how they end. While there are many other schemata shared by gays, the lore about gay sex and social conventions is central to the learning process for young entrants to gay society.

In the interviews there are many indications of things the narrators had to learn in order to survive and prosper in the gay world. Basic to the entire process was the learning of what

²⁸¹ Entrepreneurs in the bar business, underworld figures, and police informers shared some of the same information, but with a significant difference in point of view.

Mauss (1950 termed the “techniques of the body.” For gays this includes learning about sexual techniques and situations that were not documented in books available in the period the narrators lived in. They had to learn about where when and how to kiss, about crabs and anal sex, about lubricants and names for different sex acts. This learning could be accomplished by hilarious conversation in the club or murmured requests in bed. Percy learned the techniques of sex with his cousin before he was ten, who also go him involved with other boys:

I'd go to bed with him, and he would do everything. Everything that probably I didn't want, but anyway he'd do everything, and then when I got a wake-up in the morning, I'd have probably another affair before I got out of bed, but it wasn't the same person I went to bed with.

Though different from the experiences of most men, his included an early introduction into multiple sexual partners, another prominent feature of gay sexual culture.

After his entry into the bar world, described in Chapter 5, Gérard remained uncommitted to its values, unconvinced even that promiscuity was common among the people he met there. His clothing choices, turtleneck and jacket, set him apart from the norms of the period, when the formal requirements of the 1950s were giving way to casual dress (p. 346). I asked if he had continued to go to clubs with the friends who had first taken him to the Tropical

Non, non. Ils ont peut-être plus sorti ou moins sorti mais moi, j'ai repris le temps perdu. J'allais prendre une bière souvent—même 2 ou 3 fois par semaine.

Asked if he had met sexual partners, he said that he never did, explaining that he often went to the clubs accompanied by women friends. His awareness of his own naïveté in sexual matters was heightened by a trip to Provincetown²⁸² with a man he thought of as simply a travelling companion.

C'était pendant l'Expo, je suis parti pendant 15 jours. Et c'est la première personne qui a voulu m'enculer. Je trouvais que ça faisait très mal. Pis j'étais très naïf. Moi, je partais en vacances. Je partais pas avec quelqu'un pour faire l'amour. C'était Provincetown dans ma tête. J'avais pas le goût de le faire non plus. C'est lui qui m'a approché, qui voulait me caresser. J'étais mal à l'aise mais quand il a voulu me pénétrer, j'étais ben plus mal à l'aise. Il a ben vu que je répondais pas à ses transports et est allé se recoucher.

For Gérard the purpose of the trip was to see Provincetown, the famous gay resort, and the trip put an end to his friendship. He hadn't understood the signals the other man had given.

Peut-être, il a été ben franc mais j'ai pas compris ses messages. J'étais pas attiré d'avoir des relations sexuelles avec quelqu'un.

Discussion of the techniques of the body concerning such intimate topics as anal penetration were rare in the interview materials, but fits readily into the process of schema acquisition which new entrants undergo to prepare them for successful social functioning in the gay world.

²⁸² One of the most famous gay resorts in eastern North America, located at the tip of Cape Cod. Discussed in the section on gay travel destinations below.

Given the age of the narrators, I did not attempt to question them about the more technical side of learning how to behave sexually, though clearly all passed through a process of learning with respect to such issues.

Health-related concerns arise from the practice of gay sex, though in the pre-AIDS period, few were distinctively gay. None of the primary narrators mentioned venereal disease, but for Roger, a secondary narrator, this is one of the first aspects of gay life that he encountered. At age seventeen, while still living with his parents in a village in southwestern Quebec, he began to come to Montreal to meet men for sex. He caught syphilis from one of his first partners, but his family doctor failed to recognize the symptoms and he did not receive treatment until he moved to the city six months later. Not all of the physical dangers were that serious. Normand and Jean learned about "those little flies" (crabs) when they started to itch after using beds in the rooming houses where they went at the beginning of their relationship, while both still lived at home.

Less intimate aspects of the bodily techniques commonly acquired by entrants to the gay world related to the frequent expressions of affection between men (who were not sexually intimate) in hugs and kisses. The type of kisses exchanged between men in a gay bar was a focus of interest on the part of the judge during the trial of the proprietor of a bar called Truxx following a major raid in the late 1970s (personal observation). The defence attempted to establish that customers greeted one another with "accolades à la De Gaulle" (kisses on either cheek, not sexual kisses).

Another set of gay bodily techniques to be learned centred on the issues of fitness and health, as the larger culture increasingly framed these as attributes of attractiveness. Percy began to work out early on. He went to the Weider gym across from the Colonial Bath, "not for sex, just for exercise." Arthur accounted for his dislike of bars in part because when he first visited them, he was rather overweight, and thus had no luck meeting sexual partners in a setting which placed a premium on slim youthful good looks. As the 1960s progressed, the gay world became integrated into the drug scene that swept North America after the flower children's summer of 1967. Patrick mentioned the coming of drugs to the gay scene at the end of the 1960s. At Britton's Restaurant there was:

Much exchange of pills and dope. Covertly, not overt at all. But that was also the dope floraison of Montreal in those years, about four years after the West Coast.

Trevor recalled his initiation to LSD at the Peel Pub by a resident American.

Anyway, one time we were there and somebody put a hit or two on the table. The things were crumbling on the table so everybody licked fingers, and went, "Hmmm, let's see what happens." Well it didn't take too long. We were all flying, flying let me tell you. That was the time when acid was acid. It was not laced with baking soda and God knows what. That was an interesting experience, probably 1968 or 69.

In short, both the fitness craze and the obsession with stimulants other than alcohol of the surrounding society was, unsurprisingly, reproduced in the gay community of the late 1960s.

As well as the physical side of gayness, the entrant into gay society had to learn about social relations in the gay world. Once the gay world had been found, and a beginning made at learning the shifting locations where gay sexuality and sociability occurred, as outlined in Chapter 6, perhaps the most crucial schemata to acquire were those related to navigating the social situational patterns needed to meet sexual partners or lovers. When competing for sex, people could be ruthless, and the newcomer had to reconcile himself with a possibly negative first impression in order to achieve a self-identification with the world that had produced it. The gay world can be hard on the naive newcomer; it doesn't recruit so much as it tests. When Eugène recounted how his best friend Étienne had once stolen the man he had brought home for the night, he quoted (or made up) a proverb of gay sexual culture, "*Queue bandée n'a pas de principe*" (p. 202). This philosophical view was the fruit of a learning process that began with his first trip to the Lutèce. That night his naive expectation that having sex with someone would automatically mean beginning a relationship was quickly and unceremoniously dashed when the person he met gave him a false telephone number (p. 212). His romantic illusions didn't survive. Eugène spoke more explicitly than most of the narrators about the process of learning how to conceive of himself in relation to the search for a stable relationship with a lover.

Au début mon modèle était d'avoir un amant. Mais c'est trop difficile. Finalement la liberté est plus importante que la stabilité du couple. Je me rend vite compte que je suis polygame. J'ai des expériences de blessures dans mes premières années et je décide que le désir d'avoir un amant était névrotique. J'ai eu de mauvaises expériences avec la possessivité des amants; c'était près de la schizophrénie.

This view was not shared, of course, by many of the other men, who did have frequent or long-term experience of couple relationships. Since this aspect of their lives was less obviously connected with the public, shared orientations of the gay world, it did not form a focus of the interviews; future work could usefully explore gay men's schemata of romance.²⁸³

²⁸³ A deeper inquiry into gay views of romance, and self-conception as romantic participants like (1992) study of heterosexual women would be a useful extension to the literature on gay couples.

Since bars are the most notable venues for the development of public gay social life, the consumption of alcoholic beverages looms large in the social activities shared by gay men. In the mocking account of a purported 1964 "Congrès d'homos" in Montreal (p. 127), the writer makes much of the fact that the conference organizers have decided not to allow alcohol at the proceedings, since, he assumed, when gays drink they can't keep their hands off each other. This reflects a societal perception of the close association between gay men and alcohol. The focus of gay life on public drinking establishments inevitably makes alcohol and its abuse a significant issue. Trevor's first great love was Jack, an American who had come to Montreal as the lover of a McGill professor who dropped him almost immediately. Trevor explained his drinking problem in terms of his parents' mixed religions:

He had come from a background where daddy was a cigar-chomping, bourbon drinking Southern Baptist father married to a nice Catholic girl. I don't think he could deal with the guilt about sexuality. And also the problems with booze. We used to meet after work and have a couple of drinks and have dinner and go back to his place and have some more drinks. I could handle it. I know I have a propensity. ... I know I can't "handle" it in the sense that I can't drink myself sober but he would be far more affected by it than I would. He was more an alcoholic. So triple scotch and sodas.

Still very young when they met, Trevor tried in vain to save Jack from alcohol.

I thought Jack was just wonderful, wonderful to look at, and he was bright and he was vivacious. The life of the party. One of these people that sit down at a piano at a party and play away and sing and gather people around. Anyway, I said, "Jack, I love you." But he said, "Well I don't love you. But I like you very much." So I said, "Piss on you. I'm going home." And I'd go home and I didn't even get in the house and he'd call, "Oh come back." And I'd go back. Eventually the booze got the better of him and his parents came up and took him home to dry out.

Émile also tried to save a lover from alcoholism, with an equal lack of success.

Narrator attitudes to bars and drinking of course varied widely. For people like Walter and Percy, Len, Ralph and others, going to bars was a central aspect of gay sociability, sometimes the only venue for their gay lives. On the other hand, Oscar, who joined Alcoholics Anonymous in 1954, naturally avoided the bars, and thus denied that he was a "member of gay society."

Normand and Jean also equated gay life with bar life, though when I said I thought there was more to it than bars, they agreed. Like Oscar, they eventually joined Alcoholics Anonymous, and like him, their early attempts to stop drinking through the group were unsuccessful. Normand didn't accept his homosexuality easily, implying that homosexuality was the cause of his drinking. He read as much as he could about homosexuality, trying to find out what had caused it. He found it difficult to stop drinking in the days before the creation of

gay AA groups (in the late 1970s). In groups with heterosexuals, gay men did not feel they got the necessary support to deal with their addiction. Normand went on:

I went to AA many times but felt odd, not in my place on account of my gay life, my homosexuality. Talking with people—"How's your wife, your divorce?" I didn't feel at ease.

Later, in gay groups, he no longer had to be concerned about hiding his sexual orientation and had confidence that the other members really understood what he was going through.

"Without that," he concluded, "I'd probably be dead." His experience illustrates the emotional force of collective identification, even in areas of life that appear at first to be far removed from sexuality. Ironically, coming together with others with whom he shared gay knowledge and values was an essential part of overcoming a problem this narrator thought of as a reaction to his gayness. As in other areas of gay lore, the shared preoccupation with certain topics was a vehicle for the expression of emotional solidarity.

Social Occasions: Many types of social events are held by gay men for their own amusement: drag parties, the variation of hat parties, group outings to bars, shows, restaurants, etc.

Following up on the earlier discussion of the importance of parties in gay private space (p. 204), I will look at the conventions which governed their forms and the practical necessities which they posed, arguing that organizing such events, even in small private circumstances, required planning and work effort to be successful, and that those who did so were exercising leadership for the benefit of the group. Many of these events included the highly symbolic possibility for men to dance together. Finally I will look at the calendar of social events that were shared across the gay community. In addition to the daily cycles of the downtown taverns (p. 284), or the regular weekly rendezvous on Sunday afternoon at the Monarch Café, there was an annual calendar, a round of social occasions, with Halloween as the best known.

Parties fall into a number of distinct types. Len, who was a regular party host until the 1970s, discusses some of the practical problems and more of the social complications this entailed. He developed a formula that illustrates the way parties have definite conventions similar to discourse genres in that they are time-structured events.

Then on in the 1960s, 1970s the parties, I very seldom had late parties. They were all cocktail parties. You know, invite people for six o'clock drinks and then try and get rid of them by ten or eleven because most of these people lived in apartment buildings and there was some hassles there with late parties. And certain people were out to harass gay people in general and if they could get you for extremely late parties, they were even happier, you know with the faggots. But if you had a reasonably sedate party from six to ten o'clock they really couldn't say very much. I had a couple of good parties at home and I did the same thing. I invited people for six o'clock and we had drinks and lots of food.

For parties to succeed, the guests must share, or at least be willing to accept the host's definition of the social occasion. Len explained the problem of the types of party which didn't fit into a well-planned evening out, or were of no particular form.

I used to find going to other people's parties for drinks and then at nine o'clock you get out and what do you do. You're not really hungry because you've been eating all this party food, and it's too early to go to the bars. And you're all dressed up and nowhere to go sort of thing. Much as I enjoyed going to the parties I always found there was a lapse in there unless you were ready to go home after the party, which I never was. But sometimes the parties would go on. It was very bad taste, I think. You'd go for cocktails and still be there at midnight. But it's the old story if the booze and the people and the people are there no one's going to go home.

However, he used some special techniques to avoid the problem of parties that went on forever, though some of the techniques added to an already expensive undertaking.

Well one way was to run out of ice, or to shut off the music and close the bar. But you had to have—very often the host, and I've done the same thing, has had more to drink or as much as most of the guests and so you're rather disinclined to bring the party to an end if you're having a good time yourself. And I don't think anyone else can enjoy your party if you don't enjoy your own party. Even though it can get out of control. But at bigger parties I always had a bartender, usually a bartender from one of the bars that knew most of the guests and could regulate the drinks, and he really did an excellent job. ... In the early 1970s, I had my biggest parties. Looking back on it. ... I used to invite about fifty people and sometimes get seventy people. And I remember in those days parties would cost about \$500. Now it would cost thousands for parties like that.

His view of the host role as a gay convenor was realized with close attention to detail and the overall practical requirements for a successful event.

Trevor recalled many memorable parties during the influx of Americans in the 1960s, when resistance to the draft and the Vietnam War sparked a wave of immigration. Their presence enlivened the social scene, at least for Anglophones.

About the mid-1960s they started to arrive in great numbers. And it did make a difference. It meant there were party people. A lot of parties around town. They were avoiding draft, flower children, students—not really serious about staying here, not acclimatizing.

He expressed a sort of nostalgic regret that eventually they all drifted back south of the border, because "they did make for good parties - they were good at parties." The hosts who mastered the forms of party-giving so well included:

One chap who was a professor at McGill who ... had a wonderful apartment on two floors. A big crowd on two storeys. People everywhere. Probably about 50 people at a house party. There were not a lot of parties but some. ... They were parties, not orgies or anything. Lots of laughing and dancing. One man had a big old townhouse on Jeanne-Mance before they renovated. They had great parties there. Three floors of people.

These were house parties in the classic genre. Not only parties but party-goers were categorized. Trevor defined a "party person" by giving the example of an officer in the United States Air Force, stationed in northern Maine, who came south to Montreal as the nearest metropolis where he could participate in gay life. For Trevor, this was an admired type of person, and he enjoyed recalling this period in his life when parties were a frequent pastime.

In addition to the classic cocktail party or the evening house party, there were other types of social event that brought gay men together. Percy and Walter, the oldest narrators, played host to many gatherings. They organized their friends into a regular Saturday routine that centred on spending the afternoon listening to the Metropolitan Opera broadcast, then going out to their favourite bar. Donald added that everyone had to be ready to discuss it the next time they met. He “abhorred” the “spinster ladies” who socialized with gay men at Walter and Percy’s and provided them with the “cover” of respectability. After Donald met Evan, the latter would have nothing to do with that sort of crowd, and though he still corresponds with Walter and Percy, Donald’s social sphere drew away from them in the mid 1950s. Once they were living together in an apartment building downtown, Donald and Evan hosted dinner parties, another well-established party genre, jointly with women neighbours. The fact that they were gay was never mentioned, although all the men present at these ostensibly heterosexual affairs were gay. What is more, Donald engaged in a quiet sexual banter with his friend Carter, out of hearing of the other guests:

Carter would say, “Of the men in this room, who have you been to bed with?” And I’d say, “Every one, including yourself.” And he’d go, “Oh, I like that one over there.” Everybody was trying to be very butch and pretend.

Donald was one of the narrators who most enjoyed this kind of gay jocular discussion of sex and his own and others’ sexual activities and desires. This is a further example of a gay discourse topic/point of view, a communication game played against the shared schemata which testify to the existence of community.

Part of the explanation was that doing drag “properly” is a lot of work. One solution they found was the “hat party.” Len pointed out that drag parties cost a lot of money and took a lot of work, so he and his friends simply went for “hat parties.”

I went to quite a few of those back in the 1950s and 60s. And it was just, you know, you didn’t have to wear a costume, just a hat. And I don’t know whether straight people ever had hat parties but we sure did.

Hats were much easier to make and did not involve compromising walks down the street in high heels. For a while they organized hat parties at a hotel bar that gay men patronized for a short time around 1962 in the Laurentian resort of Morin Heights. Asked what he wore to them, Len explained:

Well you just used your imagination. I always used things from the garden. And the one I won up there with—my parents used to be away like in September and the garden was sort of at its last ebb. ... I won twice with the same sort of thing so it was sort of cheating but it was a wicker Victorian wastepaper basket that had come from my grandmother’s house and I wove flowers into the wicker and we’d had a new lamp shade that came wrapped in cellophane, cellophane?, so I made a big bow for under my chin with this Victorian lamp shade [that] had real flowers on it so it

was sort of spectacular but after I won two hat party prizes I thought I'd better cut it out but it was—Well those things were fun because some people had great imaginations and went to a lot more work than I did.

His own inventions didn't really take much work since the raw materials were (unknowingly) supplied by his parents, who were avid gardeners. His comments suggest that hat parties were a gay fad in the early 1960s. Len explained that he had won the prize for best hat on two occasions.

I don't know whether it was the same year or not. I guess it was 'cause hat parties didn't, you know, weren't in vogue for that long. And I won it with spring flowers at a party in the city and then I won it in September up north. ... It's fun 'cause it's easier than a costume party, you know, and most gay people have enough imagination.

Both the "hat" party and the "drag" party are distinctively gay party genres, similar in some ways to masquerade parties, but distinguished by their focus on men dressing in costume elements normally reserved for women. This perception of a gay genre that came and went in a short period of years is also a very visible instance of the operation of schemata. For a short time, "hat parties" were "in." The schema of what is "in" at a given moment is followed with interest by members of the group which generates it.

Normand and Jean gave their own definition to the word "party," which did not involve very much food or talk. After they bought their cottage in the Laurentians, they said, they never went out much, but invited people up to the country for "*partouzes*" (sex parties).

Normand explained:

We'd leave Montreal on Friday, before dinner or after, and come here for the weekend and go back Sunday night. [Parties] every weekend and partouzes besides that. We had a lot of friends. If you have a place here and invite two young boys and start to have fun. ... We were heavy drinkers. Free booze, free food and everything—you have a choice of young men you can invite over. Everybody enjoyed it including the young men. Snowmobiles—you can go through the mountains—ski resorts one right next door. Summertime—we had a boat at the lake—water skiing.

Perhaps because people have to sleep over when they go to cottage parties, the stories of this couple and also Eugène's experience indicate there were more orgies there than in the city. In outlining this set of social event genres, I am not implying that they were either exclusive to the gay world or universally practiced there. The culture offered a set of options which were realized in accordance with the hosts' understanding of them, available space to hold them, and resources to afford them.

Trevor mentioned dancing as one of the principal attractions at some of the parties he went to in the 1960s. Gay dancing, the movement of men's bodies through space, was a major

target of pre-movement gay political struggles.²⁸⁴ The police evidently accorded it the highest symbolic significance, to judge by the reports of harassment and arrest that continued to surround the subject even after Armand Monroe had set a precedent at the Tropical. Private parties, events like the commercial parties described by Armand Émond, the dance bars that appeared in the late 1960s, and the gay dances put on by the *Front de libération homosexuel* in 1971, described by Pierre, were all phases of a struggle to allow men to make the visual statement of two men dancing together in public.

Long before the annual celebration of the anniversary of the 1969 Stonewall Riot, gay society had institutionalized a set of popular holidays and occasions in an annual calendar that only partly coincides with that of the surrounding society. The most important annual celebration is undoubtedly Halloween. For the general Francophone public, the adoption of this holiday seems to have been relatively recent, dating from about 1950. Previously the main costume holidays were Mardi Gras and Mi-Carême. The latter was the occasion for the party that led to the 1950 masquerade raid story, though it is not clear to what extent it was regularly celebrated by Quebec homosexual society (Higgins 1995).²⁸⁵ In Montreal, Halloween was celebrated with drag balls in rented halls (like the one at Butch Bouchard's restaurant that Armand Monroe said was raided in the late 1950s). It was also a special occasion in the bars, as indicated in rather distorted fashion by the yellow press:

Les homosexuels montréalais se préparent à fêter avec enthousiasme la mascarade de l'Halloween : car c'est l'une des rares fois où ils peuvent se costumer sans trop choquer les gens (*Ici Montréal* 1956.10.27:11).

The same publication developed this theme much further several months later in publishing "L'Halloween: Le 'Grand Kick' des Homos." It was written by a former teacher from a collège classique who supposedly got invited by a friend to attend a "party de fun" at the Club des Aigles on Ste-Catherine Street. While establishing his heterosexual credentials, the author assures the reader that though he certainly knows the difference between men and women, to his consternation he was not able to distinguish them at this Halloween party. The "kick" in the title is the desire of the drag queens to be mistaken for a real woman, which they assured the investigator was the greatest thrill of all "homos" in order to seduce men.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ It is ironic that gay slow dances, the hard-won fruit of decades of struggle, were abandoned almost as soon they were achieved. With the advent of first discotheques and then disco music at the beginning of the 1970s, slow dances gradually faded away in gay clubs so that today, young gay men do not slow dance in public space.

²⁸⁵ There is more indication that it was celebrated in France, at least at one particular Paris club, the Magic City (Barbedette and Carassou 1981:16-19, plates 3-10).

²⁸⁶ "L'Halloween: Le 'Grand Kick' des Homos." *Ici Montréal* 246 1957.02.23:24. The Eagle Restaurant was the former name of the bar that was by then officially called the Café Monarch.

Louis stressed the importance of such gay holidays more than other narrators:

Ben, il y avait le Miss Montreal, le Mardi Gras au Monarch et au Tropical. À l'Halloween de Atwater jusqu'à Frontenac il y avait de l'activité. C'était pas Rio, mais il y avait beaucoup de costumes.

Armand Monroe put on special shows for Halloween as have many gay bar managements since, either by holding costume competitions or finding other ways to mark the occasion.

Some Francophone gay men at least had an annual day of their own, the Onze Août (August 11, see p. 308). This holiday is actually little more than a running gag in the gay world, which I learned about from a friend in the late 1970s; it is not universally known even among Francophone gay men, however. It is a gag that has circulated since the 1950s, judging by this item from the yellow press about a nightclub called the "400":

Le "400" fermera ses portes samedi, le 11 août prochain. Nombre de clients de Radio-Canada sont passablement ravis qu'on ait choisi cette date du on z'oue... fête par excellence des tapettes (*Jour et nuit* 1962.06.24:2).

Despite such publicity, this "holiday" remains something of an inside joke, and thus a signifier that draws together those who recognize the reference as uniquely gay. Other gay celebrations followed the calendar of public holidays, like the large New Year's parties hosted by Percy and Walter at their downtown penthouse in the 1960s, which were simply gay versions of parties going on everywhere on the same night.

Gay Aesthetics: What gay men talk about in leisure conversation reflects who they are in other aspects of their identity as much as it symbolizes their attachment to gay community values.

The range of variation in the importance of these factors in one man's life, or between people of different backgrounds, professions or age groups is vast. Nevertheless, and in confirmation of the stereotype of the "cultured" gay, there are frequent mentions of Hollywood movie stars, opera, Broadway musicals, and cooking in the interviews. Several of the "lonely hearts" ads for meeting other men from the yellow press indicate that this was not unusual.

Cél. châtain, dans la trentaine, 5'6", sincère honnête, aimant lecture, cinéma, théâtre, voyages, tout ce qui est beau, désire correspondants de la ville ou de l'extérieur, 25 ans et plus. But: amitié (*Ici Montréal* 1957.02.23:23).

In this context, the interests are probably best read as indices of gayness by the writer of the ad, who expected the hoped for readers to catch on.

Donald was the narrator most interested in musicals and popular songs. His relationship with his mentor Frank (p. 219) focused on show business a great deal of the time. Frank kept up with New York shows. He was originally from Prague but fled when the Communists took

over Czechoslovakia in 1948. From him Donald acquired a range of knowledge not only of Broadway musicals but of the popular musical traditions of Central Europe in the 1930s. Frank claimed to have known the Gabor sisters there before the war, before they all became blondes. Once he took Donald on walking tours in the wealthy district, the “Golden Square Mile” above Sherbrooke Street and pointed out a house where he said the Dolly Sisters had lived at the expense of a rich patron.²⁸⁷

But for some men, the intense focus in gay circles on certain topics could feel suffocating. Charles discussed his very mixed feelings about such gay identified obsessions. He himself had undertaken the study of French cuisine with unusual zeal.

J’ai pris des livres de cuisine et je les ai faits de A à Z, en faisant toutes les techniques—Julia Child “from cover to cover” pour apprendre.

He agreed that at certain points in his life this interest had been shared with members of his gay friendship group.

Ah oui, j’ai eu des périodes comme ça, beaucoup, j’ai connu des gens qui faisaient ça, qui s’intéressaient à ça. Encore une fois j’ai évité ces milieux fermés. Ça me rend fou. Même si je peux parler cuisine pendant des heures. J’adore ça, mais je peux pas vivre dans le monde de la cuisine complètement.

This indicates more than a little ambivalence about the type of fanaticism that small groups with a topical focus can develop. He mentioned the devotees of opera as another example.

Ah oui, j’ai connu ça aux États-Unis, des maniaques de l’Opéra. J’ai un ami qui est véritable maniaque de l’opéra, qui court le monde entier pour l’opéra, qui s’est même trouvé une job là-dedans. Il travaille pour l’opéra de San Francisco et qui maintenant fait des voyages avec eux et qui ne va qu’à l’opéra à travers la planète. Et tout ce monde à San Francisco exactement, ce monde d’opéra qui me rendait littéralement fou. Mais t’as raison le culte des vedettes, c’est vrai—même à l’opéra. J’ai toujours été fasciné par des vedettes comme Sutherland, des gens comme ça.

The friend from San Francisco was well placed by his job in opera to pursue his interest, which would otherwise require considerable leisure time and money to maintain.

In Western culture, the social organization of the audiences for various kinds of “High Art” includes a stratum of “cognoscenti” or “connoisseurs” who follow and support the performance and production of art-forms from ballet to opera to Broadway, including concert singers, modern dance, and many other small-audience forms. Gay participation in these specialized audiences is widely enough understood to be considered part of the stereotype of the urbane cosmopolitan queer. This is tied to the stereotyping of careers in such fields as set design or choreography as being gay.

²⁸⁷ The Dolly sisters were Hungarian born stars of New York musicals from the turn of the century to the 1920s (Hirschhorn 1991:264). One of them was married to Montreal playboy, Mortimer Davis Jr, son of tobacco magnate Sir Mortimer Davis (obituary. *New York Times* 1970.02.02). Tom Waugh helped to locate information on this point.

The social reality corresponding to the stereotypes differs from them in two ways. Undoubtedly there are non-gays working in theatre-related fields considered to be gay, just as there are non-gay hairdressers. From the point of view of the present enquiry, however, it is more important to realize the opposite falsehood, that there are many gays for whom the theatre or other art-forms hold no special appeal, as illustrated by the divergence of attitudes among the men in the narrator group. The relationship between their taste for music and their gayness proved to be contested ground in the interview with Jean and Normand. When they spoke of their frequent trips to New York for sex and opera, I assumed that the latter was as gay-related as the former, and was corrected by Normand:

With me, it's not that—it's a family affair. My sister and brothers liked classical music. On Saturday afternoon there was the Met opera.... This was in my mind, in New York, why I went to Met. [It had] nothing to do with gay people or snobs. It's because we like it.

Jean agreed that they hadn't been aware of it in relation to gayness at the time. The Saturday afternoon "Met" broadcasts were listened to by narrators of many backgrounds. They were part of Donald's induction into gay life by Walter and Percy, part of the weekend routine he led with Walter for a year or two in the early 1950s, described in Chapter 5. Not only did they organize social gatherings in order to listen to the broadcast every week, but participants had to be prepared to discuss it at the next gathering as Donald indignantly recalled.

One story illustrates how gay interest in the arts could have social consequences, rendering momentarily visible a large gay population, as happened at a Judy Garland concert in 1961 described by Donald.²⁸⁸ He remembered in vivid detail going to see her with his lover Evan, their neighbour and their friend Frank.

I remember going to the Forum for Judy, Judy, Judy. And that was something. ... We had splurged and got real nice seats, at the side near the stage, but up above, so you could really see down properly. And I don't know if you've ever been to a Judy show, but they play the music you know "The Man Who Got Away" and it just gets to you. But the whole—I would say—the Forum was packed, and about 90 percent gay. Of course, she was our goddess.

Donald and his friends were not fanatic Garland fans like those whom they saw at the Forum that night.

And then, I don't know how they did it, but all these little numbers²⁸⁹ who had paid much more than [us], they all had huge floral arrangements, and they kept running up on the stage with them. It was just a night to remember.

Which performer a particular audiences will favour varies with class, race, culture and age cohort. Before Judy Garland, for example, were performers like Beatrice Lillie, who used the

²⁸⁸ Donald was not able to supply the exact year, but the show *Judy, Judy, Judy* at the Forum in the fall of 1961 (Coleman 1990:248).

²⁸⁹ A term indicating that he looked down on them.

song "There are fairies at the bottom of my garden" in ironic reference to the homosexuals in the front row at her concerts.²⁹⁰

The ethnic boundary of course strongly affected choices of show business forms for gay attention, with opera and classical concerts as a unifying draw for both Francophones and Anglophones. On the other hand, such was not necessarily the case with popular music. The passion for Broadway show tunes that is a hallmark (or stereotype) of American and English Canadian gay culture did not necessarily travelled well across Montreal's cultural divide. For example, Donald recalled trying in vain to convince Evan's new lover Yvan of the wonders of Broadway:

The time I was most pissed off with Yvan—the road company of *My Fair Lady*—and Yvan's one that didn't believe in shows. And I said, this is an opportunity that you are not going to miss, and I got tickets for him and Evan and myself. He wouldn't go if I wasn't. And he sat through *My Fair Lady*. Did not clap once. Just like he was in punishment. I was so angry.

This lack of interest in Broadway was not a characteristic of all Montreal gay Francophones, though. Donald also knew another Francophone with a professional interest in it, since he sold concepts for television programs, and was thus obliged to be fully aware of trends on Broadway. The party-giver Armand Émond, interviewed in Siegel (1993), still enjoyed going to New York for a few days and seeing as many shows as possible, a practice begun when he was stage manager at a Montreal nightclub.

There were also local stars who attracted Francophone gay audiences. Gérard kept going to the clubs because he enjoyed the shows, and Armand Monroe kept his fans coming back to the Tropical. Trevor shared with many Francophones his fondness for a lesbian singer, Carol Breval, who entertained at the Hawaiian Lounge, where she:

belted songs out like the Ginette Reno type, but sort of bull-dykey. And she was usually preceded by some drag queens that would come out and do their number too.

Québécois stars like the transvestite Guilda and Michel Louvain, a rising young singer in the late 1950s, attracted a gay audience as well as the general public.

Not all gay men shared the same idols. Trevor took an impassioned stand against Edith Piaf, who was too popular with other customers at Bud's for his taste.

I used to get pissed off at that bar. They had Edith Piaf on the jukebox, arghhh. If they played it just once in a while, fine, but one or two songs constantly came back time and time again to haunt me.

This didn't deter him from being a regular at the bar. Secondary narrators, Robert and Earl, provided a glimpse of a specialized form of gay taste when they described going to the

²⁹⁰ Such star fixations have been analysed by Richard Dyer (1986), as outlined in Chapter 3.

Cock'n'Bull bar, downstairs at the southwest corner of Peel and Ste-Catherine, in the late 1960s, for the Sunday afternoon gay singalong. They said that on Sunday night the same bar attracted gays in country and western drag. Country music and the cowboy look have never been very popular among Montreal gay men except for a few. Heteroglossic discourse intersects the gay world as it does every other segment of society.

Personal Style and Identity/Camp and Gay Visibility: How does the decision to participate in gay life influence personal style choices in clothing, home decor, food choices, etc.? The journalist who wrote the account of an entrapment arrest in Montreal in June 1886 (reproduced in Appendix C-1) chose to dwell at length on the effeminate characteristics of some of the strollers. The report gives sufficient detail on the special vocabulary, tones of voice, and particularly the styles of dress of these men to justify the conclusion that a homosexual social world had already taken shape in the city by that time and that it had a recognizable continuity with the gay world of later years in terms of these style orientations. These few densely written paragraphs touch on a number of key concerns for the study of the emergence of a gay identity: effeminate stereotyping and explicit ideological control by the popular press; state intervention to enforce this moral stance; and (reading between the lines) a glimpse of gay defiance of these controls. In the first paragraph we recognize such aspects of the modern gay subculture as the careful, stylish dress, effeminate mannerisms and soft speaking voices of these men.

One of the tones, styles or modulations of the gay social voice is the "queeny" or "swish" style, as it was once called.²⁹¹ "Camping it up" runs through all areas of gay society. It represents a private moment of freedom from the constraints the world places on gay identity, a way of "letting our hair down." The gay "sensibility" known as "camp" has been explored by many cultural critics since Sontag's (1966 [1964]) popularization of it. In light of political assertions that being gay is an identity choice, Escoffier (1985:140-141) quotes Sontag's famous 1964 article: "Camp was built on the assumption that gender behaviour is a role, something that can be adopted, changed or dropped." But he accuses her of ignoring the political importance of camp, the fact that "it offered a counter-hegemonic challenge to the sex/gender system." Camp behaviour modified the dominant cultural view of gender and sex

²⁹¹ Leznoff (1954:120). The opposite is "butch."

and was the “ideology of the homosexual subculture in the 1950s which promulgated the view of gender roles as performance with a bitter sense of irony.”

While the concept of “sensibility” is reminiscent of anthropological attempts to pin down diffuse qualities of a culture and its value orientations, as in the “culture and personality” studies or cultural analyses of art, it is not easy to bring such abstractions to bear in concrete ethnographic research. In the present study, no use of the concept of “camp” was made beyond the idea of “campy” behaviour, meaning carrying on in an obviously gay manner, breaching, if outsiders see the performance, the code of secrecy. However, to the extent that such aesthetic considerations are reflected in style choices in clothing or interior design, they can be investigated with reference to specific choices by gay consumers, thus rendering the schematic bases accessible for investigation.

Campiness and drag can easily throw the inductee into gay life into a personal and political quandary. Some rejected “swish” out of hand. Most worked out some sort of *modus vivendi* with a “social fact” that there was no getting around. The narrators commented on these questions in some detail, mostly rejecting queeniness in themselves, and said they had not participated very much at all in its most overt form of expression, doing drag.

The narrator group did not include any men who responded enthusiastically to the queen stereotype. Their comments, assuming that the passage of thirty years or more had not affected their opinions, indicated a fairly negative view of “queening it up.” As Eugène’s story shows, all gays can be said to incorporate stereotypes (which he learned especially from reading *Ici Montréal*) into their behaviour at least as an indication of how *not* to behave for fear of being revealed. Because of the stereotype, gays actively worry about whether their wrists are too limp or their voices too lispy. One document attests to the anguish this caused a gay man in early twentieth century Montreal. In a letter to Elsa Gidlow, her friend Roswell George Mills wrote despairingly:

If only I could fit in somewhere, I should be a little better off than I am. Unfortunately, there is absolutely no place wherein I seem to suit. We none of us fit, I know, but you have not quite so much to contend with as I have. You, at least, are not marked out by a lot of idiotic mannerisms that are unconscious, yet terribly apparent, you are not subject to the ridicule and the sneers, the hateful appellations that are given me all the time.²⁹²

²⁹² Roswell George Mills to Elsa Gidlow, undated letter in the Gidlow papers, Correspondence file 2/27, Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California Archives, “Dearest Sappho, Needless to say, I am in the dumps tonight.”

By Gidlow's account (1978:16), his taste in striking clothes and perfume didn't make him stand out any less.

He was beautiful. About nineteen, exquisitely made up, slightly perfumed, dressed in ordinary men's clothing but a little on the chi-chi side. And he swayed about, you know. We became friends almost instantly because we were both interested in poetry and the arts (Gidlow 1978:16).

The trade-off between personal preference in style and the requirements for social survival and success posed a difficult problem for men like Mills.

Leznoff (1954:117-119) sees the use of camp style as a central symbol of the collective life of the "Overt Participating Group" in his study.²⁹³ For the individual member, he says, effeminate behaviour "reaffirms values to which he finds himself committed." The "shes" and use of female nicknames are symbols of revolt, "symbols of the path which separates the homosexual from the rest of society" that reaffirm their belonging to group. The Covert group, whose social lives are much less exclusively homosexual, can only adopt effeminate behaviour in "secret" gatherings, where it is "understood to be only play-acting." Leznoff asks whether swish behaviour is effeminate, but finds it hard to evaluate because of lack of objective standards of masculine and feminine. He nevertheless concludes that swish behaviour is not effeminate but rather an interpretation which is patterned after Hollywood portrayals of women, such that group members developed a style considered effeminate, in which female behaviour was exaggerated beyond recognition (1954:122-123.). It is a:

stereotyped form of behaviour which symbolically emphasizes his identification with the group of sexual deviants and his rejection of the sexual values of heterosexual society. This stereotyped form of behaviour is an attempt to adopt the sex-linked roles of the female and takes the form of a combination of mannerisms, dress, manual gestures, vocal intonations, and vocabulary which are suggestive of a caricature of women.

In several contexts Leznoff emphasizes the divisions between Overts and Coverts. The "swish" behaviour of the Overts was seen by the Coverts as a threat to the code of secrecy, since they were afraid that someday they would be embarrassed by them in public. They felt it was dangerous to either talk to them or snub them and risk antagonism leading to public scenes. One Overt homosexual stated:

But I couldn't see myself fitting in with the intelligentsia. I know some of them because sometimes they stoop down and have an affair with somebody from our gang. ... We just might say hello. But sometimes they will cruise you and try to take someone home to bed. I think that you could say that they mix sexually but not socially (Leznoff 1954:77).

The antagonism was mutual. Leznoff discusses the theme of secrecy at great length, and the class distinction was central to the fears of the Coverts, as one of them makes vividly clear.

There are some people who I don't like and I wish that these people didn't know about me. Then there are the people I don't know too well, or people who are obvious or what I uncharitably call

²⁹³ made up of "3 butch and 11 swish homosexuals." (1954:121)

the riffraff. I have always attempted to avoid them and I avoid them now. It is inevitable that you bump into a lot of people who you would rather not know. Homosexuals are very democratic people. To achieve their own ends they overlook a lot they wouldn't overlook in other fields. If you know one you know fifty is a good way to describe it. It's an eclectic society. People are bound to each other as by a link of chain. You try to avoid being a link in this chain by carefully choosing (Leznoff 1954:77).

This contemporary expression of viewpoint is of immense value, since the open declaration of class hostility is unlikely to be expressed decades later, and none of the narrators in my research put such feelings so bluntly.

In the narrators' accounts there were several references to avoidance of queenly behaviour, dress, etc. This is the kind of danger that Alvin was explicitly warned about when he was young:

In my teens, I was, as I later learned, dreadfully effeminate myself. I remember when I was about 16 or 17, one of my favourite expressions was "Oh, piffle!" And at that time, I was working in the summer at one of my uncle's businesses, and I happened to say that once in the presence of one of the secretaries. And she said, "Don't talk like that, people will think you're a pansy." But I didn't know what was meant by pansy. I just knew it was something not desirable. So when some of my uncles began to make comments, I tried to get rid of those gestures and effeminate ways, but I'm aware that my way of speaking is still betrays me.

This story points to the importance of learning things like posture control as the individual attempts to establish his masculinity, mapping onto his body they precepts of families and adolescent peer groups.²⁹⁴ The telling use of the word as "betray" underlines the strength of the taboo on effeminacy and the danger perceived by this narrator, not of being effeminate but of being seen as effeminate.

After entry into gay society, adoption of a role as either "butch" or "swish" was not obligatory for men, as it was for lesbian women.²⁹⁵ Aside from occasional parties and a tendency to verbal flourishes, most of the narrators were not practitioners of a camp or drag style. Émile said that at the Monarch and the Tropical there weren't a lot of queens, but that they took up a lot of space:

Ah, mon dieu. C'est pas énorme. C'est dur. C'est eux qui venaient transiger, ils venaient de couper parce qu'ils prenaient de la place mais c'était pas énorme. T'avais par exemple, le nom me revient pas, mais i' était à Radio-Canada dans les costumes longtemps, est mort il y a 2 ans. A ben lui, il chantait des airs d'Opéra à quatre pattes sur le stage. Là, fallait le faire. Mais ils prenaient beaucoup de place parce qu'ils étaient pas nombreux et ils défendaient leur territoire.

The opera performance must have been at the Tropical, since the Monarch had no stage.

²⁹⁴ Bourdieu (1977:94) describes the "mapping" of the orientations of the culture onto the body of the child by such exhortations as "Stand up straight," or "Don't hold the knife in your left hand," which show the relation of such everyday discursive action to the construction of gender identity and other aspects of the individual's self-concept.

²⁹⁵ For a discussion of lesbian butch/femme roles in the Montreal bar scene, see Chamberland (1993). Almost immediately upon entry into the lesbian world, women were expected to opt for one or the other role.

Some men experimented with queeniness, without adopting it. But one time soon after arriving in Montreal, another man watched as Donald, thinking he was alone, experimented with a walk he had learned from two co-workers at Ogilvy's Department Store, with lasting consequences, since this man was Evan, whom he would know for the rest of his life:

One day I was walking through the stockroom and no one was around and I thought I would practice my sashay walk, like those other two that I told you about—Billy and Simon. And he was in another aisle and could see. I couldn't see him and he saw me. So from then on, he knew for sure. No one could act that little part. And we would go out in a little bunch made up of workers and Westmounters. And after lots of—not lots of drinking, but a fair amount—we just grabbed each other and that was it.

As a result of practising his sashay, Donald and Evan became lovers for the next six years, lived together as friends for several more years. But effeminate behaviour is something they only use for humour.

The hostility some gay men feel for drag and camp behaviour is illustrated by Normand's comments:

I didn't like it in places where guys start to "faire les folles." It gets on my nerves sometimes—depends where we are and how I feel—maybe I shouldn't say that.

He and Jean went to see drag shows sometimes in New York, but didn't like them either. His apologetic closing comment indicates, however, that he sees drag as a marker of gay lifestyle, so he doesn't want to appear to be too negative about it.

Less reticent about the expression of negative reactions was Pierre, who, in his coming out period in the early 1960s, was bothered by the camp style of some of his friend Gilles' gay friends.

Après ma rencontre avec Gilles à 20 ans, qui m'a ouvert la porte du monde gai (Le mot commençait peut-être à s'employer), m'a fait rencontrer des gens. Il m'a amené sur la Main. Je connaissais seulement l'Ouest de la ville d'où je venais. J'ai connu un groupe d'amis gais—certains avec qui j'aimais parler, malgré que je les trouvais ben efféminés. J'ai toujours eu de la misère avec les efféminés sauf les grandes folles qui s'assurent elles-mêmes. Je les trouvais folles ces gens-là. J'étais gêné de m'afficher avec eux.

Nevertheless, in a later reference to this theme, Pierre remarked on how easy it was to pick up the queeny style:

J'étais capable de faire la folle moi aussi. Ça s'apprend vite ces tics de langage et de manière. Parler les uns des autres au féminin.

It was an idiom so common in the gay world that even someone like Pierre, who was adamantly opposed to effeminate behaviour, fell into the practice from time to time.

Similarly, though Alvin expressed rather negative feelings towards effeminacy and drag, nevertheless he did include a remark on the widespread use of campy language:

You're asking me about effeminacy. I'm not terribly sympathetic to it. I guess we all camp it up a bit now and then, but I don't take kindly to people flaunting their homosexuality. To me it's a kind of a caricature, and I don't like to see it in public.

The uneasy compromise between camp as common culture and camp as excess was constantly interpreted and re-negotiated in gay social circles.

While some men never went beyond the simple use of feminine pronouns and a queenly style of accentuating the pronunciation, some of the narrators did on occasion wear female clothing, following a long tradition in the gay world (see the historical and mythological overview of female impersonators by Bulliet [1928] and Bray's [1982] account of the use of drag in the "molly houses" of early eighteenth century England). The earliest account of drag in Montreal, other than theatrical cross-dressing, was an 1886 news item, "Homme-femme," which describes in detail the kiss this young "woman" blew to three policemen, who then discovered she was a man. The article includes a full description of her white satin turban hat, high heels, and evening fan.²⁹⁶ An early twentieth-century account of men dressing as women involves the Church. Gidlow's friend Roswell (see p. 122) told her about a house where priests welcomed good-looking young men like himself and his two friends, as well as street boys. They had welcomed so many that someone denounced them to the police, saying that there were women in the house. The police mounted a raid and discovered priests dressed as women and young street boys in elegant clothes. The priests explained it as an attempt to rehabilitate the young men, and the affair was hushed up (Gidlow 1986:113-114). A 1957 New Year's party involving drag is described in detail by a yellow paper whose headline claims that it was an unimaginable orgy.²⁹⁷

Though drag was not something he ordinarily got involved in, Percy did try his hand at women's finery on one occasion. He had a friend who lived in an apartment downtown.

One night, he was having a stag party. There must have been twelve or fourteen people there, maybe more. And I had a friend staying with me, and we decided to go as girls. I forget what his costume was, but I wore a very tight-fitting, sleek gown to the floor, with no back in it—just straps over my shoulders. And we carried our shoes with us from where we were living at that time. We just had to walk. It was in the fall. We had our overcoats on, anyway. And we carried our shoes, and walked along Sherbrooke St., and pulled up our dresses so that just our coats went down to our knees. And we were going along, carrying our shoes, and we passed some lads, and just after we got by, and they turned around, and said, "God help us, they're men, not women." But they didn't do anything. We kept on going, and we went, and when we got there, rang the bell, and the crowd in there just shouted because they were all dressed—all the chaps in there in jackets, and then we arrive, make-up on and everything.

Perhaps Percy wanted to see what the attraction was in doing drag, since he knew his lover Walter had had extensive experience with it in Toronto from the late 1920s until 1933 when

²⁹⁶ "Homme-Femme" *La Presse* 1886.07.29.

²⁹⁷ "40 Homos fêtent le Nouvel An dans une orgie inimaginable." *Ici Montréal* 1957.01.26:1, 12, 14, 16.

they met. Through the men he met in parks or at the gay restaurant, he was introduced to a remarkable household.

One place in Toronto where we used to go, they used to throw all these drag parties, and they'd be big parties—twenty to thirty people there—and they used to have women there, too. Lesbians used to come. It was a married couple—they had two children. It was a pretty good size house, so they could throw a good size party. And they'd put the children to bed up on the third floor or some place quiet, and the wife used to come down. The gowns used to be beautiful. The first time I ever went to one like that, I was surprised—I didn't realize what I was getting into. I used to take Percy to the place afterwards. I introduced him to that same crowd. But the first time I was taken there, I wasn't in drag, of course, and my friend wasn't either. We walked in the door, and I thought, Oh my God—there were all these beautiful women. Beautiful clothes they were wearing, and expensive, some of them, you know. Just looked like real women. I didn't know for quite a while what I was getting into, till my friend told me. That's when I was just starting getting into the business.

Surprisingly the hosts were a heterosexual couple. The husband, Walter said, liked to play bridge, and would take the streetcar all the way to the other side of town dressed as a woman.

No person ever knew he wasn't, he was so well built, and looked so much like a woman when he was properly dressed. He did it for years.

Though these people were not themselves gay, they evidently provided a social space for gay life in the very conservative Toronto of the late 1920s.

Drag parties required a considerable investment, as Walter notes. As a variant on the drag party, in the early 1960s Len's circle of friends took to holding hat parties, described above, because hats took a lot less work than full drag. But for Alvin there was another disadvantage: doing drag killed sexual attraction, a viewpoint which he illustrated by recounting a party he had attended in Edmonton in the 1950s. He had a letter of introduction to a local gay man from a mutual friend, and so did not have to ferret out local gay life.

We were there over the weekend, so it was Saturday night, and at the party, most of the men got into drag. That completely killed any interest [them], because I was seeing a female, not a male. ... There were a couple of other people who were not in drag, and I ended up with somebody quite masculine.

The strategy of gay visibility through drag did not appeal to most of the narrators, who found the non-drag coming-out strategy of gay liberation more in keeping with their sense of their own masculinity. But some narrators alluded frequently to drag and queenly style in putting on exaggerated accents or gestures. It is, as Pierre said, an easy style to imitate. Leznoff concluded (1954:123) that effeminate usages constitute an important socially constructed code for behaviour that is proper to the gay world, as a marker of membership, a style whose adoption means that an individual accepts a gay identity (and not an attempt to actually portray female behaviour). Clearly this function is maintained in the narrators' reports, except that their observance of the style is mainly in the form of quoting fragments. They performed queenly routines, but in quotations, as mimicry of others, rather than in their own voice. This quoting

of the behaviour of others at once symbolizes their allegiance to the gay community and its cultural forms while it nevertheless distances the speaker from the effeminate implications of camp.

Consumer Patterns and Gay Identity: Most of the narrators expressed their gayness in styles less extreme than those of camp. The interviews provide a glimpse into several aspects of the acquisition of material goods or the use of services as a consequence or affirmation of the decision to adopt a gay identity.

Style choices for gay men could be analysed in many areas. Since collection of the detailed data required for a full social semiotics of style choices among gay men was not possible in this study, I provide here only a few examples of gay fashion trends and preferences in interior design to illustrate the sharing of this type of schema. Another important area of gay consumer activity presented is that of travel, with the development of specifically gay vacations as a market commodity exemplifying the growth of this new market niche. Consumer spending patterns like attending operas and Broadway musicals or buying records have already been discussed in the section on gay lore, while publications and other products specifically aimed at the gay market, such as physique photography, will be examined in the following section on cultural works.

The general obsession with style was reflected in the first thing that Donald mentioned about Percy and Walter, their way of celebrating Christmas.

At Christmas time, before getting involved with Evan, who was the same age, I was involved with these older guys and their little knitting-circle group. They could be quite fussy. At Christmas each year, they would have a different theme. Are you ready for this? Like all my packages, I would choose black and gold. And everything would be black and gold. The tree would be black and gold. Another year, it would be silver and green. And if your colours—if some other one that you didn't like had the same colours as you, well, that would be a feud for life. Percy and Walt would have their colour. Henry and this other one would have their colour. All the couples who entertained each other at smart, smart little dinner parties.

This fussiness, most extreme in the case of the "two-tone" Christmas, drove Donald crazy, as mentioned in discussing their mentoring relationship below.

Fashion and Design: In the North American male identity, too much adornment runs counter to the consensus that the most appropriate masculine appearance is the "natural" look, not subject to the fussiness that women show in their concern with clothes and grooming. The style-less natural man sees himself as a member of the unmarked gender, the standard against which women's (and gay men's) difference is measured. This ideological stance includes

opposition to fussing over style in other areas, like interior decoration or other details of life, and would view with disdain the use of theme colours for Christmas trees and presents by Walter and his friends. It has been pointed out by Plummer (1975:192) and others how the need for gay men to keep their secret, their careful study of “natural” male behaviour, and attempts to duplicate it have fed into new developments in the overall construction of men as objects of social gaze and social construction in the feminist era (Mort 1988).

The *Herald's* use of the word “chi-chi” in its coverage of the obscenity arrests of January 1956 has already been mentioned in Chapter 4.²⁹⁸ This exemplifies how a popular notion of gay preoccupation with fashion becomes a marker of homosexuality for general readers. But in fact, in 1956, most gays avoided “chi-chi” clothes precisely because they wanted to avoid conforming to the popular stereotype. Leznoff included a section on the “Role of Dress” in his chapter on contact techniques. As he does throughout his study, he finds that gay men of the early 1950s had differing attitudes according to their class. He concludes the section with the words:

Since they generally consider that heterosexuals are as suspicious of certain types of dress as they are, those who attempt to conceal their homosexuality are careful to avoid fashions defined as “gay.” For those who make no attempt to conceal as is the case of Overts, dress may be used to aid in making sexual contacts (1954:165-166).

Leznoff explains that:

In some cases identifying dress consists of a pair of tight fitting slacks designed to reveal the outline of the body, a sports shirt open at the neck and a pair of sandals. To homosexuals, this clothing arouses suspicions of homosexuality.

As one of the Overts boasts:

It's amazing what a pair of slacks can do for you. I find that the most successful way to cruise. You really get the looks that way.

This kind of technique might be used by the Coverts on occasion as well, but usually they were more restrained. The Covert, or higher status, homosexual:

consciously avoids those fashions, colours, or combinations which homosexual society defines as being “gay.” Thus Coverts use dress as a means of concealing (1954:165).

In accordance with such thinking, Donald, growing up in Trinidad in the late 1940s, was leery of becoming too close to a man named Edmund:

He was flamboyant, but not in a faggoty way. He was just a bit too different for Trinidad. He was like, I would say, a Noel Coward—that type. He dressed just too well. And he was so fabulous-looking. ... You see, he worked for the oil fields. ... And he would go to New York and New Orleans and come back with all these stories and clothes. He was quite a clothes horse.

Fashion however was not the knowledge structure in the gay world that interested Donald.

²⁹⁸ “34 to Face Court For Obscene Talk” *Herald* 1956.01.23:15(?).

One major constraint on the expression of gayness in dress was the fact that as men, especially middle-class men, like those who hung out at the downtown gay bars in the 1950s, you had to dress according to the limited fashions allowed for all men. Most of the narrators stressed that a suit and tie were *de rigueur* in the bars of the period, especially in the mixed spaces like the numerous hotel bars where gay men congregated at the bar itself, while straights drank at the tables, supposedly oblivious to the gay crowd. Len, who began to frequent the downtown bars in the early 1950s, explained:

Then if we wanted to be sort of dressed up there was the Piccadilly bar in the Mount Royal Hotel upstairs. ... I don't know if they would let you in without a shirt and tie but in those days we all dressed up a lot more. I started work when I was 18. I wore a shirt and tie to the office every day and if you were going out anywhere very respectable in the evening you wore a shirt and tie. Shirt and tie sometimes with a sweater but still wearing a shirt and tie. It made it a lot easier in some ways if all your clothes were dress up clothes. You know, just shirts and sport jackets and suits. If you didn't want to be quite as dressed up you wore a sweater instead of a jacket but still the shirt and tie was there.

The only real trouble about clothing which any of the narrators reported was reflected in Patrick's story of how the police once brought his Danish lover back to the apartment to change because his European-style shorts were a violation of a Montreal bylaw.²⁹⁹

When Gérard was starting to go to gay clubs in the mid-1960s, he was very particular about his appearance:

Je me souviens comment je m'habillais. Je mettais toujours un collet roulé tout le temps en blanc avec un veston en suède. C'était surtout pendant l'hiver.

This emphasis on formal wear continued until the late 1960s, varying with the club and the clientele. When Ralph came out in 1969, he fell in with a crowd that hung out at the Café Apollo on Park Avenue, some distance from downtown (described on p. 290). He said:

Then life became complex. I had two sets of clothing, one for work and trips home, another for the bar. I couldn't get over people wearing tank tops in the bars in mid-winter. ... What was unusual in those days was that you dressed in suit and tie. Three-quarters of the people were in suits, with cuff links, etc., at the Apollo, the Taureau d'Or, Chez Fernand, and the Rose Rouge. Today it's unusual but then jeans were just starting to come in.

The shift to the less genteel image of jeans and casual shirts was part of a new masculinization that occurred among gay men at the end of the 1960s, when work clothes became a symbol of the new manliness.³⁰⁰ Regardless of what style they chose, for some gay men in the 1970s at least, there was a constant need to buy new clothes. One of Sawchuck's respondents said he had spent \$1,000 in a summer, explaining that you "have to for people to notice" (Sawchuck

²⁹⁹ Hurteau (1991:139) mentions campaigns by Action catholique against the wearing of shorts or revealing bathing suits by both men and women in the 1930s and 1940s, while Thivierge (1991) makes it clear that women were the primary targets of these efforts.

³⁰⁰ See Higgins (n.d. "À la mode..."). Even in the early 1970s, Sawchuck (1973:54) observed signs at the entrances of two downtown bars saying "Jacket and tie must be worn."

1973:68-69). Among the small group that Sawchuck observed, he also surprisingly found that the discreet use of make-up was widespread in order to manage appearance and project a desirable visual impression for success in cruising (1973:69). Though the clothes may have been masculine, their newness and the manicured face of their wearers continued to signify gayness to the observant eye.

Changes in the design of club interiors had an impact on fashion as well. Ralph found out from experiencing the innovations at the end of the 1960s.

And black light was coming in too. You dressed for it. God forbid you'd wear a black sweater. There'd be no lint on it when you left home, but when you walked into the club it looked like polka dots. And people started rubbing the crotches of their pants so the white showed. You had to know how to dress. Certain prints stood out. And we discovered the effect of Murine under black light: it gave you lime green eyes. False teeth showed up too. We had a lot of fun around black light, but it could make you look awfully silly. I remember one time I cruised someone all night until the waiter André came up to me and said "Jesus, Ralph, what's on your face?" The Murine had run down my cheeks in lurid green streaks. And I had spent hours talking to the guy and wondering why he didn't respond.

Ralph's description provides a good example of the expressive use of fashion and style among gays as a focus of collective attention, similar to the style subcultures of British youth described by Hebdige (1979), Willis (1990) and others. In practical terms, stereotyped signs were dangerous, since they could easily be learned by outsiders. Probably gay men have more commonly relied on minor variations on standard fashions. These subtler codes consisted of taking just a little too much care in choosing a sweater, being just a little too groomed to fit in with the masculine no-style style that dominated European men's fashion for two centuries. It is in this way, even more than in flamboyant queen fashions whose audience was outsiders, that fashion expresses gay community

But style choices divided the gay community as much as they served as a channel of solidarity by offering a topic of conversation supporting a shared knowledge structure. Leznoff's report on the divergent views of overts and coverts regarding tight slacks is evidence of this, as is a comment made by Donald about interior design and furniture selection. This arose in remarks he was making about how he and his lover Evan withdrew from the social world of Walter and Percy to a social life with neighbours and a few gay men who were not as closely linked to the bar world.

Our own community, that was. And we knew people in the other, but we didn't care to be involved with the colour-coordinated presents and fussy little. ... It seemed like the majority of that set liked Victorian furniture and heavy drapes and great big swatches. We wanted modern Scandinavian designs.

Here he clearly expresses the symbolic significance of such style choice differences. But the unspoken significance of the difference over furniture is as much a matter of generational difference as one of involvement in the bar scene.

Travel: Gay vacation spots like Fire Island (off Long Island, New York) have been described in literature ranging from Lévi-Strauss's (1955:186-187) humorous mention, in which he was concerned to highlight the symmetries of symbols as he observed his childless gay neighbours carrying food along the boardwalks in baby carriages, to Newton's (1987, 1994) ethnographic study of class and ethnicity as factors in the history of the community of Cherry Grove as a lesbian resort for New Yorkers from the 1930s on. Quite a few of the men interviewed had vacationed in Provincetown, a Cape Cod resort that became increasingly gay in the 1950s and 1960s. Starting in 1962 or 1963, Étienne went there every year for two or three weeks until the mid-1970s:

Provincetown était agréable. Beaucoup de liberté, toutes les formes d'aventures: les balades en bateau, passer des journées entières à poil à Truro. C'était le paradis! Tout bronzé des pieds jusqu'à la tête, c'était le fun, sans compter les petites aventures dans les dunes.

Harry explained the social significance of Provincetown, as well as Greenwich Village, in terms of his concept of gay community, and provided a little historical background:

I had gone to New York with friends and I remember walking in the Village. Remembering how wonderful this was, a place where there were gay people. We went into a jewellery store on this street that was run by lesbians who spent their summers in Provincetown. This was the mythic gay community for me. I don't know that I'd ever been to Provincetown in my life. In terms of that time it was what gay people did. They lived in the Village and they went to Provincetown. People still do. It started out as an artists' community, before the first war, and then the gays found a space there. It was because it was an artists' community. And that's how it became a gay community.

As a cosmopolitan art historian and Anglophone, Harry had been exposed to the New York view of the "done thing," but Montreal Francophones who didn't speak English also went to Provincetown.

As Ernest explained, one of the motivations for getting away to an American vacation destination was secrecy. Some of his friends were well-known literary figures who preferred to go to gay bars only when they were in Boston, or to visit the gay beach in Provincetown.

Whether the latter was a good choice for Quebec intellectuals to get away may be doubted based on a comment made by Gérard, who had seen many Quebec license plates there on his visits, and had met people from Montreal who included doctors and other professionals.

Gérard provided a description of the atmosphere which attracted so many of his fellow Francophones.

Des beaux garçons, tous dans la vingtaine, un peu plus vieux que moi, pis qui étaient en groupe, qui s'amusaient. Je les trouvais donc chanceux de pouvoir sortir ensemble. Ça m'attirait. Pis ils étaient dégagés, probablement plus là-bas qu'à Montréal. ... Je me rappelle des clubs de plage, y avait une plage gaie ... parce qu'y avait des lesbiennes, beaucoup d'hommes au bout de la plage. Les américains, quand ils donnaient de la bière, ils en donnaient à tout le monde. Ils t'avaient jamais vu, et te disaient bonsoir le soir et si t'étais le moins proche—they avaient des coolers. Même s'ils te connaissaient pas, ils te donnaient une bière.

Though he spoke little English, Gérard got into the habit of going to Provincetown nearly every summer.

Through trips to such vacation spots, gay men, especially those who did speak English, had an opportunity to build networks that extended far beyond Montreal. Len's story of the friends he made in Provincetown who stayed at the Laurentian Hotel reminds us of the importance of contacts made on vacations, followed by visits or Christmas cards, in consolidating a gay social life that transcends the local scale. Even Gérard, with his limited English, met Americans whom he showed around the bar scene when they later came to Montreal. Provincetown was such a standard reference for gays in eastern North America that any mention of it could be taken as a hint of gayness, as it was when Alvin used his knowledge of Provincetown to ascertain that the son of one of his cousins was gay (p. 321). His relative's detailed knowledge of the gay establishments there confirmed a suspicion founded on a mention of the resort as a whole.

New York, with its famous gay scene in Greenwich Village and elsewhere, was another favourite travel destination, since it was relatively near for Montrealers. Most of the narrators had been to New York at least once. Many were regular visitors. Donald passed through New York on his way to settle in Montreal. He was able to stay with a friend, an American he had had an affair with in Trinidad. The man's mother took Donald around to the museums and so on, and was the hostess at a gay party held to "launch" him in New York. Jean and Normand described their annual visits to New York, usually at New Year's. What attracted them was the "gay bars and French movies and the opera." They didn't really know people there, but had lots of "nice parties," as Jean put it, with people they met at the bars.

We would rent a room in a hotel, meet a friend, have a threesome. I remember one in particular—a young Portuguese boy invited both of us to his place and we had a night to remember.

Normand recalled a special New Year's Eve in the 1960s:

I remember one night in New York at a small bar called the Intermezzo. We were at the door feeling pretty good and we wouldn't let anybody come out or go in without kissing us. It was small, nice people. And when the Americans saw that, they made a line up between so there were six people on each side and they had to kiss us. A lot of fun.

Every year they had to figure out where the bars were because, Normand explained:

From year to year they moved and they were raided. From one year there would be very few left. Of course, there were the old steady ones.

These longstanding places were where they headed first to find out what the current favourites were. Visitors had to be aware of the local customs, which were crucial for self-preservation in the face of the constant raids.

And then they started to dance in New York City in the bars in those years. But the dancing was done in a special room in the back and if somebody strange came in that didn't look gay they'd have either a light or a bell and everybody in the back room would rush and sit down and the music would stop and then the light would go out and everybody would start to dance again.

Such warning systems are well known in descriptions of American gay bars (e.g. Achilles 1964), but never seem to have been used in Montreal.

While most Montrealers were attracted by the social and cultural side of New York, others focused mainly on the sexual. Étienne and Eugène went to New York for the saunas, as mentioned elsewhere, but became attuned to gay politics as a result. However, some narrators felt no desire to go there. For example Pierre saw the fascination with New York as a form of anglomania which ran counter to Quebec nationalism, and he sharply distinguished himself from it.

C'était l'époque du FLQ pis tout ça. Je pense qu'il y avait comme une loi du silence sur les événements politiques, jamais question de ça. Mais ça me passionnait, Gilles aussi. Monde gai fin des années 60. Un monde apolitique et je pense qu'il y avait une certaine anglomanie dans le monde gai. Beaucoup de gens avaient voyagé à New York. Et New York, c'était la grande ville pour les montréalais même si Montréal était la grande ville pour ben du monde, donc anglomanie. C'était pas mon fait à moi.

His criticism of the apolitical nature of gay life appears somewhat unjust, though it was probably true of most local bargoers. However, the opening of political awareness among Montreal gay men that resulted from Étienne and Eugène's trips to the New York saunas would later influence Pierre himself when the three worked together in the *Front de libération homosexuel* in the early 1970s.

Literature and Other Cultural Works: Gay consumer behaviour and the shared schemata on which it rested became socially visible with the rise of gay performances like drag shows or publications ranging from physique magazines to political publications. In the cultural domain, there was a growing interest in gay themes during and after World War II. The small body of Quebec literature that dealt with homosexuality was outlined in Chapter 4 (p. 116) and the prominence of gay writers been discussed by Denance (1987) and Schwartzwald (1993), among others. Literature and its influence on the process of identity formation have been discussed in Chapter 5. Comments here will focus on the narrators' reports of their

consumption (attending, viewing, reading) of cultural works that specifically addressed a gay audience. Here the function of the discursive constructs overtly served to integrate gay social circles through a shared network of schemata maintained collectively by those ready to invest the effort to participate in promoting the sense of community.

The audience for specifically gay performance could unite members of the city's two large cultural groups in an alternative community. As previously mentioned, Montreal Francophones and Anglophones, were fans of distinct (but overlapping) sets of popular cultural performers, as well as different by types or styles of performance, distinct venues, or differing art forms. The boundary between the city's two cultural groups, as audiences for culture, was semi-permeable. Chamberland (1990) depicts the scene as a steady stream of French lesbian singers who played the Ritz Café, haunt of wealthy Anglophones and some cultured Francophones, in the city's grandest hotel. From the Ritz to the cabarets of the "Main" was a great social distance, yet even within the latter area there was a complex mix of clienteles of various ethnic and class and racial origins. The lower end of Boulevard St-Laurent had long been an important focus of Montreal's culturally diverse downtown population.³⁰¹ Some art forms like music travel better across a linguistic divide, but visual work does also. Men who didn't share a common language could nevertheless share a passion for drag shows or any art form that featured scantily-clad men performing, or appearing in print. In this section I will first present the narrators' perspectives on these two types of performance and then examine forms of visual arts that specifically addressed gay men as cultural consumers.

Performance and the Gay Gaze: Gay interest in performances that had a direct symbolic significance for gay identity was focused on two forms with opposing gender valence: drag performance and the display of the athletic male body. Social rules against cross-dressing in the individual's private life were contradicted by the role of female impersonators in performance. Similarly, the visual representation of homosexual desire has been subject to severe restrictions for centuries. However in performance fields like dance, acrobatics, as well as in visual arts like painting and sculpture, gay men have long found access to images of the male figure, and the thriving trade in gay iconography has been one of the most salient indicators of the changed cultural position of homosexuality in the late twentieth century.

³⁰¹ Robert (1928) wrote a description of diverse population of what was then called Dufferin District (the lower Main), one of the Chicago-inspired urban ethnographies of Montreal (Shore 1987).

Female impersonators attracted a broad audience in Quebec, especially among Francophones, for whom Guilda was a major star. In an interview, Guilda confided that he had two personalities, recounting how his move into women's clothing resulted from a chance opportunity to audition for and play the film role of Barbette, "l'un des plus célèbres hommes-femmes" in French show business.³⁰² In Quebec the show business enjoyed a boom in the 1950s, and Guilda's product fit in well with what the Quebec market wanted, as attested by extended runs in Quebec City and regular runs at top Montreal clubs for several years in a row (Thibault and Hébert 1988). Both Francophones and Anglophone gays went to the Casa Loma night club when Guilda was performing, according to Armand Monroe.

There is no written history of drag performance in Montreal, whether in variety theatre or in female impersonator acts at nightclubs. Information gleaned from Hébert (1981) and other sources³⁰³ leads to the conclusion that, like other North American cities, men dressing as women and women dressing as men were popular types of acts in the early twentieth century.³⁰⁴

In the yellow newspapers there was extensive coverage of one of the Montreal appearances of a very well-known drag performance troupe, the Jewel Box Review.³⁰⁵ The items address several themes. One alludes explicitly to the prevalent repugnance for homosexuality in society:

Depuis quelque temps, il semble qu'une partie de la clientèle du Café Provincial passe petit à petit au Havana. Serait-ce la présence de Gérard Auger qui les attire? Ou la présence du Jewel Box Revue qui les repousse? (*Ici Montréal* 1957.02.02:18).

The editorial comment behind the following item betrays either a protest or a too-open demonstration of the violation of gender rules, or perhaps a protest against treating the local audience as naïve prudes, when they are not:

Le plus grand reproche que l'on puisse faire à la troupe du Jewel Box Revue, c'est d'être trop crue et trop brutale dans les finales de chacun de ses numéros. Si une "femme" vient de chanter avec une voix de contralto féminin, puis avec une voix de baryton masculin, il n'est point nécessaire d'insister. Il devient ridicule et insultant de "la" voir arracher les seins artificiels de sa robe pour bien montrer à l'assistance que c'est un homme (*Ici Montréal* 1957.01.26:19).

The appearance locally of such visiting stars was no doubt an infrequent occurrence in the 1950s and 1960s. Their contributions to the local scene were bolstered by a host of local talent

³⁰² "Le dur métier d'être une femme." *Petit Journal* 1956.02.05:82. On Barbette, see Barbedette and Carassou (1981, plates 34-36).

³⁰³ A transvestite performer named "Sugar" was featured in a photo spread in a mid-1960s scandal and sex magazine (*Zéro* 1[6, n.d. (late 1964)]:1-2).

³⁰⁴ See for example, the history of female impersonation by Slide (1986).

in all domains. Evidence of local enthusiasm for drag performers appearing on an international performance circuit comes from one narrator's admiration for a Mexican drag performer at the Beaver Café (Bleury and Ste-Catherine) in the early 1960s, as well as Armand Monroe's regret at not having enough money to see rising female impersonator Charles Pierce, who played the Sans Souci in the early 1950s.

Some bar personalities consciously sought to mould themselves after Hollywood female stars as part of developing their stage persona. While the cross-gender style clothing and the glamour of the stars was not adopted by most gay men, they flocked to see performances in which these were highlighted. At the popular end of the spectrum, far from the select crowds of the Casa Loma, were the bar queens of the Main, brought to life in Tremblay's literary portrayal and in news clippings like the cover story "L'homosexualité en progrès" (*Le Nouveau samedi* 1965.03.26), accompanied by photos of men disguised as women.

As a rite of passage for new entrants, attendance at a drag performance is almost inevitable, if only to find out what they are like as part of the process of adopting gay identity. It was an early highlight of gay experience for Harry, who was shown around the Montreal gay scene by a man he met when he was still in his mid teens.

I remember I told you about this drag bar, and it was he who took me there too. And it was a drag bar. ... I don't remember any name. All I remember was being enchanted because they did an Easter pageant—no they talked to me about an Easter pageant they did. But all I remember was this drag queen who did this huge show—much web work for hats and pseudo-elegant drag and I was intrigued that it was his mother who made his costume. I thought that was wonderful. That was in the summer of 62. ... I left in October for France. And I only knew him during that period of late summer.

Harry only wished his mother could be so supportive. Towards the end of the 1960s, Charles began to go to drag clubs as well.

C'est beaucoup plus tard où j'ai connu les drag shows. [Chez] PJs et sur St-Laurent—comment ça s'appelait? Au Rodeo—le Lodeo plutôt.³⁰⁶ Oui, y avait beaucoup de travestis au début des années 70.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, few bars with live entertainment, even drag shows, were able to survive as the economics of the bar industry changed from the late 1950s until the definitive arrival of discothèque in the late 1960s.

The second type of performance included ballet and other dancers, wrestlers, bodybuilders and male models. These were not specifically gay in character but attracted gay attention because they offered legitimate avenues for getting around the limitations on viewing the male

³⁰⁵ Documented in a film by Michelle Parkerson (1987) and an article on male impersonation in show business (Drorbaugh 1993). Both of these documents focus on the shows only female performer, Stormé Delarivière, while the local press was preoccupied with the men.

³⁰⁶ Successive names for a club at the northwest corner of St-Laurent and Lagauchetière Streets.

body in cultural works before 1970. This interest in the male body was covert in most instances, but did attract the knowing report in the yellow press of a body-building competition which attracted gays including members of the "Jewel Box Review," female impersonators then appearing at a local night club:

Un grand nombre des artistes du "Jewel Box Revue" ont assisté, le 23 décembre, au gala culturiste de Ben Weider, au Monument National (*Ici Montréal* 1957.01.12:20).

Body-building competitions were attended by narrators Percy and Walter as well. The men who hung out in gyms were also known to have performed in specifically gay space on at least one occasion in the 1950s. One of Armand Monroe's triumphs after he took on the responsibility for producing a weekly round of entertainment at the Tropical/Down Beat, was convincing gym owner Jimmy Caruso (also a well-known body-builder photographer) to assemble a team of bodybuilders to perform in the club. It was one of his most successful offerings, but did not become a regular feature. Whether drag or muscle shows, gay men were a faithful audience, and accounts of these events would by put to use as grist for the conversational mill at the next house party or bar outing.

But by the late 1960s, the entertainment scene in clubs began to change. Gay bars pioneered the trend to become discothèques, saving the expense of live entertainment in favour of investments in a massive sound system. Sometimes such establishments would have low-paid entertainment, like the gogo boys hired in imitation of the gogo girl phenomenon which had swept heterosexual venues in the mid-1960s. In the early 1970s, Charles recalled seeing his first gay dancers at the Tunisia.

Je crois que c'est là que j'ai vu un danseur nu pour la première fois. Je crois pas qu'il se déshabillait complètement nu mais c'est là que j'ai vu les premiers danseurs gais. J'en ai vu peut-être à San Francisco mais ça n'a jamais été un gros phénomène aux États-Unis, je pense, pas à cette époque-là. J'ai vu des gogo boys et des drag-shows. Gogo boys en Californie mais moins qu'à Montréal. [Les drag-shows], j'adorais ça. Y en avait que j'aimais beaucoup, oui, une époque.

The arrival of gogo boys³⁰⁷ marked the first competition for drag performance as the entertainment in gay clubs, and serves as another indication of the emergence of an openly gay community. A more detailed study of the drag world in Montreal would require more focused interviewing of audience members and the performers.

Gay Visuals: Direct views of men's bodies in forms such as ballet and sports were available only occasionally, and cost money unless they were on television. Several sources of images of

³⁰⁷ Male strippers in gay clubs were virtually unknown in Montreal before 1980; despite the g-string, Charles recalled the dancer as nude.

men were available to gay men before the advent of the large-scale gay publishing industry that exists now. The interview data reflect the search undertaken by gay men for visual representations in genres ranging from sports or *National Geographic* photographs to classical sculpture. Underwear ads were closely scrutinized. An economic and widely available source of images was in the form of a new set of “beefcake” magazines, inspired by the growth of consumer photography and the “cheesecake” magazines that became familiar to (especially American) soldiers in World War II.

The most common visual product or publication bought by the narrators was physique magazines, which were typically acquired at an early stage of life, usually in the early teenage years, as a significant step towards self-acceptance. For at least one narrator, Arthur, this early interest translated into an ongoing passion for physique photography, of which he became an avid collector. Two other narrators had an even closer relationship to this field as photographer and physique model. Other products with gay overtones were the yellow newspapers and tabloids that some men read, novels and other books relating to homosexuality (mentioned in Chapter 5).

In the 1950s, the number of physique publications skyrocketed, and they were distributed in virtually every corner store in Quebec. An item from the yellow press suggests that sales in Montreal were brisk:

Les revues *Adonis* et *Vim* s'enlèvent très rapidement et tous les acheteurs sont des hommes. Dans ces revues, on admire les culturistes, avec ou sans maillot (*Ici Montréal* 1956.12.29:13).

In the 1960s, the yellow press continued to scrutinize the physique publications. In a lengthy, rather confused diatribe about censorship, the author, M. Lasalle, seems to argue that censorship should be exercised against physique magazines (called “*la littérature infâme*”):

Quand on voit sur toutes les tablettes de nos marchands de journaux, ces magazines pour hommes, magazines qui sous le prétexte fallacieux de l'art musculaire présentent des hommes dans des poses propres à satisfaire les désirs et à aiguïser les appétits sexuels des quelque trente mille messieurs qui n'ont de messieurs que le nom (*Zéro* 1[6, fin 1964]:7).

Soon afterwards, *Ici Montréal* published a cover story “Contrebande d'hommes nus,” (1965.08.07) featuring a sensational photo of a man in a posing strap with the caption “Les nouveaux hommes nus sont très différents des culturistes,” at the same time as claiming that a reaction against such pictures was in progress across the North American continent. The story gave details on the physique magazine trade in New York and its illicit tributary in Montreal.

However Arthur's account³⁰⁸ of his experiences buying physique magazines makes it clear that they were very widely distributed from at least the late 1950s on. He bought them while still a young "externe" at the collège classique in St-Jérôme. Arthur explains the tease strategy of these publications:

Pour la masturbation, il y avait pas de hard-core, juste les petites revues de culture physique, dont certaines on sentait très bien que c'était pas la culture physique qui était le but principal des photos. Mais y'avait jamais de nus, jamais, jamais de nu intégral sauf de dos. Dès que c'était en avant, y'avait soit un petit pagne, ou une colonne grecque très bien placée, ou un accessoire, je sais pas quoi, une chaise, pour cacher évidemment le sexe.

He hid the magazines, but believed his mother must have known about them, though she never mentioned the subject. Around 1960, Arthur started to travel in Europe, where photographs were more daring.

Avant de partir j'ai vu une annonce d'un photographe à Stockholm, Sandor Kassai. Je lui ai écrit avant d'arriver à Stockholm. C'était un hongrois installé à Stockholm qui vendait des photos à travers le monde. Pas des photos comme aujourd'hui, mais juste des gens seuls, des fois en érection, des Scandinaves. J'ai beaucoup acheté de photos pendant ce voyage—de Kassai et à Paris. ... A Londres je suis allé chez le photographe. Je les rapportais sans histoires. Plus tard je m'abonnais à des revues [homophiles] scandinaves.

Receiving photo orders or magazines sent by mail could be risky, since they were subject to customs inspection, as Arthur's experience with the seizure of an American photo magazine by customs illustrates (p. 194).

As the 1960s advanced, Arthur increasingly relied for his acquisitions on trips to New York, where he also followed other developments in gay pornography.

Depuis le début des années 1960, j'allais à New York 4 ou 5 fois par année pour les musées, les comédies musicales et pour ma provision de revues. J'ai toujours été chanceux aux douanes. J'ai jamais été fouillé. J'allais dans un magasin sur 42e près de 8e. Le gars me reconnaissait. J'étais très systématique et rationnel. Je passais trois heures, je fouillais tout. Le gars me saluait. [A la fin des années 1960] il a commencé à y avoir des films porno à New York au théâtre Park Miller, à côté de l'hôtel Edison où j'étais. Dans le lobby du cinéma ils demandaient si on voulait recevoir leur publicité, alors ils me l'envoyaient ici.

Arthur was known as a collector to a circle of friends, and became a repository when they wanted to get rid of their own collections. Special collectors like him served as opinion leaders in their social networks, underscoring by the time, energy and money they devoted to this pursuit, the importance of male erotic imagery in the collective sense of identity. A further discussion of the symbolic role of physique photography will be included in the section on the leadership contributions of its practitioners below.

³⁰⁸ Eugène, Harry, Pierre, Ralph, Trevor, Walter, Percy, Stefan and Lucien were also physique consumers. Those interviewed in this study also included two physique photographers and a model/studio operator, all jointly interviewed by myself and Tom Waugh, who has generously shared his pioneering work in this field with me.

Men whose bodies were on public view could find themselves subject to public condemnation. One yellow newspaper item comes close to openly accusing a Montreal bodybuilder of prostitution.

Le jeune Aubry qui a déjà remporté le titre de "Monsieur Canada Junior" a-t-il délaissé complètement la culture physique? Trouve-t-il la vente de matériel à la verge plus payante? (*Ici Montréal* 1956.12.01:10).

This venomous text hinges on the dual meaning of the word "verge" ("yard"/ "penis") and the use of an anglicism, "*matériel*," instead of "*étoffe*," to imply that the man has turned to prostitution, a reading that was open to virtually all readers with a little imagination. Some people were caught in the limelight of a moral tirade against homosexuality as a measure of enforcing a type of masculinity where the man is always consumer, never consumed—the eye behind the camera, not the object of the lens. Although by Alan Stone's account, the motivations of the physique models was a mix of desire for profit from photo sales and of pride at the body they had accomplished and a desire to show it off. Few were gay, but that was also a marketing ploy, an appeal to the idiom of "straight guys," which gay men are accustomed to reading as a highly ambiguous message. The issue of their sexual orientation conditions the photographer / model / viewer triangle that underlies the "meaning" of the photo. For the gay consumer, however, the photos as objects available for viewing or owning became foci of group identification, in the form of sharing enjoyment of these cultural artefacts. As a group, gay men constructed a discursive universe which justifies gazing at the male form, pointing out, among other things, that the restriction of gaze at the male form was an element of male-female gender differentiation (and the underlying imbalance of power between the sexes). Women in general have been much less reluctant than heterosexual males to accede to the idea that there should be equal display of the human body in arts and media, and the area is still a hotly contested sphere of discursive turf today.

More expensive than mass images in advertising or sports, or even bodybuilding and physique photography was the work of creative artists who were themselves gay and produced work which grew out of their experience as gay men. Some were professional artists while others simply produced work for their own pleasure. Walter had a good friend (and former lover) who became a well-known professional artist until his early death; one of the prized pieces in Percy and Walter's home is a sculpted head of a beautiful young man. They also have on display the work of a friend who had no formal training, but once made a bas relief of a

cowboy with a naked torso on a horse that is rearing up under the guidance of the professional artist. These pieces reflect the theme of male beauty that can be seen in the decoration of Percy and Walter's home. In contrast to the exhibited works of the well-known painter were his private sketches,³⁰⁹ in which there are male nudes, a type of painting not at all associated with his work. While the stereotype of the gay as "artistic" is misleading, there are many gay artists. For them and those who buy their work, there is a question to be resolved about how gay to be. In many cases they may have devoted a small amount of their output to gay themes, for which there was no significant public art market until the 1970s because of the fear of public identification as gay. As confidence grew, cultural producers played an important role promoting the gay collectivity's sense of itself as a community, a group sharing certain knowledge structures and practices for building and maintaining them.

Within the discourse arenas of party and bar, many of Bakhtin's heteroglossic voices can be heard. From interpersonal bickering in a friendship group, recorded by Leznoff, to discussions of physique models and retellings of sexual triumph and mishaps, socially situated points of view address the themes and topics of the discourse in their own characteristic ways. Pragmatically, the community has never failed to recognize the presence of different voices. The schematic structures of gay lore are influenced constantly by new inputs from other connections that members have as participants in the non-gay world. As in other areas, the general stability of topics of gay interest evolves in response to the changes that occur in the struggle of contending voices of a large, complex urban society.

Purchase of gay visual materials was a clearer manifestation of commitment to a gay identity than almost any style choice. This was not a gay nuance on general consumption as with clothing, but actual gay consumerism. It had been going on for a long time among the wealthy, with vacations in Capri like that mentioned by Toupin (1977:99), or the fashionable photos sold from Taormina, Sicily by von Gloeden (Waugh 1996:86-93). Now it reached mass market proportions. As with the use of particularly gay linguistic and discourse forms, or the practice of social occasions and other cultural habits that testified to a commitment to gay identity, the sharing of schemata in supporting gay performance and the consumption of gay imagery was fostered by private initiative in the circles of opinion of the gay world and by the commercial producers and distributors of the new products. The second part of this chapter

³⁰⁹ I was shown the artist's sketchbook by his lover, who inherited all his work.

looks at the importance of such action in both the private and public spheres for the emergence of a sense of gay community.

B. MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP: GAY AGENCY

The question of agency in the development of the gay collectivity, from loose congeries of social friendship groups and semi-isolated individuals to a community with visible ongoing institutions and practices, was forced on gay scholars by the implications of Foucault's (1976) work on nineteenth century medical sexology. The argument over which came first, the lifestyle or the medical definition of it, leads us to examine the power of institutional discourse over individuals, and the ability of individuals to resist. Discourse is a category of social action, and cannot be divorced, when investigating causes and prior effects, from a consideration of the full range of forms of meaningful social action. Discourse expresses situated viewpoints on common topical themes, as in Lemke's (1988) elaboration of Bakhtin's theoretical construct of heteroglossia. Thus heteroglossic discourse, offering schematic constructs of individual freedom in Western culture and the ideas of minority rights and fair treatment, led gay men to support the rhetorical stance of the new American homophile movement. Schemata not only store knowledge, but also carry value positions regarding that knowledge. These attitudes vary with the social and cultural point of view of the individual. In words and deeds, from living room to bar to print medium or podium, men made manifest their attachment to communal gay existence, explicitly rendering into words and gestures what is distinctive in the gay perspective, passing on the culture. The early grassroots support for the idea that the taboo on homosexuality was both immoral and irrational in terms of Western culture's own values of fairness and reason provided the ground from which the political movements of the 1960s and 1970s grew. In the following sections, I will outline the way the narrators' accounts support this point of view.

1. Private Lives: Fellow Feeling, Roles and Resistance

Looks of recognition exchanged in public venues are perhaps the basic level of signifying acts that make manifest the affective and structural links to the gay world felt and acted on by individuals. Recognizing someone "the same" in a non-gay venue often leads to no more than a quick stare signifying mutual acknowledgement. Leznoff (1954:159) described how gays practice a "direct stare" (a mutual gaze between passers-by on the street or in a park), comparing it to the look of comradeship exchanged between passing soldiers. In this section I

will examine several kinds of coding systems whose adoption by an individual signifies identification with, or some participation in the gay scene, gay life, or the gay community. Codes of style and dress were discussed above.

Outsider and insider naming practices frequently diverge for social minorities. Of course both the dominant languages of Montreal offered a whole range of lexical options for naming homosexuals or other variant sexual practices. For Francophone linguistic patterns, given the particularities of Montreal French, the best source is in theatre and fiction, particularly that of Tremblay. Works of art cannot, however replace the need for a systematic study of gay Québécois usage.³¹⁰ One narrator said that the word “*berdache*” was used for gays in parts of Quebec. He said his relatives in the Abitibi region would say of a man who was gay, “*Ah oui, ça, c’est un bardache.*” It is not known if such men would use the same term in speaking of themselves. More background on the usage of this word was supplied by Ernest. When asked about what words were used when people in his literary-artistic circle when they spoke of homosexuality, he said:

Ça dépendait de qui parlait. Le milieu vulgaire parlait de tapette—souvent le langage parisien, les “gouines” [lesbiennes]. Entre les gais les gens ne s’appelaient pas gais. C’est un mot récent. Évidemment, personne ne se revendiquait du mot “berdache.” Seulement avec les années 60, avec des gens comme [l’auteur qui a écrit] un des premiers romans gais, Jean-Jules Richard. Dans le *Journal d’un hobo* [1965], on parle premier du Berdache.

Ernest maintained that “berdache” or “bardache” had been in current use in New France, but that it was not a gay tradition and had died out in Quebec.³¹¹

The “third sex,” another term used for homosexuals in popular discourse in French derived from the sexological terminology of the late nineteenth century. It was in regular use in the yellow newspapers:

Un photographe à l’emploi d’un hebdomadaire montréalais est un homosexuel notoire qui se paie le luxe d’une petite “famme” à l’occasion. Mais qui est plus, cet individu préparerait à son tour un volume sur le “troisième sexe” (les homos!) à Montréal. Il compte que cette petite vacherie lui rapportera quelques mille dollars (*Ici Montréal* 1956.12.01:8).

The wide diffusion of this usage in popular language was illustrated by a comment made to me by a taxi driver in his sixties who picked a friend and I up after a gay dance in the early 1980s. Knowing what kind of event we were coming from, he remarked in a friendly way that he had always respected “*les gens du troisième sexe.*” The term was picked up indirectly in the choice of name for an early gay magazine, *Le Tiers*, in 1971. A striking recurrent usage is “*la gent*

³¹⁰ Lapointe (1974:58-59), in a brief section on homosexuality, lists twenty-five words and expressions related to the subject in Québécois French.

³¹¹ Courouve (1985:59-66) says that this word of Italian origin (but traceable to the Persian *baraj*, slave) was an unambiguous label for passive homosexuals in French from the sixteenth century.

homosexuelle,” one of the few examples of a non-gay term for the gay world as a society in either French or English.

The oldest Anglophone narrators refused to acknowledge the necessity of having a name for homosexuals. Percy and Walter couldn't answer when asked what word they had used to name the group: “Nothing, we just were.” Donald confirmed that in his early days in the Montreal gay world of the 1950s, there was no particular word in use. He said that if one had to be chosen, it would be “queer.” This was considered preferable to the word “gay,” which implied a screaming queen to him at that time. Len, speaking of the lack of linguistic awareness of the public in the 1950s, said:

Yeah but see at that time I don't think the average person knew that much about gay life. The word “gay” was never used.

The interview excerpts in Leznoff's (1954) thesis, where usage of “gay” is frequent, show however that his lower-class “overt” informants had adopted it to name themselves by the early 1950s. Among middle-class men, “gay” grew in popularity after 1960, and became the standard name for the collectivity after the founding of the “gay liberation movement” (symbolically situated in the Stonewall Riots of June 1969). In Québécois French, Martin recalled the slow progress towards adoption of the word “gai”:

Je me demande si on utilisait le mot gai au début des années 60. Je pense que c'était “homosexuel.” “Gai,” ça commençais tranquillement.

At the time of my own arrival in Montreal in 1975, few Francophones in the movement with whom I was in contact were comfortable using this translated name. It was only in the second half of the 1970s that the Montreal Francophone gay community embraced the use of the word “gai.”³¹²

The gay term for non-gays has not always been “straight,” which is now current in both English and Québécois French (the latter also uses “*hétéro*”). Leznoff (1956:202) reported that “normal” was the most common term that the “Overts” used as the opposite of “gay.” Walter recalled having used this word himself in the pre-war period. As gay collective self-confidence grew with the development of a positive gay rhetoric, the usage of “normal,” which accepted a characterization of the self as pathological, disappeared entirely. Even when it was current, “normal” was often pronounced with an ironic tone. Despite its ideological legacy, having any

³¹² This issue was brought to the fore in discussion of the name choice of the group that formed out of the gay reaction to massive arrests in the pre-Olympic cleanup of 1976. The group finally adopted the name “Association pour la défense des gai(e)s du Québec” in the fall of 1976 (Archives gaies du Québec Fonds ADGQ).

term as opposite of "gay" implied the existence of a distinct we/they boundary, emphasizing the difference of gays, and constituted gay society as a named collectivity.

Whether or not there was consensus over naming the group (which Percy and Walter considered unnecessary), it was still possible to act in its collective interests. Despite the dangers of raids or violence which sometimes intruded on their lives, for most men in this study, most of the time, action on the collective behalf involved planning and organizing gay social events. Even attending them was an act of courage, even though the laws were enforced rather rarely. While it seems that more credit for creation of a gay social space should go to those who hosted the parties or opened the bars than to those who simply attended, simply entering the clandestine world of gay sociability constituted a claim to social life that the official discourse did not admit. Involvement in the flow of gay discourse at private parties or in gay bars and other venues made it possible to articulate a common viewpoint, to solidify the readiness to be more assertive in the face of social hostility.

One important aspect of the changes in the social organization of homosexuality in the middle of the twentieth century was that group interests came to be perceived as such through the efforts of effective leaders who came forward to create institutions or publish positive literary and journalistic representations that fostered the development of a sense of gay community. Underlying the rise of such innovations in the realm of public discourse, were, I maintain, the efforts of private individuals acting on their intimate acquaintances, in a social mechanism like that which Mills (1950) analysed as the role of "opinion leaders" who mould opinion in private "opinion circles" in opposition to mass media attempts to influence public opinion. Though Mills seems rather optimistic about the likelihood of resistance rather than enforcement of the values transmitted by the media, his description of how opposition can be generated among members of a group ridiculed by the media provides an interesting hypothesis for the analysis of the emergence of a gay discourse in opposition to the pronouncements of religious and medical authorities. As Mill says (1950:593), the discussions of the primary group may bolster an individual's criticism, lending him assurance that his views are correct, and that the opinion proffered by the media is not.

Several roles may be distinguished in private life that could correspond to the "opinion leader." Storytellers and party-givers each contributed their share, as did those who argued for the minority rights perspective among their peers in taverns or at dinners at home. Before there

were many gay-run bars and businesses serving a defined gay market, and before the creation of a gay movement³¹³ in a given city, leadership on a broad scale was exerted in the community mainly through informal social networks. We need to pay more attention to the role played by such informal leaders in building a community out of a set of intertwined friendship groups until a population ready to support a more elaborate set of formal institutions (particularly bars with an exclusively gay clientele) as venue for group social life. In the discussion that follows, three terms for gay leadership roles in the private sphere will be examined: queen role, convenors, mentors. Information from previous sections will be re-examined in an analysis of how the discursive shift towards a private or semi-public resistance to the dominant ideology was effected by such private leaders, and how they thus set the stage for the public discourse of the gay liberation movement.

Queen, Convenor and Mentor: Three Gay Roles: In this discussion, the term "role" is used for a schematically structured mutual relationship between an individual and another individual or a group. It is a patterning of behaviour that is perceptible to those who take part in it, not a category of social analysis only. It may be subject to greater or lesser comment, but was noticed by the participants. The roles of queen, convenor and mentor are only three examples of this schematization of modes of action in the gay social world, chosen to reflect the channels through which individual initiatives could have social consequences.

Though Leznoff's main focus was on the function of the primary friendship group of the overts, he includes an extensive formal analysis of the role of the "queen" of the group, based on the definitions offered by group members. Their comments indicate a much more specific meaning of the term than the usual definition of this slang term for an effeminate homosexual. For them, it included an explicit leadership component. Leznoff's (1954:20) "overt" (no-concealing) group met virtually every evening at the home of their "queen," (pp. 97-109) Robert, who provided space for being together, exchanging stories, fighting among themselves and generally spending their evenings together. He sometimes provided a room for those who couldn't bring anyone home, advised them on their love lives, helped find jobs, mediated fights, and received in return contributions of food and work, as well as occasional financial assistance.

³¹³ Montreal's gay movement began with the "Front de libération homosexuel" (FLH), created in March 1971. A shadowy earlier group called International Sexual Equality Anonymous may have existed around 1967-68.

Leznoff makes no claim that all homosexual friendship groups will conform to the image of what John Grube (1986) has called the “queen and entourage” formation, on the model of Leznoff’s “overt” group. Significantly, “Robert” provided social space (his apartment) for get-togethers and overnight stays for group members with no place to bring somebody home for sex. Leznoff’s description of “Robert” formalizes the role of “queen” in this context as the person who was “officially recognized as group leader or ‘queen’” (p. 99), a position supported by exchanges of material advantages, information and protection. The word “queen” seems to indicate an actual social function as well as its more general connotation of effeminacy. Leznoff implies that the leading queens in a city form a loose society, and says that each city has one overall queen. He mentioned the “queen of Halifax,” who is “a real lady” and has a vast social network. Robert also knew many people, since his address book is reported to have held 3,000 names (Leznoff and Westley 1956:263). Such people thus act as connections in the larger gay society. By knowing people, they are able to provide introductions over a wide geographic area. None of the narrators belonged to this type of social group, with the possible exception of Émile, who was in a tight-knit bar-going crowd after he came out in the 1950s.

More prevalent among higher status gays was the convenor role.³¹⁴ This less formalized and less demanding role involved playing host or organizer for social events like parties, dinners or outings for their friends. Elsa Gidlow played such a role in forming her literary group (p. 122). This role of social convenor was of critical importance in the years before the advent of open, advertised gay social events, and the network links that are fostered by the work of such people is still an important underpinning of community sentiment today. One example of a gay host team was in Donald’s description of the Saturday afternoon Met Opera broadcast parties that Percy and Walter organized. He also said that they moved in a circle of couples who “entertained each other with smart, smart little dinner parties.” In the Laurentian village where Percy and Walter now live, they have fewer gay friends, but, well into their eighties, they were still hosting sit-down dinners for ten or twelve people. The activities of other party givers among the narrators, like Len or Jean and Normand, have already been mentioned.

³¹⁴ The term is used by Steele and Tomczak, in a preparatory text for their film *Legal Memory* (1993), to describe a couple whose house near Victoria, B.C., was a gathering place for gays in the late 1950s. The film is a re-enactment of events surrounding a sensational murder at the Esquimalt naval base in 1958. The police investigation revealed extensive gay social networks on the base and in Victoria.

Private parties were only one of the types of activities organized by “convenors,” since the role could be adapted to a commercial function, especially in the case of people like the hosts of the 1950 Mi-Carême party or Armand Émond, who temporarily also made a direct contribution to the development of a sense of community by providing space for a large crowd of gays and their friends to meet socially. Their efforts rendered visible, at least on isolated occasions, a large-scale gay collectivity that grouped together an array of disparate, loosely interconnected friendship groups. In so doing, they made the community visible to itself, and also spanned the divide between the private sphere and the emergent gay commercial scene.

A discussion of the final private leadership role that I wish to present, the mentor role in gay society, was included in Chapter 5. The relationships between Walter and Donald, Alfred and Étienne, or the older Bengal Lancer to Alfred (p. 174) all illustrate a pattern of transmission of gay customs and views. Grube’s (1986) oral history work in Toronto has led him to formulate this role pair explicitly as the “mentor/protégé” pair. Perhaps as an extension to his more public role, Armand Monroe could be helpful to shy newcomers in a more personal way, as this story of Len’s early days at the Tropical illustrates:

I had one particular friend who used to sew and so he made dresses for um, have you heard of Monroe, Armand Monroe, who used to do drag at the Tropical Room/Down Beat? ... He was sort of the unofficial hostess of the Tropical Room, the Downbeat Lounge and on my first few times there, I guess he knew I was new, I was young, (although maybe I’m older than he is, I don’t know). He was always very friendly, you know, and we’re still friendly. But he was someone closer to my age because when you went there—it was a long time before I’d go there alone you know. I used to make sure someone I knew was going to be there and then I’d have to have several drinks somewhere else to get up enough nerve to go.

This suggests that there can be many shortened or topic-specific versions of the mentor role, so that it might be better to add the term guide. Len viewed Armand Monroe’s friendliness as a helping hand into the community. Trevor was also inclined to serve as a “guide,” to offer a helping hand especially to visitors to Montreal. Trevor like to play a very scaled-down version of the mentor role, when he would spot nice-looking visiting Americans and offer to guide them around Montreal’s gay nightlife. They usually accepted, he said, smug with his success in making conquests but nevertheless sincere in his desire to provide company for someone who was alone.

This exploratory discussion of roles and relationships between novices and established members of the gay community is far from exhaustive. Roles are enacted in complex and changing circumstances so, for example, two friends can guide each other through aspects of gay life where they each have had different experience. Many other situations can be imagined,

and the details can be worked out in a model that focuses on the exchange of meaning, especially in discourse, teaching someone about a problem or a fun thing to do, or actions, such as taking friends places where they have never been. Members strive to help others survive and make sense of their experiences in the gay world, as part of the affective bonds which they form. Action taken by narrators to try to keep friends from falling apart because of arrest or alcohol problems have been noted above.

Gay Resistance to Social Control: Since part of the gay world was in the ambit of the underworld, and another substantial part of it was distinctly working class in clientele, there was ready access to ideas of resisting police and other agencies' efforts to control one's life. Incidents of minor resistance undoubtedly occurred long before the recorded evidence begins. The report of the railway policeman chained to a washbasin by the burly man he had just arrested (p. 246) stands out as an instance of gay resistance. Another less dramatic incident occurred during the raid that confronted Gérard the first time he went to a gay club in December 1964. He was reassured by his companions that they were really looking for drugs (goof balls, perhaps simply a pretext for checking everyone's identification papers). He recalled that during the long period that they were held in the club while this was being done, the men around him said that such and such a policeman had put his hand where he had no business. Gérard remarked that this was a scandalous incident of professionals profiting from their positions of responsibility for sexual ends. Though it doesn't seem to have struck Gérard this way, it is clear that the boys in question would have made this accusation whether or not there had been any professional misconduct, in order to ridicule the police who were oppressing them. This was a classic opening for a form of gay boundary maintenance humour, as discussed in a later section. As a newcomer, Gérard didn't "get" it.

Other examples of gay resistance to the constraints imposed by police actions against the social space that they occupied include pleading not guilty in court, especially in a case like the obscenity charges faced by Alvin and 33 others in 1956. Almost all of them refused to accept the absurd use of an obscure section of the Criminal Code for the harassment of homosexuals. The not guilty pleas in the Puccini raid may have been encouraged by the wealthy arrested man who agreed to pay the others' legal expenses. On the other hand, the developing discussion of gay civil rights that was beginning to be audible in the media in 1963 may also have motivated the decision to reject the arbitrary and unfounded arrests. A letter to the editor was also

published in *La Presse* (1963.08.14 :4) regarding the Puccini raid, in which the writer protests that the arrests are part of a witch hunt (p. 187).

Community actions of solidarity included the holding of parties when the bars got too dangerous, or the arrangement of bail, as Alfred did for his friend caught in the Puccini raid, and help in finding a lawyer. Donald and Alvin both mentioned getting lawyers through recommendations from friends. While Donald was fully satisfied with the gay lawyer he hired to defend him, Alvin reported that the men accused of obscenity in 1956 who went to the gay lawyer who came and offered his services ended up paying more than twice what his own lawyer, who was not gay, charged. "So much for gay solidarity," was his observation. Here his comment is underlain by an understanding that gay men should treat each other properly as fellows, not as dupes in business transactions.

Private sphere opinion leaders of the three types described here helped to shape the growing resistance to official condemnation of homosexuals and to define the collective self-concept that grew among members of the gay world in Montreal in the 1950s and 1960s. However the types of leadership in gay society have varied with the historical period, and once institution-building replaced private discourse, the focus shifted to other, more direct assertions of the validity of gay existence.

2. Institutionalization and Economic Initiative

By the end of the 1960s, the network of friendship groups and entrepreneurs had developed to a point where it can be considered a fully institutionalized "gay community" in Montréal. These institutions included gay-run bars and an increasingly diverse group of other businesses such as saunas, clothing stores, antique dealers, travel agents, gyms and photographers. Of primary importance for community development was the opening of public space, usually bars, in which gay social life could unfold. The transition to gay-run clubs, beginning in the mid-1960s, was a crucial step in the building of a self-aware community ready to undertake political work on its own behalf, feeling increasingly confident through its secure (despite some disturbing incidents) occupation of physical urban space.

Thus far the discussion of efforts to build a collective sense of self among homosexuals has focused on the expression of alternate meaning to the dominant social discourses on the subject, and on the provision of social space in which alternate discourse could develop and flourish. A further stage in the elaboration of a new social dispensation for homosexuals was

the recognition by capitalist entrepreneurs of new economic opportunities for selling products and services to gay men, generated by the increasing identification of gay men with the emergent gay community. As the 1950s progressed, this occurred more and more often in the large urban markets of North America, including Montreal. In addition to the bars, restaurants and other types of establishments whose development is traced in Chapter 6, a growing number of retail merchants and professionals were recognizing the potential for sales to a gay clientele. In the brief overview of market developments in Montreal that follows, I have selected gay visuals such as physique photographs and gay information products like newspapers, as examples of the new economic trend that accompanied and forms an inseparable part of the symbolic transformation of gay status in urban society.

Montreal Physique Photographers: Even before the emergence of bar ownership by gay men, local photographers had found ways to tap an international gay mail order market. One of the most fortunate results of Tom Waugh's (1996) research was the contact made with Alan Stone, Montreal's most prolific physique photographer from the 1950s and 60s. Stone's untimely death in December 1992 cut short our joint discussions of both his own work and of the interlocking social networks among photographers, models, publishers, trainers and the officials of international bodybuilding. This sport has always figured prominently in Montreal since it was home to the Weider brothers, who made it the headquarters of the International Federation of Body Builders (IFBB), founded in 1947 (Weider 1979:2-4; Waugh 1996:249-250). Aside from putting on competitions that attracted a gay audience, as discussed above, the Weider presence also partly responsible for the fact that Montreal had a thriving local physique photography business, with studios run by men ranging from the highly regarded international photographers like Tony Lanza and Jimmy Caruso to gay-oriented producers like George Henderson. Others, like Stone or John Ryan, sought a middle ground, appealing to gay consumers through ostensibly straight imagery. Even the best-known photographers were not unaware of the gay interest in their work. For example, Jimmy Caruso brought his bodybuilders to the stage of the Down Beat for a show hosted by Armand Monroe in the late 1950s (p. 354). His later arrest for male-male obscene photos (*Le Nouveau journal* 1961.11.17:1) also indicates that he was actively producing work for the gay mail-order market.

The identification of "gay" visual cues in these pictures requires careful analysis, as can be seen in Waugh's account. It is evident from the magazines, however, that a separation occurred late in the 1950s. The gay market became quite distinct, and around 1960, such magazines became more and more vocally gay, while the straight bodybuilding magazines took pains to become visibly heterosexual. The same publishers, photographers, models and studios were involved in what became simply a segmenting market.

While the point of view of physique models towards homosexuality was often ambiguous, and their presence in a magazine had no clear bearing on their actual sexual orientation, the magazines were bought extensively by gay men, as the stories in the yellow press (p. 355) clearly perceived. As Waugh emphasizes, the burgeoning market in physique magazines and photographs provides one of the clearest patterns of consumption that marks the development of gay identity on a mass scale in the United States and Canada. From Stone's observations and from the widely shared awareness among the narrators of physique products, it is clear that this new industry attained mass success in the 1950s. This was confirmed by Marcel Raymond, who had modelled for Stone as a teenager and was subsequently guided by the older photographer when he set up his own very lucrative photo mail order business.

The exact ways in which the financial success of this particular branch of the gay market served as an example for other entrepreneurs of the potential profits to be made in other areas cannot yet be determined, but a fuller study of the economic and social aspects of the physique market and the awareness of the gay market in general that it signified would make a useful addition to the literature on the development of a self-aware gay community.³¹⁵

Gay Information: The establishment of a periodical press was one of the most important signs of active gay attempts to change the social situation in which they lived. Other publications were produced by homophile political groups.³¹⁶ Evidence that they had a local readership was supplied directly by letters published in American magazines (p. 125) and by the account of Arthur's visit to the Swiss homophile group *Der Kreis (Le Cercle)* in Zurich in about 1960

³¹⁵ Body building, as a deviant sub-cultural pastime, with extensive international diffusion, which has risen to a position of dominance in the concept of what a body should look like in the 1980s, certainly deserves closer scrutiny from a gay vantage point than it has received to date. Klein (1993) looks at the subculture of bodybuilding champions, including the prostitution aspects, but does not do so from a gay point of view. On analysis of images, see Dyer (1985) and Waugh (1987, 1996); on bodybuilding history see Webster (1982); Weider (1979).

³¹⁶ D'Emilio (1983) and Licata (1976) on *One* magazine and the *Mattachine Review*; Bach (1982) on *Arcadie*.

on one of his photo-shopping tours of Europe.³¹⁷ Along with the new homophile group publications and the physique magazines were some cross-genre products, especially those produced in the Scandinavian countries, where textual content of political news and social analysis was accompanied by physique photographs and drawings often more daring than the images carried by American or British magazines. Similar offshoots of the nascent movement were the membership association magazine and book clubs, like that run by the International Guild of Washington, which offered mail order gay books through a regular insert in the company's physique magazines, as well as their annual guidebook (p. 36).

Towards the second half of the 1960s, there was an increase in books for the gay market in the form of explicitly gay publications. Works such as the *Gay Cook Book* (Hogan 1965) began to appear, supplementing the increasing flow of popular psychology paperbacks, novels of all types, and novelty products like underwear and 45 RPM recordings. Alan Stone proudly explained how he had sold army surplus underwear at a 5,000 percent mark-up by advertising it in his physique magazines. An updated homophile magazine called *Drum*, published in Philadelphia, introduced a new staple: the gay comic strip.³¹⁸ In Quebec there was less merchandising of gay products, though fiction books like *La Braguette magique* (Valmain 1972) testify to an awareness of the new market on the part of commercial producers. While a self-published text like Germain's (1969) homophobic rant *Mon pays, mes amours* (about mistreatment by gays in the Canadian Armed Forces) was exceptionally outspoken on the opposite side, there were more and more periodical publications aimed at a gay readership and openly adopting a pro-gay editorial stance. A later section provides details of this new wave of gay publications.

In addition to controlling gay clubs, crime groups like the Dubois organization had other interests in the gay market in and around the Main, as shown by a 1965 denunciation in a yellow press article, "Contrebande d'hommes nus" (see p. 355). It first describes the magazines with pictures of nude men sold in stores around Times Square, New York, where the writer counted 165 magazines with male pictures, and 350 with pictures of women. It goes on to describe how the Dubois gang profited from the proximity of this supply of images banned in Canada.

³¹⁷ He and a friend attended a meeting where their presence was announced from the microphone. He bought two books published by the group, one a collection of gay drawings and the other a collection of gay photography.

Dans certains cafés de la rue St-Laurent, de jeunes et vieux colporteurs vendent sous table les fameux magazines qu'on trouve dans les kiosques de New York. La différence existe dans le prix. Ces revues qui se vendent aux États-Unis entre un et trois dollars la copie, se détaillent sur le marché noir de Montréal à trois et cinq dollars la copie (*Ici Montréal* 1965.08.07:3).

The only problem was getting the magazines through Canadian customs, since they would be seized if discovered. Most of the customers were homosexuals, though some magazines were bought by call girls, according to the article.

Gay Bar Management and Ownership: While this study has been largely concerned with the discursive, meaning-oriented aspects of Montreal gay life, it is important to note the symbolic significance of gay men themselves engaging in economic activity which fostered the development of a self-defined gay community. Providing space for gay sociability under gay ownership or management was a means of serving the community while advancing the individual entrepreneur's personal financial interest. Such ventures appear, based on the limited information available, to have begun with short-term projects like the parties in rented halls (p. 258) which created a large gay social space for an evening. Two other types of innovation in gay business were revealed in a story told by Len. In the early 1960s, he said, when a gay man was working as manager of a resort hotel in Morin Heights (a village in the Laurentians), he decided to try making the basement bar into a weekend gay bar. Len heard about it through his crowd of regulars at one (or really several) downtown bars. He seemed perplexed when I asked how people found out about it. "Everyone knew about it," he claimed, and the place caught on. One gay man took the initiative of organizing bus excursions to take groups of downtown Montreal bar regulars up to Morin Heights, since the return trip was daunting to many after a few drinks.

We used to drive up there and back. And then someone tried chartering a bus because we were all concerned about, you know, driving home from up there. But of course the people that didn't have cars wanted to charter the bus but they couldn't get the people that had cars to leave them at home. Because it gives you a certain amount of independence when you're used to having your own car and leaving a place.

Although there were many difficulties, the organizer managed to put on at least two such excursions. Finding a bus and a driver, setting times and getting everyone coordinated required considerable effort, for a profit that could not have been very significant. As Len observed:

Oh there're always some real organizers in any group, aren't there, who always want to run something. Usually they're trying to make money and usually they don't.

³¹⁸ Harry Chess first appeared in *Drum* in 1964 (Polak 1966:4). The comics were so popular that a compilation was soon released (Jay 1966). The magazine's publisher, Clark Polak, was forced to abandon his business and leave Philadelphia because of FBI harassment in about 1967, according to historian Marc Stein (1996).

But, Len added, the organizer of these bus excursions opened one of Montreal's longest-running gay saunas a few years later.

Now he has managers to run things. He's really done very well. I met him a year ago and he was on his way to India.

In this case, informal entrepreneurial experience appears to have led to a lifelong career. Len also appreciated the leadership shown by the hotel manager in Morin Heights, who he said had frequently invested in such small business ventures.

I don't think he ever made very much on any of these things. You know he did it partly for the community to have something more interesting to do, you know, because we were very limited in the number of places we had to go and things to do.

Len agreed emphatically when I suggested that "There are some people who take it upon themselves to do that, to have that vision of a community." In the final exchange, Len confirmed my sense of the importance of such early, small scale semi-profitmaking ventures for the opening of gay-controlled social space. The idea was suggested by Len's use of the phrase "for the community."

Unlike the small scale bars in San Francisco (Achilles 1964, 1967), Montreal establishments were usually larger and don't tend to have "personalized" owner/manager presence at the bar. Some nightclub hosts, like Carol Grauer at the Samovar (p. 270) and Armand Monroe (whose career is fully described in the next section), did play this role. Both of these men straddled the boundary between entertainment and club management. After working at another club following the close of the Samovar, he started his own French restaurant downtown, according to Percy and Walter, and, they said, killed himself with overwork in two years, leaving his young lover saddled with heavy debts. This was not a gay venture but is an early example of two lovers going into business together.

Gay ownership of gay bars was slower to arise in the Montreal market than in California. Narrators have told me that there were no gay-owned bars here before about 1965, expressing their impatience with the severe control of customer behaviour in the straight or mob-run establishments. The change which began in the late 1960s was intensified after Stonewall, since most of the bar openings in the last period covered in Figure 19 (p. 409) were gay controlled. As gay customers grew less and less tolerant of contemptuous treatment at the hands of hostile managements, commercial success in the business eventually required the hiring of gay managers and staff. Even before the advent of gay ownership of bars was the inauguration of the principle of an all-gay staff, which Armand Monroe says he introduced for the first time at the Lutèce in the early 1960s, and again insisted on it when he became manager

of PJs towards the end of the decade. Gay bar entrepreneurs became active after 1966-67, as related in Chapter 6 (p. 297).

Managers and entertainers played a more visible role in the bar scene, especially Monroe, whose career itself made manifest the existence of a community. He addressed his intended audience in a way that took their membership in the community for granted. The community role of gay bars was an unintended consequence of business before the advent of gay ownership. An additional symbolic dimension can be distinguished in the rise of gay consumers and the businesses that served them. Whether the bar was gay-run or not, the new gay consumerism made gay men into a useful social category from the point of view of those whose main concern was purchasing power rather than morality. With few choices available, the bars that became popular were assured of an extremely faithful clientele. In paying for their beer, the new customers bought their small but significant share of the urban land market in the 1950s and 1960s. This brought them to the attention of beer distributors, though there is no local evidence of the type of active intervention to protect gay bars from harassment that Achilles (1964:) reports for San Francisco. Nevertheless, the economic and the symbolic aspects of the rise of the gay consumer market were intimately intertwined.

3. Cultural and Political Leadership

While some business people also took more overtly cultural roles, the work of fostering was more likely to be done by entertainers, whose public role and interaction with the audience gave them a means of promoting the idea of community. This section will examine their impact, and at two other forms of leadership. By the mid-1960s, inspired by American publishing ventures, the first efforts were made to create a local gay press, an important initiative at promoting collective self-recognition as well as providing practical information. It was only at the end of the period studied that the first stirrings of gay political organizing appeared in Montreal, opening the final type of leadership that I will discuss, gay politicians.

Entertainers and Celebrities: In the bar world, legends form around the personal histories of bar owners, staff, performers, regulars, and others. In this section I will provide a few examples of how people talked about such figures, an instance of the kinds of knowledge sets that were developed by the growing gay community of the postwar period. It is through the growth of such sets, I argue, that the community developed itself. Among other functions,

they provide a vehicle for identification with a social world and a set of values not shared with outsiders. I will not include a number of stories about gay bar owners and managers here, since they have appeared in the preceding section on gay business leaders.

The history of gay institutions intertwines with those of individuals and reflects larger social changes. Several sources confirm Leznoff's insight into the influence of Hollywood portrayals of women as the source of gay men's interpretation of effeminacy. Party host Armand Émond explained in an interview where he got his inspiration for the first outfit he wore in drag.

Well my first big night out dressed as a woman, that was too much. We used to have a hair dresser on Ste-Catherine called Warner. So I went to see the movie *Gilda* with Rita Hayworth and I says, "That dress, it's for me. And that hairdo is for me also." ... I enjoyed it to wear that gown because Rita Hayworth was nice and beautiful, so I figured I can be beautiful.

The inspiration of Hollywood was also what hooked the other Armand, Armand Monroe, on the idea of "glamour." Monroe, one of the city's best known gay personalities, said the "*origine de 'la piqure'*" was in the films *The Gang's All Here* with Alice Faye and Carmen Miranda, and *Morocco*, which starred Marlene Dietrich. He explained his point of view to the producers of one of the first Montreal gay cable television shows ("*Les Productions 88*") in about 1980.

I said I'm sorry but either you take me the way I am or not at all. So I had my own hairdresser, my own designer. I'm glamour, I love glamour. And glamour is a very big part of gay life.

Although he took her name, Marilyn Monroe was not as much of an influence as Dietrich. "Doing" Dietrich for Halloween was a triumph for Armand Monroe at the Lutèce in the early 1960s.

In his public career (p. 281), Monroe updated the host role of Carol Grauer, host at the same Peel Street address decades earlier by making it a specifically gay performance. Both provided a welcoming and lively atmosphere where, despite the ever-present menace of police intervention, gay life found a hospitable space in which to develop. Monroe made gay life a subject of public discourse with a decidedly activist orientation, as his struggle to get the management to allow dancing indicates. Émile was impressed with his quick wit as he handled hecklers in the audience.

Je l'ai vu répondre à des gens qui ont essayé de l'avoir pis y avait le dernier mot. Il était très vite à répondre. Fallait partir deux milles avant lui pour arriver. Non.

He gave public voice to gay humour, mixing languages in a stage patter that drew his listeners into a closer identification with the gay community.

Another man who combined commercial success with cultural leadership was the singer Michel Girouard who in 1972 assured himself a prominent place in the Quebec entertainment

tabloids by marrying his pianist Réjean Tremblay.³¹⁹ An interesting view on Quebec gay history advanced by Claude Beaulieu (1983), former president of the *Association pour les droits des gai(e)s du Québec* in the late 1970s. Beaulieu stressed that the Girouard-Tremblay marriage had put homosexuality on the list of topics discussed for the first time in Quebec, since the tabloids had a massive readership, especially of women (Fontaine 1978). Both he and Monroe put homosexuality on the agenda, though their emphases differed. Girouard remained a public performer who happened to be gay, while Monroe made the gay community his only public.

The Gay Press: In light of the importance of communication for the development of a feeling of attachment to the collectivity based on homosexuality, the rise of gay publishing ventures is clearly important both as a channel for collective self-awareness to develop and as a sign that the process was under way. For a social group rendered invisible by the mainstream media, the opening of self-produced communications channels was a significant step towards redefining the social discourse on homosexuality. Early in the twentieth century, Elsa Gidlow and her friends had published a small literary magazine (*Coal from Hades*, later *Les mouches fantastiques*), with considerable lesbian and gay content, (Gidlow 1986:82-83). Several decades later, the second known gay publication in Montreal was a mimeographed gossip and entertainment newsletter that a group of friends living in suburban Châteauguay produced for their own amusement in the mid-1950s. Printed thanks to a man who worked in the printing department of a large company, and thus had access to the mimeograph machine, *L'Écho royal*, recounted the experiences of the members, identifying them with humorous aristocratic nicknames. Thus Henri, who provided this information in a brief interview, bore the name "*Le Prince de Pont-Viau*" because of the area of the city in which he lived. The group carried into print the type of naming practices used in gay oral discourse.

It is not until the very end of the period studied that a commercial gay publishing industry started to take shape in Quebec. Information on these is available from the existing collections of gay tabloids like *Omnibus*, which appeared in the late 1960s. One aspect of the activities of early political leader Paul Bédard (see p. 127) was writing for a non-gay tabloid.³²⁰ According

³¹⁹ "Michel Girouard et son ami à la défense des 200,000 homosexuels québécois." *Nouvelles-Illustrées* 19(34, 1972.02.12):1-2,4.

³²⁰ I have not been able to locate this material to confirm this information.

to Laurent, Bédard managed to get paid for writing a couple of pages a week in one of the local yellow papers or tabloids, but simply used this forum as an opportunity for him to get publicity for his social club, translating American texts and reprinting photos without permission. Though this narrator is rather dismissive of the significance of Bédard's work, it nevertheless seems to have made American analyses of homosexuality as a political issue available to Quebec readers in a mass medium, perhaps for the first time.

A second man also broke new ground in the area of local gay publishing at about the same time. In 1969 or 1970, André Dion founded the first gay tabloid, *Omnibus*, with the backing of the publishers of *Midnight*,³²¹ one of Montreal's (and Canada's) leading supermarket tabloids. Dion went on to publish *Le Tiers*, Quebec's first "serious" gay magazine in the fall of 1970. His chance to undertake a career in gay journalism came about accidentally. Dion had worked as a writer for *Mimuit*, the French equivalent of *Midnight*, for some time before he came out to his co-workers one day. They made him mad by insistently presuming that he would be bringing a woman as his date for the company Christmas party so he told them point blank that the important person in his life was a man, not a woman. When word of this exchange got back to management, they reacted by asking Dion to start a weekly gay column in the paper.³²² After Dion had written his column for some time, the publishers asked him to start a separate paper for a gay readership. This was the origin of *Omnibus*, named after the 1969 law which decriminalized homosexuality in Canada, which began publication in late 1969 or in 1970. It enjoyed great success and soon had a number of imitators, though their content consisted of little more than sex narratives and pictures, with none of the information content of *Omnibus*. The magazine *Le Tiers* was Dion's own personal initiative, started after the *Front de libération homosexuel* had been founded (though the two were not closely linked). It folded, Dion says, not because it didn't make money (as people assumed), but after his partner disappeared with the assets.

A number of avenues for further research have been opened by this interview, which reveals an unexpected connection between Montreal's vigorous tabloid press and the beginnings of gay journalism in Quebec. I have dealt at greater length with the history of gay publishing in Montreal in the 1970s elsewhere (Higgins 1984b). The tabloid publications

³²¹ *Midnight*, founded in Montreal in 1954, later became the *Midnight Globe*, and is still publishing as the *Globe* (sold in supermarkets throughout North America), though its headquarters moved to Florida in the late 1970s. For background on *Midnight* and the formulae of tabloid writing. See Lantos (1972, 1973).

continued sporadically into the 1980s with *Spécial Gay* and various short-lived revivals of the successes of the early 1970s (*Le Nouvel Omnibus*, etc.). Pending a full investigation of these publications, it is difficult to assess the impact they had on increasing gay community consciousness in Montreal. However, their mere existence and their visibility on news stands undoubtedly contributed to a growing awareness that gay men constituted a community in the eyes of both gay men themselves and of the general public.

Political Organizers: In the political ferment of the 1960s, some gay men began to take an active interest in the rights of the homosexual minority, and, by the end of the decade, there had been one attempt to start a Montreal gay political group. This would be followed by the establishment of a durable movement in the city in 1971. Those who got involved in such efforts drew their motivation from personal experience and observation. The injustices which gays suffered contrasted sharply with the ideals of liberal democracy and individual freedom. One comment several men voiced was the lack of collective support for those who got into trouble with the police. Harry, Étienne, Eugène and Alfred, all remarked on how difficult it was to get help in case of arrest when there was no organized community. In Harry's words:

Being arrested was a real fear. [Being caught] either in a gay bar or cruising a can was the same thing as far as the police were concerned. It was a marginal community. It was all separate from the environment I'd grown up with.

Documentary sources on the early impact of gay political organizing have been outlined in Chapter 4. In this section I will outline information from the interviews that relates to the creation of an organized gay movement.

Under the influence of his mentor, le Père Albert, Louis said that he had circulated a questionnaire on homosexuality in the early 1950s. Unfortunately he no longer has any documentation concerning this early effort at raising the consciousness among homosexuals about their political interests. A man who would go on to be one of the founders of the first gay liberation group in Toronto, Charles Hill, said that one of his first significant steps to gay political awareness was when, as a student at McGill University in 1964 or 1965, he attended a lecture given by a representative of the Mattachine Society of New York. Sponsored by the Pre-Med Society this talk attracted a capacity crowd at a large auditorium.³²³ Hill reported

³²² It is not impossible that both Dion and Bédard had similar columns in similar publications. Given the lack of collections of any of these publications, it is not possible to verify these stories by documentary research.

³²³ I have not been able to locate documentary confirmation of this information, though it is unlikely that a prominent leader of the early gay movement in Canada would be mistaken about his earliest contact with gay organizing.

that he was accompanied on that occasion by his friend Douglas Leopold, who would later become famous in Montreal as an openly gay radio celebrity.³²⁴

The most significant step in the development of the local gay movement before 1970 was undoubtedly the creation of International Sex Equality Anonymous (ISEA)³²⁵ by Paul Bédard in 1967, as outlined in Chapter 4. One of the narrators in this study, Laurent, met Paul Bédard in 1967 or 1968—he could not remember how—at the time when Bédard had a social club on Cherrier Street. He said that Bédard had lived in California during the mid-1960s and while there, he had become aware of the homophile movement. In Laurent's opinion he was more interested in the form than in the content. He said the Cherrier club was not gay and had not been founded by Bédard, who simply rented it one night a week. A lot of homosexuals went there because it was semi-private and therefore extremely discreet. This appealed to Laurent, who was just in the process of coming out at that time. The atmosphere was neutral, he said, with both straight and gay men present, but no women. He thought that Bédard used the premises without the owner knowing what he was really up to. He described him as "*pas quelqu'un de limpide*"—someone who was not easy to fathom.

Paul Bédard combined three of the leadership roles that have been discussed in this chapter. He was at once a commercial entrepreneur, whose interest in money was plain to Laurent, at the same time as he espoused a more political rhetoric and served as one of the gay community's first public spokesmen. But he had another talent, as well. According to Laurent, part of Bédard's attraction for people was that in California he had learned to do female impersonation and was very good at it. Laurent saw him dressed as a woman several times and said he was "*magnifique*." He had even been to Bédard's apartment on more than one occasion and had seen his huge address book and his photo albums, including shots of him in drag as well as physique photos. He was not sure whether there were any photos of underage boys, like those described in news reports of Bédard's arrest and subsequent acquittal on charges of corrupting minors (p. 127). He thought that in all, perhaps between one and two hundred people passed through the club on Cherrier, but few remained long because most of them found Bédard too manipulative. Like the others, Laurent eventually gave up on Bédard. When a straight cousin told him about accidentally wandering into a gay bar, he spent several

³²⁴ Léopold (1982) wrote an "autobiography" entitled *Comment bien vivre avec l'argent des autres*. He died of AIDS in the early 1990s. The two friends took radically different paths, but both made significant contributions to making homosexuality a subject of public discourse in Canada and in Quebec.

³²⁵ In French the group was called *Égalité sexuelle internationale anonyme* (ÉSIA).

weeks getting up enough courage to go there. Once he took the plunge, though, he quickly found himself “*en famille*,” so Bédard was no longer necessary to him. After that, Laurent totally lost track of him, and thus could not supply any information on the latter part of the story of Paul Bédard. The ISEA thus remains something of a mystery.

Bédard’s early work in the homophile movement, though unusual in form, was nevertheless a courageous act of leadership. Although Laurent seems to have been more favourable to Bédard than many who went to his club, in retrospect he concluded that all that Bédard was really after was the membership fee. He took the movement idea that he had seen in the United States and turned it into a scheme for making money. Whatever his motives were, Bédard stands out as someone who took an extremely courageous public stand in defence of homosexuals in Quebec and Canada, at a very early date. His contacts and correspondence with other gay leaders across Canada set the stage for the broad network of activists who appeared in the 1970s.³²⁶

With the creation of the *Front de libération homosexuel* (FLH) in March 1971, Montreal joined the trend sweeping all large metropolitan centres in North America in setting up a gay liberation organization in the wake of the “Stonewall Riots” which took place in New York City in June 1969, and mark the symbolic beginning of the Gay Liberation Movement. Information on the beginnings and evolution of the FLH was provided by Pierre, Étienne, Eugène and Alfred, all of whom were involved.³²⁷ The FLH opened a storefront office that served as the Montreal gay community’s first community centre, and organized dances that were the first non-commercial gay social events open to the public. The full story of this group lies beyond the scope of the present study. The date of its creation was the main reason for choosing 1970 as the end of the period I have covered.

A major focus of attention among early gay liberationists was the opening up of a new form of gay space: movement space. Achilles (1964:65) refers to the influence of gay political organizations already active in California by the early 1960s (whose history has been traced by D’Emilio 1983), but does not see in them a viable alternative to the bar world, although providing other modes of gay sociability was one of their most explicit aims. The commercial

³²⁶ Correspondence between Bédard and Douglas Sanders (Association for Social Knowledge, Vancouver) and Charles Hill (University of Toronto Homophile Association) is preserved in the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto, copies in the Archives gaies du Québec, Fonds ÉSLA.

³²⁷ This was recent history when I began to work in gay groups in Montreal in the mid-1970s, and my understanding of these events is based on the accounts of many others whom I met in the movement at that time, especially the members of the *Groupe homosexuel d’action politique* (GHAP, see Noël 1993).

aspects of gay life made both the homophile movement and the gay liberation movement which succeeded it at the end of the 1960s rather uneasy. The movement tried to offer alternative social space life by holding dances and opening community centres. With the creation of an active, politically aware group began the transition to a new and more militant attitude towards collective identity among gay men.

4. Symbolics and Gay Agency

Gay identity is a complex and changing set of ideas about the self as a member of a social category, and an emotional attachment to others perceived as sharing the same membership. This dual definition eliminates the possibility of being a gay loner, a person never socially connected to other gays. The intensity and type of social links vary widely, but the argument made here is that the links were partly expressed in the form of overt sharing of gay patterns of behaviour and the schematized knowledge on which they rested. Indeed, such knowledge is argued to be essential for successful functioning in the company of other gays. For most narrators, the degree of involvement in gay social life varied with age, changing interests and other commitments. For some narrators, "gay" was an identity that only lasted for a certain period (Pierre) or which they came to accept relatively late in life (Ralph, Gilles). Some increased their commitment to gay life, moving from a critical distance on the fringes of gay life to an active political role in the 1970s (Gérard). Even when Pierre was interviewed many years after his departure from gay life, and despite several comments on his lack of familiarity with it in the 1990s, he was highly informative about the time that he had spent as a gay man, and provided insightful comments on the politics and practicalities of the bar world and the movement. He thus contributed much useful information to the overview of gay schemata that I have constructed here. For him as much as for the narrators who maintained a gay identity throughout their lives, one of the central schemata was that shared sense of the self as gay, and love and friendship links that it created between a man and his primary social contacts.

The militant commitment that several men manifested at or after the end of the period studied is itself evidence of their interest in the new conception of gayness that began to circulate widely after World War II. In the context of the American civil rights and Black Power movements, the second wave of feminism and the many national liberation struggles that were waged in the 1960s, it is not surprising that gay men, especially Anglophones, drew on other minority rhetoric to re-examine their own situation. Whether couched in highly

philosophical language or simply in reactions like "that's not right" on hearing of some injustice suffered by a gay man for being gay, the argument for gay rights took shape in the private sphere before it became a public discourse. Some men went beyond simple conversational support, even by undertaking such unremarkable actions as hosting social events where the conversation could occur that fleshed out the gay point of view on the politics of identity. Though overt politics was no doubt rare as a theme of interpersonal chat in the gay social world of the 1950s and 1960s, I argue that the choice of theme was not so important as the occurrence of the conversation, since being together and finding common cause on the basis of a tabooed sexual orientation was itself an act committed in defiance of social opinion. In the interminable discussion of the minutiae of peoples' lives, style options and interests, emerged in ever wider circulation the knowledge and the point of view of gay men.

The language and discursive forms that are specific to the gay world, the expression of the gay point of view in humour and the gay experience of secrecy are all readily observable in the corpus of narrator accounts. Topical elaborations, discourse on specific subject areas because they relate to gay life or simply because they interest significant numbers of men, vary widely. The concentrations of gay schematizing efforts cannot be fully summarized, but the topics which I have outlined provide a framework to be completed by future work. They included a range of topics I have labelled "gay sexual culture," grouping together such themes as sex techniques, romance, cruising approaches and medical situations. The data also confirmed the widely observed gay interest in show business, stars and music, as well as a passion for aesthetics, style and the role of gay consumerism in consolidating identity among gay men. Other gay schemata organized ever-changing shared knowledge of patterns of social life, social behaviour and relationships between men of different class and ethnic backgrounds or age cohorts. They included as well the shared discussion of literary and other cultural works which addressed the theme of homosexuality. Finally, shared gay schemata provided a set of roles, some of which involved actively helping others to learn their way around the gay world, like the mentors, or to play other leadership roles in the development of the gay community as business, cultural, media or political innovators.

In this discussion I have stressed the importance of the efforts of those who, whether inspired by ideals of community or simply by the profit motive, made available public gay space. Gay discourse flourished in private space, but opened into a broader forum, it became

accessible to those without prior connections to gay society, and thus spread more readily to more individuals with a wider variety of social backgrounds. Bars and other establishments paved the way for other ventures in serving the market whose existence they rendered visible. In time, gay men found themselves specifically catered to, albeit discreetly, by new local marketing attempts by clothing merchants, publishers and gymnasias which advertised in new gay publications as their predecessors had in the physique and homophile magazines.

Gay men also found their experience and point of view reflected in new voices of cultural and political innovators like Armand Monroe and Paul Bédard, who took the risk of public identification as gay, breaking gay invisibility in the press and focusing the attention of gay men on the collectivity by giving it a human face. The discourse of a diverse and ever-changing social world is never a coherent whole. Many points of view spin many different versions in the discussion of how life should be lived, or what one should wear. Despite the fragmented and contradictory versions that can be gathered from gay men in the past, there was a broad consensus in rejecting the anti-gay attitudes of the police or psychiatry or other situations of injustice suffered because of homosexuality that was the pre-cursor and enabling condition for the broad acceptance of gay political rhetoric after 1970.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

In this analysis of the accounts of thirty men who participated in Montreal gay life before 1970, I have outlined a new way of understanding the changes in the social organization of homosexuality in Western societies. I have stressed that it is not only because of the overt actions of political or other leaders that the change occurred. Indeed, the success of leadership depended on the existence of a collectivity which had already become aware of its collective identity and whose members shared the leaders' condemnation of the treatment of homosexuals by society. In reading the narrators' stories, I have shown how this non-violent social change was effected from the ground up. Using discourse analysis supported by schema theory, I have indicated how the mundane activities of private lives, as well as the conversation and social bonding of the clandestine gay world of bars and other establishments, gradually led to the emergence of a self-aware collectivity. The rhetorical stance which rejected the treatment of homosexuals by society emerged as a consensus among those who considered themselves members of the new community. Though much of the discourse that contributed to a sense of gay selfhood concerned anything but political issues, I have argued that all forms of action or talk which took the collective self as a given fed into the emergent consensus in favour of gay rights. The evidence shows a continual development of specifically gay institutions in the 1950s and 1960s. When political groups began to work seriously on the struggle for social acceptance in the 1970s, they did so against the backdrop of economic and cultural signs that change was occurring in other spheres. Long before the political victory of civil rights protection in 1977 in Quebec, a visible, self-aware gay community had taken shape in the urban landscape.

At the outset of this study, I listed three principal aims. The first was to develop a theoretical framework, based on schema theory and discourse analysis, with which to understand the processes of change in the social organization of homosexuality. In the middle of the twentieth century, gay social life developed into a public community, equipped with a set of visible institutions and a coherent rhetoric to combat the formerly universal taboo on homosexuality in Euro-American cultures.

The second aim of the study was to gather together a wide range of ethnographic and historical information on gay life in Montreal. By making use of many varied sources, however partial and uneven, I have shown that a rather full picture of the gay lives of men in the past can be obtained. Despite the risk of narrator memory distortion, or the temptation on my own part to cast the history in the light of present thinking, I feel there is sufficient evidence of a progressive change of attitude, seen in the accounts of the daily lives and social occasions of the men interviewed, to justify my contention that they acted in ways which contributed to the large-scale change which I am studying. And although the social sanctions against homosexuality have, to a great extent, deprived us of the kinds of personal accounts that are otherwise generally available in a literate society, the accumulated sources which I have used, together with the invaluable earlier ethnographies, contribute to a broad overall picture of the activities, interests and values of gay men in the postwar period and earlier.

The final aim in this research was to use the information on Montreal to present a broad-based framework for the ethnographic analysis of gay life in North American cities, one which pays particular attention to the discursive and schematic aspects of the processes of collective identity formation and maintenance. In spite of Montreal's unique cultural duality, the city's gay community shares many of the characteristics of gay communities elsewhere. Profiting from Leznoff's (1954) early work, I have reconfirmed the central importance of the gay friendship group. I have extended his framework with the inclusion of a more specific understanding of the ways in which the discourse practices of friendship groups fostered collective identification as they extended and continually updated the schematic knowledge on which their interactions rested. The overall theoretical framework which I have developed will, I hope, facilitate comparative work that will lead to a more precise understanding of the general social and cultural patterns of gay life, at the same time as it allows deeper insight into the unique local experience of each community.

In this conclusion, I would like to briefly review several issues related to each of the three aims. I will summarize and critically evaluate the use of schema/discourse theory as a tool for investigating the processes of social change and pointing to further research directions to better understand the relations between individual and collective identity and the heteroglossic discourse through which gay and other social identities are shaped. I will look at the Montreal data in a general consideration of the factors of class, ethnicity and what I have called gay

“obviousness” or social visibility. Finally, I will draw together the discussion of gay ethnography, focusing on the crucial but problematic link between the shared sense of community and developments in the urban bar, service and retail markets with which it was closely intertwined, pointing out directions for research to continue to investigate these issues.

Schemata and Heteroglossic Discourse: This study documents a change in collective identity that was closely linked to an effort to change the cultural understandings and social reaction to a minority sexual orientation. The theoretical framework for scholarly work on gay identity has been profoundly influenced by Foucault’s (1976) problematization of the concept of sexuality as an object of historically specific cultural discourses. His work attacked naturalistic understandings and suggested that sexuality is no more an inherent aspect of human selfhood than the modern Western concept of individuality, and that both are constructs that arose at particular moments in Western intellectual, social and cultural history. Within this new framework scholars have been re-examining the multiplicity of factors that contribute to the individual’s acceptance of identity as a member of a social group based on sexual attraction to members of the same sex. The notion that identities are the result of social construction has brought to the fore the processual aspects of collective life as well as that of individuals.

Schema theory, with its roots in psychological studies of perception at the most basic level, incorporates a dynamic, processual approach which is well suited to modelling the changing cognitive structures with which people manage their lives. In gay studies, a mass of previously unavailable data has been accumulated on the differing patterns of organization that societies impose on sexual practices. Feminist scholarship has emphasized the importance of studying gender definitions and relations in societies all over the world, and in Euro-American cultures in particular. The synthesis of this information will, with time, contribute to a deeper understanding of the workings of sex and gender in human affairs. Gay identity in Euro-American cultures is one aspect of this discussion. I believe that the schema/discourse model which I have outlined can be useful in the analysis of how, through discourse processes, and the sharing of meanings, individuals adopt identities that are at variance with the prevailing gender ideology as they form emotional bonds with similar others and are integrated into communities. The theory also offers an avenue for making comparisons between identities, or at least

between the processes through which they change under the influence of complex socio-cultural variables like those at work in Western cultures of the postwar period.

In this research, I have looked closely at the words of a small group of narrators in order to uncover the schematic basis on which mutual understanding rests in a discourse community. Knowledge acts in two ways in the process of collective identification. Firstly, it has a referential function, serving as a repertoire of factual information, stored in content schemata which also maintain the group's point of view or attitudes and are selected in accordance with its values. Secondly, it has a symbolic function, since the adoption of discourse topics and practices identified with a particular group indicates the group membership of the speaker who makes the effort to learn the knowledge and conform to the rules of discourse him (or her)self as well as to others. The symbolization of mutual identity between speakers is an expression of the emotional bonds which unite them.

In addition, the particular schemata that individuals hold of the individual self and of collective life motivate them to take action so that their lives more closely resemble these ideals. At least, they do so under certain circumstances, but exactly how and when they will do so for a particular group is a question for research. By examining discourse and its schematic underpinnings, progress may be achieved in understanding what these circumstances are with greater precision, as we gain better understanding of collective identity processes in general. The ways in which actions, practical or discursive, undertaken in the daily lives of many unremarkable people, relate to large social changes are usually difficult to perceive. The emergence of gay collective identity offers a useful case for study because it occurred in a rather well-defined time period within the range of living memory, and was observed by participants who could not avoid being conscious that they were involved in social change. In the gay case, the dimension of political power is clearly expressed, since it was through the political rhetoric of minority rights that the gay movement has achieved major impact.

The political dimension of discourse lies at the heart of the theories of Bakhtin and Foucault, who have both contributed significantly to the views expressed here. In an anthropological framework, I think that the latter's model of heteroglossic discourse best serves the investigation into the connections between the multiple identifications of individuals in highly differentiated societies. The notion of an array of social voices engaged in a continuous process of contentious discourse opens the field of study of how individuals affiliate

with different voices at different times and for different pragmatic purposes. It also facilitates the analysis of how through the conflict of various rhetorical stances, particular collectivities achieve their practical aims.

By focusing on the minutia of lived experience, ethnographic data can help us to understand how individual experience articulates to group life. Collective identity or "community" is itself seen as a social construct. By stripping away naturalistic assumptions, the way is cleared to seeing change as a product human agency in a way that does not privilege official institutions and authoritative discourses. With the conception that cognitive categories like self and community have motivational force, we are challenged to examine the testimony of members of the collectivity for signs of how the gamut of categories offered for the classification of self and group, lead to actions that, in the case of gays and lesbians, resulted in a broad change in the social arrangements recognized as governing same-gender sexual activity.

The intimate influences of families and peer groups combined with the impact of authoritative discourses which stigmatized and excluded people whose sexual orientation violated cultural norms pushed some individuals to dismiss the latter as hypocritical and erroneous, and to work to change the perception of members of the immediate social context to accept or tolerate their difference. Though schemata of the self vary widely between individuals, for the process of collective identity formation, it was sufficient that some gay men decided to make their relationships with other gays the basis for organizing their social lives. As the numbers of such individuals increased, their actions, even those confined to what is usually thought of as private life, contributed to the formation of a more self-aware and more visible collectivity. Inspired by cultural notions like individual rights and political minority, their efforts supported the emergence of a rhetoric of gay rights put forth by the movement and the simultaneous flourishing of to cultural expressions of gay life in literature, journalism, scholarship and other forms. All of these initiatives have succeeded in putting the issues surrounding homosexuality on the agenda of public debate.

Gay life in Montreal since 1930: Divisions in "knowledge horizons" characterize all gay communities, but in Montreal the ethnic boundaries are particularly significant because of the tense history of French-English relations in Quebec. Where possible, in examining the

testimony of the narrators, I have indicated evidence of both the separateness and the common features of the two major cultural groups. The Montreal gay scene is unique in that Montreal gay men live their lives under the influence of two major Western cultures. In both, homosexuality was condemned by authoritative discourse, but in practice, the way it was viewed was quite different. The contrast between the pillorying of Oscar Wilde in England and the reverence accorded Marcel Proust in France or the pre-eminence of Michel Tremblay in later Québécois literature could not be sharper. Does this divided perception give rise to the relative tolerance with which gays are treated in the city? Or does this reflect the operation of the "dual hegemony" under which neither group's elite feels responsible for the enforcement of public morality?

At first glance it seems clear that the greater tolerance attributed to the French tradition played a role in making Montreal a hospitable place for gay culture. The "open city" period of from the 1930s to the 1950s, with its freewheeling nightclubs, gambling houses and brothels, created an atmosphere of tolerance which extended to sexual orientation. In the bars of the "Main" especially, gays were accepted in a matter-of-fact way as fellow customers, not only by prostitutes and underworld figures, but by the ordinary working-class Francophones who made up part of the clientele. But the inclusion of class complicates the ethnic explanation. In my analysis of the processes by which the narrators came to self-acceptance as gay men, I made an ad-hoc assignment of the relative ease and speed with which they did so. I have discussed the detailed findings on a number of social dividing lines in Chapter 5. The cultural, linguistic and religious affiliations of the narrator group do not offer much support for the hypothesis of Québécois tolerance, and offer little insight into the explanation by dual hegemony.

In fact, the linguistic, cultural and religious expectations of the tolerance hypothesis are contradicted by the narrator data, with a significant group of Anglophone Protestants experiencing unproblematic self-acceptance, while Francophone Catholics made up a major component of the narrators whose self-accounts led me to rate their self-acceptance as problematic. This may be an artefact of the small, non-random nature of the sample, but it underscores the need for caution in assuming that broad cultural orientations determine individual experience in a simple linear fashion.

The data on self-acceptance in relation to the narrators' social class are mixed. In fact, the factors which most often promoted self-acceptance among the group were family tolerance or

acceptance and early sexual initiation rather than their social status. But the data do indicate the importance of class in some of the narrators' overall experience of gay life. Many of them stressed, directly or indirectly, how important it was for them to find a gay world that was in some sense "respectable." The link between middle-class identity and the rejection of "obviousness" was strongly expressed. But being "obvious" was not a simple either/or choice. There was a notable difference in the acceptability of wearing drag in private and acting as a "screaming queen" in public. Outrageous behaviour was not tolerated in the more "respectable" establishments downtown, even those that were predominantly gay. Despite the symbolic cultural geography of the city that marked the downtown as Anglophone, the development of exclusively gay bars in the there meant, for middle-class speakers of both languages, a newly accessible protected space for public sociability. Though lacking full documentation of the "lowlife" area of the "Main," the numerous accounts from Francophones who preferred the downtown scene counter the simple deterministic role of culture and language and point to the greater importance of class differences within the gay world.

The overlaid differences of class, ethnicity and gay "obviousness" changed over time as the relative positions of Francophones and Anglophones changed with the arrival of the Quiet Revolution. In the 1990s, the signifiers "east" and "west" in the social geography of Montreal have changed more profoundly in the gay world than in the rest of society. Today's Gay Village is even further east than the old "Main," but it is the pre-eminent centre of gay life for Anglophones as well as Francophones, while only two small bars remain in the old downtown gay area. The complex interrelations of changing social circumstances as they influenced gay collective life will take further research and analysis to untangle. They focus on a central issue in the emergence of gay communities, that of visibility, and it remains to be seen whether in Montreal, this goal in the collective identification process was achieved more by the efforts of Francophones than of Anglophones. This preliminary synthesis suggests that it did. Francophone tolerance led to the establishment of the Monarch Café as the city's first exclusively gay bar in the 1930s. Early entrepreneurs and cultural leaders like the organizers of the parties in rented halls and the entertainers in gay clubs were Francophones. Most significantly, as I have noted in my discussion of leadership, the gay men who operated the new wave of exclusively gay bars that opened downtown in the 1960s were almost all Francophones. This finding indicates a possible explanation by the dual hegemony hypothesis.

But much more remains to be learned before this hypothesis can be fully tested. Even here it is clearly not a simple either/or distinction, since some of the most important new bars were opened through the collaboration of one member of each cultural group. This question of the relationship of French and English culture to gay life has long been debated in the gay movement. I believe that only by looking at a very broad spectrum of aspects of gay individual and collective experience will progress be made to resolve it.

Issues in Gay Ethnography. In some ways, individuals still follow in the footsteps of gay men in earlier periods, coming to awareness that they have a sexual desire which sets them apart from the mainstream, looking for and joining friendship groups, and embarking on a period of learning, then practising the arts of gay discourse and getting involved in gay social activities. The social and cultural context for identity formation by individuals has altered radically, however, due to changes at the collective level. A host of institutions and a previously undreamt of ease of access to information about homosexuality have mitigated the absolute sense of isolation that characterized gay experience for many in the past.

In looking at the individual experiences recounted by the thirty narrators, one of the most striking observations is their diversity. Individuals find their way into gay life by many paths. Many men never make the decision to enter gay life or to accept a gay identity, while others do so later in life than the prototypical coming out age in the late teens or early twenties. Some do not remain gay, a fact which casts doubt on theories of biological determination of sexual orientation, with which theorists who favour that approach will have to reckon.

For those who affiliate with the gay world, the types of involvement possible are also quite varied, and tend to change over time as the individual ages and develops time constraints due to work or other commitments. All the narrators were embedded, or had been at some stage of their gay lives, in a network of gay friends. They emphasized gay sociability to varying extents, and had different approaches to the integration of gay social life with other social network connections with family members, neighbours and co-workers, or relationships linked to other aspects of their identities. Friendship groups play a key role in the early years of many men's gay experience. Reliance on friends as guides or mentors was essential to social functioning in the private social scene and in the bars and other public gay venues. Friends provided not only information and access to social events, but solidarity and strength to face

the challenges posed by leading a double life, or being publicly labelled as homosexual in a period when this was unacceptable to society. Friends supported those who were arrested, for example helping with bail money or arranging a contact with a lawyer. But such external threats, though a real and present danger, rarely affected the lives of the narrators. Most important shared interests were of a more positive nature, including the mastery of language and discourse forms favoured by the group, and learning about the topical interest areas that united members.

Sharing interest in topics that included not only survival techniques but other areas like the lore of bars, of gay sex, and of a range of consumer products and leisure activities was a vehicle for the expression of group cohesion. It made manifest the emotional bond that linked men together with others whom they regarded as fellow members of a large social group. Gay specificity was reinforced by the adoption of particular discursive genres in which topics of common interest were articulated from a gay point of view. Notable among these was the coming out story. Less well-known, though celebrated in more recent gay fiction and porn videos, is the sexual conquest narrative. A broad investigation of the patternings in conversational discourse, using the genre as a specific type of formal schemata, offers many interesting research possibilities. For Montreal, for example, such work as an investigation of the use of similar forms by members of the two major cultural groups, and by members of other ethnic and racial minorities could afford important insights into the way gay cultural orientations are transmitted across social dividing lines.

The pairing of knowledge structures with emotional bonds and motivation is one of the chief advantages of discussing gay life within the framework of schema /discourse theory. I have argued that schemata of the self play a significant role in the coming out process. The imperative to be true to oneself, to seek self-realization, has come to the fore in Euro-American cultures over the course of the time period which the narrators described. I also want to stress that it is not only such overtly "ethical" schemata that exert motivational force. Human behaviour is adapted to the expectations of the peer group, so the individual is equally motivated by the need to conform to conventions in discourse, to display skill in managing social life, including sexual success, and to demonstrate expertise in the topical interest areas favoured by the group.

The feeling of group membership motivated some gay men to exert considerable effort and to spend money organizing parties or other social occasions for the benefit of their friends. Despite the costs and the risks, they did so because they were convinced of the rewards such actions could bring. Part of the reward was prestige within the limited circle of acquaintance of the host. But in a period when gay claims to public space were tentative and where the police intervention was common and could have disastrous consequences, opening private space to large numbers of gay men was also a recognition of membership in a collectivity beyond the immediate group. Depending on the occasion, members of interlinked friendship groups were likely to appear at parties, and their presence was a sign that there was a large population of gay men in the city and beyond.

The perception of a larger collectivity, a community which extended beyond the circle of acquaintance, activated schemata of group identity and involved the narrators, whether consciously or not, in a process of collective identity formation. The fellow-feeling shared by unacquainted gay men was accentuated by conflicts with outsiders to the group. This was often a theme in the discursive genre of the coming out story, which often included accounts of the tellers' struggle with religious or moral precepts, the hostility of parents or peers, and the need to validate their sexual desire for other men that listeners had also experienced. The story's climax, entry into gay life, was reached after a sequence of efforts to ignore or reject condemnation by prevailing ideology, to find other gays, to have gay sex and meet gay friends. These themes were as resonant for strangers as for intimates, and contributed to the sense of belonging to a group apart from society.

Of central importance in the growing recognition of the existence of the gay community by members and non-members alike was the use of space. Access to public space is a marker of social recognition, and in a capitalist urban land market, it is available to those who can pay. This link between symbolic and economic functions is one of the most important characteristics of the emergence of the gay community. The progressive appropriation of secure public space interacted dynamically with the emerging sense of community. Gay spatial practices before the twentieth century are little known, though a range of documentary resources in newspapers and administrative files awaits researchers with the patience to uncover more information. Since most early forms of spatial occupation involved exterior locations, or very limited access to shared interior space, they allowed only a first step towards recognition of shared identity

among the gay men. But even the marginal occupation of mixed bars enhanced the visibility of the larger social group to its members. With the establishment of exclusively or predominantly gay bars like the Monarch and the Tropical, gay discourse flourished with much less encumbrance from the expectations of outsiders. The line between inside and out became more sharply defined.

I have not explored in detail the economic dimensions of gay space and other aspects of the emergence of a gay market for goods and services from the entrepreneurial perspective. This development has been analyzed from the point of view of the consumers, who bought the goods and used the services in ways which symbolized their attachment to the gay community. Bars played a very practical role in opening a space where gay men could socialize in public, and where public accessibility meant that outsiders could be integrated into the networks and activities of the community, was most apparent to men at the time. Nevertheless their functions on the symbolic level were more important from the point of view of collective identity as an object of shared discourse and lore. In order to function socially in the gay world, and out of curiosity awakened by the realization that they had entered a hidden corner of society, newcomers began a process of acquiring detailed knowledge of the times and places, practices and etiquette, pleasures and dangers of their new community.

More than other venues, the bars especially afforded a secure but publicly accessible discourse environment where the shared schemata of gay knowledge, including knowledge of the places themselves, could be elaborated and passed on to others. In the discursive practices which formed the core of social interaction in gay space, the significance over time of the increasing availability of gay "places" was that they permitted the growth of specifically gay schemata. I do not mean to imply that all gay men shared the same knowledge, but they all drew on a cluster of schemata, some of which were shared by virtually everyone who considered himself gay. The most famous bars, the allure of physique magazines as gay consumer items, and the threats of violence or arrests and strategies for avoiding them, were no doubt almost universal. But in the details of the content of other knowledge, the same lines of social differentiation as those of the surrounding society divided gay men along the lines of class, ethnicity and age.

In private discourse, gay men had always (as long as can be traced) rendered their difference visible. In large part they did so through the use of campy dialogue. Even narrators

who disavowed imitating women admitted that on occasion they had slipped into feminized syntax. It was one of the many schemata that furnished material for daily conversational interaction within the friendship group. It is also evidence of widespread but rather low-key support for "queen culture" or camp among "covert" gay men, in circumstances where it did not threaten secrecy. It was an important symbol of group cohesion.

While it has a special significance in Montreal, gay visibility and how it was achieved and how public understanding of gay life was transformed is an issue in the history of all gay communities. What I have called gay "obviousness" has long been associated with working-class gay bars and their customers, though only a minority of working-class gays adopted it. By doing drag and talking or gesturing in an exaggeratedly feminine way, some gay men have proclaimed the existence of homosexuals. The camp style served, and still serves, in mass culture as the fundamental signifier of gayness. But this ignores the history of changes in gay visibility and its relation to class. The moment when a younger generation of non-queeny working-class men and middle-class men began to drop the rigid cover they had once used, to start to be seen in groups in restaurants and theatres without women was dated by one of the narrators to about 1960. We can accept this as at least a tentative date, a beginning of the move to the coming-out strategy of the gay liberation movement, which was devised to present to the public images of gay men who were not like the queens of stereotype. It led to later charges that those who had been at the forefront of the fight for gay self-affirmation were unceremoniously dumped by the new middle-class movement leadership as embarrassing reminders of the past. Nevertheless the move to self-affirmation on the political level is clearly the logical consequence of a change of attitude in private, a development or response to the rhetoric of minority rights which the small homophile movement of the 1950s had tried to promote.

So far I have discussed symbolization processes in private, but as the period advanced, it moved more and more into public spaces like bars. There, as I have said, gay discourse flourished. The emergence of gay bars made it much easier for newcomers to acquire knowledge of its contents and skill in using its forms. But the bars existed to serve customers, not to develop collective discourse or to serve as symbols. Over time the consumer interests of gay men became increasingly intertwined with the expression of identity, as consumption has for all kinds of identities in capitalist societies. The growth of the gay bar market led to a

recognition by capitalists of the possibilities of this new category of consumer. Products like clothing, travel, gay visuals and magazines, came to symbolize membership just as much as bar attendance. Such products were clearly aimed at the middle-class gay consumer who had the money for leisure and style. This broad overview of gay social patterns and culture can only provide a general understanding of the complex interplay of factors which linked the development of collectively held schemata to the motive of private gain. And it was not purely for profit that some of the early entrepreneurial ventures which I have recorded were undertaken. Some men undertook projects (like the man who chartered a bus to the Laurentians so that his bar friends could visit an out-of-town establishment) had more community-oriented goals along with the hope of making money. The fact that the same man later became a sauna proprietor shows how perception of the possibilities of the gay market arose. This man shared the growing awareness of the gay collectivity as a community, and initiated actions that served the common good and his own interests as well.

Early gay liberationists, heavily influenced by the left-wing political rhetoric of the late 1960s and early 1970s, disparaged the capitalist motives of gay bar owners, gay or heterosexual. Their view now appears rather limited, in view of the link I have noted between entrepreneurship, gay consumerism and the elaboration of the schemata which were the basis of collective identification. These divergent viewpoints return us to the motivational force of schemata, and the multiple ways in which such ideas as identity and community can be understood. Mobilizing abstract concepts of freedom and minority rights was only one approach. Providing gay-supportive social environments in return for payment was another vision of the common good.

But as the activists saw, profit-making enterprises can accomplish only limited goals, and would not help to achieve political ends or social tolerance. They counted on speaking out, making an identifiable gay voice heard in public discourse in ways more dramatic and sophisticated than the earlier homophile movement had done. Gay liberationists had little time for the older activists, and even less for the stereotyped culture of the bars. They failed to notice how the process of collective identity formation had been fostered there and in private gay space. The new gay spaces of the 1950s and 1960s, had served as the proving grounds for gay rhetoric and the strategy of coming out. A full account of the relationship between identity and economy, or class and visibility will require more research on the broad range of aspects of gay life that I have presented here. From the perspective of individual action as one source of

social change, I offer the gay case as an illustration of how the micropolitics of discourse can work. Among the many schemata that the mundane conversations of ordinary gays nourished was a strong sense of belonging. All later success was based on this collective self-identification as a community. Pre-liberation gay men's actions and discourse, and their implicit support for the rhetoric of gay resistance, opened the way to public self-affirmation in the dramatic growth of the gay movement and the gay community after 1970.

Appendices

A. NARRATORS

1. Individual Descriptions

Table 1 List of Narrators

Alan	Born 1928, died 1992. Quebec Anglophone from Protestant middle-class family in Montreal. Father's occupation was varied (businessman). Highest level of education was photography school. Left home never. Occupation: photographer. Personal religious practice: not known. Interview focused on career as physique photographer. Family attitude towards homosexuality was not specified. Entered gay world in 1955 at age 27. Bar-going habits: no. Attitude to secrecy: very discreet. Relationships: mentor and/or lover of some models? Experience of social control: police raid after another photographer's arrest; not charged. Leadership role in gay world: physique photo pioneer, mentor to some models.
Alfred	Born 1932. Immigrant (French) from Catholic middle-class family in France. Highest level of education was university. Left home at 18. Military service in French Air Force. Occupation: unemployed artist, formerly pilot, administrator, writer. Personal religious practice: not known. Aware of gayness when 24; repressed for 3 years after arrival in Montreal. Self-acceptance was problematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was not specified. Sexual initiation at 27. Entered gay world in 1959 at age 27. Bar-going habits: very frequent. Alcohol problem. Gay places mentioned: Tropical. Attitude to secrecy: no. Relationships: some. Account of gay-related violence: police gay bashing. Leadership role in gay world: gay writer, early movement activist.
Alvin	Born 1920? Canadian Anglophone from Jewish middle-class family in Winnipeg. Father's occupation was businessman. Highest level of education was university. Left home at 20? Military service in Air Force. Occupation: office clerk. Personal religious practice: none. Aware of gayness when in service during wartime, at 20. Self-acceptance was somewhat problematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was tolerant. Sexual initiation at 24. Contacts with psychology and psychiatry: no. Entered gay world in 1943 at age 24. Bar-going habits: frequent. Gay places mentioned: Tropical, Peel Tavern. Attitude to secrecy: mixed: discreet at work; no fear in bars. Relationships: few? Experience of social control: 1956 arrest for obscene language; late 1960s loitering arrest; NYC police shakedown. Leadership role in gay world: active in gay groups, 1970s and after.
André	Born 1935? Quebec Francophone from Catholic not known family in southwestern Quebec. Highest level of education was teacher's college. Occupation: layout, formerly newspaper work. Personal religious practice: not known. Interview focused on work in gay journalism. Family attitude towards homosexuality was not specified. Entered gay world in 1962 at age 27. Bar-going habits: not known. Attitude to secrecy: public spokesman. Leadership role in gay world: early gay journalist.
Armand	Born 1935. Quebec Francophone from Catholic working-class family in Montreal. Highest level of education was public school. Occupation: entertainer. Personal religious practice: not known. Interview focused on career as gay entertainer. Aware of gayness when adolescent. Family attitude towards homosexuality was tolerant. Entered gay world in 1953 at age 16. Bar-going habits: staff. Gay places mentioned: Monarch, Tropical, PJ's. Attitude to secrecy: very open. Leadership role in gay world: leading personality in gay world from 1957.
Arthur	Born 1935. Quebec Francophone from Catholic middle-class family in Laurentians. Father's occupation was hardware storekeeper. Highest level of education was university. Occupation: public administrator. Personal religious practice: none. Aware of gayness when about 13. Self-acceptance was somewhat problematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was intolerant. Sexual initiation at 21. Contacts with psychology and psychiatry: Jesuit psychiatrist was helpful with self-acceptance. Entered gay world in 1956 at age 21. Bar-going habits: no. Gay places mentioned: street cruising. Attitude to secrecy: moderate. Relationships: few.

Charles	Born 1932. Canadian Francophone from Catholic working-class family in Sudbury. Father's occupation was unskilled labourer. Highest level of education was university (MA). Left home at 23. Occupation: cegep teacher; formerly university instructor. Personal religious practice: not known. Aware of gayness when young. Self-acceptance was problematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was intolerant. Sexual initiation at 8. Contacts with psychology and psychiatry: negative experience with cure-oriented psychiatrist. Entered gay world in 1951 at age 20. Bar-going habits: occasional. Gay places mentioned: Perchoir d'Haïti, Hawaiian Lounge, existentialist cafés; Tarot; Chat noir; Quatre Coins du Monde. Public sex experience: saunas. Attitude to secrecy: little (unable to hide). Relationships: several. Experience of social control: called fifi public school, but not at collège classique.
Donald	Born 1926. Immigrant (West Indies White) from Protestant affluent/upper middle-class family in West Indies. Father's occupation was civil servant. Highest level of education was university. Left home at 26. Occupation: accountant. Personal religious practice: not known. Aware of gayness when in mid-teens. Self-acceptance was unproblematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was not specified. Sexual initiation at 15. Contacts with psychology and psychiatry: no need. Entered gay world in 1948 at age 22. Bar-going habits: frequent. Gay places mentioned: Tropical, Kiltie Lounge, Joe Beef. Public sex experience: toilets, change rooms at Plattsburg, etc. Attitude to secrecy: very discreet. Relationships: six years with first lover; other short-term affairs. Experience of social control: toilet arrest. Account of gay-related violence: saw vicious fights among customers in rough restaurant near St-Marc.
Émile	Born 1930. Quebec Francophone from Catholic working-class family in Estrie. Father's occupation was varied (unskilled labourer). Highest level of education was high school. Left home at about 20. Occupation: office clerk. Personal religious practice: not known. Aware of gayness when about 20. Self-acceptance was somewhat problematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was not specified. Sexual initiation at 20. Entered gay world in 1955 at age 25. Bar-going habits: very frequent. Alcohol problem. Gay places mentioned: Tropical. Attitude to secrecy: out at work in late 1950s. Relationships: several; esp. one in SF. Account of gay-related violence: robbery attempt; hits thief with wine bottle, chases him; police beating gays for fun. Leadership role in gay world: gay AA; AIDS work.
Ernest	Born 1946. Quebec Francophone from Catholic affluent/upper middle-class family in Sherbrooke. Father's occupation was businessman. Highest level of education was collège classique. Left home at about 20. Occupation: writer and literary critic. Personal religious practice: none. Aware of gayness when young. Self-acceptance was unproblematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was intolerant. Entered gay world in 1960 at age 18. Bar-going habits: occasional. Gay places mentioned: literary parties. Attitude to secrecy: no. Leadership role in gay world: writing.
Étienne	Born 1937. Quebec Francophone from Catholic middle-class family in Montreal. Highest level of education was university. Left home at 21. Occupation: university professor. Personal religious practice: none. Aware of gayness when 13. Self-acceptance was problematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was intolerant. Sexual initiation at 21. Contacts with psychology and psychiatry: psychology student, teacher. Entered gay world in 1958 at age 21. Bar-going habits: frequent. Gay places mentioned: Tropical. Public sex experience: saunas. Attitude to secrecy: out at work in 1960s. Relationships: a few. Experience of social control: sauna arrest. Leadership role in gay world: early movement activist.
Eugène	Born 1940. Quebec Francophone from Catholic working-class family in Montreal. Father's occupation was municipal employee. Highest level of education was university. Left home at 28. Occupation: laboratory scientist. Personal religious practice: none. Aware of gayness when in mid teens. Self-acceptance was problematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was not specified. Sexual initiation at 20. Contacts with psychology and psychiatry: studied psychology. Entered gay world in 1960 at age 20. Bar-going habits: frequent. Gay places mentioned: Lutèce, Tropical. Attitude to secrecy: not out at work, still concerned about effect. Relationships: few. Leadership role in gay world: early movement activist.
Gérard	Born 1940. Quebec Francophone from Catholic middle-class family in Matane. Highest level of education was university. Occupation: cegep teacher. Personal religious practice: not known. Aware of gayness when in mid teens. Self-acceptance was problematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was not specified. Sexual initiation at 14. Contacts with psychology and psychiatry: professional psychologist. Entered gay world in 1964 at age 24. Bar-going habits: occasional. Gay places mentioned: Hawaiian Lounge, Tropical. Public sex experience: no. Attitude to secrecy: moderate. Relationships: yes. Account of gay-related violence: sexually abused by priest at 14. Leadership role in gay world: late 1980s president of gay group.

Gilles	Born 1933. Quebec Francophone from Catholic working-class family in Laurentians. Highest level of education was university. Occupation: consultant. Personal religious practice: Catholic. Interview focused on adolescence and religious commitment. Aware of gayness when about 14. Self-acceptance was problematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was not specified. Sexual initiation at 18. Contacts with psychology and psychiatry: beneficial therapy in early twenties. Entered gay world in 1980 at age 47. Bar-going habits: occasional. Gay places mentioned: none. Attitude to secrecy: little after real coming out. Relationships: year with fellow novice; long-term since early 1980s coming out. Leadership role in gay world: late 1980s, early 1990s gay group president.
Harry	Born 1945. Canadian Anglophone from Protestant affluent/upper middle-class family in Montreal. Father's occupation was lawyer. Highest level of education was university. Left home at 20. Occupation: museum curator. Personal religious practice: none. Aware of gayness when in boarding school. Self-acceptance was unproblematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was intolerant. Sexual initiation at 14. Entered gay world in 1960 at age 14. Bar-going habits: frequent. Gay places mentioned: Quatre Coins du monde, Hawaiian Lounge. Public sex experience: toilets while in teens. Attitude to secrecy: rejected; wore radical drag at work. Relationships: few. Experience of social control: arrest for same-sex dancing. Leadership role in gay world: early movement leader in Ontario.
Jacques	Born 1930. Quebec Francophone from Catholic working-class family in the Ottawa Valley. Highest level of education was collège classique. Left home at about 20. Occupation: actor. Personal religious practice: not known. Aware of gayness when in teens. Self-acceptance was problematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was supportive. Sexual initiation at 21. Contacts with psychology and psychiatry: sympathetic therapist helped him get over religious guilt. Entered gay world in 1951 at age 23. Bar-going habits: occasional. Gay places mentioned: bars in Ottawa. Attitude to secrecy: moderate. Relationships: 22 years with one man.
Jean	Born 1927. Quebec Francophone from Catholic middle-class family in Montreal. Father's occupation was businessman. Highest level of education was collège classique. Occupation: accountant, trade magazine publisher. Personal religious practice: not known. Aware of gayness when in mid-teens. Self-acceptance was unproblematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was tolerant. Sexual initiation at 17. Entered gay world in 1948 at age 20. Bar-going habits: very frequent. Alcohol problem. Gay places mentioned: Peel Tavern, St-Regis tavern, Carrousel. Attitude to secrecy: moderate; came out to father (who asked). Relationships: with Normand since 1951.
Len	Born 1930? Quebec Anglophone from Protestant middle-class family in Montreal South Shore. Highest level of education was high school. Left home never. Occupation: office clerk. Personal religious practice: none. Aware of gayness when in late teens. Self-acceptance was unproblematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was tolerant. Sexual initiation at 15. Contacts with psychology and psychiatry: Therapy after lover stolen by friend, not related to sexuality. Entered gay world in 1950 at age 20. Bar-going habits: very frequent. Gay places mentioned: Tropical, Monarch, Montreal Swimming Club. Public sex experience: park sex before bar discovery. Attitude to secrecy: moderate. Relationships: some. Account of gay-related violence: no violence because straights not aware of gay presence. Leadership role in gay world: party giver.
Louis	Born 1927. Quebec Francophone from Catholic middle-class family in Laurentians. Father's occupation was businessman. Highest level of education was collège classique. Occupation: welfare, formerly various unskilled jobs. Personal religious practice: gay church. Aware of gayness when in early teens. Self-acceptance was somewhat problematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was not specified. Sexual initiation at 14. Entered gay world in 1948 at age 20. Bar-going habits: frequent. Gay places mentioned: Tropical, Échouerie. Attitude to secrecy: moderate. Account of gay-related violence: saw fights in restaurant near St-Marc. Leadership role in gay world: led discussions, early 1950s; activist late 1970s.
Lucien	Born 1935. Quebec Francophone from Catholic working-class family in Lanaudière. Highest level of education was university (MA). Left home at 20. Occupation: teacher. Personal religious practice: not known. Interview focused on adolescence. Family attitude towards homosexuality was not specified. Entered gay world in 1955 at age 18. Bar-going habits: frequent. Gay places mentioned: Peel Pub. Relationships: nine-year relationship.
Martin	Born 1943. Quebec Francophone from Catholic middle-class family in Montreal. Father's occupation was plumber. Highest level of education was university. Occupation: businessman. Personal religious practice: not known. Aware of gayness when in teens, going to gym. Self-acceptance was unproblematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was tolerant. Sexual initiation at 14. Entered gay world in 1960 at age 17. Bar-going habits: frequent. Attitude to secrecy: very open.

Normand	Born 1929. Quebec Francophone from Catholic middle-class family in Montreal. Highest level of education was coll�ge classique. Military service in navy enrollment intended but met lover instead. Occupation: sales, trade magazine publisher. Personal religious practice: not known. Aware of gayness when in late teens. Self-acceptance was somewhat problematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was tolerant. Sexual initiation at 17. Contacts with psychology and psychiatry: no. Entered gay world in 1949 at age 20. Bar-going habits: very frequent. Alcohol problem. Gay places mentioned: Peel Tavern, Mount Royal Tavern, Tropical. Attitude to secrecy: very discreet. Relationships: with Jean since 1951.
Oscar	Born 1915, died 1996. Quebec Anglophone from Protestant affluent/upper middle-class family in Montreal. Father's occupation was administrator. Highest level of education was university (law). Left home at 24. Military service in army. Occupation: administrator. Personal religious practice: not known. Aware of gayness when in teens. Self-acceptance was problematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was intolerant. Sexual initiation at 30. Contacts with psychology and psychiatry: reading and talking to psychiatrist friends; supports sickness model of homosexuality. Entered gay world in 1946 at age 30. Bar-going habits: not after joining AA. Alcohol problem. Gay places mentioned: Samovar, Hawaiian Lounge. Attitude to secrecy: very discreet throughout life. Relationships: some. Experience of social control: overt family intervention against roommate. Leadership role in gay world: gay AA organizer in 1980s, 1990s.
Patrick	Born 1943. Quebec Bilingual from Catholic affluent/upper middle-class family in Montreal. Father's occupation was engineer. Highest level of education was high school dropout. Occupation: varied (sales, etc.). Personal religious practice: none. Aware of gayness when in early teens. Self-acceptance was unproblematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was intolerant. Sexual initiation at 13. Contacts with psychology and psychiatry: therapy in mid-teens used as learning experience. Entered gay world in 1956 at age 13. Bar-going habits: staff. Gay places mentioned: Tropical; Taureau d'Or. Attitude to secrecy: very open. Relationships: both men and women. Leadership role in gay world: 1960s gay theatre in Vancouver. late 1970s, early 1980s gay media work.
Percy	Born 1907. Canadian Anglophone from Protestant middle-class family in Ontario. Father's occupation was businessman (twice in financial difficulties). Highest level of education was university. Left home at 21. Occupation: administrator. Personal religious practice: Protestant. Aware of gayness when less than ten years old; teen cruising in Grimsby, and Toronto. Self-acceptance was unproblematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was tolerant. Sexual initiation at 8. Entered gay world in 1927 at age 19. Bar-going habits: very frequent. Gay places mentioned: Piccadilly Club. Public sex experience: parks, saunas. Attitude to secrecy: very discreet. Relationships: with Walter since 1932. Leadership role in gay world: party host.
Pierre	Born 1945. Quebec Francophone from Catholic middle-class family in Montreal. Father's occupation was insurance agent. Highest level of education was university. Left home in twenties. Occupation: unemployed; formerly language teacher. Personal religious practice: none. Aware of gayness when adolescent. Self-acceptance was somewhat problematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was not specified. Sexual initiation at 17. Contacts with psychology and psychiatry: personal reading. Entered gay world in 1965 at age 20. Bar-going habits: frequent. Gay places mentioned: Altesse, Plateau Tavern, Monarch. Public sex experience: when young. Attitude to secrecy: public spokesman, early 1970s. Relationships: several; later with women. Account of gay-related violence: fights at Altesse; murder of waiter at Plateau tavern. Leadership role in gay world: early movement activist.
Ralph	Born 1941. Quebec Anglophone from Catholic middle-class family in Ottawa valley. Father's occupation was engineer. Highest level of education was design college. Left home at 18? Occupation: manufacturer. Personal religious practice: Catholic. Aware of gayness when about 20; repressed till 28. Self-acceptance was problematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was intolerant. Sexual initiation at 28. Entered gay world in 1969 at age 28. Bar-going habits: very frequent. Gay places mentioned: Caf� Apollo. Public sex experience: saunas. Attitude to secrecy: little concern. Relationships: several. Experience of social control: toilet arrest. Leadership role in gay world: gay religious group participant, 1980s.
Stephan	Born 1918. Immigrant (German) from Protestant affluent/upper middle-class family in Germany. Father's occupation was businessman. Highest level of education was high school. Left home at 18. Military service in Luftwaffe. Occupation: set designer, artist. Personal religious practice: not known. Aware of gayness when in boarding school. Self-acceptance was somewhat problematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was tolerant. Entered gay world in 1945 at age 21. Bar-going habits: frequent. Gay places mentioned: Tropical. Attitude to secrecy: no. Relationships: several. Experience of social control: sent to military prison for homosexuality during World War II. Leadership role in gay world: gay art work.

Trevor	Born 1947, died 1992. Quebec Anglophone from Protestant affluent/upper middle-class family in Montreal. Father's occupation was businessman. Highest level of education was university. Left home returned on occasion. Occupation: public administrator. Personal religious practice: Protestant. Aware of gayness when about 13. Self-acceptance was unproblematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was tolerant. Sexual initiation at 15. Contacts with psychology and psychiatry: no. Entered gay world in 1963 at age 16. Bar-going habits: very frequent. Gay places mentioned: Hawaiian Lounge, Quatre Coins du Monde, Bud's. Public sex experience: cinema, park while in teens. Attitude to secrecy: moderate, not out at church in 1990s. Relationships: few. Experience of social control: arrested in Truxx raid, 1977. Leadership role in gay world: story teller.
Walter	Born 1912. Canadian Anglophone from Protestant middle-class family in Toronto. Father's occupation was businessman, then magazine editor. Highest level of education was public school. Left home at 21. Military service in army during World War II. Occupation: leather goods; dress designer. Personal religious practice: Protestant. Aware of gayness when less than ten years old. Self-acceptance was unproblematic. Family attitude towards homosexuality was tolerant. Sexual initiation at 8. Entered gay world in 1928 at age 16. Bar-going habits: very frequent. Gay places mentioned: Piccadilly Club, Samovar. Public sex experience: parks, saunas. Attitude to secrecy: very discreet. Relationships: Walter since 1933. Experience of social control: charged with disorderly conduct after sex incident in army, official warning. Aware of military codes indicating homosexuality on discharge. Account of gay-related violence: attacks on gays on Mountain after World War II; fight just before left Army. Leadership role in gay world: party host.

2. Narrator Birth and Family Background

Figure 1 Decade of Birth

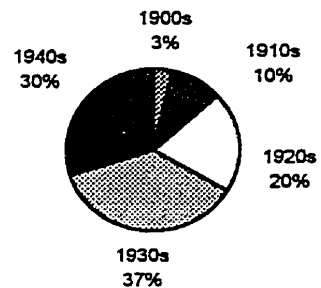


Figure 2 Region of Origin

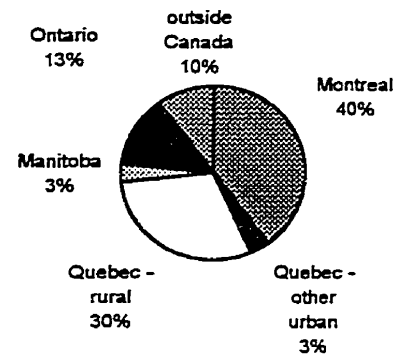


Figure 3 Ethnicity

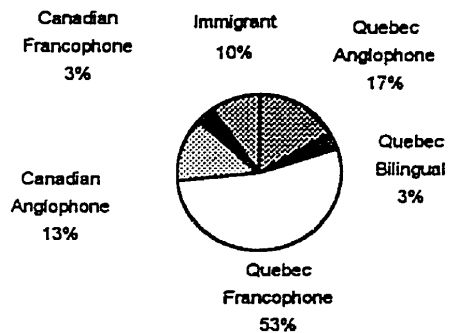


Figure 4 Language

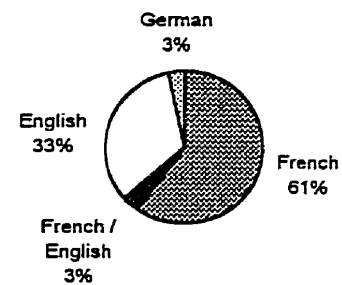


Figure 5 Parental Social Status

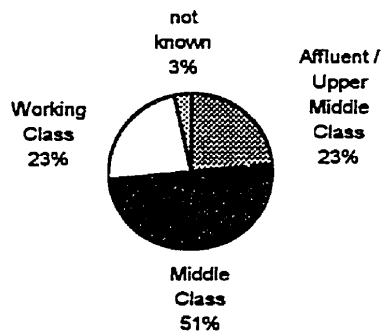
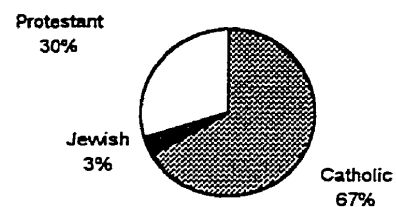


Figure 6 Family Religion



3. Narrator Social Characteristics

Figure 7 Education

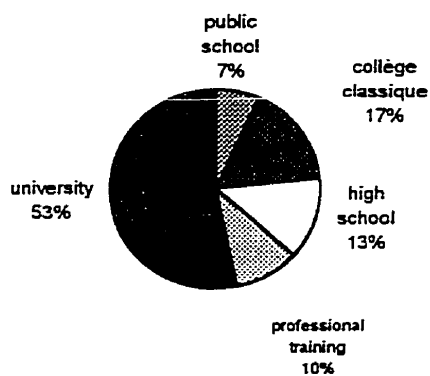


Figure 8 Occupation

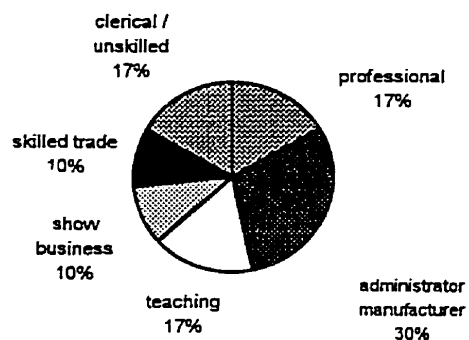


Figure 9 Narrator Social Status

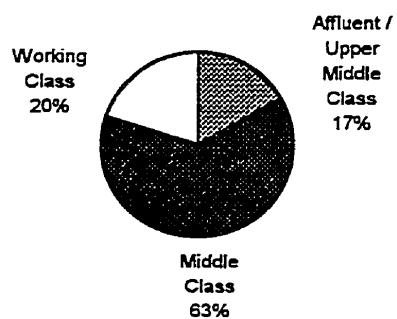


Figure 10 Personal Religious Practice

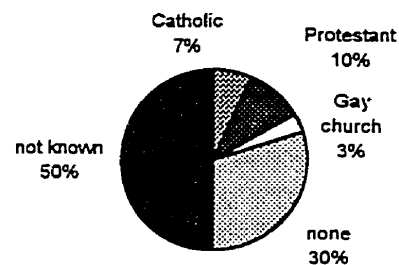


Figure 11 Sex Initiation Age

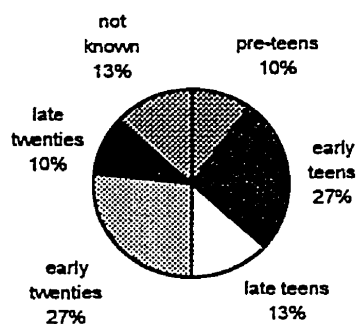
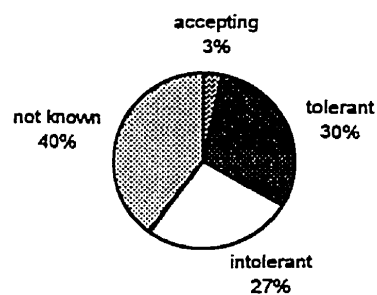


Figure 12 Family Attitude to Homosexuality



4. Narrator Involvement in the Gay World

Figure 13 Age at Entry into the Gay World

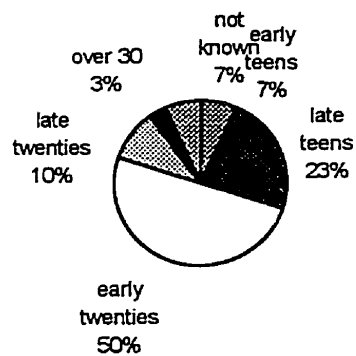


Figure 14 Decade of Montreal Gay World Entry

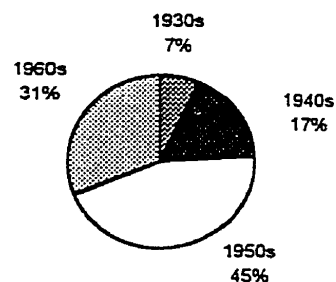


Figure 15 Bar-Going Habits

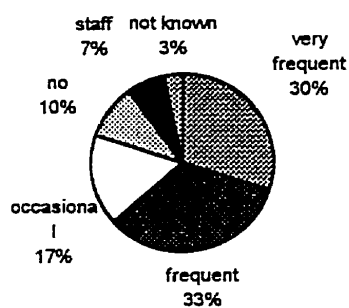


Figure 16 Secretiveness

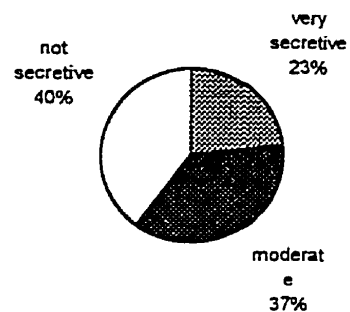


Figure 17 Relationships

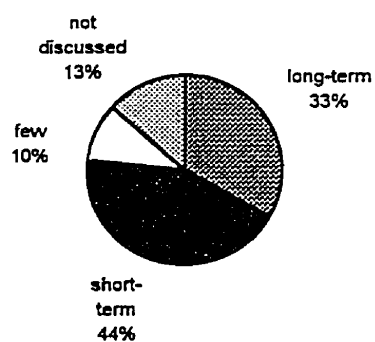
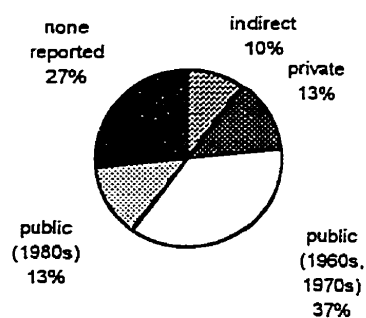


Figure 18 Leadership



5. Extended Interview Excerpts

How Walter and Percy met, Toronto, June 1933:

Walter began the story:

I met Percy one time. An old friend of his — I didn't know at the time. ... And then I started going around with this chap. We used to all meet at the restaurant there on Yonge St. near Bloor — what was the name of that? We all used to go in there. ... But anyhow, we all used to meet there. I didn't know Percy at that time, but Henry had already been a lover of Percy's. So in the meantime, I'd picked up this Henry, and Percy had thrown him out for somebody else. So we went in there one night for our Saturday-night snack, and there was Percy in a booth with two or three other people, and Henry comes over and says, "You must meet a friend of mine." So it was Percy I met. Now I don't know how I got an invitation. Then I didn't see any more of Percy for quite a long time.

Their subsequent meeting was due to the fact that both were seeing the same man:

Percy was having a party. In the meantime, I had met another — I'd dropped this Henry person, and was going out with another person — a real blond, blond, blond boy — a beautiful boy too. But there was something peculiar about him, too. He was one of the ones my father said, "No, I object to you going out with him, but if you are, don't bring him in the house. We don't like his— something about him we don't like." Anyhow, Percy had been going with him at the same time as I was. We'd both been playing back and forth the same guy. So anyway, Percy was having a party for a chap that was going to get married — a gay chap that was going to get married, and he invited this chap I was going with. He was having a card party.

Percy knew from experience that the man liked to do bring someone along so that they could have a threesome. This however was to be a formal social occasion, so Percy had given the other man strict instructions not to bring anyone else to the party. Walter didn't know anything about this:

So the chap invites me. He says, "We're going to a party out in the district" — a very elegant district where Percy was living. So I was all for elegance and meeting new people.... And it was pouring rain. So this chap said, "Get on the same streetcar. I'll be on the streetcar — watch for me." So that worked out okay. We had to take a streetcar and then the bus to where Percy was living. So we arrived at Percy's apartment. And he was furious at this other chap for bringing me. But I guess I was so bedraggled looking, and at that time I'd been screwing around, fucking around so much that I was down to 100 pounds. You could put your hands around my waistline. And I guess I was kind of sick-looking. So anyway, Percy felt sorry for me, but gave the other chap a real going over.

For punishment, the other man was forced to sit in the bedroom all evening, while Walter joined the card game, not sure what was going on.

The party turned out to be quite nice, and then everybody was leaving. I went down the stairs with Percy. I was one of the last to leave, because I was apologizing, saying, "I'm sorry I butted in." And Percy said, "Well, maybe you'd like to see me again." And I said that would be very nice, so we exchanged phone numbers and we phoned back and forth for two-three weeks, but no person was going to give in, oh no. I'm too busy, you know., haven't got the time to see you. Eventually we got together. Percy says, "Oh, we'll go to the Pantages Theatre." So I had to go and buy new clothes for this big affair, and Percy had to get all tiddled up. So we both decided, well, we're going to be a little bit late. And keep the other one waiting. I decided I was going to take a taxi. So I took a taxi to the show. I get there just ahead of Percy I had just an ordinary little taxi. Percy decided he was going to go whole hog, so he hires a limousine. So I met him there, and he's getting out of this big car, and I thought, Oh my god! So we went to the show, we nudged each other in the theatre and—

[P] And at the restaurant afterwards.

[W] And we went to our favourite restaurant afterwards, and by that time, we're all goo-goo eyes at each other, so finally the evening was getting on, and finally Percy says, "Would you like to come home with me tonight?" I said, "God, I thought you were never going to ask." And after that, it was every night.

With numerous ups and downs, especially periods of separation, this couple remained together for more than sixty years.

Walter's Military Service: In one of Walter's most memorable army stories, he had been out drinking with his buddies, but lost sight of them and ended up alone at one of the clubs for military personnel:

And apparently I'd gone down to the basement to the washroom. ... There's not that much privacy. Anyhow, I must have gone in there — I must have been pretty drunk. The urinals were full, because I must have gone in there to have a pee, and, I don't know, there was a sailor who went in there with me to have a pee, too. Anyhow, I started doing blowjobs on them. They were lining up at the door. I was sitting in the cabin — when one got finished, then another would take his place. So finally, somebody called the police to say this was going on, because that's a very serious offence in the army.

He survived the investigation that followed, managing to convince the authorities that he was "alcoholically unaware of what I was doing." But it went on his report, as he learned soon after being transferred to another hospital. A friendly security officer later let him know that his homosexuality was on his record, but he broached the subject in an extraordinary way. After a great deal of alcohol had been consumed, Walter and the officer were walking near the barracks when the security man said:

"Maybe you'd like to do a little job on me." So I didn't hesitate. I hadn't had anything for a long time. I says, "Well." He says, "It's all right — I have it on your chart anyhow, you know." So I says, "Okay." We had a great time — he was nicely built and clean and smelled nice.

Afterwards the officer assured him that he wouldn't have any trouble because he had an otherwise excellent reputation in the forces, and offered to help him get out with a clean slate. But near the end of the war after getting into a fist fight with a sleeping soldier whom he had touched, Walter decided that he was ready to get out of the army. His superiors tried to change his mind, threatening that there would be a code on his discharge papers. Walter still refused, and was laughed at by the orderlies when he reported for his final medical examination, indicating that the officers had made good their threat. This story is one of the few sources for the type of record keeping the Canadian military put in place in World War II to track homosexuality among military personnel.³²⁸

³²⁸ Kinsman (1987:110-115) reviews official documents concerning "sex deviates" and collects gay servicemen's points of view from several sources.

Military attitudes were sometimes expressed more significantly in personal interaction rather than through official policies and actions. Walter experienced divergent reactions from superiors. In his hospital, he was in charge of the orderlies.

We used to have one colonel, he was a son-of-a-bitch. ... And he abhorred anything that was gay. And some of our boys were inclined that way — two of them would go off together for a weekend somewhere — go into town. I had my eye on one or two of them, but never anything was really finalized. But I used to sympathize with them. And he vowed up and down, if he ever caught any of his boys in any kind of trouble like that, he was going to have them put into jail.

But this colonel had a heart attack in bed with his mistress and was replaced by a new man.

Then we had another colonel that was — it came up again about being gay, because it was pretty obvious some of our boys were a little too affectionate to each other — during working days, they'd give each other a little pat or something. And some person complained about it. He says, "I don't want any complaints about my boys because that's exactly the kind of boys we want for hospital. They're sympathetic, and they're more interested in their patients, so I don't want any complaints about them, just the complete opposite."

This was the second contradictory message that officials in the military gave to Walter, who valued his army experience greatly and was not surprised to find the same hypocrisy there that he had encountered from other institutions.

How Jean and Normand met, Montreal, December 1951: Jean recounted the story of meeting Normand.

I was going into the Navy and spent part of afternoon at tavern. I met man there who would have liked to take me to his room. He interested me, mentioning he knew a nice boy in Montreal I might be interested in, so I was really interested. So I went and had sex with him and he gave me his phone number. He had met [the boy] in Quebec City. It was pure coincidence. And I went back drinking all evening after sex in the afternoon and the same evening, I saw a young chap come into the tavern (and my heart started to go like this), but I was too shy to talk with him. But as he passed me by, I grabbed him by the hand, but I was too shy, so I let him go. He went to the bathroom, then went out — he had just been looking to see if there was anything interesting and apparently he didn't find me interesting. It was close to the closing of the tavern, around midnight. Then we went at another place, a temporary place where we would meet, the Palm Café.³²⁹ It was temporarily operated by the Carrousel because it had been burnt. And what did I see? The same guy I saw at the tavern. I wasn't shy any more because I had been drinking. So I didn't resist — I kissed him. At the time to kiss someone in public was an "offense à la pudeur," but he was the one I had been hoping to meet one day and since then we've been together. When I met him at the bar I said "Would your phone number be Calumet 2270?" He said, "How did you know?" I said "One of your friends in Quebec gave it to me this afternoon!" He said, "Since you know my number, call me back tomorrow." So I did call. We met two or three days after and had a long walk and a long chat and decided we would see each other as often as possible.

From Normand's point of view, this sudden meeting put an end to a period of doubts about his sexuality.

I was resisting my homosexuality, but when I met him, that was it. I just came back from out west — I hadn't been out at all for 3-4 months. That night I decided to go out — I was so happy to meet — he had spent part of the night with a fellow from Paris and his French was so beautiful — he charmed me with besides what other charms he had physically — being tall and nice.

³²⁹ On Bleury, near Ontario Street.

However he found Jean's methods of getting acquainted rather shocking. When Jean grabbed his hand the first time:

I thought it was very audacious, but this I didn't notice. But what I noticed was when he kissed me in the bar — this I resisted. You couldn't do that — we could both have got arrested. This was not tolerated at all. Outside of that, it was perfect — but later I found he had a drinking problem — this I didn't like because I had a drinking problem also. I liked to drink a little all the time and he liked it once in a while a lot.

The Story of Jacques and Martin: Jacques and Martin met at a dinner party at a common friends and Martin gave him a ride home afterwards and thus knew where Jacques lived, though he had to ask for the apartment number.

Le lendemain j'avais une note dans ma porte me donnant rendez-vous à tel endroit, à telle heure. Le lendemain, il est venu et il a apporté des fleurs.

Their relationship developed slowly, with several meetings before things got serious.

La troisième ou quatrième fois, on a fait l'amour. Ça s'est développé comme ça. On s'est connu de mieux en mieux. Il était à Montréal pour du travail; il avait son appartement et moi le mien mais on était toujours ensemble. Il a dû partir pas très loin à Baltimore. Il est venu une fois par mois et moi j'ai été là, fait qu'on s'est vu aux deux semaines. Comme ça à travers les années, on s'est visité. On a dépensé beaucoup d'argent pour aller se voir, se téléphoner — une fortune — et on s'est écrit beaucoup. Ses étés, il venait trois mois parce qu'il était prof d'université. Quand il a quitté son poste, il est venu s'installer ici pis on a passé les 8 dernières années ensemble. C'est ça. C'est assez ordinaire comme histoire.

Given the social difficulties posed for homosexuals by society, Jacques reflected, he had been very lucky to have had this experience. In gay life, as he put it, "il y a tellement d'accessoires; la vie semble purement sexuelle." Finding someone to share with was a gift. "Je suis fier en tant qu'homosexuel d'avoir fait ça," he concluded.

B. COMMERCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL GAY SPACE

1. Increase in Gay Space to 1975

Figure 19 Types of Commercial Gay Space by Period

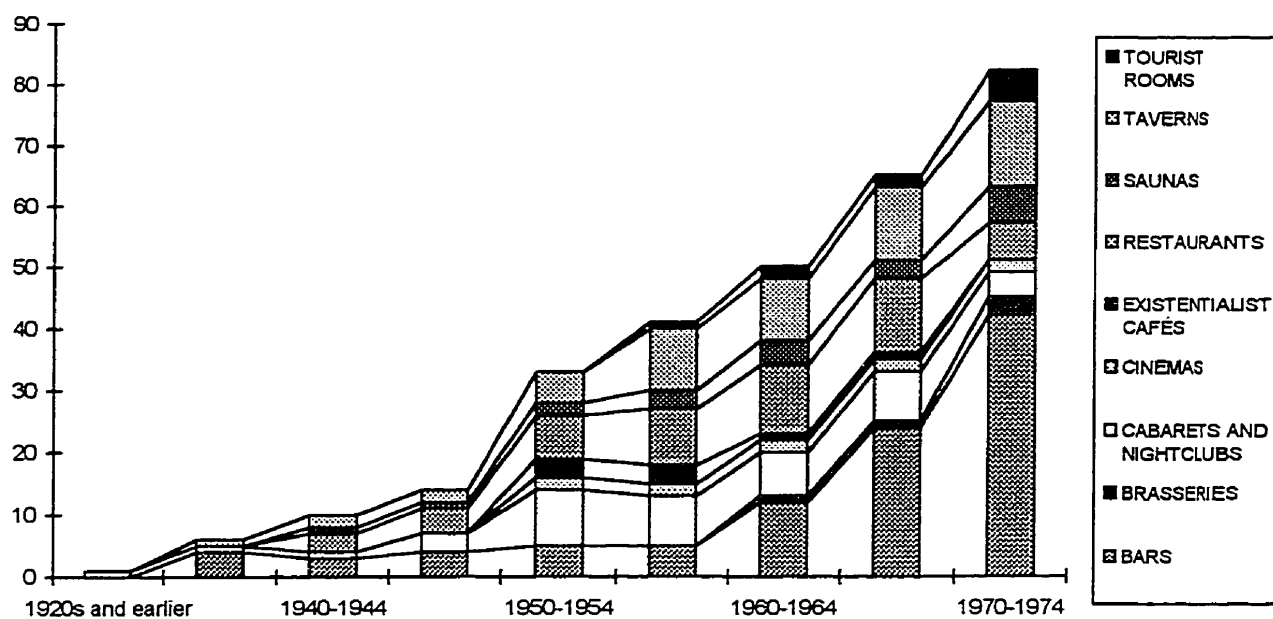
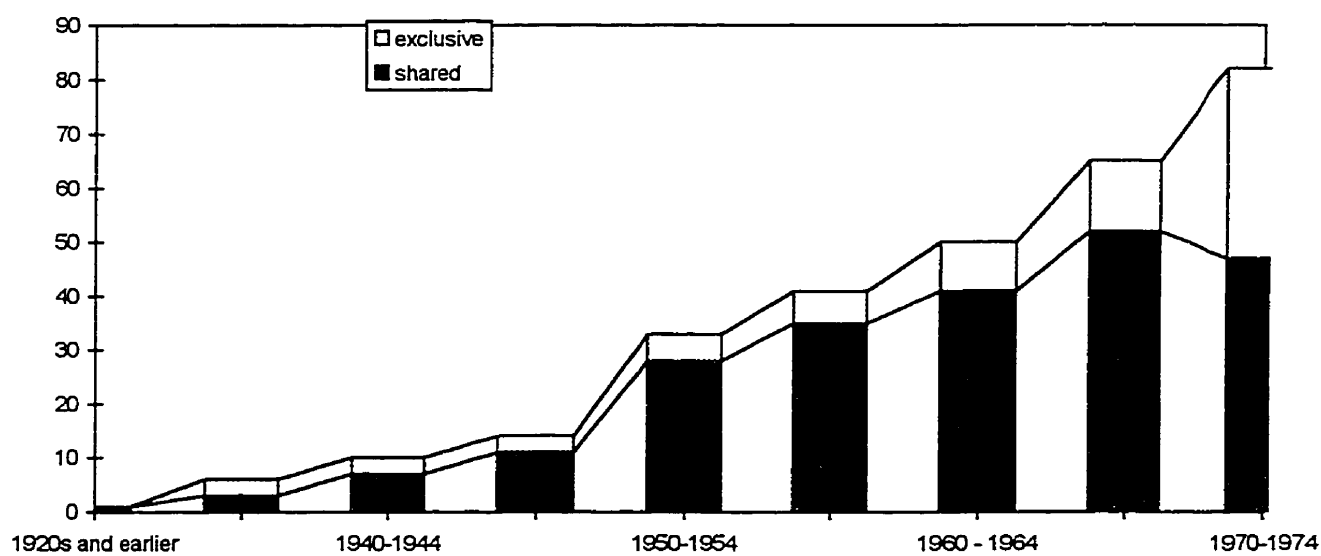


Figure 20 Shared versus Exclusive Gay Spaces by Period



2. List of Montreal Gay Bars and Other Gay Places by Period and District

Table 2 Montreal Gay Bars by Period and District

Before 1950: Downtown (West)

Dominion Square Tavern	1243 Metcalfe St.	exclusively gay tavern, 1920? to present (known as a gay place from 1950 ? to present)
Drummond Café	1427 Drummond St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1946 to 1951
Hawaiian Lounge [I]	1256 Stanley St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1946 to 1954?
Piccadilly Club	1455 Peel St.	mixed bar, 1930 to 1960?
Le Samovar	1424 Peel St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1928 to 1948

Before 1950: Main (East)

Café Monarch	162 Ste-Catherine St. East	exclusively gay bar, 1930? to 1994?
Silver Ball	900 St-Laurent St.	mixed bar, 1945 to 1950?

Before 1950: Other Districts

Café Lincoln	4479 St-Denis St.	exclusively gay bar, 1936 to 1985
Taverne Lincoln	4481 St-Denis St.	mixed tavern, 1932 to 1988
Les Trois Grenadiers	?	exclusively gay bar, 1935? to 1936?

1950s: Downtown (West)

Le Carrousel	1422/1424 Peel St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1949? to 1951?
Dominion Square Tavern	1243 Metcalfe St.	exclusively gay tavern, 1920? to present (known as a gay place from 1950? to present)
Down Beat Bar	1422/1424 Peel St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1950 to 1965
Drummond Café	1427 Drummond St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1946 to 1951
Gumbo	1455 Stanley St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1951 to 1951
Hawaiian Lounge [I]	1256 Stanley St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1946 to 1954?
Peel Pub	1107 Ste-Catherine St. West	exclusively gay tavern, 1958? to 1985
Peel Tavern	1452 Peel St.	exclusively gay tavern, 1953 to 1958?
Piccadilly Club	1455 Peel St.	mixed bar, 1930 to 1960?
Taverne St-Régis	484 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed tavern, 1950? to present (known as a gay place from 1953 to present)
Tropical Room	1422 Peel St.	exclusively gay bar, 1950 to 1965
"The U-Boat"	on McGill College St.	exclusively gay tavern (?), 1953 to 1953

1950s: Main (East)

Béret Bleu	173 Ste-Catherine St. East	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1953 to 1970
Blue Sky	65 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1950? to 1960?
Café St-John	984 St-Laurent St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1954 to 1969
Café Canasta	1230 St-Laurent St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1955 to 1966 (known as a gay place from 1960 to 1966)
Aux Deux Canards	1278 St-André St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1950? to 1958?
Le Hi-Lo	on Ste-Catherine St. East	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1956 to 1962
Café Monarch	162 Ste-Catherine St. East	exclusively gay bar, 1930? to 1994?

Taverne de Montréal	1415 St-Laurent St.	mixed tavern, 1965? to present
Café New Orleans	188 Dorchester St. East	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1955? to 1957
Taverne de la Paix	214 Ste-Catherine St. East	mixed tavern, 1950 to 1973 (known as a gay place from 1970 to 1973)

1950s: Other Districts

(cabaret?)	on Notre-Dame St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1953 to 1953
Taverne Joe Beef	205 de la Commune St. West	mixed tavern, 1870 to 1982
Café Lincoln	4479 St-Denis St.	exclusively gay bar, 1936 to 1985
Taverne Lincoln	4481 St-Denis St.	mixed tavern, 1932 to 1988
Taverne Neptune	121 de la Commune St. West	mixed tavern, 1813 to 1977
Rockhead's Paradise	1252 St-Antoine St. West	mixed bar, 1930 to 1980?
Taverne Turgeon	on Ontario St. East	mixed tavern, 1956 to 1957

1960s: Downtown (West)

Bar Au Ballon	on Peel St.	mixed bar, 1960 to 1966
Berkeley Hotel bar	1188 Sherbrooke St. West	mixed bar, 1964 to 1970
Bud's	1250 Stanley St.	exclusively gay bar, 1964 to 1984
Le Cachot	1204 Drummond St.	exclusively gay bar, 1968 to 1975
La Cave	on Mayor St.	exclusively gay bar, 1967 to 1967
Chez Fernand	1232 Peel St.	exclusively gay bar, 1967 to 1973
Dominion Square Tavern	1243 Metcalfe St.	exclusively gay tavern, 1920? to present (known as a gay place from 1950? to present)
Down Beat Bar	1422/1424 Peel St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1950 to 1965
Elbow Room	1194? Peel St.	mixed bar, 1965? to 1966?
Hawaiian Lounge [II]	1256 Stanley St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1964 to 1971
Kiltie Lounge	on Peel St.	mixed bar, 1960? to 1972
Kon Tiki	1455 Peel St.	mixed bar, 1959 to 1980?
Le Lutèce	1208 Crescent St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1959 to 1962?
Métro Bar	1455 Peel St.	mixed bar, 1960? to 1970?
Peel Pub	1107 Ste-Catherine St. West	exclusively gay tavern, 1958? to 1985
The Penthouse	1194 Peel St.	mixed bar, 1965 to 1969
Cabaret PJ's	1422 Peel St.	exclusively gay bar, 1968 to 1989
Puccini	on Victoria St.	exclusively gay bar, 1963? to 1963?
Quartier Latin	1177 de la Montagne St.	mixed bar, 1948 to 1970
Aux Quatre coins du monde	1218 Stanley St.	exclusively gay bar, 1966 to 1970
Taverne St-Régis	484 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed tavern, 1950? to present (known as a gay place from 1953 to present)
Le Tapis rouge	on Dorchester St. West	exclusively gay bar, 1960 to 1965?
Le Tarot	1459 St-Alexandre St.	mixed bar, 1968 to 1977
Le Taureau d'Or	1419 Drummond St.	exclusively gay bar, 1967 to 1976
Tropical Room	1422 Peel St.	exclusively gay bar, 1950 to 1965
Le Tunisia	1204 Drummond St.	exclusively gay bar, 1968 to 1971

1960s: Main (East)

Brasserie Alouette	on Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed brasserie, 1960? to 1974
Taverne Altesse	100 Ste-Catherine St. West	exclusively gay tavern, 1960? to 1973 (known as a gay place from 1966? to 1973)
Arlequin aux deux masques	75 Ste-Catherine St. East	mixed bar, 1963 to 1969
Béret Bleu	173 Ste-Catherine St. East	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1953 to 1970
Le Cabaret	251 Ste-Catherine St. East	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1966? to 1966?

Café St-John	984 St-Laurent St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1954 to 1969
Café Canasta	1230 St-Laurent St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1955 to 1966 (known as a gay place from 1960 to 1966)
Le Casbah	286 Ste-Catherine St. East	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1966 to 1969
Casino de Paris	316 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1964 to 1969
Chez Jan-Lou	1203 St-Laurent St.	mixed bar, 1965? to 1975
Le Hi-Lo	on Ste-Catherine St. East	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1956 to 1962
Taverne des Immeubles	804 Ste-Catherine St. East	mixed tavern, 1967 to 1967
Café Monarch	162 Ste-Catherine St. East	exclusively gay bar, 1930? to 1994?
Taverne de Montréal	1415 St-Laurent St.	mixed tavern, 1965? to present
Taverne La Patrie	214 Ste-Catherine St. East	mixed tavern, 1967 to 1969
Les Ponts de Paris	1278 St-André St.	mixed cabaret/nightclub, 1959? to 1988
Café Rialto	1217 St-Laurent St.	mixed bar, 1960 to 1990
Taverne de la Paix	214 Ste-Catherine St. East	mixed tavern, 1950 to 1973 (known as a gay place from 1970 to 1973)

1960s: Other Districts

Café Apollo	5116 Parc St.	exclusively gay bar, 1967? to 1975
Le Gobelet	8405 St-Laurent St.	mixed tavern, 1963 to 1971
Taverne Joe Beef	205 de la Commune St. West	mixed tavern, 1870 to 1982
Café Lincoln	4479 St-Denis St.	exclusively gay bar, 1936 to 1985
Taverne Lincoln	4481 St-Denis St.	mixed tavern, 1932 to 1988
Taverne Neptune	121 de la Commune St. West	mixed tavern, 1813 to 1977
Rockhead's Paradise	1252 St-Antoine St. West	mixed bar, 1930 to 1980?

Table 3 Other Montreal Gay Places by Period and District

Before 1950: Downtown (West)

Britton's Restaurant	1606 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1940 to 1977
Diana Grill	on Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1944? to 1955?
Traymore Cafeteria	1107 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1925? to 1957? (known as a gay place from 1945? to 1954?)

Before 1950: Main (East)

Toronto Restaurant	on Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1940? to 1950?
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Before 1950: Other Districts

Colonial Steam Bath	3963 Coloniale St.	mixed sauna, 1940? to present
Montreal Swimming Club	on Ile Ste-Hélène St.	exclusively gay beach, 1930? to 1965?

1950s: Downtown (West)

Britton's Restaurant	1606 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1940 to 1977
Cordner's Restaurant	on Philips Square St. West	mixed restaurant, 1950? to 1960?
Diana Grill	on Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1944? to 1955?
Dunn's Restaurant	892 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1950? to present
Honey Dew Restaurant	1340 Peel St.	mixed restaurant, 1953 to 1970
Lusignan Steam Baths	802 Lusignan St.	mixed sauna, 1950? to 1970? (known as

Monterey Restaurant & Lounge	1108 Ste-Catherine St. West	a gay place from 1960 to 1960) mixed restaurant, 1955 to 1970
Restaurant St-Moritz	1166 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1953 to 1961
Traymore Cafeteria	1107 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1925? to 1957? (known as a gay place from 1945? to 1954?)
The Vines Tourist Rooms	1208 Drummond St.	mixed tourist room, 1955? to present (known as a gay place from 1960 to present)
YMCA (Young Men's Christian Organization)	1441 Drummond St.	mixed residence, 1950 to present

1950s: Main (East)

Cinéma Crystal	1223 St-Laurent St.	mixed cinema, 1950? to 1989?
L'Eldorado	on Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1954 to 1975?
Cinéma Midway	1229 St-Laurent St.	mixed cinema, 1950? to 1980?
Paloma	? Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed existentialist café, 1955? to 1960?

1950s: Other Districts

Colonial Steam Bath	3963 Coloniale St.	mixed sauna, 1940? to present
L'Échouerie	on Pins, avenue des St.	mixed existentialist café, 1950 to 1958
El Cortijo	on Sherbrooke St. East	mixed existentialist café, 1950 to 1959
? (hôtel)	[Pointe-aux-Trembles]	mixed hotel, 1953 to 1953
Montreal Swimming Club	on Ile Ste-Hélène St.	exclusively gay beach, 1930? to 1965?
La Petite Europe	on Parc? St.	mixed existentialist café, 1950 to 1955
Swiss Hut	394 Sherbrooke St. West	mixed restaurant, 1955? to 1965?
Westmount Health Club (sauna)	? Sherbrooke St. West	mixed sauna, 1955? to 1965?

1960s: Downtown (West)

A & W Root Beer	1116 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1966 to 1973
Britton's Restaurant	1606 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1940 to 1977
Bus Stop	on Guy St.	mixed restaurant, 1968 to 1970
Café de la Madeleine	on Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1963 to 1968?
Dunn's Restaurant	892 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1950? to present
Honey Dew Restaurant	1340 Peel St.	mixed restaurant, 1953 to 1970
Honey Dew Restaurant	481 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1960? to 1970?
Honey Dew Restaurant	728 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1960? to 1970?
Honey Dew Restaurant	966 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1960? to 1970?
Lusignan Steam Baths	802 Lusignan St.	mixed sauna, 1950? to 1970? (known as a gay place from 1960 to 1960)
Monterey Restaurant & Lounge	1108 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1955 to 1970
Restaurant St-Moritz	1166 Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1953 to 1961
The Vines Tourist Rooms	1208 Drummond St.	mixed tourist room, 1955? to present (known as a gay place from 1960 to present)
Waikiki Tourist Rooms	438 Lagauchetière St. East	mixed tourist room, 1960? to 1973?
Windsor Steak House	1194 Peel St.	mixed restaurant, 1966 to 1971
YMCA (Young Men's Christian Organization)	1441 Drummond St.	mixed residence, 1950 to present

1960s: Main (East)

Cinéma Crystal	1223 St-Laurent St.	mixed cinema, 1950? to 1989?
L'Eldorado	on Ste-Catherine St. West	mixed restaurant, 1954 to 1975?
Cinéma Midway	1229 St-Laurent St.	mixed cinema, 1950? to 1980?

1960s: Other Districts

Le Chat noir	on Sherbrooke St. West	mixed existentialist café, 1963 to 1969?
Colonial Steam Bath	3963 Coloniale St.	mixed sauna, 1940? to present
Le Bain Cristal	4107 St-Denis St.	exclusively gay sauna, 1960? to 1994?
Montreal Swimming Club	on Ile Ste-Hélène St.	exclusively gay beach, 1930? to 1965?
Swiss Hut	394 Sherbrooke St. West	mixed restaurant, 1955? to 1965?
Westmount Health Club	Sherbrooke St. West	mixed sauna, 1955? to 1965?

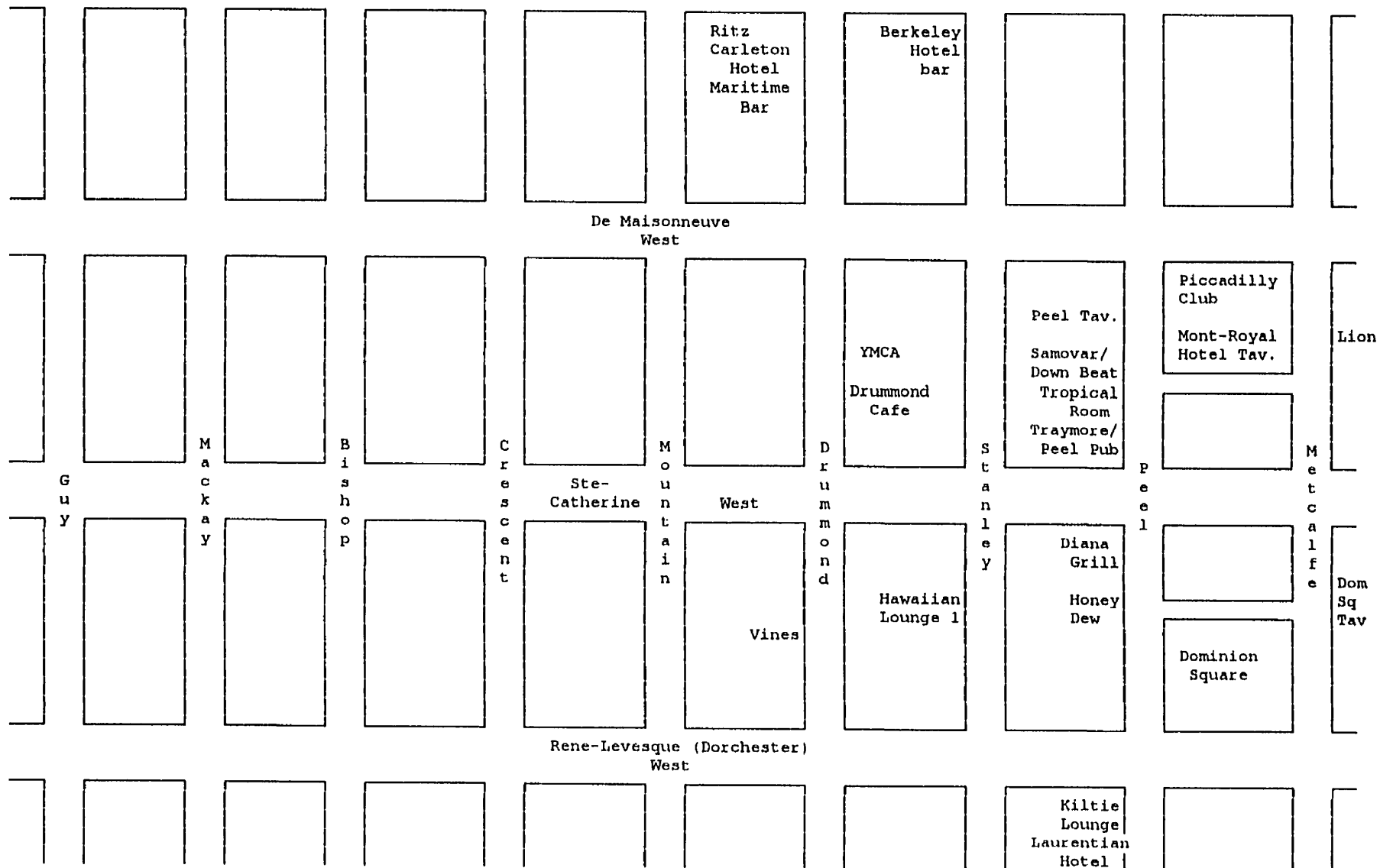
3. Maps

Map 1 Ste-Catherine East, 1950s

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Map 2 Ste-Catherine West, 1950s

Sherbrooke Ouest

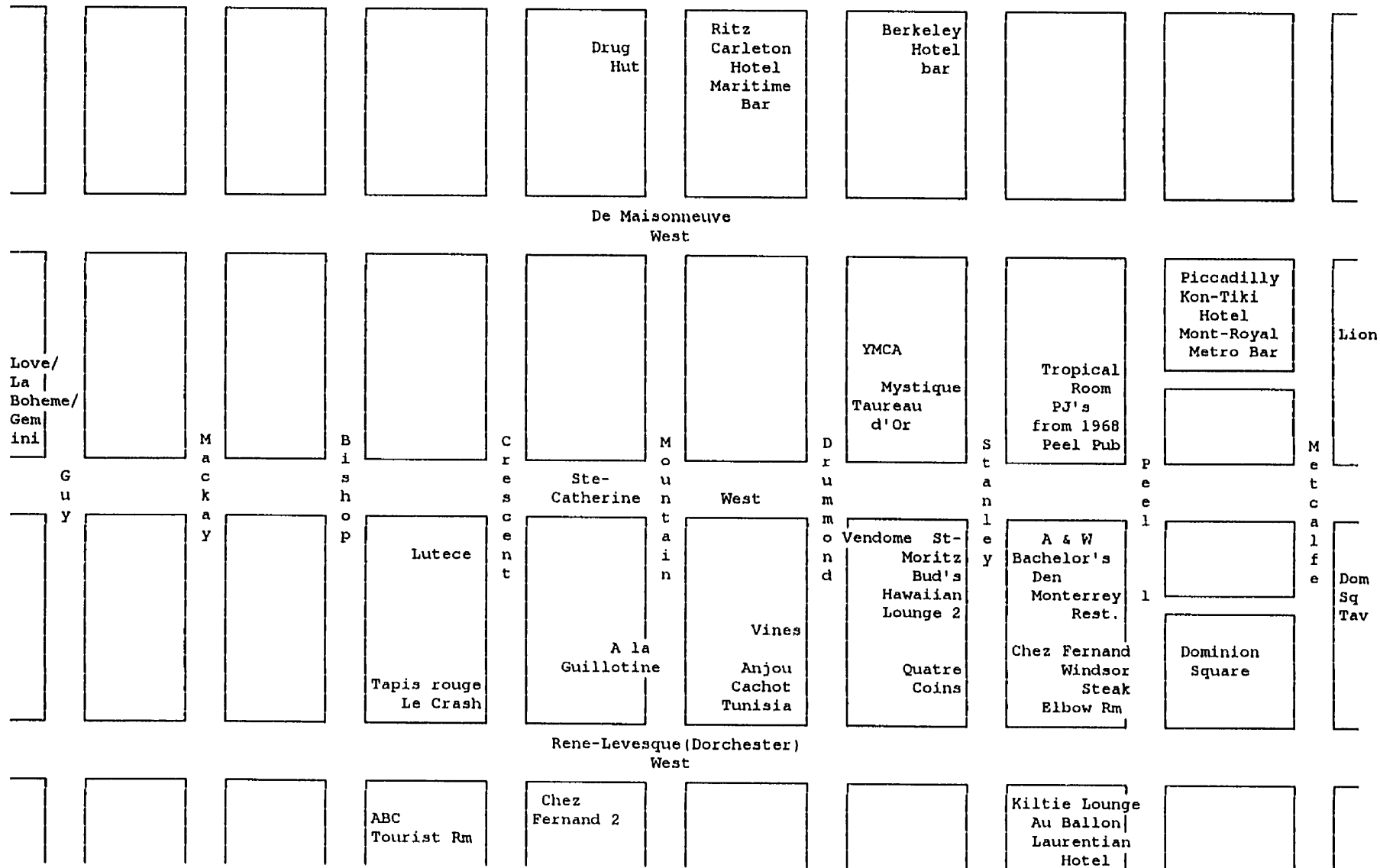


Map 3 Ste-Catherine East, 1960s

[illegible]

Map 4 Ste-Catherine West, 1960s

Sherbrooke Ouest



C. SELECTIONS FROM NEWSPAPER SOURCES

1. Early Newspaper Items

An Abominable Assault

Yesterday morning an old man of 60 named Moise Tellier was brought before the Recorder, charged with an indecent assault on a constable. Tellier lives at 417 Craig street on the same premises occupied by James Butler of the Britannia Saloon, Dr. Perrault and several other respectable citizens. Tellier's business is nominally to keep a small shop for the sale of apples, cakes, and similar trifles. But this business is only a cloak for the commission of crimes which rival Sodom and Gomorrah. A house of prostitution were indeed decent compared to this den. It has been watched for some time past by the police and we regret, for the credit of our city and of humanity, to say that several respectable citizens have been found frequenting it and evidently partaking in its abominations. A special policeman was sent there, and after a brief acquaintanceship Tellier made overtures to him of a nature too abominable to be described. The policeman knocked him down and brought him to the station. We are sorry to say that Mr. Bourgouine was found to defend him. It appears that Mr. Bourgouine is counsel for the revenue department; that a son of Tellier's is a whiskey detective, and that most of the expeditions against shebeens³³⁰ are organized at Tellier's house — certainly a reputable rendezvous. The miserable wretch fell on his knees and implored pardon of the Court, withdrew his plea of not guilty, and threw himself on the mercy of the Recorder, promising to quit the practice and leave the place. The Recorder said he regretted he could not send him to the Penitentiary. The law provided no imprisonment, but he would fine him \$20, the highest possible amount.

Evening Star, Montreal, June 8, 1869, [p. 3]

Another Wretch

Joseph Gagnon, the same party who was charged at the Police Court a few days ago with having stolen about \$415, but who was [? released *] for want of evidence, was brought [? this]³³¹ morning at the Recorder's Court having been found drunk in company with a soldier last night. Detective Lafon testified that the prisoner was one of the most abominable wretches in town — quite a match for Tellier and Dufaux — being a Sodomite; his house on St. Mary street being frequented by soldiers and most depraved characters. He accosted respectable parties on the street and made most abominable proposals to them. The Recorder inflicted a fine on him of \$10 or two months in jail.

Evening Star, Montreal, June 11 1869, [p. 3]

Served Him Right

Last night a man was caught on the Champ de Mars attempting in company with a young lad to practice one of the most revolting species of crime than can well be imagined. One of our detectives happened to be passing at the time, but on seeing what was going on he quietly hid himself behind a tree so as to make sure of his man. The detective was about rushing out to seize the scoundrel when he heard a party of young men coming towards him. He signalled them to keep quiet and watch what was going on. They did, and in a moment saw enough to justify them in chasing the brute and giving him a most tremendous thrashing. The detective left in another direction, not wishing to interfere in the matter, as it was in very good hands. We would strongly recommend that a couple of policemen should be detailed to attend the Champ de Mars every evening from about seven until twelve o'clock. It would prevent a great deal of crime.

Evening Star, Montreal, July 17, 1869, [p.2]

³³⁰ "Shebeen": slang for an illegal bar.

³³¹ microfilmed copy torn

L'association nocturne

Grand concours d'amis hier soir en arrière du Palais de Justice. Depuis le crépuscule jusqu'à minuit, on voyait glisser à travers les peupliers des êtres longs, efflanqués, aux jambes effilées, se dandinant avec des airs efféminés, toussant, s'appelant sur des tons doucereux. L'air frais, la beauté de la soirée, avaient attiré dans cet endroit privilégié une vingtaine de ces voyous, homme-femmes, qui y tiennent leurs ignobles sabbats. Plusieurs fois, ces brutes, vêtues à la mode, ont été amenées devant nos cours de justice, pour avoir donné aux passants le spectacle de leurs sales amusements. De légères sentences leur permettent de revenir aux plaisirs de leur race.

Hier soir, Clovis Villeneuve, un dude, affilié de cette association nocturne, s'est approché d'un citoyen assis sur les degrés du Champ-de-Mars, a engagé la causerie d'une voie (sic) mielleuse et ... s'est fait empogner par le dit citoyen qui n'était nul autre que Lafontaine, constable de la patrouille du centre.

Le misérable n'a été condamné qu'à \$20 d'amende ou deux mois de prison! La sentence est bien légère. Pourquoi ne pas envoyer ce voyou au pénitencier? Probablement Viau et ses compagnons rougiraient d'un tel compagnon...

"A Nocturnal Association"

A great gathering of friends last night behind the Court House. From dusk till midnight long slender creatures could be seen, swishing through the poplar trees on tapering legs, coughing with feminine delicacy, and calling to each other in honeyed tones. The cool air and the beauty of the evening had brought out about twenty of these lowlifes, these she-men ("hommes-femmes"), who hold their filthy revels in this favoured spot. These fashionably dressed brutes have often ended up before our law courts for having treated passers-by to the spectacle of their vile pastimes. Light sentences just allow them to slip quickly back to the pleasures of their kind.

Last night, Clovis Villeneuve, a "dude" and a member of this nocturnal association, came up to a citizen seated on the steps by the Champs-de-Mars, and began talking to him in the sweetest voice, only to get himself arrested by the said citizen who turned out to be none other than Constable Lafontaine of the Centre Patrol.

The wretch was given nothing but a \$20 fine or two months in jail! The sentence is remarkably lenient. Why not send the miscreant to the penitentiary? Probably Viau and the other criminals would blush at having such company.

La Presse, 1886.06.30, p. 4³³²

Un bordel spécial

A l'été 1916, il est question d'une maison dont les pensionnaires sont masculins. Un certain Carreau, propriétaire des lieux et ancien marchand d'ornements religieux, ainsi que sept autres personnes — les autres avaient eu le temps de fuir — sont mis en accusation. Ce «club social» existait depuis trois ans, l'histoire tournera court: son tenancier, grâce à des complicités en haut lieu, chuchote-t-on dans les couloirs du Palais de justice, bénéficie d'une remise en liberté sous caution et fuit aux États-Unis (*La Presse* 1993.07.04:A-6 [Proulx 1993]).

³³² We owe the rediscovery of this report to Cyrille Felteau, a journalist at *La Presse*. It was reprinted in that newspaper (1982.04.19), and subsequently in Felteau's *Histoire de la Presse* (1983, 1:170). As Felteau indicates, Viau was likely a famous criminal of the time.

2. Yellow Newspaper Items

Items providing access to the gay world from *Ici Montréal*, 1953 to 1962

1953.03.14 p. 11

Avec le printemps le homosexuels ont tendance à fréquenter davantage un hôtel situé dans le voisinage du Bout-de-l'Île.

1956.11.03, p. 13

Les ampoules électriques dans la vespasienne du carré Philip sont franchement trop faibles.

1957.01.26 p. 18

Ramona, la lesbienne, reste toujours la reine du St-John Café, sur la Main, où elle a, dans le passé, rabroué maints hommes et maintes femmes qui voulaient jouer sur ses plates-bandes.

1957.01.26 p. 19

Le plus grand reproche que l'on puisse faire à la troupe du Jewel Box Revue, c'est d'être trop crue et trop brutale dans les finales de chacun de ses numéros. Si une "femme" vient de chanter avec une voix de contralto féminin, puis avec une voix de baryton masculin, il n'est point nécessaire d'insister. Il devient ridicule et insultant de "la" voir arracher les seins artificiels de sa robe pour bien montrer à l'assistance que c'est un homme.

1962.06.30 p. 6

Dans le groupe de prétendus homosexuels récemment appréhendés dans un bain turc de la rue Coloniale, il y avait un pauvre type qui s'appelait (c'est pas de sa faute) Mondou.

1962.12.08 p. 6

En marge de la récente bagarre entre trois jeunes clients de la taverne Montréal, nous avons acquis la certitude qu'il s'agissait d'un excès de jalousie à l'intérieur de l'éternel triangle sentimental. Mon doux, ma chère! S'ils s'étaient contentés, aussi, de se battre à grands coups de mouchoir, ils ne seraient jamais ramassés en prison...

1962.12.22 p. 6

Les "grandes" de la métropole sont en effervescence, car la Société Mattachine et sept sociétés d'homosexuels de moindre importance viennent de demander à la législature américaine d'abolir toute persécution contre la sodomie. Comme notre pays singe son grand voisin en tout, il est certain que si les États-Unis font ce grand pas, le Canada suivra, à moins que le Québec tire de l'arrière, lui, comme toujours.

Items about the novel *Derrière le sang humain*, 1956

Soon after publication, the pseudonym of the book's author, "Robert de Vallières," was quickly penetrated,³³³ not surprising when there had been a build-up of several years about the forthcoming book in the gossip papers.

Le monde littéraire de Montréal possède ses originaux. Robert de Vallières (pseudonyme de Robert Pelchat) est toujours accompagné d'un jeune homme qu'il présente comme son conseiller personnel. M. de Vallières est l'auteur de "DERRIERE LE SANG HUMAIN" qui sera très prochainement publié et dans lequel il est beaucoup question d'aventures homosexuelles. Ce jeune auteur sera le conférencier d'honneur à un diner-causerie du journal l'EST MONTREALAIS qui aura lieu lundi prochain le 16 juin au Club de Réforme (*Ici Montréal* 1952.06.14, Vol. 1 No 1, p. 2).

The yellow press also covered the book launch at the Mount Royal Hotel, an event out of all proportion with the novel's meager literary worth.

Le lancement du livre *Derrière le sang humain*, par le romancier Robert de Vallières, le 9 oct., au Mont-Royal, aurait été l'un des plus spectaculaires jamais réalisés au Canada. Plus de 400

³³³ In the official bibliography *Canadiana* (1956.12: 840, C56-2846) the pseudonym is given along with the real name of the author, Robert Pelchat

personnes représentant la diplomatie, la politique, la littérature, le journalisme et les arts y avaient été invités (*Ici Montréal*, No. 227, 1956.10.13, p. 4).

The book's appearance gave the gossip papers free rein to mock the author and his subject.

Le dernier film de Marilyn Monroe avec Laurence Olivier, "A View From The Bridge," a vu sa première édition interdite au public, à cause de ses allusions à l'homosexualité. Arthur Miller, son auteur, serait-il un parent de R. de Vallières? (*Ici Montréal*, No. 234, 1956.12.01, p. 5).

Though the movie does end with a kiss between two men, neither of the actors mentioned appeared in it.

Ce bouquin qui vient de paraître récemment et qui traite de l'homosexualité est protégé par une large bande de papier qui cache en partie le titre, ne laissant apparaître en caractères gras que les premiers mots : "DERRIERE." On avouera que pour un bouquin de ce genre, c'est une coïncidence assez réjouissante! (*Ici Montréal*, No. 241, 19 janvier 1957, p. 6).

Fausse cette rumeur qu'un certain auteur à succès lance un volume qui s'intitule *Derrière l'argent humain* dans lequel il traiterait de la futilité des suicides ratés et montés pour monter la circulation d'un volume raté (*Ici Montréal*, No. 242, 26 janvier 1957, p. 8).

L'écrivain montréalais Robert de Vallières, auteur de *Derrière le sang humain*, commence à savoir ce qu'est la gloire littéraire. Sur plusieurs de ses affiches, notamment dans la vitrine de la librairie Montréal, à deux pas de *La Patrie*, on peut voir ajoutés en gros, au crayon, ces mots suaves : "Robert de Vallières, c'est Robert Pelchat, l'écoeurant "d'Hochelaga" (*Ici Montréal*, No. 242, 26 janvier 1957, p. 8).

Est-il vrai que le second bouquin de Robert de Vallières (traitant toujours le même sujet) serait : "SENS... le DERRIERE HUMAIN"? (*Ici Montréal* No. 246, 23 février 1957, p. 8).

40 Homos fêtent le Nouvel An dans une orgie inimaginable

(«Rue Laval» en lettres plus petites) [résumé] L'article occupe trois pages à l'intérieur. Il raconte dans le menu détail un party qui a eu lieu le 31 décembre 1956 chez Monsieur XXX, «dans le sous-sol du 3...8...3.-. de la rue Laval», «à quelques pas de la rue Rachel». On y apprend l'ample fourniture du bar, le décor (poster d'Elvis Presley), les cris de «ma chouette» et «mon pitou» qui ont salué l'heure de minuit, après quoi certains se sont mis à disparaître, deux par deux, dans la chambre pour quelques minutes..., mais tous revenaient à temps pour «Le Show».

Une fois ces agapes finies, Monsieur XXX se retira dans sa chambre pour quelques instants. Un maître de cérémonies installé à un micro annonça le spectacle. Monsieur A. apparut. En jupe et chandail, portant un maquillage habile et tentateur et des seins artificiels, monsieur s'avança au centre du salon, sous les yeux attendris des spectatrices. C'était son premier numéro et il dansa comme une fille de club.

Puis, Ti-Lou, habillé en hawaïenne, vint donner la hula-hula. Il reçut des tonnerres d'applaudissements. C'est à ce moment que le maître de cérémonies annonça le clou de spectacle, Monsieur XXX dans la danse du Banana Boat Song.

Dans le même costume que tout à l'heure, Monsieur vint donner le spectacle écoeurant de sa Banana Boat Song, enveloppé d'une pelure de banane retenue par un élastique.

Les applaudissements durèrent plus de cinq minutes.

(*Ici Montréal* no. 242, 26 janvier 1957, p.14).

Il y a LONGTEMPS que le Colonial Turkish Bath est un refuge "d'HOMOS"

Le sensationnel raid de la police municipale dans les salles du Colonial Turkish Bath, au 3963 de la rue du même nom, n'a pas pris personne par surprise, si l'on peut dire.

Car il y a belle lurette que l'on sait un peu partout, dans la métropole, que cet endroit, où l'on peut par ailleurs prendre d'excellents bains de vapeur à un prix qui n'a rien d'exorbitant, est devenu un rendez-vous favori des homosexuels de Montréal. Et même de toute la province.

Nous ne voulons aucunement, en cela, attaquer la parfaite honorabilité des tenanciers de l'établissement. Pas plus que bien d'autres, ils ne sont capables de choisir leur clientèle. C'est la même chose qui se passe, d'ailleurs, dans les cafés et restaurants licenciés. Si une prostituée se présente au bar, qui peut dire au barman que c'est là une femme de mauvaise réputation à qui il doit refuser une bière ou un Martini.

Si les clients de ce bain turc, en partie, se recrutaient donc dans le milieu des invertis sexuels, c'est que, évidemment, le caractère de la maison s'y prêtait.

Il est évident que, dans un bain turc, on n'est pas tenu de se promener en ... capot de chat.

La nudité la plus complète y est tolérée, et ce n'était aucunement une exception à la règle pour les établissements du même genre.

Que cette même nudité ait constitué une attraction pour les "dévies," cela, c'est une autre histoire.

Le raid de la semaine dernière, en tout cas, aura démontré que la super-classification des sexes, dans ces établissements comme dans bien d'autres, ne réussira jamais à faire disparaître les excès sexuels. Quand on en évite un, et c'est là la preuve, on en suscite presque un autre.

Cela ne signifie cependant pas que la police n'a pas eu raison d'exécuter la descente que l'on sait.

Mais il n'est resté pas moins qu'il y a bien longtemps que certains établissements de ce genre servent de refuges aux "homos," et qu'il en sera très probablement ainsi encore longtemps.

(Ici Montréal 1962.06.23:7).

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B. FILMS AND VIDEOS

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1973 *Il était une fois dans l'est*. 100 min. Feature film.
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1991 *Nelligan*. Montreal. Feature film.
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1963 *À tout prendre*. 99 min. Feature film.
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1965 *Délivrez-nous du mal*. 81 min. Feature film.
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1987 *Stormé: The Lady of the Jewel Box*. 21 min. Documentary film.
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1993 *Lip Gloss*. Montreal Lois Siegel Productions. 55 min. Feature film.
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1993 *Legal Memory*. Toronto: Legal Memory Inc. 80 min. Video.
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C. UNSIGNED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

- [letter by A. C]. *La Presse* 1963.08.14:4
34 to Face Court For Obscene Talk. *Herald* 1956.01.23:15 [?]

- 376 Arrested in East End Montreal. Herald 1950.03.20:1.
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- An Abominable Assault. Montreal Evening Star 1869.06.08:[3].
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- Des "petits amis" sont pris à des jeux interdits par la loi. Dimanche-Matin 1962.11.18:2
- Distributeur de films condamné à \$1,000 d'amende. La Presse 1965.02.04.
- Fifis versus Homos. Ici Montréal 1962.06.30:1
- Guerre aux tapettes à St-Jérôme. Ici Montréal 1962.06.02:3.
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- Homosexuels form local club. Montreal Star 1969.04.21.
- L'association nocturne. La Presse 1886.06.30:4.
- L'événement mondain de l'année: Tous de blanc vêtus, Roger et Florent se sont marié(e)s sous l'oeil de la police. Nouvelles Illustrées 1960.10.15.
- L'Halloween: Le 'Grand Kick' des Homos. Ici Montréal 1957.02.23:24.
- L'homosexualité en progrès: Une menace pour nos enfants. Le Nouveau samedi 1965.03.20:1.
- La police saurait qui a mis le feu au Downbeat. Dernière Heure /le Petit Journal 1965.10.31.
- Lancement spectaculaire d'un volume canadien! Nouvelles et potins 1956.10.20:26.
- Le dur métier d'être une femme. Le Petit Journal 1956.02.05:82.
- Le feu fait un mort dans un club de nuit. Allô Police 1962.11.04:26.
- Le monde fantastique des homos: Le mariage (à retardement) de Thérèse. Ici Montréal 1957.02.16:24.
- Le président des homophiles acquitté. Montréal-Matin. 1968.09.17:7.
- Michel Girouard et son ami à la défense des 200,000 homosexuels québécois. Nouvelles-Illustrées 1972.02.12:1-2,4.
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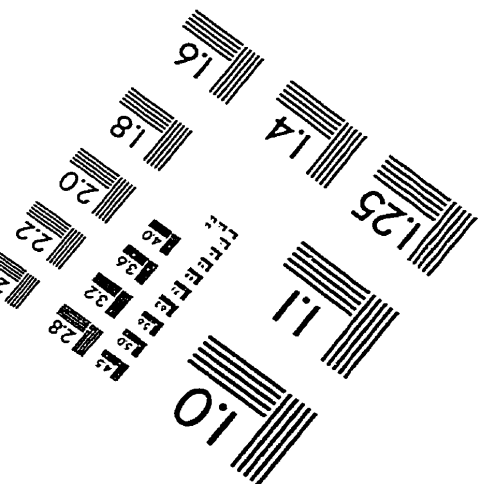
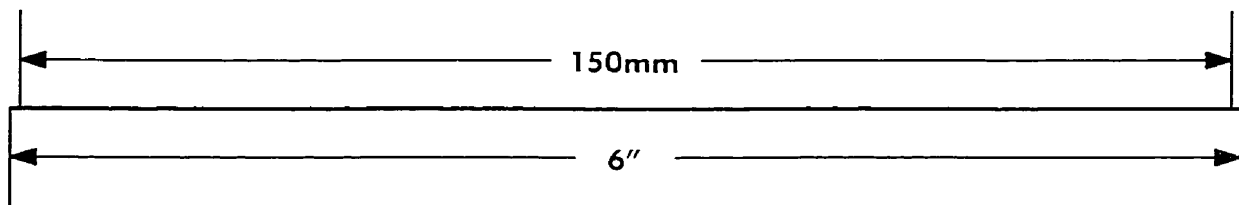
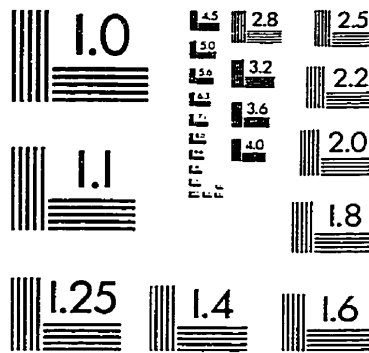
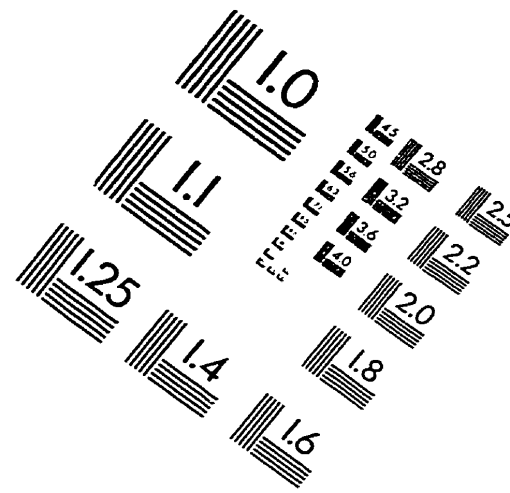
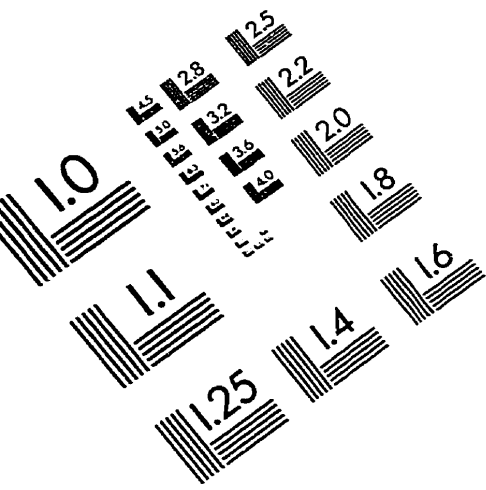
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1653 East Main Street
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