

## THE BOUNDARIES OF IDENTITY: BISEXUALITY IN EVERYDAY AND THEORETICAL CONTEXTS

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How can bisexuality be placed in the framework of the political movements of sexual minorities?<sup>1</sup> These movements are built on a need of acknowledgment and representation, in a situation of invisibility and prohibition. The “ethnic model” of identity politics—either in a liberal, equality-centred or a radical, difference-centered way—expresses a psychological need for being reinforced, with reference to or in opposition to an oppressing majority, creating its own institutions, forums, events, etc. While it might result in an isolated, “underground” being, it provides a safe space; separation indicates a need and a constraint at the same time. This bond strongly exists, since prohibiting and tabooing strongly exist, too. From a “primary,” psychological aspect, these spaces and ways of representation seem to be essential for self-strengthening.

The varied discourses on bisexuality are closely intertwined with the different arguments on the concept of identity in general. Conscious or subconscious standpoints about gender identities have their implications regarding the status of and the attitudes towards bisexuality, too. In one major system of ideas, bisexuality is approached in a framework where sexes, gender identities and sexual orientations are considered clear-cut and stable categories. In this framework, bisexuality may represent a disturbing phenomenon, but also another group that needs to be represented, included into sexual minorities. From a different point of view, however, it can be approached outside of this structure, used for subverting the very system of sex-/gender-based identities. The first group of opinions seems typical for a (semi)politicized LG community, while the second viewpoint is based more on post-structuralist theoretical grounds. I try to explore these major discourses that determine the sub-discourses on bisexuality and to raise the question of whether there are potential passages between them, connecting the theoretical outlines with some experiences I have had in the Hungarian LGBT community.

As for the situation of gays and lesbians in Hungary, they are generally in a *pre-identical*, partly in an identity-vindicating state. What most

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this text has been published in Ferens, Basiuk, and Sikora (2006).

LGBT-identified people have to face, is the difficulty of coming-out. This results either in a closeted existence, or an occasional immersion in a hidden and separated gay world. Organizing gay and lesbian communities, festivals, associations (without even including “bisexual” and “transgender” in their names) reinforces the sense of difference along the line of sexuality, while at the same time aims to break out of it.

Since it is the (op)position that creates a community, which is otherwise not homogenous at all, the different sub-identities, which stand outside the most direct interests—among them bisexuality—, are often put aside. These omitted groups may then create their own identity politics that claim to represent sub-identities with their special interests. It has appeared in Hungary too, mostly on the level of naming groups, festivals or publications. Its first steps were about including the term “lesbian.” The representation of bisexuality is less an issue. The gay magazine calls itself the only gay magazine in Hungary (while stressing that they are open for lesbians too; bisexuality is basically not thematized). After ten years, the Gay and Lesbian Film and Cultural Festival included “Bisexual” into its name. The biggest LGBT organization is called Háttér Support Society for LGBT People in English, but its Hungarian name is Háttér Society for Gays—although its subtitle states that it works for the equality of LGBT minorities, protecting human rights and providing human services.

Bisexuality is frequently considered a *pre-identity* state, merely a sexual practice without any other personal or political commitment. This approach to bisexuality is probably the major root for biphobia both among gays and straights. The stereotypes around bisexuals indicate a strong defense of the boundaries of identities and sexual orientations (Ochs 1996). The dichotomized conception of sexuality assumes everyone to be straight in a straight world, and everyone gay in a gay community, which maintains the almost total invisibility of bisexuals. In practical terms, bisexuals appear to be weakening the gay community and movement (Newitz and Sandell 1994). In this social and ideological milieu, it seems much more difficult to come out as bisexual, especially to reclaim a bisexual identity or history (Garber 1997). Often bisexuals themselves do not consider their bisexuality more than a sexual habit. But for many of them, facing the social expectations (in many ways different among straights and gays), the internalized fears of condemnation by the dominant society may cause a similar identity crisis to that which gays and lesbians often go through. It is not just the sexes, between which the shift takes place, but also between levels of acceptability and visibility.

I have done a “micro-study,” based on two Hungarian Internet forums discussing bisexuality.<sup>2</sup> It is remarkable that the discussion basically consists of arguments “pro” or “contra” bisexuality. The opinions are diverse, with some returning motives either from the “defending” or the “opposing” side. One major group of opinions associates bisexuality with sex-centrism, polygamy or promiscuity, emotional and sexual infidelity and irresponsibility. They take it as evident that bisexuality means parallel relationships with men and women.

I have a bad opinion about bis perhaps because I've had very negative experiences with them so far. Their sense of morals, in general, is scanty. The other thing is that bis are usually not reliable, they are much more easy-going in sex, too (Buccser, 24 September 2002, Lesbikus tér).

Bisexuality excludes fidelity from the beginning. If you have a woman, sooner or later some guy also appears in the picture, if you have a husband, male friend, lover, etc., then you need a woman on the side (Edo, 6 April 2002, Mi a baj a biszexekkel?).

Another, very typical train of thought, often within the same contributions, goes on by declaring that bisexuality does not exist at all. According to these views, this is just a transitional stage, an incapacity for making up one's mind on one side or the other: A temporary excuse, a “developing step” for compromisers or beginners, or a trendy excursion for straights, who may return to the shelter and social privileges of the straight world at any time. These speakers seem to know what bisexuals really are, regardless of self-definitions—either this or that, either straights or “stone-fags.” There are two options altogether, and one has to decide between them; there is a wall that one cannot just walk through this or that way. These remarks indicate a kind of “*compulsory homosexuality*” (cf. Rich 1996). Any connection with the opposite sex is thus seen as inconceivable.

Another thing is that I don't believe in bisexuality from the beginning. Bis think that they are bis since they have orgasm with women and pricks too, while it doesn't mean anything. And I can't imagine being in love with a woman and a man at once. It's rather some transitional stage (Buccser, 24 September 2002, Lesbikus tér).

According to my observations, when someone goes out with a boy and a girl, there is always some trick. Most of my bi acquaintances turned out to be “stone-fag” or they just tried the same-sex in the name of some sexual libertarianism (ada\_monroe, 25 September 2002, Lesbikus tér).

<sup>2</sup> I explored the forums Lesbikus tér (Lesbian space) and Mi a baj a biszexekkel? (What's the matter with bis?) between April and October 2002, proceeded on the site <www.pride.hu>. The forums are visited mostly by gays and lesbians.

By the way, in my modest opinion and [from my] (not few) experiences bisexuality doesn't exist. I would rather call it a middle stage in a developmental process that leads to homosexuality. When you can't tell, explain, admit either to yourself or to others what the hell you want. (Edo, 6 April 2002, Mi a baj a biszexekkel?).

Other remarks suggest that it is a more complex, emotionally saturated state that is, however, more difficult to grasp or represent than either straight or gay identity—which bisexuals themselves suffer from:

I think that you have the same problem with everything that is not concrete. I mean if you don't belong to either group, at least you are unable to classify yourself somewhere, then the community will not accept you either (Lil, 5 April 2002, Mi a baj a biszexekkel?).

So do I have to pursue a decision? Certainty? Declaration?—so that I can belong to a real group at last, and be reconciled (Newt, 23 November 2002, Mi a baj a biszexekkel?)?

Going beyond the pro and contra arguments, some participants of the forums try to get closer to the phenomenon; questions and uncertainties are soon raised about defining what bisexuality is, where it begins, whether it has grades, whether it is a sexual practice or a lifestyle. The incapacity and constraint of categorizing themselves along the lines of sexual orientation bring about great discomfort.

I try to find out from what point we can speak about bisexuality. Am I bisexual if I'm concerned about sex with a same-sex person? Or just in case of the acceptance of a same-sex partnership in everyday life (I'm not thinking about this at all, in fact it is repulsive to me) (Raki, 4 October 2002, Mi a baj a biszexekkel?).

One pivotal question regarding the nature of bisexuality is whether it indicates the bisexual person's need towards both sexes—or on the contrary: it represents his/her attraction to a certain character, whose sex is actually irrelevant. The former idea is related to an essentialist view of sexes, while the latter one might be seen as a kind of *queer* approach:

Have you heard about the idea that a female and a male self can be found in everyone? Thus, it may sound logical that we are looking for two people at once. Our female self is looking for the male one, and vice versa. Perhaps bisexuality can be better understood this way (WEGO, 11 April 2002, Mi a baj a biszexekkel?).

I think when you fall in love, then it's the other's being, mind, feelings, taste, humour that you love, and this has nothing to do with sex. Of course the body is also important, but since I'm not left cold by neither the female nor the male body, I think it's all the same whether whom I love is a boy or a girl. And then it's her/him who is there, and I don't need anyone else for sex (Iola, 24 September 2002, Mi a baj a biszexekkel?).

One of the participants links (mixes up?) the attitudes toward bisexuality with the issue of monogamy. S/he sees the main root of biphobia in the compulsory need to possess and at the same time classify others, and thinks the institution of monogamy itself precarious.

I think when people criticize bisexuality, they insist on thinking about a partnership in the framework of property relations. Bisexuality, in their view, can't be put in this framework. And for non-bisexuals you can figure out simplifying definitions, while for bis it's hard to find one attribute that would cover them properly. This is why it's not possible to talk about bisexual rights, while in the case of gay rights it seems possible (halacska, 8 April 2002, *Mi a baj a biszexekkel?*).

I made a quick and non-representative survey among LGBT activists,<sup>3</sup> including questions regarding the stability and relevance of the subjects' sexual orientation, the exactness of its categories, their personal attitudes to bisexuals, and their perception of the attitudes of others. The answers rather reflect upon the stereotypes, than display them. People perceive the difficult status, the stereotypical refusal or invisibility of bisexuality within the gay and lesbian community. They acknowledge that it is not an issue within the LG organizations either, while they have several bisexual members. I will return to some of these opinions later.

I also conducted in-depth interviews with a bisexual woman and a "latent heterosexual" man (using his own term).<sup>4</sup> My questions concerned their self-definition in terms of sexual orientation, its aspects and meanings, and its place and relevance in their broader scope of identities.

Both of them realized right at the beginning, how complex and relative self-definition is. My woman interviewee, Klári identifies herself as bisexual, but adds that she almost never declares it, only if she is "interrogated." Her formulation also depends on the social situation she is in. She calls herself bisexual especially speaking to her children. When she is in Labrisz,<sup>5</sup> she calls herself a lesbian. It is not just a question of adaptation, as she does have more, not exclusive identities, and it is her "lesbian self" indeed that Labrisz liberates and reinforces. On the other

<sup>3</sup> 10 activists of Háttér Support Society for LGBT People and Labrisz Lesbian Association answered a questionnaire with 10 open-ended questions in 2002.

<sup>4</sup> The interviews were conducted in 2005. I would call them "sexual life-course interviews" with questions built around the history of and the reflections on the interviewees' sexual identity. My purpose was to choose a man and a woman with complex experiences and/or ideas about bisexuality. Of course they do not represent any general opinions, however, their narratives may present some possible problems from a subjective point of view.

<sup>5</sup> Labrisz Lesbian Association—the first and so far the only lesbian organization in Hungary.



hand, however, there are also social and psychic inhibitions that make it more difficult for her to speak about her “lesbian self” for her children, and her “bisexual self” in the lesbian community.

I am bisexual. But I've been looking for that for a long time, and even now, I define myself only if it's unavoidable. I don't declare it very often. But when I declare it, there is a feeling that it mitigates homosexuality. For example in front of my children I call myself bisexual rather than homosexual. But in Labriz, in the lesbian community I like to call myself lesbian because I feel that they want to hear that, it's better if I belong to them. Also, as far as I feel, they are less interested in my heterosexual life and experiences, and they want to keep it away from themselves a little bit. All the discourses are about “those straights.” Because they want to strengthen their identity . . . , and my bisexual or heterosexual self weakens this community, and this is problematic for them to accept. . . . At the same time, there is a liberating power that I cannot experience anywhere else.

My male interviewee, István has gay relationships, but every now and then he has fantasies about women. His self-definition is also dependent on the circumstances, but his decision is more a political one.

This is not so simple. In most cases I say I am gay, in some cases I say I am bisexual. Sometimes I'm very much pissed off by biphobia, and then I say I am bisexual. For a long time I've thought of myself as clearly gay, and it came up 3–4 years ago that I might have something to do with women. But I am a bisexual grown into the gay culture.

His orientation has social, cultural and political aspects as well, over sexuality. It has effects on his circle of friends, his readings and his activist work, with its identification-conflicts:

I've had problems with the Gay and Lesbian Festival for a long time, because bisexual was not included in its name. I declared for example that I wouldn't translate films for free until this changes. And this year it was included, so I very much praised the organizers for that.

For Klári, the need for self-definition appeared in the particular moment when after ten years of marriage, she had a lesbian relationship, and the relationship finished. Then she felt she had to find a stable direction, to take a side, to decide which way to go further. (She went towards lesbian ways.) But now she does not feel her sexual orientation a prominent part of her identity or personality. Although bisexuality has been an enriching experience, it has not fundamentally influenced her human values.



I thought I had to decide whether I'm straight or gay, and where to go then. . . . I thought that would help, would give me some safety. And then I went to Labrizz, where I saw a couple of identities and women. So after a while I thought I didn't necessarily have to define myself. This is more important for the society than for me. . . . It doesn't contribute to my human qualities, everything else might contribute more—how I think about poor people, about my job, how I manage my partnerships, my marriage, how I rear my kids, how I can or cannot separate from someone. . . . But the mere fact that my spectrum is wider, that is enriching, I've experienced more, I can understand more situations.

Being a bisexual does not refer only to her actual state, but includes her past, her life-history, and the potentialities of the future, too.

If I wanted to establish proportions, I would say that it's 80/20 or 90/10 to the the lesbian side. So I've been longing for women more, I've had more relationships with women. But I don't want to exclude from my life anything, which is in there, I don't want to deny anything, which was in there, and which was good, so I don't want to deny anything, neither the past, nor the future. And I don't want to fix anything.

Independence and non-possession are highly important values for her in a relationship. Partly this is why she hasn't had any long-term lesbian relationship so far; she has no primary need for close and forever-committing bonds at all. Her openness, mobility, her independent and pleasure-seeking personality might stem from the fact that bisexual attraction has always been a source of pleasure rather than of crisis for her.

One of my interview questions was related to the classic problem regarding bisexuality: whether it is something special and different that they find in women versus men, or whether they are attracted to certain persons, attributes regardless of their sexes. The difference between the sexes appears not just in the quality or the extent of sexual attraction felt towards them, but also in the level of consciousness and social expectations related to this attraction. We can see this especially in Klári's case, but István also suggests that his attraction towards men is not primarily a question of biology. Quoting Klári:

There was more consciousness in my straight relationships. . . . A woman is more familiar, my job is easier, since I know how she works, I can get close to her more easily, I can provide her something that a man can't. This means pleasure and a sense of achievement for me. The exciting thing in a man is just his strangeness, that he works differently, that I have to learn he is different. . . . It's probably also a question of conscience, for example when I had parallel relationships, I reassured myself that it was not a betrayal, since it was a different thing. This is a self-deception of course, as this is not so different, just one is better than the other, and I choose the better one. The commitment is different, but my emotional energies are taken up with only one. At the



same time, if I had to choose in that situation, I would have opted for my kids, even if I was in love.

As for István, it is more a “type” of a person that he finds attractive, bodily and intellectually—and he finds this figure more frequently in men.

I think I'm looking for the same in men and women, bodily as well. . . . But accidentally—or not accidentally, but for cultural or biological or whatever reasons—I find it more in men.

He does not feel comfortable with the term “bisexual,” since it stresses the role of sexes, which are not necessarily the major factors of attractions. He also problematizes bisexual identity as the possible basis of a community or a political movement.

I also think that bisexuality is an amazingly paradoxical label. It specifies the least important thing: sexes. . . . I think it paradoxical to be organized on that basis, but once definitions occur along this line, it might be necessary. And also because of biphobia. . . . Clearly, if one doesn't have such a “we” identity, then it's more difficult to do a mass movement.

He prefers to use the term “latent heterosexual” to designate his own sexual identity. He uses this formulation in order to express his authentic feelings, but also to provoke people to reflect upon the categorization and “natural identities” themselves.

I also say sometimes that I'm a latent heterosexual. And I think this completely seriously. I live a gay life, but I have this interest in women, which is latent, and latent heterosexuality describes it very well. On the other hand, this is a paradoxical label that is suitable for challenge, people are forced to think, to ask back, then I start to explain, and these explanations may loosen these categories.

The latter ideas may lead us over to the ground of (de)constructivist theories of sexual identity. This theoretical standpoint—that may have consequences for possible political actions, too—, taking its roots primarily from Judith Butler's works (e.g. Butler 1990, 1991, 1993) suggests that identity-based politics, instead of superseding marginalization, actually works for reinforcing it. Postulating a repressed and homogenized identity that should be discovered, acknowledged and represented, may resolve some obvious inequities, but while doing that, conceals other fundamental questions. By claiming an independent identity, we can reverse or struggle with an oppressive gaze, but we cannot back out of it and





replace our muted or distorted identities with a real and authentic one. Fixing an autonomous identity always presumes a fixation of the “interpellating Other” (Althusser 1984), a “respond to a request” (Butler 1993, 13). Paradoxically: the moment of subjection necessarily implies oppression.

A typical symptom of a two-folded discourse that reduces and at the same time reinforces the marginal status of sexual minorities, is the popular habit of asking “experts” about the issue of “homosexuality.” A well-known psychologist in Hungary has recently been asked about the possible effects of the education program of Labrisz Lesbian Association:<sup>6</sup> “What is the standpoint of science in connection with [homosexuality and education]?” The expert commented on the program in a basically supportive and liberal way; his rhetoric, however, is deeply typical of the relation to sexual “otherness”: “Informing the youth about sexuality [sic], including the knowledge on homosexuality, is very important . . . Homosexuality is an attribute we are born with, and in no way can it be changed during the life-course. So there is no danger for the mis-education of children in this field” (Ranschburg 2002, 10). The psychologist’s words suggest that “homosexuality” is an inborn thing, which can be defined and described in opposition to the norm. There is something that is “responsible” for this alteration, and that is why they are different from “us,” obviously including me, the expert. The expert’s opinion also suggests a polarization of the world for straights and gays; but it is straights who make the division, putting gays into a controllable category of “minority.” On the other hand, while (or since) identity is produced from difference, it also carries multiple differences in itself. Differences and contradictions are emerging not just between identities, but also *within* them (Fuss 1989). Since the *relation* between the self and the prevailing “Other” is multiple, identity cannot be grasped and fixed either; it slips out of our hands. When we try to make it fixed and unified, we ignore a couple of further differences. Not because individual experiences are so diverse and so individual, but rather because the self-other relation, the constructedness is so multiple. It is the politics of this constructedness that is really interesting—the process, in which representation and identity mutually and continuously reflect and produce each other.

Gender identities and sexual orientations represent a field where this contingency and constructedness are very easy to ignore. Naturalizing mechanisms and social interests that strive to essentialize the role of

<sup>6</sup> In the scope of the program—that has been going on since 2000—Labrisz organizes discussions with high school students and prospective teachers about LGBT people and related issues.

sexes or erotic attractions, and to make them coinciding elements, work strongly from all sides. This approach does not reckon with the complex ways of sexual bondings that cannot be expressed in the prevailing categories. “There are no direct expressive or causal lines between sex, gender, gender presentation, sexual practice, fantasy and sexuality” (Butler 1993, 25). This makes categorization impossible and unnecessary, stating that the different subject positions should not be multiplied, but need to be destroyed, subverted. Instead of a “strategic essentialism,” we should choose a strategic provisionality. It does not necessarily lead to the depolitization of LGBT efforts, but rather points out that identity-based politics could (should?) be followed by politics of identity-disruption. To consciously show the constructedness and (compulsory) performativity might be a starting point for an opposing strategy. As Jane Gallop puts it: “Identity must be continually assumed and immediately called into question” (Gallop 1982, xii). Or quoting another remark that depicts the necessity and fluidity of identity from the other side: “There must be a sense of identity, even though it would be fictitious” (Marks 1984, 110). Referring to Butler’s vocabulary, gender is a performance, an imitation which has no original version. Taking the example of the Aretha Franklin song “You make me feel like a natural woman . . .”, Butler is captivated by the idea that this “you” has endless possible versions: “What if she were singing it to a drag queen, whose performance somehow confirmed her own” (Butler 1993, 27–28)?

If identity itself is not identical and stable, but a contingent, unclear and temporary field, then instead of being a firm base, it might become a destabilizing force. After a certain point difficulties may emerge in deciding on what basis, in the name of whom and for whom we want to speak. This argument frequently comes up in implicit or explicit ways within the “community” while organizing a social event, editing a book or giving any public manifestation.

The complicated issue of representation has been raised in connection with a Hungarian commercial TV-program. In one of the reality shows, a gay man and a lesbian woman had been selected, and then voted into the show by the audience. The characters received rather mixed reactions from the viewers and the media. But there are big debates also within the gay community, basically on the question of whether these people should represent “us,” whether they are the good ones and this is the good way for the “proper” representation. Some state that this kind of mission cannot be expected from them, while others say that they are doing it anyway, whether it is their intention or not, at least in the eyes of the millions who watch them. Apart from the inevitably biased media

selection procedure of choosing characters who strongly reflect the general stereotypes, it is equally problematic to decide from “inside,” who can represent “us” and how to show what we are “really” like. It is probably only a diversity of representations that could equilibrate the biases or constraints.

To specify the question to bisexuality: its contingent and precarious—personal, political and theoretical—status often seems threatening not just for the movement, but also for the conception of fixed and exclusive sexual identities. However, it might be more productive to consider it a potentiality that may help to challenge the very dichotomies of sexual orientations and the prominent role of sexes in erotic attraction (Esterberg 1997; Jagose 1996). From this point of view, the “mission” is not to justify that bisexuality is more than just a stage, but to show that identity in general is “just a stage,” in every sense.

For some people—as we could see that in István’s case—, naming themselves bisexual is more a political statement than a sexual practice (as for others, or at other occasions naming themselves gay or lesbian might be the same), through which they can designate the potentiality and contingency of sexual orientations and practices themselves. This is close to a certain *post-identical*, queer state that imagines sexuality in much more complex ways, along much more diverse axes than sex or sexual orientation. This is a less typical attitude among LGBT people in Hungary, whether politically active or not. Among the activists who filled in my questionnaire with open-ended questions, there were only two people (two lesbians) who represented an attitude of this kind. One of them—answering the question “To what extent do you feel the category of your sexual orientation a stable, exact and relevant one?” – wrote the following:

I don't think that identity necessarily reflects sexual practice. I can imagine being attracted to a man, but for this I won't define myself as bi- or heterosexual.

This answer suggests that sexual orientation might have parts that look over the sex of the actual partner. Another answer to the same question specifies some cases when the person consciously chooses the category she identifies with. It seems to be at least as much a political gesture as a personal one:

I'm a lesbian, but in some moments, when I'm pissed off by biphobia, I call myself bisexual. I'm not attracted to men though, and usually it's easier to essentialize [my lesbian sexual identity]. It's not very subtle, as in many ways I don't have much in common with a couple of lesbians. But for the outside world this is a relevant category. There



are moments when you cannot specify too much—e.g. speaking with a homophobic creature or a rushing politician.

Her answer on another question, regarding the definition of bisexuality, reflects upon the potential and vague character of it:

Bisexuality may refer to someone who can feel attracted to any gender. But it's difficult to define, as there may be people like that, who still don't call themselves bisexual. There is a kind of future-potential in it as far as I feel. That is, I think someone bisexual if s/he says that s/he can be attracted to any gender at present, or s/he thinks that it will be possible in the future.

Some years ago, a couple of people in Hungary founded the Group of Genderless People (NINCS). Its ideology basically coincides with a radical Butlerian standpoint, denying biological states as the bases of gender roles and sexual orientations:

It is a mistake to think that one is attracted to some (of the) sexes. There are a lot of attributes of the other among which anatomic sex is only one. When we are in love, we are usually not tied to the genital of the other, but to the whole person. Therefore it is a false idea to consider someone hetero/homo/bi/a/poly, etc. -sexual. The term of "sexual orientation" is compelled into our mind in order to fix, observe, manipulate and exploit our personality.

. . . The real challenge for "normality," i.e. heterosexual dictatorship, is so-called bisexuality. There is a great helplessness regarding its status, from the part of those affected, "normal people" and "homosexuals" too. Who is the bisexual? A "normal person" who is winding down a bit and wants to have fun? Or a gay who partly submits to the norms? . . . The best would be if gays did not practice their sexuality as gays. If we had no word for that, if it was not an issue at all. Gay liberation is harmful in this sense, as it reinforces this self-consciousness. It is not the gays who need to be liberated, because then they always remain the group that can be oppressed in different ways (Juhász and Kuszing 1996).

Gay discourse, according to the NINCS-activists, reinforces the scale between two extremes, homo- and heterosexuality. It does not assume that people may interpret their sexuality *regardless* of the sex of their partner. They recognize it as a success that we can choose between homo-, hetero- and bisexuality, but at the same time protest against the obligation of choice:

Say that someone is attracted to fat people. S/he is looking for her pregnant mother in every partner, together with the power and safety that the mother used to provide. Therefore s/he falls in love and has sex with fat men, because their social roles and appearance represent the attributes s/he is looking for. One day s/he meets a lesbian



woman who is strong, protective—and fat. Falls in love with her. Can we say that this person is either hetero- or homosexual? Does the term “bisexual” tell anything significant about his/her sexuality (Kuszing 1997)?

The group in its original form does not exist any more, and their work has not really influenced mainstream LGBT activism. NINCS did not have a real scope of social or political activities, and the queer conception swallowed the marginalized sexual identities that still needed to be represented and acknowledged. Since then, another association, Habeas Corpus Working Group has been established by more or less the same people. The organization, taking into account the prevailing gender system, is doing wide-ranging work for discriminated LGBT-s, as well as abused women and children.

Finally, I quote from one of the NINCS-leaflets, construction that by repeating and exaggerating the most typical stereotypes, shows the absurdity of the “how one became sexual” kind of questions. The text, entitled *John Smith: A Bisexual*, is a fictive autobiography, an identity-fiction that exposes the fictitious nature of identity through a parody-like narrative built around the protagonist’s sexual behaviour:

I was born on 10 May 1973. My mother loved me very much, she always warned me against dangerous things, wouldn’t let me climb a tree, and told me not to play soccer, because it is rude, and this is why I became a bisexual. I say I’m bisexual because I don’t dare to admit that I’m actually homosexual. For there are no bisexuals, I think; people are attracted either to men or women” (Kuszing 1998).

The inconsistent and controversial mixture of arguments is going on the same way, providing a tool for rewriting and revealing the arbitrary rhetoric on the process of gender identification.

It is a question whether the two viewpoints—to put it simply: identity politics and the politics of identity subversion—may have intersections. Identity politics is probably “just a stage,” too, and probably an inevitable one. The struggle for the liberation of identities might be followed by a struggle for the liberation *from* identities. If discrimination is not a problem any more, then the need for a declared identity and a safe sub-culture will decrease, too. This does not necessarily involve a total assimilation and depolitization, but perhaps makes a more mature identity politics possible, taking into account the needs and necessities as well as the casual and constructed “nature” of identities—including bisexuality.

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