

THE HOMOSEXUAL MATRIX

by, C. A. Tripp

C.A. Tripp's THE HOMOSEXUAL MATRIX suffers from a sneer-face liberalism, all too familiar in the realm of literature on homosexuality. The liberalism, as well as the analysis, stops at the surface of homosexual behavior. While expounding enlightened attitudes toward sexual variation (some, not all), he fails to probe deeply either the underpinning of those variations of the social opprobrium they have elicited. The result is that Tripp upholds, perhaps unconsciously, dominant social mores and conservative myths.

According to Tripp, if we are limited in our ability to love someone and to enjoy sex simultaneously without sacrificing either, we are almost incapable of experiencing sexual or amorous feelings for both sexes equally. Unless, of course, (here Tripp elaborates sexual class fantasy surfaces) one is a lower class male (LCM) who is willing to "stick it in anywhere." Tripp mentions so often the LCM's habit of laying back and letting the middle class queer fellate him, that it is embarrassingly like sneaking a peek into Tripp's masturbatory diary. Perhaps Tripp is correct when he assesses American sexual alternatives as a "fork in the road," which inhibits the potential for reconciling bisexuality. However, he does not attempt to understand the origins or repercussions of these limited options, accepting and explaining "what is" by his hazy theory of "elaborately evolved sexual value system."

Tripp relies heavily on biology and anthropology. This is one of the rewarding aspects of the book -- finding out what other cultures and species do about the "Big H." It is loaded with ammunition for those who argue that homosexuality is unnatural. But in drawing parallels between species and stressing the biological side of man, he reduces the human being to an animal with a highly developed cerebral cortex, and which differentiates man from other species. Perhaps Tripp's background as a sex researcher explains the concentration on behavioral aspects of homosexuality: a third of the book deals with inversion, the "psychology" of effeminacy (from a male-chauvinist bias); a rather silly (although academically elaborate) differentiation between Nelly, Swish, Blase, and Camp; and sexual techniques.

Even the section on the Politics of Homosexuality ignores its political and social ramifications. Discussion is limited to the risks and trials of high-ranking homosexuals, or the success and adaptability on the upper echelons of diplomacy. It would seem, given the intent of the book "to draw a picture not only of homosexuality but a social matrix," that there

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