Let me, at the very outset, state my little metaphorical apology of homosexuality in Bulgaria, and if you still haven’t grown sick and tired of it by that time, read on. Pell-mell, in a mannered way, without a thesis – call it what you will, just let me write; before you know it, I may arrive to the “discourse”...

**The Binary Code: What Is It?**

In order to explain: the zeroes and ones (male-female?) are replaced by the bizarre Pythagorean union of numbers in that sublime moment-date-event: o-2. Not just 02, but 02.02 as well. Come to think of it, the date is not much of a date at all, just like us. Only that it’s not quite clear what this couple wants here: probably that is why homosexuals should be sexually integrated. This couple here surely isn’t just a metaphor, but a kind of a quaint deviation – double in both day and date at that – from the matrimonial union between 0 and 1: the domestic and global future of the world, so to speak. Come on, we’re not going to computerize homosexuality, are

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*The present text is dedicated to a peculiar phenomenon connected with homosexuality in Bulgaria - the date 2nd*
Lesbians and Paedras(t)s (the “t” is optional)

According to me, the matrimonial union between the media and homosexuality appeared in Bulgaria somewhere about the time when the first enormous cocks, spray-painted onto public buildings, started to appear for the first time, with the inscriptions “COCK” just next to them strangely signifying and doubling them (it was highly ingenious). The belated sexual revolution dispersed, fortunately perhaps, in the collective subconscious and stayed there. The ‘collective will’ of homosexuals did not become emancipated, for one reason or another. That is not the case, however, with the media, who, in one way or another, have an interest in homosexuality and care for the people.

February (02.02), which is accepted unofficially as a holiday of homosexual people. In folk art and folklore studies this date is officially celebrated as a holiday of male children and men. In the years of socialism this date gradually turned into an urban folklore phenomenon, connected with homosexuality.

The word “paederast” is common slang in everyday language used not just to refer to someone’s homosexuality, but generally expresses the negative attitude towards someone’s appearance. Surely, it’s a possible Bulgarian analogue for “queer,” it is only that it could refer to male homosexuality. Also, “paederast” is the kind of words being overused in everyday language with or without reason. On the other hand, phonetically, it is totally misused in that it could be often spelled as: “pidiras,” “pediras,” “peeras,” “piraas.”
The Discock?***

Sometimes, our favorite things are such simply because we never have them at our disposal; sometimes, when we do have them at our disposal, we do not want them because we want not to want them. This is a straightforward life aporia (first in number and for life), in whose insolubility the ethereal feeling of the absence of yourself, or of that which you “need”, starts off ever new, endless saps of life. This is the case with the media discourse (if there is any media discourse or if it can be named at all for that matter: no Lacan, if you please) on homosexuality in Bulgaria. This “discourse” (I feel uneasy about the word, I blush at its “course”) has several important characteristic features, and, so as not to leave you bewildered, I will present to your attention an example of this “discourse” and this “homosexuality”. In order to present my thesis, I’m not going to begin monitoring the media because there will surely be someone to tell me that someone has to begin monitoring of monitoring. I will present a brief chronology of a TV talk show and of the way in which homosexuality is advertised, and at the same time is derided and subverted.

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Discock – a possible and intriguing trans-linguistic compromise in-between the Bulgarian spelling of the word “dis-course” – “dis-kurs”, where “diskurs” is consisted of the prefix “dis”, the word “kurs” (“course”) and a “s”, “kur” meaning “cock” - a typical Balkan masculinist signifier. “Discock” is the kind of phonetic creatures that I wouldn’t use below; rather, I’d just add that a more radical translation of such an impossible linguistic game is to translate discock back into Bulgarian, and the literal result is somewhat para-linguistic: “the word” “razkur”.

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Разкурот?***

Понекогаш, нашните омилени нешта се такви само за- тоа што никогаш не ни се на располагање; понекогаш, кога ни се на располагање, не ги посакуваме затоа што сакаме да не ги сакаме. Ова е конкретна животна апорија (прва по број и за живот) во чија нерешливост нестварното чувство на отсушто на тебе самиот или на она што ти „треба“ го придивижува секое ново, непрестајно слабење на животот. Ова е случајот со дискурсот на медиумите (доколку воопшто постои дискурс на медиумите или доколку воопшто може да се нарече некако: без мешање на Лакан, Ве молам) за хомосексуалноста во Бугарија. Овој дискурс (незгодно ми пана од зборот, црвенeam од неговиот, „курс“) има неколку значајни карактеристични црти и, за да не останете зачудени, ќе ви изнесам пример за овој „дискурс“ и за оваа „хомосексуалност“. За да ја презентирам својата теза тука нема да направам мониторинг на медиумите, затоа што сигурно некој ќе се најде кој ќе ми каже дека некој мора да изврши мониторинг на мојот мониторинг. Ја изложам куса хронологија на едно телевизиско ток шоу (talk show) и за начинот на кој се рекламира хомосексуалноста, а истовремено и се исева и подрива.

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The responsible representation of homosexuality — a seemingly politically impossible representation — with public stress on analyzing, constructing or deconstructing, is an aporetic situation similar to the abovementioned one. The case of homosexuality in the media is firstly a problem of it being declared (or rather, the declaration of its non-declaration — coming out?). In brief, the summarisation of the discourse on homosexuality would sound like the following: the method of exclusion in the media is in actuality applied as inclusion of the homosexual people in the TV talk show, in which the leading part is played usually by the TV programme itself, sometimes even by the host, and if we are altogether lucky, by a representative of the species ‘homosexual’. The exemplary discourse that I’m going to present is dedicated here to the Sblusak [Clash] talk show, shown every Sunday morning on the national BTV station.

This text was meant to be something like a case study but is not, because firstly, this would prove to be immense, and secondly, in the beginning it becomes clear that things always look as if there is nothing to be studied. Which is precisely the most splendid thing that could happen to a media: to have something, which is not there, but which everybody is able to identify. Let us now include the subjects of this talk show. Because the homosexual, it seems to me, has always disappeared in between.

Sblusak: The Clash of the Deaf-and-dumb

I will quickly try to look at what this whole hullabaloo is all about without going into detail.
(a) The question “why” does not stand, because, at first glance, it seems that nobody knows anything.

(b) Sblusak is a show that does not exist.

Because at ten o’clock on Sunday, men, with still numb cocks for breakfast, and women, with a still lower-than-usual blood pressure, are only now waking and getting up. Sblusak does exist in the spatial-temporal continuum, but it does not in the one of the consciousness – I really do not think that anybody takes this show seriously, even its authors. The debility of the media has been selling ever better lately. This is precisely the trick/method: that, as long as you are not taken seriously, you can exercise considerable influence (a volitional or a marketing one), and you can fill up the probably least appropriate time (this is prime time tending to minus infinity) with the possibly most appropriate and topical subjects from the week that has almost elapsed. Because, you see, during the week everybody has chewed over everything, so let’s swallow all these subjects on Sunday morning and let’s shit them out (no Freud, if you please). And this is precisely what happens. All week the media bear, in earnest or not so, the thing which could be called “journalism” with justification and earnestness, and on Sunday morning the merry widow(er)s of the national air Ivan and Andrej deliver or, usually, abort it. Anything else on “existing”?

(c) Sblusak is not a political transmission. Not because of anything else, but because it is not even a “transmission.” It is only transmitted: the principle of its happening is of the type “the dogs bark but the caravan goes on”. It simply is not. It is not a political transmission not because of anything else, but because of the fact that even politicians participate in it. The daily, Sunday-morn-

(а) Прашањето „зошто“ не функционира затоа што, на прв поглед, се чини како никој да не знае ништо.

(б) Сблусак е шоу кој што не јоштои.
ing politician, public figure, activist and the like are of course an excellent alternative for the Sunday-morning rest. The political contradiction of Sblusak lies in the fact that it succeeds in working its way to politicians and socially active individuals and to politics, in the narrowest and broadest sense of the word at the same time, without engaging in politics. The hosts of the show, Ivan and Andrei, play the role of the aggregate postmodern Socrates, whose irony is reduced to a nail in the coffin of every dead man even if he is alive.

Chronology of the Great Guzzling

1.1. (2002)

First Sblusak broadcast, connected with homosexuality.

Topic: “Is homosexuality a perversion?”

Guests:
Us: Desislava Petrova-Soldier (then president of Bulgarian Gay Organisation Gemini) and your humble servant, I (then spokesman of Gemini);
Them: Garo (D2) and Svetlyo (Hipodil).3

Result: A total failure on both sides. On one side: naivety and passiveness, and on the other: uncontainable masculinity. Society is facing the prospect of homosexuality being ‘on-the-up. We like you, but don’t advertise yourselves and don’t create a gay culture, because you are contagious. Thesis (sic!): no baby is born a faggot.

Since the show was a total flop as far as conception, topic, result, clash, scandal, rating, melee and the like go, the
1.2.

Секако, следната недела учесниците ги бранеа своите позиции со невидена хомо-стрст.

Тема: иста.

Гости:

Ние: Ицо Петров (музичар и менаџер) и Калојан-Дива (занимање – травестит);

Тие: извесен новинар на чие име не можам да се сетам и некој друг, на којшто воопшто не можам да се сетам.

Исход: безмалку вистинска тепачка и кавга во студиот.

(a) Ицо Петров за малку успеа да се одбрани себе си (со тоа не мислам на одбрана на теза).

(b) Травеститот Дива рече дека за три месеци кој било маж може да го претвори во геј.

(c) Безимениот новинар изјави дека педерите се болни и дека ги изложуваат луѓето на здравствен ризик.

(d) Другиот учесник рече дека има геј лоби и геј мафија во Собранието, во сфериот од значење за јавноста, и дека сиот наш јавен живот го контролираат манипулативни педери-пивони, кои манипулираат други политичари, кои пак од нивна страна ги ебат, и како сето ова ја загрозува националната безбедност на државата.

(e) По завршувањето на шоуто имаше и задкулиско нурнување: претставници на Бугарската Национална Алијанса чекаа во заседа за да ги претепаат нашите дечки (лезбејките). Морааше да ги изнесат низ задниот влез на зградата на БТВ во придружба на канцелариските редари. Метафора, а?

hosts declared that they were going to pursue the topic next week as well. The customary division into winners and losers did not happen.

1.2.

Sure enough, with what homo-passion the participants held their own field next week.

Topic: the same.

Guests:

Us: Itso Petroff (musician and manager) and Kaloyan-Diva (occupation – transvestite);

Them: a certain journalist, whose name I do not recall, and someone else, whom I do not recall at all.

Result: almost real fighting and a brawl in the studio.

(a) Itso Petroff almost succeeded in defending himself (by that I do not mean defending a thesis).

(b) The transvestite Diva said that in three months s/he could make a gay out of any man.

(c) The nameless journalist said that faggots are sick and that they put people’s health at risk.

(d) The other participant said that there were a gay lobby and a gay mafia in the Parliament, in all publicly important spheres, and that our whole public life was controlled by manipulative faggots-pawns, who manipulated other politicians, who in their turn screwed them, and how all this imperiled the national security of the state.

(e) After the end of the show there was backstage diving as well: representatives of the Bulgarian National Alliance lay in ambush for our guys (the lesbians) in order to thrash them. It was necessary to take them out by the back entrance of BTV’s building with the help of the office security guards. A metaphor, eh?

Some two years later.

**Topic:** “Is it an advantage to be gay in Bulgaria?”

**Guests:**

*We:* Stefan Markov (IT specialist) and Lyubomir Milchev (writer-dandy);

*They:* again a journalist, whose name I once again do not recall, and DJ Radi (from the techno movement Metropolis).

**Result:**

(a) Stefan Markov kept on insisting that it is neither easy, nor difficult to be gay in Bulgaria. (Amorphous stands sell with difficulty).

(b) Lyubomir Milchev, thoroughly in the fashion of Oscar Wilde, kept on muttering to himself: “bah, what are we talking about; why did I come here in the first place; this thing here is a bi-i-i-ig piece of porn and that’s all there is; what else do you want from us.”

(c) The opponent, i.e. the journalist without a name, maintained the same old thesis about the manipulative character of the homosexual politician-faggot, and said that gay lobbies and the gay mafia imperiled the national security of the state.

(d) DJ Radi maintained the same thesis that it was easy to be a faggot/a gay in Bulgaria and, of course, particularly so in the music business and the show business circles, and both he and the nameless journalist were all but left discriminated.

2.2. (2004)

Nearly a year later.

**Topic:** “Is there any reason why gays should be rejected by society?” (see note 2)

**Guests:**

Stanimir Panayotov  The Binary Code: Notes on the Celebrating of Homosexuality
Nie: Ivelin Jordanov⁴ (from the Queer Bulgaria Foundation) and Atanas Lozanov (Union of Young Journalists).

Tie: Iliya Iliev (journalist and doctor) and Stanimir Kacheshmarov (medical student).

Ishod: once more a wrongly phrased question; once more the thesis was maintained that homosexuality is a disease by reason of the view that non-productive sexuality is not a sexuality; once more it was said that homosexuality is the ruin of civilization. “We” managed to demonstrate that good self-control and cultivated demeanor are not a question of being homosexual but of rudimentary breeding. And that’s all there is to it.

2.2.2.

And so, notwithstanding the somehow happening sexual revolution and emancipation, why does the media representation, serious or derisive, of homosexuality and its problems (whereby the subjects of homosexuality itself are probably recognized) happen in the style of this ritualized, self-ruining debate⁵? Is it that there is no serious journalism or is it that there haven’t been chosen any serious representatives of the homosexual community (if there is such a community)⁶? Or is it both? Why is it that people think of us on 2nd February only, and of lesbians when they watch porn (heterosexual one)?

X(y/o)mor

It is clear to everybody that, for the time being, any debate on minorities is a political and pro-European show of realizing European minority identities-tolerant directives: our legislation, it seems, is homosexualised.⁷ The
big (dementia) paranoia that I wanted to illustrate has its roots in the continuity of something that will together favor everybody: the European Union, Mother Bulgaria herself, and faggots, who will even no longer be subject to punitive measures; and the favoring of the latter seems to be something that should not favor them in practice but in theory only, i.e. another of those non-functioning directives. On the other hand, in reality, so far no serious public dialogue on homosexuality has taken place. That, of course, is due to both sides – the representatives of the community and the lack of serious attitude on the part of journalists. But this is also due to the stereotypes of the effeminate pansy and the mannish lesbian, which are still employed by everybody (society, the media and homosexual people). There must not be any claims to the appearance of a political “We” and its subjects. Yet the representation is strange, because these categories and ideas, irrespective of the extent to which they exist (in)visibly in society, persist in circulating as representative/real models in both h(u/o)mourous and serious perspective.

I maintain that, for various reasons, and regardless of whether I agree or not, or whether I’m happy about this or not, these models and stereotypes of homosexuality have already visibly disappeared and are disappearing. This isn’t at all important when what is involved is the substantialization of something that does not exist. Without particularly insisting on reality, I will say a few words about veracity, about what works or what doesn’t, in practice, in these models of the homosexual species (without a pedigree).

It is already only rarely that you can see walking the streets what is presented to you on TV as an image of what walks the streets. The image of homosexuality that...
is presented in the media is a copy solely of itself. It is above all things an image of the image, i.e. an image of itself, and it does not have a counterpart in reality – not, however, as the reality of the real, but as the veracity of that real. At least not in the way this is intended to be presented (on the TV screen in particular). This image is a parody of itself since, having been taken after all from reality, it remains on the TV screen without being discovered at the place from which it was inspired. The simulacrum is complete, as is the discourse, but reality is not. Irrespective of whether we talk of “a predominant portion of the population” or of “a minority in the minority,” irrespective of what someone likes, nobody wants to see effeminate men or manly women any more. In a word, it seems that the production of discrimination, from within or from without, cannot be checked. It is a social (and not a biological) destiny, both in the feminine and in the muscular. This discourse on homosexuality has increasingly been receiving lately what it does not want: a hard, big and real cock in the form of the self-as-simulating brawny body (and not image) of the homosexual-man. (The last is not an oxymoron).

The media discourse on homosexuality (a) does not dispose of what it works with and what it makes fun of; (b) however, it rarely disposes of the thing it wants to help, in those rare cases; (c) it is paranoid and self-maddening, because it takes itself for a doctor, from precisely whom the paranoia, which s/he tries to instil in his/her non-existent object, derives; (d) and, in the final analysis, it is a psychoanalytical misunderstanding which carries on an odd mono-logic dialogue with something that does not exist and which, accordingly, often cannot speak. The latter is what is also held responsible: that one has to take responsibility for one’s own irresponsibility...
My thesis is that the public representation of homosexuality in Bulgaria is still in the phase of the sexual use of one’s anal orifice for private ends. What is taken as an ineffective surrogate of the sexual object of this anal orifice is what can least help—homosexuality, which is absent in the representation of the represented. That is, the public reflection of the discourse on homosexuality takes place without the special case of the latter, but in the partial drive of the former, i.e. of the discourse.

By way of example, Sblusak is not a show that is a problem of the homosexual viewers, but is a problem of its viewers, among whom there are homosexual people as well. The subliminal and collective political stake is an innovative weapon for shaping public opinion, while the latter does not by any means serve as a weapon. Sblusak is the absolute maximum of Bulgarian critical publicity. They know who and to what extent someone is an (un)representative figure, who and to what extent someone can be charged with responsibility and a corresponding feeling of being of importance (i.e. the syndrome “I’m gonna be on television”). But they do not know that they are the metaphor. The principle of providing space for a debate on homosexuality (and its normalisation) turns into a method of eliminating the subject of the debate. Sure enough, the politically ravishing theatre functions perfectly: all the hosts of Sblusak do all the time is to toss every now and then an occasional bone to be thoroughly chewed over (Proof Reader’s Note: Was it the author’s intention to have a double entendre here? I doubt it – perhaps a revision of the sentence should be considered) if it hasn’t already been thrown on the ring (and which is all the same a part of the scenario), while all the rest...
of the job is usually done by the participants themselves who normally either shit themselves or have simply not yet reached the phase of the infantile pre-genital organization – and that is why they shit themselves.

Therefore, the Sblusak show is a problem of its viewers to begin with. The folklore scholar would say, “The affair of the drowning is in the hands of those drowning themselves.” These hands, however, are unusable, bound, or simply unhygienic. Parallel with this, however, the affair is in the mouths of those, who provide the sea for the purpose of drowning as well. The instruments of this ‘critical publicity’ include (a) to confront in a Hegelian fashion the mutually exhausting stands: participants as if deaf-and-dumb to each-other; and (b) exercises in vestibule rhetoric, which makes use in a covert or overt manner of scientific means and means of demonstration of the kind of social Darwinism and sociobiology.

Best regards from Doctor Mengele.

Translated from Bularian by Petar Hadjidochev

Notes:
1. “Think of me as of fire” – a popular phrase from the 1980s, pronounced by Lyudmila Zhivkova, daughter of communist leader Todor Zhivkov and minister of culture at the time.
2. In the course of 2004, the talk show “Sblusak” organised three shows dealing with homosexuality. Needless to say, the wording of the topic in the form of a question placed the representatives of LGBT at a disadvantage in each of the cases – a TV example proving in itself the untenability of any attempt at proving “equal footing.”
3. Popular Bulgarian bands.

4. In November 2004, this member of the Queer Bulgaria Foundation and of the Bulgarian Socialist Party made a coming out in an interview for a medium, which produced a media sensation. In actual fact, Yordanov is the first Bulgarian politician to openly declare his sexual orientation and to declare a political commitment to the LGBT community. Yet, commitment is as insufficient as homosexual desire itself.


7. The Protection from Discrimination Act has been operative in Bulgaria since January 1st, 2004.

8. Apart from this, the tendency of the homosexual community itself becoming more and more heterosexualised and rejecting those of its members that have been stereotyped by society, is visible in Bulgaria at the present moment, which is an additional, double problem, that has yet to enter the agenda.

