ABSTRACT

BODIES OUT OF PLACE - on abjection, exclusion, and adaption of intersexed and homosexual bodies within legal and scientific discourses, 1919-1968

Sara Edenheim, dept. of History, Lund University

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As a part of my dissertation, this paper concerns the definition of the heterosexual matrix, where abjection is a central process of exclusion. By analysing (Swedish) legal investigations on homosexuality (1935, 1941) and intersexuality (1968), the concepts of sex/gender/desire are discussed, as well as the ways in which an ‘impossible’ body is dealt with within this contexts. To be able to carry through such an analysis, it is first of all necessary to differentiate between that which is repressed and that which is foreclosed. The intersexual body, e.g., is not defined or treated as a subject until after a physical change of the body has taken place. This implies a very difficult and dangerous process, where the intersexual body is defined only to be denied an ontology. The homosexual (male), on the other hand, occupies a more ambivalent position, since homosexuality as a category serves an important role of reproducing heterosexual desire. Instead it becomes clear that homosexual bodies have to be defined through heteronormative terms to be adapted and ‘tolerated’, while the homosexual desire per se is declared non-existent, hence excluding a possible ‘same-sex’ desire. Unfortunately the author had no time to include an analysis of the lesbian body, but this will be done in the dissertation, since female homosexuality is defined and treated in much different ways compared to male homosexuality and probably can be said to play a more complex, and marginalised, part in the heterosexual matrix.