

Pink without Frontiers

Floats parading through the streets like mobile discos, rainbows printed on absolutely everything, go-go dancers covered in oil demanding sex. Are we in New York, Berlin, Madrid? It doesn't matter, the gay way of life is spreading all over the world like wildfire.

Global capitalism imposes a process of political and cultural homogenisation disguised as diversity. The kind of diversity, however, that conceals the single model shaping all the different identities. The information and communication technologies have transformed the concepts of space and time. Nowadays you can watch an event live, as it unfolds, on the other side of the world. So, while we are familiar with a certain image of New York, we don't know what is happening on our own doorstep. On the other hand, global capitalism depathologises the homosexual and the tribade, created by medicine, and encourages the propagation of the lesbian and the gay, not in their liberation movement version, but as a community of consumers. *Assert yourself! Consume pink!* urged a slogan that flooded the Barcelona gay scene a few years ago.

The transformation of the concepts of time and space and the mechanisms generating consumption have fostered the spread of deterritorialised identities and allow us to feel that we are part of a universal community of lesbians -often seen as a subgroup of the gay community- with which we share a set of symbols: K.D. Lang, Jodie Foster, knickers with wide elastic, etc.

And so lesbians and gay men, especially the latter, have gone from being seen as agents of social transformation a few years ago to becoming an expanding market segment, a view based on the cliché of the DINK (double income, no kids). As if we didn't know that there are lots of lesbians who are mothers and that on average women earn pretty low wages, and that there are lots of HIV-positive gay men who have to devote a considerable amount of their income to health-related expenditure or who live on a pension because they are unable to go on working, as well as lesbian and gay men without partners, and those who are retired, unemployed or have only casual jobs. But in this pink market, there is no room for making demands. At most, for the right to marry -and, especially in the United States, the right to "serve" in the army- as well as charity to combat AIDS, such as the 0.7% of its income a Barcelona club sets aside for this purpose in a megamix between a cancer charity stall and an NGO. Pink capital creates a hedonistic, self-centred, acritical subject rendered incapable of communicating, for whom sex is a matter of masturbation between two. And the pink media, and the others, reinforce the discourse which says that the only thing that is worthwhile is to have a good time and that groups like us who raise demands are living in the past and cut off from reality. This model of gay sexuality is being imposed day by day, just like McDonald's food and Disney culture, with universal, all-encompassing referents, albeit tinged with a supposedly local (!?) hue, which in our case consists in the *canción española* and Andalusia-inspired pseudo-folklore traditions, *The Rociera Party*.

The pink market needs a territory where it can sell its products and services. The only possible place where it can do this are the big cities, and then only certain particular territories within them, such as the *Gaixample* in Barcelona. This concentration of territory favours not only consumption, but also control of the population by the state and the banishment of the lesbian and the gay man, who are seen by most of the population as having been displaced to an alien kingdom where misogyny, discrimination and aggression against lesbians are common. And while Narcissuses blossom in the *Gaixample*, violence against lesbians and gays in Barcelona is on the increase. The policies imposed by the agents of global capitalism lead to the privatisation of public services and the non-development of the welfare state, so that we women have to move heaven and earth to provide for the care needs of others. This applies especially to lesbians, who are supposed not to have any "family obligations" of our own or, if we do, they are supposed to be of a secondary order. That is precisely why we are more affected by the "flexibilisation" of work

shifts, days off, leave, etc. With fierce competitiveness for jobs and complete deregulation, many lesbians who live out their choice of sexual orientation in a state of conflict due to the stigma it represents are forced into unemployment, casual jobs and social exclusion.

Oh, yes, globalisation is also said to bring us international agreements on human rights. It's a pity that none of them takes into consideration the violations of rights on account of sexual choice, except the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. And that the policies of the World Bank go against the possibility, in many places, of staging awareness and educational campaigns on sexual choices. Many "poor" countries have already had to ditch their family planning policies to pay off their foreign debt, while the World Bank's education campaigns for women reinforce their role as exclusively heterosexual mothers and carers. The major agents of globalisation also feed the ferocious homophobia of Mr. Mugabe in Zimbabwe, who proclaims that gays and lesbians are an example of colonisation by the West; that of the religious right in the United States, which argues that gay men and lesbians live too happily; and who knows what is in store for us in Catalonia.

Globalisation means that the acknowledged "representatives" of the social movements are increasingly large, hierarchic organisations committed to the status quo, while small, rank-and-file organisations find it harder and harder to survive. In the case of lesbians, this means that these organisations, on paper, are generally mixed (gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals, etc.), but are in fact dominated by gay men. These are the organisations that have more conservative positions -allies of gay capital and the alcohol corporations, with which they co-organise the Pride macroblowouts- and would have us believe that all we need is for them to let us get married so that we can lived cocooned in a rosy pink-tinted dream.

But paraphrasing the opening lines of the Asterix comics, more than one small village still holds out against the invaders: from the supermarket trolley that blocked the way of the floats last year in Plaça Sant Jaume to the European Lesbian Network, Gay Shame in New York and San Francisco, GALZ in Zimbabwe and so on. However, going into that would make another article.

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