“Homosexuality haunts ‘the normal world,’” writes Guy Hocquenghem in the introduction of *Homosexual Desire*, before quoting the Austrian psychotherapist Alfred Adler:

> The problem of homosexuality hovers over society *like a ghost or a scarecrow*. In spite of all the condemnation, the number of perverts seems to be on the increase ... Neither the harshest penalties nor the most conciliatory attitudes and most lenient sentences have any effect on the development of this *abnormality*.  

qtd. in Hocquenghem 1993: 50, emphasis added

After arguing that “capitalist society manufactures homosexuals just as it produces proletarians, constantly defining its own limits” and thus avoiding the confrontation with its own homosexual desires, Hocquenghem analyzes the discourses used by “the normal world” to create the repulsive figure of the homosexual, suffering from all kinds of vices (1993: 50). In the chapter “Anti-Homosexual Paranoia,” he dedicates an entire section to “Homosexuality and Crime” (1993: 67). If he recalls that “homosexuality is first of all a criminal category,” he also insists that legal repression has slowly been replaced by psychiatry and therefore by the *internalization of guilt*: pathologizing discourses have increasingly marginalized homosexuality by linking it to delinquency and criminality, and, if homosexuality *per se* is no longer a crime, “every homosexual is a potential killer” (1993: 68). As Gustave Macé, chief of the Paris Sureté of the third republic, wrote: “there is but one step from blackmail to crime, particularly since the sodomite is always hidden ... All sodomites are intelligent, but their minds turn to evil” (qtd. in Hocquenghem 1993: 68). The French queer theorist goes on, quoting “the Spanish law on social diseases”:

> Clause I, paragraph (i). The following categories of persons are declared to be social dangers: (1) vagrants, (2) pimps, (3) homosexuals ... (7) the mentally sick who, for want of medical attention, constitute a peril
to society ... (9) drug peddlers ... (11) those who unite in gangs and whose intent is clearly criminal.
qtd. in hocquenghem 1993: 68

The relationship between homosexuality and crime, then, is longstanding, and, within this discourse, if homosexuals sometimes suffer from these troubled alliances, it is only because of their actual connections with criminals. To Hocquenghem's genealogy I want to add here the nineteenth-century French medical examiner Ambroise Tardieu, who noted that if "examples of pederasts assassinations are not very rare," it is strictly because "the satisfaction of their monstrous desires" can only be found in "the foam of the vilest world" (133).1

"Homosexuality is not just a delinquent category, it is a pathological one," continues Hocquenghem (1993: 69), referring to both psychiatric and physical senses: indeed, drugs and homosexuality often appear together in official reports, and venereal diseases play an important role in such paranoia. "The anti-homosexual measures of 1960 were legitimized by a press campaign which dragged out the old bogey of a resurgence of syphilis," writes Hocquenghem, before quoting the French Minister of Health, M. Chenot:

In fact, the causes may be divided into two categories: the increasing immunity of viruses to antibiotics and the considerable development of homosexuality in every country ... How can we fight this recrudescence? By increasing the penalties in force against homosexuals.
qtd. in hocquenghem 1993: 70

In both cases – the relationship established between homosexuality and crime, and that between homosexuality and disease – the pathologizing discourses of the nineteenth century charted by Hocquenghem were still highly present in people's minds during the 1960s and 1970s, and kept influencing media comments, court judgments and medical reports, as he demonstrates. Needless to say, this figure of the homosexual as killer and infectious carrier was reactivated during the AIDS crisis, as noted by Leo Bersani in Is the Rectum a Grave? Making a connection with the perception of female prostitutes in the nineteenth century, Bersani comments ironically that "women and gay men spread their legs with an unquenchable appetite for destruction" (18).

1 "Les exemples d'assassinats pédérastes ne sont pas très rares. [Ces assassins] ont révélé avec éclat la fin cruelle à laquelle peuvent être réservés ceux qui ne peuvent trouver que dans l'écume du monde le plus vil ces liaisons inavouées auxquelles ils vont demander la satisfaction de leurs monstrueux désirs."