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## MULTIPLICITY OF CRUISING: INTERACTIONS WITH THE UNKNOWN AND REALISATION OF CRUISING FOR SEX IN A. K. CAMPBELL'S *THE PRIDE*

**Summary.** *Cruising* can be defined as an activity where subjects look for sex in public spaces and is usually called cruising for sex. Authors like Humphrey and Delph emphasize that non-verbal communication, such as eye contact, body language, way of walking, etc., is used to make first contacts that eventually lead to sex. Despite the sexuality of cruising, authors like T. Dean or Turner note that besides public sex, cruising also defines a way of life or indicates a pastime. When discussing cruising, T. Dean emphasizes that contacts, superficial conversations and a playful relaxing atmosphere are characteristic to cruising. The context of cruising not only involves pleasing sexual impulses but also focuses on hospitality and friendliness towards strangers. It notes that this practise is used to establish contacts, engage in a meaningless conversation and start relations for the goal of pleasure, however the identity ego remains free. Furthermore, cruising for sex is often considered to be a negative activity for immoral behaviour in public and the risk to contract sexually transmitted diseases. Men who cruise often stigmatize themselves and assign deviational meanings to cruising. Contacts established while cruising as an open and an unregulated activity are managed entirely by pleasure produced by playfulness of randomness.

**Keywords:** cruising for sex, public sex, contemporary British drama, "The Pride", Alexi Kaye Campbell.

We can observe localisation and globalisation, centralisation and decentralisation, homogeneity and heterogeneity in all major cities. All cities have multiple areas where people establish contacts for one evening and then establish contacts with others the next. Such performative playfulness and transgressive encounters can be observed at the station area in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius, the Gay Village in Manchester, and the Times square in New York in 1960's–1990's which was the spot for public sexuality and intimacy. For this reason, gay porn movie theatres, bars, public saunas and sex clubs that emphasized the leatherman subculture were established in the area. Cruising in such areas is understood as a continuous playful deregulated encounter with strangers where conversations are superficial and not meant to get to know one another but rather to play, often sexually. Therefore, cruising usually is understood as a negative practice, especially when it is associated with barebacking sex (physical sexual activity without the use of a condom), AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Social and humanitarian science associate cruising with the queer culture (here it is synonymous with homosexual men and women). However, cruising should not be simplified and treated as a temporary irrelevant situation between several strangers at a set time and area. People (not always from the 'queer areas') cruise to not only for continuous practice – they also assign special roles to identities of people involved in cruising. These roles reveal psychologic and social narrative which influences sets of beliefs which encourage specific actions in a social and cultural context. Cruising, as a socially engaged action, has become a popular cultural and artistic practice, which helps new subcultures with specific and unique sense of fashion and varying activities to emerge. Therefore, the analysis of cruising becomes an important media when tackling the queer policy and studies.

The **object of analysis** of this work is the aspects of cruising for sex represented in a play "The Pride"<sup>1</sup> by a british-greek dramatist A. K. Campbell<sup>2</sup> and

embodied by one of the characters in the play. The methodological tool and the material for theoretic analysis are the different generalisations of the cruising practise by different authors, notably V. Turner, E. W. Delph, T. Dean, L. Humphrey and others. The **goal of this text** is to emphasize the different understanding of cruising in different theoretical points of view of the authors. This **article aims** to reveal the cruising operation mechanism, its meaning and potential in the social context, as well as, show the influence of cruising to its subject. Before we go deeper into the analysis of cruising, we should note that it is very new in the context of Lithuanian artistic scene and social sciences, even though it is discussed in foreign publications and represented in films, theatre, and literature. As cruising is not present in Lithuanian social research and it is not represented in the artistic context (plays, performances), this analysis is likely to be a pioneering research on cruising with emphasis on its meaning in sociology and presentation of its potential application in works of art.

Cruising is defined as an activity where subjects seek to establish contacts with strangers with the intention to become sexual partners.<sup>3</sup> Cruising can also be defined as a search for sexual interaction participants in marginalised spaces and in particular ways.<sup>4</sup> Such definitions inspire an assumption that cruising actually means public sex in public spaces. However, cruising is different from simple sexual activity because while emphasizing the need for anonymity, it also involves the pleasure of eye-contact, feeling, playfulness, contact and encounter which please the subject physically and emotionally. Furthermore, cruising is also a way of life, which is why theorists and cruisers themselves emphasize the addictiveness of cruising. Nevertheless, it does involve a factor risk to contract HIV and AIDS (associated with barebacking) and has a negative influence on romantic and social relations of cruisers, as well as their physical and mental state.<sup>5</sup> Historically, the analysis of cruising began in the middle of the twentieth century when a sociologist L. Humphrey laid the scientific grounds for the discussion of cruising. L. Humphrey was one of the pioneers who discussed the use of public spaces for private reasons. He questioned

the social and ethical limits of the definition of cruising for sex.<sup>6</sup> The Theoretical emphasis on cruising by Humphrey is considered to be one of the first works that analyse men who cruise. Unlike Humphrey, who analysed cruisers, E. W. Delph analysed the process of cruising.<sup>7</sup> His analysis revealed the processuality and performativity of cruising and questioned the purpose of public spaces, as well as challenged the heteronormative system that privileged heterosexual relations and disciplined sexual activities and locations. In this way the public spaces were eroticised and sexualized. Turner noted that cruisers occupy a transgressive space that challenges and provokes the heteronormative worldviews. However, in this situation cruisers are limited by norms characteristic to urban spaces.<sup>8</sup>

The cruising context focuses not only on sexual impulses but also emphasizes hospitality and friendliness towards strangers – this shows that cruising is used to establish contacts, start superficial conversations or engage in pleasurable relations (including sexual relations to which another type of contact is equally as important) with others while keeping their identity-ego free. Cruising (temptations in town) means establishing contacts and encountering not only the differences of unfamiliar people but also perfect strangers and one's subjective subconscious.<sup>9</sup> Cruising is associated with sexual minorities and is depicted in dramas and plays, one of which is "The Pride" by A. K. Campbell.

Furthermore, cruising signifies openness to variety, transgressiveness, movement and promiscuity which becomes a lifestyle associated with STDs (AIDS, syphilis, etc.), violence, burglary, exploitation and mistrust. Although cruising signifies risk (unpredictability, randomness), it also creates a source of contacts and conversation opportunities. Contacts become a guarantee of safety in cruising sectors. Public contacts with strangers in cities help to ensure security.<sup>10</sup> Although cruising is associated with untraditional sexual identities, it is not only a gay lifestyle. Cruising does not emphasize sexual preferences, number of participants, gender differences, class, race or sexuality – the ethics of cruising focuses on the encounter with differences (yours, or other participants).<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, one

of the most popular factors of cruising policy is public sex, temptation and desire towards strangers in public (beaches, parks, etc.). These parallels are also evident in "The Pride". This play emphasizes two different eras in London (the year 1958 and the year 2008) and reveals conflict among three people (Philip, Oliver and Sylvia) with life and themselves. As John Lar noted, the part of the play that takes place in the year 1958 demonstrates the punishable results of repressions and the part that takes place in the year 2008 – the punishable results of freedom.<sup>12</sup> This reveals that although in the twenty first century no repressions that happened in the middle of the twentieth century take place, the freedoms of the new era are also a kind of punishment, as the subjects in the play are unable to fulfil themselves emotionally or cannot enjoy personal freedom and happiness, even though they are no longer punished and the despise towards homosexuality has decreased. The context of cruising and a postmodern world (the year 2008 in the "Pride") are important for the analysis, as Oliver establishes sporadic temporary contacts with strangers and engages in the cruising practice. Oliver embodies a homosexual man who not only enjoys public sex in parks, gay bars and public bathrooms – he treats this tendency as a possession and as an inappropriate and a shameful way to live. Just like analysis of cruising, the play "The Pride" focuses on the city where contacts with strangers are established and which offers a wide range of spots for intimate intercourse. Cities and metropolitan centres encourage the variety of options and become a representation of the postmodern world that physically embodies fluidity, ephemerality, organic pointlessness and a silent conversation. All people feel a little lonely in cities and meet strangers who are just as lonely. Although they chat in shops, post offices, etc., there is no risk to disperse the integrity of the subject. Even though Oliver sexualizes various spots of the city by associating them with strangers, he also verifies that relationships are meaningless and is only an obligation of a city person – to be without actually being. Oliver discusses his sexual encounters with his best friend Sylvia and notes that the essence of a contact is the brutal physicality without trespassing the

personal level or the subjectivity of an identity. Oliver compares these practises with a bathroom break and emphasizes that it is simply a biological need – merely a short moment of pleasure with a condition not to go deeper. Oliver claims that "[...] you never look at the eyes of these men, most often, you do not even speak. [...] You do not know who they are."<sup>13</sup> A. K. Campbell's Oliver and his cruising demonstrates that he cruises when he looks for anonymous sex. Public spaces where Oliver does that usually happen to be dark alleys or backyards of bars. Oliver does not seek for conversations, dancing and relaxing or drinking and communicating – his goal is to have anonymous sex. When cruising for sex, conversations are not meant to discover the personality of another or to find out details about their life – they are meant to simply express interest.<sup>14</sup> This reveals certain contradictions. First of all, cruising only focuses on sex, however while looking for a sexual pleasure one inevitably encounters the personality of another which makes them enter the zone of unfamiliarity. Therefore, cruising for sex cannot be classified as a uniquely anonymous public sex with an exception of sex booths with glory holes for oral sex, which completely eliminate a contact with a personality of another and only focuses on physical pleasure between strangers. It is worth mentioning that a number of cruisers that cruise for sex sodomise in public spaces, such as parks, beaches or public toilets or alleys. This usually has a negative connotation which in turn supports the hegemonic normativity morale by justifying disciplinary mechanisms based on heteronormativity standards.<sup>15</sup> Oliver understands this activity as deviant and abnormal – clearly such assessment of his own actions has a negative impact on his social and sexual identity. Oliver condemns his behaviour and tries to control his desires. By thinking negatively about his actions, he loses self-confidence and becomes emotionally frustrated and socially excluded. Clearly, despite the fact that cruising is associated with anonymous sex and a physical act, it cannot be excluded from social and psychological context. Cruising provides physical pleasure, helps one get to know themselves and influences the understanding of external contexts. Although cruising is not a social but a physical

practice<sup>16</sup>, in this text we do not see cruising as the search for sex alone. Instead we analyse cruising as understood by Dean and Turner where cruising is a playful and spontaneous activity that becomes a way of life and that provides a positive emotional pleasure. Although cruising is not fully a social practise, it operates in a liminal position between social and sexual where a sexual motive is always considered but a deeper social factor of cruisers becoming friends, lovers or partners is also likely. Despite this, Oliver also shares sexual pleasures of the gay culture, meaning that he complies with the dimension of unfamiliarity: strangers maintain their status even after becoming short-term lovers.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore “The Pride” presents cruising in a negative light, as public sex is considered to be an addiction and a deviation. Although places of intimate encounters become an exile to homosexuals, they are also places of plural contacts and sexual freedom, where erotic practices are undertaken. The play shows cruising as a lifestyle but also emphasizes confrontation between a love connection and a risk of cruising.

T. Dean focuses not only on sexual potential in cruising but also emphasizes contacts, conversations and encounters, however, other authors, such as Humphrey, Ponte and E. Delph claim that cruising is exclusively associated with sexual activities. This is why cruising is traditionally understood as cruising for sex which is usually synonymous to sexual relations between homosexuals. While many texts analyse sex between men, cruising is also important for homosexual women. “The Silent Community: Public Homosexual Encounters (Sociological Observations)” a book by Edward W. Delph published in 1978, defines public cruising spaces, such as parks, toilets, graveyards, parking lots, fitness studios, public saunas or pools, as erotic oases where men find favourable conditions to interact sexually.<sup>18</sup>

Each city becomes a vast territory of strangers but although its inhabitants and travellers acclimatize in it perfectly, they still remain strangers to one another (neighbours to neighbours, local cashiers to their clients and ect.). Strangers and the interclass contact are unique features and norms of cities that cannot be discovered in small towns. Although people

associate strangers with fear from a very young age (children are forbidden to talk to strangers), unfamiliarity also encourages desires and a prospect of encountering something new and different (especially, random erotic pleasures). Oliver needs to please sexual desires and anonymous sex secretly gives him erotic pleasure with a risk associated with differences and encounters. As shown in the play, Oliver cannot avoid an encounter with a stranger who causes negative physical consequences (Oliver’s relationship with a man in a suit ends, as Oliver is punched in a face). All Oliver’s interactions focus on a purified contacts where details are eliminated, allowing a person to get closer to an ego of another. Neither party of this relationship knows the name of one another and often do not even see the face of one another (except in a roleplay with the Nazi). These interaction conditions are explained in T. Dean’s text on cruising. All parties want to protect their uniqueness from others and try to remain lovers and not friends or acquaintances – the binary line between familiar and unfamiliar is emphasized. Such interactions focus on untouched uniqueness, personality and integral ego rather than safety or risk. Contacts have to remain pure from the destruction of an ego integrity. Although anonymous public sex in clubs and gay bars support the aspect of undisturbed unfamiliarity, contacts are associated not only with efforts to depersonalize uniqueness of another but they are not an exclusively introvertial practice, as the logic of a contact requires encountering a stranger and at least a short conversation.<sup>19</sup> In the play shows Oliver’s sexual relations that focus on the logic of contacts, however they do remain outside of contacts because Oliver tries to avoid even the smallest chat that activates not only the physical pleasure but also starts a superficial and banal conversation. The most authentic example is Oliver’s relationship with the Nazi: he not only plays the game but also engages in a conversation that reveals the otherness of another without trying to involve him in his life, unlike Oliver’s relationship with Philip.

Just as camp, queer or travesti, cruising should not be categorised due to its multilayeredness and uncertainty. The potential of these activities and subjects (travesti, queer) cannot be easily described or

defined, as it is usually felt by performing it or being it. Turner discussed the evolution of cruising in the past 150 years and defined it as a way to conceptualize men in streets who use contradictions and the unknown that are characteristic to cities. Just as cities, cruising is associated with ephemerality, instability and fluidity.<sup>20</sup> This means that aspects of instantaneousness, feeling and unpredictable performativity are highly important for cruising. Cruising does not only mean bodily interactions in public city spaces, gay bars, adult cinemas, sex booths, public saunas or college territories. It also is a celebration of different views, reactions, encounters with strangeness and a visual and processive practice.<sup>21</sup>

Rather than emphasizing the difference of sexuality, gender and different sex forms or definitions of safe sex and disease prevention, T. Dean focuses on the ethics of cruising and its relation to power and psychoanalytic resources. Contacts become an opportunity to access the otherness of another and yourself, thereby allowing to get to know yourself. Although one seeks for erotic pleasure, the sexual aspect is not the most important in a contact which is why we can assume that actions are done in the name of it. Oliver involves himself in a very sterile anonymous sex which turns into a blind need to please one's desires, as no options for a *tete a tete* contact are created. Regardless of a cold introverted sexual pleasure, this encounter turns into a meaningful part of Oliver's understanding of his identity. It is also a stimulator of a stigma and the feeling of guilt that reveals Oliver's subconscious desires, as well as, conscious guilt and shame for his actions. Furthermore, not only does Oliver perform an irrelevant physically pleasuring action, but he also touches on his otherness which turns out to be key to understanding how subconscious works, more specifically, why Oliver craves for sex – he gets back to his relationship with his father. This means that anonymous sex is an access to emotional and sensitive parts of Oliver's life and through encounters with others one can touch on their otherness and reveal their identity.

Public places, such as bars and porn movie theatres that temporarily houses numerous different individuals turn into a heterogenous space that allows

contacts and conversations between representatives of different class, race and religion to flourish. Such areas turn out to be vital to maintain a lively and safe public space.<sup>22</sup> Contacts are considered to be an interesting and pleasurable practice that generates a one-off friendliness and support and yet does not encourage any commitment, responsibility or necessity to become anything to one another. For this reason, it is also even more desired. We can add that a chance not to commit is very important to Oliver in "The Pride".

Presence of contact options is directly related to presence of public spaces where encounters with strangers happen – this is a necessary condition.<sup>23</sup> Public spaces, cruising people, constant movement and diversity creates a friendly, attractive and safe space. However, cruising that enables sex in parks, beaches or public toilets is different from public sex spots (in bars, clubs or saunas). Here public sex is private, yet not privatized. Therefore, public sex should be considered an option to have intercourse outside the privatized home space and yet not in a publicly visible area, e.g. a town square. Homeless people embody the essence of cruising even though we assume they do not have any home (they always operate outside of it), the public space turns out to be their home. This poses a question, whether or not the contacts they establish in public actually are established in public. If the public space is their home, then the contacts they establish are actually established in private.

Furthermore, it is very important to emphasize a theoretic assumption that public sex is not a dionic activity but a social behaviour with its etiquette and code of conduct.<sup>24</sup> Although public sex is a stigma in a heteronormative society, it is still generated in this society, as it is not an isolated system that operates outside the heterosexual world. Associations of homosexuality and public sex spots can be questioned, as they exist in a segregated gay context and a multi-layered field of sexuality where there is still space for heterosexuality which is not as often focused on in the public sector because it matches the stereotypical norm and, understandably so, causes a lot less fury than deviated homosexual interactions. The "proper" world tries not to

be aware of this and tries to eliminate the shameful activity that poses danger to the safety of the society and destroys places where public sex takes place.

Contacts become parts of people's lives (at the post office, home, etc.) but it is important to emphasize that it is not associated with disintegration of another person's ego and is not a basis for a spiritual connection. A contact does not only mean public sex but also / or a conversation, i.e. it is a physical and / or a verbal interaction. Oliver's conversation with an editor is equally as important a contact as is sexual intercourse with strangers. Although contacts are usually short-term and a one-off encounter with strangers, sometimes they turn into friendships where otherness of another becomes a part of one's ego which, in turn disrupts the unity of an ego. This means that a fluid, random and fragile interaction provides mutual pleasure and benefit. Gay bars are a multi-layered space and not merely places for sexual contacts where an apotheosis for a perfect body image is praised. Bars that do not emphasise attractiveness, sexuality and youth (beautiful perfect bodies) and fascinate by their simplicity and friendliness towards strangers. Such spots (e.g. "My Place" in San Francisco that operated up to 2004) are perfect to converse and establish contacts; they are a space for multicultural contacts and sexual activities where working class, older people and the disabled gather. It is not only a place for sex but also a place for knowledge transfer, where social and sexual space merges. T. Dean notes that such sexually pedagogical context proposes allusion to queer practises in ancient Greece. This justifies a sexually pedagogic connection. Ancient "buddy love" was popular between older and younger men where the younger one was a student (*eromenos*) that received wisdom and learned courage from his teacher (*erastes*) who was embodied by an older man.<sup>25</sup>

The dichotomic opposition of a contact (destruction of class, other public limitations and a risk factor) is the destruction of networks where social stratification and privatisation (networks are not accessible to all) emerge and the risk factor is eliminated.<sup>26</sup> Members of networks are associated by membership and class connections. There is also a factor of money – this is considered to be something coveted.

As a homogenized state that is meant for a small circle of people, networks depend on similarities of public sex spots (parties, gyms, conferences, social gatherings, singing and tourist groups) and in order to be a part of the network one has to have social skills.<sup>27</sup> Although networks function outside of home and encourage gatherings, conversations and multidimensional contacts, however they do differentiate the potential network members and privatize states of the socium without being completely open.

Below the specifics of cruising are summarized and divided into several forms:

1. *Cruising as a form of contact.* Public spots in cities (streets, parks, etc.) or public places (bars). The level of strangeness is very obvious, the interclass limitations are eliminated, public sex is not privatized, the range of pleasure is wide and superficial, contact does not disintegrate a person's ego.
2. *Cruising as a form of networks.* Various places have different selection criteria. The level of familiarity is less obvious, the socioeconomic status of all parties is similar, public sex is privatized, a fee exists.
3. *Online cruising.* Virtual space. Sex with strangers not only postpones a contact and a conversation but also usually eliminates it (there is no need to leave the house or start a conversation). Unfamiliarity is instrumentalized and is merely an object, the openness factor is eliminated, a private network is formed in a private space. A factor of activity control is obvious (strict limitations and rules on behaviour and looks), e.g. sites that organise barebacking parties (sexual intercourse is only allowed without condoms). Cruising is deconstructed into usual monotonous practises that enable a comprehensive panopticon and disciplined regulation.

The online pleasure in "The Pride" represents an online mechanism. In the first act of the play Oliver is involved in a roleplay of a masochistic fantasy: he becomes a victim of the Nazi. Very quickly spectators realize that the Nazi is fake and is categorized as an online boy. As discussed in an online scheme, the Nazi becomes an instrumentalized object of desire – an item advertised online. The scenario of the game is clear and mutually agreed upon. It also has clear

rules, which is why erotic activities instrumentalize the stranger, and sexual activities are privatized by enabling repressive rules. A short *mise-en-scène* in the play shows that practices eliminate factors of randomness, imagination and innovation.<sup>28</sup> Just as with networks, to engage in this activity one is required to become a member (to register online) and to pay a fee for services performed. This performative game enables discipline: aesthetics of one's look (attractiveness), an online image of the object advertised and behavioural discipline that is agreed upon (the Nazi acts persuasively: he has a good German accent, military Nazi uniform and is accompanied by a German shepherd in his online image). The Nazi is considered to be a mechanical object, which is obvious as he argued that while he is an entertainer, he wants to be treated with respect meaning that online boys are not merely objects for entertainment. Nazi's interaction with Oliver is an example of online cruising (the Nazi arrives to Oliver's home and the rules present a disciplined contact in the erotic play, as there is no need for any other type of contact). This *mise-en-scène* shows that the Internet provides conditions for contacts – Oliver's and the Nazi's conversation after a failed roleplay. While establishing a superficial contact, but keeping the status of strangers (the ego remains integral and the zone of privacy – autonomous), they become one-off lovers. This shows that activities enabled by the virtual space form networks instead of random contacts and yet, they also provide an option to choose whether to establish a contact and start a conversation or not (contacts are not required, as determined by cruising as a form of contact).

Apparently, accessibility to modern technologies allow all city people (especially those from the middle class) to choose an alternative for public sex in bars, clubs, special booths or peep show. Technology-enabled porn (DVDs, online porn, phone sex, etc.) represents the privatisation of public sex and the destruction of cruising ethics. This factor homogenizes and reduces pleasure.<sup>29</sup> Destruction of public sex spots and emerging of technology-enabled porn forms prevents subjects from cruising and meaningless fluid nomadism, thereby minimizing or eliminating the chances of pleasure of the

working class or those with lower income. Once public sex spots are destroyed, those without access to technologies lose a chance to have pleasure. This shows that the "losers" are discriminated and marginalized by homosexuals with better socioeconomic status.

Privatisation of the public sector turns out to be a destructive force of freedom and options, as the democratic poles Liberty, Equality, Fraternity are eliminated and the stratification of wealth, class, race, religion and status is brought back to the society. This destroys the metaphor of public erotic activities as a potential of freedom and options. Although it is believed that such "purification" of the city (by closing gay clubs, bars and arresting the participants) makes it a safer and a more proper place to live, the city becomes less attractive and vivid as the gay tourism stops and one can feel anxiety and opposition to differences. The paradigm of public sex and erotic encounters bring the 21<sup>st</sup> century gay life back to Stonewall riot of the year 1960.<sup>30</sup> Class, sex, race and ethical differences that were not present in universal public sex spots now become a confrontational force in an open and empty city. Once most public sex spots are destroyed, there are fewer differences and we will see an increase of racial and class segregation, as well as, xenophobia. The risk of AIDS, syphilis and unsafe sex is merely a superficial factor that overshadows the greediness and the desire to commercialize the public sex spots and make them controlled by the government, which, in turn, would enhance the disciplined pleasure and the privatized and uncommunicative portrait of society. Cruising control is the effort to bring back the punishments and the emphasis on differences which gives power to the superior (obvious in the Brazilian *travesti* cases where the police terrorize the *travesti* simply because they feel pleasure doing so).

It seems that in postmodern world all efforts are put in place to eliminate contacts and conversations with strangers. New ways to avoid contact are invented: phone conversations, iPods, books, sleep and etc. This creates detachment from the public in public. This is also encouraged by advertising ("Mobiles in French and Lithuanian advertising: items or means of connection" (*lit.* "Mobilusis

*telefonas prancūziškoje ir lietuviškoje reklamoje: daiktas ar ryšys*”) an article by N. Keršytė shows that advertising encourages people to detach themselves from the world). All these means reorganise contacts into networks of a private space. Detached movement within the city, safety rhetoric (including safe sex) and fear of strangers motivate people not to get close to strangers. Even though security and risk factors are emphasized in cruising, where various forms of contact are important, the desire for erotic pleasure becomes the driving power reducing the fear of risk.

Interactions with strangers and differences are explored by various psychoanalysts. We already know that the subconscious part (ID) that contains our *libido* (pleasure) and *tanato* (fear) instincts are a motivational power that influences all choices. Clearly, when encountering strangers people confront their fears and pleasures. Contacts are ever-changing and instable and they also represent the deconstruction of essentialism: there is no place for stability in cruising and if sometimes there is, cruising loses its essence of multi-layered practise that proposes an interclass contact in public for all. Obviously, the meaning of contact is an object of psychoanalytic discourse. As mentioned already, people encounter not only the differences of a stranger but also differences of their own. This is exciting and sparks curiosity, but the unknown also causes fear. By aiming to be both lovers and strangers, we try to protect our and the stranger's egos. Basically, we still hope and aim to keep our illusion of freedom and independence. In the trajectory of a contact, the dynamics of power also disappear, making all parties equal. T. Dean emphasized that the real contact is not aimed for a goal and is based on the logics of randomness where non-instrumental strangers generate openness to the world and another person is merely a mediator that ensures one-off repetitive new possibilities to open to differences and to the subconscious.<sup>31</sup>

T. Dean speaks about the Laplanche's model of psychoanalysis (parents to children are mysterious markers) and shows that we are born into the world of strangers, meaning that we encounter strangeness in our early childhood while our parents

become the first strangers we meet. Nevertheless, while the strangeness is important in relationships, both parties (the parents and the children) tap into their mysterious subconscious impulses. Laplanche named this process a generalized enticement – a subconscious activity that encourages children to understand messages from strangers and enticement of an unfamiliar world.<sup>32</sup> This initial encounter and enticement is renewed and reactivated. Different encounters with the outside world form different sexualities and desires create a range of different needs. This context also shows the importance of differences between one another. Sexuality ends up being a part to our world that is transferred from subconscious to subconscious. The imminence of these processes shows that it is impossible to avoid encounters with an unfamiliar construct as it is imbedded not only in the environment but also in ourselves (the subconscious). Therefore, the destruction of public sex spots which enable encounters with subconscious via another person, reveals the coveted illusion of safety. Individuals that are not able to establish contacts and meet the needs of a conversation produces anxiety and frustration which reduce the potential of safety.

Oliver from “The Pride” is cruising in public and participates in online cruising which emphasizes not the encounters with others but an encounter with his own subconscious. We can specify cruising online is usually considered to be a safer choice, as it allows one to avoid a potential threat of other participants or law enforcement. While cruising online one is not bothered by a bad vibe of a public spot, bad weather, wrong timing, lack of places for sex (e.g. in a village) or avoidance of direct contact with other cruisers.<sup>33</sup> Cruising online is often seen as a more erotic way to express one's sexuality, as there is no need to meet one another which supports the desire for complete anonymity and the freedom of identity-ego.<sup>34</sup>

Oliver's search for sex verifies the fact that non-verbal communication is highly important to cruising, as intentions toward one another are conveyed by eye-contact (long and direct), bodily contact (accidental touch), body language (self-touching, head nodding, smiling, etc.), a manner of walking

(following or being followed) and the demonstration of one's bodily desires (Tewksbury, 1996)<sup>35</sup>. These non-verbal means of communication are not always used, however. Oliver claims that he is not always interested attractive men, he actually feels an uncontrollable attraction towards dirty, drunk men who can please him right there and then with no or minimal verbal contact. Such choice of men shows that Oliver punishes himself for his shameful deviational behaviour and tries to cause his self-disgust and self-rejection. Clearly it is not the outside world that marginalises Oliver but rather he himself. Cruising turns out to simply be a way to punish and despise oneself. However, it is not cruising that should be seen as negative but Oliver's psychological portrait and his inner issues ignoring which may lead to an understanding that cruising is negative rather than positive. Sexual reflection of participants is a signpost that helps to understand his own identity and to purify a subconscious destructive stigma that affects his personality and relationships with his loved ones (Philip, Sylvia). As shown in the play, Oliver seeks for an executioner and an oppressor (the Nazi) who would humiliate and despise him. This is a muted voice of Oliver's subconscious that shows that he craves for humiliation, disrespect and despise from his oppressor. This desire represents Oliver's understanding that sex between two men is shameful and obscene, and those who crave for this type of sex should be humiliated and oppressed. Due to this stigma Oliver wants the realisation of his sexual desires to become a means reminding him how he and his body is understood by the society. He genuinely believes that he deserves punishment, humiliation and disrespect which he looks for in his sexual encounters with strangers. The narrative of the play shows that though oppressive and humiliating sexual interaction he experiences his subconscious, understands reasons for his "illness" and eliminates them. Nevertheless, the climax of this realisation shows cruising as a nearly shameful and erroneous activity. Basically, Oliver sees homosexual love and monogamous relationships as a proper, honest and pure practise and cruising – as a deviation and a shameful stigma. In this context, Philip, a former lover of Oliver, should also be considered

a materialised paradigm of monogamous ideal relationships. Judging from his words and effort to become a proper homosexual, Oliver understands cruising (sex in bars, clubs, parks, toilets, etc.) as a failed alternative of real and honest relationships where one becomes intimate with another individual and becomes a part of their ego. Although this play seeks to show the destruction of limitations between heteronormative and homonormative way of life and the change of the world view, the connection with differentiation in gay subculture remains. One does receive a right to be seen and have their voice, however the public life of gay people is still interpreted as improper and the participants of cruising are marginalized – this is how the gays in the play understands them.

As Oliver is an intellectual and a writer, he cannot understand his own instincts, which is why his bodily desires are contrasted by his conscious and positive identity and which is why he forgets that this "dark" part of his life (cruising) is an inevitable part of his identity. Oliver's experience also confirms the fact that the majority of gays and men who cruise treat cruising as a voyeurism, a deviation and an unhealthy lifestyle.<sup>36</sup>

Oliver's cruising clearly contradicts the meaning of modern understanding of cruising where it is not considered a deviation or a wrong behaviour but rather a leisure pattern and a lifestyle. "The Pride" presents cruising as the psyche of a person and as a factor that evokes sexuality. Cruising is an activity that Oliver wants to free himself from and an illness that has to be cured in order for him to enjoy a full and happy life. Although the drama was created in 2008, it presents cruising in a dogmatic and negative light. The story of the drama and the common thread through the play supports a clear dichotomy between normal and abnormal, proper and improper. Based on this, Oliver's cruising turns out to be an improper and wrong behaviour while Oliver's and Philip's relationship, attraction and the prelude to feelings are shown in a positive light and as proper homosexual relations. "The Pride" suggests that cruising contradicts Troiden's assumption that cruising also encourages sensuality between its participants.<sup>37</sup>

To sum up, in his book “Unlimited Intimacy” T. Dean presents contacts as a positive factor for both the participants and the society. Cruising turns out to be an expression of postmodern life that reveals temporality, superficiality, fluidity, plurality and continuity. Cruising becomes a way to establish contacts and to engage in a conversation that does not have a beginning or an end and which purpose is not to exchange in meaningful messages and touch on the ego of one another but to create a background and a relaxing environment for detachment and flirting. Unlike T. Dean, the majority of authors, such as Humphrey, Delph, Ponte, Tewsbury, explain cruising by emphasizing the importance of sex. The authors explain that cruisers look for sex rather than sex partners, which is why their analysis of cruising processuality and cruisers is done by emphasizing non-verbal means of contact and the messages that are conveyed by them. However, this text concludes that the simplification of cruising into public sex minimizes the meaning of cruising for cruisers, the socius and performativity of spaces. Furthermore, cruising both reinforces and breaks hegemonous dichotomy. Oliver, a character from the play, cruises for sex and abdicates himself from emotional contact and encounters with differences. In his acts non-verbal communication is minimised to enhance anonymity and to distance himself from another subject. While cruising, Oliver makes minimal contacts, and minimises it to a physical erogenous encounter (there are some exceptions, e.g. contact with the Nazi, the online boy). Oliver clearly and categorically represents the views of Humphrey, Delph and others: cruising is the search for sex. It is worth noting though, that Oliver understands this activity as deviation and stigmatizes himself. A play “The Pride” presents cruising as a negative factor: sexualisation is contrasted by romantic relations of two men (Oliver and Philip). The play shows cruising as a fluid and spontaneous act that arouses participants due to its unpredictability. Although cruising is a repetitive action, it is still randomly playful which is why it does not end up being a passive routine.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This article analyses the original play „The Pride“ (2008) by Alexi Kaye Campbell. This play presents the complicated love between a married couple (Philip and Sylvia) and their best friend (Oliver). The dramatist emphasize the confrontation between feelings and social rules. This proposes a conflict between an individual and the society and although Philip is emotionally sensitive with Oliver, the negative attitude of the society towards homosexual relations is causing conflict and the denial of emotional and sexual attraction towards Oliver. „The Pride“ is a gay drama that emphasizes the change of homophobia and represents the influence of society towards interpersonal relations between men and their destinies. This play takes place in different periods of time (the middle of the twentieth century and the twenty first century) and emphasizes different social and political contexts that have an effect on the changing lives and mutual relations of the characters. While the dramatic language of the play is conservative, emotional and sometimes illusionary, the brutal sex scene between two men – the most radical part of the play – is described clearly.

<sup>2</sup> A. K. Campbell started his creative path as an actor and later became a dramatist. He has already written six plays and „The Pride“ is rightfully a part of British drama. In his creations the author focuses on acute issues of a modern man, including gay marriage, homophobia and economic crisis. A. K. Campbell's plays are characteristic by irony and black humour, dreams and visions and, most notably, emotions and complex psychological portraits of his characters. Moreover, the author dramatizes stories of his characters in different periods which shows how different conditions affect lives and worldviews of his characters.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Reece, „Exploring the Physical, Mental and Social Well-Being of Gay and Bisexual Men who Cruise for Sex on a College Campus“. *Journal of Homosexuality* 46: 1–2 (2004): 112, doi: 10.1300/J082v46n01\_03.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Tewksbury, „Finding Erotic Oases: Locating the Sites of Men's Same-Sex Anonymous Sexual Encounters“, *Journal of Homosexuality* 55: 1 (2008): 2, doi: 10.1080/00918360802129253

<sup>5</sup> Reece, 132–133.

<sup>6</sup> Reece, 113.

<sup>7</sup> Tewksbury, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Grant Anderson, „Why can't they meet in bars and clubs like normal people?: the protective state and bioregulating gay public sex spaces“, *Social & Cultural Geography* (2017): 7, 16, doi:10.1080/14649365.2017.1301542

<sup>9</sup> Tim Dean, *Unlimited Intimacy: Reflections on the Subculture of Barebacking* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 206.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 177, 206.

<sup>12</sup> Drewrey Wayne Gunn, *For the Gay Stage: A Guide to 456 Plays, Aristophanes to Peter Gill* (North Carolina: McFarland and Company Inc, 2017), 157–158.

<sup>13</sup> Alexi Kaye Campbell, *The Pride* (London: Nick Hern Books Limited, 2008), 60.

<sup>14</sup> Robert C. Philen, „A Social Geography of Sex“, *Journal of Homosexuality* 50: 4 (2006): 38, doi: 10.1300/J082v50n04\_02A.

<sup>15</sup> Junxi Qian, „Beyond heteronormativity? Gay cruising, closeted experiences and self-disciplining subject

in People's Park, Guangzhou,“ *Urban Geography* 38: 5 (2017): 787, doi: 10.1080/02723638.2016.1139408.

<sup>16</sup> Stefano Ramello, „Behind the Mask: A Typology of Men Cruising for Same-Sex Acts,“ *Identity* 13: 1 (2013): 78, doi: 10.1080/15283488.2012.747436.

<sup>17</sup> Dean, 184.

<sup>18</sup> Tewksbury, 2–3.

<sup>19</sup> Dean, 180.

<sup>20</sup> Mark Turner, *Backward Glances: Cruising the Queer Streets of New York and London: Cruising Queer Streets in London and New York* (London: Reaktion books, 2003), 7–8, 10.

<sup>21</sup> Turner, 60.

<sup>22</sup> Dean, 183.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>25</sup> Louis Crompton, *Homosexuality and Civilization* (Harvard: First Harvard University Press, 2006), 4.

<sup>26</sup> Dean, 187.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 199–200.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 208.

<sup>33</sup> Michael W. Ross, B. R. Simon Rosser, Sheryl McCurdy & Jamie Feldman, „The Advantages and Limitations of Seeking Sex Online: A Comparison of Reasons Given for Online and Offline Sexual Liaisons by Men Who Have Sex With Men,“ *The Journal of Sex Research* 44: 1 (2007): 67–70, doi: 10.1080/00224490709336793.

<sup>34</sup> Brandon Andrew Robinson & David A. Moskowitz, „The eroticism of Internet cruising as a self-contained behaviour: a multivariate analysis of men seeking men demographics and getting off online,“ *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 15: 5 (2013): 564, doi: 10.1080/13691058.2013.774050.

<sup>35</sup> Jamie S. Frankis, and Paul Flowers, „Public Sexual Cultures: A Systematic Review of Qualitative Research Investigating Men's Sexual Behaviors with Men in Public Spaces,“ *Journal of Homosexuality* 56: 7 (2009): 872, doi: 10.1080/00918360903187846.

<sup>36</sup> John Bancroft, and Zoran Vukadinovic, „Sexual addiction, sexual compulsivity, sexual impulsivity, or what? Toward a theoretical model,“ *The Journal of Sex Research* 41: 3 (2004): 5, 7, doi: 10.1080/00224490409552230.

<sup>37</sup> Tewksbury, 4.

<sup>38</sup> *Cruising* termino vertimo į lietuvių kalbą paaiškinimas: Pirmiausia pažymėtina, jog terminams, kurie vartojami lyčių studijų diskursuose, ne visada tikslinga ieškoti analogų lietuvių kalbos žodynuose būtent dėl to, jog dažniausiai jokia tiksliai termino esmę atspindinčio analogo surasti dažniausia neįmanoma, nes nėra tokios reikšmės, kuri visapusiškai atskleistų tarptautinėje kalbų aplinkoje vartojamo termino prasmę. Tą galima pasakyti apie tokius terminus, kaip, *queer*, *camp*, *travesti* arba šiuo atveju *cruising*. Dažnai neįmanoma visos reikšmės perteikti vienu žodžiu, nes ji daugialypė, dažnai suvokiama tik ją patiriant ir praktiniame lauke. Kadangi tam tikri lyčių studijų diskurso aspektai Lietuvos mokslo kontekste yra naujiena, tokie terminai taip pat yra naujiena. Tad tikslingiausia tokiu atveju tokio termino tiesiog neversti ir neieškoti jo analogo, jeigu ir norima išversti, tą turi atlikti grupė skirtingų specialistų.

Vis dėlto, atsižvelgiant į šiam tekste nagrinėjamą problematiką, artimiausia terminui *cruising* reikšmė gali

būti viešas seksas arba konkrečiau viešo sekso paieškos. Tuo akcentuojamas viešas seksas viešose erdvėse. Vis tik kaip šis tekstas atskleidžia, *cruising* negali būti sutapatinamas tik su viešu seksu viešose erdvėse, nes ši praktika skirtingų autorių darbuose įgyja ir papildomas reikšmes. Nors *cruising* neabejotinai siejamas su viešu seksu viešose

vietose, tačiau tai ir gyvenimo būdas, savitas laisvalaikio leidimas, atsipalaidavimas, rizikingas jaudulys, kur ne mažiau svarbus ne tik anonimiškas seksualinis aktas, bet ir susidūrimas su kito asmens kitoniškumu, pats kontaktualumas. Pabrėžiamas ir procesualumas, performatyvumas, žaismė, efemerškumas, daugialypumas, jutimiškumas.

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## **CRUISING PRAKTIKOS DAUGIALYPUMAS: INTERAKCIJOS SU NEPAŽIŠTAMUMU IR VIEŠO SEKSO REALIZACIJA A. K. CAMPBELL DRAMOJE *THE PRIDE* (PASIDIDŽIAVIMAS)**

### **Santrauka**

*Cruising*<sup>38</sup> praktika vadinama tokia veikla, kai subjektas vykdo seksualinio akto paieškas viešose erdvėse (angl. *cruising for sex*). Tad dažnai *cruising* praktika įvardijama kaip *cruising for sex*. Tokie autoriai kaip Humphrey'us, Delph'as akcentuoja šiai praktikai būdingą neverbalinę kalbą, kaip, akių kontaktas, kūno judesiai, vaikščiavimo pobūdis, kuriais siekiama užmegzti pirminį kontaktą, vedantį į seksualinį aktą. Nepaisant šios veiklos seksualinio pobūdžio, tokie autoriai kaip T. Dean'as arba Turner'is taip pat nurodo, jog tai ne tik viešas seksas viešose vietose, bet ir gyvenimo būdas, laisvalaikio leidimo forma. T. Dean'as, aptardamas *cruising*, akcentuoja šiai praktikai būdingą kontaktualumą, mezgamą paviršutinišką pokalbį, atpalaiduojančią ir žaismingą atmosferą. *Cruising* praktikos kontekstas, įtraukiantis ne tik seksualinių impulsų patenkinimą, bet akcentuojantis ir svetingumą, draugiškumą nepažįstamiems, nurodo, kad šia praktika siekiama užmegzti kontaktus, betikslį pokalbį, tačiau visada išlaikyti savo tapatybinį ego neuzurpuotą. Taip pat pažymėtina, jog *cruising for sex* dažnai priskiriamos negatyvios reikšmės dėl amoralaus elgesio viešose erdvėse, ligų platinimo rizikos (angl. *barebacking* – seksualiniai santykiai be prezervatyvų). O vyrai, užsiimantys *cruising*, neretai ir patys stigmatizuoja save. Taip pat *cruising* praktikai priskiria deviacines reikšmes. Taip pat pažymėtina, jog *cruising* mezgamas kontaktas yra atvira ir neregamentuota veikla, valdoma atsitiktinumo, žaismės produkuojamo malonumo.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** viešo sekso paieškos, viešas seksas viešose erdvėse, šiuolaikinė D. Britanijos drama, „Pasididžiavimas“, Alexis Kaye Campbellas.

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