

AIDS AND FASCINATION

1. AIDS is in fact an extreme form of violence. Usually the body is, when the illness breaks out, destroyed in an ugly manner in a very short time. Violence is always fascinating. It draws the onlookers, who don't have the freedom to fly, into its orbit, making them to its victims. The heavier the violence, the deeper fascination.
2. AIDS patients are, by all the publicity given to them, by all the talking about them, all the fears they provoke, make extremely important. Important persons, important people are, again, fascinating. In the neighbourhood of importance is "being", which we all seek. Much of the publicity around AIDS patients has to do with this fascination, again deepening it.
3. This fascination is again deepened by the power AIDS patients have. Cf. Thomas Bernhard, the well known Austrian author, who himself suffered from tuberculosis: "Jetzt hatte ich, so mein Gedanke, die Möglichkeit, Gesunde anzustecken ein Machtmittel, mit welchem alle Lungenkranken, alle Träger ansteckender Krankheiten von jeher ausgestattet sind, dasselbe Machtmittel, das ich an jenen bis daher verabscheut hatte, die mich wochenlang mit ihren Blicken, mit ihrer Gemeinheit, mit ihrer Schandenfreude gejagt und verfolgt hatten". (Die Kalte. Eine Isolation. München, DTV 1985, 17). (Now I had, so I thought the possibility to infect healthy people, a means of power, which all lung patients, all bearers of infectious illnesses, always had, the same means of power which I had until then detested I those, who during weeks had hunted and chased me with their meanness, with their pleasure in the misfortunes of others). Both sides of the fascination, the happiness it gives and the fears, are in this one sentence.
4. AIDS patients, and all bearers of infectious illnesses, not only have power to make ill, to destroy. They are often victim of their power in that sense that they use it. They are, become evil, wishing to destroy. And so the circle of fascination, because the violence again becomes stronger, becomes again more complicated, more enticing.
5. Fascination becomes probably always worse by warning against the consequences of the fascination. To have success with warnings against an object of fascination, you have to be more fascinating than the object, the reality you warn against. Of course, academic people or other authorities, warning against an object of fascination are not that interesting, fascinating. So all warning runs as least the risk to make what is warned against again more interesting, more fascinating.
6. Worse still, all warning destroys freedom. As soon as you are warned you don't have any longer the freedom to make the choice between following the fascination or to say no to it. Being warned you have to choose between following the call of the fascination or the call of the warners. That makes in fact unfree, giving even the fascination a better chance. The unfreedom becomes again bigger, when the warning comes from older, important people, directed to younger people, so bringing all the hassles of the generation-conflict in the theme.

7. In fact we only leave free, and hopefully give freedom by stating the facts, leaving the choice to them who have to choose, Eg. "If you really wish to have AIDS, that is not that difficult. Then take it!" or: "These are the facts. Make your choice!"

The big advertisement in the Observer, 18.2.90, 11, is quite good. I would leave away in the first text: "We know for certain that", beginning with "HIV & c". In the third text not: "I have a patient", but: "A patient". I am not sure if the pictures and the texts with the pictures do any good, because they "colour" the stated facts. Below I would do away the sentence: "The experts & c" and probably the whole paragraph. It is repetition and so it weakens what is already said. So only: "Further information &c".

26.2.90