

BONUS SUPPLEMENT!
THE LIVING THETARE'S
SEVEN MEDITATIONS
ON POLITICAL SADO-MASOCHISM

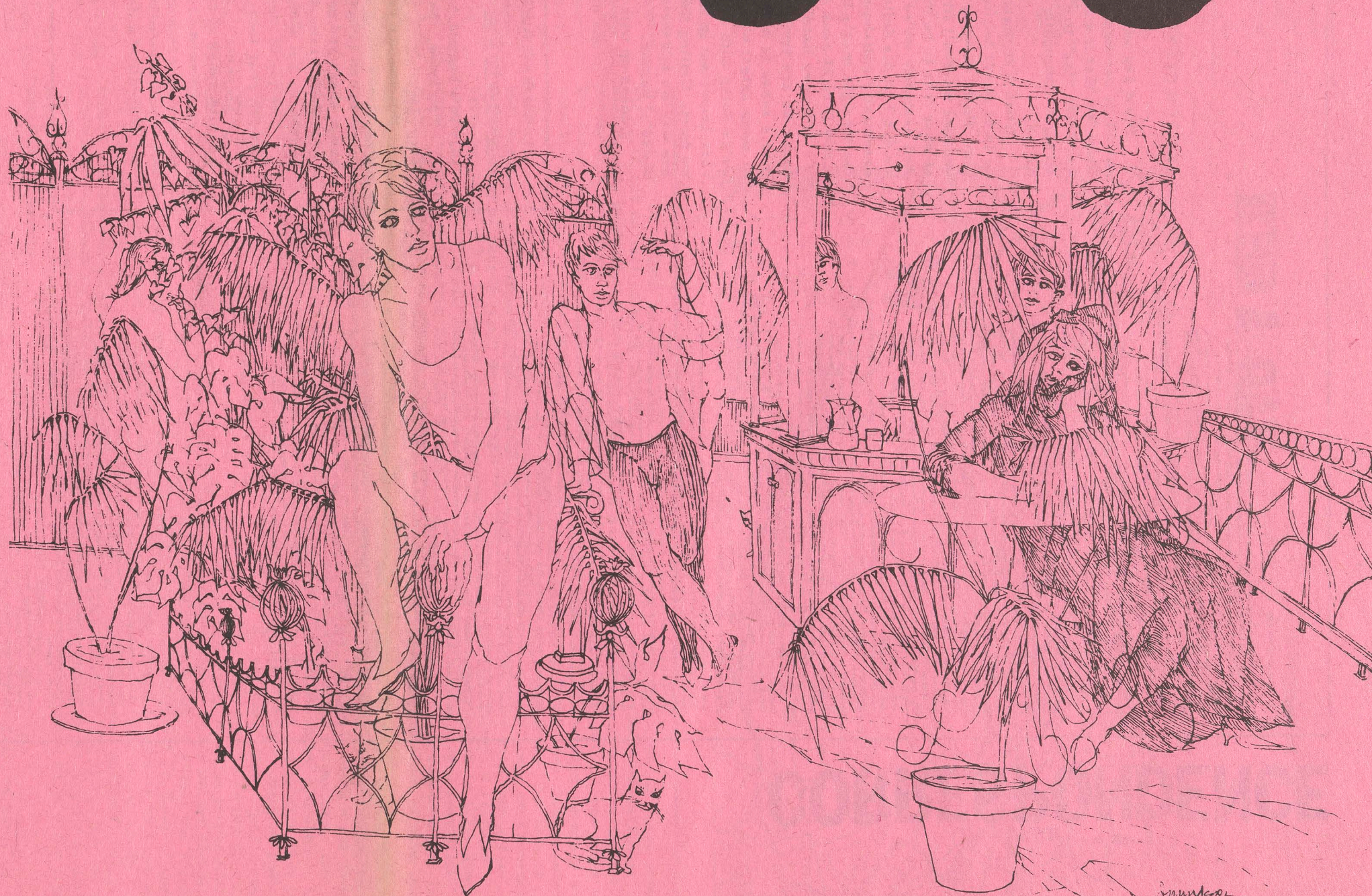
photo by Cécile Ballif



Fag Rag

50¢

VI



Boston, Mass.

Fall-Winter 1973

CORRESPONDENCE

to the staff of fag rag:

I've just finished re-reading yr 5th issue and, having been a reader since the paper's beginning, I'm feeling an incredible amount of anger and disappointment about the complete (to be generous: nearly complete) lack of fulfillment of fag rag's promise of being an always interesting textured colorful at times outrageous never-perfect open-ended organism, one which was growing/making mistakes and always beautiful in that growing/stumbling practice. However, by this point all those above attributes so attractive 5 issues back and even 2 issues back, by this point all those attributes have degenerated into plain sloppiness--in both personal and political terms. I'm not expecting 'perfect' politics from you or myself or anyone, perfect politics (readily, and dangerously, in men anyway) all too often implying rigidity, a lack of eros or life-affirmative qualities/ for example, witness the double-f magazine: the most brilliant male politics ever but the pages contain/point out not only a righteous anger and a currently necessary self-sternness, self-examination but also contain/point to a hard unfeeling impersonal dead-endedness. so anyway, not expecting a 'perfect' politics of faggotry, I still find myself feeling angry and cheated: fag rag has become a ragged collection of jagged dismembered parts and loose ends--a state not objectionable in and of itself, but repulsive when those parts are in and of themselves too often sexistly offensive and this self-defeating, -destructive. the pieces seem carelessly thrown together, displaying a catch as catch can attitude about what you print, ie: I hear you saying: we need material so we'll take anything/ and it's this attitude which becomes more and more obvious with each issue. and it's this attitude which's beginning to get to me, sharply. we need to hear from each other but what we hear is not always what's needed and what we hear needs to be weeded out, questioned, the movement, a collection of diverse contradictory parts, needs to begin asking many hard and serious questions; and specifically it's this task I see fag rag shirking in the name of some kind of anarchy, in the name of let faggots be heard, but I feel that not all the people deserve to be heard/ at least not without a commitment on yr parts to make hard-edged editorial and critical statements on what these people are saying. a demanding criticism is a quality of love (at least I've found this to be true in my present struggle to get beyond/beneath the romantic definition of love which we've all been infected with and which is killing us). and it's the kind of love missing in yr paper; instead, there's a liberal let's-make-nice-with-each-other form of acceptance pervading the pages, a brand of acceptance which is contagious: reading fag rag I find myself tolerating the bullshit cause of an emotional-historical connection felt for the paper and because it's one of the few faggot publications around which occasionally prints something fine, but I no longer want or expect myself to tolerate anything because of the general dearth of cultural feedback, resulting from my oppression and promoting it. and I especially no longer want to tolerate anything created by the people who suffer the same oppressive starvations I do.

I am tired of the attitude abounding in yr pages of: wouldn't it be groovy if we could all get together in a big circle & dance & fuck & share food & love each other and make the revolution (that way). yes, it would be, but now it's time to start asking questions about why that's not happening/why when it did occur it got no further, rather than to continue mourning its absence and promoting the illusion of: it is not that easy, that hard hands / when all the evidence points to the reality that it is not that easy, that getting to that point will involve much pain, more than we can imagine I think. it will involve the pain of healing. there are no easy miracles, no crutches throwing away their crutches and simply getting up to boogie and rejoice. there are instead small steps, painful painful steps, but that pain--if not ignored in favor of fantasy--that pain can be a type of joy when it's understood within the proper context: ie, the context of what it means to change/how that hurts/how we must learn to get through pains not over them, and we've got to begin, because we are still dying, we've got to carve out positions, make commitments, find a real politics and not some form of liberal sugar pill.

I'm particularly disturbed about one article in particular from the last issue: mitzel's article on s&m, which I feel is inexcusable, to promote s&m as revolutionary (this is my sense of what his article tries to do) is the height of pig insensitivity. s&m isn't inherently liberating/ were it so, we'd all be free because we all live it/perpetuate it in some form. we don't need to hear that freedom lives in worshipping the masculine (sadism) in ourselves/anyone else and in worshipping the submissive (masochism) in ourselves. that's the poison we've been fed for years. and the result has been the rape in some form or other of the planet the species the culture our bodies women's lives etc. we don't have to live out all we wish, ie, being indoctrinated with the s&m trip, all of us, it has become a part of all of us; but so has racism. does mitzel advocate the concrete expression of that also? because in effect what he's saying is: live out all yr disease. what I feel must be done instead is to encounter all the sickness within yrself, thru the means of fantasies, wishes, dreams, thru listening to yrself, watching how you operate with love/sex partners etc. encounter yrself, accept the disease as a part of who you are (the fault for it isn't yrself but the responsibility is)--and then kill it off, all of it. that's survival and freedom willing an identity out of the raw material of yr gut experiences, changing that raw material because it's the stuff which not only reflects the sickness of the patriarchy but which also helps to aid and perpetuate that same sickness. and that perpetuation is in no way liberation. mitzel advocates giving in to what's been done to us/ to women/ the planet, etc. by advocating becoming an active force of patriarchal power and its definitions and actions (all of which are rapes of different forms).

what's most offensive, essentially, about the article is this: it says (and by extension, fag rag does also) just what the Man has said all thru/his-story, just what we are supposedly fighting: be the Man, the rough, hairycheated, thickcocked, rapist pain-dealer/that's freedom and as a man -faggot or otherwise- you can have it, it's yours. an option no different than any I've been offered all my life.

Still, I am slightly confused. A piece of mine published in FAG RAG FIVE ("The Boy Who Spoke In Pornography") is severely criticized as an article advocating sado-masochism. How in the world could a sentient adult ever come to that conclusion? The piece was manifestly a short story, which in my book is classified as fiction, and that is the realm of the imagination. It is in no way an "article." That a reader could maintain that advocates s&m leaves him with the burden of proof. That he so patently insists that the short story does advocate s&m is easily enough seen as the reader's fear of something. Surely, I hope that when FAG-RAG does get around to dealing with gay s&m (as it must sooner or later) we won't lose readers who fear proper discussion of an issue that affects the lives of many faggots.

In the meantime, though, I am dedicated to the notion that our enthusiasts will read--actually read, word for word--our publication before lunging for a typewriter and dashing off a five-page letter which they then demand to have printed in its entirety.

Never underestimate the power of demands: a poem by Joseph Canarelli is printed in this issue of FAG RAG. So don't give up yet!



ARE YOU OFFENDED BY OUR NAME?

Some gay people have told us they feel put off by our name for this paper: FAG RAG. They felt that it was wrong for us to use a word like "fag" that is often used by the straight community to show its contempt for us.

When a straight man calls us "faggots" he is in effect telling us that we aren't like him. He is showing his contempt for us because we don't fit his twisted concepts of what it is to be male in our society. And basically we're proud of the fact that we don't fit his definitions because they are essentially anti-human. We're glad to take the straight man's term of contempt and throw it right back at him.

It's very hard to put out the kind of paper we are trying to do and not entirely lose a sense of humor. All of us feel that to some extent we have to go about what we're doing with a sense of humor; it's very important in the vision of the world we have. Calling this paper FAG RAG is one way we felt we could incorporate this sense of humor.

Loosen up with us.

To the FAG RAG staff:

Quotation by Chris H.

Life is a banana,

You know, the kind you see everyday.

But you are given to choices; the one you follow's your own.

You can either spend your time in ballet shoes and gently tiptoe around it, or you can take off your shoes and squash it, but when you do watch out!

The joy of mushed banana, squishing between your toes, turning them moist and soft.....

You can speak of relaxation, but the excitement of a stepped on banana is way beyond compare.

Remember: "When in an absurd situation, act absurdly." Life is an absurd banana.

Michael Phelan

fag rag staff

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yearning for something blond -
a hitchhiker - an expression read as
bored arrogance - wanting to own that -
to control it -

by handling his genitals.

chris storey

In order to prevent Communist or American police from using information in this article against gays in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, names have been changed and the identities altered slightly.

OPPRESSION EAST AND WEST

RED & GAY

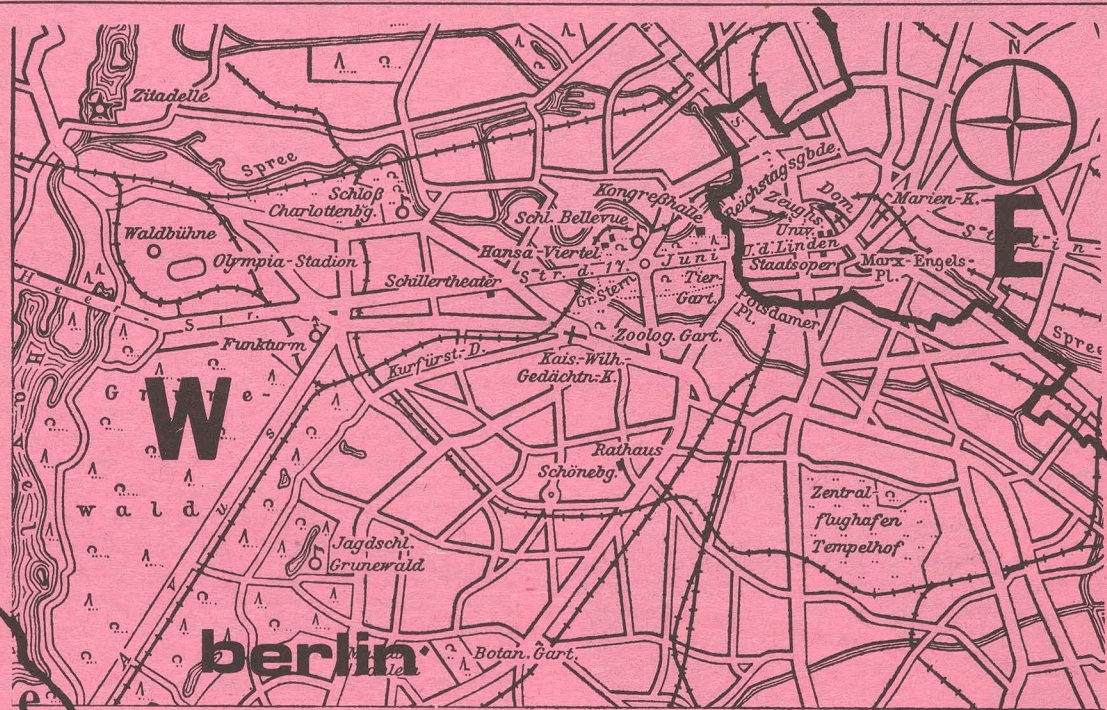
by Tom Reeves

Birmingham, Boston and Berlin are not very similar, but they are linked in my memory because I came out in all of them. In Birmingham I first learned that there were others like me in the world. Coming out among the derelicts and rough country trade of Woodrow Wilson Park and the Birmingham Greyhound was not what I call gay. Coming out in Boston three years later was very gay, but hardly liberated: cruising the meatrack of the Public Garden, along with the Boston police; hopping from Punchbowl to Sporters in search of a "trick." West Berlin made Boston look like Birmingham. There was a more refined, relaxed gay culture with a two-hundred year history and bars like "The Porcupine," known only to a few, where gay poets and artists had gathered through and between two wars. But there are meatracks and tinselly bars and police busts (Razia) in West Berlin. And it is impossible to forget that the same men who ruled German economy when our gay brothers and sisters were burned in the ovens rule West Berlin today. It was by crossing the Berlin Wall and "coming out" all over again in a Communist setting that I found an entirely different homosexual world and very different forms of oppression.

At least for me, comparison is the primary inspiration of learning. The South with the North; blacks and whites; Europe with America; homosexual and heterosexual; Communist with Capitalist. It is difficult to be "objective" in any comparison; it is probably not desirable to try when one of the items compared is your self or your culture. In the case of comparing East and West it is impossible. Mass media, advertisers and the ilk of Richard M. Nixon have drilled into us images of ourselves and the Reds and definitions of such crucial words as "freedom" and "dictatorship." Unless we squarely face the hidden biases built into our mass American mind and lay out clearly the self-chosen biases of our authentic consciousness, we will produce comparisons that mock reality and mimic Time Magazine, however "liberal" or "tolerant" our terminology may be.

I have two strong biases in writing this. I am totally opposed to the power of the modern warfare/"welfare" State, whether it is the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R. I am especially opposed to the policies and power of the U.S. government and the multi-national corporations protected and extended by American weapons, trade and aid. I believe America is the chief source of exploitation, poverty and war in the world, just as Rome was in her era and Britain was in hers.

My first bias leads me to protest strongly the ruthless discrimination and scapegoating of homosexuals in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, since those countries are the topic of this essay. My second bias insists that I denounce in advance any use of my critique for the reactionary purposes of a "liberal" American establishment. Our oppression here is profound enough for us to fight it alone, with no time for exotic interests abroad. Our oppression here is subtle enough to make it almost impossible to rouse more than a handful of our brothers and sisters. Yet, it seems to me, we will never rise ourselves until we see both the plight and the potential power of gay people in the whole world. Gay is an oppression-liberation force that transcends national borders. It is one of several forces helping to wipe out those borders and erode the power that created them. In both East and West, the criminals in charge are worried. Their panic causes them to oppress more than ever. In both societies, the authority of a distant and mechanical State and the priorities of an insane production-consumption economy have entirely engulfed the legitimate authority and priorities of individuals and communities. The only way to reverse the trend toward total mass society is to be ourselves and to act directly to take power where we live and work. I believe a comparison of gay life and oppression in East and West will be helpful to us in doing that.



The best way to explain something that is different and unusual is to be personal. I will be very personal. I met Klaus while shivering in the snowy cruising path between Der Keller (a bar) and the Savigny Platz men's room in West Berlin. Klaus was an apprentice carpenter, not quite twenty, blonde, with rough hands and a sad face. He had "escaped" from East Germany to the Economic Miracle (*Wirtschaftswunder*) of West Berlin. He rode his Czech motorbike off a low cliff and through the barbed wire fences in the middle of Wannsee, a favorite swimming spot for Berliners on both sides. He was barely scratched as he fled through a dark, rainy night. Vopos, East German guards who volunteer to keep their comrades at home, shined their searchlights and shot, but Klaus made it safe to "freedom."

With the dry humor of most Berliners, he filled in one of those police questionnaires which all good Germans, East or West, must send in whenever they move, work or copulate. He sent it back across the Wall to the People's Police of the German Democratic Republic. He had no idea then that he would want to follow it home again someday.

Klaus came out when an FDJ (Free German Youth) leader seduced him during a bicycle outing on his fourteenth birthday. He suffered in the belief that his sexual acts were viewed as reactionary, condemned as decadent "Western" perversions, and punishable by disgrace and "rehabilitation" at special camps for moral and political criminals.

The official philosophy of the German Democratic Republic, as in the Soviet Union, is a set of dogmas called "dialectical materialism" or "Marxist-Leninist democracy." One dogma holds that prostitution, homosexuality and many other sexual practices do not exist in the progressive socialist world. Vestiges of such behavior is said to be due to Western radio, tourists and spies. The capitalist nations--especially decadent West Berlin--are portrayed in the Party press as full of perversions and sexual license.

Klaus believed the Party. He knew a few other gays, but he thought they were a tiny minority. What a delectable hell-hole West Berlin must be! Since Klaus knew he was unalterably "perverted," he lusted and biked his way over the Wall to what he expected would be delicious damnation. He was soon disappointed. He had had several satisfying relationships with men in East Berlin despite the secrecy surrounding cruising. In fact, he had a small circle of gay friends who visited opera and theater, picniced, or read poetry together in the evenings. They were not part of a larger gay scene--none existed. That very fact made them aware of each other's needs, careful of each other's feelings. The extreme nature of their problem lead them away from promiscuity and stereotyped "gay" casual sex into honest, loyal relationships.

I found such trust and closeness among many forbidden or circumscribed communities in the East (gays, Methodists, dissenting intellectuals, freaks (*Gammler*), etc.). Two facts seem to lead ironically to stronger community and warmer humaneness in the East than is usually true in similar groups here. The lack of over-consumption and affluence amid poverty and discrimination bring with them a disinterest in material things, a friendly sharing of the simple things in life, almost a sort of "spirituality." The possibility of exposure and penalty is so complete that it leads to a comradeship and trust of some depth.

This was not so to any degree during the excesses of Stalinism with its terror and paranoia. But once the rigid police state gave way to a modified police-bureaucracy, the breathing space proved rather comfortable for those who dared to think and be different in their private lives. Gays cannot be public, but that is not all bad. Since their lives are very private, their style is not at all affected by mass media or elite propaganda, as it increasingly is in the United States (the Mafia bars, the slick porno, the tired *Advocate*). One other point in favor of gay life there as opposed to here is that the most basic principles of Marxism reject crude prejudice. Such prejudice obviously exists and is even promoted by the State, but the gay object of persecution is not hounded by some deeply felt religious guilt as is often true in the West.

A curious and sad side-effect of being gay in the East is that gay people often identify with "free" America and the "capitalist world." Klaus and many others I met in East Berlin, Moscow, Budapest and Bucharest listened to illegal tapes of the latest (and often the worst) rock music, wore faddish western clothes, and even sided with reactionary western politicians. Once, at a gay gathering on the wooded Dneiper River banks in Kiev, I heard gays praise Nixon's famous kitchen debate with Khrushchev, which they had heard on Voice of America. Every one of my gay Kievites would have voted for RMN!

So Klaus was unhappy and gay in West Berlin. He visited dozens of the many gay bars. He danced among the lavish costumes of the elegant Kleistkasino, risked the roughness of Trocadero, and stared at hundreds of butch boy-crotches in *Why-Not?* He cruised from Tiergarten and Volkspark (like Esplanade and Fenway in Boston) to Bahnhof Zoo and Ku'damm (meatracks like Park Square and the Block). He found what he considered crass competition, coldness, bitchiness. He found it hard to fit into a community and find friends. He was amazed that persecution still existed. From time to time the Tiergarten would be cordoned off and every fag in the bushes rounded up to face disgrace and a minor sentence. The same thing happened at the bars,

RED & GAY



BERLIN. Cruising the Wall on both sides; in the Tiergarten (near this sign) and across the Wall beyond Brandenburg Tor on Unter den Linden.

except for a few protected, dignified bars where the rich and prominent gathered (including, in those days, the young son of Mayor Willy Brandt). One night Klaus was caught in a bombed-out ruin (a favorite sex pad in a city full of tiny apartments and nosey landladies) with a friend. He was roughly handled by police. When his partner turned out to have a U.S. passport, he was released by the cautious "occupied" Berlin gestapo, but Klaus spent a night in jail. He had to endure several "psychological interviews" at the refugee settlement where he had been living.

Klaus wanted me to find out for myself about gay life on the "other side." One Sunday I took the Communist-run S-Bahn (elevated train) over the Wall to meet his gay friends in Pankow, the seat of East German power. Pankow is a villa-filled East Berlin suburb in which is located a luxurious compound for government and Party officials--amazingly similar to the American compound in the Dahlem area of West Berlin, except it fortunately lacks the American built super-markets, subdivisions and football stadium.

Klaus' former lover was a man named Hans, subdued, friendly and forty. Hans lived with Else and Juergen, a lesbian-gay couple who married for convenience to save their careers as economists. Hans had once been "discovered." While on a mission to Prague as a translator for the Foreign Ministry, he was arrested for an "indiscretion." He was immediately confined and sent home in disgrace, fired from his job, and forced to spend five months in an *Anstalt* (mental hospital) with other moral and political offenders. He then went through a six months' trial period as a factory worker, attending weekly rehabilitation sessions and reporting regularly to police. Finally he was allowed to become a translator again, but not for sensitive security work. Hans was lucky in comparison to some others I have met. He was useful in his skills and he was a Party member. When I met him, he had returned to gay life, cruising cautiously, living among gay friends. He was at first dubious about meeting an American, but curiosity overcame his fear.

Else and Juergen both had long-time lovers, Marie and Fritz. These lovers were both actors. Actors, writers and musicians--like regular Party members and scientists--live a more secure life than their Western counterparts. Culture and technology are supported by the State. They are well supported, and ballet, opera, theater and art flourish far better than among us. But the security and the support severely limit the creativity. A writer-friend of Fritz', Voelker, told me how painful limitations can be to an artist. He became briefly my own lover and a life-long friend. His father was a member of the highest Party committee for agriculture and showed no patience with Voelker's "radical, decadent" poetry. His writing and some loud rumors of his homosexuality were his undoing. Two bits of evidence were used against him in the kangaroo court that decides such matters. The first was testimony of the Party Watchdog in the literary faculty at Humboldt University where we both were students. These watchdogs are usually very stupid and frightening people and students take pleasure in making fun of them behind their backs--but very carefully.

The other "evidence" was a poem. Its first line, written while he worked at a lake-side cafe, reads (as I remember it):

<i>Als Ich noch Kellner war</i>	<i>(When I was still</i>
<i>Wie Weh es mir doch tat</i>	<i>a waiter, how</i>
<i>Immer zu bedienen</i>	<i>very painful it</i>
<i>Die schoene Knaben</i>	<i>was, always to</i>
<i>Als ob ich sie nicht wollt'</i>	<i>serve them, those</i>
<i>Zu lieben und haben....</i>	<i>lovely young boys;</i>
	<i>as though I did</i>
	<i>not care to love</i>
	<i>or possess them.)</i>

Voelker lost his scholarship and went off to the boondocks where he is working in a village library. He wrote me, "You have no idea what goddamn, narrow gossips East German librarians are. You have less idea what it is to write, yet never share what you have written."

Voelker was one of the few genuinely radical gay men I met in the East. Among the others were four men who had formed an illegal secret Tolstoy Society in Leningrad. Most gays were very middle class, or they were workers whose sex lives were furtive and who never thought much about sex or politics. My Pankow friends were sickeningly pro-American. So were many of their straight counterparts in the East German bureaucracy. Marie and Fritz had responsible economic tasks which they did well--East German economy is the best in Eastern Europe. Yet these responsible socialists found it cute to flaunt their official privileges. They had TIME magazine on their coffee table and they wore mod West Berlin styles. They listened--as did the Russian officers you saw with portable radios in subway stations--to AFN American radio! Where else could they hear the Rolling Stones?

Despite our political and life-style differences, I enjoyed going to Pankow. I went to their parties and picnics and met writers, artists, bureaucrats, teachers and a few workers. The workers were much younger than their hosts. They were, like Klaus, pick-ups who had become safe companions for older middle class people. An interesting effect of life in the East is that fear of ruin causes relationships either to be furtive, hidden and silent, or to become life-long and relaxed. There is little in-between. It is hard to find a Klaus. When you do, you do not give him up as easily as do Americans and West Germans in their penchant for promiscuity.

Gays and straights never mix in openly gay settings. Gay people must spend most of their lives in a straight world of Victorian morality. The one exception is the art-music-drama world. I spent many nice evenings seeing good theater at the Berliner-Ensemble, which is Brecht's legacy and one of the finest theaters in the world. Afterwards we went to the milk bar on Karl-Marx-Allee, or to a fine hotel or club cafe.

The milk bar was the first cruising spot I discovered, and cruising was more complicated than I was used to. We would watch each other for an hour. Then we left in tandem and walked another hour, careful to stay on opposite sides of the street. When we were sure no one was following, we sat and talked on a bench or in a neighborhood bar (*Kneipe*). Hans had met Klaus along the Dimitroffstrasse, just off Leninallee, and I also met a boy there. The area was full of bored, working-class youth on corners and in playgrounds. My friend was a very frightened apprentice window-washer (the Germans over-organize every occupation). He ran away after a short but splendid time in a field where they were building apartments. There are "nearly-gay" bars in East Berlin, Bucharest, Budapest, Prague, Dresden and Leipzig. These bars are quite subdued and straights often go there without knowing what is happening. Two such places attracted me in East Berlin. Both were near the old Marienkirche and not far from Party Headquarters, just beside a canal-bridge some three blocks from Alexanderplatz. One had a cowboy and Indian decor--a favorite German gay theme. Rough trade is sometimes called "wild-west." I encountered there the only East German hustler (*Strichjuenger*) I met. I had often enough seen them near the Friederichstrasse Station, among the tawdry women who prostitute themselves, primarily to honored third world "guests" from Africa and Iran. We left the bar separately. After more than the usual street choreography, we met in a little park near the French Cathedral. He was direct: "Leckst Du?", he asked (do you

suck?). "Ja, manchmal," I replied (Yes, sometimes), "Und Du?" (and you?). "Kommt darauf an. Hash da 20DM?" he drawled in heavy Saxon dialect, sounding like a young Ulbricht (It depends; you got \$5?). I was not in a buying mood, so I did not sample his wares.

There was another bar for less sex-oriented conversation nearby: Club Havanna. There was some subtle cruising along Unter den Linden on the benches in the middle of the street near the Wall, and also near Hitler's bunker at the Wall, not far from Check-Point Charley. These were not romantic cruising environs, but they added to the *Verboten*-ness that gays have always secretly enjoyed. The wildest East German cruising scene I found was by a castle on Babelsburg just outside Potsdam, and along the swimming area that separates East from West near Klein-Glienicke-Bruecke.

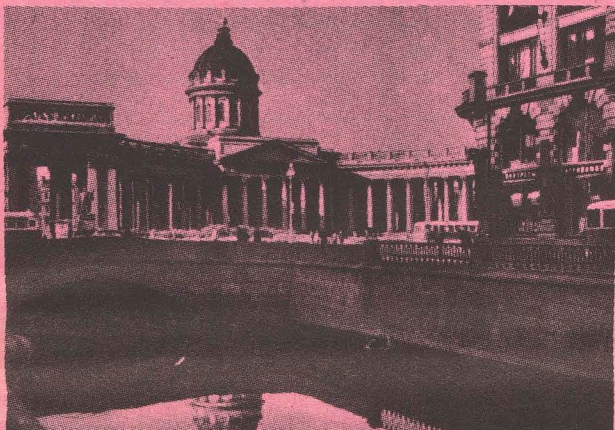
It was at Babelsburg, where I had gone to hear a lecture on Walt Rostow at the Walter Ulbricht Academy of Foreign Policy, that I ran into Ivan. Although I knew him slightly from the University, I had not known he was gay. His area of study was German language, but he hated Germans. "Russians and Americans are more compatible than we are to German barbarians," he told me. I have decided he is right, both about our virtues and our vices. We especially enjoyed using Ivan's credentials to eat the good food at the Russian embassy together after our morning classes. Later, in Washington, I was questioned by "FBI agents" (who knows what they really were?) about those Embassy visits. They also told me they knew about Hans. They told me he was an agent, that he would try to use me, and that he might soon ask me to serve as contact in Washington. They wanted all my "East German contacts" names and addresses. I threw them out of the school where they had interrupted my teaching. Not only might our police, agents, and double-agents use the information, but so might theirs! Two years later I visited East Berlin and met Hans at the House of Teachers Cafe. He was nervous. I told him at once about the FBI visit and the accusations. He laughed and changed the subject.

Oddly, the agents never mentioned homosexuality. Nor was I questioned about that when I was detained for ten hours once at the border. I was charged with smuggling a plastic raincoat. I was stripped and left naked in a tiny room. I worried that I might have been "discovered." It was a tremendous relief when the guard returned with my clothing and an apology. He explained that it had taken a long time to translate all my notes that I had with me. A scrap of paper with figures and symbols and puzzled them most. It had taken them forever to translate. It was a recipe for old-fashioned Southern boiled custard from my mother. I had made it for Fritz, Else, Hans and Voelker.

Before I left Berlin to go to Russia, excited to find the gay contacts supplied by Ivan, I crossed a last time through the Wall. My gay friends often went with me to the "Glass Palace" where lovers kiss and cry before parting at 1:00 AM. It reminded me of those ridiculous dormitory scenes that used to happen on college campuses at curfew. As I waved to friends the border guard checked my wallet. One guard had been there almost every night. Once he asked me about the signature of Secretary of State Dean Rusk in my passport. "Do you like him?" "No, not really." "Well," he laughed, "He's a lot better than ours." Max came from a family of ten children. He believed his lot was better in the East, but he complained--mostly about economic things, not "freedom." "At least we have a fair chance here. I could have gone to college just like a son of a Central Committeeman, but I didn't have the energy. We have a dictatorship of bureaucratic bastards from all classes. You have a dictatorship of clever capitalist bastards from the rich only. Not much difference." My last week we met at a restaurant in an alley near the Glass Palace. Since he was not married, I thought he might be gay. Among Russian soldiers, red-faced plump Berlin women, schmaltzy violins, good schnitzel and white beer, we talked. I trembled (this was a policeman!) and told him I was gay. It took a few minutes to explain. "I may be that way, too. I don't know." (Germans often say, simply, "So", for lack of a decent term for gay.) Max was afraid. He did not want me to write. Too many risks. "It's too bad we missed it, but maybe the next life. I believe in reincarnation, you know. I have to."

I found Kiev, Leningrad, Odessa and Moscow all friendly, thanks to Ivan. But I met gay Russians and Uzbeks and Kalmyks everywhere. In mysterious Samarkand, I met and spent a happy (and hot: 110°F) afternoon with a gay Turkman boy. He introduced me to his mother and brothers in their near-by hovel after we had had a tender hour behind a ruin of the magnificent temple-palace-observatory of Ulug-Bek. He had been playing among a group of younger boys who gawked at the tourists. He usually took much younger boys than himself (he was seventeen). He was very afraid of exposure. He, like his parents, were bitter about Russian prejudice against the other ethnic groups, and about being forced to work away from their own people. He could not grasp what I meant by "gay," and refused to talk about it. He made up for lack of words in affection.

In Moscow I went to an address given me by Ivan. It was noon on Saturday when I found the flat in a row of Stalinesque apartment houses (the ones with nets to catch the falling mortar). Evgeny lived just around the corner from the "Progress" cinema. He was dark, bearded and about thirty. He wrote obscene gay science fiction and was devoted to the occult. He had lost his job because of absenteeism. He had a collection of illegal Western jazz tapes and several crudely mimeographed *Samizdat* (underground) articles on subjects from music to sex. He was living from a tiny amount provided by the state, but he had been forced to take work, starting the next week, as a mail clerk. He was the very model of what Soviet officials would call a "parasite."



LENINGRAD: The canals and the Neva River are alive during the White Nights of June--dope, women or gay men, as you wish. But there is less cruising and more just meeting friends.

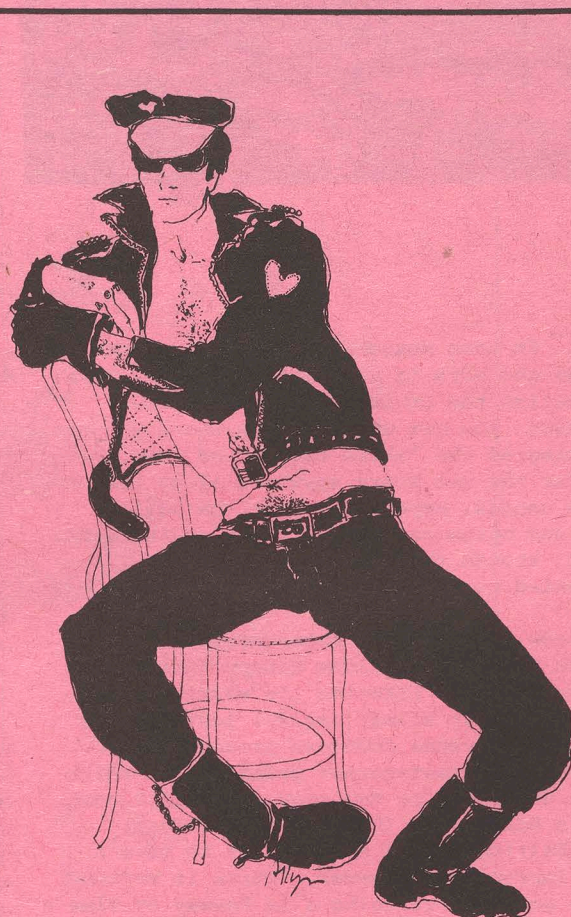
Without hesitation, Evgeny invited me to go to a party at the gigantic University building a few blocks away. He went in first and got me a student pass to use in order to get in. Moscow University is one of the largest buildings in the world. Under one roof are dormitories for thousands as well as classes, offices, labs and even a cyclotron. The halls are dirty and depersonalized, but each suite is converted into the private world of the Soviet young elite and the few young rebels who manage to make it. Suites are often lived in for years and passed on to friends. Whole sections of a hall may be taken over by some subculture or ethnic group. Gays could not go as far as the brave Baptists, jazz and rock freaks, scientists, etc., but inside a larger area of mostly musicians and artists, there were two suites of gay men. I had once been to a similar straight party, likewise illegal for an American, at the University, and there was little difference--except of course that the seven men were starved for word of gay life "outside."

The Soviet press is much more puritanical than the East German, and the Soviets are more isolated--in East Berlin one can watch Western TV. Gays had only heard a few rumors of what our life is like here: printed in travel books like those of Yevtushenko or in cultural articles in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. They knew there was "flagrant" gay porn in Times Square and heard about transvestites and gay brothels in San Francisco. And they longed to see for themselves.

Most of these men would have been at home among American bar-queens, except for one thing: style. It was softer, gentler, less flamboyant. They were queens but not screaming. No screaming was allowed, of course. I suspect those who feel like screaming (or whose very looks literally scream out their condition) are the most brutally oppressed. Just as bad, however, is the condition of the complete closet cases. For they must believe the Soviet lie that "Homosexuality is practically nonexistent in the U.S.S.R." (Revised Soviet Encyclopedia). But those who are obviously gay but not *too* obvious, have managed to create a quiet but almost comfortable place. In the combination of their oppression and silent self-assertion, Soviet gays like their East German counterparts, have come up with a life that in some ways is less brutal than the "free world" gay ghettos. Russians have one plus that East Germans lack (along with Americans): Russians are affectionate with each other and often embrace and kiss in public. Cheek-kissing and embracing is not even considered an intimacy. Russian men go much further. I was deeply moved and excited during my first Moscow subway ride when two bold boys of about sixteen, who had been holding hands and touching throughout our ride, suddenly kissed full on the mouth before one of them left the car! Not one person aside from me seemed to notice.

When I left that subway near the Kremlin, I bought an ice-cream cone (*morozhenoye* is delicious). Ahead of me in the long line was a shy, blonde worker of about nineteen. He was wearing shorts and sandals and looked more German or Scandinavian than Russian. In fact he came from the area near the Finnish border. He glanced at me frequently, but when I smiled, he stared at the ground. I thought he vanished after buying his icecream. Then I saw him looking in a show window of the Intourist building. I approached, but he moved on, glancing coyly back. This game continued for so long, that I gave up. To my surprise he ran after me, then turned around and darted behind a warehouse. I followed him into the Kremlin walls to the little park in front of the Grand Palace where you have a good view of the river. He was so nervous he whispered and I could not understand him between chattering teeth and gulps. We spent a whole evening moving from one park to another, touching each other gently when he was absolutely sure no one would see. We could *not* go anywhere for sex, he said, because he knew Big Brother would find out! He obviously was unaware that Stalinism was dead. He met me twice again for similar outings, and on the evening before I left he took me home for supper with his equally nervous mother and sister (his father was dead). In the room he shared with both of them--where he had slept since he was six--he showed me a little album of simple photos of boys cut from magazines; nothing even slightly sexy, but quite important to him, something he was both ashamed of and excited by. I was the first to see them. He gave me his picture--which I still carry--in which he is embracing another boy. But no sex. Yet he wrote me in incomprehensible-to-me Cyrillic handwriting. I met him again when I visited Russia; this time he had found some courage. The things I had told him about gays even in Moscow had lead him finally to experiment. He had gone to the two chief cruising grounds I had suggested: Pushkin Square on and around the steps of the Rossiya Theater, and the river bank area in University Hills just near the Metro stop. That is where the "*Stilyagi*", teenagers with long hair and guitars, leave their friends sometimes and wander alone, looking for fun with lonely students or bureaucrats. Sasha met several people, but still had no gay friends. This time we made love--twice, both times after taking a train to a secluded forest outside the city.

I have mentioned several cruising areas. There are many more. In Kiev, it is near the Pecharskaya caves and on a sand-island in the river (nude bathing, only at night). In Leningrad, the two best places I found were the basement of the Museum of Atheism in the former Kazanskaya Cathedral (in the unguarded labyrinth depicting excesses of Papery in the Middle Ages) where one meets a cross section of workers and students, and the beach-park near the Peter and Paul Fortress on the Neva



knights templars

what homage can i give
to knights
who raped and plundered
in the name of christianity
the peoples of the east?

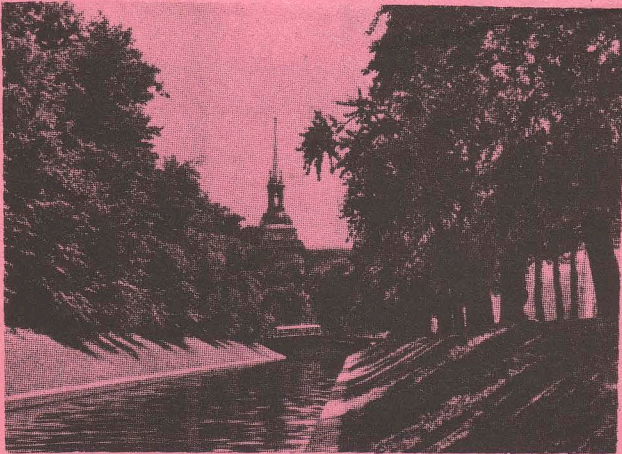
what homage can i give
to blond-haired military men
who marched
to save the holy land
for their own gain?

what homage can i give
to conquerors
who killed my people then
and still conspire
to keep us bound and chained?

what homage can i give
that will destroy their rule
and free
the peoples of the world
from western tyranny?

what homage can i give
to men
who always must be men
who do not love
themselves
or other men
and cannot find the way?

n.a. diaman



LENINGRAD: Kazanskaya Cathedral, now Museum of Atheism, where lonely gays often meet in unguarded hallways.

RED SEX

American police--perhaps not as bad. If arrested the situation could be grave. Yet Soviet jails are usually cleaner and less violent than ours, and who knows what might be eagerly waiting in them? If you decide to try, I suggest practice first in some near equivalent of oppression: say Jackson, Miss., or Pretoria, South Africa.

River. In both Moscow and Leningrad I met gay men and boys in many other areas--I have the feeling the cruising is less defined than here: you get whom you can where you can. In Leningrad the "white nights" of June are best for the wee hours anywhere along the Neva or the canals, especially near the Ballet. Grass and opium are easily found at the same places, though the gays I knew did not seem interested in drugs.

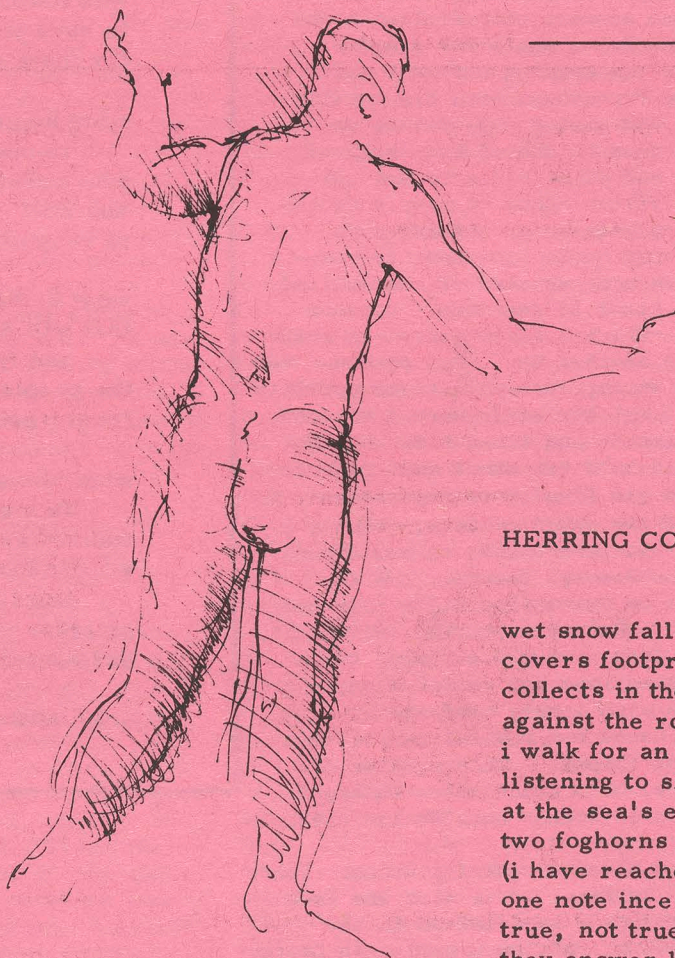
In Moscow, I found the Embankment near the pond in Gorky Park seldom disappointing on a summer evening. Likewise the working-class streets (mostly slums, really) just off the broad Gorky Avenue downtown present some interesting street-corner groups, from which I have drawn one or two away, just as I have done in Dorchester (Boston) or Highlandtown (Baltimore). I do not want to give a false impression, however. There is *nothing* on the scale of cruising a la Fenway or Time's Square or (formerly) the Embarkadero Y. I almost think I am glad there is not. The men I did meet were always friendly and never pushy. The casual American tourist should be extremely cautious, however. I could easily have been put in a Soviet prison for my "crimes," and Soviets are well-known for "finding" reasons to detain you if they wish. On the other hand, if you have done nothing out of the ordinary, I do not think they are more vigilant or vindictive about gays than

Those Soviet and East Europeans who *have* seriously tried to do something about their situation have read everything in Marx, Lenin and Soviet history on the subject. I remember looking up every reference to homosexual in dictionaries and psychology books and gleaning indexes in history books when I was growing up in Tennessee and Alabama. Gay Soviet youth do the same. What they find is stunning paradox: Marx mentioned it only twice, as a sickness to be gently helped; Engels has a favorable reference to gay liberation; both favored the abolition of all victimless "crimes." One of the first acts of the first Soviet Commissar of Health, the libertine intellectual Madame Kollontai, was to abolish all laws forbidding homosexual acts between adults. By 1921 the last bit of sexual freedom was gone. Stalin's constitution praised the sanctity of family and marriage, and the law reverted to a Victorianism surpassed only by some U.S. states (and the Nixon Court). It was not until 1960 that some psychologists were again able even to write about homosexuality. The famous "thaw" of the late fifties and early sixties was a meaningful time for gays. Many of the older men I met said they cruised for the first time during that period. Jazz clubs and other meeting places sprang up. Poetry readings, gatherings of intellectuals in Maya-

kovsky Square, art or music discussions--all of these provided a milieu for the first stirrings of a new gay life. These have not stopped anywhere in East Europe and the U.S.S.R. In Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania and I even think East Germany, the scene gets easier each year. But in the U.S.S.R. it is the opposite. The most open clubs have been closed and poetry and discussions censored. Yevtushenko became a mouthpiece for a "liberalized" state. But the decisive actions of repudiating Stalinism and allowing some dissent cannot be completely overcome anymore than American rulers in the 70's can wipe out all the gains of the 60's. New repression has brought even bolder rebellion. The Samizdat has increased and become more sophisticated, and it now has a gay subdivision. More and more brothers and sisters in Russia are coming out among their friends at least.

It is hard to be optimistic about the future for gays in the East, especially when our own future in the West looks more dim than ever. We are all liable to suffer until we become aware of who are our oppressors and who we are. It is impossible to say whether we in America really have more "freedom" than gays in Russia and East Europe. Freedom is not a condition. It is actions. Unless men and women think their own thoughts and act on them, and unless they relate to each other fully and responsibly, freedom is just a word. Where stereotypes are deeply entrenched, and where people are just looking for a mass-mold to fit into, there is certainly no freedom. It may even be unlikely that gays will ever unite to throw off the rule of straight, male dominance. But understanding what is gay and what is oppressive suffering in Siberia as well as in Springfield may help.

Tom Reeves is the author of several books, including *THE END OF THE DRAFT* (Random House), and of a number of articles in newspapers and magazines including *The Nation*, *Christian Century*, *The Washington Post* and *Politologe* and *Aussenpolitik* (in German).



HERRING COVE

wet snow falls on the coast,
covers footprints and dead reeds,
collects in the hollow pockets of dunes
against the roots of dry brush.
i walk for an hour
listening to small pebbles clack
at the sea's edge.
two foghorns groan in the distance.
(i have reached back to my past.)
one note incessantly greets the other:
true, not true, true, not true,
they answer like lovers, each
beached in a blizzard of lies.

David Eberly

IT MIGHT BEGIN ANYWHERE

tip between knuckles
finger tip
tongue
nipple so far away
neck back
hairline
cracks everywhere
knee pit
arm back
hip fold
thigh bend
double cheeks with wing
salt singing in them
flesh floods
the atmosphere
tongue tip
nostrils
what
wings
higher
tit hair
eye lash
down down each vertebrae sucked
flesh pocket
cell orgasm
skin orgasm
toe suck
tongue fuck
anally
orally
silly smile
cheek to clit
back to tit
cock to pit of neck and soft shoulder
ball to thigh to cock to mouth to asshole to tongue to quick bites everywhere
person to person to
cock to cock to
cheeks to cheeks to
instructions for the dance
begin anywhere
eye to eye say



Michael Lally

"THE EMPEROR OF ENNUI AT BANGKOK"

Filling generation gaps with hard, deep
thrusts. Now no poet I, tail exposed
throbbing.

Tribal rites primeval
soothe my seething
lips, Lingua franca
darting in and out,
Anonymous other--
conscious coming.

Tramp, tramp, tramp.
Obeisance before
Priapus, Patroness of
Pederasts.

Tramp, tramp, tramp
Loaded canons
war march of the
priests

aiming at my head,
smell
of
smegma.

Toothy mouths too small shallow
tight cheeks too
Liberated ecstasy, too real!

Phoenix rising from hurled
Ashes. United

nations of
Buffalo Bulls in
masquerade.

Being here now
Pulsating in the heat.
Sweat.
Delicious wetness.
I join
the life
of my
time and am caught
in the
web of
togetherness.
orgasms-in-"check"
moans of release.
I touch everyone but myself.



II

Will the nameless cowless nothing bar?
war whoops
and Bachanal
Dance and thrust and
Drive. Joyous groping.
Hands passing from joint to joint, joints
passing from hand to hand.
Live. Live. Life.
Jumping, bumping, stamping
out the beat.
Everything's swell.

We'll all be ready when
we get to hell.
Masculine/feminine. Pushed
out of shape.
It's the fullness
Right-on! Right-on!
Kicky kicks and
sequined studs. Tambourines
and painted nails
Bare chests and empty
halters.

High heels and flowing bells.
Hot numbers and bad sounds.
What a trip. Wow-w-w
Kings Drones
are bore
queens the
in queen.
disguise.

clutching thighs
as the Planet
dies!
Leather and suede
and
denim and khaki
and
baubles beads.

"Did you make it, man?"
"yeah-h-h. Thanx."
Butch-bi-Fem-swish
"I feel my body!"

Sativa Sagittarius



BLOWING in the wind

by Charley Shively

There was unquestionably a wave of violence this summer against faggots, both here in Boston and around the country. Many not involved in gay liberation blame gay activists for the violence; they say things were all right before we started attracting attention to our life by being so open and notorious.

I want to dispel this attitude by reciting a short history of violence against my person -- a violence that began long before gay liberation.

Although I lived in a relatively "rough" neighborhood as a child, I was never beaten or attacked. I had a fight once with a neighbor boy when I was about eleven years old; other than that I had a reputation of being outside the usual male competitive games. I never challenged anyone, and they left me alone. In school I was known as a "brain." Being poor, I never belonged to any cliques, and I tried very hard not to offend anyone. I wasn't exactly known as a "sissy" or a "faggot" then; as far as sex went I was a neuter to both men and women. Only a few boys knew I was gay as I slept with them (one of them being the toughest and meanest kid in the city who wanted me to run away and live with him as soon as I was eighteen). Instead I went to Harvard & he went to prison on an armed robbery charge.

So as far as I can remember I had never been beaten up before I came to Cambridge; certainly I'd never been beaten because I was a faggot.

In the fall of 1956, I got my first shocking taste of homophobic violence. I was cruising the Charles River by the university & several "townies" in a group approached me. I thought they were quite attractive, except for an older man who stayed back. They asked me if I wanted to suck their cocks. I said sure; why don't we go somewhere. We went nearby to the stairs beside the Larz Anderson Bridge. As soon as we got into the darkness away from possible witnesses, they jumped me, began kicking and yelling at me. The most striking phrase they used was not "cocksucker" or "faggot" (which have never bothered me), but they called me an "animal." Sex to them was an animal, awful, fearful thing. Of course that's what I like most being, an "animal," & and I rather despise the vanity of humanists who try to make so much of our species. As it were, that was my introduction to Western Civilization, Christianity, Catholicism, and Cambridge. Fortunately for me, I wasn't beaten too badly because an MDC patrol cruiser came along and scared the "humans" away.

The next incident I remember was sometime in the summer of 1957. I'd gone to the Greyhound Bus Station in Cincinnati. At the urinal I met this boy who just melted me all over. He had on a Hawaiian shirt, tattoos, and rough interesting hands. I

had driven down in my father's car, and after we left the station, felt each other up in the alley, I suggested we could drive somewhere.

We went to Eden Park (sort of Cincy's Central Park) & across from the plant Conservatory under some lovely shrubbery, we made love. As we finished, he pulled a knife on me and took my valuables. I really didn't mind since he obviously seemed to need the money; but I hated to lose my watch which my aunt had given me when I was graduated from high school. (I was the first person in my family to finish high school.) He told me he was a hustler & suggested I might try it. I was quite flattered, and I drove him back to the bus station. We said good-bye.

The next incident I remember was sometime around 1963 in the late summer. I met this fellow in a yellow figured shirt and went into the reeds with him on the Fenway. We were near the water where there was a slight embankment. I was on my hands and knees doing him, lower on the bank than he was.

As I was enjoying myself, he pulled a rusty knife out & put it to my throat & said something about give me your money. I took hold of his arm and just pulled him over my shoulder and threw him into the mud. He cried & asked me: "Why'd you

have to do that?" This was his first robbery & his male ego was quite crushed. We talked awhile & finished our sex play. He agreed to meet me again on the Fenway. When we met, we did something or other. He told me about an older man he'd met on Commonwealth Avenue and stabbed to death. He said he got nervous or didn't like his looks or he was getting nasty. I didn't see him again.

Sometime in the early spring of 1964 (or maybe 1965) I was robbed on the Esplanade. I had crossed from Phillips Drugstore on the bridge to the river. Near the boathouse I saw three fellows turn the corner. I thought it looked like trouble. Should I run? Before I could think about it, they were upon me. I was impressed with their "professionalism." Two held me with their faces away so I couldn't possibly see them & the third held a sharp new knife to my throat & said very little. They quickly searched me, took my wallet, and went on. I said: Can't you at least leave my ID. They kicked me solidly in the ass, kept the ID and went on their way.

I had almost no money & didn't care too much anyway. I'm sad to say, though, that the thing I resented about them was their greasiness and ugliness. The one who held the knife had pimples and a "flesh-colored" Bandaid on his neck. It may be contemptible, but I enjoy robbery more if the robber is handsome and sexy.

About the same time, later in the summer, I was attacked by a whole gang of juveniles--ranging between the ages of twelve and sixteen. They were a striking group, six or seven of them I'd say. They had a leader, no doubt the oldest of the group. He was ugly in almost a deformed way, blond-haired and toad-looking. I felt a great compassion for him as soon as I saw him. He obviously loved the boys he was with, hated himself for not being so beautiful as they were & and took his revenge attacking faggots, fighting the love he too felt for men, and expiating the profound hatred he felt for himself.

Well, I'm beginning to sound like Dr. Bieber! Anyway, this group of boys ran up and started throwing stones, shouting "faggot, cocksucker," hitting me with clubs as soon as they saw me. I ran for the Arthur Fiedler Bridge. As I neared the bridge I got very angry. Why should they attack me? I had never seen any of them before. I had never approached any of them sexually or otherwise. What right did they have to beat me?

I grabbed one of the sticks and started hitting back at them, yelling: "I'm no faggot, get away from me." I chased them. They ran away. Later I saw the ugly one at the Fenway, sitting with another couple of young and very attractive sex objects.

For another incident I have an exact date: March 26, 1965. I met this fellow on the Meatrack or block in Boston. We'd had sex together several times before &

had enjoyed each other very much. He was tall, sharp-featured, gangly legs and arms, a magnificent penis, a bit of acne about which he was very self-conscious. We did everything in bed: 69, rimming, fucking, sucking each other, ending up coming together. Then we showered together, rubbing each other's backs, kissing, and doing each other for awhile just for the fun of it.

I'd first met him in the old Punch Bowl --predecessor to The Other Side--and we'd gone to his hotel room in the Touraine (then a fairly nice hotel). We'd spent the night together happily. So I thought why not try it again? I invited him over to my place in Cambridge. He said OK but my friend is with me and needs a place to stay; he's from out of town. I said why not bring him along. I've always trusted a person after sleeping with him and finding a deep communication in our bodies. I was soon disabused of that notion.

As soon as we got home, the two of us jumped into bed. The other fellow began searching the kitchen and bathroom for my valuables. The joke was on him because I was totally poor. The only possessions I had that were worth anything were my



"With Gay Liberation my beatings suddenly stopped; no more nagging aches and pains. Why don't you try it?"

THIN BLOOD

Red blooded red breasted
pale faced Amerikans
run out to command
their sun to turn
turnips from winter
their tops purple
bleeding with roses
they eat potatoe chips
as they walk by sassafras
molasses between moons
portholes in tarps
ripe nails in code
messages in snow
we read our fate
and run away.

1/21/73

NEON VISIONARY

blood fills
your straight hearts
in four feet
a boy drowned
mashed stabbed
your visions in hills
hollow voices
after a party
body putty
they were so pretty
a side sliding
in pale ancestral veins
memory only of pinecones

I cannot walk alone
those drunken
beer can voices
John warned me
to be careful
stay away
poets are prophets
I hide with an ambiguity
his belt open to Alcatraz
Attica--They Shot George Jackson
down on him
an abdominal muscle
pulled out for investigation
fighter planes straf a
nearby clearing with radar
we wanted only love
stacked on top
they killed us.

charley shively
13 July 73

books; and hardly anyone ever takes more books than he can carry, which isn't very many. We were having wild sex while the accomplice moved into the bedroom (there were only two rooms) & my partner tried to keep me turned so I couldn't see what his friend was doing. But I didn't care.

After we had finished with sex, they tied me up and began slapping me around to find out where my valuables were. They weren't convinced that I didn't have any money as they searched through books trying to find tens stuffed between the pages.

Finally they found my bank book with the magnificent balance of \$45.35. I agreed if they'd take me to the bank next morning I'd give them \$35 if they'd go away. I was disappointed with the mess they were making and just wanted them out of the house.

Sometime in April '67 or so, my lover and I picked up this sailor in a straight bar in Allston who was acting drunker than he really was. He had lovely black hair, clear shining eyes, and he leaned against me gently. We offered him a ride back to the Charlestown Naval Base since it was two in the morning and the subways weren't running.

The three of us were sitting side by side in the front seat of an old '53 Chevy. As we were driving along, Agamemnon groped him, which the sailor sort of liked, then rubbed his neck and tried to get the sailor to do him. The sailor got upset and pulled a knife on me. I was driving. He had it aimed at my liver. He said something like just drive where I tell you, or something dramatic like that from a bad B movie.

We were driving on Storrow Drive near Charles Circle, so I pulled in there. The MDC police tend to hang out there since the drugstore there is one of the few places in the area that's open all night. I pulled in between a couple of police cars and jumped out. I told the sailor to get out. He did. That's the last I saw of him.

The last assault I can remember was sometime in March, 1970 on the Fenway. I was cruising among some of the toolboxes when I saw these three people approaching me. They looked ridiculously out of place with some sort of basketball bag with them.

Everyone moved to get out of their way. A mechanic/trick said to some of us running "Wait a minute! There are four of us. Why don't we just stick together?"

I thought: well, I'll try anything once. So the four of us waited together as the creeps came closer. They were two beautiful teenagers with an older man. The older man began by saying he had been in the Marines & he knew about faggots. They should all be killed.

He asked us if we were cocksuckers; we said yes we were & it was our own business. If he didn't like it he could just stay away.

They asked us for our money which we gave them. It wasn't much because anyone familiar with the Fenway knows enough not to carry lots of cash. They took a beautiful change purse from me; that was my saddest loss. My father had made it from one piece of circular leather which folded shut. It was from my father's things. He had died just a month before. My mother told me to keep it as a token. My father died poor and deeply in debt; the coinpurse had always been with him as he had his work-badger pinned to it. I hated to lose that purse, but later I said that just shows how you should never come to love things too much.

Their robbery completed, the two young accomplices seemed eager to be running along, but Mr. Butchie their leader had something else on his mind than theft. We enjoyed talking with the younger fellows & and they seemed somewhat uncertain about their lover-maniac-leader-fiend-friend. He seemed particularly upset that we were getting through to his companions.

Walking the Block at 2:00 a.m.
I saw the perfect person. (He was just the right height and weight and he had a beautiful face, long brown hair and an intellectual air about him.)
Then someone in a passing car shot him in the head.

Michael Phelan

He didn't like the fearlessness and rationality of our responses. He started hitting us with belts. One fellow victim pulled out a can of mace--that "paralyser" spray sold in drugstores. Butchie asked: "What the hell is that?"

"Mace!" the kid answered as Butchie clobbered him.

It became every faggot for himself as the four of us got away. Butchie told the two teenagers to hold me while he was beating someone else. They held me half-heartedly & then they let me go. We all got away.

Later that summer I saw five or six cleancut young men--maybe from Northeastern U. ?--come into the Fenway. Every one stayed clear of them, but we watched from a distance. I saw them take stakes from some tomato plants. I thought they were tearing up a garden. As we moved closer, we could see they had been beating a person.

As they left, three of us came to help. The victim was so scared that he also ran from us. With some reassuring, he let us help him. His glasses were smashed; his nose and face were beaten; he couldn't use one leg at all. We helped him to the road, but no one else would go further. They were afraid of being witnesses, etc. I got him to the nearest hospital & helped check him in. I didn't get his name. He was quite attractive, I thought, even if somewhat battered. I realized it had only been fate that had chosen him and not me.

About beatings & police & robberies, there has been in the past an unwritten gay rule: don't report it.

First of all, the police aren't going to do anything except maybe beat you up or hassle you.

Secondly, even if your attacker is found, it's your word against his. He can always say you solicited or molested him & he was only defending his "manhood." No judge in Boston would accept the word of a faggot against the word of a straight man.

Also there has been a community taboo against reporting a place if it can be avoided. You don't mention the Esplanade, the Block, the Fenway, Sporter's, the Other Side, etc. By naming them, you might help get them closed down. If the police get lots of reports about robberies, muggings, and assaults in a gay area, they want to shut it all down. They believe we're all criminals anyway. If there is trouble, we're the ones to blame. Whatever the logic, it is true that if you drive all the faggots out of an area, they won't be robbed, knifed, beaten or killed anymore.

The demand of gay liberationists is that the beatings, assaults, and murders end. All places must be open to us. It's very much like the rape "problem." Men say that the best way to prevent rape is to lock women up. They conclude that any woman assaulted is at fault if she isn't locked up or accompanied by a guard. With faggots, the assumption is that we are not daily threatened by assault and murder. Secondly, if we are, it must be our own fault. We must continue to organize, as women have. We need rapes lines; we need faggots at the police station to receive calls and complaints of assaults; we need rape squads.

And we need publicity so that we can organize among ourselves and find ways to terminate our extermination.



GAY AMERICAN'S DAY

IN ROSE KENNEDY'S ESTATE

ACQUAINTANCE OF MS PARKINSON'S
AT THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT
ON GAY AMERICAN'S DAY

by John Wieners

Glancing at a book on Jacqueline Kennedy nee Bouthier now a well-known limited commodity, Ms Aristotle Onassis, I recollect her contributions to the national consumer's indirectly through products on the shelves of most of our international markets, flesh inflation-controlled goods, viz. silver, tarnish and rust. Wigs and collector's items, soap boxes and the often guaranteed necessities applicable to central heating and sweet nutrients, as decorators' lamps, ice-cream, table accessories, conveyed to anyone's locality's market, in various Travail alleviated over the burgeoning nation's expressways and country thoroughfares by enormous vans and oil-freight cargo expresses.

She as far as a good Christian maintains is totally unaware in many notices of this tremendous virtues such conveniences immediately and irremediably promote. Witness storm-proof windows where I understand her genealogy distinguishes itself undeniably and within whom's benefaction the tempers of frost or child could but suffice to gain privilege from without the test of her father's inventions, as in likewise genius standards of employment for the too-cyclically broken carriages privately restored above control in literary establishments or beyond.

Cokesbury Bookstore now suffices to afford example these priorities at an avenue home, 1040 Fifth, in Gotham Town near our largest military harbor, where multi-various armaments are sacrificed in regulation of naval exchanges for terms to support capital gross.

I again realize from the many photographs, in this book, by Robert T. Harding and A.L. Holmes of Encyclopedia Enterprises, Inc. as distributed to Vanguard Press (60 East 42nd Street) she remains responsible for a filial relationship to her late husband, our chief Executive, not by the Whitman sampler at the top of her barricade stairs or the small telephone chair placed there only today, nor through the Greek urn at the crook of the bend across from the non-paying banister, with jet and ivory synthetic pearls looped around the gold and bronze 19th century crucifix, supporting copper peacock, or rhinestone fleur-de-lis, but possibly through the fluorescent poems she composes in an unofficial way, to her community and its omniscient calvary. As a perennial boyhood, I am glad to have this book, glad to see her future favors postulated in several determinations of royal blue and gold, the ever vouchsafed honor guard supporting its supervisory publication through Edward Ernest, Inc. (274 Madison Avenue).

As a native of Massachusetts in the 5th voting District, I recognize the profile sky colors in harmony to those depicted at the Compound, and even what I imagine to be Gstaad en Suisse inaugurating her mother's Early years. Unaware of any receptions at the White House during the John F. Kennedy term in office. I may only marvel when confronted in the face of our Lady's demeanor before the gossiped integers photographing Dinner, Dance or Debate, forgetting Janet!

Unbesmirched through betrayal, and without an enemy in the world, the leif-motif or leit surpasses what denigeratory comparison cottons maintenance in journals of general usage, as witness oblivious rhetoric in Turning October's LHJ* into juxtaposition to her biography as Femme du Monde. A woman on the Hill, a woman across from Aristotle's enormous business, a woman wed on an island, Thesis woman married to a nouveau riche seaport. All this, yes the blase and blistering contemporary facts disclose. And more, much more, the terrible pains of ghostly assassination and blood-stained rites of hemeliness and oblivious hearsay.

On page 108 of this 1966 Memorial tribute I noticed our own United States Congress allowed thousands of sympathy acknowledgements to be posted to their patrons over her graveside, as is authorized overseas to the widow of a Former Ambassador's son:

"The knowledge of the affection to which my husband was held by all of you has sustained me, and the warmth of these tributes is something I shall never forget. Whenever I can bear to, I read them. All his bright light gone from the world. All of you who have written to me know how much we all loved him, and that he returned that love in full measure. It is my greatest wish that all of these letters be acknowledged. They will be, but it will take a long time to do so, and I know that you will understand."

Political aspirations did not run in his family. He was an appointee of the Secretary from the Treasury and it murdered as such. Informers do not help to reside within earshot of his survivors here in 300 yards of his home state's City House. This week at a Gay American's Day or Gay American's Congress

there we were witness to what remains of his Governor's capital.

It was not tacky, or ill-prepared, compulsory as this quarter dictates, not against but pro, for allegiance to the tour, the guides deployed before uniformed cohorts to the section's R.S.V.P.'s. Surveying the scene I would say it's pretty hot for patriots distraut at a local representative's loss, not his gain as those terminal to this past week's homosexual liberation.

This is not a legate's Truth, under an envoy's motivation; less a senator's reclamation or a journeyman's proclamation. A god's test, a guru's ostracization may relativize distinction into blessed ascension, as tepid documentary subjects morals into revolution, beyond permission of edification. When one may match decorum, declassification and subservience, suppose popularity pervades.

A black-gowned hostess we may surprise while in the line of duty, one declares hostility. So I hearken the survivor of the Triple deaths to her descendant's Uncles and paternity allow derision, not division from both her papa's and mama's later aggrandizement. Two aunts of Ms. Onassis alas testily waken hope that justice and contentment darken no door that shutters befuddlement as a pathway for speculation and conjecture, how to Boston, Back Bay and the Banks of Cambridge lease confusion, a specialized congratulatory prospectus over both men and women's observed or attested mastery to libertarian dowagerhood.

Both of Ms. Onassis' aunts and her children's grand-aunts survive to smoulder the kindled ashes, these ten years gone, of their brightest light's espousal to the corporality infirmed at Virginia.

Continued on p.28



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Trade is a finite commodity. And if you occasionally tire of sucking and fucking with your faggot friends (as we all do), why not try something new?

Why not reach out?

There are literally millions of MEN out there nervously awaiting your approach. All they need is a slight push or a gentle coaxing shove--and they're yours!

How to do it?

Simple! Use this handy 1-2-3 Guide to Proselytizing. You can help save the world by turning MEN into FAGGOTS...and getting a little fun out of it too!

Worried by this '50's Queen Question:

IS TODAY'S TRADE TOMORROW'S COMPETITION?

Don't fret! Find out for yourself with this

HOW TO PROSELYTIZE

by Mitzel

A) Don't be afraid of them. Let them be afraid of you. After all, you're the FAGGOT. They pretend to despise you; but there's nothing more they'd like in the world than to have you.

B) MEN often pose as TRADE. This means they're available. But as TRADE, they'll insist that they're only available on their own terms. You let them know that their terms aren't good enough. Remember: you're the professional FAGGOT or QUEEN, and you know ten times what any TRADE does. All men are available.

C) Allen Ginsberg has told us that we can have any MAN we want even though we may have to wait ten or twenty years. Well, I don't know about the rest of you FAGGOTS and QUEENS, but when I want a MAN, I want him NOW! Who has all that time to wait for the natural fermentation process to turn an ordinary MAN into a sparkling, vintage FAGGOT? Not me! I'm inclined to take a more activist approach. I believe that any FAGGOT who's not meeting his duty as a proselytizer falls back into that twilight zone between QUEEN and TRADE on the continuum. It's up to us to change MEN into what we want them to be: FAGGOTS, QUEENS, and available TRADE. If we don't, who will?

D) If a MAN is not TRADE yet, never assume the guise of being a MAN yourself just to make him feel better. We don't want MEN to feel comfortable at our own expense. If you do, you're falling right into his game. Let him know you're a FAGGOT: swish, mince, touch yourself and him, spread your legs, lick your lips. He may be abusive the first time--but so what? You've made your point. You've made him uneasy. Maybe next time you meet him, he'll loosen up.

E) If he is already TRADE, your work is half done! He's only waiting for a professional cue to become an out-and-out FAGGOT. Tell him how sexy he looks in his doubleknit pants and those white shoes. Tell him what a stud he is with his T-shirt sleeves rolled up. That puts you on the advantage immediately. It is always to your advantage to exploit his state of sexual repression. Use your own liberation as a lever to pry open and then force out that quality that keeps him as TRADE instead of being a bona fide FAGGOT.

F) As TRADE he'll probably just want his cock sucked--though with TRADE anything can happen. You already know he wants it sucked, but he doesn't know that you'll do it. He thinks he's going to have to talk you into it! Disarm

him. Go right up and say: "Hi! I'm a FAGGOT and a cocksucker. Would you like me to go do down on you?" Never hesitate. If TRADE sees you hesitating or equivocating, then he'll figure that you're as nervous about the whole thing as he is and he'll pull his MAN routines on you to try to gain the upper hand.

G) You've agreed to suck his prick. That's often reward enough in itself. But you're a proselytizer, and you're going to teach him a thing or two before you're through. Help liberate him to do what he wants to do. While sucking him, make him take down his pants all the way. Get him involved. Tell him he must play with your prick too, or else you won't continue. Kiss him. This is especially important because TRADE maintain the idea that they are still MEN by not kissing FAGGOTS.

H) Just as he's nearing climax, pull your mouth away and ask him in a disinterested voice: "Want me to fuck you? Or you fuck me?" More than likely he'll say no, but at least you've raised the possibility. Tell him: "Well, maybe we'll fuck next time." It's imperative that he know you're assuming he'll become a FAGGOT sooner or later.

I) Don't run away immediately afterwards. Nor should you let him escape. Establish the fact that you enjoyed what you did and hope to do it again. Get him to say so likewise. Don't let TRADE get away with showing contempt for you post coitum. If he becomes a problem, put him on the level of novice. Say: "Hope you don't mind, but you really could benefit by a few pointers. You might hold my head while I'm blowing you. It's a sign that you like me being there. And never whistle or chew gum while I'm sucking you off. It's so tacky!"

J) Next time you see TRADE in the park or the bar, walk right up to him--even if he's with friends--and gently stroke his crotch or his ass (whichever catches your fancy first) and ask: "Hi, hon. How's the treasure?" This will flatter and humiliate him simultaneously. Help liberate him by being his partner in acts and behavior he desires but is afraid to initiate himself. After doing them, never let TRADE forget you or the acts. BUT, always make sure you're in control until TRADE has learned to do for himself all you've taught him. At that point he'll no longer be TRADE. He'll be among the ranks of FAGGOTS, and he'll be proselytizing himself!



oh my brothers

oh
my brothers
begging
straight men
for their
love

what gentleness
do you
see
there

what beauty
in the
coolness
of their
smiles

can they
be
touched
by you?

n. a. diaman

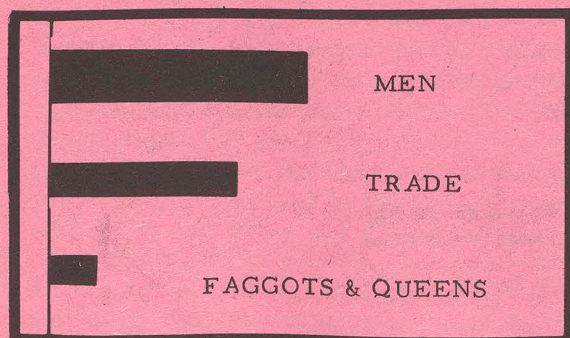
Alas, some MEN will never seize this remarkable opportunity to change. These are often the kind of MEN who wind up as bank presidents, shop stewards, or in prisons. Don't waste time on them. There are scads of other MEN manque for you to proselytize.

As we turn more and more MEN into TRADE and TRADE into FAGGOTS and QUEENS, yet even more will want to become FAGGOTS and QUEENS. We're where the action is!

Looking at the impressive change from Chart A to Chart B, we must then answer our original question: Is Today's TRADE Tomorrow's Competition?

No.

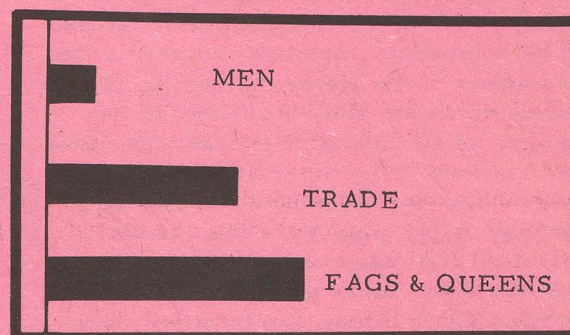
Today's TRADE is Tomorrow's Brother!



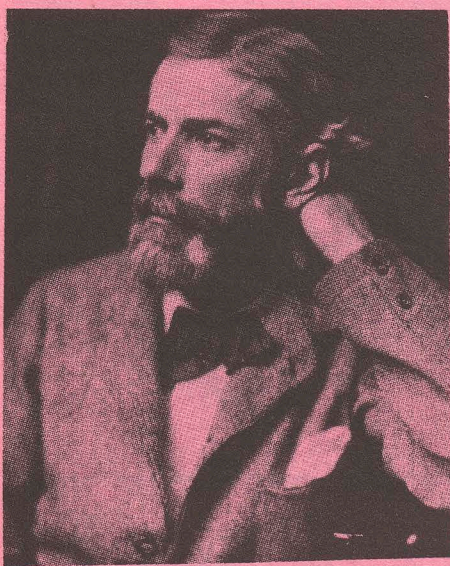
With a good job of proselytizing done by us all, we can turn the Grim Facts of Today

into

the Happy Reality of Tomorrow!



EDWARD CARPENTER



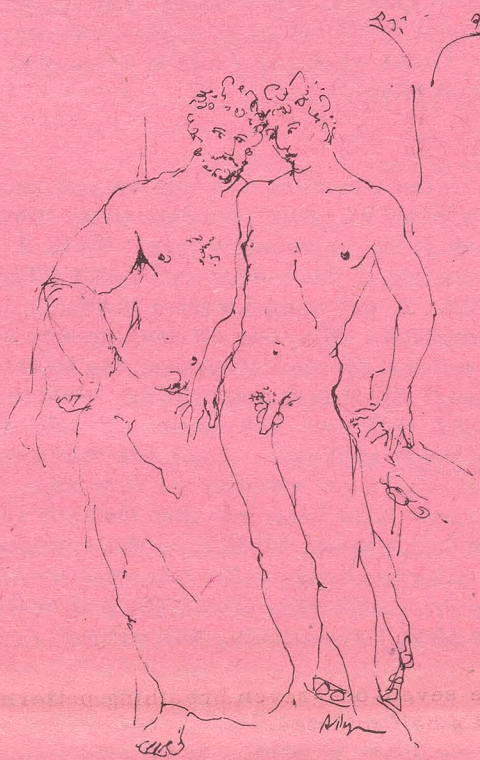
ON JEALOUSY

Edward Carpenter was an English radical. Born in 1844 to an upper-middle class family, he studied at Cambridge. He entered the clergy. After a few years, however, he turned his back on a conventional career and gained notoriety for his beliefs and actions. He thought of himself as a kind of agrarian socialist--despite his private income. He had a wide-spread reputation as a sandal-maker, vegetarian, anti-vivisectionist, and advocate of women's right and personal freedom. He was among the first in his country to herald the poetry of Walt Whitman. On his trips to the U.S., Carpenter visited Whitman at his Camden home, and even wrote a book about the poet. Carpenter wrote and spoke openly on the subject of homoerotic passion. His essay, Homogenic Love, dated 1894, is an early celebration of gay love. Carpenter preferred the company of working people; he was a strong believer in the Love of Comrades. He writes tenderly of his own male lovers in his autobiography, My Days and Dreams, most particularly George Merrill with whom he lived for many years in his rural home at Milthorpe. Edward Carpenter died in 1929. The following essay is taken from his book Love's Coming of Age, which, if reissued today, would still stand as a radical statement.

A great disturber of the celestial order of Love is Jealousy--that brand of physical passion which carried over into the emotional regions of the mind will sometimes rage there like a burning fire. One may distinguish two kinds of jealousy, a natural and an artificial. The first arises perhaps from the real uniqueness of the relationship between two persons--at any rate as it appears to one of them--and the endeavor to stamp this uniqueness on the whole relationship, sexual and moral--especially on the sexual relationship. This kind of jealousy seems in a sense natural and normal, at any rate for a period; but when the personal relation between the two parties has been fully and confessedly established, and is no more endangered, the feeling does often I think (equally naturally) die away; and may do so quite well without damaging the intimacy and uniqueness of the alliance. This jealousy is felt with terrible keenness and intensity by lovers before the consummation of their passion, and perhaps for a year or two afterwards--though it may be protracted rather indefinitely in the case where the alliance, on one side at any rate, is not quite satisfactory.

The other kind of jealousy rests on the sense of property, and is the kind that is often felt by the average husband and wife long after honeymooning days--by the husband not because of his especial devotion to his partner, but because he is furious at the idea of her disposing as she likes with what he considers his property; and by the wife because she is terrified at the thought that her matrimonial clothes-peg, from which depend all her wordly prospects, may vanish away or become the peg for another woman's clothes. This kind of jealousy is more especially the product of immediate social conditions, and is in that sense artificial. Though probably not quite so heart-rending as the other, it is often passionate enough, and lasts on indefinitely, like a chronic disease.

In early times, with the more communistic feeling of primitive societies, and with customs (like group-marriage) which allowed some latitude in sex relation, jealousy though strong was not probably a very great force. But with the growth of individualism in life and in love, with the rise of the sense of property under civilisation and the accentuation of every personal feeling in what may be called the cellular state of society, the passion became one of fearful and convulsive power and fury; as is borne witness to by numberless dramas and poems and romances of the historical period. In the communism and humanism of the future, as the sense of property declines, and as Love rises more and more out of mere blind confusion with the sex-act, we may fairly hope that the artificial jealousy will disappear altogether, and that the other form of the passion will subside again into a comparatively reasonable emotion.



Brown Boy

brown boy
sun brown boy
you heard me!
I said, Wake up, beloved!
I kissed you on the beach
I brushed off sand from sleeping arms:
stretching out,
one gently gangling at your side
the other coyly curving over your soft hair.

brown boy
sun brown boy
can you see the grain of sand on your nose
glistening
do you feel the wind stir your tanned lip-fuzz
whispering
or do you bear the burden of the beach
that bears up your handsome hip
mustering
all the power of peace within the earth
to give you sleep?

brown boy
sun brown boy
joy is in your touch
without it, I had none.
you teach me,
before you, I did not learn.
will you change and grow and be a man
will the boy in you not laugh when I am silly?
what will you be when you are not
sun brown boy?
my tongue would say: Don't change!
but your love kills my greed,
lets my heart say: change if you like!
but be yourself, not mine (as if you could be).
I would not own you, change you, keep you, mother-hen you
when you
are beautiful
only as you are;
and I become free only as I love you
free.

so have you heard or dreamed
my singing to you through light mist, this early Sunday
among the gulls, the friendly dogs who licked your hand
and by the shameless Sand-Cock
you erotically erected
as we played
before you lay sleeping
and I sat singing
brown boy, sun brown boy?

Tom Reeves

SEVEN MEDITATIONS ON POLITICAL SADO-MASOCHISM

photos by Richard S. Gorny

The meditations are formal.

The performers sit in a circle in the center of the room. They sit in a half lotus position, their hands resting on their knees. They are wearing their own clothing, each more or less different, except that the colors are confined to black and red.

The piece is planned for a space in which the spectators sit on the floor around the circle behind the performers and can, if they wish, participate in the half lotus position and in the meditation.

The room at the first performance in Chapel Hill was a gymnasium, as it was at the second performance at the Anarchist Conference in New York City.

The performers are meditating as the public enters. The light in the room is concentrated inside the circle. The instruments are in the center: a tray holding a spouted water-pot, a Za-Zen stick, a bowl of honey, a bowl of water, a small white hand towel.

When the public has entered the ceremony begins. The performers regulate their breathing pattern: A seven count inhalation, hold for one count, a seven count exhalation. The objective of this breathing pattern is to begin the process of unification within the group. After two and a half minutes, one of the performers (Roy) announces the title:

SEVEN MEDITATIONS ON POLITICAL SADO-MASOCHISM

The seven-one-seven breathing pattern continues another two and a half minutes.

The Gnaoua chant begins.

THE GNAOUA CHANT

This melody was taught to The Living Theatre Collective by a group of tribesmen with whom the Collective worked in Essaouira (Morocco) in the summer of 1969. The Gnaoua, who until recently (1955) suffered a slave status, are a tribe of mendicant-musician-sorcerers who were brought from the sub-Sahara and now live in North Africa. The Gnaoua tribesmen use this chant, among others, in both mendicant street singing and in religious rituals such as the exorcisms which they perform to protect the community in which they live, as well as to induce deep religious trances in which extraordinary physical feats can be performed. It is used here as a reference to the slavery which is implicit in sado-masochist politics.



* Female voices one octave higher

The Gnaoua chant is sustained throughout the seven meditations except during the Meditation on Money when the melody changes and during the Meditation on Revolutionary Change when the chant stops.

Steven Ben begins the chant. After the first musical phrase, everyone joins him. The chant is hummed slowly, intensely, with full vocal force and closed mouth.

After the first cycle of the Gnaoua chant (the word 'cycle' here refers to the four musical phrases of the melody taken together), Roy announces the subject of the first meditation.

THE LEGACY OF CAIN:

PILOT PROJECT: UNIVERSITY PROJECT NUMBER ONE
SEVEN MEDITATIONS ON POLITICAL SADO-MASOCHISM

University Project Number 1 was created to be performed collectively with a group of students and members of a local theatrical group, The Everyman Company, at the invitation of the Spring Festival of Fine Arts at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C. The performance took place on April 2, 1973.

Some FAG RAG faggots attended the performance of the SEVEN MEDITATIONS at the March anarchist conference. We were deeply moved by the play and luckily obtained permission to print it here. It goes as far as any analysis we know in illuminating the relations between sexism and capitalism/imperialism/fascism. FAG RAG continues to probe the question on which the play ends, "WHAT CAN WE DO?"

ONE:

A MEDITATION ON DOMINATION AND SUBMISSION
WITH A TEXT ON THE REPRESSION OF SEXUAL LOVE

Steven Ben rises and walks to the center of the circle. He walks in the character of the Master. He gives a signal consisting of a few vocalized notes. Everyone in the circle shifts out of the half lotus position bringing the hands forward, palms on the floor, bringing the knees together and shifting into a kneeling position with the body resting on the heels, the hands resting on the knees. All eyes are focused on the Master.

The Master walks slowly around the circle looking into the eyes of each performer as he passes them. Each performer, as her/his eyes meet the eyes of the Master, bows slowly, touching the forehead to the ground, bringing the hands together behind the back with the wrists crossed as if bound. One after the other they bow until all are in the position of obeisance. The Master gives another vocal signal and everyone slowly returns (during a count of two phrases of the melody of the chant) to the kneeling positions with hands remaining behind their backs.

After one cycle of the Gnaoua chant the first statement is spoken.

THE STATEMENTS

Each of the first 6 Meditations includes three statements about the sado-masochist nature of the subject of the Meditation. These statements are drawn from a collective study made by The Living Theatre Collective during July-August, 1972. They are spoken over the sound of the Gnaoua chant and while the action of the ritual is performed.

The Gnaoua Chant

STATEMENT ONE ON DOMINATION AND SUBMISSION (spoken by Roy)

Obedience is the principle of love according to the state:
obey the father,
obey the husband,
obey the teacher,
obey the policeman,



THE LIVING THEATRE COLLECTIVE

obey the mayor,
obey the governor,
obey the president,
obey the rules of the system, and love them all.

(One cycle of the Gnaoua chant.)

STATEMENT TWO
ON DOMINATION AND SUBMISSION
(spoken by Pamela)

The pattern of domination and submission in our sexual habits conditions people to an authoritarian pattern which the ruling class exploits to secure their power.

(One cycle of the Gnaoua chant.)

STATEMENT THREE
ON DOMINATION AND SUBMISSION
(spoken by Eduardo)

The sexist and sexual pattern of domination and submission conditions people to an authoritarian pattern which always expresses itself in terms of economic exploitation.

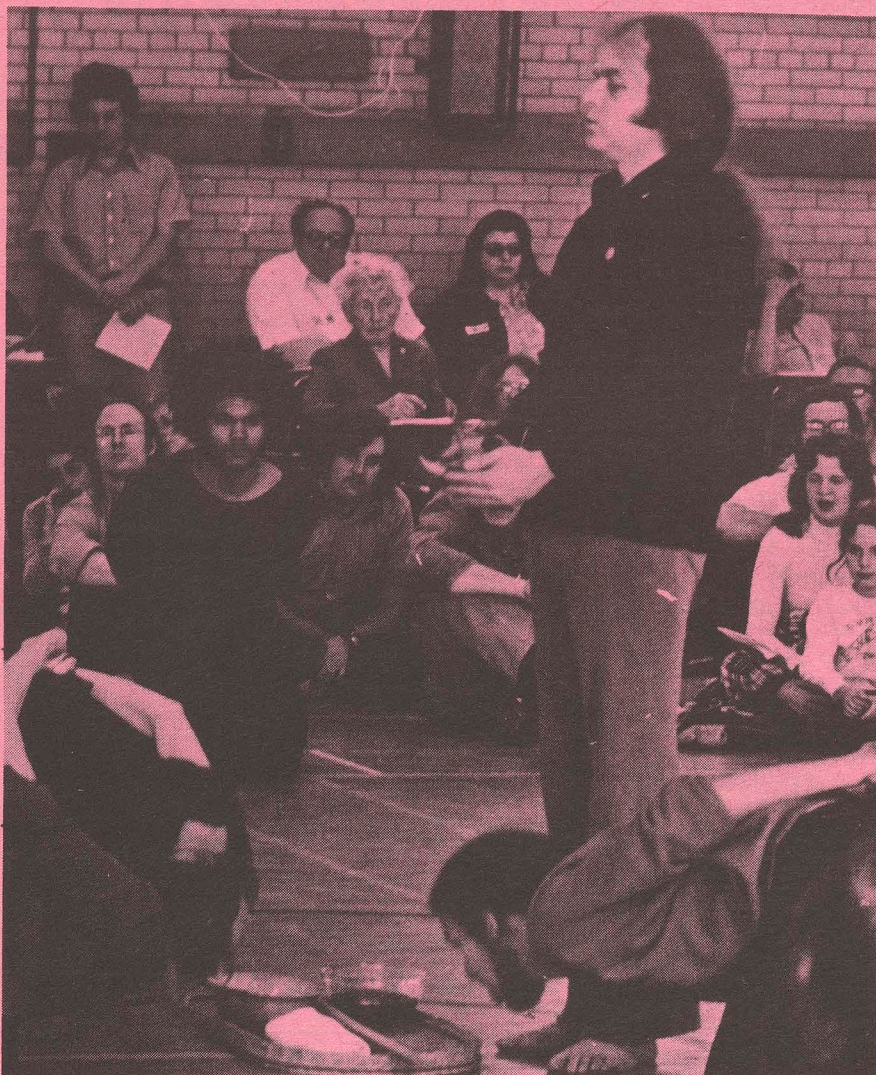
(One cycle of the Gnaoua chant.)

THE TEXT

Each meditation includes a text, each from a different source, each read after the statements, over the Gnaoua chant and during the action of the ritual. (Note: the statements are spoken, but the texts are read from a paper.)

TEXT
ON THE REPRESSION OF SEXUAL LOVE
(read by Judith)

The State forbids free love and breeds forced marriage.
The State forbids open sex and breeds prostitution.
The Law forbids gay love and breeds hate among brothers and sisters
The Law forbids children sex and bombs the villages.
The Law inhibits touch and breeds guns.
The State forbids the naked body and parades the soldiers' uniforms.
The State prohibits fucking and reinstates capital punishment.
The Law prohibits eroticism and breeds racism.
The Law forbids the mouth on the genitals and furthers the hand on the gun.
The Law forbids the cock and the cunt and furthers the pollution of the air.
The State inhibits tenderness and produces violence.
The Law inhibits joyous spontaneous sex and locks up the prisoner's sex life.
The State builds jails and busts lovers.
The Law hates human love and produces colonialism.
The State forbids Lesbian love and degrades women.
The Law inhibits birth control and breeds ecological disasters.
The State squashes the body and produces warped minds.
The State will be smashed because we won't let it smash us.
(The text was written by Judith Malina during a collective meditation on domination and submission.)



During the reading of the statements and the texts, three rituals of domination and submission are enacted.

RITUAL 1

While Roy speaks the first statement, the Master takes the water pot from the tray in the center and walks with it to Pierre. Holding the water pot ceremonially, he pours a few drops in front of Pierre; then, walking backwards ceremonially towards the center, he pours a thin line of water. It starts at the point in the circle where Pierre is kneeling and ends at the center. The Master then walks ceremonially with the water pot to Gypsy and pours a line of water from where she kneels to the center. In the same way he pours a line of water from Serge to the center. The Master stands in the middle. He gives a vocal signal. Gypsy, Serge, and Pierre bow slowly. They are in the character of the submissive. They lick up the water which the Master has poured. They move their hands from behind their backs and place them palms down on the floor before them and pull their bodies forward; they bring their heads down again, lapping up the line of water, raising their hands between licks, showing the Master their obedient tongues. The three performers bow, lick, and rise in unison. In this manner they lick their way to the center where they all bow their heads to the ground at the Master's feet. The Master gives a vocal signal. Serge and Pierre, remaining on their knees, raise their bodies up towards the Master. Serge takes the water pot from the Master, and Pierre hands the Master the Zen stick.

RITUAL 2

The Zen stick is a ritual object used in Za-Zen meditation for the awakening of the disciple's concentration. The use of the Zen stick was first taught to The Living Theatre in London in June, 1969, by the disciples of the Japanese Zen Master Taisen Dashimuru who had been instructing Living Theatre members in Za-Zen meditation.

The Zen stick is 2 1/2 feet in length, 2 inches across, and one inch thick.

The Master holds the Zen stick at arm's length directly before him, clasping both hands around the handle, the shaft of the Zen stick pointing directly upwards. The Master begins to walk around the inner periphery of the circle. As he approaches Julian, Julian bows his head to the ground and then looks up at the Master inviting the Master to strike him with the stick. The

Master acknowledges the bow with a slight bow in return. Julian leans forward, placing his palms on the ground and swivels around so that he presents his back to the Master. He bares his right shoulder by pulling down his shirt with his left hand, tilts his head to the left, leans on his left palm, and places his right hand on the left side of his chest. The Master raises the stick and delivers a swift sharp blow with the flat of the stick on the trapezius muscle which extends from the neck across the shoulder. Slowly tilting his head to the right, Julian exposes his left shoulder, and the Master delivers a second blow. The Master continues to walk around the circle. Julian returns to his original position.

Roy bows as the Master passes and submits himself to the Zen stick ritual. Pamela bows as the Master passes and submits herself to the Zen stick ritual. Richard bows as the Master passes and submits himself to the Zen stick ritual. Bill bows as the Master passes and submits himself to the Zen stick ritual. The Master completes the walk around the circle and returns to the center where Pierre, Gypsy, and Serge have remained in their positions bowed down to the ground. The Master gives a vocal signal. Pierre rises to his knees and takes the Zen stick from him, places it on the tray, and returns to his bowed-down position.

RITUAL 3

Gypsy holds up the honey pot. The Master dips his right hand into the pot, immerses it, and then raises it slowly dripping with honey. Gypsy rises to her feet. The Master moves towards the periphery of the circle. Gypsy follows, attending him, holding the honey pot under the Master's dripping hand. The Master presents the honeyed hand to Cécile who stretches towards it and licks it. The Master moves around the circle and presents the hand to the six other members of the circle, Virginia, Jeffrin, Marsha, Michael, Nammu, and Judith. They all lick it. The Master then returns to the center of the circle. Pierre rises on his knees holding up the bowl of water in which the Master washes his hand. Gypsy holds the bowl of water and a towel which Pierre gives her. Serge takes away the honey pot, places it on the tray, picks up the tray, rises to his feet, and walks slowly out of the circle to the prop table which stands at one side of the room. Pierre rises at the same time and walks back to his position in the circle. The Master finishes washing his hand. He gives the towel to Gypsy who walks out of the circle to the prop table. Steven Ben returns to his position in the circle and sits in half lotus. Everyone in the circle shifts from their kneeling position to half lotus.

(One cycle of the Gnaoua chant.)

Roy announces the subject of the second meditation.

The first ritual of the first meditation: the licking of the water. (Anarchist Conference, Hunter College, May 19, 1973)

2

TWO:
A MEDITATION ON AUTHORITY
WITH A TEXT ON GOVERNMENT AS A REFLECTION OF
THE MASTER/SLAVE RELATIONSHIP

Gypsy and Serge enter the circle carrying between them a pole from which hang chains, one for each person in the circle. Each chain is about six feet long and fastens around both wrists, or from ankle to neck. They walk around the circle handing each one in turn a chain. Then, contemplating--meditating on--the meaning of their own complicity, the recipients fasten the chains around their own wrists, or from ankle to neck. During the ritual chaining, the statements and text are spoken, interspersed by one full cycle of the Gnaoua chant.

STATEMENT ONE ON AUTHORITY
(spoken by Julian)

The state sets sexual standards which support a male dominated, sadistic, authoritarian system.

(One full cycle of the Gnaoua chant.)

STATEMENT TWO ON AUTHORITY
(spoken by Pierre)

Government exists to protect the property of those who own more than they need.

(One full cycle of the Gnaoua chant.)

STATEMENT THREE ON AUTHORITY
(spoken by Richard)

The state is the machinery of repression. Its function is to maintain the rule of one class over another.

which moves forward as a unit accompanied by the clanking of the chains and the Gnaoua chant. The image is of a headless river of bodies laboriously moving under the great weight of work. The configuration moves across the diameter of the circle. As it approaches the circumference, the structure dissolves. The first row slowly disintegrates, collapsing towards the ground, then rising up to form a line of people walking one behind the other around the circumference of the circle. The second and third rows follow. The fourth and fifth rows form an inner circle moving counter-clockwise. It is a meditation walk.

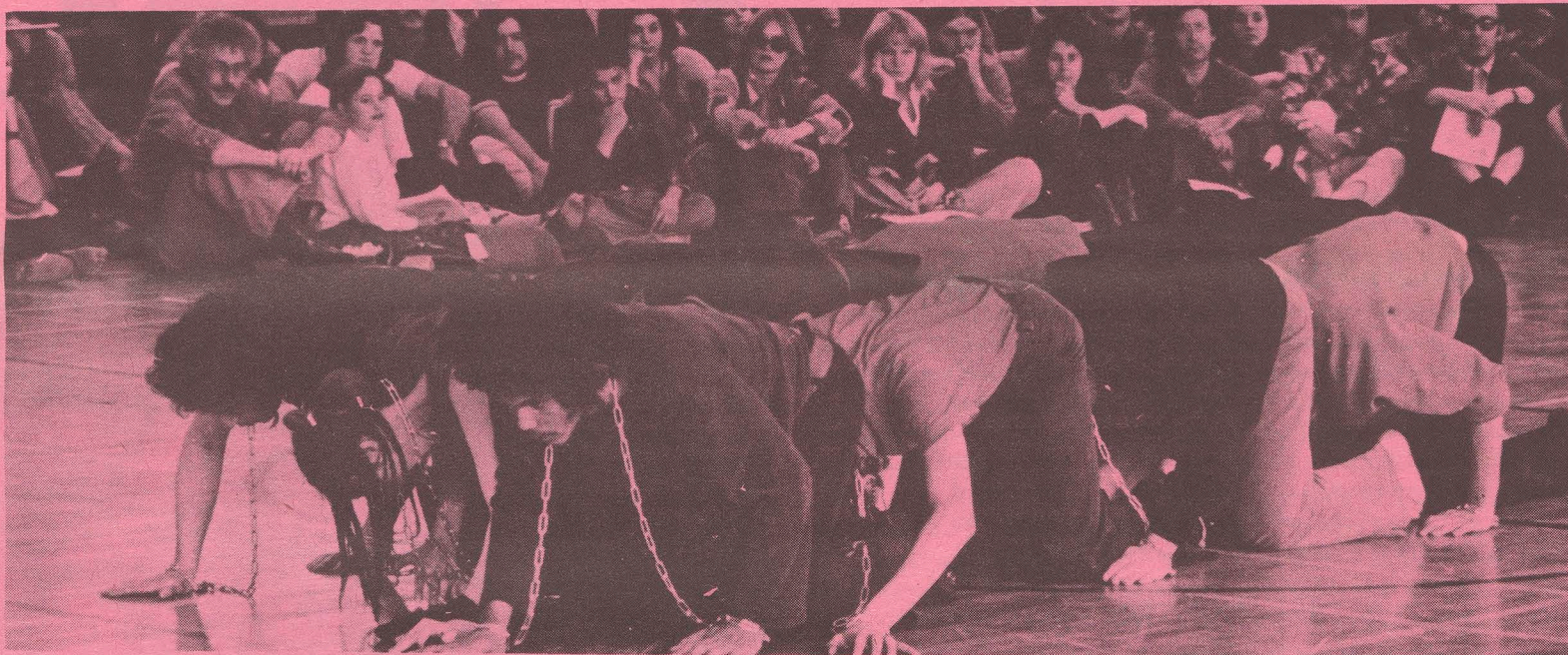
Walking and meditating at the same time as they move in a circle, the performers walk in a special way in order to maintain the meditation without breaking the concentration. They take small silent steps, they keep their bodies centered, the head is held still and erect, the eyes are cast downwards three feet in front on the floor. The forearms are brought up so that they are parallel to the floor and so that the hands meet just under the diaphragm. The left hand is turned upwards, the right hand downwards, and the fingers of both hands hook into each other. This meditation walk was taught to members of The Living Theatre by Taisen Dashimuru.

The sound of the Gnaoua chant continues. When all the performers are walking in the circles, Roy announces the subject of the third meditation.

3

THREE:
A MEDITATION ON PROPERTY
WITH A TEXT ON OWNERSHIP AS MURDER

The meditation walk continues throughout the Statements and the reading of the Text.



TEXT
ON GOVERNMENT AS A REFLECTION OF THE MASTER/
SLAVE RELATIONSHIP
(read by Bill)

"Slavery is the necessary consequence of the very existence of the State. Slavery may change its form or its names--its essence remains the same. To be a slave is to be forced to work for someone else just as to be a master is to live on someone else's work. In antiquity, slaves were, in all honesty, called slaves. In the Middle Ages they took the name of serfs; nowadays they are called wage earners. The position of this latter group has a great deal more dignity attached to it, and it is less hard than that of slaves, but they are nonetheless forced, by hunger as well as by political and social institutions, to maintain other people in complete or relative idleness, through their own exceedingly hard labor. Consequently, they are slaves. And no state, ancient or modern, has ever managed or will ever manage to get along without the forced labor of the masses, either wage earners or slaves, as a principal and absolutely necessary foundation for the leisure and the liberty of the political elite."

(from ROUSSEAU'S THEORY OF THE STATE by Mikhail Bakunin, translated by Sam Dolgoff.)

During the reading of the text, the performers rise one by one, abject figures in chains, and walk slowly to one end of the circle where they sit huddled together. The image is that of a group of slaves in a slave market. When they have all gathered they form a conformation of bodies, five abreast, on hands and knees, heads lowered, and the second line of people butting their shoulders against the buttocks of those in front of them so that only their backs are visible. Each row does the same so that they form one solid surface like a table of human backs, a river of humankind,

The table of human backs in the second meditation.
(Anarchist Conference, Hunter College, May 19, 1973)

In Chapel Hill, three additional Statements--not reproduced here--were written by the Everyman Collective to reflect the special problems of their city. In its analysis the Everyman Collective considered the Meditation on Property the section most appropriate to the expression of local problems.

(One half cycle of the Gnaoua chant.)

STATEMENT ONE ON PROPERTY: (Spoken by Pamela):
Everyone is owned. This is derived from a pattern of ownership which is modelled on the sexual relationship in which the woman is owned by the man. (One half cycle of the Gnaoua chant.)

STATEMENT TWO ON PROPERTY: (Spoken by Steven Ben)
The obsession with property is a substitute for a satisfying life, for meaningful work, and for gratifying love. (One half cycle of the Gnaoua chant.)

STATEMENT THREE ON PROPERTY: (Spoken by Eduardo):
In the name of defending capital and the right to hold private property, the state maintains police, armies, courts, and jails to repress those who challenge the system of private ownership, slave labor and control. (One half cycle of the Gnaoua chant.)

TEXT
ON PROPERTY
(read by Roy)

"The property urge and the death-wish are brother and sister. The escape into the property-urge is a form of dying. To own things transforms the owner into a thing.

"Our despairing social order is an offshoot of our metamorphosis into things. Humanness is delivered up to thingness. Thingness and nothingness are twins. The decline of people into thinghood is a product of property urges. People succumb to the production process and end up as a commodity.

"It is obvious that 'thingness' has its roots in our acquisitive urges. The elementary form of grasping and accumulating is concerned with food. The acquisitive urges are entirely a product of scarcity. We do not accumulate what we have in abundance. People at a table where there is plenty of food will not quarrel over it. It is our privilege that we can create abundance, a characteristic that makes us superior to the animal, which must accept the hostility of nature and cannot change it. If there were an economy of plenty--the accumulation urges would wither away."

"It has been said that property is theft; I say that property is murder. The hands of the dying children reach up through your bread. You beat them with a stick. You walk over my face. I am the poor. I am the one in whose house you live. It is my food you eat."

(The first part of the Text is from CHOOSE LIFE by Eric Gutkind. The final paragraph is from THE JOURNAL OF ALBION MOONLIGHT by Kenneth Patchen.)

Note: In the Chapel Hill performance the meditation walk was sustained, without interruption, until the end of the reading of the Text on Property. The following action was added at the performance given at the Anarchist Conference held at Hunter College, NYC, on May 19, 1973. (This latter performance was played only by members of The Living Theatre Collective and consequently there was only one circle of walkers during the meditation walk.)

After the first Statement has been spoken, all of the women--and also Pierre and Michael--leave the circle one by one and sit in submissive positions in the center. When Roy begins reading the Text, the six men still moving in the circle walk towards the center. Roy continues the meditation walk while he reads the Text. Each of the men goes to one of the people sitting in the center and takes their chains and drags her or him by the chains towards the periphery of the circle. The slave (who is being dragged) lies on her or his stomach, head facing the earth, continuing the Gnaoua chant. Michael remains seated in the center. The men drag the slaves around the circle. When the text ends, the slaves rise and move towards the public. Roy walks to the center and drags Michael to the periphery. Michael rises and moves out with the other slaves among the public. The men who have been dragging them continue the meditation, walking in the circle. As the performers move among the public, they look directly into the eyes of each spectator as they pass by. When the glance of the spectator moves the performer to speak, the performer addresses a question to the spectator:

"Am I your slave?"

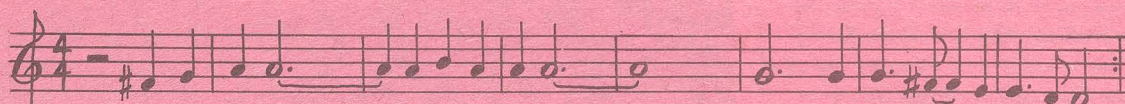
The performer awaits the spectator's reply. The performer reacts to the spectator's response--whether the spectator speaks or not, whether the spectator says something friendly or unfriendly, the performer always answers the spectator quietly with:

"Yes, I am your slave," or "No, I am not your slave." depending on which phrase the performer is moved to say. Each performer addresses six spectators and returns to her or his place in the circle. When the first performer returns, the men who are still walking in the circle begin to move slowly among the public and ask the ritual question six times and then return to the circle.

The scene about property is focused on an underlying level of human relationships, that is, that level on which we relate to each other as owner and owned, master and slave, oppressor and oppressed, sadist and masochist.

After the last person returns to the circle and sits down, the sound of the Gnaoua chant changes to the sound of another melody which is repeated over and over throughout the meditation to come and to which the mantric text of the money song will be sung:

The Money Song



After one complete cycle of the melody of the money song, Roy announces the subject of the next meditation.

4

FOUR:

A MEDITATION ON MONEY

WITH A TEXT ON THE FALSE STANDARD OF EXCHANGE
WHICH ENSLAVES THE PEOPLE

(One complete cycle of the melody of the money song.)

STATEMENT ONE
ON MONEY
(spoken by Bill)

All labor is forced labor, therefore all labor is slavery.

(One cycle of the melody of the money song.)

STATEMENT TWO
ON MONEY
(spoken by Julian)

Under the money system people continue to die of starvation at the rate of one person every four seconds although we could produce enough food for everyone on earth. Money and the

money system are not essential for the production and distribution of all the basic necessities for everyone. Money is superfluous.

(One cycle of the melody of the money song.)

STATEMENT THREE
ON MONEY
(spoken by Gypsy)



The spinning during the money song in the fourth meditation. (Anarchist Conference, May 19, 1973)

Under the money system people have to sell their labor and their time as if their bodies and their lives were nothing but lifeless commodities.

(One cycle of the melody of the money song.)

TEXT
ON MONEY
(read by Judith)

"Money is the most practical expression of indirect life. Money is accumulated and stored-up life. Originally money was a token to facilitate the exchange of goods, item for item. But this token was the first step toward the detachment from immediate life. It was a means to store up one's claim for delivered work or merchandise to be used at a convenient later date.

"But in the meantime that token decreased or increased in value, or it might have to be traded at a loss. So the token has ever more taken on an independent existence of its own. It devoured, as it were, the simple, immediate life, and finally it drained the blood off so completely that the token usurped the place of the thing for which it stood.
"That money has become an idol is true in the profoundest sense. One of the most effective processes of idolatry is the concentration of power in money. And it is in the monetary system that the decisive battle will take place."
(From CHOOSE LIFE by Eric Gutkind.)

As Judith reads the last words of the text, eight performers rise with their arms crossed on their chests so that the fingers rest near the shoulders. They move slowly towards the center of the circle. At the end of the text, the eight persons who have come towards the center begin to spin and spin.

THE MONEY SONG

My life is 1 hour for 2 dollars
My life is 2 hours for 4 dollars
My life is 4 hours for 8 dollars
My life is 8 hours for 16 dollars

My life is 1 day for 16 dollars
My life is 2 days for 32 dollars
My life is 4 days for 64 dollars
My life is 8 days for 128 dollars

My life is 1 week for 80 dollars
My life is 2 weeks for 160 dollars
My life is 4 weeks for 320 dollars
My life is 8 weeks for 640 dollars

My life is 1 month for 350 dollars
My life is 2 months for 700 dollars
My life is 4 months for 1,400 dollars
My life is 8 months for 2,800 dollars

My life is 1 year for 4,200 dollars
My life is 2 years for 8,400 dollars
My life is 4 years for 16,800 dollars
My life is 8 years for 33,600 dollars

My life is 40 years for 168,000 dollars

THE SPIN

The performers begin to spin slowly. As they do, they extend their arms and raise them till the hands are at eye-level, the right palm facing heaven and the left palm the earth in homage to the dervish dancers of Constantinople. The spin accelerates as the performers spin deeper and deeper into the money trance. When they reach the last line, both the song and the spin decelerate.

The dancers sing the first line of the song and then spin silently while the other performers who are sitting in the circle sing the words. The dancers join in singing the last line of the song, then drop to the ground, bent over, forehead touching the earth. The melody of the song blends into the Gnaoua chant, and after one full cycle of the chant, the dancers rise slowly and return to their places in the circle.

(Roy, Richard, and Eduardo, in preparation for the action in the next meditation, slip off their chains.)

Roy announces the next meditation.

5

FIVE:
A MEDITATION ON VIOLENCE
WITH A TEXT ON POLICE REPRESSION

The entire action of this meditation is played in slow motion. Richard plays the victim. Roy and Eduardo play the police. Roy and Eduardo begin to rise. Richard, without leaving his place in the circle, twists from side to side looking uneasily in all directions. His face and body react with evident fear as he sees Eduardo and Roy moving menacingly towards him as they cross the circle.

The statements are spoken while the action takes place.

STATEMENT ONE ON VIOLENCE: (Spoken by Serge):
War is a tactic of racism and imperialism; it is organized sadism.

STATEMENT TWO ON VIOLENCE: (Spoken by Cécile):
War is the health of the state. War is competition for profit, property, and power among the ruling class in which the people are sacrificed. (One full cycle of the Gnaoua chant.)

STATEMENT THREE ON VIOLENCE: (Spoken by Nammu):
War is a culturally and legally accepted outlet for sadistic behaviour. (One full cycle of the Gnaoua chant.)

TEXT
ON VIOLENCE
(read by Steven Ben)

"The police department and the armed forces are the two arms of the power structure, the muscles of control and enforcement. They have deadly weapons with which to inflict pain on the human body. They know how to bring about horrible deaths. They have clubs with which to beat the body and the head. They have bullets and guns with which to tear holes in the flesh, to smash bones, to disable and kill. They use force to make you do what the deciders have decided you must do.

"Every country on earth has these agencies of force. The people everywhere fear this terror and force. To them it is like a snarling wild beast which can put an end to one's dreams. They punish. They have cells and prisons to lock you up in. They pass out sentences. They won't let you go when you want to. You have to stay put until they give the word. If your mother is dying, you can't go to her bedside to say goodbye or to her graveside to see her lowered into the earth, to see her, for the last time, swallowed up by that black hole.

"The techniques of the enforcers are many: firing squads, gas chambers, electric chairs, torture chambers, the garrote, the guillotine, the tightening rope around your throat. It has been found that the death penalty is necessary to back up the law, to make it easier to enforce, to deter transgressions against the penal code. That everybody doesn't believe in the same laws is beside the point.

"Which laws get enforced depends on who is in power.

"The people are nowhere consulted, although everything is done always in their name and ostensibly for their betterment while their real life problems go unsolved. The 'people' are a rubber stamp for the crafty and sly. And no problem can be solved without taking the police department and the armed forces into account.

"The police do on the domestic level what the armed forces do on the international level: protect the way of life of those in power. The police patrol the city, cordon off communities, blockade neighborhoods, invade homes, search for what is hidden. The armed forces patrol the world, invade countries and continents, cordon off nations, blockade islands and whole peoples; they will also overrun villages, neighborhoods, enter homes, caves, huts, searching for that which is hidden. The policemen and the soldier will violate your person, smoke you out with various gases. Each will shoot you, beat your head and body with sticks and clubs, with rifle butts, run you through with bayonets, shoot holes in your flesh, kill you. They each have unlimited fire power. They will use all that is necessary to bring you to your knees. They won't take no for an answer. If you resist their sticks, they draw their guns. If you resist their guns, they call for reinforcements with bigger guns. Eventually they will come in tanks, in jets, in ships. They will not rest until you surrender or are killed. The policeman and the soldier will have the last word."

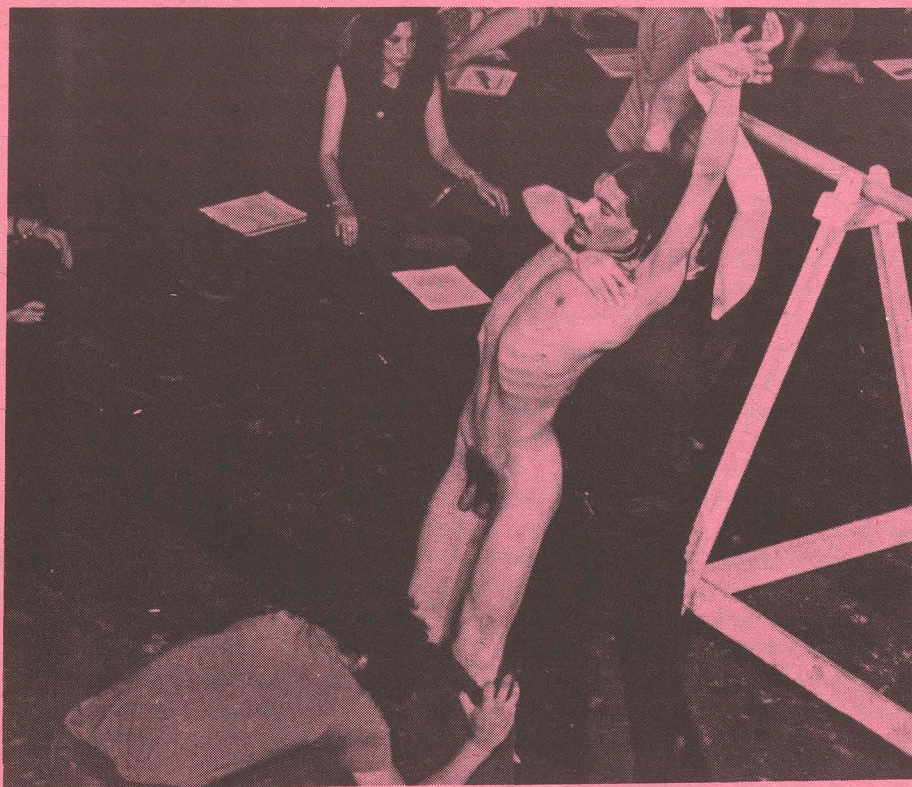
"But the police and the soldiers, the defenders of 'law and order' are not men of the capitalist class. They are men from the ranks of the people, poor men who for pay protect the very system that keeps them poor. It is unbelievable, is it not? Yet it is true. It just comes down to this: some of the slaves protect their masters in keeping them and the rest of the people in slavery."

(The first part of the Text is from SOUL ON ICE by Eldridge Cleaver. The last paragraph is from Alexander Berkman's WHAT IS COMMUNIST ANARCHISM?)

While the statements are being spoken, Eduardo and Roy close in on Richard and seize him by the arms and drag him--always moving in slow motion--struggling across the circle, past the center, where they haul him to his feet and begin to beat him up. Roy punches him in the face. As he reels away, Eduardo kicks him in the abdomen; as he veers back Roy punches him in the stomach. Eduardo brings both fists down on the back of the neck. Richard begins to drop to the floor but Roy grabs him by the arms and holds them above his head while Eduardo pulls the victim's shirt off, and then his pants and underclothes. The victim stands naked, his hands held behind him as Eduardo kicks him in the groin. He collapses to the ground. Eduardo pulls him to a sitting position, takes a cord from his waist and ties the victim's wrists together making sure that the victim's arms bracket his legs. The Parrot's Perch has already been carried to the center of the circle by Nammu and Serge who then return to their places in the circle. The Parrot's Perch is a pole suspended about four feet above the ground between two wooden saw horses. Roy takes the pole off and pushes it into the space between the crook of the victim's arms and the backs of his knees. Roy and Eduardo each

take hold of one end of the pole and raise it up off the ground so that the victim swings helplessly from it upside down. They carry the pole at shoulder height, the victim suspended between them--always moving in slow motion--and place the pole back on the two sawhorses.

They take two wires from a small I. T. & T. Field Telephone Generator (which Serge and Nammu had placed near the Parrot's Perch) and attach one wire to the victim's penis and insert the other into the victim's anus. When the wires have been secured in place, Roy turns the handle of the generator. A light bulb flickers, showing that the current in the machine is alive. The victim screams in agony. When the scream subsides, the first Statement of the Fact sheet on Torture is read.



The undressing of the victim of the parrot's perch in the fifth meditation. (Washington Square Methodist Church, June 30, 1973)

FACT SHEET ON TORTURE: STATEMENT ONE

(All of these Statements are spoken by Julian. The text quotes the hearings of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate, Sen. Frank Church, Chairman, Washington, D.C., 1971.)

The Parrot's Perch is the name given to the pole from which the victim is hung. Electric shocks are then applied to the most sensitive parts of the victim's body: to the eyes, ears, mouth, to the breasts, anus, penis and testicles, or vagina.

Roy turns the handle. The victim screams a loud, piercing, lingering scream.

FACT SHEET ON TORTURE: STATEMENT TWO

In 1972, this and other forms of police torture were reported in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico, the Philippines, Israel, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Greece, Ceylon, Turkey, and more than 50 other countries.

Roy turns the handle. The victim screams a loud, piercing, lingering scream.

FACT SHEET ON TORTURE: STATEMENT THREE

The machine used for administering electric shock in Brazil, among other countries, is a U.S. Army Field Telephone Generator manufactured in the United States by I. T. & T.

Roy turns the handle. The victim screams a loud, piercing, lingering scream for the fourth time.

FACT SHEET ON TORTURE: STATEMENT FOUR

Over 700 officers of the Brazilian Police Forces have been trained in the United States.

Roy turns the handle. The victim screams a loud, piercing, lingering scream for the fifth time.

FACT SHEET ON TORTURE: STATEMENT FIVE

Several Brazilian prisoners have recently reported bizarre forms of torture including being forced to stand for days in front of a table to which their penises have been nailed.

Roy turns the handle. The victim screams a loud, piercing, lingering scream for the sixth time.

FACT SHEET ON TORTURE: STATEMENT SIX

In Brazil, the United States maintains a special army center for training contingents of counter-revolutionary forces to be used in various Latin American countries.

Roy turns the handle. The victim screams a loud, piercing, lingering scream for the seventh time.

FACT SHEET ON TORTURE: STATEMENT SEVEN

In Brazil alone there are between 12-16,000 political prisoners all of whom have been subjected to torture.

Roy turns the handle. The victim screams a loud, piercing, lingering scream for the eighth time. Everyone in the circle rises to a kneeling position.

FACT SHEET ON TORTURE: STATEMENT EIGHT

U.S. Military aid to Brazil has amounted to over \$200,000,000 since the Brazilian Fascist Regime took over in 1964.

Roy turns the handle. The victim scream a loud, piercing, lingering scream for the ninth time. Everyone stands.

FACT SHEET ON TORTURE: STATEMENT NINE

In the last decade, The United States has trained over 70,000 police officers in different countries around the world.

Roy turns the handle. The victim, Richard, screams a loud, piercing, lingering scream for the tenth time. Everybody moves in slowly toward the victim. While the Statement is being spoken, Gypsy and Steven Ben remove the wires from Richard. Steven Ben and Nammu then lift the pole off the sawhorses and lower it gently to the ground. Gypsy unties Richard's wrists. Richard rises and puts on his shirt and pants. At the same time, the props are carried away. The circle of people which has been moving inwards and which has surrounded Richard begins to move backwards until everybody regains their position in the circle.

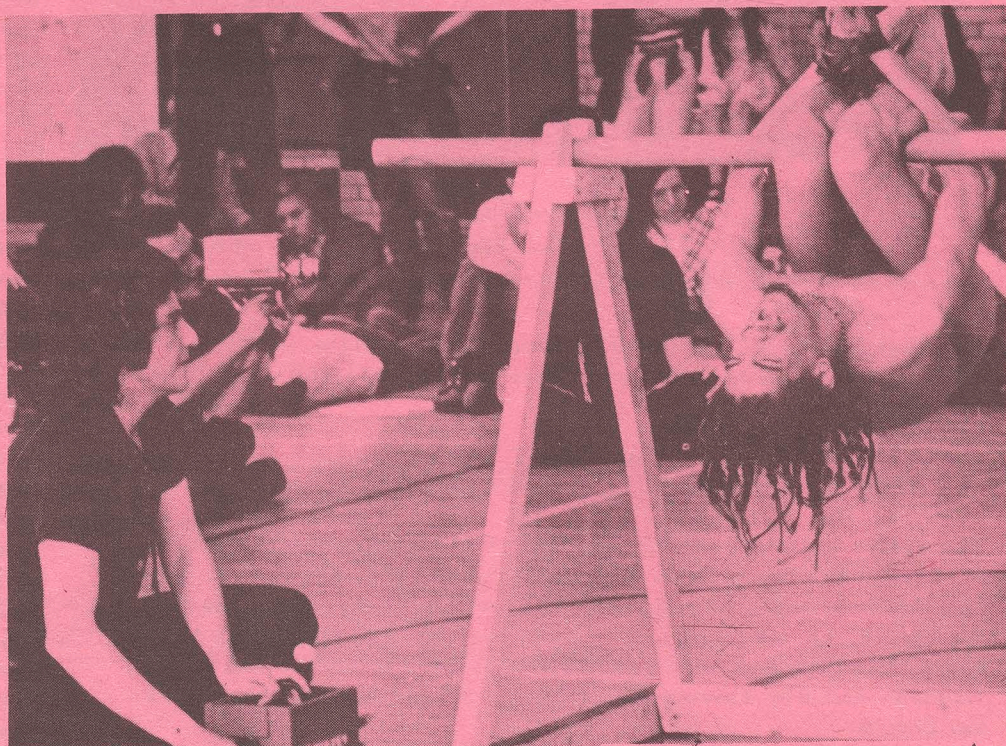
FACT SHEET ON TORTURE: STATEMENT TEN

While some 560 American prisoners of war were released from North Vietnamese jails during the past months, over 200,000 political prisoners remain in the jails of Saigon, Cambodia, and Laos where thousands are kept in crowded tiger cages. Originally developed by the French, these cages are now being manufactured by the Raymond, Morris and Jones Company in Austin, Texas, and are subsequently exported from there to South Vietnam. The Parrot's Perch was also originally developed by the French in Indochina. It was later used in Algeria where American Intelligence officers found out about it and are now teaching it to police officers the world over--in order to prevent the people from rising up against the repressive military capitalist governments which use torture to keep the people enslaved.

Everyone sits in meditation position. Richard, Roy, and Eduardo quietly put their chains back on.

(One full cycle of the Gnaoua chant.)

Roy announces:



The victim of the parrot's perch screams in agony under electro-shock in the fifth meditation.

6

SIX:

A MEDITATION ON DEATH
WITH A TEXT ON CAPITALISM AND THE DEATH CULTURE

The performers begin to use the chains with which they are shackled in such a way that they make a percussive sound. They shake and rattle them in various ways, setting up a rhythm which accompanies the melody which grows louder and louder with increasing intensity, giving way to frenzy.

(One half cycle of the Gnaoua chant with chain accompaniment.)

STATEMENT ONE ON DEATH:(Spoken by Cécile):

Capitalism is a death-system which poisons our food, our air, our work, our lives. (One half cycle of the Gnaoua chant with chain accompaniment.)

STATEMENT TWO ON DEATH:(Spoken by Bill):

There are degrees of death: the partial death of imprisonment; the partial death of drugs, of boredom, of despair, the oppressive deaths of racism, of sexism, of authoritarianism, the premature deaths of the poor and exploited. (One half cycle of the Gnaoua chant with chain accompaniment.)

STATEMENT THREE ON DEATH:(Spoken by Nammu):

Capitalism ruthlessly seeks to accumulate money regardless of the suffering or destruction it causes, including the deaths of countless people.

TEXT

ON THE DEATH CULTURE

(read by Julian)

Sexual repression leads to death.
Economic repression leads to death.
Racist repression leads to death.
Intellectual repression leads to death.
Imperialist repression leads to death.
The bondage to death is the fascination with dead objects, a fascination with things. The bondage to death is the elevation of things over life and living. The bondage to death is in the structure of the society whose goal is materialism, power, money, and property.
People are forced to sell their lives. The oppressed are forced to surrender their lives to their oppressor. The class system takes the life out of the people. Death becomes the unconscious fixation of activity; and, in turn, fixation on death rigidifies activity; and life as we know it and live it is already half dead because of the nature of the economic and political system in which we live.

We are enslaved to death. We kill ourselves. We poison ourselves. We kill each other. We believe in death.
The death instinct is furthered by all rigid forms. The death instinct is the psychological fear factor on which the exploitive classes base their threats that keep the people enslaved. The death instinct is the hopelessness of the people. Revolution is its opposite.
When the love drive is repressed it turns into a death drive: either to kill or be killed. All forms of activity become death-oriented. The whole social structure could be based on the love drive but because of the repression of love it is based on the death drive.

If sex is forbidden or repressed, violence takes its place. This violence is always related to sadistic or masochistic tendencies which link pleasure with death. The sado-masochist trip always ends in death.

(This text is drawn from a study made in the summer of 1972 by The Living Theatre Collective.)

During the reading of the text, the Dance of Death begins. One by one, the performers rise and begin to dance to the rhythm of the chant. The performers create their own dance of possession by the death culture. The dancers become progressively possessed by the dance until they begin to tremble. The trembling increases till the dancers' entire bodies are shaken. The trembling then accelerates, movements becoming more and more rapid until the trembling becomes almost invisible. As each dancer begins to feel the rigid stage of the dance approach, each one becomes part of a configuration of trembling bodies caught in the death trap of our culture.

The intensity of the trembling locks the body into rigidity. The configuration in the center of the circle becomes a cluster of people locked in torment, their faces twisted in anguish. Their eyes are open. They are not dead. They are caught in the death culture.

As the performers lock into rigidity, they stop singing. The sound of the Gnaoua melody, which has accelerated from a soft hum to a loud, open-mouthed chant, which, in the heavily pronounced dance rhythm accentuates the relationship between the melody itself and the beat of the human heart, stops. When the last dancer freezes, there is silence. They do not move. After thirty seconds, Roy, without moving out of his position in the cluster, announces the next meditation.

7

SEVEN:

A MEDITATION ON REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE
WITH A TEXT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
LIBERATION AND ANARCHISM

(10 second silence)

TEXT

(read by Judith who has remained seated in the circle)

"People adapt and habituate themselves to the conditions in which they live, and transmit to their children their acquired habits. Thus, being born and having lived in bondage, being the descendants of a long line of slaves, people begin to believe that slavery was an essential condition of life, and liberty seemed to them an impossible thing. In the same way, the working people, forced for centuries and thus habituated, to depend on the good will of their employers for work, that is, for bread, have ended in believing that it is their masters who give them to eat, and ask how it would possible to live, if there were not masters over them.

"In the same way, people who have have their limbs chained from their births but have nevertheless found out how to hobble about, might attribute to the very chains that bound them their ability to move, while on the contrary the chains would be diminishing and paralysing the muscular energy of their limbs.



The death freeze in the seventh meditation.
(Washington Square Methodist Church, June 30, 1973)

"If we add to the chains the education given them by their masters, the teachers who are all interested in teaching that the employers are necessary, if we add also the judge, and the police, to force those who think differently to keep silent, we shall understand how the belief in the necessity of masters and governments has become established.

"Thus, since it is believed that government is necessary, and that without government there must be disorder and confusion, people assume that anarchy, which means without government, must also mean absence of order."

"Anarchism is the name given to a theory of life and conduct in which society is conceived without government/ harmony in such a society being obtained/ not by submission to law/ nor by obedience to any authority/ but by free agreements concluded between various groups, freely constituted, for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of the people.

"In a society developed along these lines, the voluntary associations which are already now beginning to cover all the fields of human activity would extend so as to become substitutes for the government of all its functions. They would represent an interwoven network, composed of groups of all sizes, communal, regional and international, for all possible purposes: production, consumption and exchange, communications, sanitary arrangements, education, mutual protection, and an ever increasing number of social needs.

"We anarchists do not consider this conception a Utopia. It is derived from an analysis of tendencies that are at work already: the potential of post-scarcity technology, the growing

spirit of rebellion, and the rapid spread of alternative structures are steadily reinforcing the Anarchist tendency."

(The first section of the Text is from ANARCHY, a pamphlet by Errico Malatesta. The second section (beginning "Anarchism is the name...") is from the article on Anarchism by Piotr Kropotkin in the 11th Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.)

The performers remain motionless.

(10 seconds silence.)

Julian: But how can we smash the trance?

(The performers wait 10 seconds for a response from the public.)

Nammu: But how do we get out of these chains?

(They wait 10 seconds.)

Bill: But how do we build the new society within the shell of the old?

(They wait 10 seconds.)

Steven Ben: But how do we break the bondage to a system that cultivates death?

(They wait 10 seconds.)

The next seven questions--not reproduced here--were composed and spoken by the members of the Everyman Company and refer to issues of special importance in North Carolina.

Pierre: How can we liberate the great love in us?

(They wait 10 seconds.)

Eduardo: How can we organize our strength?

(No wait.)

Roy: And do what is to be done?

(No wait.)

Richard: Before it's too late?

The performers wait 10 seconds for a response from the public.

If there is no response, the questions are repeated. The performers are waiting for the public to take the first step. If there is silence, they all ask the questions again, waiting between each one for the people to take action.

As soon as a member of the audience opens the dialogue or moves to remove the chains, the performers break out of the conformation and begin the final scene. The form of the final scene is dialogue in which the performers' objective is to rouse the public to consideration of new forms of organization and action which will lead to less authoritarian, less hierarchical social patterns, and to diminish the effects of our sado-masochist conditioning.

At the Anarchist Conference at Hunter College, NYC, on May 19, 1973, the ending was performed as follows:

At the conclusion of the reading of the text, after a wait of three seconds, the first question is asked.

Julian: How can we smash the trance?

In the three second pause between this question and the next, a whisper is heard:

What can we do?



Between each of the questions there is a three second pause, and during each pause more and more voices are heard whispering until the whispers of

WHAT CAN WE DO?

are spoken not only during the pauses, but during the questions. This rising whispered

WHAT CAN WE DO?

forms a background for the final questions until Richard says

BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE?

At this instant, all of the performers say, in chorus, in full voice:

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Each performer has prepared a statement relating to activist alternatives which can be engaged in at the present time. Each performer has chosen the statement which each feels can serve as a basis for initiating dialogue with the public.

All of the performers utter their statements simultaneously without moving out of their positions. After they have said the statement once, they begin repeating it immediately and at the same time move towards the public. They move among the public repeating the statements. When a member of the public gives a response which could lead to useful dialogue, the performer stops and raps with that person.

THE STATEMENTS

Steven Ben:

We can form communes, collectives, and affinity groups that can work and study together how the overall repressions can be penetrated.

Pierre:

We can show the people why they should distrust all politicians and stop voting on any issue.

Julian:

We can strengthen the solidarity between working people and other revolutionary forces.

Judith:

We can, in our daily lives, break the sado-masochist patterns of our conditioning.

Richard:

We can be non-violent and build a non-violent culture.

Howard:

We can turn off the TV and turn each other on. We can make love with our friends; loving is the revolution.

Cécile:

Lesbian love and gay love can challenge the pattern of the nuclear family and its rights of possession.

Gypsy:

We can work to abolish the concept of falling in love like falling into a ditch; we can introduce relationships as a dynamic continual process of struggle; relationships without categorizing; we can integrate love, life, and work as one.

Pamela:

We can build a struggle based on non-cooperation with the government.

Pati:

We can fight for parent-controlled schools.

Eduardo:

We can turn our schools into places of learning instead of centers for governmental and corporation control.

Bill:

We can create revolutionary pre-structures, decentralized, non-authoritarian organizational forms to satisfy our needs which can become the basis of the post-revolutionary society.

Roy:

We can create caucuses on the job, coalitions in the community, and struggle collectively.

Michael:

We can organize free schools with experienced teachers.

The SEVEN MEDITATIONS was the collective creation of the following members of the Living Theatre Collective:

Pamela Badyk, Cécile Ballif, Julian Beck, Serge El Beze, Pierre Biner, Cathy Feuer (Nammu), Gypsy, Roy Harris, Steven Ben Israel, Judith Malina, Pati, Michael Shari, William Shari, Eduardo Silva

MYRA BRECKINRIDGE is a novel by Gore Vidal, his eleventh. The book was published in 1968 without the usual pre-publication fanfare. No advance copies were sent to reviewers. Yet within weeks of publication, MYRA was the number one bestseller in America. The book was roundly attacked by establishment reviewers, editorial writers, even banned from some libraries; it was treated in a manner often used against works of genius and incisive criticism. Many regarded MYRA as "pornographic," most memorably Wm. F. Buckley, Jr., who referred to it as such in his famous televised exchange with Vidal in the summer of 1968.

The following article was inspired by notes and discussions by members of the Gay Study Group. We felt MYRA is a far greater work than is generally acknowledged, a work by an advocate of sensuality and personal freedom not often publicly heard on these shores. Vidal is an articulate anti-religionist and anti-patriarchalist; he is also a classicist. His intellectual dimensions gave MYRA a profundity which grows deeper with each reading. He has said he wrote MYRA to be the kind of book he would want to read, and by doing so he has written one of the most enjoyable and most significant pieces of fiction in the last ten years.

The following are a series of notes which we feel will help a reader to enter into more quickly what is in many ways the very gay world of M.B.

by John Mitzel
Steve Abbott
and the Gay Study Group

some notes on myra b.

...whose astonishing history is a poignant amalgam of vulgar dreams and knife-sharp realities... (p. 4)

What an awkward youth Myron was! Born in 1940--how lucky!--packed off to the movies each Saturday, living a nervous, wretched life in NYC with his mother Gertrude, a great tyrant of a woman. Myron, as far as we know, is without a father. It is Gertrude in person, and Buck Loner in his "feature-length oaters" (of the older generation) who are presented as influences on young Myron within his family. The Mother and the Mother's brother: already hints of matrilineage and some sources for Myron's eventual development.

But Myron did not restrict his movie viewing to Saturday afternoons. Buck tells it this way to his DICKtaphone: Myron was "this sissy kid who wanted to go to the movies all the time."

Envision young Myron slipping away from school to pop round to the Rialto, the Roxy, the Broadway to sit silently alone in the dark, his hand reaching through a hole in his pocket for an occasional squeeze as he watches Lana Turner in MARRIAGE IS A PRIVATE AFFAIR or Joan Crawford in POSSESSED.

The most important lesson he learned by watching movies of that era was that those women on screen were goddesses--as he'd read sometime later as theory in Parker Tyler--and like all goddesses, they had power over mortal men.

Mortal men. They became the problem. As Myron entered adolescence (his huge prick growing bigger by the day, it seemed) mortal men were his obsession. How to get power over them? He pursued them. They tormented him. He took them up his ass. (Oh, goddess-to-be, why so anal? Fucking: so 1940's. In the '60's, people got into oral-genital sex and group-grope.) These mortal men beat him up in alleys and bars.

As a "man," Myron quickly reached his capacity for having power over other men. He remained unsatisfied. What other means were there, then, to find out where men were vulnerable?

In day and by night, Myron lived with the image of mortal men imprinted on every level of his consciousness. How to conquer this fascination, or better yet the cause for this fascination. Haunted by this "natural man," every component of the swaggering working lad fantasy of Forster/Lawrence/Ackerley crossed with the peculiarities of the American frontier man fantasy of Hollywood and Madison Ave.--grim products of patriarchal repression.

And doesn't Myra understand the intricacies of sexuality in a repressed patriarchal order? In fucking Rusty at long last, it is obviously not the sensory thrill that so

excites Myra (there's no flesh contact being made; Myra's using a borrowed dildo, and Rusty refuses even to whimper), it's the intellectual excitement of Fucking Authority by penetrating the Holy Patriarchal Asshole (the judeao-christian Achilles Heel!).

Myron hunted for HIM and only found bits and pieces of him in sailors, construction workers, drifters, sanitation studs, merchant marines, truckdrivers, forklift operators, men hopefully down on their luck who would do anything for \$\$\$\$\$.

As it turns out, the joke is partly on "men" as well. Their male prerogative enacts a social imperative which has been dominant since the first centuries of historical times. Myron's just a fag to them, so why not fuck him--especially since he's willing to pay. But the tables are turning, and patriarchy, along with its attendant vices of Macho and father-right, is in its last days. Myron paid his dues in the old dying order; with his experience he's ready to move into The New Age, the age in which patriarchal men are obsolete.

As Myron releases Myra to work out his own vision of a new social equilibrium, so the rights of one sex vis-a-vis the other are rapidly being altered. Myra intends to overthrow established power just so he'll be happy. Is there any nobler inspiration? Myron/Myra B. is an attempt at synthesis, one which never fully works itself out because A) one can't expect a smooth mesh in the life of one individual when dealing with grand principles that affect an entire society, and B) the contradictions are still too great in the present order--heading toward collision--to permit someone to work them out without a great lot of mad swinging back and forth.

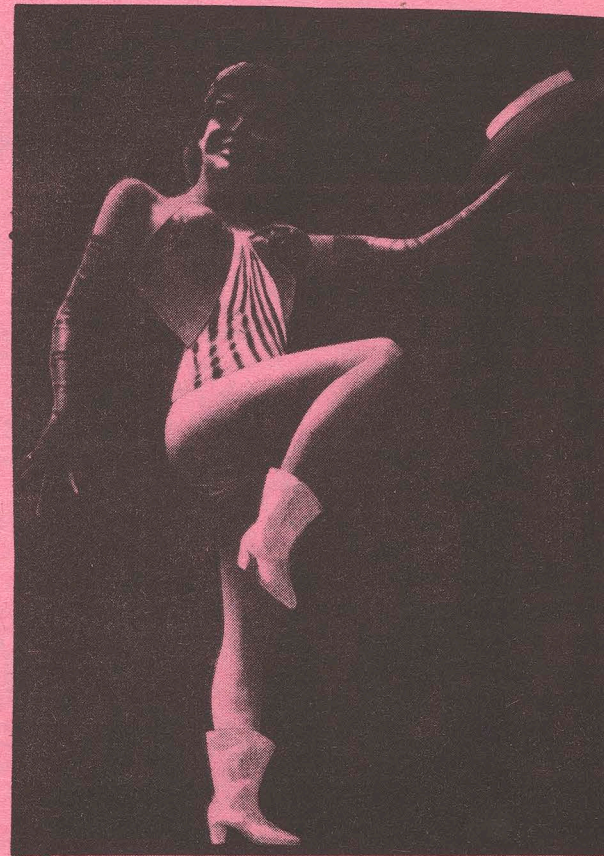
MYRA BRECKINRIDGE is the 1960's super-imposed on the 1940's; you get one picture, but the separate images are still distinct.

...there are no words to describe for you exactly what my body is like... (p. 10)

Could Myron have become Myra without severing his cock and balls?

Probably not. And if Myron did offer up his genitals to become Miss Myra, is it possible that Myron II, at the end of the book, has got a penis back? Not an operative penis to be sure, but a prick as decorative and as artificial as were Myra's inflated breasts?

Would Myron II then be a remade "Man" as Myra was a woman manque? And is this where Vidal would have us go?--individuals first and sex-identified creatures second? Or is it simply the inevitable outcome of Myron/Myra's choice of action? Is the



moral that pursuit of power makes you sexless?

Myron evidently felt the removal of his genitals was important--more than important, essential--if he was ever to become what his intellect declared he must be. As a queen, Myron had long since dispersed his erotic energy to other regions of his body--the exact opposite of all that trade that fucked him; they bunched it all up in their genitals.

One thing you can say about Myron/Myra, he's non-genital in his orientation and eventually in his sexual actuality. It's power he's after, not stimulation. MYRA BRECKINRIDGE is a book about power. Myra seeks power; how manly of her! For that's the other lesson she learned from American films made between 1935 and 1945--that decade "when no unimportant film was made." Imperial power. Goddess power. That's what Myra wants. She wants power over lesser men and women. He/she wants to be worshipped. In our society men have power and women are worshipped. Myra wants to have both.

...the cock-worshipping Dorians enslaved the West, impiously replacing the Goddess with a god. Happily his days are nearly over; the phallus cracks... (p. 6)

The excesses of patriarchy have reduced women to mere decorative accessories and slave labor when not used for breeding. The excesses have reached the point of absurdity when a queen like Myron can assume the appearance of a decorative accessory in order to charge right into the flank where modern-day patriarchs leave themselves wide open.

Myron as Myra can beat men at their own game and on their own terms--power. Myra can reduce Macho He-Men like Buck and Rusty (hard sounding names for hard men) to blubbing subordinates. She is



subversive. She takes from each what is most supportive of his manhood: from Rusty she takes the sanctity of his asshole, violating it in a forceful way, and from Buck she takes half his capital.

Myra as woman manque takes back for Women their birthright. She takes half of Buck's property (which is lawfully hers), and she confronts Rusty with the new phenomenon of an independent, aggressive, and sexually autonomous image of woman. How much more can we ask of a metaphor?

Her strategy with Rusty is less successful than with Buck, but with Rusty it is also much more complex, more personal. There's no telling which way the marbles will roll once they're spilled. It is less a matter of reestablishing the right of Woman as an equal partner in the functioning of Society. Myra feels compelled to debunk his Macho cockiness, paying back a debt long owed to Myron. Or: Inside every queen there's an Amazon warrior. The

Theban Band in drag!

...Wanting to tame for all time the archetypal male, I have created something ten times as masculine in the classic sense as what I started with... (p. 214)

Rusty remains a problem. Has Myra really changed him? And if so, is the change for the better?

He turns overtly sadistic--a sadism towards women he has always possessed--will always hate women, winds up satisfying Letitia, "the ultimate female masochist," and becomes an aggressive homosexual TV star--by the archetypal name of Ace Mann--of huge popularity.

By taking away the supports of conventional manhood, Myra's unleashed a male animal unfettered even by a connection with women. He's got an identity he can capitalize on. She's freed him to be the frontier man supreme. He has fallen, through a trap

door, back to Eden, and Americans just lap it up.

Myra's one real triumph over Rusty is that all those little spermatozoa in his balls will never sprout into more little Rustys. Make him anything but a father! Hard to be a patriarch without women and kids to push around, and Rusty will have neither women nor kids in his life.

Gentlemen, the desire and the pursuit of the whole ends at Santa Monica! (p. 187)

Hollywood is a female-oriented town vs. NYC with its rough industrial imperative. Different interpretations of sexuality as a result.

California, always at the Edge of Culture, welcomes someone like Myra who is an odd amalgam of the sexes; Myra who's come like a prophet to sit at the feet of

myra

the revolving lady in front of the Chateau Marmont, as a Greek pupil might have sat at the feet of a philosopher in the stoa. There she is, The Sunset Lady, slowly revolving before a city which births goddesses.

And how she is the Sunset Lady! (She ultimately got dismantled.) For she is the symbol of The Female Principle in its last shackles of a dying patriarchy. She has almost made it. After her comes an age when there is no longer the need to keep Ladies (revolving or otherwise) on pedestals, not when there are people like Myra Breckinridge to bring the principle home and take humankind to its next stage of social development.

The Sunset Lady, certainly as much as Bette, Talu, Gloria, even Gene Tierney, was a rallying point for all the queens in the realm. It called out to them and they came in droves. Once assembled, the symbol was no longer required; the queens worked out their own plans to change society, and then they had to seek new symbols. Or, as the mood tells us today: "Baby, we're all in show business now!"

How can Myra Breckinridge move in on Patriarchy in the name of The New Woman when "she" herself is the perfect embodiment of so many of the corruptions and artifices inflicted on women in a culture like ours?

"Myra Breckinridge is a dish, and never forget it, you motherfuckers..." (p. 5) Ah, but that Myra is a dish--a careful concoction closely following the recipe--is only more evidence of the degradation of the Female Principle in our society.

Or, like in earlier societies, does Myra pull off this transvestite masquerade to increase her power over other men? She does what they dare not do? Myra is a shaman in our tacky culture, an assembly-line Cassandra.

Perhaps we are not so removed from The Goddess after all. And as to mother-fucking...well...who knows? In Myra's New Order of human relations, this taboo may also be discarded. After all, if Rusty's pink little asshole is no longer sacred, what is? Were dildoes invented before the wheel? Myra's the new Totem (The Sunset Lady Lives!) going after the old Taboo. They exit hand-in-hand. The set is struck. Time for new auditions.

Of course part of Myra's realigning of sexual power is internal as well as external. The fact that Myron had his cock and balls removed--his primary organs of sexual stimulation and gratification--does this leave him sexless in Utopia?

What does Myra do for sex kicks? Surely she hasn't lost the desire. True, she can't orgasm.

But Myra IS sexuality, in Big Bright Walking Talking Neon Lights, just like the Great Ladies of the Silver Screen. They never actually did anything sexually on screen either, but you sure as hell got the impression that they could! Myra modelled herself on them. '40's sexual repression demands rechanneling sexuality to stylized artifices. Myra exemplifies the further evolution of the repressed sexual order of a church-going, production-oriented industrial society. Myra is all come-on. Her whole life is like Rita Hayworth doing "Put the Blame on Mame, Boys" in GILDA. Without a prick or pussy, her sexual energy is diffused. She exudes it out of every other opening. Leslie Fiedler predicted there'd be a "revolt from the orgasm," and Myra's at the barricades. Myra excites other people into sexual fear and frenzy so that she may manipulate them--as poor rutted Myron was manipulated.

...Sudden daydream: Buck Loner hanging upside down like a fat sack of potatoes while yours truly works him over with a tennis racket strung with copper wires... (p. 16)

Dumb Buck thinks he's going to gain mastery over Myra by shooting her "a Buck Loner special"--Patriarchy's dictat: orgasm as instrument of power and that every man is irresistible to any woman. Hence, Buck walks right into Myra's trap.

Buck Loner is obviously the embodiment of what's left of The Male Principle. What better than a cowboy (back in his youth of course), riding free on the prairies, recalling the nomadic origins of patriarchal order, independent, plundering, free of the land. Now, however, in his old age, Buck is tied to the Land. That was traditionally the place of the Mother-Goddess. So Myra, in the name of The New Woman, comes to claim the inheritance back.

Like Buck, the Male Principle is now degenerate, and as Myra sez: "...fat--no, gross!--with breasts even larger than mine. He is huge and disgusting and old..." (p. 12) The Male Principle, appearing so glorious in its prime, is now fat and old, industrial oligarchism ravaging the Earth, turning people into a hierarchy of consumer groups, marketing areas, and labor pools. The decaying patriarchal order cries out for the feminine heritage, the Goddess and Her principle.

Rusty is intimidated by her authority, something he finds odd and frightening in a woman. He has no way of dealing with this except submitting--the good sisters back at his parish school taught him that. And so Myra's opposition crumbles.

The world is certainly ready for The Return of The Goddess--QUEEN Goddess.

"...you carry yourself like a veritable queen..." (p. 20)

Just look how the students flock to her classes.

Ch. Look. Mary. Look.

She teaches Posture and Empathy! Wouldn't you know it? Both the specialties of queens. Just those qualities which happen to be lacking in patriarchal societies. How can you have "Posture" in an oppressive society which breaks peoples' spines? How can you have "Empathy" in an authoritarian society in which conformity and competition are mandatory for success?

Placed somewhere in the back of our mind we are constantly aware that Myron/Myra is a big queen. Not a female, not a woman, not even a complete transsexual/sic/; she's a big queen who's had his prick cut off. Her name is an anagram of "Mary," that generic name all queens use in addressing one another. "Mary," you might say, is the cognate of The Queen Clan.

Though possessing a higher level of consciousness, Myra attains the mythic position of the other gods and goddesses examined by Parker Tyler in his books. Myra brings to life an Olympian type too long discredited. Only, unlike your Gables, Grables, and Monroes, Myra does not use her privileged position to confirm and support the sexist attitudes and behavior of our society.

No. Myra floats down from Olympus and swings into L.A. like The Cleveland Wrecking Co., devastating what's left of a rotting edifice, i.e., the '40's Hollywood sensibility.

Fuck off, Louis Mayer!

That Myra is an exciting and attractive representative of the best and the most powerful of the '40's Queen Culture was quite thoroughly supported by the legions of queens one met in bars in the 1968-70 period who, upon mention of the book or film of MYRA, began with their Theda Bara eyes and stated quite unequivocally: "I am Myra Breckinridge!"

And they were all right. They were.

After fucking Rusty, the Mysterious Cock is no longer a tyrant over Myron/

Myra. He has laid low his opponent. It is once again just an instrument from excretion and pleasure. "Shall I ever be free of the dull lingering pain that is my particular glory, the price so joyously paid for being Myra Breckinridge, whom no man may possess except on her...my terms" is the first question she asks in the book. (p. 4)

Joyously?

Whether it's a prick or a dull, lingering pain, either way Myron/Myra seems to carry a burden through his life, some final echo of pain from those nails in Christ's hands. Will Christianity ever allow us to be whole and like it? (And there she goes again, the dizzy queen, referring to herself in the third person, the vice of all '40's queens with their alter-egos and feminine names.)

Ch, Prick!...Symbol of Tyranny! Sought, Sucked, and Hated! And who loves/hates Mr. Prick the most: men, women, or queens? Why slay Priapus when what you're after is some bargaining with Eros?

... "Whenever I hear the word 'smegma,' I become physically ill"... (p. 120)

It was not uncommon in gynarchic societies for a male to offer up his member, or a part of it, to the Goddess. Priests and administrators were eunuchs through the Roman Empire until the imposition of Christianity.

Myron's smarter than this. He knows--as P.T. would instruct--that at any moment in a society, the Pantheon of gods and goddesses must be filled. (See Myra's opening rap to Letitia. p. 121) The pantheon needs not only typical Hollywood stars but in this age of television and constant attention it requires creatures even more total than them. Myron's experience in the underground film culture of the mid-'60's in New York City taught him that it isn't enough to enact roles on screen; in our Total Media Age, one must live one's role.

Did Zeus and Hera ever "take five"? NO! So Myron offered up his rather sizeable prick not merely just to serve the Goddess but in order to become the Goddess!

Athena sprang from her father's head; Myra rose from the surgeon's table--both creations of men!

...For what true purpose have I smashed the male principle only to become entrapped by the female? Something must soon be done... (p. 241)

Myra makes in actuality what many queens are always talking about. Myra becomes an instrument in service of her obsession. That he finds himself in a physiological cul-de-sac was not foreseen except, obviously, by Vidal.

Myron moves from being a drone to a queen to a Goddess-designate. He is not a transsexual; he has no artificial vagina--an intentional oversight?--he has no mock-up sensory glands, nothing even to allow for penetration by a male in front. He is no woman, he is no man, he is no hermaphrodite, no androgyne. He is plain and simply a queen, a category into which all "others" must fall. (The "Twilight World of the Third Sex" come back in dignity?)

Myron comes out of a masculist-patriarchal society. Both he and his society are obsessed with males and masculinity and maintaining the power of both. Yet Myron is "woman-identified" to some extent (at least in understanding the potential to gain power through Woman as Goddess) without the biological base of actually being female. He then alters himself to best exploit his masculine drive for power. He completely "demasculizes" himself physically--the most outrageous thing for a male in our society to do--in order to outstrip men in that most manly of pursuits: gaining power over others.

Why keep bringing new babies into the world when we, as Myra demonstrates, can keep creating new selves instead?

Myra understands the contradictions of

myra

our culture well enough to know that saving the species from overpopulation will only come by pitting this new necessity of sex realignment against the decadent social imperative of male prerogative.

Control population. Take things in hand. Redesignate roles. That's a masculinist notion associated with a patriarchal culture. Yet to control population means birth control, sterilization, free and easy abortion. These are hallmarks of women's freedom in every society. If men can't subjugate women to be breeders of children, then their power is greatly diminished over the other sex. (Queens, of course, are too self-involved to bother upholding a repressed order of personal-power relations. This self-involvement is the "narcissism" the shrinks find so awful in us.) The clash of contradictions, then, is resolved in Myra's schema by asserting our human right to limit growth, to manage population, to control men's ravaging of earth's resources. Show some respect for the Goddess!

Myra is calling for the curtailment of human greed. She wants a severe change in the world view of Western Civilization. Myra advocates using patriarchal ideas and procedures to bring to an end the reign of Patriarchs. Will her New Age be more reminiscent of when times were Matriarchal? Perhaps. But the New Age will be wholly original. Myra envisions a kind of harmony --once you get past her venom--between the sexes unknown for centuries. Wouldn't you know it'd be a queen forcing people to be free?

...I certainly went through a pretentious phase!... (p. 262)

A certain incredulity covers everyone in the book. As we agree with much of what Myra advocates, it comes as a bit of a shock when Myron II reminds us in the last chapter that "...like so many would-be intellectuals back East, Myra never actually read books, only books about books." (And hasn't Vidal used disclaimers against Myra? What a literary bully! Mugging his own precious creation! Hasn't he said that Myra's logic was exquisitely off-base--modelled on that of Wm. F. Buckley, Jr.? But we know better. Myra is no prevaricator. She Speaks Truth! Though one is fully entitled to suspect that Vidal doesn't like her. Or as Truman Capote has warned, stay away from drag queens; they call you up twenty years later at 3 AM, cry over the phone and ask to borrow money.)

Myra didn't just read books about books; she also read books about films. Oh, how very like those bees in the NYC Queen Cocktail Network! Myron was after all a product of the "film culture," that parasitical critical aberration which reached its furthest crystallization in the mid-to-late '60's, back when people took Film oh-so-seriously.

That Myron successfully read the work of Parker Tyler makes him a little suspect. That he believes in them is icing on the cake. Film critics like poets have great difficulty writing lucid prose (Tyler, Kracauer, the Cahiers crowd); tangled prose almost seems to be a requirement for that vocation. And in Myron/Myra's case, from tangled prose to a tangled life, the twisted symmetry of the illogical.

...I played several Andrews Sisters records... They really did roll out that barrel, and no one has yet rolled it back... (p. 118)

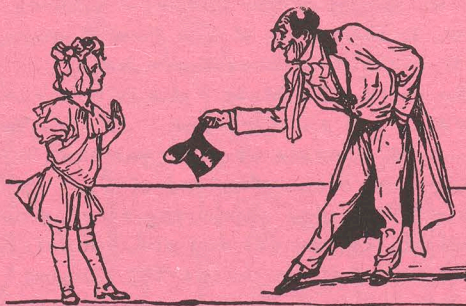
But, too, we must weigh the possibility that the last chapter itself is a put-on.

Take the plot of MYRA and make it into a screenplay. It would follow, quite comfortably, the '40's MGM Production Code. Slimy Louis B. would scream if M.B. didn't end happily, which it does. The "story" ends happily in chapter 29 after Myra forci-

bly penetrates Rusty per anum. "Myra" has been fulfilled. The winning of Mary-Ann and subsequent metamorphosis into Myron II is ordained after screwing Rusty.

Louis Mayer could stand the "depravity" of the story--"give 'em the hint of perversion; that'll pull 'em in"--as long as the storywriters came up with something to please the censors at the end.

"Boy" does get girl in the end--after Queen gets boy in the end, the tail end! Imagine the hurried story conference called to "whip up something suitable" with only two day's shooting left. (See Vidal's recent essays, "The Ashes of Hollywood" in The New York Review, May, 73.)



CRUEL PATRIARCHY VS. JUDY IN WIZARD OF OZ

Let's look at Glinda The Good in THE WIZARD OF OZ for a good metaphor. Too bad that classic film was made in 1939. Had it been just a few months more recent, it would have fallen within Myra's magic decade, and Myra could have likened herself to the immortal Judy.

Wonder how a queen like Myron felt about Judy.

Judy was a faltering Goddess of the 1940's whom the '60's actually destroyed. What do you think Dorothy's trip down the yellow brick road to Emerald City was but a symbol for the life of a female growing up in a patriarchal world? "Lions and Tigers and Bears!" Indeed! Sound like football teams. They'd scare anybody!

Those little Munchkins, a sweet child-like race, would gladly have kept Dorothy to live with them. But Dorothy can't do that. She has a world to return to. (Kansas? Matriarchy?) She has evolved past the primal bliss of the Munchkins. She must move forward to Utopia, never back toward Eden. Hence, she must pass through and triumph over patriarchy--just like Myra!

Glinda is a Goddess, too, who helps out a sister in need. We should also note that the one woman in Oz who assumes the characteristics of the Male Principle is the Wicked Witch of the West, and she's undone when Dorothy throws a pail of water at her--water: the symbol of feminine potency; fecund, tranquil, eternal.

Also, though a man--the Wizard (who's a fraud)--promises to take Dorothy back to Kansas with him, he ultimately falls through on his pledge. Deserted by Man, Dorothy, through the help of Good Glinda, finally learns she's always had the power to do it herself. What a grand feminist statement; and wouldn't Myra love it!

And when Dorothy awakens in her bed back in Kansas, she's surrounded by men! She's grown up now, and though she still likes them all, she's on her own, wary of their authority. But poor Judy never learned Dorothy's lesson.



The plot of MYRA follows formula, with only a few stretched dimensions. Our characters are introduced (we can almost see Myra sitting at her table in bra and panties writing out the credits in garish queen script); we meet a Regal Lady "with a past"--she was a MAN!--and we see the lust for money and power unfold. Introduce the love triangle. This is all familiar stuff.

Admittedly, there's lots of 1960's candidness in MYRA BRECKINRIDGE, but no matter how kinky the behavior of the characters gets, All Is Redeemed in the final scene: Renunciation of Deviation; "Man" and Wife in Wedded Bliss; Involved Citizens; Productive Community Members; Good Christian Scientists--just like mother Gertrude (read abstainers); Myron II wishing they could have a baby even though they belong to Planned Parenthood and after a whole book in which we've been lectured on the evils of over-population!

WWWHHAAATTT!!!

The nerve!

To end so raunchy a tale with string section up, in a glowing sunset as curtains close...! Hey! Wait a minute! Who you shittin', V.?

No one, of course.

It's just his final nail in the coffin burying '40's culture, that dreary decade now revisiting us in Bette Midler, the Pointer Sisters, and gas rationing, a decade when Patriarchy stood triumphant in its unchallenged values.

Think of the '40's and you can see the American Empire and its MEN--Ike, Marshall, MacArthur--unopposed in its might, when stage hits like ON THE TOWN and OKLAHOMA celebrated masculinist values. (In contrast with the increasingly anti-patriarchal symbols of the Sensuous '60's: Beach Party movies--with Annette Funicello --Woodstock, HAIR, even MYRA BRECKINRIDGE, the failure of the GREEN BERETS movie, etc.)

The coffin containing the corpse of '40's culture is finally being laid to rest, killed off by one of its finest products. Locked inside the coffin are Myra, Sheilah Graham, Luckies Green, Hollywood Canteen, Bob Hope, and the recent additions of Veronica Lake and Betty Grable--who McLuhan called "the Goddess of death for GIs"--all suffocating as they beat out some tune to the Big Band sound of Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians.

In place of a preacher-man giving solace at graveside to '40's survivors, we've got the Andrews Sisters, well, at least two of them, chugga-chugga-choo-chooing out their grief in unison.

Vidal and the 1940's have a very special relation. As John Aldridge, the critic, pointed out in a review of V.'s last book to be published in that decade (THE SEASON OF COMFORT, 1949), Gore Vidal, amongst all the writers to debut in that decade most tried to capture and reflect the sensibility of the 1940's. It was his "special decade."

But the 1960's shattered the illusions of the '40's to hell, and the birds came home to roost. MYRA just may be Vidal's own joke on himself and his times. By writing MYRA, V. frees himself from inclusion in the '40's bunch. It's a prodigious effort to wrest oneself out of the time of one's youth, and when successful, it's worthy of admiration. Have any other male writers of that era done likewise? escaped the insidiousness of that decade's values? John Horne Burns would have, but he's dead. Merle Miller? Perhaps. Paul Bowles? Maybe, but he's too dedicated an expatriate. Capote? Still needs to make a declaration of independence. James Jones? Ha! Norman M.? Are you kidding! He's too busy jerking off into Hemingway's shoes. Vidal manages to remain far more contemporary than any other male writer of his generation.

Chapter 42 is a joke on top of a joke, Vidal's big wink at us who are in the know. It is the '40's necessity now rendered wholly superfluous--hence hilarious. It's a sop to every 12th grade English teacher

in Farmville, USA; MYRA's "redeeming social value" to the patriarchs who will have been outraged by everything else in the book.

Sez Myra: "I exist entirely outside the usual human experience..." Yet she's the New Woman, just as centuries ago there had to be a New Man--uppitty and above traditional law--to conquer Woman and matriarchy by force. Now Myra has come to take things one step further. Just like a queen to be so trendy! And it's on the tails of queens that the contradictions between conventional sex roles will be dissolved.

"I created myself." And isn't that the S.O.P. for queens? It's a new identity with each sunrise... "thought she was James Dean for a day"... living in an overprecious state of awareness of NOW, reflected in the NOWness of V.'s prose for Myra, a life like a reel of film, flickering out its little drama for some passive audience.

A queen's best medium is staged musical comedy. MYRA could have been better rendered there than on screen (in that butchered job of Sarne's). Leave the screen to real film goddesses (except in totally straight-lipped put-ons like DINAH EAST), and leave the stage to queens--of whatever sex!

...I have no clear idea as to my ultimate identity once every fantasy has been acted out with living flesh... (p. 203)

Are Myra's loyalties waning as she reaches the fulfillment of her fantasies? She notes quite early in the book how she has lately become interested in the television commercial as the art form best expressing our post-Hollywood sensibility. From silver screen giant of a goddess in an illusion to a fleeting impression of moronic inarticulateness and cool dis-involvement.

But can queens endure in The Age of The Television Commercial? Or have they become genetically adapted to The Great Ladies of the Silver Screen? Old queens will pass; new queens will usurp their place. '40's Queens were the last of a breed; the last real Ladies of the third sex. Even Myra admits that his chronological age is unaligned with the age to which he is spiritually attached. My, my, isn't she antiquarian for a queen!

Today's queens are children of TV. Yet you don't find them naming themselves after the Great Ladies of the Tube. No Miss Dinah Shore, no Miss Donna Reed, no Miss Lucy. That's because people aren't the "stars" of TV; products are. Jackie Kennedy was perhaps our last great "Movie Queen"--a tide-over from the '40's--and she was the last great inspiration to queens.

The book itself, if we're to believe anything, mimicks the beloved TV commercial. "I shall not begin at the beginning since there is no beginning, only a middle..." The NOW.

For Myra, there is only the present, excepting the 1940's--and that's HISTORY! Myra has little personal history (so very like a queen) and, like the other faculty and students at the Academy, she too reaches into the common repertory of movie lore when she needs appropriate scenarios.

That she shows interest in the TV commercial gives us hope. She'll abandon the Star System yet. You can't have Gods and Goddesses in a TV ad. You can't even have stars--other than the products themselves--Viva, Tabby, Silva Thins (where today's queens find inspiration for their names). How can anyone be Bigger Than Life on a 21 inch Motorola? Myra will become a democrat in her symbols soon enough.

Myra vs. "like."

"Nothing is like anything else." Or is it?

Hollywood, repository of M.'s dreams is but a simulacrum of the world's reality (shot through gauze and heavily edited). Everything is pose, gesture, and facade. It is so much "like" what it pretends to be that one tends to forget there was an original.

Surprising in a way that Myra didn't moonlight as a guide at Disneyland. Maybe her dreams were too natural for Disneyland, much too involved with human archetypes and human power to be confused with mere sanitized echoes of worldly contrivance.

Yet Myra herself is nothing but a sequence of animated similes. She is "like" Greer Garson, Fay Wray, June Allyson--oops! never June Allyson--Phyllis Thaxter, Margaret Sullivan, you name it.

...That is woman's role, to make the wound and then to heal it... (p. 228)

In Myron/Myra's development, we have an encapsulation of the evolution of human development in historical times.

"As a small girl /sic/ I used to yearn for Lana Turner to crush me against her heavy breasts, murmuring, 'I love you, Myra, you perfect darling!'"

Here we have a fundamental matriarchal principle desired, that is, the Mother-Goddess's indiscriminate love of her children, in this case, all the adoring patrons in the movie theatre.

Ah, but with age came the switch of focus: "Fortunately, this Lesbian phase passed and my desires were soon centered upon James Craig." In maturity, the direction is not stabilized. It gets Rusty--or rather it focuses on Rusty, now Mary-Ann, then Gloria...oh, dear! Is this the new order?

...my mission: the destruction of the last vestigial traces of traditional manhood in the race in order to realign the sexes, thus reducing population while increasing human happiness and preparing humanity for its next stage... (p. 41)

Myra's mission of destroying the male principle and its agents would seem to imply the reintroduction of the principles of matriarchy. One of the essential cornerstones of matriarchal orders is Woman-Goddess as the Bearer of Life, she who is worshipped for replenishing the fields, the race, the rivers, the forests, and the sea.

But Myra is an agent for sterility. In an overpopulated world, we do not need goddesses of fertility. Myra, like Vidal, believes that we must curtail the fact that people now "breed like bacteria under optimum conditions." Myra wants to destroy male prerogative, yes; but her ultimate aim to is make men and women halt their compulsive birthing. What the world doesn't need is another green-light for baby-making--like those Leggs pantyhose drugstore displays: phallic shaped stands loaded with sperm cells-like products and the women come running. A real goddess would be an incentive for procreation.

But as a queen, Myra is in fact sterile, and that's exactly what the world needs more of now. She's a proselytizer for birthlessness. (Vidal has no children that we know of; Mailer gives race to the Kennedies.) Myra has successfully guaranteed that at least three people will never spawn: Myron, Rusty, and Mary-Ann. Myra's acted just like a queen: serve yourself and serve posterity. The Old Order was one of sexual repression and massive, unchecked procreation; the New Order will be one of sexual expression and reproductive sterility. And won't it be grand?--that is if we don't starve to death first. "Sterility," a word long suffering a stigma in our society, is being given a new respectability. "Non-parenthood" is emerging as an acceptable choice for adults. Of course queens have been "non-parents" for generations. Isis, Cybele, Rhea--bye, bye. Day's done. Hail Myra! Free agent of sexuality sans fecundi-

"Talent is not what Uncle Buck and I deal in, Miss Van Allen," I said, lightly resting my hand on Buck's clenched fist. "We deal in myths. At any given moment the world requires

		Optional Reader's Alternates:
1. one full-bodied blonde Aphrodite	a Melvyn Douglas	_____
2. one dark siren of flawless beauty	b Myrna Loy	_____
3. one powerful inarticulate brute of a man	c Jean Harlow	_____
4. one smooth debonaire charmer	d James Cagney	_____
5. one world-weary corrupt lover past his prime	e Lon McCallister	_____
6. one eternal good-sex woman-wife	f Hedy Lamarr	_____
7. one wide-eyed chicken boy	g Susanna Foster	_____
8. one gentle girl singer	h Clark Gable	_____
9. one winning stud	i Humphrey Bogart	_____
10. one losing stud outside the law.	j John Wayne	_____

ty! No more "Mom." It's Miss Myra to you, boy!

Patriarchy conquered matriarchy in virtually every society, but industrialism and systematic scientific developments have nursed the contradictions inherent in patriarchal societies to proceed to a point where life in those societies is brutal and near collapse.

Myra offers us an out: CHANGE!

Queens like Myra, so long beaten down and/or exterminated, are now finding themselves at the fore, suddenly being listened to, except by those patriarchs who denounce MYRA as "pornographic." (Instead of just plain old "heresy"--that Christian specialty--20th century patriarchs have invented "sickness" and "pornography" to use against those who advocate justice and freedom.)

But the destruction of masculist principles must bring the collapse of those institutions and behavior which are in themselves manifestations of the principles.

Out goes heterosexual pairing for compulsively programmed procreation. Hence, Rusty goes exclusively homosexual. He remains, however, thoroughly misogynist. But at least Myra has ruined him as a carrier of masculist behavior. He becomes a male impersonator, exaggerating the fanciful projections that Patriarchs like to see of themselves.

There were social positions for a queen like Myron/Myra in other societies. He would never have had to be the total reject he was in America. In our culture a queen like Myron has no social status. He writes esoteric film criticism--a queen's occupation, be they woolly-headed queens scribbling in little film quarterlies or "just plain folks" queens arguing about CABARET over a cocktail.

Myron/Myra rides the rail between the sexes, figuring out the right combination of anatomy and gender behavior to assume power over others. He chooses the body of a sensuous female in order to exploit the male's conditioned deference to Woman, his fear of her body (which in Myra's case is a mock-up), and her mysterious reproductive power (which Myra ain't got).

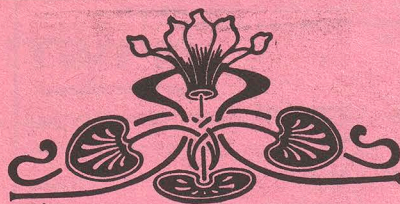
Myra's attack is genuinely masculine. She has power as her Goal, and she lets nothing get in her way. She shamelessly resorts to Rape, Blackmail, Threats, and Exploitation--just as any red-blooded American Man would!

We must always remember the nature of the beast.

So who is fooling whom in MYRA BRECKINRIDGE? Part of the joke, certainly, has to be on F. Nietzsche. His ubermensch turns out to be none other than Myra B., quasi-transsexual, movie devotee, '40's worshipper, who believes that personal freedom can only come to those who are fearless enough to fully act their sexual fantasies.

Sound a bit extreme?

Then perhaps we too should chime in agreement with Myron II's comment as he comes across a quote from Jean-Jacques Rousseau that Myra noted in the margins of her writings: "...the quotation still sort of appeals to me. It is about how humanity would have been a lot happier if it had kept to 'the middle ground between the indolence of the primitive state and the questing activity to which we are prompted by our self-esteem.'"



WALLFLOWER at the revolution

by Charley Shively

Sexual "freedom" does not mean sexual liberation.

In fact, I believe it is being used to quash any changes in the power-love relations in our society. Sexual "freedom" means stopping revolt among women, among students, among prisoners and among gay people. It means straight men fucking more and more women (with maybe a few men thrown in as a possible option).

Karen Lindsey recently published an eye-opening article in The Boston PHOENIX, "The Sexual Revolution Is No Joke For Women." She begins by saying, "I'm not sure when the revolution began to hurt." And concludes, "until men change the sexual revolution is just another ugly, dirty joke, and the women aren't laughing." (13 March 73)

We often assume that any slackening of Victorian sex codes will mean more freedom for faggots. Superficially this may be the case. But concessions are more often designed to quiet us and remove any sympathy we might receive for our persecution. As in law reform, for instance. They repeal the anti-sodomy laws (which are rarely enforced and are unconstitutional on several grounds already) then retain carefully worded statutes against "solicitation" and outlaw homosexual love for anyone under 21.

In Illinois, one of the earliest states to repeal its anti-sodomy laws (1961), arrests of faggots have not declined. If anything, they've increased. The police use the more carefully defined laws to make arrests stick. The law thus becomes a more accurate instrument of control. Those arrested are more often poor, and the wealthier faggots think of them as "sluts" deserving what they get.

Even the anti-discrimination bills (passed thus far in San Francisco, Ann Arbor, and East Lansing) serve more to quiet gay protest than to protect victims from official and vigilante harassment. These laws largely protect people with jobs. They may outlaw housing discrimination, but they won't pay the rent for faggots who can't get work. What they do is silence those gay people who could most effectively challenge the existing structure of things.

Gay marriage is another canard. While the press remained resolutely silent about the 31 gays massacred in New Orleans, they have been lavish in covering gay marriages (usually of two men).

The celebrated Baker-O'Connell marriage was featured in LOOK, LIFE and elsewhere. Jack Baker became President of the student body at the University of Minnesota, and O'Connell's legal case against the same university went all the way to the Supreme Court.

Here in Boston, the marriage of Bob Jones and Harry Freeman at the Old West Church has received more coverage in the GLOBE, PHOENIX, and Boston LEDGER than all other events combined in the whole history of gay people in Boston!

The same thing is happening abroad. The Swedish REVOLT MOT SEXUELLA FORDOMAR reports in its May '73 issue that gay marriages have become an issue in Swedish politics. They report "How press and TV discuss the rights of homosexuals to have wedding ceremonies, whereas most homosexual are only interested in equal legal rights."

The Norwegian Union (a gay group) has refused to fight for gay marriages because they see any privileges accorded to couples as discriminating against single individuals.

The effort to popularize gay marriages is thus a way of attacking single individuals; it is an effort to turn aside gay liberation by pretending to support it.

SEX EDUCATION

Most people consider sex education very progressive since so many bigots oppose it. But even the most liberal sex education programs are designed to exterminate homosexuality or to curtail any advances of sexual liberation.

Bruno Bettelheim, the famous "child" psychologist, in a book called SEXUAL LATITUDE, FOR AND AGAINST (1971) wrote that "as long as homosexuality was outlawed, there was no reason to stress the destructive effects of the perversion." But now that it is being legalized (he lives in Chicago), Bettelheim favors spreading word to the young about the "severe psychological damage" homosexuality will "cause." (p. 241) He calls his approach a "radical reform."

Less famous than Bettelheim but probably more representative is Dr. George Kriegman who published an article "Homosexuality and the Educator" in THE JOURNAL OF SCHOOL HEALTH (May, '69). He wrote: "...let me make one thing clear: homosexuality as an enduring sexual pattern is an illness, no different than other illness, and is a symptom of deep-seated emotional difficulty." Extermination, of course, is the ideal way of dealing with illness. If that isn't possible, then containment.

Typical among the many textbooks used in schools of education to prepare teachers to exterminate homosexuality is one by

John J. Burt and Linda A. Brower, EDUCATION FOR SEXUALITY, CONCEPTS AND PROGRAMS FOR TEACHING (1970), \$9.75 paperback. In their section on sex education and homosexuality, the authors state: "Since it is true that most parents would not want their children to be homosexual in behavior (that is also the case with parents who are themselves homosexual), sex education should focus on prevention." In their lesson plans Burt & Brower provide a program for first grade through high school; they save homosexuality for the last unit in the book. There they suggest the teacher have students "play the roles of happy parents who are likely to bring up heterosexual children. Now have the class play the role of parents who are likely to push their children toward homosexuality." To accompany that lesson, they provide a wall chart showing homosexuality as the culminating false lead-out of the non-creative, parasitic lifestyle which includes, "wife-swapping, prostitution, alcohol, drugs, gambling, excessive food, excessive sleep, and excessive TV."

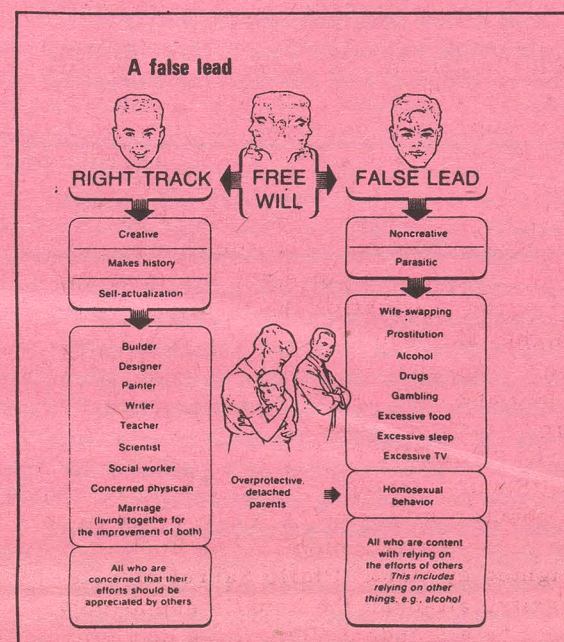
The Burt & Brower text is one of the most liberal now on the market; nonetheless, you could argue that its ideas are at least a decade behind the times (textbook publishing always suffers a cultural lag).

But ideas in the journals of education and sociology are no better. For instance, Edward Sagarin, an author sometimes thought to be pro-homosexual, reviewed about forty of the latest books published on homosexuality in a recent issue of CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGY. He says that the problem of dealing with homosexuality is in finding a way to curb the activity without making martyrs out of the victims. He concluded that an intensive program of sex education was the way. "Children can be taught that it is better to have heterosexual than homosexual patterns, but for those who pursue the latter, kindness and not cruelty should be offered, even as one would extend the kind hand to the blind or the mute."

The most favorable sex education book I have found is by Clinton R. Jones: WHAT ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY? It was published as part of a series of Sunday school books.

Jones is a kindly Hartford canon in the Episcopal Church who turned from helping alcoholics to homosexuals. He studied with George Henry who wrote that "lack of sex education is one of the major causes of the sex variant."

One chapter in the book is entitled "What About Cure?" While his discussion of "cure" is liberal, it still reads like a discussion of alcoholism or schizophrenia and would hardly encourage anyone to consciously choose this life style. He says: "No book dealing with homosexuality would be objective if it did not emphasize the anguish, anxiety, pain, even despair that too often are part of a homosexual's life style." (77-78) If, despite all such warnings, some persist in being homosexual, Canon Jones urges that marriage and counselling services be provided to them. He combines the marriage herring with the sex extermination project.



The culmination of anti-homosexual sex education programs is that of Eloisa de Lorenzo in Montevideo, Uruguay. An account of her work, "A Simple Course in Sex," appeared in the March 73 issue of HUMAN BEHAVIOR. Professor de Lorenzo pioneered in educating allegedly "retarded" children in Montevideo. "Among the boys there was excessive masturbation," she explained, "...but the problems began when some of the boys started having homosexual relations." The school evidently became a favorite rendezvous place in the city for gays. When the boys refused to talk with their teachers about their gay life, school officials called in the gardener for the full details. As a result, they decided to hire four prostitutes--at school expense--to teach the boys how to fuck women. Dr. de Lorenzo told how it worked. "The vocational teacher began by getting the boys together... /He/ explained to them in an easy conversational fashion what it was all about. Then we called the prostitute..."

Homosexuality was thus controlled if not exterminated among the male students. One boy told his teacher: "Do you know now I am a man, I don't need it anymore."

The universal heterosexual fantasy seems to be that all a homosexual man needs is a good fuck with a woman and he will magically "become normal."

COLLEGE SEX

On the college level, the campaign against homosexuality has been combined with a coordinated program against any student protest--gay or straight. What at first appeared as a loosening and liberalization of college life now appears to be a program specifically aimed at reinforcing the current status quo--sexual, economic, and political.

Many college deans are now actively encouraging heterosexual sex as a form of pacification. I wouldn't be surprised to see the Dean of Students at Boston University (a charter member neanderthal) trying to revive panty-raids--though now they'd have to be panty-hose raids.

College deans once saw their role as largely repressive. They kept women locked up (at some schools not even allowing them out at night). Men were encouraged to take cold showers, study, and play sports. Women were encouraged in music, poetry, and the arts. As repressive as this system was, it provided more cover for faggots than the present "liberal" system. Now it's almost impossible to hide what you are what with compulsive heterosexuality practically a required course. It's even more difficult to be what you want to be.

Ideally the new liberality should extend to homosexuals, and gayness should be part of the new permissiveness we hear so much about.

This is seldom the case. Quite the contrary in fact. The new "freedom" is often used to suppress homosexuality. The new permissiveness is defended for doing just that. Dr. E. D. Macklin, after studying cohabitation at Cornell, concluded that "given peer group support, ample opportunity, a human need to love and be loved and a disposition to question the traditional way, one might ask: 'Why do students of the opposite sex choose not to live together?'"

Lesbians and faggots would have an answer to his question.

THE STUDENT GUIDE TO SEX ON CAMPUS summarizes many of the ideals of the counter-attack being made under the banner of sexual "freedom." The book is copyrighted by "Dr." Philip Sarrel of Yale University, although the book is supposedly authored by a "Student Committee on Human Sexuality."

The GUIDE is almost exclusively devoted to fucking women (we are reminded that Yale is now coed), and the attendant "problems"--heterosexual intercourse, V.D., birth control, and abortion. This straight man orientation shows in the elaborate attention paid to women's bodies and how they can be controlled. The section on "Female Anatomy" is almost four times as long as the section on "Male Anatomy."

(The men obviously cannot conceive of themselves as sexual objects.) Only six of their 167 pages deal with homosexuality, and not one word explains "how to do it." They just reassure men not to worry too much about faggots. Almost nothing is said about lesbian love.

I observed the system in action first hand in a small New England liberal arts college where I went as a "gay speaker." The dormitories were completely co-educational. Signs had been taken off the "mens" and "ladies" rooms. The school provides "sex counsellors" (a man and a woman who shared an apartment). In talking with both the counsellors and the students, I couldn't find any faggots--either open or closeted. The consensus seemed to be that all homos and lesbos were down in Boston--over a hundred miles away--and if you turned out to be one that's where you should go. There were a handful of radical women, but they were surrounded and outnumbered by a bunch of jocks with "girls" cuddled in their arms.

The irony was that this sex education/cohabitation program appeared "radical" and far out, yet it served more than anything else to cool student protest.

PRISONS

As with the university deans, prison administrators are turning to programs of heterosexuality to curb rebellions. In a study primarily researched in 1963, one prison expert concluded "that most prison homosexuality is not a function of sexual deprivation itself. It is, rather, an expression of anger and aggression caused by the frustrations and indignities rooted in the nature of prison life as it exists today." (Columbus Hooper, SEX IN PRISON, 146)

If you want to curb anger and aggression, the way would be to curb homosexuality.

The issue of homosexuality in prisons is complex and not easily understood. First of all, it exists and like few other parts of American gay life it is recognized. Indeed, exposure to homosexuality is considered one of the punishments of prison.

The very first thing I ever read about homosexuality was a story in my hometown paper about a teenager in the county jail who had been killed for resisting rape. Some of this publicity is manufactured by prison officials. Whenever there are prisoner demands or rebellions, they talk about homosexual rape. Nonetheless, it is true that men do rape other men in prison.

But it is often the guards who commit or provoke rape. Every prison is a little different, depending on where it is, the length of the sentences served, the physical plant. But they are all the same in the way guards are much more lewd, lascivious, and up-tight about homosexuality than the general population of prisoners. Officials hate homosexuals and want to see them hurt; at the same time they use the threat of rape to control people. They divide the prison population between black and white, favored and unfavored, straight and gay.

Finally, homosexuality in prisons tends (like traditional homosexual society) to mimic heterosexuality. "A heterosexual parody," as a friend of mine called it. Lacking women to abuse and molest, "straight" men now attack weaker and more vulnerable men. Men loving men or gay love is virtually impossible in prison; the institutionalization of brutality and power seeps out of every pore of the buildings and furnishings. Masculine and feminine roles become fixed, and there is often even a place for gay marriages. At one long term prison, a gay couple celebrated a wedding and received \$200 worth of gifts at the reception.

If they have been able to use homosexual marriage as a pacifier in prison, they have had even greater luck with heterosexual marriages. Many people might think conjugal visits are a new liberal reform; they have been taken up of late in the wake of the rebellion at Attica and other "correctional" institutions.

But conjugal visits in this country originated in Mississippi many years ago. The Mississippi State Prison is a huge plantation taking in twenty-one thousand acres largely devoted to the cultivation of cotton. Most of the prisoners there are black men, and they are forced to work quite hard since most of the profits from the plantation are absorbed by Mississippi politicians. Conjugal visits for prisoners encouraged production. When asked whether conjugal visits increased output, one prison official replied: "Oh yeah, they are better workers. If you let a nigger have some on Sunday, he will really go out and do some work for you on Monday."



Not only that, those receiving conjugal visits (blacks and whites) cooperated more with the staff, trusted staff members more, and rated their fairness higher than those not receiving conjugal visits.

The moral: Conjugal visits.

Massachusetts has moved carefully into this area. Sheriff John Buckley of Middlesex County has introduced conjugal visits, and other counties have furlough systems.

The sheriff of Worcester County said a major benefit of the furlough system was in stamping out prison homosexuality--which he had cited to show what animals prisoners were.

The ultimate progress has been made in Framingham, the previously all-women prison. The state brought in men prisoners to "pacify" the women. Just like in straight society, the men will become rulers of the women and forget their own griefs at the same time that they keep women from rebelling.

Many women at Framingham objected strongly to this intrusion; their objection was not even taken into account or publicized anywhere I've seen. (I heard about it from a newspaper man.)

What the reactionary press objected to was the possibility that the MEN might be enjoying themselves (no mention is ever made of what the women might want or how they feel). All sorts of lies were broadcast about the program in an effort to discredit the now-deposed Commissioner, John Boone (a black man and a controversial reformer). Boone, incidentally, publically supported "conjugal" visits for homosexuals without going into great detail. We can be sure that his more conventional "patrolage system" successor will not even entertain any idea of homosexual visits in prisons.

Sexual "freedom" in sex education programs, colleges, and in prisons have not automatically led to liberation for those held down. In fact, those in power have used sexual liberalism to stifle the revolutionary potential within homosexuality. Straight people often ask us: "Aren't things a lot better now than a few years ago under Puritanism?"

I always answer no. We face as much bigotry from straight society as ever.

What has changed is us; we are coming out and coming together--but that's no thanks to straight people. Their liberalism is very far from our liberation. On the contrary, their liberalism is part of a concerted program to stop liberation.

For faggots, lesbians, and other women, the pressure is to fuck and be "normal." If you must persist in being homosexual, the "new society" offers pity and perhaps ultimately reservations or retention camps as long as they don't attract too much attention. (Perhaps gay marriages could be tolerated because they isolate the "disease" and support the status quo.)

For anyone who would question my argument, I ask that they try getting grammar school sex education programs to include illustrated manuals in homosexual sex techniques, and that these be explained to the "children" by practising homosexuals. (Many schools now do this with heterosexuals.) Would anyone like to predict the uproar such a proposal would provoke?



Continued from p. 10

I have seen Caroline's airplane parked at a New York International Airport, smooth sleek and sylvan, it gathers no grass as Long Island, not far from where I first caught a glimpse of her late dad as he sped to the Soldier's and Sailor's monument, on the Battery in 1963 shortly before the Dallas calamity that suffered over mobilization, when I returned to New England that autumn from the environs of a shaky Cooper Union residence.

What a thrill it was! Anything to be there, on that side of New York, proximate to Fifth Avenue and the swell homes his widow indeed maintains; the New York Transit system and Washington parks, Washington arches and sidewalks. It has been prophesized that I would dwell on those years, *sotto voce* and more recently, that I would go far; from Churchill Street to Eliot off Blue Hill Avenue; to Grove Street, Black Mountain, Irving, Hancock, So. Russell Streets and San Francisco.

It has never been prophesied I would return and I have. To Main Street, Buffalo and Chestnut Circle, Hanover.

Later on this evening, examing from conditions manifest over my *Magnavox*, believed purchased 1956 in Jordan Marsh Company I confess my own pertinacity to the Kennedy autobiographies, whether in government employment, or without their inherent solutions. Photographing as a Stork Club cigarette vendor, there similiarly supposes during the 1950's white visiting in New York City in the Upper West 70's, as a patsy or kelley for the Continental Camp-coterie, that violators of penal codes both in New York State and Confines of California penitentiaries, notably Alcatraz and Sing-Sing or San Quentin enjoyed their parole officers in front of my 16 year-old eyes. I am now 39 years of age and it still shocks me to see supposed inmates of the reformatories posing as licensees in drugs and dispossession from their sensory routines in acute management or in respectable vagabondry. Could Forrestal or Marshall speak apart from sordid sentences they chance leak for punitive chastisement negatively, then my identification with all of the above listed personages must be enlightened.

Continued on p. 29

a poem having more to do with need than expectation or good politics

1.

with a gut-deep thanks to diane wakoski,
whose "motorcycle betrayal poems"
showed me much of a hidden part of my life:
the need of a mechanic, a machinist;
and helped me not to be ashamed of this.
i've borrowed the metaphor.

if the time were riper

i could learn to love you easy;
and you
i could find the strength to leave you, to let you
go

but there are poems in me that i must find and somehow this impedes
there is a man to love me, fix me that i must find
and somehow

there are specifications to be attended to: like he must find me
beautiful, sexy, a warm lap with a fine mind; he must be a strong,
persistent poem

and cast new light on my life
or an instruction manuel describing, in numbered steps and with warnings
in heavy type,

how to do

what must be done

for proper functioning to occur.

in the meantime, i am open to my typewriter:

it is safe. it disappoints personally, breaks down beneath my hands,
ceases to function while i manipulate, control it.

but men break impersonally; they have nothing,

finally,

to do with me.

on the other hand, a machine, this tool, involves me with itself,

verifies my sense of contact with it: it breaks;

i can't go on.

a typewriter is the real artist, the real poet:

melting and re-casting the shape of my life
revising and re-typing my story as if it had no art
of its own
endowing events with the dignity of the printed page
erasing confusion in order to construct a beginning
a middle
an end.

and a broom too: reaching the distant hiding places, those demanding
stretching, bent backs,

collecting the dust of bedroom dreams and histories,

preparing for an easier disposal,

it sweeps the refuse, the untidy scraps into a corner building something
substantial,

almost exhilarating:

a disorderly pile of dust from around my mattress

cat hairs and

leaves they've dragged in

ashes and cigarette butts

pieces of wax picked off the furniture with a knife,
a finger

finished packs of cigarettes and match books
used tissues

out of date notes to myself, scribblings for poems.

this tool cleans up after me, finds missing objects like an earring,

a tiny seashell:

small and beautiful things and precious because they combine these two
qualities

so

effortlessly.

no man has done for me what these tools have

i wouldn't allow it i couldn't fool myself that well i have too much
pride (it works like strong mental fences: everyone can see through
but no one gets past unless they are exceptional, fiercely
determined).

the cleaning up, the maintenance work i do myself.

it is a lonely task, one i face more or less

apprehensively

knowing what i won't find: the relief of a man in one impressive piece,
finely tuned

and in good working condition, one to take care, take me in hand.

there is no such tool.

(even i can be

no such tool.) so

i inhabit a fantasy world a carnival in my head run by smoothly
functioning men

equipped to do for me jump a fence defrost a freezer oil a phrase-
making, poem-inventing machine

and if they are not being made this year

if the company is out on strike or has declared bankruptcy
 if that particular make and model is no longer available
 if it is faulty and has been recalled
 if it has hit the market anyway and proven hopelessly inefficient,
 perhaps dangerous
 if it is too rare, thus too expensive:

i will not invent it--

this is beyond my not too special talents i never manage to get past
 the planning stage the cost is too high, investment too great i
 am left with faded blueprints (and they don't turn me on the way faded
 blue jeans do)--

instead i will merely imagine
 anticipate:

he is at every place i'm not
 every encounter at which i meet strangers;
 he stands at the end of every walk/ride, is the destination;
 he is the one expected every time the door opens unexpectedly,
 the one hoped for on every corner while i wait for the light
 to change;
 he is the focus of every conversation with someone telling me
 about someone i don't know;
 he rides every train i miss, drives his car on some other street
 walks into the house next door while i'm taking a nap
 wanders into a store i have no reason to enter;
 in some restaurant he sits three tables away and the person i'm
 with suddenly becomes a burden;
 he's in every weather report where the quality of the air is
 reported to be satisfactory, and visibility good;
 he's the one in the bar i watch but can't bring myself to talk to,
 to ask to dance.

and inside i gasp every time
 at the thought of changing
 shape, coming together, falling apart, being made, re-
 paired under his hands.
 all my props keeping me

 buttressed, mobile, defenced, rigid, insensate, fed-
 up; they all soften. i am drugged by the skill of his fingers (i am still
 imagining, remember)

like i've swallowed a sleeping pill and am beginning to feel the effects
 i become smooth, polished i can see how i'm fitted how the
 pieces come together or don't.

2.

for david

and with the lightest touch, to my complete surprise, david, you
 fulfill something of this machine shop phantom's factory made promise.
 although i know you're not he,
 because you've entered my life as a surprise, not the miracle;
 because i need an older, more reliable model;
 because with you maximum running efficiency is not reached;
 because you are too often quiet,

 you're hands on my keys typing a hesitant poem,
 when what i need is an operator's manual, that kind of
 forthright poem;

still
 when you touch me;
 when you rub the sides of my face and beard;
 when we hold each other speaking softly, whispering velvet;
 when we move together with precise, uncharted rhythm and the parts fit,
 it is always the middle of the night, i can be safe;
 and all the hard places yield
 like rain.

between us there is such precarious, trembling tenderness
 i am reminded of candles burning by open windows, loose buttons, tiny
 glass bottles in a room with cats or children, the
 hair on your belly

like seaweed
 and i am grateful
 but
 fear is the shape of my gratitude it has turned me away before
 i will try to insure against this breakage will be our custodian.

you are, in any case,
 a gift like

a newborn infant given to its' mother's breast
 a perfect poem describing my life lived by another
 something of silver and beautiful
 looking at my feet and finding that they're pretty
 a cigarette after we've made love
 someone smiling at me on the street
 living the afternoo quietly, doing our separate tasks, some-
 times touching
 listening to bach or roberta flack singing
 laughing, in bed, when you say you have the hands of a
 nun and then reach for my body.

being excessive and impatient i could say i love you,
 but i am speechless

will stop planning, pursuing

be quiet

finally

like the rain

 or the moon

or

a pierced ear.

joseph canarelli
 12/72-1/73

Continued from p.28

Who these Forrestals or Marshalls are
 beats me.

Sexual peons push trials, nuclear tests and
 cathedrals out of decimated chains, despotic
 cains and semi-terrestrial cadaverous battles.

At that time it was an Alsatian pack of
 Smotes; now in 1973 an island of ambergris
 off of another Kathleen, her father's wife
 too widowed. Would you say proper names
 without Christian ones lead to consequences
 surmised to be raw or overlooked; unlooked
 for in these thinly-disguised ownerships, or
 heightened bafflements.

Stretched before the Second World-War by
 Bedlice or as some South Boston relatives
 might call them in forms of cooties, I have
 let my memory maimed occasionally stray
 from Jacqueline to Aristotle to John Jr. and
 Janet and his aunts, grand-or cousin as
 widowed sympathizers to a learned politique
 cause; nor to mention Caroline and other
 burdened impresses, as King Carol's Madga
 Lupescu, Grand-Duchess as she was before
 the first World War; a veritable "Ann Har-
 ding" of the Tricia Cox variety. It's not
 much to suppose the tortures of the collec-
 tive rack or collusive rank second choice the
 century's second hand avocateurs.

In conclusion. Water-skiing at a Salerno
 beach head sacrifices tens of thousands of
 human lives if the beleaguered skulls from
 my homeopaths pop up as doctors of law or
 Dixie successions over Edmund Gwenn's
 garmet District, in case of point the fraudu-
 lent effects of last remains in convents and
 helter-skelter chapels, seen meritorius
 around Park Avenue and Greenwich Walgreen
 Swedenborgian grilles. Cheesey, isn't it,
 crafty too, that those blue tin-foil velleities
 fetch an honorary declasse in white chef-
 tower cleft hop and scotches, or soda pop
 pulses noodles, don't deny St. Paddy's clan
 chowder in summerhill kitchens, include
 Somerville maniacs asearch of sister
 Kenny's Lafayette.

I'm not blind. Pictures don't lie. My hair
 is curly. Her's is straight and black, some-
 times dyed from blonde and strengthened
 over black Greek Land of Lakes, contumely
 hoods to His Grace, the aforementioned 37th
 prestzone?



THE POET AS REPORTER:

I

Beside mammoth, mocking ledgers
tiny tints of rosy
pink, patches of blue
cerulean mid tones of
pearl.

A "Large Vase of Spring
Flowers" blooms from
bleak bulletin board in
bare office.

Well-known rainbow
palette of shimmering
brightness, color ascendant,
lyric-charms through
broken strokes.

Impression of day-light painted
prettiness. Porcelain vase
roundly echoing flowery bliss
waiting...

Vanilla shakes and oranges
in Justice Dining Hall--

"Luncheon of the Opera Party."

Mock Chagall trays of
pleasing plastic presence.
Red, rectangular art deco
purse of "Goodwill"
provenance rested on
formica table top with
graduate-studied non-chalance.

Tanya, Ferd, and Bumblebee:
The "Aida Three."

Radames sees and Ramsis sees
and

Amneris sees and

Aida sees unseen super-
numeraries seize the
scene. seize the time
of triumphal march to unfurl
crotch-hidden banner
in triumphant manner:

"FAGS AND DIKES SUPPORT THE
SEVEN POINT PEACE PLAN."

Curtain falls. Din rises.
Fists fly. Jaw breaks.
Bumblebee buzzes bailfully.
All three are free but he
must attended be.
Talks through his teeth now
yawns through his teeth now.
Drinks through his teeth now.
Wires through his teeth now.

II

The people against Eggen,
Herthstone, and Whitaker!
You are charged with
disturbing the peace with
reminders of the war.

How do you plead?

Innocent. Innocent. Innocent.

Tweedy, unshaven, volunteer
defense counsels trial
by jury of peers

(If such can be found).

Behind the bench behold
The Red, the White and the Blue.
Before the bench, Behold!
The White, the Blue, and the Red.
Skin, and mood and politics.
Eyelids, fingernails and pocketbook.
Scarves, hooded cape, and lips.

The setting of the date:

"Counsel might suggest
to his clients that
since this is a court
of law, they should
come more appropriately
dressed!"

Steely glance and pencil
taps. The candid, un-concealed displeasure
of His Honor.

Finally, We fingertip descend again
into the Brave New World
of cold marble corridors,
tiptoe through regiments
of balding barristers and
porcine pawns, past
ephemeral nooses of
cigar smoke, to the
sign saying, "Southern
Police Station" and
another scientific search by the
machine.

Emerging into the dull smelly,
man-darkened day I Orwell read:

"Hall of Justice.

To the faithful enforcement
of the laws with equal
justice to all of whatever
state or persuasion this
building is dedicated
by the People of the City
and County of San
Francisco."

We pause to pick the ripe red
pyrocantha growing wild
near the parking lot.

Sativa Sagittarius

THE BAR

Hazy happy thoughts
Soft light, retrospection,
Muffled voices, disinterest,
soothing dreams--
And then those eyes in
the bar-room mirror.
Did they fall on mine?
Those regal eyes
holding court
over my longing heart.
The audience is over.

Tom Cisco

NEW ORLEANS, 1963

It seems a shame to still a
romance that was meant to live,
a love that always will-

We met in New Orleans.

Your sly confident way
drew me to you.

Your blond seaside hair
and sun gold skin,

Your liquid blue eyes,
but most of all the feel
of your bare back.

My hands in a passionate frenzy
run through your silken hair
then over your face.

Though miles divide,
two people meet,
and know love-

Their souls cry out to have again
A far-away dream that now seems
ended

Tom Cisco



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welcome subscribers. \$5 buys you
a lifetime subscription to FAG RAG.
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offer you a complete set of back
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RAG will be sent free to incar-
cerated brothers in prisons,
hospitals, and the armed forces.

(name)

(street)

(city, state, zip)

I am interested in a complete set
(sets) of back FAG RAGS. Enclosed
is _____.

FAG RAG
Box 331 Kenmore Station
Boston, Massachusetts 02215

BOOKCHAT

Steve Abbott

FAG RAG 3 and FAG RAG 4 both have lists of the recent gay publications. We continue this bibliography here with particular emphasis on novels and belles-lettres. In FAG RAG 7 forthcoming we promise a comprehensive list of modern gay poetry.

Brophy, Brigid. Prancing Novelist: A Defense of Fiction in the Form of A Critical Biography in Praise of Ronald Firbank. Barnes & Noble, \$20.00.

Buford, Lolah. Edward, Edward. Macmillan. \$8.95.

Capote, Truman. The Dogs Bark. Random House, \$8.95.

DeBecker, Raymond, The Other Face of Love. Bell Publishing, \$10.00.

Douglas, Alexander. Friends. Coward, McCann & Geohagen, forthcoming.

Hamilton, Wallace. Christopher and Gay: A Partisan View of the Greenwich Village Homosexual Scene. Saturday Review Press, \$6.95.

Hansen, Joseph. Fade Out. Bantam paperback, 75¢.

Death Claims, Harper & Row, \$5.95.

Johnston, Jill. Lesbian Nation. Simon & Schuster, \$7.95.

Levy, Paul, ed. Lytton Strachey: The Really Interesting Question and other Papers. Coward, McCann, \$6.95.

Maughm, Robin. Escape from the Shadows. McGraw Hill, \$8.95.

The Last Encounter. McGraw Hill, \$6.95.

Nicholson, Nigel. Portrait of A Marriage: V. Sackville-West & Harold Nicholson. Atheneum, \$10.00.

Rechy, John. The Fourth Angel. Viking, \$5.95.

Reid, John. Best Little Boy in the World: Maturing of John Reid. Putnam, \$7.95.

Renault, Mary. The Persian Boy. Pantheon, \$7.95.

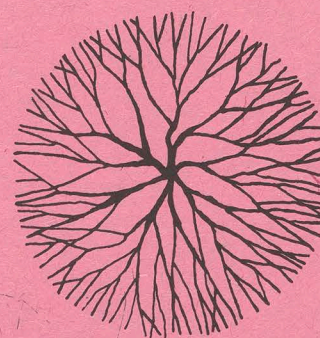
Stein, Gertrude. GMP: Matisse, Picasso & Gertrude Stein. (Includes "A Long Gay Gook.")/Something Else Press, paperback, \$3.45.

In Reply To "A Poem for Michael"

I want to cry,
I want to DIE!!!
(And other, sensual,
Lines...)
But, to be direct,
(And for whom)?
...For who:
Last night,
(earlier this morning,
this Sunday-)
I saw you, Charlie,
When you ran across
the street.
But I was up in a tree.
I shall expect
A Letter
From East Africa
because you said
You'd try-
I want to cry,
(again).
Charlie, I'm sincere.
I want to die.



Michael Hallaren



OPEN LETTER TO THE ADVOCATE

(This letter was sent to the Advocate by the Fag Rag staff and others.)

The ADVOCATE is the only national gay newspaper that attempts to report news of interest to gays everywhere. Some of us have always found it crassly commercial and sexist. The monstrous stories on the Houston killings force us to repudiate the ADVOCATE in the strongest terms.

In a Sept. 12 editorial, you lament the "misinformation and ignorance among homosexuals" and insist that your reporting will "place the various aspects of the story in perspective and correct the gross errors that hetero reporters have inflicted upon us." You go on to say that you are "not trying for sensationalism; we don't need sensationalism to sell the Advocate." The rest of that issue makes a mockery of your editorial. Another Sept. 12 editorial, "What Can We Say," implies that a guilt-by-association for all homosexuals is accepted by the ADVOCATE. Your cartoon on the same page is such an outrage that even the NATIONAL ENQUIRER would be unlikely to print it. Your approach to the Cor 11-Henley-Brooks story is far worse than some "non-gay" accounts like that in the Los Angeles FREE PRESS.

One gem of anti-gay prejudice is the lead sentence in your front page article: "He was in the army when, you know, he turned into a fag, and ever since then it got worse and worse." It is difficult to imagine why you print such a quotation with neither comment nor context. You then repeat the old cliché about dirty old men giving children candy, and you apparently agree with the doctor who calls Cor 11 a pedophile, although pedophilia is sex with children, not teenagers, and is seldom connected with violence. The fact that you connect the story of the Dallas "prostitution ring" with Houston is an affront to our intelligence. Though your story was printed some time after

those in the New York TIMES and other straight press, you do not point out that they found no link between the two. A genuinely homosexual paper might have had a headline: "Press, Police Add to Hysteria: Link Fabricated Between Houston Murders and Dallas Prostitution." You fail to explain why you call the hysterical informer a "gay activist" or why you give credence to his story. Your own reporter is fanning the flames of fury within the "het" beast mentioned by one of your columnists in the same issue.

"Dean and His Boys: A Tale of Sex and Death" in bold red letters beside a smiling Cor 11 with a "snoopy dog" is about as sensational and offensive to homosexuals as we can imagine. Why have you stressed over and over the craving for teenage boys? There is an over-interest in youth among Americans, but your stories only add to the difficulties experienced by the thousands of homosexuals in America who have satisfying friendships with teenagers. Rather, your front page might quote Paul Goodman and other who expose the myths of the straight world about sex between teenagers and adults.

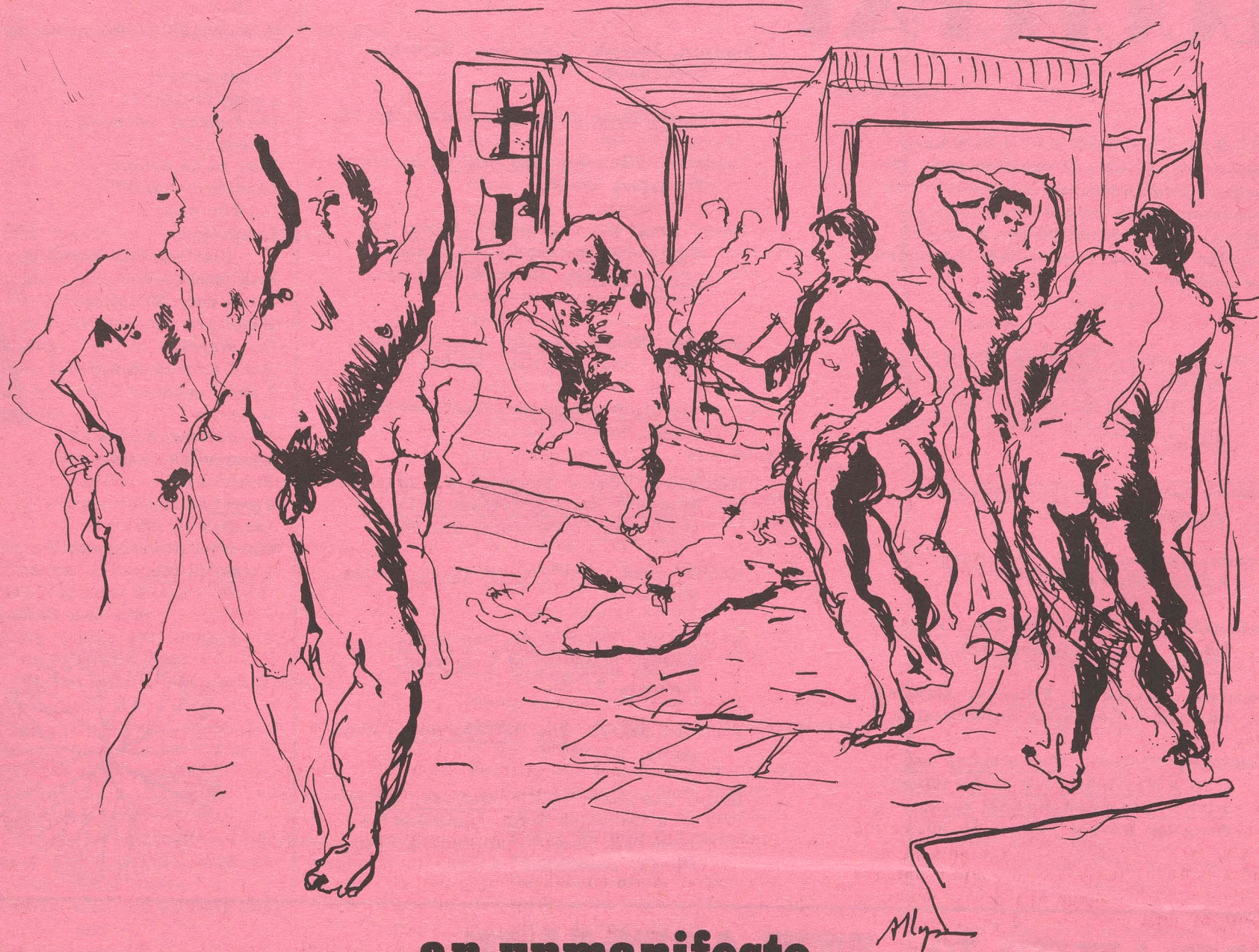
Perhaps there is a clue to the otherwise incredible content of your newspaper in one sentence of your editorial: "We are on the defensive...we can only hope that the intelligent members of the establishment--those on whom we depend...will see that the Houston massacre is not relevant to your fight for justice..." The Advocate is on the defensive. We are not, and we hope by now American gays have stopped being defensive and become strong in their consciousness. The Advocate depends on the establishment. We do not.

Why doesn't the Advocate expose the causes of mass murder and sexual exploitation in America? Among these, we see the preoccupation of Americans with violence that stems from an economy of over-consumption and a politics of war; inequality and injustice in an "affluent"



nation that keeps 20% of its people in poverty and many of its teenagers in prostitution to get the "things" the society says are important; the continuing oppression of gays, especially in schools; and the packaging and temporary fad of "campy" homosexuality rather than an honest treatment of it. Why haven't you mentioned that mass murders and sexual violence are especially peculiar to the U.S. and seldom heard of in socialist, sexually-liberated societies like Scandinavia?

It is evident that you want to be "good Americans" and mirror the appropriate image of straight America. You want to be "gay" sexually and straight in everything else. Such a newspaper is destructive of a national gay community of trust and strength in which we can not only be free ourselves, but from which we can exercise a healthy critique of the pervasive sickness in society. We hope that homosexuals will go right on "wading in ponds" and "skipping down streets" (behavior for which you condemn Cor 11). In one sense, it is the fact that we have refused to "grow up" in the way in which all Americans are supposed to that makes us different, healthy, and able to see the ugly realities around us.



an unmanifesto

Every FAG RAG has been the unique production of those who put an issue together, and each issue has been the work of different people.

FAG RAG has never had a rigorous ideology or a closed editorial board. We have tried to avoid hierarchy, "leadership," "followers," purges, dogmas, uniformities. FAG RAG has beyond all else tried to be open: open to change, open to criticism, open to existence, open to faggotry.

FAG RAG has resisted efforts towards centralization, incorporation, definition or other institutionalization.

If you want to call us anything, "anarchist" might be the best label--although we like to avoid labels.

We grew out of the Boston Gay Liberation Front, and we felt we shared many hopes with the women who later came to call themselves the "Amazon Anarchists." And we believe that gay liberation itself is an anarchist strategy. Because the order ("archy") of the world starts and ends all in the family with Daddy, fascism comes not only from the nuclear family but from compulsive heterosexuality.

A writer in The Boston PHOENIX (July 5, 1972) wrote: "gay breaks down (not legally, but in fact) the obtuse and painful grids of language and convention which categorize and seek to control sex. The old uptight dichotomies, normal/perverse, male/female, top/bottom, in/out disintegrate, where misapplied, into the all and nothing notion 'gay,' do what you are, be anything you say you are, can pull off, strap on. The masquerade is not--no no no--not the sad expression of a closeted minority. It's a total freedom and anarchy."

Our greatest enemy is will power, dominance, force used to control others than oneself. Part of the death/dominance performance, the police and the army are

obvious gay enemies. And while there have been homosexual police and soldiers, militarism and the police state contradict all of what we call faggotry.

Power still dominates our lives. The whole subtle range of sexual and economic manipulation of which each of us is a part must be broken.

We believe that the ultimate roots of our freedom must come from breaking the sexual roles in which we have been tracked and rutted. "Jealousy," for instance, is not just a personal issue; it is a political issue at the center of our liberation. We reprint Edward Carpenter's essay in this issue not only because he was a pioneer anarchist and faggot but also because "jealousy" remains to enslave us.

What we want is very simple.

We want every person to have complete control over their body as well as their own life and destiny.

This is an unequivocal demand; it cannot be hedged or circumscribed. The "children," "insane," mentally "retarded," or "incompetent" must be equally included or the demand means nothing. Imprisonment is the worst disease that can afflict anyone, and any form of confinement either psychological or physical is anathema.

Many of these themes are developed in The Living Theatre's SEVEN MEDITATIONS, which gives a physical living expression to what we feel.

Anarchism has a particular meaning for us in the publishing of FAG RAG. The loose structure of the paper is no accident; it is a strategy, a functioning of our beliefs. As faggots, we find most media completely closed to us. Even when there are a few "spots" or "openings" for gay liberation, we must speak to straight people, use their language; we are ensnared into their ways of working.

The media like everything else in the man's society is a power game. You use media to manipulate, control, influence and propagandize the listener, audience,

reader or victim. You try to force the victim into accepting your view of the world. FAG RAG has never really played this game of straight journalism or broadcasting.

In publishing, we do not wish to block someone else but to share ourselves and to provide a place where other faggots might wish to sing about themselves. Hopefully, our readers will find echoes and reverberations of themselves in our own writing and will respond to us, not by accepting everything we write, but by loving us for taking the time and energy to write for other faggots.

FAG RAG doesn't try to print everyone and everything that comes in. We'd much rather see faggots get together and make their own newspaper. That way there'd be many media. Sadly more gay papers are going under than are coming into being at the present time. But this is only temporary. And new papers are still appearing. For instance, the wonderful MORNING GLORY in Rhode Island. And GAY SUNSHINE, DETROIT GAY LIBERATOR, and BODY POLITIC continue to give voice to our hopes.

Of course, there is an enormous gulf separating our dreams and desires from our actual lives. Sometimes we (or at least I) can't even say: "Well, at least I tried." And more times than not when we have tried, things haven't worked out; the straight world is so deeply internalized within us that sometimes we only struggle to destroy ourselves. Nevertheless, we are here; we do publish this newspaper; and if we haven't yet created the utopia that we want, neither have we given up and fallen into silence and despair.

FAG RAG remains open to discuss questions and give expression to as many free gay voices as possible.

We hope to hear from you.