

GAY  
AUSTIN  
January  
1978



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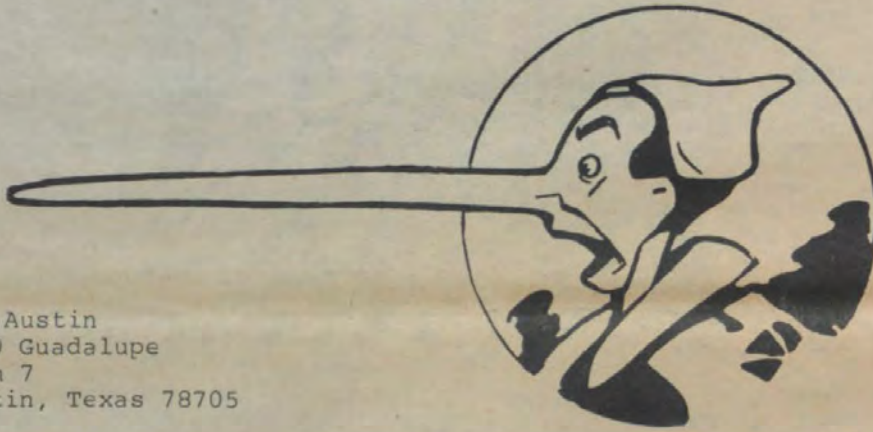
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Dear Editor:

December 28, 1977

Brothers and Sisters! As most of us have sometime in our lives, I had become disenchanted with Austin last summer. It seemed to me that I knew everyone in town and that everyone was playing games or giving off unapproachable vibes. I had several friends agreeing with me and some who were planning to move away. I thought that maybe that was my only alternative, so I traveled to the West Coast to change my life. Well, it certainly did, if I thought Austin gays were involved in games and bad vibes, then lord knows what level they were on in California. For some reason I thought gayness was a common denominator that held us together and I was surprised, but I was surprised on many counts. There is a movement that is slowly changing the way things are but so many gays don't want to be involved and that is a waste. There are many levels of involvement, some are in your head and others are around you. Happiness is never in a place, California taught me, it travels with you and if you just open your eyes and quit analysing, it settles around you like a second skin. I am sorry that it took several traumas, heartbreaks and the like for me to finally realize it. We are all in this together and I think it is time we worked together. All of us, regardless of our trips can contribute to the betterment of the gay community. So next time you are dished, or looked at strangely, or any of the other cruelties we inflict on one another, forgive them and wrap yourself up in your cloak of happiness, they know not what they do. Thank the stars that you do! In love, peace and strength.

*Moonwind*  
#

## MANGROVE: the Trust of Touch contact improvisation by men

by Kelly Kay

Imagine two male dancers on the dancefloor, posing almost like statues, nonhuman. Gradually they come together, intertwine, and move as one amorphous body through the dancespace. Conscious only of his partner, each yields to and then supports the partner's mass and movement. Together they writhe like a conveyor belt fallen from its track.

Imagine three male dancers lying face down on the dancefloor, arching their backs and rocking in rhythm. Their breathing is loud and sputtering. Wonderfully free creatures, they are like great fishes or whales, each paying homage to the others on the open sea.

Imagine two male dancers standing on the dancefloor, side by side, their shoulders quietly touching. Slowly, one dancer turns to face the other, letting his droopy head nudge the chest of his partner—the way a small child might approach a parent for protective acceptance.

Imagine these moments, and you will imagine something of the best of Mangrove, the San Francisco-based men's performance collective, 3 of whose 8 members conducted workshops and performed at Studio D during the first week of January.

The work of Mangrove is contact improvisation. The dancers do not perform planned choreography. Instead they perform extemporaneously, communicating with each other onstage through physical contact.

The focal point of their work is the physical contact, the touch. Men spontaneously touching men. Men interacting with men through touch. And more importantly, men trusting men enough to touch.

Talking before the performance, Mangrove member John LeFan (a native Texan) explained that before working with Mangrove he possessed a deep-seated fear of men. He believes that our culture nurtures this fear in all males.

During the dance, LeFan takes a sudden running leap towards Byron Brown. From nowhere Brown's arms rise to catch LeFan. Here there is no lack of trust, no fear. The success of Mangrove rests largely upon each dancer's becoming likewise vulnerable, always with the knowledge that he may depend upon the others for support and freedom from exploitation.



Significantly, these man-to-man physical dependencies never become erotic. Sensual, yes; erotic, no. Mangrove's message is not only that men need not fear each other, but also that physical trust and touch need not imply eroticism. This is the message that all too many Austinites missed through their absence from the performances.

An innocence of touch and a pure sensuality were especially apparent in the duet work of dancers LeFan and Rob Faust. Their work together was all the more striking for the physical contrast between the two: Faust, a tall, athletically handsome and gentle Aryan; LeFan, a much smaller, fiery dark-haired dancer, whose solo work resembled Bacchanalian revelry. LeFan, of the three, always seemed the most comfortable, the most open.

The third dancer, Byron Brown, seemed too intellectual, too eager to play for laughs, too ready to break a tender moment of movement, and really lacking in spontaneity at times. All too often he would open his mouth to speak, encouraging the others to do the same. Then the movement would become subordinate to the dialogue, which was usually mindless anyway, and the beauty of the dance would wither for too long a time.

Green deep, forest in the day  
where the light runs sapling  
bright in leprechaun cheerfulness  
thoughts racing like the autumn leaves  
in a sunny wind  
like squirrels chasing through spring

Forest thought in your eyes  
in your eyes in your hair  
light vibrant you smile  
weightless fire dancing in the wind

—Amme Hogan



A Family Matter: A Parents' Guide to Homosexuality, by Dr. Charles Silverstein. McGraw-Hill, 1977. \$8.95.

Every gay person is confronted at one time or other with the prospect of telling his/her parents he or she is gay. To most people, the idea is not a pleasant one. On the one hand is the fear that Mom and Dad won't understand, that they will be hostile or confused or hurt so badly that it would seem better not to have told them at all; on the other hand is the fear that they won't care, that they suspected all along or are indifferent anyway, with the result being a feeling of anticlimax and the sinking realization that all those years of fear and intrigue were endured for nothing.

For many parents, the sudden knowledge that their child is gay can be quite distressing. Often with little warning, they are forced to acknowledge that their child, whom they feel they know better than anyone else in the world, has a whole other side, unknown and undiscussed and uncharted, which they must recognize as a very large and real aspect of his/her character.

Coming out is difficult for all concerned, and adding to the strain is the fact that traditionally not much has been said about the ritual of coming out except in gossip circles.

Finally someone has had the good sense to write a book, a "parents' guide to homosexuality" which—ostensibly—will help to ease the burden of coming out for both parents and children. Dr. Charles Silverstein's A Family Matter is the first really systematic and professional attempt to discuss this aspect of homosexuality from the family's point of view, and as such it is long overdue.

Unfortunately, A Family Matter is not nearly as successful as the urgency of the subject demands. It falls far, far short of its intentions, and the reason, oddly enough, concerns Silverstein's misuse of the vast amount of information he has at his disposal.

Silverstein seems more interested in rattling on about his own (usually irrelevant) experiences and observations than in providing a clear and concise guide for parents.

For example, he wastes the better part of two chapters showing us how closely twentieth-century attitudes towards homosexuality parallel antiquated, nineteenth-century notions about "sinful" masturbation. The analogy surely is a good one, but to spend two chapters on it when there is such a vast amount of more crucial information indicates a severe lapse of judgment on Silverstein's part. Most parents reading this book will be going through an extremely unsettling period, and they will not be very receptive to the notion of taking a leisurely stroll through the annals of psychoanalytic history at such a time.

The major part of the book consists of case histories of children coming out to their parents, taken from Silverstein's own files. In theory, this is a very good idea. Parents need to realize that they are not alone in their situation, and they could learn much by observing how other parents react when they discover their child is gay.

Unfortunately, Silverstein does not select the most appropriate studies, nor does he present them in a very effective context. He sketches his subjects in vaguely and so poorly that even the most empathetic reader would be hard put to feel much for any of the people in the author's deadpan accounts. Silverstein takes great pains to annotate each case with insightful and compassionate comments, but they are wasted, because he is just not literary enough to present real, sympathetic people.

And in at least two of the cases, Silverstein seems to present the studies because they are the bizarrest in his files, despite the fact that more typical cases would be so much more useful. One study tells of a man in his 50's, who has been taking testosterone injections for two years. He tells Silverstein that he has been in the closet for decades, and would not even come out when his son made the confession that he was gay. The whole case study comes off like a very bad Neil Simon comedy, and it certainly presents very little that is relevant to the typical family grappling with the typical coming out. Another case, dealing with a family of Orthodox Jews, is a grim little story that does nothing so much as churn

oh my  
darling baby!



the stomach. Middle America, it seems, does not exist in Silverstein's experience.

There is no telling why Silverstein passes up so great an opportunity for enlightenment and again opts for left-field examples and useless information; perhaps these people are his favorite clients, perhaps (and this is more plausible than it should be!) they are his only clients. Whoever they are, they definitely are not included with the best interests of the largest number of families in mind. Nothing but confusion can result from their inclusion.

Ironically, Silverstein holds back his most sensible, general family-oriented advice until the last few pages, and then he addresses the whole chapter to the gay child instead of to the parents, for whom the book ostensibly is written! Another dubious use of potentially helpful data.

In the last chapter, Silverstein includes a little disclaimer concerning the spottiness of his book. "You may already have noticed the omission of topics that you feel are important," he says. "These omissions are deliberate . . . Why haven't I written more . . . ? Because it's your job." This is the famous cop-out my fourth-grade classmates used to use when they gave a book report on a book they never read. "If you want to know how it comes out, read it yourself!"

The topic of homosexuality is truly "a family matter" and it is too deeply entrenched in each family's unique and complex history to be untangled by even the best lay psychology book; on this point, at least, Silverstein is correct. Still, people look to books in difficult times for solid, supportive information, and if a book is used to facilitate the discussion between parent and child, it must cover the topic thoroughly and not leave gaping omissions stand with the cutesy excuse that they occur only in order to tantalize the family into filling the gaps themselves. This is very thinly disguised irresponsibility.

In the event that a good book is really necessary, I would recommend C. A. Tripp's rich and compelling The Homosexual Matrix, which is about as definitive a study of homosexuality as we are likely to see. It is arguably too intricate and complex to give anyone encountering homosexuality for the first time, but to date it is the only really thorough, fair, compassionate, and joyfully readable discussion of gay life to come along for lay people in quite some time. Even the most enlightened reader would have to work through it several times to absorb all that it has to say, but it is clear after one or two mesmerizing pages that the effort is worth it. I think most concerned parents will realize this right away and forge bravely through the book.

If only Silverstein had approached the subject with Tripp's wisdom, insight, and a sense of selectivity, he might have written a useful book. But as it stands, A Family Matter is worse than no book at all, since it could only serve to add confusion to a family that is already going through one of the most crucial and unsettling stages of its existence.

—Michael Wertin

PROVE IT

Push and shove me  
deceive and abuse me  
tell me you care

Distrust and hate me  
shout and curse me  
unbutton your jeans

Throw glass and burn me  
drench me and pick me  
I'll lick off your sweat

Tie your boots  
round my balls  
pinch my nipples  
pierce me—rehearse me

Spit on me—ream me  
leave me for dead  
Yet risen again  
Sadistic again  
and again  
and again. . .

—Jhett Roehl

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Boy leaning against lamp post  
torn denim hugging young flesh  
well-worn black leather boots and jacket  
valiantly thrown over one muscular shoulder  
pouting lips pulling on unfiltered cigarette  
eyes wanting. . . always calculating  
staring holes through all.  
Sauntering as if a snake  
he changes skins for difference,  
able to be all that is needed  
in order that he might continue.  
He is chameleon  
coming and going with the season  
don't push him for a reason  
this lost and lonely boy.  
Many men happen by him  
others hoping to possess  
linger on past fleeting moments—  
never to hold him back.  
Instances of passion in dark-secluded rooms  
remind him of something  
he's not quite sure of.  
Women caress his smooth-silken skin  
but none go further,  
for he has to honor celibacy.  
Angels may only love other angels  
they're not sanctioned for creation  
only sanctioned to help others like themselves!

—Jhett Roehl

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Magnus Hirshfeld had an important part in forming the World League for Sexual Reform in 1921. At its peak, over 130,000 people belonged to organizations affiliated with the League.

In the meantime, ominous trends were beginning in Germany. Magnus Hirshfeld, Jew, homosexual, and socialist, was the obvious target for budding Nazi groups. A meeting he was addressing in Munich in 1920 was physically attacked; in 1921 he was attacked by anti-Semites and left for dead in the street with a fractured skull; in 1923 Nazi youths disrupted a lecture by Hirshfeld, opened fire and wounded many of the people in the audience.

Equally ominous trends began about the same time in the USSR, trends which were reflected in changes of attitude shown by the Soviet delegation to the Congress of the World League for Sexual Reform. While they had previously supported gay rights and held up the Bolshevik repeal of anti-homosexual laws as a model for other nations, the Soviets were now speaking of homosexuality as a "social peril." As Stalinism developed, discrimination, spying, denunciations, and Party purges of gay people began. The Stalinists began describing homosexuality as "the product of decadence in the bourgeois sector of society." In 1934, mass arrests were carried out; there were many suicides. In March of that year a law was introduced, reportedly at the instigation of Joseph Stalin himself, making homosexual acts a crime punishable by up to eight years in prison; sex between consenting adult males was punishable by up to 5 years imprisonment.

What the Soviets were branding as "the fascist perversion" was in the meantime being described by the Nazis as "sexual Bolshevism." In May, 1933, it was announced that Germany was to be cleansed of books of "un-German" spirit. The first target was Hirshfeld's Institute for Sexual Science, which was raided by several hundred students who, to the strains of the Horst-

Wessel song, removed more than 10,000 volumes from the Institute's library, together with masses of unpublished manuscripts and other documents and a bust of Magnus Hirshfeld, which were later destroyed by storm troopers at a public burning.

Within a few years, tens of thousands of homosexuals, pink triangles affixed, were to die in the Nazi concentration camps.

There are, of course, lessons to be learned from the early history of gay activism. At the height of the German movement's struggle, it must have seemed to those concerned that nothing could stop the advance toward gay freedom and equality. Yet the most optimistic times for gay people were followed abruptly by the most ghastly. Surely no complacency can survive the realization that not only Jews, Gypsies, and dissidents died in Hitler's concentration camps, but thousands of homosexuals as well.



Nazis carry bust of Magnus Hirschfeld in torchlight procession.

## GAY JEWS OF TEXAS

We've all heard about gay discos, gay artists, and gay Christians. But Gay Jews? In Texas? Yes, such a species does exist here, and a group of us in Austin have recently surfaced to form Gay Jews of Texas. The initials of our name are G J T, which we pronounce "Gidget"—like the famous lady Gidget of the movies. What is Gidget up to?

We're basically an informal rap group, meeting weekly or semi-weekly to discuss issues of concern to gay Jews. This isn't a religious meeting really, but rather a chance for Jewish lesbians and gay men to talk about their pasts, their politics, current problems, or whatever feels most important to the group meeting that week. It is also an opportunity for gay and lesbian Jews to get to know each other a little, something that doesn't usually happen very often. For many of us, in fact, Gidget is the first time in years we've sat down with a bunch of Jews, talking about how being Jewish affects our lives.

In our meetings so far, we've talked about the traumas of high school, the peculiarities (both good and bad!) of our families, the right-wing reaction to the International Women's Year meeting in Houston, anti-Semitism and heterosexism, the politics of Israel, and each other. The group has been meeting for about two months now, but is still open to anyone who is interested. From time to time, we'll also be having parties and meetings open to anyone, not just Gay Jews of Texas. So, if you're a Jewish lesbian or gay man, and interested in exploring your roots a couple of evenings per month, give us a call. You can get telephone numbers of the members through Gay Community Services, or check the notice on the GCS bulletin board.

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# GAYS AND THE HELPING PROFESSIONS, OR:

## how to nurse those gay blues away

by David R. Drake

It is amazing how one word can describe such a sensitive topic of human interest as does "homosexuality." Just the mention of it conjures up diverse, individualized feelings in every person alive. The very nature of this diversity is the reason for this paper, for many of these varied feelings stem from an enormous lack of information, as well as from an abundance of myths, stereotyped falsehoods and out-right lies. In this paper I will provide valid information about homosexuality with the intent that society in general and health professionals in particular will be able to reexamine their attitudes and beliefs on the matter and, as a hopeful result, will better be able to understand and relate to gay people. Many of the false concepts about gay people, which in themselves lead to the formation of negative attitudes, prejudices and even hatred, will be probed. Because of the fact that the negativisms toward a segment of our human population do exist, the significance of such a paper as this is readily apparent. This is especially true when one discusses those in the helping professions, as it does not seem feasible that negative feelings will be able to evoke the needed potential to deal in a positive, constructive manner with people to whom the negative feelings are directed.

The paper falls into two main parts. A discussion of the development of the self-concept in the gay individual will be undertaken after an initial discourse on the meaning of the concept of homosexuality and of the evolution of the attitude of United States society toward homosexuality. The relationship of this self-concept to health and health-seeking will then be discussed, with emphasis on the importance of the professional's relationship with the client. The second, shorter section will deal with the importance of objectivity on the part of the practitioner.

### WHAT IS HOMOSEXUALITY?

The definition of homosexuality appears to be very individualized. In the past, it has always been defined in behavioral terms: a homosexual was one who took part in sexual acts with another of the same gender. One shortcoming of such a definition is that gay people many times discover their homosexual feelings before any actual sexual experience has occurred. This does not make them any less gay. At the same time, there are people who engage in homosexual sex without having a true gay identity. Some people in prison, and some prostitutes could be examples of this.

What, one could ask, is a gay identity? With this question we get a little deeper into the issue, as being gay is a whole lot more than sexual intercourse with a member of the same sex. In the words of clinical psychologist Don Clark, in Loving Someone Gay,

I am Gay and that means that I know that I am able to involve myself emotionally, sensuously, erotically and intellectually with someone of the same gender. He and I can interrelate in a whole and satisfying way without having to create dishonesty and diversion from fear of possible sexuality. Being Gay means that I know I am capable of this range of relating to another male and that I am willing to act on the capability and translate the potential into behavior.

but rather a capability. It might imply a frequent or nearly constant preference of attraction for same-sex people, but it does not in itself mean that one is incapable of satisfying heterosexual relationships. It is a very individualized thing.

Mitch Walker, in Men Loving Men, considers gayness to be a self-made choice in the respect that it is a decision to do what is good for you, emotionally, sensually, sexually, lovingly and so on. He views it as a form of self-respect. Something else Walker does is to make a distinction between "gay" and "homosexual." The word "homosexual" usually refers to a sexual preference and nothing else. Gayness is infinitely much more—it is a perspective. It is from these definitions of same-sex attraction that the viewpoint of this paper is derived. The words "gay" and "homosexual" will be used more-or-less interchangeably because they are innately interconnected, but it is important to realize that "gay" denotes much more than a sexual orientation; it is a whole identity and point of view that stems from that orientation.

Sexuality may be conceived of as a continuum. At one extreme is a very small percentage of people who are exclusively heterosexual in their makeup, and at the other end, an equally small percentage of people who are totally homosexual in their makeup. Everyone else, the large majority of people, falls somewhere in between. One's proximity to one side or the other, if this can be honestly determined, indicates in which of these two areas of human expression one will find the greatest degree of self-fulfillment and happiness. Once again, the idea that homosexuality and heterosexuality are mutually exclusive is rejected. This idea that almost everyone has some capacity for homosexual expression is very strongly opposed by the American public in which homophobia is so deeply entrenched. There is a considerable emphasis among citizens of this country on the need to identify oneself as either gay or straight. If one uses Clark's definition of being gay, this seems even more ludicrous.

According to Martin Weinburg and Colin Williams in Male Homosexuals: Their Problems and Adaptations, people are born with an undifferentiated sexual potential that develops through a learning process that is quite complex. Why do some people refuse to follow the course dictated by society and tune out their feelings of attraction to people of the same sex? A more appropriate question might be: does it really matter? Only if one accepts the destructive assumption that gay people are really bad and innately unhappy, or unless we wish to rear children to retain gay awareness. According to Clark, gay people are gay and non-gays are non-gay as a result of millions of factors that include components present at birth, usually described as temperament (how active or passive one is, and whether visual, auditory or tactile stimuli are more likely to cause a reaction), and early and late learning experiences and child-rearing practices that together build the core of the person, sometimes called the character. The millions of experiences that are a part of living in an unpredictable world build on temperament and character and create the unique personality. The reason that causative factors are not important is that gay people can be every bit as happy, satisfied and productive as non-gay people, and perhaps even live in a wider and richer world. Their problems come from a castigating society and not from their own identity.

To Dr. Clark, being gay does not denote a restriction,



The reasons some people grow up gay and others do not are, as we see, individualized, varied and numerous. In the past, social scientists have assumed such interests were abnormal and have spent much time and effort looking for specific causes. Those studies conducted before Kinsey were small scale and generally much restricted to the realm of psychiatry and psychology. Homosexuality was seen as a psychopathological condition (due to the notion that heterosexuality is a normal, natural outcome of sexual development against which all other forms of sexual expression are to be measured and compared). The idea of a "cure" thus came about. Discovering a cause consequently came to be of major concern. Because so much emphasis has been placed on this, the progress toward an understanding of homosexuality has been impeded.

Much of the research that was done was done without proper methodology. The Institute for Sex Research has spelled out many examples of work that was not performed up to minimum canons of scientific research, including the use of extremely small samples, samples made up of clinical patients as well as the non-use of control groups. The first large scale study of sex was the sociological study done under the direction of Alfred Kinsey. This was done under a conceptualization of homosexuality which was in conflict with traditional psychological and psychiatric views. Sociology has seen homosexuality as a variant of sexual expression and not as pathological in itself. Thus, there is no need to search for a "cure." Nevertheless, the Kinsey Institute Research has made a concerted effort over a number of years to locate and evaluate the histories of people whose sexual orientation has changed as a result of therapy. Not one has ever been found. Several psychoanalysts have

promised to send over patients that they claimed to have cured. None have ever shown up. The fact is that there are no validated changes in homosexuality to be found.

Some gay people do seek out these so called "change therapists," having been led to believe that the source of their unhappiness is inherently their homosexuality and not the social stigma attached to it. According to C.A. Tripp, in The Homosexual Matrix, the reason that such changes are not brought about is that

...the adult human being's sexual response rests at bottom on a massive, cortically organized, sexual value system which is impervious to the trivial intrusions launched against it by what amounts to concerns, concerns which can muster their support from no more than a fragment of frontal lobe authority.

The effort to wage this war has been described as "an attempt to sink a battleship with a popgun."

There are gay people in all segments of our society: in communities of every size, at all social levels, in every profession. They are people in all walks of life. Gay people differ at least as much from each other as they do from straights. The socially integrated gay person defines him/herself as a regular member of society. Further, various surveys over the years have shown that 90-96% of gay people would not change their sexual identity even if they could do so by pushing a button.

There seems to be a belief in our society that gay couples do not work out over long periods of time. One reason for this assumption is very likely due to the fact that such couples are less conspicuous than the unattached, promiscuous gay people who tend to become the

stereotyped image of homosexuality. According to Tripp there is virtually only one basic difference between gay and straight couples, and this stems from the similarity of the same-sex partners. In the great majority of gay relationships, neither partner plays a stereotyped gender role. Divisions of leadership are usually divided into neatly complementary spheres of action and decision making. These relationships often equal the very best meshings of heterosexuality.

#### EVOLVEMENT OF THE UNITED STATES CONCEPT

Although the "sexual revolution" of recent years has somewhat removed the cloud of mystery from homosexuality and thus improved its image, homosexuality has by no stretch of the imagination become totally understood. The fact is that the closer something moves toward acceptance, the more it causes alarm in the forces against it. A new tolerance usually means a surface acceptance and a decreased tendency to delve in the basic issues.

Alfred Kinsey pointed out that in our American culture, no type of sexual activity is more frequently condemned than homosexuality. There are practically no European societies, with the possible exception of England, and few, if any, cultures in the world that have become as disturbed over homosexuality (especially among men) as we have in the United States.

The customs, laws and morals of a society come about usually for the purpose of establishing a uniformity in social behavior with the intended result of minimizing friction among members. A few of the laws concerning sexual behavior are necessary for practical reasons, but most of the sexual laws in our society came about without regard to practical necessity, but from a religious philosophy and values that evolved in opposition to "sins of the flesh." The sexual mores of United States society comes from men who believed that celibacy and abstinence were morally superior to any sexual expression, although it was "better to marry than to burn." Sex even then became fully acceptable only when practiced at certain times, in certain ways and with certain motivations present. Sexual excitement in itself was associated with sin. Anti-homosexual laws have never claimed that such activity threatens person or property, but are listed as crimes against nature, as if there were some other source than nature from which they could have come.

An interesting by-product of the societal taboo against homosexuality is that gay people hide their gayness in order to survive in a hostile straight society. Therefore there is little about gayness in the public consciousness and it thus continues to appear abnormal. Therefore gays hide their gayness. It is an endless cycle that could only be broken if everyone who is gay woke up tomorrow colored green. This is the "Closet Syndrome."

Homophobia, the fear and rage one feels toward homosexuality, is rampant in this environment which has changed human sexuality into a paranoid, feared phenomenon. We are taught that feelings of emotion toward a member of our same sex should be considered with disgust.

Howard Brown, in Familiar Faces, Hidden Lives, tells the story of Tim, who grew up in Brooklyn. At his parent's twenty-sixth wedding anniversary, his father proposed a toast to Tim's older brother, who was serving in Viet Nam: "Thank God nobody in our family's been rejected by the army. We don't have any fags in this family." As he was in no way effeminate, Tim's parents had assumed he was straight. When Tim moved to Greenwich Village, his father questioned him, "Why do you want to live there? That's where all the fags live."

Tim was fired from two jobs because he was gay. Once when his supervisor saw him holding hands with a friend in a movie theater line. The next year he was fired from another job for appearing on a special televised report as an advocate of gay civil rights. His parents saw the report and by his next visit home had concluded that they had "a fag in the family" after all. (Before the special report had come on, Tim's father had muttered, "The fags should be put on a boat and bombed.") While Tim was home, his father said, "Son, if you want to be queer as a three dollar bill that's your

business." Tim said nothing and walked away. His mother approached and put an arm around him, saying, "Tim, I've only made one mistake in my life." Tim asked her what she meant. "Twenty years ago I should have had an abortion." She has since taken to telling friends and neighbors that Tim is dead.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-CONCEPT IN THE GAY

I have been homosexual nearly all of my conscious life. I have had overt homosexual experiences for about five years. I have been openly homosexual for perhaps a year and a half. And I am still discovering the multitude of ways by which the straight world makes the lives of all homosexuals painful, while most of the time, remaining completely unconscious of the pain inflicted.

These words of John Murphey very aptly describe the predominate problem associated with homosexuality—a general lack of acceptance in our society. This cannot help but affect the gay person in the development of his/her self-concept. Self-concept can perhaps be best described as the conscious awareness an individual has of his/her attributes that make him/her different from all other individuals. It is how we think about ourselves.

According to Clark, gay people grow up suspecting that there must be many basic things wrong with them, or why else would loved ones say such things about people who have feelings like theirs? The seeds of self-doubt and self-hate grow and are with the gay person every day.

The homosexual is a member of the least visible minority in the country, having only certain feelings in common with the other members. The most pervasive and acute until now have been guilt and shame at being something that is feared and despised by straight society. Some people can handle this, but it has crippled, in one form or another, millions of others. To live as an invisible man or woman is very painful. In the words of Donald Webster Cory,

A person cannot live in an atmosphere of universal rejection, of widespread pretense, of a society that outlaws and banishes his activities and desires, of a social world that jokes and sneers at every turn without a fundamental influence on his personality.

#### INTERNAL STRUGGLE OF THE GAY

The awakening of gay feelings comes at various ages, but for most it comes quite early. Whenever it occurs, however, there follows a long period of quiet, internal, emotional struggle. It is a lonely struggle. Consciously or not, one becomes an alert gatherer of information, listening for news of others with the same feelings. Most of the news available is bad, as there are few, if any, apparent respectable models. One feels pulled in the direction of one's impulses, yet held back by the repugnance of becoming an outcast.

10

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Upon first discovering gay feelings, most people give in to the massive societal pressures and try to conform to the popular idea of what is normal. The first effort to do so usually lasts for years and is characterized by a reluctance to admit to a "deviant" identity. A common method of doing so is to announce one's own intense anti-gay feelings. At any rate, after this first effort ends in failure, it is followed by a second struggle that is motivated by the hope that the "deviant" identity can be changed. After this has drained emotional and possibly financial reserves, most are left with a seriously lessened self-esteem and confronted with despair. The surviving, wounded gay person must make some choices. Some try to kill the pain with alcohol or pills. Some give in and become the devalued, laughed at eccentric by adopting stereotypical behavior. They are surviving and refuse to go on unnoticed.

Miraculously, a growing percentage of gay people are able to choose a pathway of integrity and truth. They have managed to grow stronger in the struggle and have decided once and for all to come out of the closet and to be self-respected.

#### RELATIONSHIP OF SELF-CONCEPT TO HEALTH

We are now beginning to realize that social forces have an influence on all kinds of phenomena which we have hitherto analyzed in individual terms. We are beginning to understand, for example, that even physical illnesses such as heart disease and cancer may be influenced by sociological factors. . . . If this be the case, as is plainly indicated by recent studies, then it ought to be clear that the relationship of the homosexual to a larger hostile society must have profound effects on his life.

Here Martin Hoffman, in his book The Gay World, sums up nicely the underlying physical ramifications of the internal struggle of the gay person. The fact that social pressures can have major influence on the physiological processes of the body has been proven in various studies and is thus quite applicable to the gay situation discussed up to this point.

An additional health problem of gay people is actually an offshoot of the health problems of society in general. Diseases spread by sexual contact are a problem for both gay and straight people, but the area of the body in which one manifests symptoms of the disease can be a clue as to the sexual act from which it was obtained. This could conceivably cause anxiety in the person who is afraid of being stigmatized to the point where the person would not seek medical assistance.

#### HEALTH SEEKING

How all this ties in with health seeking, however, has much larger ramifications. The response of health professionals in the past has been distinctly negative. As a result, many gay people have avoided seeking health care at all. The very fact that gay health agencies exist points up a very tragic flaw in our health care system, in that everyone should be entitled to equal health care from any agency.

Hospitalization is a specific situation in which many gay people have undergone much personal trauma. Such an experience can be unpleasant, embarrassing and even terrifying. The gay patient may even find himself denied the strongest support possible in this time of stress, that of his/her closest loved one. He/she and his/her lover cannot express affection, or even show much concern, for each other without incurring the wrath of the floor staff. Much psychological pain is thus imposed on top of the physical pain. Hopelessness and helplessness are common feelings among hospitalized gays. Many hospital personnel believe that gay people are immoral or abnormal and thus erect barriers between themselves and the patient. This denial of the professional relationship to the client to the gay person is in no way conducive to good health care. One is denying them a very important factor in the return to a high level of health.

#### THE PROFESSIONAL AND OBJECTIVITY

The need for objectivity on the part of the professional should be an apparent necessity. A part of the motivation for going into the helping professions should be a real desire to help people. Gays are people and are as deserving of good health care as anyone else. The techniques used in caring for gay people are no different, but prejudicial attitudes can affect in a negative manner the way in which the care is given. Professionals must seek accurate, current information about gay people. They need to reassess their basic attitudes and examine how they respond to gay patients and their relationships. Clark points out the importance of never assuming that a client is heterosexual. When taking a history, examining, or whatever, keep in mind the possibility that the person, regardless of appearance, may be gay.

Gay nurses and physicians, if they dare to risk alienation and job loss, can be helpful in educating those with whom they work. He/she can serve as a role model of the healthy homosexual, and in doing so facilitate a flow of educational information. This can help sensitize others to the needs of gay patients and help them to meet those needs without prejudice and hatred standing in the way. As health professionals strive to respect and relate in an honest manner with gay people, better care will be the inevitable outcome.



Appearing in Austin next month on February 21 is the highly acclaimed men's dance troupe Les Ballets Trocadero de Monte Carlo. Led by the charming and graceful defector from the Bolshoi, Olga Tchikaboumskaya (pictured above in a scene from Swan Lake), the troupe has a flair for the unexpected. Refused in Fort Worth, the show is sure to sell out in Austin.



Illustration by Don Bachardy

CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD

Gin lovers, hay fever sufferers and people who swim in Lake Travis take note—a species of plant highly relevant to your lifestyle is quite abundant here in Austin. Juniperus asheii, sometimes called red cedar, is a small fragrant evergreen tree which is native to this area and virtually covers the lakes area of the Edwards Plateau. (This is not the cedar from which cedar chests are usually made.)

Juniperus asheii is dioecious—that means there are separate male and female plants. The male plants produce pollen in small brown structures about the size of a small wart at the tips of the branches. It is the pollen from these pollen cones which frequently causes the so-called cedar fever in Austinites and can turn the ground yellow around the male trees.

Mature female plants are easily recognized at this time of year by their blue-gray fruit—about the size of the head of a large kitchen match—which looks as though it has been dusted with confectioner's sugar. It is these so-called juniper berries (they are not berries in a strict botanical sense) which provide the flavor for gin.

Unlike its more widespread cousin Juniperus virginiana, Juniperus asheii is endemic to central Texas. A beautiful little bird, the golden cheeked warbler, is also endemic to the same area because the bird requires the bark of this particular tree (no other will do) to build its nests.

Juvenile junipers have a different kind of leaves from their sexually mature brothers and sisters. The leaves of old plants are small scale-like things while the immature foliage is like green needles about two or three centimeters long.

—S. B.



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## GAY IMAGES

Television (and the other media as well) has a tendency to identify characters as being gay by using stereotypical portrayals. While we shout about how unfair it is to portray gay people as fitting only the stereotype, we might extract some minimal solace by noting that the treatment of our minority group is being approached the same way other minority groups have been treated. In an examination of this treatment of minorities, let's look at the way black people have been presented to the public.

The first television show featuring blacks was Amos 'n Andy. This successful carry-over from radio presented the "step-'n-fetch-it" stereotype. That kind of stereotypical presentation on television with its vast and heterogeneous audience became something more than the "good-natured" kidding of an ethnic type. Instead, it tended to validate the stereotype as a true representative of a whole people, and in that way contributed to further prejudice. It was finally driven off the air because its portrayal of black life fed, rather than dispelled, racial bigotry. It was the only series on black life in all broadcasting, and it portrayed the characters in precisely the way bigots imagine black people to be.

Most people watch a lot of TV, and people who watch a lot of television carry in their heads a television version of reality rather than a true one. Most white children in a recent poll felt that comedy shows like The Jeffersons and Sanford & Son accurately portray black family life. Even white city children with black friends considered the shows realistic. The apparent contradiction presented by their own black friends they explained as exceptions to the rule. As Dr. Bradley S. Greenberg of Michigan State University concluded, some people are more likely to believe television than their own experiences. Should they have no real-life experiences with the subject being handled, the material is accepted at face value as being both factual and valid.

All of the aforementioned, which operated in the example of black minority stereotyping, holds true in the case of the media's treatment of gay people. People "buy" what they're shown—and gay people have been shown "as queer as a three dollar bill."

Gay men and women are being shown on television only after some of the taboos about "perversion" have fallen to the wayside in the higher interest of advertising revenue. For years, scripts containing gay characters

were rewritten to exclude any mention or hint of homosexuality; the heterosexual bias must always prevail. Everyone you saw on TV was portrayed as a straight character regardless of the author's intentions. With the exception of an occasional gag routine, such as Milton Berle dressing in drag, gay people were non-existent. This way of handling homosexuality as a stereotype or not handling it at all is an adaptation from the film industry. There, homosexuality was either totally avoided, or sight gags were employed to bolster a sagging scene. These stereotypes were variations of "real" men and women seen by the public as slightly odd but amusing. We were always good for comic relief. As far as television is concerned, the age-old use of the stereotype still has plenty of comic mileage left in it.

While I am willing to grant that a few episodes on a few programs have presented some portrayals that I could say something positive about, we are still struggling at the stage analogous to the black "step-'n-fetch-it" from Amos 'n Andy.

Gay men and women are still being portrayed in a manner which fits the expectation of anti-gay bigots. As with other minority group stereotyping, this can only lead to the reinforcement of the prejudices which breed discrimination. The average viewer unacquainted with a variety of gay people looks at the character of Jodie on ABC's Soap, for example, and sees a swishy, mincing fruitcake with limp wrists who wants a sex-change operation, attempts to commit suicide because he's unhappy with his life, and has a date with a female nurse who wants to show him what he's missing. People watch that kind of image and believe that it's representative of gay men. It's easy to accept because it fits in with everything they've ever been told. If that kind of stereotypical portrayal was attempted with a black, rather than a gay, character, the show would never have been produced, let alone aired.

Unfortunately, we are the new minority. As such we have only now reached the point that blacks reached with the first broadcast of Amos 'n Andy. Fortunately, this is only a starting point. Some good things have actually come with the bad. We'll take a look at this in future articles.

—Bruce D. Aleksander

- I. FOR A FRIEND: by way of reminder  
Summer's gone home for vacation.  
You thought she left you in charge,  
but no sane element could possibly  
trust the chaos in yr I.
- II. DIFFUSED  
The black of his feathers  
prisms into a thousand lights  
colors on fire on his back
- II. DIFFUSED  
The black of his feathers  
prisms into a thousand lights  
colors on fire on his back  
as he struts across the lawn
- III. EPILOGUE  
night flung the clouds high  
shook itself clear in the starlight  
and somewhere from the north  
the constellations murmured,  
rearranged.

— Amme Hogan

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-Bankruptcy, husband and wife	275
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-Occupational license	100

Legal fees quoted above do not include court costs. These fees are for cases filed in Travis County between December 1, 1977 and March 1, 1978. Fees for legal work outside of Travis County will be higher. The Legal Clinic also accepts criminal cases and civil cases not listed above. Please call for an appointment. No legal advice will be given over the telephone.

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STEVE RUSSELL  
VIVIAN MAHLAB

## Thoughts About It All Amme Hogan

Somewhere, sometime in all the recent anti-gay activity, we've all asked ourselves "Why?" And no matter how the question gets answered, or perhaps pushed aside, it keeps cropping up: "why? are these people after us," or in extreme frustration: "WHY?"

Well, I've figured it out, and it's as stupid and simple as it is frightening. The great majority of people don't want freedom, either for themselves or for others. Freedom means equality for all; freedom means an end to cut-and-dried, time-worn methods of doing; freedom means one must think and create instead of ruminating. People tend to be lazy: they don't want to think, they don't want to change.

It is this desire for stability (and damn the cost!) that allows dictators to get into power. This desire is what makes America's side to the right so dangerous. It places those of us who want an end to the injustice in the role of activist, agitator or (subversive). And that, boys and girls, means we are un-American: because we refuse to sit on our haunches and be shat upon.

Of course we're getting double messages here. One is that we should be proud, we should exercise our freedom of speech. Two is that we should be so pleased with things as they are that we will not feel any need to exercise this right. We don't have freedom of speech unless we say what everyone else says.

Nor should we try to exercise the minds of those ruminants around us. If you are different than they, you have lost your right to speak, and should forthwith shut up and quit worrying their little heads with fresh ideas and thoughts. If you will shut up, they, in their great benign state, will let you live in peace.

At the cost of your freedom. But before we get too upset over this, we must remind ourselves that the people who don't want you to have your freedom don't want theirs, either.

So you want change, eh? Well, what about my right to remain the same? We've all had that thrown at us, either in the form of Anita and the churchers, Birchers, etc., to the do-nothing-positive legislators (esp. the one who keeps trying to choke goats with his civil rights) to our parents stuck in the "you're-sick-but-we'll-try-to-love-you-anyway" syndrome. And we're all tired of it.

But what do you do when you live under a system based on discrimination: against the poor, against foreigners (unless wealthy), against differences in pigmentation of the skin, against those with different affectional preference . . . what do you do in a system that is based to favor white, heterosexual, misogynist males?

Well, boys and girls, you can throw bombs. But don't get caught, and don't do it if you've mentioned such action in an article with your name on it. You can sink into murky despair, back in your closet; the w-h-m-m society would like nothing better. You can adopt various attitudes, however inappropriate, and become a woman-hating, passing-for-straight gay man. Or, harder still, you can be a woman-hating lesbian. You can orient yourself to change; you can try to be reasonable with the unreasoning ruminants; and you can begin seeing yourself as a changer working in a society that needs the change.

In a society based on discrimination against some, there must necessarily be discrimination in favor of others. Equality of rights will of course remove from the privileged some of their privileges. But a privilege is not a right, and the loss felt is only the loss of something to which the holder was not entitled. The gain of rights by those who previously had none can only be counted as an improvement of society.

Let's go improve.

I am waiting for the day when the illustrious chairman of the excellent department at the outstanding university announces to his distinguished colleagues that since they have fulfilled the requirements of HEW by hiring a woman and a member of a minority, it will be necessary to recruit a homosexual in order to comply with HEW's most recent guidelines.

And I am waiting for 10% of those distinguished colleagues to smile knowing smiles as they raise their hands (and not-so-limp wrists) to assure their illustrious chairman that it will not be necessary to recruit new faculty members in order to comply with those guidelines.

-j. e.



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νύκτες, παρὰ δ' ἔρχετ' ὤρα,  
ἔγω δὲ μόνα κατεύδω.

MIDWINTER  
by Dennis Milam

Dark candles of light  
we have come such a good way  
our beacons stand like twisted battleworks  
protecting the cardboard men beyond  
yet these men writhe in a circular dance  
to free themselves  
to free the integral universe  
with their tears of a day  
when the spirit and the love came their way

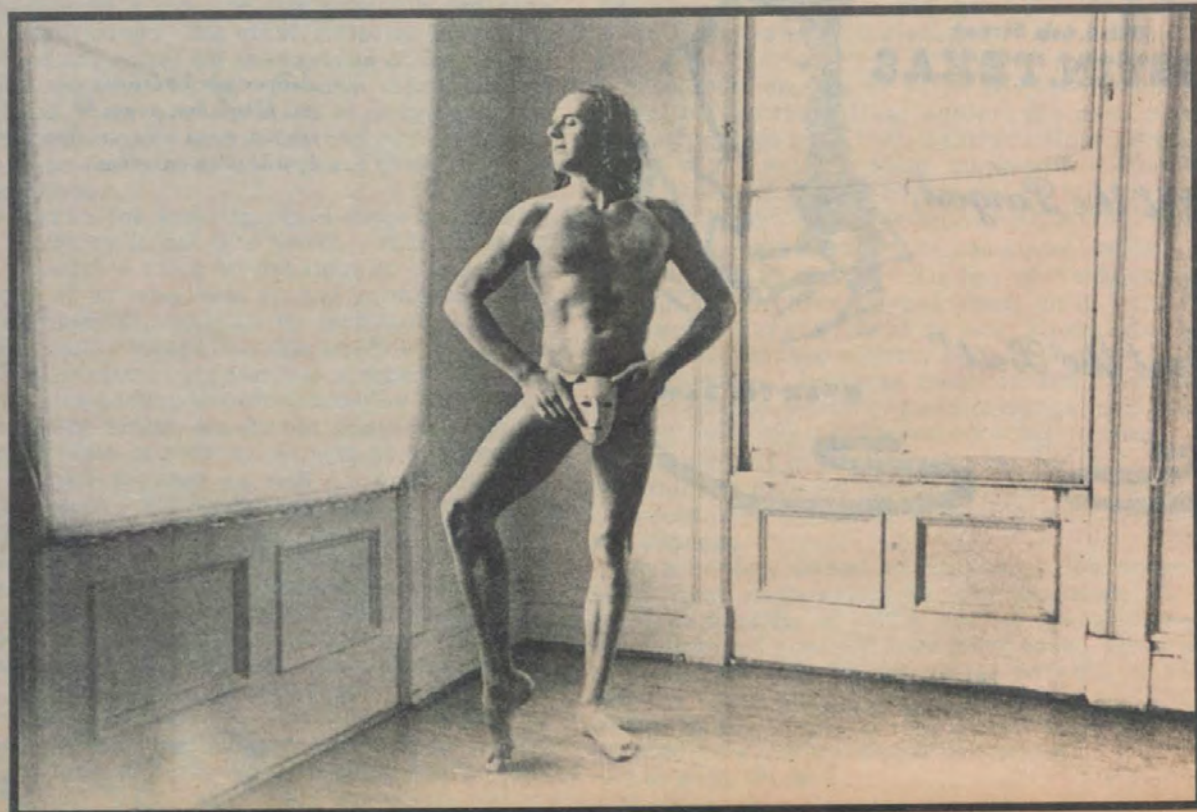
I am alive  
I can love  
I struggle  
I am beautiful  
I am gay

People made of cardboard breathe as alive  
swearing the sun shall be theirs  
beautiful people came again upon the battleworks  
and bid calm the rising streets  
to run those very same streets  
crying aloud with vengeance  
that armed love we know  
speak from beautiful passion's lips  
not heeding creakings of cardboard

We are alive  
We can love  
We struggle  
We are beautiful  
We are gay

Run streaming laughter  
into the arms of straight America  
saying sisters and brothers  
we love you as we love ourselves  
let us be as one  
we know our power  
love moves the sun  
the sun can be ours  
ride the rays to paradise





A SEX POEM

Cruising for doughnuts  
in downtown  
Turning

when the turn light allows  
left

Crossing in the crosswalk  
between white lines  
we see

a priest  
saying [to himself]  
je suis,  
tu es,  
il est,

an existential crises

we drive on  
oblivious.

Cruising for doughnuts,  
glazed.

Albuquerque

—Steven Thomas