

GAY SUNSHINE

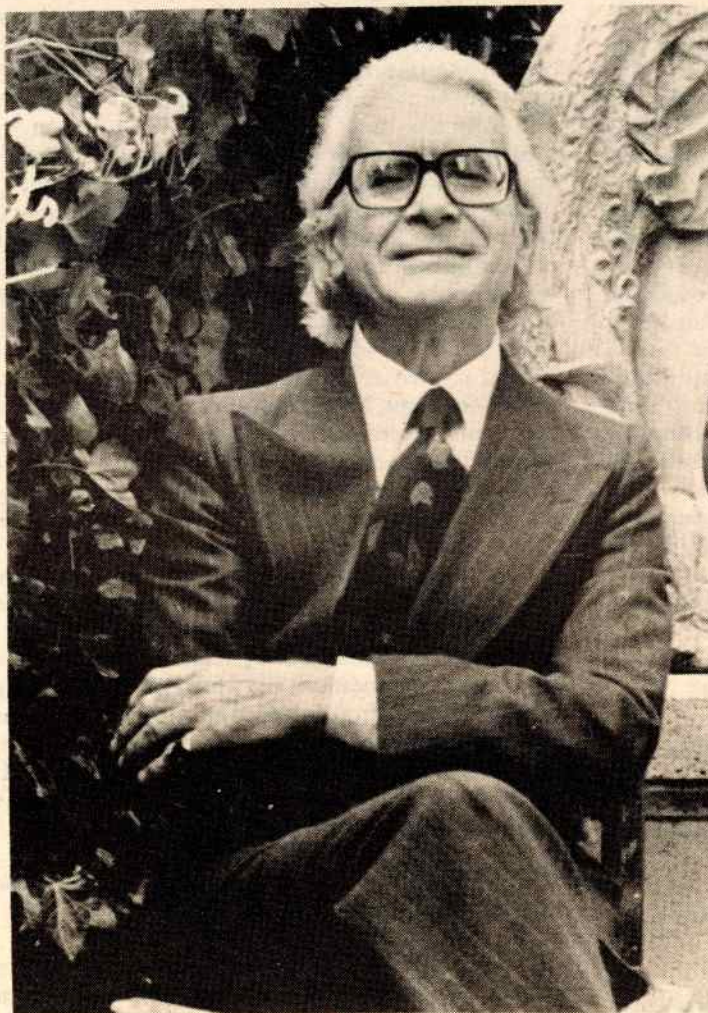
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Roger Peyrefitte
Photo by Jean Louvel

INTERVIEW

ROGER PEYREFITTE

French novelist and chronicler of contemporary mores, Roger Peyrefitte was born in 1907 in Castres in the département of Tarn. He was educated, partly in Catholic schools, in southern France and took his advanced degree at the Free School of Political Science in Paris. In 1931 he embarked upon a diplomatic career which took him to Greece, 1933-1938. Recalled to Paris because of several homosexual incidents he had there, his open life style finally led him to have to choose between resigning or being fired from the Vichy government.

To explain his development as a homosexual he turned to writing. His first novel, *les Amitiés particulières*, 1945 (*Special Friendships*, 1950), was a critical and financial success, as was the 1964 movie based on it. The book brought him to the attention of poet and playwright Jean Cocteau (1889-1963), and the two began a close friendship. Peyrefitte had already been a friend for a long time with novelist and playwright Henry de Montherlant (1896-1972). But both these writers more or less hid their homosexuality from the world's view whereas Peyrefitte became a leader of the gay movement in Paris. Together with André Baudry he founded one of the longest existing gay organizations in the world, Arcadie, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1978.

Among the books that followed were two autobiographical romans à clef about his diplomatic life, *les Ambassades*, 1951 (*Diplomatic Diversions*, 1953), and *la Fin des ambassades*, 1953 (*Diplomatic Conclusions*, 1954); two novels about the Catholic Church, *les Clés de saint Pierre*, 1955 (*The Keys of St. Peter*, 1957), and *les Chevaliers de Malte*, 1957 (*The Knights of Malta*, 1959); and his fictionalized biography of a minor French poet, Jacques d'Adelsward-Fersen (1879-1923), *l'Exilé de Capri*, 1959 (*The Exile of Capri*, 1961), which is virtually a who's who of the gay European world around the turn of the century.

Later works continued to mingle fiction and history: *la Nature du prince*, 1963 (*The Prince's Person*, 1964), set in Renaissance Italy; *les Juifs*, 1965 (*The Jews*, 1967); *les Américains*, 1968; *Des Français*, 1970; and a biography of Fernand Legros, *Tableaux de chasse*, 1976. His extraordinarily candid memoirs – *Notre amour*, 1967; *Propos secrets*, 1977; and *l'Enfant de coeur*, 1978 – await translation. He is currently working on a trilogy about Alexander the Great, the first volume of which appeared in 1977, and has just had published his novel, *Roy* (1979), set in the States. Altogether he had published, as of that date, thirty-one books. Few have been translated into English, and most of his works are now out of print in the United States; but Panther Books of Great Britain still publishes translations of some eight in paperback.

In 1976 Peyrefitte electrified the Christian world by his statement that Pope Paul VI had been a practicing homosexual while he was Archbishop of Milan.

The present interview, in mixed English and French, took place on July 11, 1978. The setting was the author's combination salon and dining room at his home in Paris facing on the Bois de Boulogne. Scattered around the room were innumerable examples of erotic art, both homosexual and heterosexual in nature, collected throughout the world (many of these were photographed for a 1972 book called *Un musée de l'amour*). The interviewer, Dr. D. W. Gunn, had been an Associate Professor of English at the Université de Metz for a number of years and had returned to France for the summer. Transcription of the tapes and translation of the French parts were made by him and Michel Murat, a professional translator living in Paris.

D. W. GUNN: In your letter to me you wrote, "Everything gay is mine." Would you like to explain what you meant by this?

ROGER PEYREFITTE: In order to do so, let me recount a little of my life. I was awakened to the meaning of tender and romantic feelings in my childhood when I was enrolled in a religious school [in Ardouane, Hérault]. And at the dawn of my life I found myself a nonconformist in love. I congratulate myself that I began not with an impure love but that for years I cultivated what I have called *les amitiés particulières*, special friendships – that is, a pure kind of pre-sexuality. I use this idea of pure and impure love only in order to render an image of my religious education, because you must not doubt that since everything that is gay is good, there's nothing gay that is impure for me. But I speak of an education which was at base a moral one. Living thus to the maximum and having seen this life lived to maximum, ending when my partner killed himself, became the subject of my first book, *Special Friendships*. That's the story which I think everyone who belongs to the "gay cooperation" has read, no? – I was marked then by two things: first, by nonconformity in love and, afterwards, with the realization that this nonconformity was in a battle with society. Society is the born enemy of people who are born gay – homosexual, pederastic, whatever term you like. There are nuances [even though the French use the terms interchangeably]. I know lots of homosexuals who didn't discover their homosexuality until an advanced age. (I remember some who said it was during military service, others who said it was when they were in the university, others much older. There was one case I knew of, a marquis who only discovered he was gay at age 45.

With fright! Then he realized that he had lost forty years of his life. [laughter] One should never lose hope. Homosexuality can strike any straight man at any age.) But as for me, I was born thus. – Notice one thing: my particularity is to be too sensitive to feminine charms also, for before being a lover of sex I am a lover of beauty. And how can one not recognize beauty in women, especially young women, as well as in young boys? So in my first memoirs, which are in a book (I don't know whether it has been translated yet in English) recognized as a masterpiece of the same order as *Special Friendships* by even my worst detractors, *la Mort d'une mère*, a book which I wrote in 1949 after my mother's death, I spoke without shame of my attitude toward my mother. She adored me, and her love was very dear to me. Through my mother I came to understand women, and this led me to understand other things than physical love. As she was very devout, I remain quite influenced by my religious education even though I am what you would call a libertine in the 17th-century meaning of the word, a libertine of the spirit, an agnostic. I still think it's good to have guardrails in life. – I said in that book, *la Mort d'une mère*, that my first physical, as opposed to sentimental, encounter was with a young girl. I was then nine years old. I said that in a veiled way because the subject of the book was sacred and didn't lend itself to confidences about physical affairs, especially indecent ones. But in *Propos secrets*, which is my naked confessions published just a year ago, which has had an enormous success in France, I spoke of everybody, beginning with myself. Since I recounted the morals of many well-known personages openly, I could not conceal intimate details of my own life . . . "Propos" is "conversation." "Secret" – what is a good translation for that?

DWG: "Confidential"?

PEYREFITTE: Yes, that would be a good translation . . . Let me give you a detail from it which shows well that I was in the gay direction even when I was a young boy. That girl: I played with her, but I didn't try anything. I made her get down on her hands and knees, I pulled up her dress, and I contemplated her bottom. It's very curious. Because even then I ignored the difference of the sex. I never even looked at her sex! It's very curious. Just at that moment my nurse surprised me in this act and frightened my parents, who put me in the religious school. Only boys. As I said in *la Mort d'une mère*, that was putting me in the wolf's mouth! But my *amitiés particulières* were without similar incidents. I contemplated the beauty of a young boy exactly in the manner (I learned afterwards) of platonic

love. With admiration I contemplated his face – not his fesses, his bottom. It was only after many, many meetings that I dared to kiss him. Thus a completely chaste relationship, though of a special kind. I am glad that I thus began. – But still I was blocked by my religious education. Then when I was sixteen or seventeen, I was no longer in a religious school but in a high school in the town of Foix, in Ariège in the south of France. There I renewed my *amitiés particulières* but pushed further on. Once I was with this boy, and we both had erections, to speak plainly. But I never touched him, nor he me. But it was a step. It was only at eighteen that I was finally liberated sexually. My way always was only with boys. With them I discovered the full delights of sex. A year later I went to Paris to prepare for my diplomatic career. (People travelled less in those days; it was my first trip to Paris.) But the first year I didn't put my foot once in the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques. I was only interested in Parisian life – and only a Parisian life with homosexuals. I had several adventures. Not many, but several. But then I came to understand that I must cut this kind of relationship completely if I were to become a diplomat, because an inquiry was made not only into the family of the candidates in order to learn that they were honorable or at least with some means (in this time they wanted them to have a little money)

DWG: This would have been in the late 1920's?

PEYREFITTE: Exactly. I was a brilliant student and finished my studies in first place. I have my medal yet. [He goes to get it.] There, you see: "School of Political Science, Diplomatic Section, 1930: First Place, Roger Peyrefitte." – That has nothing to do with the gay question.

DWG: Yes, but it is very interesting because often in the States the gays are represented as men who –

PEYREFITTE: Yes, who are outlaws in studies! I was first in my high school in French, Latin, Greek, history. The last one in mathematics. I am closed to math. I was scarcely interested in natural history either. Very bad in geography because it was dry and uninteresting, at least as it was presented then. But very interested in history. I was fascinated by living questions.

DWG: Why did you choose a diplomatic career?

PEYREFITTE: It was a way to escape my family. My father was a bourgeois with a certain fortune. He made it himself; he was a self-made man. Sometimes he told me: "Had I gone to the States, I would have been a multimillionaire today." But he was a millionaire with many large holdings, a chain of shops, and so on. My mother was from a family of middle-class landlords. My father gave me complete freedom to choose my life. I was an only child, so naturally he was a bit sad that I was not interested in becoming a gentleman farmer. But he let me choose my own career. When I was sixteen or so, I had met a famous ambassador of this period, Jules Cambon, who was president of the Conference of Ambassadors charged with overseeing the application of the Treaty of Versailles. He was a member of the Académie Française. An important person. He had told me, "You are very curious. You would make a good diplomat." So, with this word and the prospect of his introduction (because in this time, almost fifty years ago, before things became more democratic, the diplomatic corps was an awful little aristocracy, and it was necessary that someone introduce you if you didn't come from a family of diplomats), I decided to pursue this career. He gave me his name, and it was a sort of visa.

DWG: When you found that your homosexuality presented a problem in following a diplomatic career –

PEYREFITTE: It would be absolutely impossible to go into a diplomatic career if you were only suspected of being gay. But fortunately I was totally unknown in Paris. My family was not Parisian, so when I had this year of pederasty there, no one at the Quai d'Orsay [i.e., the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] knew me. I had no scandal; I was not known to the police. And then I cut out this life immediately and completely and put myself into a sort of uniform.

DWG: That wasn't difficult for you?

PEYREFITTE: Very difficult. I was dedicated to masturbation! Then after I received my appointment I went to deluxe brothels and possessed the beauties of brothel bottoms. Only bottoms! [laughter] It was a mixed life, accommodation only. – I stayed two years in Paris in order to choose my diplomatic post. When you first pass the French diplomatic examination, you are rarely sent to a post of your own choosing. You are, of course, a beginner. So older colleagues had counselled me to stay in Paris; then I could request my post. I managed to be appointed to Athens. You see, already I had turned in the right direction! When I was in Athens – I told all this candidly in *Propos secrets* [and in a disguised way in *Diplomatic Diversions*] – I began the same pattern again. I went to the great brothel there, I asked the patron discreetly for a girl who could let me take her in a masculine way, and so on. But one night I had an adventure on the slopes of Lycabethus, the hill in the center of Athens in front of the Acropole. I was provided with a car and a chauffeur, but I was on foot, returning from a restaurant to my apartment near the top of the hill. At the corner of a street I passed an outside urinal. I saw a very beautiful young boy, perhaps eighteen years old. When he saw me, he went inside. I followed – and my life

was changed. Naturally I never returned to the brothel, not even to possess a girl like a boy! [laughter] I began in this way, and I had many adventures, good and evil. I stayed five years in Athens. I was delighted by the discovery not only of pederasty but of ancient Greece. I dreamed already of Alexander the Great and imagined writing a book about him some day. (So I did: fifty years later, beginning last year. The first of three volumes, on the youth of Alexander, appeared. It will be the foremost work on Alexander. No one has ever written the definitive study, not even your dear Mary Renault.) I was fond of the country. – I did have two or three little incidents there. I was robbed in my house, so I was obliged to lodge a complaint with the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Naturally they sent a discreet note to my chief, the ambassador. I did not know it at the time, but I learned it later. A second incident occurred while I was chargé d'affaires. My ambassador, the first secretary, and the consul general had all left, so I was given the post because I had been in Athens for more than four years and knew all the affairs. It was during these three months that I had this incident: in the First Circle of Athens (a kind of Jockey Club then) with a young page to whom I gave my hat and a cane which I carried at the time. I had several times attempted to get the page to come to my apartment; each time I was there I would say discreetly, "I am expecting you to come." But he refused. That day he was reluctant to come near me; and when I gave him my hat and cane, he let them drop. I slapped him, twice. But the reason this boy had refused to come to my house was because he was the special boy of an admiral, who was president of the Circle! So he felt that he was forced to refuse me. It was not the reluctance of virtue.

DWG: You were undoubtedly putting him in a difficult economic position.

PEYREFITTE: He complained to the admiral, who was furious. Now certain Greeks considered me to be pretentious. I had many friends in the ambience of Athens high society who adored me. They were on my side. But others detested me. I was known absolutely as a militant homosexual, completely liberated. I held my head high and couldn't have cared less about the world's opinion. Each Sunday I would traverse all of Athens in my chauffeured car with a youth on the seat beside me in order to visit the ruins and other monuments. I was naturally detested – then as now – by all the hypocritical homosexuals who were in the closet. All the old admirals and generals were pederasts and hated me because I was an open man living the life of a homosexual. Now I felt very strong after four years in Athens: I was the only one who knew all the affairs; and even with my little scandals, I didn't think they could get rid of me easily. Too I was protected by my chief of personnel in Paris, the Comte de Robien. But this admiral, protector of the Circle, immediately complained to the new French ambassador when he arrived in Athens. The new ambassador, who met me for the first time, was afraid to have as a secretary a scandalous man. He decided to send me back to Paris. So after almost five years there I returned to France. It was near the beginning of the War, in 1938. Thus, I was known at the Quai d'Orsay as a homosexual. In the report the new ambassador had sent in he had said: "Roger Peyrefitte has had, first, a scandal with a boy who robbed him; afterwards, he has been known in all Athens as a homosexual; thirdly, he has had a scandal in the First Circle of Athens, slapping a boy who said he received the slap not because he had dropped M. Peyrefitte's hat but because he had refused to go to his home; and so on; and so on." I was judged! M. de Robien gave me a little lecture; he said: "Naturally, you were imprudent. But we'll forget it, and you will go in a new direction." In reality I continued the same thing in Paris. As I have confessed in my notorious *Propos secrets* [and in *Diplomatic Conclusions*], I had two incidents with police at the time. I was found only with young boys. now it's nothing in France to be found with adults, youths of eighteen or older. But because I was with young boys of thirteen or fourteen, I had to go twice to a member of the Quai d'Orsay to ask for immunity from the police. I was then evacuated with the Quai d'Orsay to a place in Touraine near Tours in order to save the archives of my nation. I displayed great courage, staying under battle conditions, and I had a letter of praise from the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Vichy government. Afterwards I went to Vichy; and some days after my arrival I had another bad meeting with police because I had been found with a boy. I was called to my Ministry and told: "Either you resign, or you are fired." After the Resistance and all that the mentality of the French changed with the years. But, let me tell you, in 1940 all France was for Marshal Pétain. Everybody knows that. So when someone was run out of the government, one thought he was a Freemason, a Jew – some category which at this time, for very bad reasons in my eyes, was considered not honorable. So I resigned in order not to be put on the list of people boycotted by the Vichy government, and I returned to my family in the little town of Alet in the département of Aude, near Carcassonne. I am a Southerner, a Languedocien. My parents had a château there. I had to revenge myself and to forget all the ugly things that had happened to me: the police, the administration, and so on. So I wrote *Special Friendships*. In order to show these people with whom I had had so many problems – in Greece, in Paris, in Vichy; and with sharp words hurled by policemen (in Vichy a policeman had said, "It's because of men of your sort that we lost the war!") Ahhh. Stupid peasant! – to show these people exactly what kind of man I was and the beginning of the whole thing, I wrote this book. I wrote a masterpiece. – Yes, I think I can say that.

DWG: Had you already begun to write before this time?

PEYREFITTE: No, no. I had never written anything really. When I was eighteen I had known another member of the Académie Française, Henri de Régnier, who was a very great poet of that era (and who is still known as a poet). I had written a short story called *les Petits soupers de l'amour*, "The Little Suppers of Love." It was a sort of pastiche of 18th-century novels, because I was very fond of the spirit and style of that century.

DWG: Voltaire, Marivaux, Prévost . . .

PEYREFITTE: Exactly. I read this tale to M. de Régnier, and when I was finished, he said: "Yes, yes. It's good. But –" I understood at once that I did not yet have the wings I needed on my shoulders to fly to Parnassus's summit. So I renounced my first idea for a career, which had been to be a writer. I had been the first in my school in French studies, I had been a member of the school academy, and so forth – all the preparations, you see, for a boy who has literary aims. But I understood that I was not able to realize myself with my pen. So I prepared instead for a diplomatic career.

DWG: Do you think the diplomatic career helped you as a writer?

PEYREFITTE: Ah! It was a formidable preparation for the knowledge of society. When I came to Paris I was only a boy, a provincial who had hardly any knowledge of society. And there in my first year I fled from any contact with society into exclusively a homosexual ambience. Afterwards I knew only my fellow students. I began at the youngest age possible in the diplomatic corps. (You could present yourself three times at the examination, and many who passed did so only the second or even the third time. But I passed the first go, just at the age limit of 23.) Immediately you are in contact with ambassadors, with ministers; you are a delegate on ministerial commissions. And immediately you become acquainted with the upper levels of society. At first I naturally hid my homosexuality, but I recognized at once others who were like me – and who were also in the closet. It was a very good preparation for my future literary career. In Athens it was the same thing. I knew Mr. Venizelos, who was president of the Republic; later, I met with the King of Greece, George II. It was extraordinary for a boy of 25 or 26 to have these meetings, which obliged one to have a certain preparation in conversation, even in manners. – As everyone knows, there are two kinds of people. I don't say those who are aristocrats and those who are democrats; that would be ridiculous. But there are people who have aristocratic aspirations, and others who have a popular attitude. M. [Jean] Genet is an example of the latter. All that is a question of education, of one's first relations in life. If you are a boy on public welfare and educated in jails like M. Genet, naturally you cannot know certain kinds of manners. But when you are introduced into society, you have an edge on others. A boy who prepares a diplomatic career naturally can claim to know a certain class and its purpose. – I am a son of the 18th century. But note: it was an aristocratic century with very revolutionary advances. I am not of the Court of Versailles. I am interested in the philosophers, such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu. They are my people. They're no triumvir of the aristocratic system. But – What was the question? Ah yes, if the diplomatic career taught me something. I learned a lot with respect to that society I desired to enter. If I knew the other kind of society, it was through pederasty. I knew young masons, workers. I was very attracted to the lower classes.

DWG: So you knew the two extremes of society.

PEYREFITTE: Exactly. And I owe my knowledge of the lower classes to pederasty.

DWG: In your autobiography, *Propos secrets*, you wrote that you had never been attracted to the outlaw, unlike Genet and that large part of society which now seems to idolize the outlaw.

PEYREFITTE: To admire the outlaw. No, no, no.

DWG: Yet in a sense you were always an outlaw yourself.

PEYREFITTE: That's right. It's very curious, because I am an outlaw, but in the bosom of society. Because I like society; I am not its enemy. I am a little like Pietro Aretino [Italian satirist and literary blackmailer (1492-1556)], *flagellum principum*, the "scourge of princes," as he was called. A rather pretty expression, no? I'm a little like that. I live in society, and I like it. I would be very unhappy not to be surrounded by people of the world, for they please me. Not from snobbism. But because you perhaps meet among them better manners, a certain refinement, a certain breadth of mind, if you know how to present the matter.

DWG: Have you ever had doors closed to you because you are a homosexual?

PEYREFITTE: Absolutely. But the doors which remain open for me are sufficient.

DWG: Just last week, I think, you were at Monaco for the marriage [of Princess Caroline].

PEYREFITTE: Yes, it was very funny that I was invited to Monaco, and at the very moment I was publishing

l'Enfant de coeur, an open homosexual confession. It's fantastic. You see that I am a man who sometimes manages to consociate contraries. — Perhaps it was in *Paris Match* that you saw that I made the ball at Monaco?

DWG: No, I heard it on the radio. — Do you think perhaps French society is more open than American society?

PEYREFITTE: Ah, yes, I am sure of it. I knew the States eleven years ago, when I went there in order to write my book (still untranslated) *les Américains*. And, as I told you on the telephone, I return in August to Beverly Hills because I have an idea for another book about the States.

DWG: A novel? or a study?

PEYREFITTE: A novel. But only when I am free of my Alexander. At the end of this year I publish the second volume on Alexander, on his conquests. At the end of next year, the third and last, *Alexander le Grand*. Before next summer the second volume of *Propos secrets*.

DWG: I thought I had already seen the advertisements for he second volume of your autobiography.

PEYREFITTE: For *Propos secrets*? No.

DWG: You don't have a new book which has just come out?

PEYREFITTE: Yes, my study *l'Enfant de coeur*. Last week.

DWG: A new novel?

PEYREFITTE: No, it's a memoir, the continuation of a book which I published ten years ago called *Notre amour*, the confessions about a relationship I had with a young boy. After it was published I had a hearing with justice; the Juge d'Instruction asked me if it were true. Naturally I told him it was a work of fiction. They could not prove it one way or the other. But the father of a girl mixed in the story knew the whole affair, and he tried his best to cause trouble for me. He even went to see my cousin, Alain Peyrefitte [French statesman and member of the Académie Française, born 1925], who was at that time the Minister of National Education, and said to him: "You must see the Minister of Justice and demand legal sanctions. Because it is a true story; it is not a work of fiction!" My cousin dropped the matter. — I owe to this boy [Alain-Philippe Malagnac], whom I knew when he was twelve-and-a-half and who is yet at twenty-and-seven my friend, all my experience with homosexuality. As I said, I had been only a pederast. Like the ancient Greeks I could not have a physical relationship with a boy who had pubic hair. And certainly not [laughing and looking at the interviewer's beard] with someone who had facial hair. When I knew this boy, he was playing the part of — How do you translate "*enfant de choeur*?" The boy who serves mass at the altar in the Catholic church?

DWG: Altar-boy.

PEYREFITTE: He was playing the part of an altar-boy in the film made from *Special Friendships*. At twelve his mother had made him read the book, and he was struck as if by lightning, as I should have been had I been in his place. For him I was a god. Later he read in the newspapers that boys were being asked to play roles in the crowd scenes for the movie, and, in the hopes of meeting me, he applied for a part. As he was very pretty, he was taken. I met him the first day I went into a dormitory of the Abbey of Royaumont near Paris, where the film was so marvelously made. His eyes caught mine at once. Later I had a secret relationship with him through the intermediacy of a friend of mine taking part in the production of the film. I said to the boy: "I risk all my life this day: If you are able to attach yourself to me, you will be my friend for life." It was fantastic to say that to a young boy. I said to myself, "But perhaps after some years he may not please me. He will be hairy and all that." But in the seconds I pronounced these words I guessed that the possibility of love, even of pederastic love, could transcend a question of hairs and become a homosexual love for life! But it was very, very, very dangerous, and a show of great confidence in the future.

DWG: But it has lasted?

PEYREFITTE: Exactly. I recounted the whole story in *Notre amour*. It's really incredible that such a book has not been translated for two such pederastic countries as England and the United States. It's considered by all French readers as *the* book on the question. The story ended when the boy was eighteen. Because we met in Italy, in Capri, and we had a — He escaped me, and I thought it was finished. In order to console myself for this lost love, I wrote the book. And just as I finished it, I met him again; and the story began again. He is still alive, and it is still alive. When at nineteen he finished his studies, he became my secretary. More than a secretary. He was my friend. It's grotesque to use such a word [as "secretary"] with the main collaborator in my life. We worked together on three books. And together we followed the travels of Alexander the Great. When he was a boy, I had promised him that we would make the trip. And when in 1972 I finally decided to write the book, we went by car and airplane all the way from Athens to New Delhi. It was a fantastic time. But when we returned, I was closed up for a year and a half writing the first draft. He was lost, because he had nothing to give me. So he had the idea of creating a bar, rue Ste. Anne.

DWG: This was the Bronx?

PEYREFITTE: The Bronx and the Colony. Naturally I furnished the money. Later, he bought another near Paris. He did other things. He was Sylvie Vartan's producer. His photograph was in the newspapers, and it was said they were going to be married because Miss Vartan [a French singer] was so in love with him. Naturally it was all imaginary.

DWG: I heard that the Bronx was closed by the police for a while. What's the real story there?

PEYREFITTE: Yes, I described the whole thing in *l'Enfant de coeur*. It was closed one summer while we weren't here. The police arrived at two in the morning and surprised an American, who was masturbating in front of three or four clients, and it was considered an attack on the law. The law is grotesque. Grotesque! In a closed place before consenting adults, no minors. The stupidity of the law! It was closed for a month. Naturally all these affairs are dropped now, and they are in the terrible hands of justice, which enacts the ruin of someone when it takes over his affairs. There's at the Bronx now an awful, horrible little crook who was the ex-secretary of a friend of Alain's, kicked out for robbery. And he was named the temporary manager! We ignore the whole thing. I think in some months all those affairs will be cleared up. But now it is confused. And for me it was a tremendous loss of money. But what followed was worse. Alain was occupied in a myriad of activities. All that drops. And he tried to commit suicide. It was for me a horrible, awful experience. I felt the need to take up my pen again; for the writer consoles himself with his pen as the painter does with his brush and the composer with his violin or piano. So I wrote the story entitled *l'Enfant de coeur*. (There's a word play there. When it is pronounced one can understand either "*coeur*" or "*choeur*." So in French the title can be understood as either "The Child of My Heart" or as "The Altar-boy.") People have told me it's a masterpiece. I put all the strength of my love into it, this story no longer that of a young boy but of a man. Really, it's a hymn to homosexual love. The women in it have only walk-on roles. It's a very strong book. It should be appreciated very much. — So, you see, from my first book published in 1945, *Special Friendships*, to my last one, published last week, *l'Enfant de coeur* — and there are 25 books — there is not a one in which there is not at least an allusion to pederasty or to homosexuality. Even when I have written books like *The Knights of Malta*; even my book of travel, *South from Naples*; in my famous book *The Jews* — everyone of them has a chapter or an allusion to pederasty or homosexuality, because I cannot leave out that ambience. So I can really say, I think, "Everything gay is mine."

DWG: Almost every time you are introduced it is as the author of *Special Friendships*. Is it irritating to be always remembered for one book and the first one at that?

PEYREFITTE: No, not at all. Never had a writer published a book which had such a success. That narrowed the horizon a bit, but all is relative. In any case, I am still proud that a book which was published in 1945 has always the same large number of readers. That's extraordinary. For thirty years young boys, young girls, of fifteen years have always written me thanking me as they discover the book. That is a grand foundation.

DWG: The film also had a great success, no?

PEYREFITTE: Even in the United States. Apparently when it was shown at New York the entire audience cried at the end.

DWG: Would you like to say something about the situation of your books in America?

PEYREFITTE: In America it's curious. Because I have friends. I have fans. But I am ignored by the majority of the people there as you know. — You have been to the Echelle, rue Jacob? The nightclub?

DWG: No, I've never been there.

PEYREFITTE: The young man who is the manager was the manager of our Bronx. Naturally he left, and he opened up this new place. It's very nice, another Bronx and Colony. When he opened the bar some three or four months ago, I saw a young American sitting on a bar stool in the vagueness of the light. He sprang up, "Oh, Mr. Peyrefitte," and kissed me very beautifully; "you are a god for us!" "Yes," I said, "for a few of you. A few of you." He made me very happy. And you cannot imagine how many marvelous letters I have received from American readers. I realized for myself my importance some eleven or twelve years ago when I was in American for my book *les Américains*. I met writers on the East Coast, in New York. I was also in Los Angeles, San Francisco. I met two or three persons with the *Los Angeles Times*, which had wired me. I also had occasion to meet a Princeton professor, who told me that at Princeton at that time (I don't know if it's still true) they maliciously gave *Special Friendships* as a book for beginning French students. And when I was at Berkeley other French professors there told me that two or three of my books had been chosen to be put on tape for students. Everywhere there are students, professors — conformists or non-conformists — are obliged to mention my name among contemporary authors. But that is a very limited circle of readers. For example, I have a great fan, a professor of

Romance Languages at Lewis and Clarke College; he wrote me that he only has twenty students! All girls. It's tragic.

DWG: Quite typical I fear of language studies in the States.

PEYREFITTE: It's tragic. I am somewhat known through some translations of my books, but principally by French readers in the States, and they are very scarce. — For Frenchmen, you know, America is the country of the average, the mediocre.

DWG: As another Frenchman, Tocqueville, pointed out more than a hundred years ago.

PEYREFITTE: No, America is not an extreme. France either strives for perfection or accepts mere stupidity.

DWG: How many of your books are available in translation? Do you have any idea?

PEYREFITTE: Perhaps half. I think ten: *Special Friendships*; *The Exile of Capri*; *The Prince's Person*, a story of the 16th century, very funny, very bawdy, which I discovered in the Italian archives; six or seven others. But it's strange that a book like the *Tableaux de chasse, ou la Vie extraordinaire de Fernand Legros*, who is an American citizen, has not been translated. My publisher, however, has told me that the States are more and more uninterested in French literary productions. It's very curious. I was blocked at the beginning, of course, by an obvious reason. All the so-called American intelligentsia had two signs, two recommendations to follow: First, you had to be a Gallimard writer. Secondly, you had to be a leftist. I am neither one nor the other. Before the war Gallimard was the biggest publisher in all France (now he is only second), publisher of *la Revue Nouvelle Française* and possessor of all the literary world. In my book *Des Français*, published in 1970, I satirized this despotic revue, which admitted to its pages only those whom Gallimard had invented. Never did the editors write the name of an author who was not of Gallimard.

DWG: A sort of literary mafia.

PEYREFITTE: Exactly. The president of Gallimard was — What was his name? I don't remember. Very, very well known. A man who was professor at Princeton or Yale. We met. He admired my work greatly on a personal level, but not enough to promote my name.

DWG: This wasn't Faulkner's translator? Maurice Coindreau?

PEYREFITTE: Yes. Nobody was known in the States if he had not been introduced by Coindreau. He said, "You must not read that. You must translate this." And it was done. He was the dictator for Americans of the French literary scene. I wonder how I had any books at all translated in the States. And when my 1964 book *The Jews* was translated (with a certain success) a number of years later, the *New York Times* ran this review: "Roger Peyrefitte, right wing homosexual, etc., etc." I said: "I am judged! No one will be interested in me." Still, it's fantastic that one of the few books published by a French writer since World War II which is favorable to Americans, my *Américains*, has not yet found a translator. I pressed my editor; I said, "It's not possible." At last we found the reason. American publishers refused to touch the book because "Roger Peyrefitte is very unsympathetic with two of America's idols: John Kennedy and the Reverend Martin Luther King. Therefore, we can't consider him." It's fantastic that this country of freedom has such an aspect of mediocrity, of deficiency, of prejudice.

DWG: I've always thought that France was more free than America.

PEYREFITTE: You think so, yes? I think so too. Well, among all the post-War writers who were homosexual, all the celebrity in the States was concentrated on Genet. For two reasons: First, he was a Gallimard writer, so he was part of the arsenal. And secondly, because his very broad and very aggressive literature perhaps corresponded to the mood of a certain part of American readers. It is worth noting that Genet's glory is greater in the States than in France. Naturally, in France he had the fortune to be supported by Sartre, but he never had a real following among readers. I remember when I was at Berkeley, I saw Genet's books on the paperback stands under the heading "Sex and Crime." The reader buys the book. I was very amused when I saw in the *Who's Who in America*, among whose names the French are few, that Genet's has long been admitted. He was admitted to the French *Who's Who* only in the last edition! In 1976. He was ignored until then, but you found him in the American *Who's Who* at least ten years before that. It's very funny. I'll permit myself to say that I have been in the *Who's Who in England* from a very old time, twenty or thirty years ago, but I have never been listed in the *Who's Who in America*. I'm in the one for writers, but that is natural; it's not an honor. but the honor of being considered a man rather important in the world, as perhaps I am, is denied to me by the States. In the French, Italian, German newspapers I am very often quoted as one of the greater, more important living writers. But absolutely not in the States.

DWG: You did make all the newspapers there a year or two ago.

PEYREFITTE: The Pope.

DWG: Yes. Would you like to comment on that incident?

PEYREFITTE: It was very funny. I am the more well-known defender of homosexual rights in France. That is certain. Often they call me "The Pope of Homosexuality." That's because I am the author of *The Keys of St. Peter* and *the Knights of Malta*, the most important books by a contemporary writer on the Catholic Church. When the Pope, Paul VI, in February 1976 published a condemnation of three things — homosexuality, masturbation, and pre-marital sex — a review, *Lui*, came here to ask me my impressions. I was really indignant. Because I knew that the Pope (not while he was pope, of course, because he is a very old man with no private life of a certain kind, but when he was archbishop of Milan) had had a relationship with a young movie actor, whose name I knew. I did not learn this from communists or doormen. In spite of the boldness of my characteristic homosexuality for many years, in a society like the Italian one, as in France, I knew people who were really at the top of the state. So, when I was in Milan years and years ago, I knew many representatives of what is called *l'aristocratie noire*, the Black Aristocracy because of the color of church robes. It was originally of the Vatican. And they told me the story, because they knew I wouldn't make capital of the fact. I knew this man who would go to a discreet house to meet boys. (All the Italians are bi-sexual; they have a wife, daughters, but —) And Archbishop Montini went there. I asked about it again when I was in Rome in those years, and other people told me: "Yes, that is a political secret in a certain circle. The boy is very well known and is protected by the Pope." So I was indignant. And I gave this information, without saying the last name of the boy. [In *Propos secrets* Mr. Peyrefitte does say the boy's first name was Paul, and that it was for this reason the Pope took his name instead of more naturally using his own given name, Jean.] The weekly Italian newsmagazine *Tempo* republished the article with a caricature of the Pope, and it was like a nuclear bomb in Rome. Fantastic. The Vicar of Rome asking for prayers in all Italy for this injury done to the Holy Father. And on Palm Sunday one saw the Pope on his balcony at the Vatican reading his "*Delle cose orribili e calunniose...*" alluding to my statement. That was like a bomb in all the world. I had a friend who was living in Columbia, South America; he told me it was an entire page in Columbian papers. Everywhere in the world: "Peyrefitte and the Pope." I was moved because I had never imagined such a reaction. But I was also very proud, because it was the most fantastic consecration ever made to a writer for many years for some lines of his.

DWG: What is *les Américains* about exactly?

PEYREFITTE: I took for my hero a student at Berkeley in the years of the famous revolt there, 1965 or so, in order to show clearly what happened as a result in France in 1968. Naturally I didn't make him a homosexual, but he has a friend who is an unrestrained gay. So we do have a picture of the homosexual question as it was a decade ago in the States; gay problems are important to the novel. — Naturally I had visited Turkish baths in San Francisco and other places with friends. Ah! I am glad to pay homage through *Gay Sunshine* to one of my dearest American friends, whom I have lost sight of now for years but whom I met in Paris when he was living here: the underground filmmaker, Kenneth Anger. He is a very clever and bright man. Beautiful work. He introduced me to all San Francisco, even including the Devil's Church. His name is cited many times in my book. — My hero was the lover of a young girl who was also a student — but a black. Already it was an anti-racist book too. I say this because my book *The Jews* has been presented as a completely racist work. If a man from the right writes about the Jewish people, it's because "he's anti-semitic." It's incredible. I am not leftist. I am not rightist. I'm an independent man, and I think the freest in all France. — Let me make a parenthesis about M. Genet. I consider him to be a very good writer, but you understand he's my opposite. "Sex and Crime." I don't like it. Sex is good. Crime is too much. I am against crime. I am above all against violence. I hate violence! I love violence in love, in spirit, in beauty, but not in action. Such people are poor people; they are primitives. You must impose your ideas by the strength of spirit and not by arms and revolution. I am against that, even though I am a son of the century of the Revolution. So I deplore a man like Genet. I accept that he was a thief, a prisoner. But I cannot accept that he should befriend the Baader-Meinhof, the Red Brigade, Palestinians, Black Panthers. Everywhere there is a handful of madmen (who perhaps had generous ideas but have such reprehensible means of imposing them), there you find Genet, like some pope. It's really a pity. Naturally he lived in misery when he was young, but he must thank the society which admitted him, which gave him glory and the money to overcome this perpetual struggle. He's yet an outlaw only because he wants to remain one; he would be accepted. I don't want to give an interview against somebody, but I was very shocked when I saw in the *Gay Sunshine* interview [GS, no. 35] that he refused to acknowledge Cocteau's poetic gift. Cocteau was only a poet; his poetry is admirable. Genet could be grateful to Cocteau, because without him he would still be in jail. It was he, after the War, who got up the petition with Sartre and other writers to free Genet. Genet had been sentenced nineteen times to

prison; a twentieth sentence would have committed him for life. So they intervened. Rightfully. Had they asked me, I would have said the same. But there's no reason to forget this extraordinary service Cocteau rendered him.

DWG: Especially famous as he is now, he can afford to be generous.

PEYREFITTE: I couldn't believe it! I would have thought he would have said, "I can't forget what Cocteau did for me." He seems to have forgotten it. He seems to be the enemy of everybody, apart from Sartre and the Baader-Meinhof.

DWG: I believe you were very warm friends with Cocteau.

PEYREFITTE: When I wrote *Special Friendships*, I sent him a copy. I wrote, "With homage to the author of *les Enfants terribles*." He wrote me a letter thanking me for the book, saying it was "admirable and resembled nothing which had come before it." So we met. Naturally I deplored his entry into the Académie Française [in 1955] because it was a diminution. When I wrote to him, I said, "I congratulate you because you wanted to enter." He responded in a playful way, "As they don't have what we have, it's amusing for us to have what they have." Oh! [laughter] It didn't satisfy me sufficiently, and so our relationship became cooler. But it was very like Cocteau. He was a bourgeois like me, but I am less bourgeois than he was. The proof is that I'm not an Academician.

DWG: You never knew Gide?

PEYREFITTE: Yes, I met him twice. Immediately after the War, when he returned from Africa, a young friend of his made him read *Special Friendships*. He told me that Gide would like to meet me, so I went to his house. I felt no point of contact. I was surprised by his home. I am sensitive to my surroundings, and there was no taste, no decor: only books, as in a professor's office. You understand that I mean no insult. It's another thing, however, to be an artist. You can be a professor and an artist, of course. But Gide was only a professor. Only his books, a bust of him with a hat on it, an upright piano. I said, "This is no artist's place." I thought it was because it was after the War, but my friends said: "No, he was always like that." Because he was indifferent to his surroundings. Another time he came to my house to see my art objects and even photographs of the boys of Taormina, the photographs taken by the Baron von Gloeden, whom I discovered. — Yes! In my book, not translated into English, *les Amours singulières* I have two tales, and one of them is "le Baron de Gloeden." I was the first man in the world to study this man! A Harvard professor sent me his thesis on the Baron, and at the head of the bibliography he put *les Amours singulières*. Now his photographs are reproduced everywhere. — Gide wanted to see those photographs. I said, "But M. Gide, you went to Taormina fifty years before I did." He answered, "Yes, but never should I have dared to pass the door of Baron von Gloeden." There you have Gide, with all his complexes of the Protestant conscience. When Baron von Gloeden was alive, he didn't dare to visit him, but fifty years later he comes to my house to ask to see the photos! No, I had no point of contact with Gide. I considered him an august puppet. Of course, he was recognized; the Nobel Prize and all was reassuring. And he has become the image of the homosexual writer, but actually he hardly wrote on the subject: *Corydon*, *If It Die...*, *the Immoralist*.

DWG: How about Julien Green [French writer, born in 1900 of American parents in Paris]? Did you know him?

PEYREFITTE: I met him one time. I cannot like this kind of people with complexes. I am without complexes. All these Catholics who are always struggling with themselves, looking through the keyhole to see what is happening in the next room.

DWG: Yet you were for many years the friend of Henry de Montherlant's.

PEYREFITTE: Ah, that is another story. Montherlant was openly living a pederastic life. True, he never confessed it in words. That was another kind of hypocrisy. But he was a very important step in my life. When I returned from Greece, kicked out for pederasty, I was very glad to meet M. Montherlant. He was perhaps one of the greatest French writers of his time, and he had exactly the same tastes as I did. Years afterwards, when I had obtained full liberty with my pen, he too, like Cocteau, became an Academician [in 1960]. I felt obliged to separate from him, because I am a free man.

DWG: Just now the struggle for gay liberation is very important in the States. Does that exist in France?

PEYREFITTE: I was one of the founders of the review *Arcadie*. I published a number of articles in it. Then I interrupted my collaboration perhaps ten years ago, but now I have given them an article, a very comic, pederastic story which occurred in Palermo in the 17th century. I discovered it while I was in Italy. It's for their 300th issue celebrating their 25th year of existence. In France that's fantastic. *Arcadie* merits the gratitude of each homosexual. In this struggle for freedom I was the first fighter after the War with my unattackable book, *Special Friendships*, and I have continued for thirty years. It has come now to an

extraordinary conclusion. By decree in 1962 homosexuality was declared by Gaullist deputies one of the social plagues. The law was not applied. I attacked it in many books. We asked Arcadians to apply pressure. And now a radical senator from Toulouse, a city in which I studied briefly in the south of France, M. Caivallet, has very recently asked that the age of consent for sexual matters be dropped to fifteen years. It's fantastic. It was adopted unanimously by the Senate two weeks ago. By chance the press said nothing. Had it written up the bill, there would have been protests, moral leagues, leagues of mothers and fathers. It passed. Naturally it will be presented to the National Assembly when it reconvenes. Then we shall see. It is obvious that I am one of the authors of this open-mindedness on the subject in my country, and I am very proud of that. It is a greater glory for me than to be in the Académie Française like my cousin, the Keeper of Seals [i.e., Minister of Justice].

DWG: In all your books which I have read I have noted one theme common to them all. It's not the theme of homosexuality. It's the presence of an open and very honest nature, whether one likes that nature or not. It strikes me how much you are against hypocrisy in all your works.

PEYREFITTE: I am very pleased that you recognize this. It is my ideal to be a man who follows a right path, against hypocrisy. That is the idea in my *Propos*, not secret but public. I had another well known occasion to demonstrate this idiosyncrasy of mine when I published my open letter in 1964 to François Mauriac, the famous French Academician. It was during De Gaulle's time, and Mauriac was one of his men. Then he read the truth when I denounced Mauriac for covering up his earlier homosexual life when he had been a friend of a certain count, well known in French homosexual circles, who had presented him to society when he was twenty. It created a sensation in all France. I must stay a free man. It's the reason I cancelled my application to the Académie Française. I am characterized by a desperate taste for freedom, the complete love of love, and the hatred of hypocrisy. I say, and nobody denies it, that I am the freest man in France. Perhaps in the world. It would, maybe, be another reason to be at least a little known in the States, because your country is the defender of freedom. Perhaps the customs there are not so free as we imagine, but we are obliged to consider, free from political prejudice, that if we didn't have the States in the world, we would all have been occupied by the Russians. Naturally no more possibility of being oneself, of writing, of loving. I would have long ago been put in a psychiatric hospital.

Excerpts From *Propos Secrets* Paris: Albin Michel, 1977.

ABOUT HIMSELF:

As a matter of fact the subtitle of these "conversations" should be "Roger Peyrefitte, Witness to His Times." The form adopted, a very free one, has permitted me to go further than I could in most of my books, in which the historian of manners had to stand aside for the novelist, who must proceed by small touches in order not to over-balance the structure. If I speak here with more frankness than I ever have before, it is not out of love of scandal but out of a passion for the truth. I am not a scandalmonger, even less a destroyer of society. One of my friends [...] said to me one day, "You are an anarchist of the right." The phrase pleased me, but it is false. I admire the civil servants, who are the honor of the French administration. I hate all revolutionary movements. (pp. 7-8).

By what is called my "tattle" I try to help the advance of a cause, too often damned, which is dear to me: homosexuality. Therein our era exhibits a strange ignorance. We know, we admit that Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great were homosexuals. By what interdiction must we therefore draw a veil over the pederastic adventures of such and such a minister, of such and such a diplomat, or such and such a clergyman? No, I am not a lover of gossip. But I defend a cause. [...] You know Voltaire's statement: "One owes respect to the living, but to the dead, only the truth." But I am always a man of truth who extends the principle even to the living. (p. 8)

Homosexuals, whom society refuses to admit, except in rare situations, tend to live openly only at night. More than one will be killed before morning. Victims of rough trade, these youths and men would never have suffered this atrocity if the straights had not enclosed them in a circle of infamy. They are pushed there because it is difficult to have a homosexual love in plain day. It is in order to protect them and to restore them to their rightful place that I undertake my campaign of namesdropping ceaselessly. (p. 255)

Believe me, I never think about money when I choose the theme of one of my books. Desiring the largest audience possible, I simply try to find a subject which will interest the "grand public." Certainly, like everyone, I like money, but it is not from avarice, like Montherlant, or from a desire for power. Money creates a veritable aristocracy. It permits one to stand out from others (isn't that the desire of each one of us?), to indulge in a certain luxury, to fill one's life with objects of art, to embellish the life of the person one loves, to consider one's work not as an obligation but as a pleasure. Far be it from me to hoard money or to carouse it away: for twenty years I

have drunk only water. (p. 75)

Whatever their social status, provincials who rise above the masses become pretentious. [...] But] pederasty saved me. One cannot be (or at least cannot remain) pretentious while running after boys in the street. (p. 91)

ON LIFE AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

It goes without saying that if adultery was a frequent affair, the habits were strictly orthodox. [...] It was only with time that I discovered those of my colleagues who had the same tastes as I did, tastes which I then hid even to myself [...] The only homosexual whom I heard about when I began was a small fry: a chancery, a retired non-commissioned army officer. [My chief] told me about it. He had found him one day in a dark corner of his office on all fours with a janitor behind him. "What are you doing there?"

"We're picking up matches." They picked up their trousers instead.

But there were cock-sucking secretaries everywhere: they sucked from the cellar to the attic. An Embassy counsellor was found in my service. When I arrived, I was cautioned: "Always knock before entering his office." I quickly understood the reason. He would arrive around ten o'clock and call for his secretary, a beautiful blonde. If one were so imprudent as to enter without knocking, one found him opening his mail while she, crouched between his legs, opened something else. (pp. 86-87)

ON JEAN COCTEAU:

He lived in Rue Montpensier, Palais Royal, in a small, dark entresol apartment which he shared with Jean Marais. There were four rooms: a barely furnished living room, a large bedroom with two beds, a kitchen, and a bathroom so tiny two people could not use it at the same time.

Whenever I would go to dine with him, I always found four or five youths on the steps waiting to be admitted. I would ring. Madeleine would come to open the door and then would close it quickly behind me. Madeleine was the queen servant. It would have been impossible for me to stand her even a day. Not that she was unlikeable. On the contrary. But, overwhelmed at serving such a well-known man, she believed the apartment was the attraction of all France. The place would ring with her incessant *Mr. Cocteau's*. At the end of every sentence she uttered, "Yes, Mr. Cocteau. No, Mr. Cocteau. Mr. Cocteau, the hash is served." He had her awarded a medal of French Courteousness as a reward for the thousands of times she said "Mr. Cocteau."

He would come to receive me in a dressing gown. "Ah, it's you! Excuse me. I must see these youths. They're waiting, and I don't want to disappoint them. The first one," he would call out. Madeleine would open the door; one of the boys would enter. "Well, my child, how are you? Have you found work yet?"

"On your recommendation, Mr. Cocteau, I looked up Mr. Claude Farrère, but he wasn't able to help me." Cocteau's apartment had become a placement service for fairies. Each address given was pederastic.

The second boy arrived, a young actor. "Well, were you able to get a part? You did go see Hébertot?"

"Yes, but he couldn't offer me anything for the moment."

"Listen. Go see Jean Marchat and give him my name."

"I'll keep you posted."

"Right. Come back and see me."

The third arrived. Another young actor. "Go see Marcel Herrand." Or, "Go see Maurice Escande." The corner boys were directed to Genet; those who had problems with the police, to Olivier Béard du Désert, who was at the préfecture (and who rendered Genet great services, as I have recounted). The spectacle stupified me. Who would want to undertake such work, I would think. I could understand it with an André Baudry, who rendered the same sort of services as the head and guiding light of *Arcadie*. But for a man of genius, a creator ...!

He forgot his true mission and lived the life of a caricature. The boys would leave; we would go into the kitchen. A blackboard was fixed there with all his appointments written in chalk: "Lunch with Roger. 3 p.m., so and so. 4 p.m., so and so. Dinner at the British Embassy." Etc. Cocteau would give himself to everybody, even though one should flee the public or give them only the least bit of one's time. He should have avoided that mob of young men — who would gather also underneath my window if I didn't take precautions. As soon as a man writes about homosexuality, all the gay groupies, all the lost sheep, come to knock at his door. And I am sure that not a one, or at least hardly a one of Cocteau's visitors had read even a line of his. One had only to look at them to know that. They were merely going to a good address. [A friend] told me: "Everytime I see a certain type of boy walking confidently down the street, he tells me he's going to Cocteau's." It was the same for Gide with all the young Arabs in Algiers.

In love Cocteau, like me, had the same tastes as Gide and Montherlant. He refused nothing and refused himself nothing. His sexuality was that of the true artist who feels intensely that which he creates. He said to me, "People take us for pigs. How can they understand that an obscene design arrives of its own volition?" But I don't think he often had a strong sexual drive: the proof is his persistent desire for opium. (He was never cured, no matter what he wrote.) All drug addicts are people with a deficient sexuality, even if in the beginning the drug helps intensify sex. Drugs, like food, take away virility. I shall never be a drug addict: I hold too dear to what heaven has given me.

The groupies are not the only ones who desire to meet a

writer. There are admirers also, passionate readers — in brief, one's true public. But the writer should be in-accessible! I answer letters, but I receive no one. I have no need for fans. My old concierge would say to youths who had unearthed my address and wanted to see me, "You must run to the Parc des Princes; he's there." And if by chance someone unexpected knocks at my door, I telephone the concierge: "Put him out." The writer must be deliberately unsociable; otherwise, he is eaten alive by persons of no interest who prevent his writing. But as a secret complement to the books written for the public — and in which for all that I have put so many of my secrets — I have had and I still have delightful correspondences with chosen people, of one or the other sex, whom I have never met.

Still, Cocteau was not taken in by his visitors. One day we were eating in the kitchen. Seated on the floor, Jean Bouillet, a minor illustrator who had undertaken several books, read to us one of his texts. We scarcely bothered to listen. When he had left, his eyes shining at having passed an hour in our company, though he hadn't had even the honor of joining us at the table, Cocteau said to me, "You see, all those — they're only old queens." (pp. 152-154)

ON JEAN GENET:

I was one of the first to read Mr. Genet's works. Almost certainly I would never have discovered him had not one of my friends mentioned him to me. This was Anne de Biéville-Noyant [...], who was one of the pillars of the Café de Flore and les Deux-Magots. He was known by everyone and knew everyone who frequented that high place of developing existentialism. I was working on *Special Friendships* when he spoke of Genet for the first time: "It might amuse you to read the work of a gay, an old legionnaire sentenced by justice (for the theft of some books), whom Cocteau and Sartre are trying to get out of jail. He has so many sentences that he will be committed for life." And he gave me the first manuscript in circulation of *Our Lady of Flowers*, which he had had from Genet himself. I couldn't finish it. You understand, that excessive writing is the antipathy of *Special Friendships*. I like only refined writing. That shows a certain level of education which Genet never acquired — though we can't reproach him for that. In the *Who's Who in France*, to which he has just been admitted — justly (there're enough unknowns of every stripe in it!) — he recalls his early life: "Student on Public Welfare." That alone speaks highly of what he has managed to become. I don't deny his literary gifts, but the results don't interest me (I set apart, as with Cocteau, his poetry — *The Condemned to Death* — which I read at the same time and which I admired). His universe is not mine. Except for Frances Carto's charming *Jesus the Quail* I have never been responsive to the criminal's world, the psychology of cut-throats and rough trade. In saying that I'm not trying to give myself airs: I have known many very refined men who liked rough trade.

In the same way Genet's erotic film left me indifferent. There's only one poetic idea: two prisoners who communicate by blowing cigarette smoke through a crack in the wall. Of course, the warden is in love with one of them, spies on him through the keyhole, and, when he can't stand it any longer, opens the door and beats him with his belt. One sequence surprised me for an erotic film: a black dances nude in the prison, but he doesn't even have an erection! Genet wanted to write his *Blood of a Poet*. Instead, he filmed "Blubber of a Prison." (pp. 163-164)

Genet's real discoverer was Cocteau, who was always on the look-out for newcomers. He told me about their first meeting: "Someone rang at the door. Madeleine wasn't there. I see this guy, with the head of a jailbird, and he hands me a manuscript: 'Read it. It's tremendous.'"

"Whose is it?"

"Mine. I'll come back in a week to get your comments." I leafed through the manuscript," continued Cocteau, "and, like you, I found the story lacking in interest. A week later he returned: 'Well, what do you think of it?'"

"Yes, it has something, an attempt" Without saying a word he looked at me in such a way that I felt guilty not having given it more attention. It wasn't just disappointment and contempt which he showed. It was a look of such intensity that all at once I believed in him. I admitted the truth: 'I read your manuscript a bit too hastily. Come back in a week.' And I realized that it was indeed tremendous."

A bourgeois always in search of bad boys [...] Cocteau had now found the great bad boy of literature. At once Genet was a sacred genius, his image reinforced by the opinion of Sartre, who discovered the gay world at the same time. [...] Though totally lacking in talent, Papillon later benefitted also from society's perpetual infatuation with outlaws — with the difference that while Genet had Cocteau, Papillon had only Revel.

When Cocteau was elected to the Académie Française there occurred an incident which shows clearly to what a state Cocteau had fallen before Genet's personality. He decided to mention him in his acceptance speech. You know that all such addresses are screened by a committee. One member, who was not an old dotard among the members of that august assembly, jumped when he saw the name and demanded that it not be pronounced under the dome. Cocteau invited Genet to the ceremony anyway: one saw him parade to the first row of the audience and sit beside the Queen of Belgium (Cocteau, the nonconformist, was also a member of the Académie de Belgique), who held tight to her jewels. (p. 165)

I met him once. [One of my friends] in the course of a meal said to me: "I have a rendez-vous with Genet this afternoon at three, at the Moulin Rouge. He would like to meet you. I didn't want to bring him here because I know he's not your type; but wouldn't you like to go with me to

see him?" We went to the Moulin Rouge. We looked for Genet. Not in sight. Finally we found him, perched on a wall overlooking the celebrated pissotière — since removed — at the Place Clichy. [My friend] introduced us. I shook hands with a man with a shaven head, resembling that of some runaway slave, and with brilliant blue eyes, filled with a vague sadness.

"I came on down here," he told us, "because I have a meeting with a guy at 3:30 in the tea-room." Looking at me, he went on: "I've read your *Special Friendships*. The setting, the masses, all that is good. When someone gave me your book, I didn't know anything about you. While reading it, I said, 'Hmmm, I am going to have a friend. This is the work of a defrocked priest.'" I burst out laughing. "Sorry. I'm only a recalled diplomat."

The meeting lasted five minutes. I have never laid eyes on him again. What news I heard of him, I had through Cocteau. Some time afterwards Genet fell for a race driver who, thanks to Béard du Désert, then a member of the cabinet of [...] the Minister of Industry, got his gas tax-free. Thus Genet benefitted indirectly from the favors of the Fifth Republic just as he had escaped prison through the indulgence of the Fourth. The race driver married, had a child, bought a home on the Riviera. Genet followed him there. Cocteau commiserated with him in his own ironical way: "He gives the child his bath, takes him for walks on the beach, builds him sand castles. He doesn't write anymore; he doesn't steal anymore."

Genet's demons soon repossessed him. I recalled in *Des Français* that in May 1968 he went with others to occupy the headquarters of French employers. It was as bizarre a gesture as the invasion of the headquarters of the writers' union by a commando of writers. All these people lowered themselves to the level of the riffraff.

At the moment Genet has taken off somewhere, along with other desperados, to fight the cause of the Palestinians or the Chilians. He has refound his first impulses. Cocteau, who thought he had tamed him, would be astonished. Yet his development seems logical to me. Like Sartre he has always remained faithful to certain ideas about himself, society, and justice. Without being sympathetic with him, I still must at bottom admire him more than these hypocrites or those dotards of the Académie Française. In a country of reptiles and chameleons, people with a backbone are rare.

But for all his having treated the subject with force and with talent, Genet has never advanced the gay cause, any more than Montherlant did. Excess in anything is a fault. He will remain a literary curiosity who, I think, will discourage readers. If I have dwelled upon his life, it is, as with Montherlant, to make better known what is always most important: mankind. (pp. 169-170)

ON HENRY DE MONTHERLANT:

At that time [the end of 1937] I was exploring the pederastic map of Paris. There existed then gathering points for boys called "kermesses." In these places the streetboys would gang together, attracted by pinball machines and other games. Everytime I would go to one — generally in the early afternoon — I would have success (and arrive late at the Quai d'Orsay). One day I went to the "Kermess" Clichy. And who did I see, chasing after a boy? Mr. Montherlant. I approached him: "Monsieur de Montherlant." He flinched and changed color. "Roger Peyrefitte, attaché d'ambassade." He at once began breathing again. "I would be happy," I told him, "to chat with you," etc. We left together.

Thus we came to know each other in flagrante delicto — or nearly so. I told Montherlant how I had learned about him. "It's fantastic," he answered. "Only three persons in the world know that I am a pederast." Those three were Gide, whom he had met in North Africa while chasing Arab boys, a waiter who served as his tout, and [a friend of a friend of mine]. (pp. 48-49)

Montherlant [...] generally picked up boys at movie theaters. He had his technique down pat. He would buy two tickets. Then when he saw a boy looking at the posters, he would approach: "I'm waiting for my nephew, but he hasn't showed up. I'm going on in. Would you like to take his place?"

"Yessir, I would."

When he couldn't land a boy, he would line up behind one and follow him inside the theater. He had several comical misadventures, which he told me about with much humor. For example: "I saw this boy lining up, the kind I like — modest appearance, well formed in his superb white shorts. I quickly got behind him, crossed my hands in front of me, and without appearing to began caressing his beautiful behind end. Hardly had I touched him than I was smothered by a cloud of gas! I let it disperse and renewed my attempt: a second wave of gas! The third time my neighbors, overcome, began to turn around. I persevered. On my fourth caress, followed instantly by a fourth fart, people became furious and the boy blushed. But stoic and possessed with "that calmness shown by French armies," he stood his ground. Fearful of suffocating, I gave up mine, put to rout by a concierge's son stuffed with beans!" [...] There's a story which you won't find in Mr. Montherlant's *Notebooks* and which he himself finished by saying, "It was the first time I met a boy with such a self-defense."

That story reminds me of another which René d'Uckermann, then an editor at Flammarion's, told me. During the German occupation he had invited Montherlant to dinner at his home on Rue du Cherche-Midi. A little while before the blackout began, the two parted. D'Uckermann, standing at his door, watched Montherlant walk down the deserted street. Believing that he was unobserved, our Renaissance gentleman let go brusquely with a series of farts which sounded like the burst of a machine-gun. [...]

A woman who was coming from the Rue Ferrandi let out a cry and fled, sure that the Germans were firing in the street. Admit that the story is funny and adds a bit of personal comedy to his drama.

Let us speak of that drama. In *Des Français* (as Lionel de Beauséant) and in *Tableaux de chasse* I sketched in his problems with the police. He had them constantly, until one could no longer count his appearances before the commissaires in the company of a young, sniveling beggar boy: "The man put his hand in my fly." Montherlant had prepared his share of excuses. His name already served him well: often he had only to identify himself in order to be released. If that didn't work, he pretended that he had been searching for young actors for his plays. That was hunting in rather low places! During the war he attempted to hide behind a charity of which he was a member, "Aid for French Children in the Occupied Zone," which sent children to Switzerland in order to escape the strictures of rationing. As soon as he was elected to the Académie Française he was freed more easily: his title made him a State personage. But even before his election he used a wife which I admired. He would present himself to the commissaire of police and murmur, "Henry de Montherlant, award for fiction by the Académie Française." While saying this he made sure the part "award for fiction" was inaudible, so that his listener heard only "Henry de Montherlant . . . of the Académie Française." The commissaire would stand up respectfully and accompany the illustrious (and fake) academician to the door. Montherlant would say to me the next day, "Well, it worked one more time." (pp. 51-53)

GAY SUNSHINE NO 42/42 SPRING 1980

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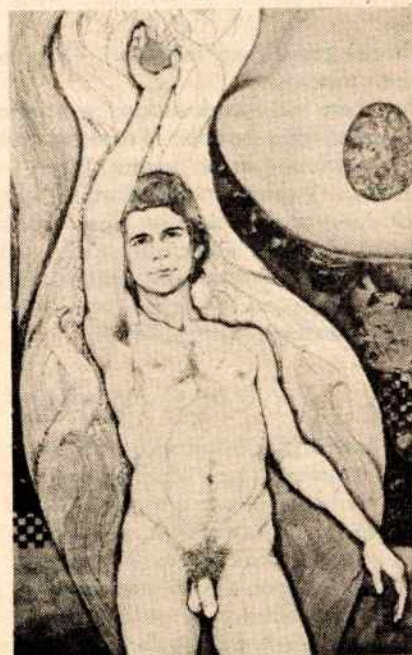
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POEMS BY DINOS CHRISTIANOPOULOS

Translated from the Greek by Kimon Friar

Dinos Christianopoulos was born in Thessaloniki (Greece) in 1931, the son of Yannis and Persephone Dhimitriou. In 1945 the poet adopted the pseudonym Christianopoulos ("Son of Christ"). He worked as a librarian and proof-reader. In 1958 he founded the literary periodical *Diagonal* which he has been publishing for periods of five years with respites of two years; and in 1962 he began publishing books. Dinos Christianopoulos has spent his entire life in Thessaloniki, visiting few places in mainland Greece or the islands, and visiting Athens primarily to give readings of his poetry. He has enclosed himself in his own self-contained universe.

The poems printed here are taken from his various books. *Gay Sunshine* publishes them for the first time in English from an unpublished booklength manuscript of the poet's work, translated by Kimon Friar.

THE CENTURION CORNELIUS

Lord, do not wonder at my great faith;
it is love that dictates my faith.
I do not beseech you for Nikítas or for Harílaos,
nor for Nikólaos who died too young to become bored with prayer.
Only make Andónios well, Andónios;
when he was young and a free man
he also concerned himself with letters and the arts;
he was conversant with ancient Greek and loved to play the accordion.
But now he is my slave — do not ask me how.
I have the power to bind him or release him.
I can do with him whatever I please;
I can even set him free, though this for me would be most painful;
besides, he works efficiently with his great vigor.
For these reasons, Lord, and for many others,
make Andónios well, slave of your slave.
If need be, I can even turn Christian.
Only make him well, this is all I ask of you, nothing else.
Anything else I might dare ask of you would be immoral.

1950
from *Season of the Lean Cows* (1950-51)

See Luke, 7:1-10, where it is told how Jesus healed the servant of a centurion "who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die." The poet has given the arbitrary names Cornelius and Andonios to centurion and servant respectively. See also Matthew 8:5-13. — trans.

INCIDENT IN ATHENS

It was a one-story house, with a garden,
and the room was warm; the radio
was playing a sweet, soft music.
We drank cherry brandy, he showed me photographs.
Then, looking at my muddy army boots
and my rumpled uniform,
"You're a mess," he said. "Permit me
to look after you."
He took my duffle-coat and rubbed out the spots
with a rag and a little benzine;
he took my clothes and smoothed them out
with his small electric iron;
he took my army boots and polished them with care.
And I watched with what delicacy
he arranged my khaki shirt,
with what care he cleaned my boot tops.
I didn't thank him, but only asked him
brusquely, when the moment came: "What do you pay?"
He bit his lips, treated me once more,
and then discreetly opened the door for me.
Denial is the worst of all, I thought then.

1951
from *Season of the Lean Cows* (1950-1951)

take off your uniform
take off your army boots
love wants us naked

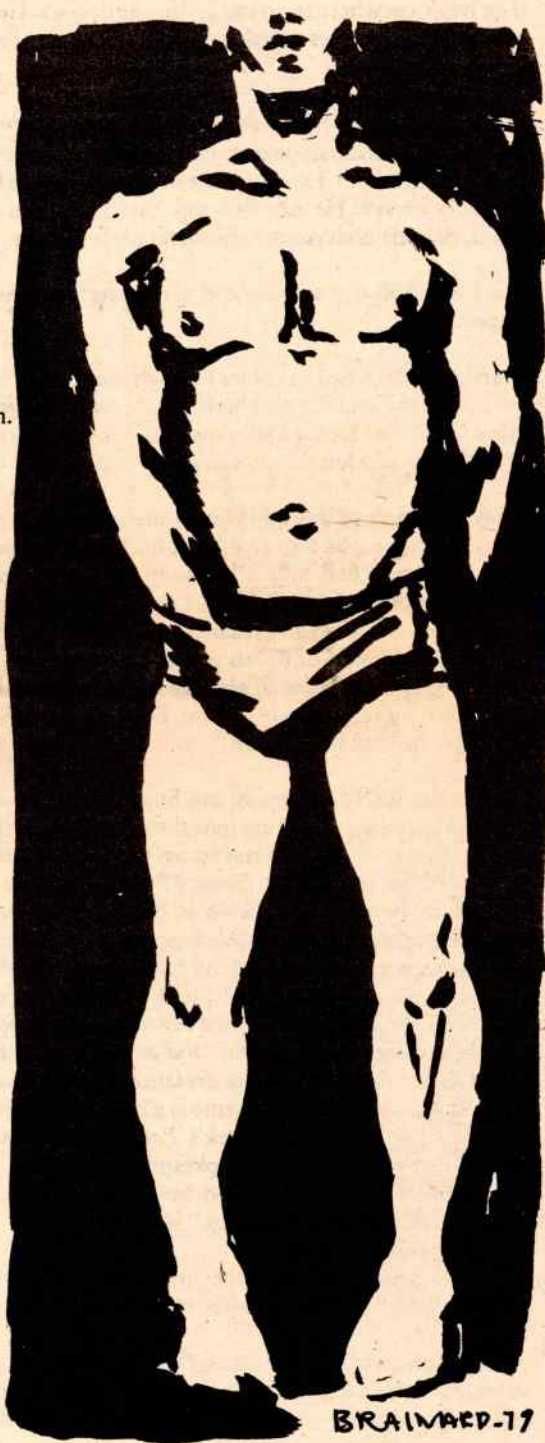
what a peaceful creature you are without your uniform
how human your feet without their boots —
they smell, of course, but the smell is yours
whereas your boots smell of slaughter

1969
from *Body and Remorse* (1960-1972)

put out the light, you keep insisting
i recalled another love of mine
he wanted everything brilliantly lit

i don't know which I prefer —
in the darkness my ugliness disappears
in the light your beauty glows

1970
from *Body and Remorse* (1960-1972)



YOU OPEN AND CLOSE LIKE A FLOWER

You open and close like a flower.
I come — and you receive me, numb,
you keep your eyes constantly lowered,
but afterwards, little by little, you take courage,
begin to speak tenderly,
color your eyes with gaiety,
Oh how heart-warming has the room become;
I don't want any sweets — your conversation suffices.

But if I forget myself and glance at my watch
or show any concern for the world's work,
you let the conversation slowly drift away
and start to grow numb again, little by little,
bid me goodbye, as though I were a stranger,
and then you close, close up like a flower.

1957
from *Cross-Eyed* (1949-1970)

"ALMOND TREES"

This place was once called "Almond Trees."
I was in time to see them. The place was filled with fragrance.
Periwinkles teemed, and a small river
carried down dry chaff from the threshing floors.

We used to come here at night for a body.

One by one the almond trees were all cut down. One by one
small houses sprouted in their place.
We were the first to inaugurate them. Our love
was given shape amid the scaffolding and the cement.

Not even one almond tree has remained.
The place has filled up with shops and apartment buildings.
They gobbled down one more place for love in the country.

1965
from *Suburbs* (1963-1970)

you are the first to offer me love
your proposal throws me into confusion
i feel inadequate for so much tenderness
until now i beat my head from wall to wall
i'd become accustomed to begging for crumbs

call it masochism, call it whatever you wish
i feel inadequate for so much tenderness

1962
from *Body and Remorse* (1960-1972)

MAKING LOVE

Let me lick your hands, let me lick your feet.
Love gains with surrender.

I don't know what making love means to you;
it's not only a wetting of lips,
a planting of embraces in the armpits,
a confusion of complaints,
a consolation of spasms.

It's above all a confirmation of our loneliness
when we attempt to roost in a body difficult to inhabit.

1959
from *Defenseless Craving* (1955-1962)

tonight Main Street has once more worn me to a frazzle
with its lack of trade,
beauty no longer swarms
in the town square —
something has changed
the hustling in Athens has reached here too
all who have not left for Germany come high
the tariff has soared
gone are the times when we cruised without a penny
even playing hard to catch

i must find another Main Street

1962
from *Body and Remorse* (1960-1972)

In the Greek, the street is Engatía, the main thoroughfare of Thessaloniki. — trans.

THE SPLINTER

The night they killed Lambrákis
I was returning from a date.
"What's happened?" someone on the bus asked.
No one knew. We saw policemen
but could make out nothing more.

Three years went by. Once more I fell
into the same indifference about political matters.
But that particular night disturbed me
like an imperceptible splinter that won't come out:
some clubbed down for their ideals,
others roaring about on their tricycles,
and I mindlessly running off to make love in the meadows.

1962
from *Cross-Eyed* (1949-1970)

The poem refers to an actual historical event: the assassination in Thessaloniki, Greece, of the left-wing Parliamentary Deputy, Dr. Gregory Lambrákis on May 22, 1963. The incident was documented in the book and film Z.

GAYFARING

A Short Story

by

Eric Sklepowich

11:30 pm summer night. Eugene pulls himself from old man Goriot's garret room and puts the book down on the table. The glitter of his own Beauséant ball tempts him from his vigil at the old father's side. Music instead of a death rattle. And in the place of Goriot's rough and dirty bedclothes the softness of silk. Whenas in silks his Julian goes...

In Balzac's Paris the poorer you are the higher up you live until you die of consumption under the roof in a room you cannot stand up in. In Eugene's New York your floor increases with your income. At about twenty thousand you are able to leave the filth and the noise. By opening his living room window, stretching and twisting with care, Eugene can see part of the Queensboro Bridge, a brief string of beads between two other buildings.

11:30 pm summer night. Eugene pulls himself from old man Goriot's garret room and puts the book down on the table. Perhaps a drink before the elevator drops him to the street and he joins the ball (party, revel, frolic, dance, caper, romp). Somewhere.

Eugene writes: For the...

He opens the door. Tallulah Bankhead, Marilyn Monroe, Sylvia Miles, Marlene Dietrich, Barbra Streisand, Bette Midler, Edith Sitwell, Carol Channing, Bette Davis, Gertrude Stein, Greta Garbo, Janis Joplin, Billie Holiday, Judy Garland, Peggy Lee, Ethel Merman, Joan Crawford, Mae West, and Kate Hepburn crowd in the hall for his *soirée noire*. They eat Italian olives, black pudding, caviar, pumpnickel, Chinese mushrooms, plums and chocolates and drink coffee, dark wines, and cordials. Everyone is dressed in black. Davis and Crawford have on the same dress, but Davis wears it most of the evening. At midnight he shows *The Big Sleep*. When the party is over, he hands each of them a black carnation. They say good-night but forget to call him Monsieur le Duc.

Eugene never ventures far from his apartment and can always or almost always be found in a lounging position. He watches a lot of television and spoons in chocolate ice cream, beaten to a soft consistency. Eugene is always or almost always at his desk, thinking and typing. He is very prolific. The sheets of his novel (story, essay, review, journal) pile up precariously, concealed with towels from the eyes of his friends. Eugene is always or almost always out and about, running errands, visiting friends, going to restaurants and galleries and museums and plays and films. He is a true master at doing the social.

They meet during their lunch hour at Tiffany's. They buy matching rings. The woman smiles as they put them on each other's fingers. "Good luck," she says. They can tell she means it.

It is neither romance nor naturalism. Men neither caress prodigious members nor suck big cocks. He doesn't now what it is, but he continues to write. He clearly has problems.

In the apartment across from his the guy does not pull down his shade and Eugene sits at his darkened window and watches him undress. He has a slim body with natural, well-developed musculature. He strips down to his briefs and starts to do exercises. Push-ups, sit-ups, knee-bends, toe-touches, knee-raises, arm-circles, stationary runs, semi-squat jumps. Eugene starts to play with himself, licking the sweat from the guy's hairless body, turning his ass to him. The guy has a big basket.

The guy takes his basket, filled with what seem to be many tiny tulips, and puts it on the window-sill. He waves to Eugene. Eugene waves back. Sit-ups. The guy has trouble because he is so fat.

In the apartment across from his there live a cowboy, a GI, a construction worker, a telephone lineman, and a mounted policeman. Sometimes they change into each other's clothes and Eugene becomes confused. A few times he sees one of them wearing a bra and panties, garters and stockings. He pays them visits on cold winter days and they all roll on the floor together. They slap him, tie him down, blindfold him, gag him, hold his legs spread for hours, bite him, twist and clip his nipples, piss on him, squeeze his cock and balls, use his navel for an ashtray. No one wears anything except his appropriate hat which somehow never comes off. Eugene, however, wears no hat. They joke about his hatless head whenever they meet him in the street.

Almost every day it is the same. He sees the cowboy, the GI, the construction worker, the lineman, and the mounted policeman from a distance of thirty feet. He is tortured by not ever getting closer to them. He never even passes them in the street. He wishes he could touch them some cold afternoon.

Eugene writes: For the last...

Ralph. Sir Ralph, he calls him. Sir Ralph is fifty-five years old and has gray hair in his crotch but he treats Eugene well. He pays for the apartment and never comes over unless he calls first. He doesn't care if Eugene fucks other men. Sometimes he watches. Afterwards he says, "You should have sucked his cock longer" and "Why didn't you let him rim you?"

The poor old man is dying. And Eugene knows he must attend. The music plays somewhere, everywhere but where he is. He returns to the dead air of the garret. 11:30 pm summer night.

He enjoys being by himself. He reads and writes letters and watches TV or listens to the radio, puts his ear to the wall and hears arguments and love-making, goes out to dinner with Proust (the last volume), gets a single seat at the last minute to a Broadway hit, moves at his own pace through Matisse and Calder and Rembrandt, takes solitary walks through the park and cruises carelessly, knowing he wants to go home alone, spends hours in bookstores. He walks as if he has somewhere to go even when he doesn't. He walks in a way that makes couples envious of his freedom and independence.

He is slipped behind enemy lines. He infiltrates cabinet meetings and cocktail parties. He speaks not only the language but the idiom. His whole life has prepared him for this stunning career. He has so many medals he can hardly move. No one understands the secret of his success.

The long shrill city screams and never sleeps. Neither does Eugene.

Marsha smiles when he comes through the door. "Here, let me take that," and she puts his briefcase on the chrome and glass table. She hands him a martini. "Little Eugene said Da-Da after you left this morning."

With no Dorian Gray portrait in the attic, he is exactly what he seems. His face wrinkled, his hair gray and thinning, his teeth dull and a bit worn down, his big toes starting to turn outward. But his mind is sharp, his spirit strong, his expectations realistic, with accomplishments behind him instead of debris and accomplishments yet to come. He lights candles to obscure saints for never having been given his brief time in the sun. Every altar would blaze if he had the time and money.

There's the sound of gunfire but Eugenio isn't afraid. He knows the *polizia* are firing into the air. He holds his sign higher. Everyone starts to run across the piazza toward the palace. As he passes the statues of the Gemini, he looks around to be sure that Paolo is behind him. He isn't. Eugenio makes the mistake of stopping for a few seconds and the men and women behind fall on him. Blood pours from his nose. Is it broken? His leg feels strange. Is it smashed? He is gradually buried beneath falling people and abandoned signs and banners. *Via anale contro capitale. Lotta dura contra natura. Piu devianze, Meno gravidanza. Siamo belli, Siamo tanti.* Eugenio is a hero. His picture and his story are in the next week's *Panorama*. He is interviewed by everyone. He is a spokesman for *i diversi*. When he walks down the street and hears, "Culattonne," "invertito," "Finocchio," "Malato," he smiles.

"But of course you're from the provinces, *mon cher*. They begin at the bridges and tunnels. How silly of you."

He lives so that no one knows for sure if he is gay or straight. Someone always seems to ask him at cocktail parties or in movie lines, "Are you gay or straight?" He refuses to answer questions like that.

Eugene's mother screams. Snooky Lansen is starting to sing. Eugene wants to hear "Green Door" but his mother screams again and he goes to his parent's bedroom. His father is lying in a pool of blood. His mother is not screaming now. Eugene can hear the crickets outside the window. The sound of waves.

Eugene is very hairy. He has to shave two times a day if he wants to look neat and has hair on his shoulders and back. It grows in irregular patterns. He thinks it is masculine and it turns him on to look at himself in the mirror. Most of the guys he goes to bed with spend long minutes admiring his hair, twirling it in their fingers. He wishes he lived somewhere where he could keep his shirt unbuttoned all the time.

Eugene screams in anguish. He tries to turn his head around, but he can't. Before the next blow comes he wonders why tenderness and trust can survive only in pain.

Eugene writes: For the last forty...

Sybil must be about ninety-one. She admits to seventy but Eugene knows that she fell in love with a young cavalryman during the Boer War. He goes to her desk and opens the bottom drawer. It squeaks but not loudly enough to wake her from a winey sleep. The paper is as dry as the skin she covers with rouge, the once-pink ribbon now as faded as her cheeks. "My darling Sibil [sic], Yours forever, Leonard," and in between the sweetmeat of a love letter. Eugene knows it all by heart, this one and all the others. They give him his script with Sybil, phrases, feelings, endearments. "*Déjà vu*," she always whispers, and then goes off to put on more rouge. He gets the same reaction from her in New York, Palm Springs, Paris, Monte Carlo, Gstaad, Rio and Capri.

His lover David is gentle and lets him do whatever he wants. He is tender and loving and is the one to clean the house and keep the refrigerator and pantries stocked and the wastepaper baskets clean. He cooks him veal cordon bleu and beef stroganoff and for breakfast pancakes and sausage. David is faithful even though he is good-looking. He cannot bear to be away from David and will re-arrange his schedule so that they can be together as often as possible. He wants him to change his name to Davad but won't tell him why.

The week after he tells his father Eugene is lying on the beach, his eyes closed, half in a daze, his cock semi-swollen from the sun and his thoughts. He feels someone standing over him, the feel of a shadow. Shielding his eyes from the sun, he looks up and sees his father in the small blue bathing suit they all make fun of but which Eugene thinks looks great. He admires his father and flatters himself that he will look like him when he is his age. Eugene does not say anything and neither does Daddy. Eugene stares at Daddy's face, then not wanting to but tempted and giving in, he looks at Daddy's crotch. And keeps looking at Daddy's crotch. All this happens the week before he tells his father.

Lean hungry and handsome young man. Smooth body. Wants same. Also long-term relationship. Eugene. Box 3217.

People sometimes forget what he looks like. Before he arrives at a dinner party, the hostess tries to remember what he looks like. She can only remember that he has "hair-colored hair" and that it is thinning. He never does anything that anyone remembers the next day. What people most remember about him is that he is so easy to forget. Over coffee and liqueur they are likely to say, "You remember that guy Eugene? The one who is so easy to forget?" They all nod and sip.

A scream and a shot. Eugene runs to the bedroom. His mother is lying in a pool of blood. Crickets, etc.

Eugene sits in the classroom. Why is he wearing a tie? He listens and writes in his notebook. "The titles of two books tell the whole story of the nineteenth century. *Great Expectations*. *Illusions perdues*." Eugene writes in his notebook. Why is he wearing a tie?

Eugene is abused by his lover's tenderness. There are invisible bruises all over his body, scars on his mind and emotions. "Why am I in such pain," Eugene asks himself as his lover kisses him good-night.

"He has Marsha's nose, most definitely. But he does have your eyes, Eugene. And perhaps your chin. Yes, I think he does have your chin. The devil's cleft, as I always say. But those ears are none other than your poor dead father's, God rest his soul." His mother continues the dismemberment as she holds little Eugene.

He is the darling of the bars. Lovers of a week break into tears when he tells them he never wants to see them again. On any one night he can cause serious tremors in the firmest of relationships by barely smiling. When he dances, he seems a still point in the motion around him. As he studies himself in the mirrors, his glance intercepts those of others piercing his image. Occasionally an older man asks him if he has ever considered fashion modeling and holds out vague promises. Other men's lovers, always the more handsome and sexy of the couples, pass him notes that, unopened, spoil the slim lines of his slacks. He periodically flushes them down the toilet, ignoring the men who have followed him. On the crowded dance floor the men around him touch his ass, his thighs, his chest. Even the darkness cannot conceal that these are the most desirable men of all. He stays until closing and never leaves alone. On one particular night he meets David, nobody's darling, who passes him no notes, succumbs to no tremors, sheds no tears. They leave shortly after midnight and are never seen in the bars again.

Eugene writes: For the last forty years...

A police interrogation. They slap Eugene's face, first on one side, then the other. He confesses: "Brother. Sister. Father. Mother. Husband. Wife. Uncle. Aunt." They think he is being perverse, as Nicholson did Dunaway in *Chinatown*.

Sybil's limousine waits while they buy cases of caviar at Zabars. It cruises noiselessly as they peer out of the window at the men and boys walking slowly along Central Park West.

Eugene, the saint of profane love. His image is worshipped in rooms on Christopher and Castro. For he knows the secret of love. Pain, jealousy, suspicion, separation, humiliation, inadequacy, without these love disappears or assumes a form no one recognizes, no one wants to know. He is ingenious at finding ways for David to be away from him for not only hours, but days, even weeks. And from early in the morning, after his second or third coffee, he sits and creates scenarios of betrayal. David sucks someone's cock kneeling on dirty tiles. David fucking someone tall and tanned in the Rambles. Sometimes as simple as these. At other times they are elaborate, intricate, baroque, for he pours more energy into creating them than he does into a full day's work at the typewriter. And when David returns he hopes he smells or kisses or fucks differently. Or has a new opinion or a different taste in wines. It is like meeting him all over again and he interrogates him on his tricks, wanting all the details. Tears, pain, rejection. Love.

Eugene writes: For the last forty years the . . .

Marsha turns around slowly. Her dress, what there is of it, makes a gentle breeze. "What do you think? Will old man Mason of Mason and Mason pop his cork or will he pop his cork?" Later that evening old man Mason pops his cork.

He lives in a society where it doesn't matter whether he is gay or straight. He lives in a town where they beat up faggots, dykes, and queers. He lives in a world where the straights are criminals. He lives in the world as it is and he lives as what he is. He lives . . .

Eugene is famous for being famous. No longer does he "do" anything, and everyone, including himself, has forgotten what it was that he had once "done" so well. He is a celebrity. He goes on talk shows and leaves early, he is slipped out the back doors at fashionable discos, his name appears in gossip columns, and with an exhilarating defiance of the laws of science *Variety* has him flying from New York to L.A. at the same time Liz Smith says she sees him tête-a-tête with Capote at Elaine's.

A scream and a shot. His mother and father run into his bedroom. Eugene is lying in a pool of blood. Snooky Lansen, "Green Door," crickets, etc.

Eugene is lying on the beach. Casablanca, noon. His eyes are closed, he is in a daze, his cock semi-swollen from the sun and his thoughts. He feels someone standing over him, the feel of a shadow. Shielding his eyes from the sun, he looks up and sees the young boy who must have followed him from the cafe. Brown, smooth skin, gypsy hair and eyes, a round little ass. He kisses the boy's thigh and puts his hand inside the leg of his shorts. The skin there is cool. He pulls down the shorts and takes his cock into his mouth. It tastes salty. Eugene closes his eyes. The boy looks down on him.

Eugene scissors out the last paragraph. He reads it again. He glues it into his scrapbook.

"Burning with a hard gemlike flame, his mind so pure it is never violated by an idea, Eugene (who steadfastly refuses to release his last name to a clamoring public) might have to choose soon between the muzzle of a pistol and the foot of the Cross. For, of the devil's party without knowing it, he describes every streak of the tulip without once forgetting that his true domain is in the country of the blue. On every page of this blest nouvelle Eugene appears to be saying, 'I eat my cake and have it too.'"

They carry the old father down all those stairs. Then: Two mourners and a few empty carriages to follow the coffin to its pauper's grave. The fate of fathers.

Eugene writes: For the last forty years the elderly . . .

He rides his bicycle over the one hundred and twenty-six bridges of the city.

Forsythia, lilies of the valley, irises, hollyhocks, violets, snapdragons, jacks-in-the-pulpit, daffodils, pompoms, tiger-lilies, queen anne's lace, crocuses, lilacs, apple blossoms, water lilies. These are the flowers he remembers. He buys others at the stand, but never these.

His lover Mark is mean and mean-spirited. And physically ugly. He hits Eugene many times, even when Eugene feels he does not deserve it. He brings friends home and forces him to have sex with them, pushing Eugene's head deeper onto the shaft of their cocks. Sometimes he locks the bedroom door and fucks them himself, but tells Eugene to look through the keyhole and play with himself. He embarrasses Eugene at parties by telling everyone their most intimate secrets all of which make Eugene look the fool. He never gives any money for the rent and never does any work around the apartment. If he doesn't like the meal Eugene cooks, he leaves for a restaurant with Eugene's wallet. Eugene eats the meal by himself and wishes his Mark to return soon. As he spoons his soup, he tries not to think of what Mark is doing, of who he is with. He wants him only to come back. He wonders if there has ever been anyone as much in love as he.

He is renowned for his asceticism. He retires to a monastery in Germany and takes the name of Brother Sebastian. He cuts his hair very short and spends the rest of his life

studying Aquinas. He is happy to have his life like a book with *Nihil obstat*, *Imprimi potest*, and *Imprimatur* stamped chastely on it.

A shot interrupts the third bar of "Paper Roses." Red stains the white of her dress. Eugene escapes into the crowd.

From the pier Eugene follows the handsome young man in khaki shorts through Soho, Little Italy, Chinatown, and Wall Street. They seem to be walking forever on this hot August night. Where is he going, Eugene wonders, Staten Island? But the young man stops at an excavated lot near City Hall and turns to confront Eugene directly for the first time. He begins to smile and then looks down at his leg. He screams. He is being attacked by a pack of rats. One is attached to his leg. Eugene goes to help him, pulling off his light summer jacket to chase them away. More appear. Eugene runs off to dial 911. When the police arrive, there are even more rats. But the young man is gone. Eugene returns to the pier.

He shakes the dust of the cities from him forever. He takes to the open road. He is healthy and free. His comrade, passive, receptive, silent, looks like the young Walt. Eugene gives him his hand and speaks the words he thinks about speaking all the time: I give you my love more precious than money. Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?

Eugene writes: For the last forty years the elderly Mrs. Wratishaw . . .

First, Saturday's Generation where he buys more shirts than Gatsby dumped on the bed. Bathing trunks, hooded jackets, slacks, jeans, raincoats, sweaters, T-shirts. Next, the first floor: suits, overcoats, shoes, slippers, ties, jewelry, sunglasses, belts, socks, satchels, after shaves, soaps, stationery, paper weights, scarves, *objets*, games. Seven young boys, like the dwarfs in the fairy tale, trail behind him with packages. He still has many miles of aisles to go before he sleeps.

Eugene makes an important decision. His epitaph. The same one that Balzac gives his Goriot. Good and kind man/Never said one word louder than another/Bothered nobody/Never did any harm. He has a feeling he will not need it for a long time but he is happy the decision is made.

He says to his friends: "Find the very heaviest things you can and put them on me. Rocks. Chains. Big wooden frames. Sculptures. Massive jewelry and headdresses. *The Summa Theologica*. Byzantine crosses. Brocaded clothes. Anything you can find. It doesn't matter what it is. But it has to be heavy."

Eugene rises slowly above his building, above his neighborhood, above the city itself, and hangs suspended there for an unmeasured moment. Beneath him the city spreads out between the two rivers. Lights sparkle everywhere. Empty carriages move soundlessly past the Plaza and into the Park. He finds no one place to fix his gaze. He continues to rise upward.

For the last forty years the elderly Mrs. Wratishaw, *née* Hassler, has kept a special boarding-house in the Village where airy young men can fall to earth like wounded birds and rest before their next long flight.

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THE RIGHT TO JOY

One of the unalienable human rights many of us gays have gone without — is the right of joy. Because so many of us have internalized society's general failure to understand us, because we often have unconsciously accepted society's contempt, we have tried to fill our spiritual need for real joy — as have so many nongays — with kicks only, with fragmented physical pleasures, without the wholeness of serenity and real joy that we are potentially as capable of as any other human beings. Spontaneous physical love-making — sex — is not evil in itself. When it becomes a way of life, a substitute for profound, intense, and long-range relationship, having sex begins to diminish our lives. Just as those who have dinned it into our heads that our bodies are unworthy and that only our souls have meaning — have made us guilty and one-sided, or hypocritical, so now many of us have swung to the opposite extreme — so that our bodies and body-pleasures take all the focus and energy of our lives, until our spiritual aspects become neglected and arid. We conspire with those who despise us (and, often, despise themselves) — by accepting their judgment: that we are half-creatures, that cocks and ejaculations are enough to live by, that since we usually won't have or get children, we will settle for sex.

I don't mean to put down sex. I rejoice in the sharing of human bodies, in the meeting of eyes that warm to each other's closeness and beauty and realness. I *am* saying that constant and relentless sex and *obsession with sex at the expense of meaningful relationships* — actually can be anti-sexual: it drives sex toward becoming increasingly desperate and unfulfilling.

It can be hard spiritual work to learn to love myself in a society which tells me I am shit, which would defeat me with competition, with diversions that have nothing to do with real *me*, with standards that won't let me find my own uniqueness, but it can be joyous fulfilling effort once I accept my own real value, my ability to grow, my capacity for learning to commune with Reality, with other human beings, with my own many-sided self, once I know that, while I might not get children, every human interchange can generate life and meaning and hope and joy, and that I can choose!

It is in aware and creative relating that sex comes into its joyful dimension. When we no longer see each other as objects only, when we do not live more for gratification than for sharing, when we begin to experience our individual uniqueness as *growing* and our love as an unfolding experience that fosters our individual personhood — then everything we share, from shopping to hiking to bed, becomes a thrilling revelation, a deep quiet assurance and communion. As we begin to know, in our own individual selves, that we are worthy because we are human, when we do not have to score to know that we are valuable persons, our lives become enriched. More and more, we have something vital and inspiring to bring to the sharing of our bodies and the growing of our love.

Even when we live alone (as I am now, though I have lived thru much scoring and several wonderful love-relationships), we can wait without feeling wasted when we feel our inner lives continuing to grow. We do not have to look for some outward cause or specific religion: we can find our own ways of relating to a Living Universe, to Nature, to each other. For myself, I *see* God as That Integrating Force at the Center of Reality, and I *experience* God as that Brother-Sister which embraces my wholeness from within and without at the same time.

But even an intellectual atheist can know joy: joy grows at the root of real, growing closeness with another person and in the discovery that all the ranges of one's own self are good and to be loved and respected, that passion and inner 'darkness' and wild fantasies are all dynamic ingredients of the larger Universal Balance in every one of us.

I cannot harange anyone into happiness and won't try. I will say strongly, *You are worthy, you're my Brother, my Sister, and I need for you to be whole and joyful, so that we can grow and share more intensely in a healthier world together.*

Reality, nature — inside us, outside us — does not care much for, nor waits upon, our labels and approvals. Reality works by subtle and elemental processes. We can cut thru the negative forces that drive us to be less than we're capable of, need to discover the resonances at the heart of life in each of us that can bring us to joyful, courageous self-belief.

Heroism has gone out of much of our friendship. We are more concerned with 'gettings ours' than with *being our own real selves*. We don't need to 'get' what we already potentially *are*. The whole Universe works infinitely in every single one of us. When those rhythms come awake between two or more of us, joy is present in resonant vibrations. No one can abort or steal that Livingness from us, that Presence from among us, if we are aware.

Be, Brothers, Sisters. Be your own real selves. Don't let anyone, especially yourselves, deny you of your own potential joy. *It was never not at the center of your being*, waiting to be nourished and known.

— Will Inman

ISHERWOOD & HIS GURU

E. M. Forster: A Life, by P. N. Furbank, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1978. \$19.95, hardcover.

Christopher Isherwood: A Critical Biography, by Brian Finney, Oxford University Press, New York, 1979. \$13.95, hardcover.

reviewed by David Chura

It is easy to imagine E. M. Forster delighting, if not seeing some significance, in the fact that his own biography and that of his young friend and devotee, Christopher Isherwood, were published within less than a year of each other, what with his sense of vague mysticism, "genius loci" and the continual interplay that he so strongly felt between the dead and the living.

These two writers, separated by a generation and the First World War, united by their sexual temperaments and a strong affection, move in and out of each other's life stories like ghosts on mutual haunts of each other's houses. But there is an inequality about this migration of souls: Furbank's *E. M. Forster* is expansive, vital and structurally sound; people can and do live in his anecdotal rooms, nooks and crannies, including Forster himself, because there is warmth and air to breathe; Finney's *Christopher Isherwood* is ponderous and pretentious, more an iron lung than a habitat for its subject with all air perversely pumped out instead of into it.

Perhaps the reason that Finney's biography fails so is answered in the book's subtitle, "A Critical Biography." This is not to say that all critical or literary approaches to a writer's life are failures per se. Furbank himself integrates Forster's works into his storytelling as does that master of biography, Leon Edel in his life of Henry James. It is this, the telling of a story, that is lacking – Finney is completely disinterested in "telling" about the man's life and art; rather he analyzes along the worst lines of literary scholarship. His pages of explication are as oppressive as the stereotypic reading rooms of the old university libraries. Or better yet he dissects the two specimens – life and that life's resultant literature – like a pathologist (even though his "subject" isn't dead); he separates the various systems from each other, examines and classifies the vital organs; delicate brain cells are spliced, viewed and interpreted while even the genitals are discreetly measured and evaluated. After such an analysis Finney fails to pull all the pieces together into a functioning whole, leaving the reader with the disparate and unrelated parts.

And not to be missed is the irony that this lifeless biography should come out of the history of a writer who has spent his literary career exploring the relationship of fact to fiction, shaping the ways of storytelling from the data of life.

One of Finney's major concerns is with Isherwood as a homosexual writer, as well it should be. However, it is while discussing Isherwood's gayness that the biographer is at his most clinical, and like most clinicians is intolerant of ambiguity or of those seeming contradictions of life, especially of life as once set down by a writer. In *Kathleen and Frank*, for example, Isherwood's own biography of his family, he writes about the formative importance that seeing his father exercise naked had on his sexuality. Finney maintains that this memory sheds more light on Isherwood's "penchant for mythologising his life as a homosexual" than on himself as a child because he claims in the later *Christopher and His Kind* that his gayness was more a deliberate choice, one of rebellion, than the result of any biological condition. Why does Finney see this as a contradiction or even as significant? And why, one finds oneself asking as one reads this biography, does he spend so much of his time tracking Isherwood through his various writings, trying to trip him up on what he has said here and there regarding his sexuality? Isherwood himself wrote to Edward Upton, one of his oldest friends that rereading his 1945-53 journals had gotten him interested in "sexual memoirs – an attempt . . . to explore one's personal sexual mythology and identify one's sexual archetypes." However, Finney offers little significant insight into Isherwood's mytho-poetics and ends up saying more about his own defensive attitude in the presence of a writer comfortably certain of his sexuality.

On the other hand Furbank's book is a more accessible biography; it does not reject literary scholarship but rather easily blends fact and literary theory; it is a life history that rolls along like the gently tilting countryside Forster loved, empty of obtrusive road signs – those markers placed to alert the traveler (and reader) of impending and important interchanges.

The first volume (1879-1914) is a bit tortuous at times dealing as it does with the more adolescent struggles of Forster's first 35 years. Furbank documents the early "sexual drama" (refreshing, not to stumble over the word "trauma") of his subject: the young Morgan at eleven is invited to play with a stranger's penis on the downs and does, an event that when innocently related to his mother caused untold embarrassment for the boy; his guilty delight in masturbating; his attraction to but physical isolation from his male friends. Pulling from Forster's unpublished letters and journals, Furbank lovingly, if not at times condescendingly, tells of the pain that Forster experienced because of his ambivalence centering around his gayness. Forster's own words on this are poignant: in one journal entry he writes that while lunching at the Bath Club he suddenly realizes that just under his feet on the floor below is the swimming pool with its near naked attendant and young male swimmers, straining, exercising. An intoxicat-

ing realization! However, guilt is capable of clearing his head quickly, as he later writes that no matter how "gross my desires, I find I shall never satisfy them for fear of annoying others."

A measure of freedom comes in volume II (1914-1970) as Forster travels to Alexandria and India and in travelling escapes the deadly vise of English virtue. Without judgement – those moral braces that a biographer can clamp on the easy movements of his or her subject – Furbank details Forster's unfolding: his growing reputation as a spokesperson for humanism and his growing ease with himself as a gay man capable of satisfying sexual relationships. Also Forster became an intimate of the gay literary circle which included such people as J. R. Ackerley, W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender and of course, Christopher Isherwood.

Despite the uneven quality between the two biographies, one thing that stands out in both works is how significant a figure Forster was to Isherwood. In terms of their feelings about their sexual orientation, they could not have been further apart: Forster, although sexually involved with men, always seemed to be slightly uncomfortable with the lusty side of affection and protected to his death his public image as a scholarly bachelor; whereas Isherwood thoroughly enjoyed himself and never hid his homosexuality either in his private life or in his novels (even his earlier books touch on gayness, if only lightly).

What then has enabled Isherwood, born of a generation that automatically distrusted their elders as responsible for the Great War, to claim as his "absolute guru" a man 25 years his senior, whom modern Gay Liberationists Hodges and Hutter have called "Closet Queen of the Century" in their pamphlet *With Downcast Gays*?

As one might expect there are similarities and differences in these two Englishmen born of the same class. Both lost their fathers at an early age, Forster's to disease, Isherwood's to the Great War, thus leaving them under the tutelage of women; their mothers were domineering and played important roles in their lives. Forster was ruled by his mother for many years, remaining protective of and devoted to her (once when Ackerley chided Forster for hiding his gayness, commenting to him, "After all, Gide has come clean," Forster answered back, "But Gide hasn't got a mother."); Isherwood on the other hand spent much of his early adult life reacting against the stern dictates of his mother and unlike Forster, he made no secret of his love for men from his mother, writing in *Kathleen and Frank*, "When he [Isherwood] defiantly told her that he was homosexual, she didn't seem at all upset . . . she simply didn't believe that a relationship without a woman in it could be serious. . . ." They both hated the British public school system, seeing it as an institution that sought deadly conformity and, as Forster wrote, led to the "underdeveloped heart." The strictures of Christianity had been rejected by both, Forster for agnosticism and a mystical humanism, Isherwood for Hinduism. Isherwood travelled, particularly to Berlin, as he stated in the 1973 *Gay Sunshine* interview, in order "to be away from all the restraints that England represented – above all to feel completely free sexually . . ."; likewise it wasn't until Forster left England and travelled to Alexandria that he had his first real affair with another man, an Egyptian conductor, which he wrote made him "feel a grown man." When it came to a choice of sexual partners both shared a liking for working class boys, a penchant which Jeffrey Weeks states in his book *Coming Out*, an overview of British homosexual politics, emphasizes further that desire to escape the stifling morality of the English middle class.

However, Forster's first importance to Isherwood was as a literary mentor. In his first autobiographical book, *Lions and Shadows*, Isherwood has his school chum, Chamlers (Upward in real life) proclaim after reading *Howards End* (1910) that Forster is "the only one who understands what the modern novel ought to be." He then goes on to talk about Forster's tea-tabling writing technique: ". . . instead of trying to screw all his scenes to the highest pitch, he tones them down until they sound like mothers'-meeting gossip. . . ." This informality of approach was a lodestar for Isherwood in his own writing. In an interview with Finney, Isherwood stated that "the most revolutionary sentences to a working novelist" were the opening lines of *Howards End*, which plunge the reader into the life of its characters. "This was dynamite: it was much more [so] than the first time we wrote 'fuck.'" Isherwood adapted Forster's "vernacular style" and ironic tone and like all good heirs to a tradition modified and sharpened it over the years to best suit his own times and content.

Ironically, the closer each came to, and the more comfortable each became with, his homosexual identity the further apart they moved as writers. Furbank suggests that after publication of *A Passage to India* Forster stopped writing because of his increased ease with his sexuality, quoting him as saying that he "grew bored with writing about marriage and the relations between men and women." On the other hand Isherwood's developing sense of his homosexuality and its relationship to his spiritual, social and political selves, caused him to use gayness more and more openly as a theme in his novels. Also as the narrators of his books became more consciously "Christopher Isherwood," they became more explicitly homosexual.

Yet is is not just literary kinship which lead Isherwood to make such extravagant claims for Forster's influence over his life. Quite simply, it was the type of person Forster was and the philosophy that he lived by that held such appeal. Although not as influenced by the thought of G. E. Moore as his friends in Bloomsbury, Forster believed along with them that the only important concern in anyone's life should be that of personal relationships. Out of this concern grew his socialism (based on his friend and mentor,

Edward Carpenter), his pacifism and his passion for loyalty to friends above all else. Here was an older man who did not preach the necessity of power, violent heroics and chauvinism to those younger men left untested by the Great War due to their age. Instead, his message was a simple one, one that is echoed throughout all his novels but which is so beautifully put forward in *Howards End*, "Only connect." No conquering here, only surrender.

This seemingly facile but resounding theme had a great impact on Isherwood who presents in *Lions and Shadows* the obsession he and his schoolmates had with being "men," an obsession reinforced by everyone around them. He writes that the "truly strong man" is "calm, balanced, aware of his strength . . . it is not necessary for him to try and prove to himself that he is not afraid" while the "truly weak man" rushes into "the Test," whether it be battle, business or marriage, with expanded chest, terrified that other men will question his prowess. Forster would have none of this forced masculinity and thus offered the younger generation a different, more human definition of manliness, a definition that debunked any emphasis on gender. When in 1938 Isherwood wrote to Forster about his impending trip with W. H. Auden to China ostensibly to report on the Sino-Japanese War, saying that he saw it as an opportunity to test his male mettle, Forster wrote back, "Bother the Test – am so certain that I shall fail mine that I can't think about it. . . I only hope I shan't let anyone down badly: that thought does precise itself rather alarmingly." The only real test is loyalty to and love of people. *Journey to a War*, Isherwood and Auden's subsequent book, is dedicated to Forster and is ruled by that Forsterian concern with the personal. Auden writes that as apolitical as Forster appeared, he was remarkably "committed." The book closes with a sonnet written by Auden that speaks of all three writers' concern with humanity's capacity to love, "Ruffle the perfect manners of the frozen heart/And once again compel it to be awkward and alive."

Like all significant people in Isherwood's life, Forster appears in one of his novels. He is given further philosophical preeminence in the Waldemar section of *Down There On a Visit*. Like all Londoners at the time Christopher, the narrator, is tense and distraught with the news of the Munich Crisis. Confronted with the horrible and meaningless rule of Hitler, he finds an answer to such seemingly universal insanity in his older friend "E. M.": "my 'England' is E. M.; the antiheroic hero . . . he advises us to live as if we were immortal. And he really does this himself, although he is as anxious and afraid as any of us, and never for an instant pretends not to be." His strength lies in admitting all those feelings that men have been raised to loath like leprosy (or like homosexuality) – tenderness, fear, powerlessness, vulnerability. After lunching with E. M., Christopher writes in his diary, "He's strong because he doesn't try to be stiff-lipped stoic like the rest of us. . . . He lives by love, not by will." And he sees no shame in describing his mentor as silly: "his silliness is beautiful because it expresses love. . . . We need E. M.'s silliness more than ever now. It gives courage." Forster is a disciple of the heart and thus an enemy of patriarchy and machismo.

Forster entrusted to Isherwood the manuscript of his 1913 homosexual novel, *Maurice*, to read and hold the rights to after his death. In *Christopher and His Kind* Isherwood describes with feelings close to religious awe what this privilege and inheritance meant to him. For years he had looked up to Forster as his Master; now the Master sought his opinion – genius suddenly uncertain. To Christopher *Maurice* was "both inferior and superior" to Forster's other novels. As a work of art, it was inferior, but it was superior "because of its purer passion, its franker declaration of its author's faith." For Isherwood Forster's writing of the novel when he did – before the world was wrenched from its Victorian hypocritical restraints by the Great War – was first and foremost a courageous human act: "the wonder of the novel was that it had been written when it had been written; the wonder was Forster himself, imprisoned within the jungle of pre-war prejudice, putting these unthinkable thoughts into words."

These last words are a clue as to how Isherwood could be so admiring and in turn so inspired by a writer who was as every bit as homosexual as he himself was but who cordoned off that part of his life from public view as though it were the scene of a crime. Isherwood was quite familiar with the stifling pre-World War I world of his elders in which Forster had lived the first 34 years of his life; the currents of his own rebellion against it had to run very strong in order for him to break free. Forster's meek and self-effacing personality had been bent too far askew under the weight of Victorian guilt and social propriety to let him slip through that latticed gate of respectability and publicly champion the cause that was closest to him, homosexual love.

Although not necessarily referring to Forster who died in 1970, Isherwood stated, in answer to a question put to him in a March 1977 *Christopher Street* interview, "Do you feel that gay writers should come out?" that "...everybody has a different duty. It's all a question of who you are, what obligations you have, whom you would hurt by doing so, etc., etc. . . ." This respect for individual differences is far from moral lassitude for Isherwood has made no secret of his gayness and has become very outspoken about homosexuality in the '70s. However, despite Forster's inadequate public stance it was the person that he was and his philosophy of love (among other influences) that gave Isherwood the courage to be lover of men in all the various meanings of that beautiful and potent phrase, and to proclaim it loudly. Isherwood is willing to forgive the shortcomings of his friend (so well aware as he is of his own as witnessed in *Christopher and His Kind*) and like Forster, is unwilling to betray friendship for the country of correct views.



CHARLES WARREN STODDARD: GAY IDYLS OF THE SOUTH SEAS

"We have killed the fatted calf," began the poet Lucius Harwood Foote, former Ambassador to Korea, as he looked out on the 150 members and guests who had gathered together to dine at the Bohemian Club in San Francisco on Thursday night, April 13, 1905. "And are glad to welcome back," he went on, "the prodigal son to the haunts of his youth."

An evening full of the most unutterable ironies, Henry James must have thought, perhaps wondering why he had ever condescended to attend this maudlin dinner at which he was now being upstaged. Here he was, all the way from England, one of the most distinguished writers in the world. And seated nearby was Enrico Caruso, who was almost as famous as he was. But who were these provincial buffoons honoring with their fatted calf and fulsome speeches? Why, a second-rate so-called writer named Charles Warren Stoddard who was, in lifting his wineglass after each of the toasts, getting noticeably drunker by the minute.

"The famous trio, Bret Harte, Joaquin Miller, and Charles Warren Stoddard who sat with us by the early campfires," Foote continued, "are talismanic names." Not to *me*, James felt like arguing. Bret Harte was just a passé local colorist, and Miller? A charlatan who was dimly remembered in London drawing rooms as little more than a joke, a no-talent humbug who dressed up in Wild West costumes and wrote execrable verse. And this Stoddard? Famous? Why, he had just written a few books about the South Seas – so it was said – all of which were now out of print. Yes, there was a "poverty of aspect and quality" here in San Francisco, the "Master" thought. What did these drunken "Bohemians" know about fame that was lasting?

And would this Foote ever finish? James sat back and listened, trying to retain a dignified composure that befitted the personage he was, while Foote droned on and on:

...the strenuous life of the Gringo and the decadence of the Hidalgo. They heard and re-echoed the bells of the angelus when the missions were no longer ruins. They voiced the idyls of the South Seas and sang the songs of the Sierras. And while Truthful James and colonel Starbottle may have long since taken to the trail which has no ending, and while Hua Manu no longer stands watching for his friend where the long pacific surges break on the strand of his island home...

Who was this Hua Manu, anyway? James had no idea. A supposedly famous character in American fiction? Hardly anyone to be mentioned in the same breath with Daisy Miller or Isabel Archer, as anyone who was at all literate could point out.

Be that as it may, Henry James was not quite as omniscient as everyone had been led to believe. Had he only read Stoddard's *South Sea Idyls*, he would have known that Hua Manu was a "wild Hercules" who had played Romeo to Stoddard's Juliet in Tahiti about 30 years before. This muscular naked youth swam out to Stoddard's boat, climbed over the rail, and the two began "making vows of eternal friendship" on the spot. Stoddard offered his heart to the youth "if he was willing to take it at second hand." Hua Manu was and, to clinch their relationship, they began rubbing noses.

Regardless of how innocuous they seemed or where they took place in the world, Henry James could not countenance overt displays of sentiments that were basically sodomitical in nature. The physical act of sodomy was, after all, so – *ungentlemanly*, wasn't it? Oscar Wilde's case had struck him as "a sickening horror," quite beyond "any pang of compassion." If one were predisposed to fall in love with a member of one's own sex as, for instance, he himself was, one should do it with discretion. He was at that moment in love with a good-looking young Irishman back in England, and a few years earlier he had been enormously attracted to a handsome Norwegian-American sculptor. But in *his* case, James was happy to think, no one would ever know of these affairs of the heart.

And how prudent of James to be so discreet, the more knowing members of the Bohemian Club must have thought. Oh, yes, it was true – some of the members did dress up in women's clothes from time to time – but only for the Jinks. None of the fellows, it was assumed, had any particular affinity for that sort of thing. No, by God! It was just a little bit of fun-loving burlesque, and there was certainly no room for hermaphrodites under the roof of the Bohemian Club! The last time a Miss Nancy had come to town – that was Wilde back in the 80s – the members had felt obliged to prove their masculinity by trying to drink their guest under the table. (They failed.) Later, when it was learned that Wilde was in fact a sodomite, his visit to the club was expunged from the organization's *Annals*. Yes, the members sensed that Henry James was an odd sort of bird, but he was the soul of propriety, and, as for Stoddard –

It seemed that Lucius Harwood Foote's tribute was finally drawing to a close. "And now, my dear old boy," Foote said, beaming down on Stoddard, "one single quatrain, to remind us of the days when we indulged in rhyme:

"Firm in our faith abiding,
O comrade staunch and true..."

No, maybe Henry James wasn't very omniscient after all. The fact was that Stoddard's definition of true comradeship included expressions of demonstrativeness that went far beyond those allowable in the club chambers, where members were restricted to patting each other on the back. Perhaps James didn't know, for instance, that Dr. William Woodworth, the good-looking curator of Agassiz's museum back at Harvard, had been Stoddard's "Kid" in San Francisco in the late 1870's. And "darling Willie," as Stoddard called him, was there at the banquet, looking as if butter would not melt in his mouth. If James didn't know this – and he should have, his interest in what Edith Wharton called "The Brotherhood" being what it was – perhaps some of the "Old Guard" who were present that night had vague memories of the Stoddard-Woodworth relationship. It had been the summer of 1878, just after Stoddard had returned from Europe as a *Chronicle* correspondent. "Willie" was just 14, had lost his father, and Mrs. Woodworth felt it was so kind of the 35 year old writer to take such a special interest in her son. Stoddard maneuvered to have the lad join him and the artist Julian Rix on a camping trip to Sonoma County, and later that summer he and his "chum" spent some cozy days together down at Monterey. During these outings Willie was inter-

ested in gathering specimens for his insect collection, while Stoddard was interested in... well, in Willie. Following in Stoddard's footsteps, Woodworth had turned into what used to be called a "confirmed bachelor," and he was famous in Cambridge for his Sunday afternoon brunches, during which officers from the Charlestown Navy Yard rubbed elbows with such Harvard literati as Pierre LaRose.

Foote was now finishing his dreadful quatrain:

"In God and stars confiding
We sail the seas with you."

Soon Stoddard would be asked to respond to all of these tributes, and now there is only enough time to consider one final irony. It has to do with another club member, Fred Henshaw, who was at that time sitting on the state Supreme Court. Had Henry James been told that way back in 1873 Justice Henshaw had been Stoddard's "sweetheart?" We will probably never know. Henshaw, now twice married and the father of three grown sons, had no doubt forgotten about that silly little boyhood affair himself. To the middle-aged judge, Stoddard was merely a balding, fat old gentleman who was charming company. So charming, in fact, that he was invited to become a house-guest at "El Nido," the Henshaw family estate near Redwood City. And who could have predicted that, when he got to the Henshaws, Stoddard would promptly fall in love with a day laborer who was adjusting the Japanese lanterns out in the Tea Garden? And that the next year he would fall in love with this young man's brother, who was a swimming instructor at Santa Clara College, and who –

But wait!

Stoddard is rising to respond!

According to the Bohemian Club *Annals*, Stoddard's response was marked by "eloquent brevity." Eloquent? Henry James would hardly have agreed. And the reason for the brevity was all too obvious. Yes, James must have mused, this "love feast," as it was billed, was full of the most delicious ironies, the sort he loved to analyze and interweave into his stories and novels. But would he – or could he – ever use the experiences of this strange evening as the basis for one of his tales? No, he must have concluded, there were some ironies that were, however tantalizing they might be to play with, best left unuttered.

* * *

When Charles Warren Stoddard (1843-1909) wrote that love was his "meat and drink," he was referring to his lifelong tendency to fall in love with other males. Many of his flirtations and love affairs were interwoven into his works with such ingenuousness that 19th century readers hardly knew what to think. (Most decided he was merely amusingly fey.) From *South Sea Idyls* (1873) through *For the Pleasure of His Company* (1903) his tales and travelogues were brimful of unabashed homoeroticism. His autobiographical hero always seemed to be chumming with a savage in the Islands, a young actor in San Francisco, a budding artist in Italy, or a winsome waif in Washington, D.C. In real life, Stoddard referred to these good-looking young men as his "Kids."

It must be pointed out that, in terms of gay liberation, Stoddard was not the witting sort of apologist that Carpenter and Hirschfeld became. True, in many old-fashioned ways, Stoddard personified the stereotypical "Noble Uranian" – like his contemporary Henry James, he was fastidious, "aesthetic," and grandiloquently theatrical. Like the equally orchidaceous Ronald Firbank, he wrote in purple ink, and towards the end of his life he began reading Symonds and *Imre* and everything he could find on Oscar Wilde. But when he began falling in love in the 1860s, there was no word in the dictionary to define the sort of person he was becoming. Was his a case of a female soul trapped inside the body of a male? Perhaps. He was not familiar enough with the classics to realize that his life and works were a part of the gay tradition that dated back to the Greeks. He only knew that when he had a "Kid" he was happy, and that when there was no young man in his life he was forlorn.

Stoddard was able to write almost anything he wanted about his lovable young chums and get away with it. To his naive and genteel readers, the expression of sodomitical tendencies in literature was unthinkable. When they read of his escapades in bed with the young men of Hawaii and Tahiti, therefore, they were pleased to think he was only teasing. Based on all the revelations that can be found in his diaries and letters, we now know he was not.

– Roger Austen

The reader is also referred to the short essay on Stoddard (pp. 11-15) in Roger Austen's *Playing the Game – The Homosexual Novel in America* (1977).

We publish here two Stoddard tales: both taken from his book *South Sea Idyls* (Boston, 1873) – long out of print.

The tale "Chumming with a Savage" is divided into three parts. Only the first part (and the best) "Kana-Ana" is printed here. It was published originally in the *Overland Monthly*, got Bret Harte's approval, and was then sent by Stoddard to Walt Whitman, who also sent his approval. Kana-aná was a young Hawaiian with whom Stoddard fell in love during a visit to Molokai in 1869. The second and third parts ("How I Converted My Cannibal" and "Barbarian Days") were written later. They involve the narrator bringing Kana-aná to the U.S. to "civilize" him, a doomed project, and finally the return to the islands to find out that Kana-aná has died.

CHUMMING WITH A SAVAGE

KÁNA-ANÁ.

THERE was a little brown rain-cloud, that blew over in about three minutes; and Bolabola's thatched hut was dry as a haystack in less than half that time. Those tropical sprays are not much, anyhow; so I lounged down into the banana-patch, for I thought I saw something white there, something white and fluttering, moving about. I knew pretty well what it was, and didn't go after it on an uncertainty.

The Doctor looked savage. Whenever he slung those saddle-bags over his left shoulder, and swung his right arm clean out from his body, like the regulator of a steam-engine, you might know that his steam was pretty well up. I turned to look back, as he was strapping up his beast of burden till the poor animal's body was positively waspish; then he climbed into his saddle, and sullenly plunged down the trail toward the precipice, and never said "Good-by," or "God bless you," or any of those harmless tags that come in so well when you don't know how to cut off your last words.

I solemnly declare, and this without malice, the Doctor was perfectly savage.

Now, do you know what demoralized that Doctor? how we came to a misunderstanding? or why we parted company? It was simply because here was a glorious valley, inhabited by a mild, half civilized people, who seemed to love me at first sight. I don't believe I disliked them, either. Well! they asked me to stop with them, and I felt just like it. I wanted to stop and be natural; but the Doctor thought otherwise of my intentions; and that was the origin of the row.

The next thing I knew, the Doctor had got up the great precipice, and I was quite alone with two hundred dusky fellows, only two of whom could speak a syllable of English, and I the sole representative of the superior white within twenty miles. Alone with cannibals—perhaps they were cannibals. They had magnificent teeth, at any rate, and could bite through an inch and a half sugar-cane, and not break a jaw.

For the first time that summer I began to moralize a little. Was it best to have kicked against the Doctor's judgment? Perhaps not! But it is best to be careful how you begin to moralize too early; you deprive yourself of a great deal of fun in that way. If you want to do anything particularly, I should advise you to do it, and then be sufficiently sorry to make it all square.

"I'm not so sure that I was wrong, after all. Fate, or the Doctor, or something else, brought me first to this loveliest of valleys, so shut out from everything but itself that there were no temptations which might not be satisfied. Well! here, as I was looking about at the singular loveliness of the place—you know this was my first glimpse of its abrupt walls, hung with tapestries of fern and clambering convolvulus; at one end two exquisite waterfalls, rivalling one another in whiteness and airiness, at the other the sea, the real South Sea, breaking and foaming over a genuine reef, and even rippling the placid current of the river that slipped quietly down to its embracing tide from the deep basins at these waterfalls—right in the midst of all this, before I had been ten minutes in the valley, I saw a straw hat, bound with wreaths of fern and *maile*; under it a snow-white garment, rather short all around, low in the neck, and with no sleeves whatever.

There was no sex to that garment; it was the spontaneous-offspring of a scant material and a large necessity. I'd seen plenty of that sort of thing, but never upon a model like this, so entirely tropical—almost Oriental. As this singular phenomenon made directly for me, and, having come within reach, there stopped and stayed, I asked its name, using one of my seven stock phrases for the purpose; I found it was called Kána-aná. Down it went into my note-book; for I knew I was to have an experience with this young scion of a race of chiefs. Sure enough, I have had it. He continued to regard me steadily, without embarrassment. He seated himself before me; I felt myself at the mercy of one whose calm analysis was questioning every motive of my soul. This sage inquirer was, perhaps, sixteen years of age. His eye was so earnest and so honest, I could return his look. I saw a round, full, rather girlish face; lips ripe and expressive, not quite so sensual as those of most of his race; not a bad nose, by any means; eyes perfectly glorious—regular almonds—with the mythical lashes "that sweep," etc., etc. The smile which

presently transfigured his face was of the nature that flatters you into submission against your will.

Having weighed me in his balance—and you may be sure his instincts didn't cheat him; they don't do that sort of thing—he placed his two hands on my two knees, and declared, "I was his best friend, as he was mine; I must come at once to his house, and there live always with him." What could I do but go? He pointed me to his lodge across the river, saying, "There was his home and mine." By this time, my *native* without a master was quite exhausted. I wonder what would have happened if some one hadn't come to my rescue, just at that moment of trial, with a fresh vocabulary? As it was, we settled the matter at once. This was our little plan—an entirely private arrangement between Kána-aná and myself: I was to leave with the Doctor in an hour; but, at the expiration of a week we should both return hither; then I would stop with him, and the Doctor could go his way.

There was an immense amount of secrecy, and many vows, and I was almost crying, when the Doctor hurried me up that terrible precipice, and we lost sight of the beautiful valley. Kána-aná swore he would watch continually for my return, and I vowed I'd hurry back; and so we parted. Looking down from the heights, I thought I could distinguish his white garment; at any rate, I knew the little fellow was somewhere about, feeling as miserably as I felt—and nobody has any business to feel worse. How many times I thought of him through the week! I was always wondering if he still thought of me. I had found those natives to be impulsive, demonstrative, and, I feared, inconstant. Yet why should he forget me, having so little to remember in his idle life, while I could still think of him, and put aside a hundred pleasant memories for his sake? The whole island was a delight to me. I often wondered if I should ever again behold such a series of valleys, hills, and highlands in so small a compass. That land is a world in miniature, the dearest spot of which, to me, was that secluded valley; for there was a young soul watching for my return.

That was rather a slow week for me, but it ended finally; and just at sunset, on the day appointed, the Doctor and I found ourselves back on the edge of the valley. I looked all up and down its green expanse, regarding every living creature, in the hope of discovering Kána-aná in the attitude of the watcher. I let the Doctor ride ahead of me on the trail to Bolabola's hut, and it was quite in the twilight when I heard the approach of a swift horseman. I turned, and at that moment there was a collision of two constitutions that were just fitted for one another; and all the doubts and apprehensions of the week just over were indignantly dismissed, for Kána-aná and I were one and inseparable, which was perfectly satisfactory to both parties!

The plot, which had been thickening all the week, culminated then, much to the disgust of the Doctor, who had kept his watchful eye upon me all these days—to my advantage, as he supposed. There was no disguising our project any longer, so I out with it as mildly as possible. "There was a dear fellow here," I said, "who loved me, and wanted me to live with him; all his people wanted me to stop, also; his mother and his grandmother had specially desired it. They didn't care for money; they had much love for me, and therefore implored me to stay a little. Then the valley was most beautiful; I was tired; after our hard riding, I needed rest; his mother and his grandmother assured me that I needed rest. Now, why not let me rest here awhile?"

The Doctor looked very grave. I knew that he misunderstood—placed a wrong interpretation upon my motives; the worse for him, I say. He tried to talk me over to the paths of virtue and propriety; but I wouldn't be talked over. Then the final blast was blown; war was declared at once. The Doctor never spoke again, but to abuse me; and off he rode in high dudgeon, and the sun kept going down on his wrath. Thereupon I renounced all the follies of this world, actually hating civilization, and feeling entirely above the formalities of society. I resolved on the spot to be a barbarian, and, perhaps, dwell forever and ever in this secluded spot. And here I am back to the beginning of this story, just after the shower at Bolabola's hut, as the Doctor rode off alone and in anger.

That resolution was considerable for me to make. I found, by the time the Doctor was out of sight and I was quite alone, with the natives regarding me so curiously, that I was very tired indeed. So Kána-aná brought up his horse, got me on to it in

some way or other, and mounted behind me to pilot the animal and sustain me in my first bareback act. Over the sand we went, and through the river to his hut, where I was taken in, fed, and petted in every possible way, and finally put to bed, where Kána-aná monopolized me, growling in true savage fashion if any one came near me. I didn't sleep much, after all. I think I must have been excited. I thought how strangely I was situated: alone in a wilderness, among barbarians; my bosom friend, who was hugging me like a young bear, not able to speak one syllable of English, and I very shaky on a few bad phrases in his tongue. We two lay upon an enormous old-fashioned bed with high posts—very high they seemed to me in the dim rushlight. The natives always burn a small light after dark; some superstition or other prompts it. The bed, well stocked with pillows or cushions of various sizes, covered with bright-colored chintz, was hung about with numerous shawls, so that I might be dreadfully modest behind them. It was quite a grand affair, gotten up expressly for my benefit. The rest of the house—all in one room, as usual—was covered with mats, on which various recumbent forms and several individual snores betrayed the proximity of Kána-aná's relatives. How queer the whole atmosphere of the place was! The heavy beams of the house were of some rare wood, which, being polished, looked like colossal sticks of peanut candy. Slender canes were bound across this framework, and the soft, dried grass of the meadows was braided over it—all completing our tenement, and making it as fresh and sweet as new-mown hay.

The natives have a passion for perfumes. Little bunches of sweet-smelling herbs hung in the peak of the roof, and wreaths of fragrant berries were strung in various parts of the house. I found our bedposts festooned with them in the morning. O, that bed! It might have come from England in the Elizabethan era and been wrecked off the coast; hence the mystery of its presence. It was big enough for a Mormon. There was a little opening in the room opposite our bed; you might call it a window, I suppose. The sun, shining through it made our tent of shawls perfectly gorgeous in crimson light, barred and starred with gold. I lifted our bed-curtain, and watched the rocks through this window—the shining rocks, with the sea leaping above them in the sun. There were cocoa-palms so slender they seemed to cast no shadow, while their fringed leaves glistened like frost-work as the sun glanced over them. A bit of cliff, also, remote and misty, running far into the sea, was just visible from my pyramid of pillows. I wondered what more I could ask for to delight the eye. Kána-aná was still asleep, but he never let loose his hold on me, as though he feared his pale-faced friend would fade away from him. He lay close by me. His sleek figure, supple and graceful in repose, was the embodiment of free, untrammelled youth. You who are brought up under cover know nothing of its luxuriousness. How I longed to take him over the sea with me, and show him something of life as we find it. Thinking upon it, I dropped off into one of those delicious morning naps. I awoke again presently; my companion-in-arms was the occasion this time. He had awakened, stolen softly away, resumed his single garment—said garment and all others he considered superfluous after dark—and had prepared for me, with his own hands, a breakfast which he now declared to me, in violent and suggestive pantomime, was all ready to be eaten. It was not a bad bill of fare—fresh fish, taro, poe, and goat's milk. I ate as well as I could, under the circumstances. I found that Robinson Crusoe must have had some tedious rehearsals before he acquired that perfect resignation to Providence which delights us in book form. There was a veritable and most unexpected tablecloth for me alone. I do not presume to question the nature of its miraculous appearance. Dishes there were—dishes, if you're not particular as to shape or completeness; forks with a prong or two—a bent and abbreviated prong or two; knives that had survived their handles; and one solitary spoon. All these were tributes of the too generous people, who, for the first time in their lives, were at the inconvenience of entertaining a distinguished stranger. Hence this reckless display of tableware. I ate as well as I could, but surely not enough to satisfy my crony; for, when I had finished eating, he sat about two hours in deep and depressing silence, at the expiration of which time he suddenly darted off on his bareback steed and was gone till dark, when he returned with a fat mutton slung over his animal.

Now, mutton doesn't grow wild thereabout, neither were his relatives shepherds; consequently, in eating, I asked no questions for conscience' sake.

The series of entertainments offered me were such as the little valley had not known for years: canoe-rides up and down the winding stream; bathings in the sea and in the river, and in every possible bit of water, at all possible hours; expeditions into the recesses of the mountains, to the waterfalls that plunged into cool basins of fern and cresses, and to the orange-grove through acres and acres of guava orchards; some climbings up the precipices; goat hunting, once or twice, as far as a solitary cavern, said to be haunted—these tramps always by daylight; then a new course of bathings and sailings, interspersed with monotonous singing and occasional smokes under the eaves of the hut at evening.

If it is a question how long a man may withstand the seductions of nature, and the consolations and conveniences of the state of nature, I have solved it in one case; for I was as natural as possible in about three days.

I wonder if I was growing to feel more at home, or more hungry, that I found an appetite at last equal to any table that was offered me! Chicken was added to my already bountiful rations, nicely cooked by being swathed in a broad, succulent leaf, and roasted or steeped in hot ashes. I ate it with my fingers, using the leaf for a platter.

Almost every day something new was offered at the door for my edification. Now, a net full of large guavas or mangoes, or a sack of leaves crammed with most delicious oranges from the mountains, that seemed to have absorbed the very dew of heaven, they were so fresh and sweet. Immense lemons perfumed the house, waiting to make me a capital drink. Those superb citrons, with their rough, golden crusts, refreshed me. Cocoanuts were heaped at the door; and yams, grown miles away, were sent for, so that I might be satisfied. All these additions to my table were the result of long and vigorous arguments between the respective heads of the house. I detected trouble and anxiety in their expressive faces. I picked out a word, here and there, which betrayed their secret sorrow. No assertions, no remonstrances on my part, had the slightest effect upon the poor souls, who believed I was starving. Eat I must, at all hours and in all places; and eat, moreover, before they would touch a mouthful. So Nature teaches her children a hospitality which all the arts of the capital cannot affect.

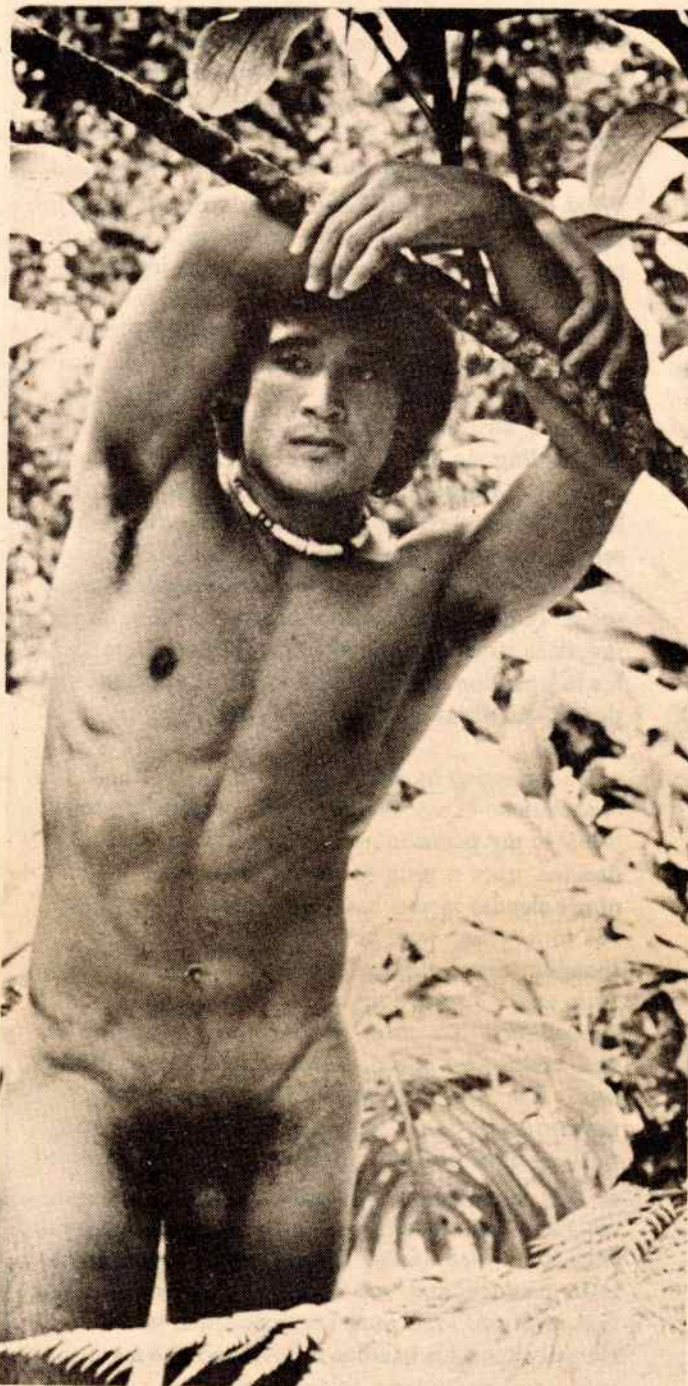
I wonder what it was that finally made me restless and eager to see new faces! Perhaps my unhappy disposition, that urged me thither, and then lured me back to the pride of life and the glory of the world. Certain I am that Kána-aná never wearied me with his attentions, though they were incessant. Day and night he was by me. When he was silent, I knew he was conceiving some surprise in the shape of a new fruit, or a new view to beguile me. I was, indeed, beguiled; I was growing to like the little heathen altogether too well. What should I do when I was at last compelled to return out of my seclusion, and find no soul so faithful and loving in all the earth beside? Day by day this thought grew upon me, and with it I realized the necessity of a speedy departure.

There were those in the world I could still remember with that exquisitely painful pleasure that is the secret of true love. Those still voices seemed incessantly calling me, and something in my heart answered them of its own accord. How strangely idle the days had grown! We used to lie by the hour—Kána-aná and I—watching a strip of sand on which a wild poppy was nodding in the wind. This poppy seemed to me typical of their life in the quiet valley. Living only to occupy so much space in the universe, it buds, blossoms, goes to seed, dies, and is forgotten.

These natives do not even distinguish the memory of their great dead, if they ever had any. It was the legend of some mythical god that Kána-aná told me, and of which I could not understand a twentieth part; a god whose triumphs were achieved in an age beyond the comprehension of the very people who are delivering its story, by word of mouth, from generation to generation. Watching the sea was a great source of amusement with us. I discovered in our long watches that there is a very complicated and magnificent rhythm in its solemn song. This wave that breaks upon the shore is the heaviest of a series that preceded it; and these are greater and less, alternately, every fifteen or twenty minutes. Over this dual impulse the tides prevail, while through the year there is a variation in their rise

and fall. What an intricate and wonderful mechanism regulates and repairs all this!

There was an entertainment in watching a particular cliff, in a peculiar light, at a certain hour, and finding soon enough that change visited even that hidden quarter of the globe. The exquisite perfection of this moment, for instance, is not again repeated on to-morrow, or the day after, but in its stead appears some new tint or picture, which, perhaps, does not satisfy like this. That was the most distressing disappointment that came upon us there. I used to spend half an hour in idly observing the splendid curtains of our bed swing in the light air from the sea; and I have speculated for days upon the probable destiny awaiting one of those superb spiders, with a tremendous stomach and a striped waistcoat, looking a century old, as he clung tenaciously to the fringes of our canopy.



We had fitful spells of conversation upon some trivial theme, after long intervals of intense silence. We began to develop symptoms of imbecility. There was laughter at the least occurrence, though quite barren of humor; also, eating and drinking to pass the time; bathing to make one's self cool, after the heat and drowsiness of the day. So life flowed out in an unruffled current, and so the prodigal lived riotously and wasted his substance. There came a day when we promised ourselves an actual occurrence in our Crusoe life. Some one had seen a floating object far out at sea. It might be a boat adrift; and, in truth, it looked very like a boat. Two or three canoes darted off through the surf to the rescue, while we gathered on the rocks, watching and ruminating. It was long before the rescuers returned, and then they came empty-handed. It was only a log after all, drifted, probably, from America. We talked it all over, there by the shore, and went home to renew the subject; it lasted us a week or more, and we kept harping upon it till that log—drifting slowly, O how slowly! from the far mainland to our island—seemed almost to overpower me with a sense of the unutterable loneliness of its voyage. I used to lie and think about it, and get very solemn, indeed; then Kána-aná would think of some fresh appetizer or other, and try to make me merry with good feeling. Again and again he would come with a delicious banana to the bed where I was lying, and insist upon my gorging myself, when I had but barely recovered from a late orgie of fruit, flesh, or fowl. He would mesmerize me into a most refreshing sleep with a prolonged and pleasing manipulation. It was a reminiscence of the baths of

Stamboul not to be withstood. From this sleep I would presently be awakened by Kána-aná's performance upon a rude sort of harp, that gave out a weird and eccentric music. The mouth being applied to the instrument, words were pronounced in a guttural voice, while the fingers twanged the strings in measure. It was a flow of monotones, shaped into legends and lyrics. I liked it amazingly; all the better, perhaps, that it was as good as Greek to me, for I understood it as little as I understood the strange and persuasive silence of that beloved place, which seemed slowly but surely weaving a spell of enchantment about me. I resolved to desert peremptorily, and managed to hire a canoe and a couple of natives to cross the channel with me. There were other reasons for this prompt action.

Hour by hour I was beginning to realize one of the inevitable results of time. My boots were giving out; their best sides were the uppers, and their soles had about left them. As I walked, I could no longer disguise this pitiful fact. It was getting hard on me, especially in the gravel. Yet, regularly each morning, my pieces of boot were carefully oiled, then rubbed, or petted, or coaxed into some sort of a polish, which was a labor of love. O Kána-aná! how could you wring my soul with those touching offices of friendship!—those kindnesses unailing, unsurpassed!

Having resolved to sail early in the morning, before the drowsy citizens of the valley had fairly shaken the dew out of their forelocks, all that day—my last with Kána-aná—I breathed about me silent benedictions and farewells. I could not begin to do enough for Kána-aná, who was more than ever devoted to me. He almost seemed to suspect our sudden separation, for he clung to me with a sort of subdued desperation. That was the day he took from his head his hat—a very neat one, plaited by his mother—insisting that I should wear it (mine was quite in tatters), while he went bareheaded in the sun. That hat hangs in my room now, the only tangible relic of my prodigal days. My plan was to steal off at dawn, while he slept; to awaken my native crew, and escape to sea before my absence was detected. I dared not trust a parting with him before the eyes of the valley. Well, I managed to wake and rouse my sailor boys. To tell the truth, I didn't sleep a wink that night. We launched the canoe, entered, put off, and had safely mounted the second big roller just as it broke under us with terrific power, when I heard a shrill cry above the roar of the waters. I knew the voice and its import. There was Kána-aná rushing madly toward us; he had discovered all, and couldn't even wait for that white garment, but ran after us like one gone daft, and plunged into the cold sea, calling my name over and over as he fought the breakers. I urged the natives forward. I knew if he overtook us I should never be able to escape again. We fairly flew over the water. I saw him rise and fall with the swell, looking like a seal; for it was his second nature, this surf-swimming. I believe in my heart I wished the paddles would break or the canoe split on the reef, though all the time I was urging the rascals forward; and they, like stupid, took me at my word. They couldn't break a paddle, or get on the reef, or have any sort of an accident. Presently we rounded the headland—the same hazy point I used to watch from the grass house, through the little window, of a sunshiny morning. There we lost sight of the valley and the grass house, and everything that was associated with the past—but that was nothing. We lost sight of the little sea-god, Kána-aná, shaking the spray from his forehead like a porpoise; and this was all in all. I didn't care for anything else after that, or anybody else, either. I went straight home, and got civilized again, or partly so, at least. I've never seen the Doctor since, and never want to. He had no business to take me there or leave me there. I couldn't make up my mind to stay; yet I'm always dying to go back again.

So I grew tired over my husks. I arose and went unto my father. I wanted to finish up the Prodigal business. I ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him, and said unto him, "Father, if I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight, I'm afraid I don't care much. Don't kill anything. I don't want any calf. Take back the ring, I don't deserve it; for I'd give more this minute to see that dear little velvet-skinned, coffee-colored Kána-aná than anything else in the wide world—because he hates business, and so do I. He's a regular brick, father, molded of the purest clay, and baked in God's sunshine. He's about half sunshine himself; and, above all others, and more than any one else ever can, he loved your Prodigal."

JOE OF LAHAINA

Joe is the beautiful young man with whom Stoddard lived near Lahaina, Hawaii in 1869 and the most homosexual, or bisexual, of the natives he met. Only Part I is printed here. Part II, which has Stoddard finding Joe near death in a leper colony, is bathetic and entirely fictional.

I WAS stormed in at Lahaina. Now, Lahaina is a little slice of civilization, beached on the shore of barbarism. One can easily stand that little of it, for brown and brawny heathendom becomes more wonderful and captivating by contrast. So I was glad of dear, drowsy, little Lahaina; and was glad, also, that she had but one broad street, which possibly led to destruction, and yet looked lovely in the distance. It didn't matter to me that the one broad street had but one side to it; for the sea lapped over the sloping sands on its lower edge, and the sun used to set right in the face of every solitary citizen of Lahaina, just as he went to supper.

I was waiting to catch a passage in a passing schooner, and that's why I came there; but the schooner flashed by us in a great gale from the south, and so I was stormed in indefinitely.

It was Holy Week, and I concluded to go to housekeeping, because it would be so nice to have my frugal meals in private, to go to mass and vespers daily, and then to come back and feel quite at home. My villa was suburban—built of dried grasses on the model of a haystack dug out in the middle, with doors and windows let into the four sides thereof. It was planted in the midst of a vineyard, with avenues stretching in all directions under a network of stems and tendrils.

"Her breath is sweeter than the sweet winds
That breathe over the grape-blossoms of Lahaina."

So the song said; and I began to think upon the surpassing sweetness of that breath, as I inhaled the sweet winds of Lahaina, while the wilderness of its vineyards blossomed like the rose. I used to sit in my veranda and turn to Joe (Joe was my private and confidential servant), and I would say to Joe, while we scented the odor of grape, and saw the great banana-leaves waving their cambric sails, and heard the sea moaning in the melancholy distance—I would say to him, "Joe, housekeeping is good fun, isn't it?" Whereupon Joe would utter a sort of unanimous Yes, with his whole body and soul; so that question was carried triumphantly, and we would relapse into a comfortable silence, while the voices of the wily singers down on the river front would whisper to us, and cause us to wonder what they could possibly be doing at that moment in the broad way that led to destruction. Then we would take a drink of cocoa-milk, and finish our bananas, and go to bed, because we had nothing else to do.

This is the way that we began our co-operative housekeeping: One night, when there was a riotous sort of a festival off in a retired valley, I saw, in the excited throng of natives who were going mad over their national dance, a young face that seemed to embody a whole tropical romance. On another night, when a lot of us were bathing in the moonlight, I saw a figure so fresh and joyous that I began to realize how the old Greeks could worship mere physical beauty and forget its higher forms. Then I discovered that face on this body—a rare enough combination—and the whole constituted Joe, a young scapegrace who was schooling at Lahaina, under the eye—not a very sharp one—of his uncle. When I got stormed in, and resolved on housekeeping for a season, I took Joe, bribing his uncle to keep the peace, which he promised to do, provided I gave bonds for Joe's irreproachable conduct while with me. I willingly gave bonds—verbal ones—for this was just what I wanted of Joe: namely, to instil into his youthful mind those counsels which, if rigorously followed, must result in his becoming a true and untrifled American. This compact settled, Joe took up his bed—a roll of mats—and down we marched to my villa, and began housekeeping in good earnest.

We soon got settled, and began to enjoy life, though we were not without occasional domestic infelicities. For instance, Joe would wake up in the middle of the night, declaring to me that it was morning, and thereupon insist upon sweeping out at once, and in the most vigorous manner. Having filled the air with dust, he would rush off to the baker's for our hot rolls and a pat of breakfast butter, leaving me, meantime, to recover as I might. Having settled myself for a comfortable hour's reading, bolstered up in a luxurious fashion, Joe would enter with breakfast, and orders to the effect that it be eaten at once and without delay. It was useless for me to remonstrate with him; he was

tyrannical.

He got me into all sorts of trouble. It was Holy Week, and I had resolved upon going to mass and vespers daily. I went. The soft night-winds floated in through the latticed windows of the chapel, and made the candles flicker upon the altar. The little throng of natives bowed in the oppressive silence, and were deeply moved. It was rest for the soul to be there; yet, in the midst of it, while the Father, with his pale, sad face, gave his instructions, to which we listened as attentively as possible—for there was something in his manner and his voice that made us better creatures—while we listened, in the midst of it I heard a shrill little whistle, a sort of chirp, that I knew perfectly well. It was Joe, sitting on a cocoa-stump in the garden adjoining, and beseeching me to come out, right off. When service was over, I remonstrated with him for his irreverence. "Joe," I said, "if you have no respect for religion yourself, respect those who are more fortunate than you." But Joe was dressed in his best, and quite wild at the entrancing loveliness of the night. "Let's walk a little," said Joe, covered with fragrant wreaths, and redolent of coconut-oil. What could I do? If I had tried to do anything to the contrary, he might have taken me and thrown me away somewhere into a well or a jungle, and then I could no longer hope to touch the chord of remorse—which chord I sought vainly, and which I have since concluded was not in Joe's physical corporation at all. So we walked a little. In vain I strove to break Joe of the shocking habit of whistling me out of vespers. He would persist in doing it. Moreover, during the day he would collect crusts of bread and banana-skins, station himself in ambush behind the curtain of the window next the lane, and, as some solitary creature strode solemnly past, Joe would discharge a volley of ammunition over him, and then laugh immoderately at his indignation and surprise. Joe was my pet elephant, and I was obliged to play with him very cautiously.

One morning he disappeared. I was without the consolations of a breakfast, even. I made my toilet, went to my portmanteau for my purse—for I had decided upon a visit to the baker—when lo! part of my slender means had mysteriously disappeared. Joe was gone, and the money also. All day I thought about it. In the morning, after a very long and miserable night, I woke up, and when I opened my eyes, there, in the doorway, stood Joe, in a brand-new suit of clothes, including boots and hat. He was gorgeous beyond description, and seemed overjoyed to see me, and as merry as though nothing unusual had happened. I was quite startled at this apparition. "Joseph!" I said in my severest tone, and then turned over and looked away from him. Joe evaded the subject in the most delicate manner, and was never so interesting as at that moment. He sang his specialties, and played clumsily upon his bamboo flute—to soothe me, I suppose—and wanted me to eat a whole flat pie which he had brought home as a peace-offering, buttoned tightly under his jacket. I saw I must strike at once, if I struck at all; so I said, "Joe, what on earth did you do with that money?" Joe said he had replenished his wardrobe, and bought the flat pie especially for me. "Joseph," I said, with great dignity, "do you know that you have been stealing, and that it is highly sinful to steal, and may result in something unpleasant in the world to come?" Joe said, "Yes," pleasantly, though I hardly think he meant it; and then he added, mildly, "that he couldn't lie"—which was a glaring falsehood—"but wanted me to be sure that he took the money, and so had come back to tell me."

"Joseph," I said, "you remind me of our noble Washington;" and, to my amazement, Joe was mortified. He didn't, of course, know who Washington was, but he suspected that I was ridiculing him. He came to the bed and haughtily insisted upon my taking the little change he had received from his costumers, but I implored him to keep it, as I had no use at all for it, and, as I assured him, I much preferred hearing it jingle in his pocket.

The next day I sailed out of Lahaina, and Joe came to the beach with his new trousers tucked into his new boots, while he waved his new hat violently in a final adieu, much to the envy and admiration of a score of hatless urchins, who looked upon Joe as the glass of fashion, and but little lower than the angels. When I entered the boat to set sail, a tear stood in Joe's bright eye, and I think he was really sorry to part with me; and I don't wonder at it, because our housekeeping experiences were new to him—and, I may add, not unprofitable.

DE BIEDMA (continued)

QUESTION: We might well end this conversation with "Dúo"...

DE BIEDMA: "And your arms hold ecstatically, for the first time, that small dark body which, on the threshold of adolescence, has barely left childhood behind. Dusk in the half-light of the room, his presence betrayed only by his contrast with the sheets' whiteness, he seems a bit of shadow, so slight and brown he is; a warm shadow, whose contact nevertheless refreshes your limbs, relaxes your thoughts. He responds with his complete abandon to your enveloping tenderness, and you do not grow tired of caressing him, kissing him, feeling more than seeing his face, where the eyes twinkle with a spark which is still one of playfulness and already one of mischievousness. How long do you remain like this? Six o'clock, seven o'clock, eight o'clock. If he finally essays the gestures of getting up, it's only to fall back laughing in your arms, which, seeing the game, and playing it too, you had opened wide for him. Suddenly, on the window-panes of the adjoining room, from which a lamp also casts its veiled radiance, you hear the low, heavy pattering fall of the daily rain of the dying hours of the summer evening, and, almost at the same moment, the roll of thunder which should have preceded and announced it.

And then these lines of poetry, centuries old, come to your mind: *O Western wind, when wilt thou blow/That the small rain down can rain?/Christ, if my love were in my arms/And I in my bed again!* And you cannot repress your own annoyance at the untimely literary remembrance. Literature? At a time like this? Ashamed of your memory, that impertinent intruder in this episode of pure animality, you want to reject, to forget those lines. Not thinking, as you do so, that what made them come to life in you was the same cry of the human being and of his always identical need, the same impulse which first pulled that cry from deep within the mind of their anonymous author, a man like you, separated through long interminable days of winter from a body like this body you now caress and kiss, from the hot, dark embrace of another and the same beloved shadow."

Bruce Elliott. *The Potency Clinic*. Bleecker St. Press. 463 West St., D 518, New York 10014. [1979]. Paper. \$3.50.

Reviewed by Robert Peters

I didn't know what I was in for when I received *The Potency Clinic* in the mail this week. I thought I pretty much knew the novelists spinning books out of New York. But Bruce Elliott? I don't know. Is he pseudonym of some well-known poet? The novel turns out to be well-written, nicely-plotted. And it has a purpose: it seems designed to assist teetering heterosexuals, male and female. There's a fine satiric drift throughout: the hero Roger Elmsford is a psychiatrist who has flown from Los Angeles to New York to attend a professional meeting. Actually, he's there under a guise: he hasn't been able to get it up for a year, and his wife is threatening to leave him. So he has registered at a famous potency clinic, led by cocky little Amos Richter, a sort of fake who, it turns out, has a penis so small he is ready to rush off to Morocco to have an addition made to it, with or without nerves. He doesn't need to though, because one of his surrogate female lovers, employed to arouse his patients (actually she's an aging lesbian) prefers men with small penises—when she prefers men. Richter is saved by her and vows to go into the natural food business.

The hero's blossoming (or hardening) begins in a phone booth at the Kennedy airport. A teenager in an adjacent phone booth is making an obscene phone call. He whips it out and plays with it. Richter is turned on, for the first time in months. The police appear suddenly and whirl the youngster away.

Bruce Elliott seems to know group therapy well, and the attendant absurdities. He must have been through it himself. And his funniest scenes are those about the group, built around three men with sexual problems. There is a weird heavy-hung dude who ejaculates before he can get it in, another male, a super jock, a Namath figure, who never comes; and then, there's the hero Elmsford. Therapy for the first man involves tying a string around his penis until he's inserted it into a surrogate female lover. The jock achieves ejaculation only when he finally sodomizes Elmsford. Therapy also involves masturbation machines, mutual jerk-offs, and parties. Elmsford, open to experiments, visits a gay bar in the village—a trashy one, and fails there. But he meets a longshoreman who spends some of his time hustling. Roger won't pay, so nothing happens. Roger is haunted by the image of the lad in the phonebooth, and drifts slowly towards the homosexual life. He visits his surrogate lover's home. She is busy making a cherry pie for the Jesus-freak boy from next door. She asks Roger to counsel the boy, since he has an "enormous problem." As the lad lies on a bed he tells Roger that he has had intercourse with his pre-pubescent sister 48 times. Roger explains that fellatio is a way out. He demonstrates. And boys aren't apt to tell, says Roger, as sisters probably will. Next, Roger attends a big party, hosted by the stud-jock at his pad. The longshoreman is cleaning up the drink glasses. After the party Roger decides to catch a fast plane back to Los Angeles, to clear things up with his wife. She informs him that she has turned lesbian. As they talk long-distance, he notices that the youth is again in an adjacent phone booth, going through the same erotic antics. This time, the police think Roger is the pervert, so they arrest him. They find pills in his pocket. Final irony.

The Potency Clinic spins along brightly. Despite the ironies and the concluding twist, the novel is a healthy plea for compassionate sharings of our blent, androgynous sexualities.

JOSÉ LIMA

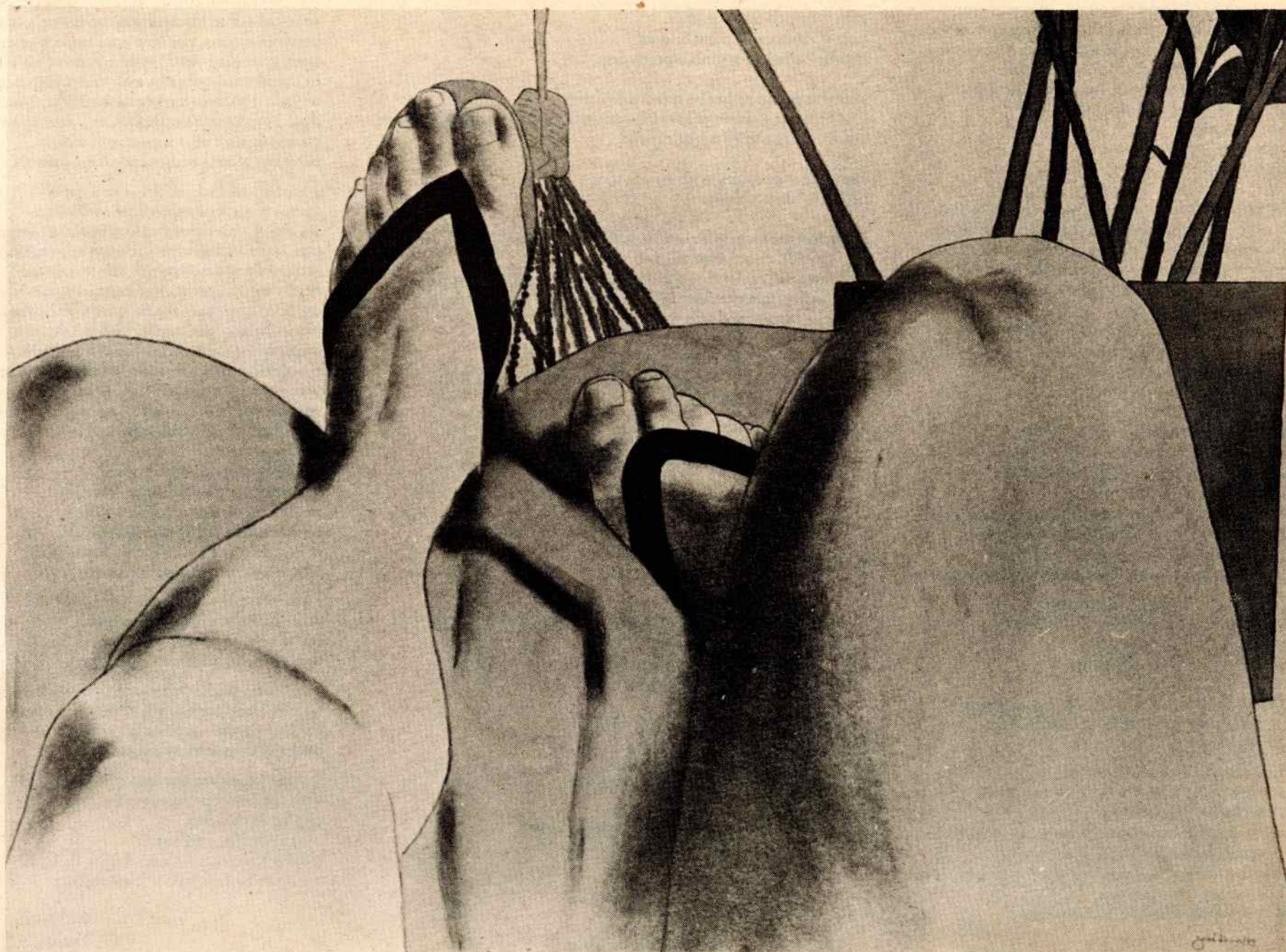
José Lima was born in 1934 in Recife, Pernambuco (northeastern Brazil). He studied at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro with Ivan Serpa and Friedlaender (1957-1960). During the past 20 years he has had fifteen one-man shows in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Brasília, Lima (Peru). He has won many prizes for his work, including the "1 Premio de Gravura" at Salão de Abril in Rio de Janeiro (1967) and a prize at the first International Biennial in Vancouver, Canada (1968). He has worked in metal and has taught metal engraving at many schools and museums in Brazil. He currently lives in Urca, a suburb of Rio de Janeiro, very popular with artists.

José Lima's work has been compared to that of David Hockney, but his own originality and genius is obvious. In *Gay Sunshine's* opinion, his work is clearly of equal artistic worth to that of Hockney and to any of his contemporaries in South America. Lima appears to be the only major artist in Brazil currently using gay and homo-erotic images in the greater part of his work.

There are more than 50 paintings in his new series: all of them are pastels in full color with brown-orange predominating. Many of them portray a young man in a hammock in different positions, close ups of his feet, etc. Approximate size of each original pastel is 31" high by 23" wide. The pastels reproduced on this page were shown (along with many others) at the Galeria Funarte Oswaldo Goeldi in Rio de Janeiro, June 1979.

Gay Sunshine has agreed to act as the conduit for the presentation to North Americans of this new work. Price is \$350.00 per painting, postpaid (air-mail insured) from Brazil (mailed in a tube). Here is your chance to own an original work by a major South American artist at a modest price. If you are interested in purchasing one of these original works of art, please write to Gay Sunshine for details. Since you will be ordering directly from the artist instead of a gallery, the price asked is at least 40 percent discounted.

Please write: Gay Sunshine, Box 40397, San Francisco, Ca. 94140.



all-male
the room was full of men
i'd been classified as a male i decided
have we been divided has gender meaning
an imaginary man animalized on the floor
new men come every year
the american language is spoken frequently
other tongues are heard
(projected against blue-green, institutional walls)

bodyshapes
there were wires running through the air
thin tensiles circular horizontal &
vertical uniting/binding them
waves v-rr-r-r-rrr-ed could be slid along
i was starting to smell like the wallpaint
hints of what communism as interpreted by
former capitalists might be abounded

(from the crapper) i know you're getting
a hard-on
(erect) this is not a hard-on
i just like to pet it
(strokes)

to be more than a sexual commodity
he agreed there should be more
there are more than expected
a bottle of pink liquid like methadone

silhouette of a head
taped speech:
— know whether they have to
things get darker

i was crouched naked against a wet black wall
it's dark
i coddled my head in my palms
the lights came on
a lot of guys were in the room with me
pacing in groups around the unoccupied wooden
tables and benches
i wanted anything to happen
so stood up and walked to them
at first no one noticed me
a slender young man with dark hair
flecks of gold embedded in the iris
my cock moved upward
a force a black solid pushed it downward
i alternately wanted the man and was
repulsed by him
the white paper of the cigarette contrasted
with the black hairs planted in his chest
in close-up rivulets on the changing surface
of a lake we were playing
minding our own business
my fingertips streaked along his breast
a riffling noise could be heard
two leave
three of us
just breathing

[A masculine congregation. Some heads tilted
slightly backward. Immense pupils. (the immensity
of pupils) Man upon man's back, fondling each other,
heaped high, sculpted, German Baroque. A squirming
mass of bodies, some entwined, others isolated.
Hip bones jutting over belts, wet, sleeveless shirts.
A staircase climbing and descending itself.
"Same amount."
"I got more I tell you."
"Give it to me."
"No."

He turns his back and walks away as if propelled
by an exterior force. Careful to circumvent the lagoon,
he opens the gate, throwing the courtyard behind him.
An expanse of earth, level even from the point de-
scribing the distance he seeks to conquer.]

Jeffrey Srdich

SATURDAY AFTERNOONS

Perhaps our best lovers are the dead ones.
They flicker across screens too finite to hold them,
broad arms, broad chests grappling with life.
We reach out and touch . . . air.
Pale semblances of tanned men slip between our legs.
We hold them jealously, carry them home with us,
like secret hard-ons. Stale popcorn and semen
are the memories of youth. They are with us, now, forever.

Perhaps the best lovers love heroines,
women like us. We clasp them to our breasts,
grown weak, rachitic with age.
We swirl down hidden stairways,
agile in taffeta and silk.
Swept into their arms and ravished, oh, so tenderly . . .
Worms ravage flesh. We stare at faded screens.
Beauty does not fade.

Perhaps our best lovers are the dead ones.
In back rows of balconies we pursue our affairs.
Cracked plaster, like too thick make-up,
reveals the sullen truth. Does truth pertain to reality?
We surrender to too-large lips,
our mouths thrown back, our tongues suffused with blood.
Take us, we say. We are yours,
Dead lovers speak the only bearable truth.

Tom Felt

These poems are taken from the book *Schwule Lyrik/Schwule Prosa: Eine Anthologie*, and appear with permission of the publisher Rosa Winkel Verlag (Pink Triangle Press). The RWV is the first gay press to exist in contemporary Europe. Established in September, 1975 by two gay men in West Berlin, the press has published a number of books and calendars, and also distributes books from other publishing houses of interest to gay men. RWV can be contacted at the following address: Rosa Winkel Verlag/Versand, 1 Berlin, Postfach 620304, Federal Republic of Germany. Translator from the German for these 3 poems is Richard Mills of Austin, Texas.

Our sensibility
has its origins in the fact
that we must learn
the choreography of our enemies exactly, if
we want to survive.

Eschi Rehm

TEA ROOM OR A SHORT POEM ABOUT LONG LASTING DISGUST

1
it stinks

2
and when you come out
you feel like throwing up

3
whether your horniness
is still hanging in your pants
or whether you've come on the slippery tiles

4
it stinks like the smell
that an ANONYMOUS COCK forgot there

5
that's it
it stinks

Manfred Semmelbauer
(Berlin, March 13, 1977)

LOVE STORIES

albert has had just about too much.
bernt-leopold loves everything that's beautiful.
curt has imagination: so does brigitte.

detlev has been looking all his life for a real friend.
edith will do anything; that's what she enjoys.
friedrich thinks jürgen is his friend for life.

gabi is turned on by leather.
hort-hannes can't stand queens.
ingobert thinks hartmut is pretty fem.

johanna would rather be somewhat careful.
karl-heinrich sometimes asks himself: what does love mean, anyway.
luis would like to be a gentle friend.

martin always wants to (in groups too).
norbert's always ready.

odilo uses the most intoxicating genital deodorant there is.
petr shouldn't until after the next shot.
quirin-anselm prefers to stick with his stamp collection sometimes.
reinhard has fallen unhappily in love again, but renate doesn't know it yet.
stefan just smiles and says to roland: humping is great.

thea's not quite sure if theo is the right one for him.
udo has class and associates only with confirmed homos like
for example vincenz.

volker-volker could care less about all of them.
walter is sometimes afraid that it's not enough to just sleep
together.

x, y, z just say: i don't know.

Klaus Sigl (March 1972)

SEX BEING THE HEROICS OF INCONSISTENCY

gagging on the fist of your penis
i attempt to swallow your being
wanting to vomit
wondering if i should be crying
your scrotum drapes on my neck
gives a wrinkled double chin
your phallus pivets me a balance
tittering from joy to agony
kissing you your beard knives my cheek
biting a shoulder I cannot make bleed
you close your eyes
i think you in blind ecstasy
you groan a name that isn't me

Dennis Sinclair Miles

THE NAME OF MY LOVE

My love has no family.
It lives in a wound, incised
on the skin of beauty.
Those who perform it deny it.
Those who reject it don't know its face.
It is slandered, hectored
but it is also the light over the plains
and the heavy darkness between the mountains.
It lives in my body, behind my brow.
It lives in a place where
your shame hides itself.
My love is not well known
and it has no allies, no childhood
and it never ages for it
cannot be defined in words.
Plato carried it, Wilde called it by names,
Michelangelo transmuted it, Shakespeare escaped it.
My love is the country where the morning
wipes away the future from your forehead.
My love is an epilogue to a play
in which the parts cannot be cast
because the actors can only play themselves.
It is not a member of any union,
it is homeless and it flourishes
in the holes shot through the twilight
by the shrieks from the convicts.
But don't pity the gay traveller:
his love has so many names: David, Arthur, Paul,
and his body doesn't depend on mercy.
My love lives in you and is given birth by you.
It bursts out of faces and it returns
to THEM and their faces in fire.
It is a wound, unhealed by time.
And I play the audience, my lips are not painted,
I don't need disguises, for I can leave after the play
and return to the silence between the words.
Inside me my love has a hiding place
where you and I can disappear into each other
and escape the paste-people, the phrase-spitters
and the soluble lies of the gluers.
Proust lived with it, it lives in symphonies,
it escapes straitjackets and religion.
Gide loved it, Der Ludwig decorated it,
Whitman was its prophet and my love
trips backwards through the centuries,
it is the caryatid of pain: carnations drenched in blood,
it is the fiery chariot of art: carnations held in a fist,
it is passion, travelling through landscapes,
ravaged into wasteness by oblivion and hatred,
it is my love and you cannot draw it
from slot machines on the main street.

Jorgen Christian Hansen

WOUNDED BIRD, DARK IRIS

i want to look behind your eyes where your
fifteen-year-old cousin still takes your eleven-
year-old self to his darksleep body summer's outside
between moons, but now your smile washes over me
from your nine-years' reservoir, turns my longing
to liquid music, my ribs melt under your laughing
mouth, darkness, darkness, shining with secret
dew, i push aside the bushes, that murrey flesh
groans against my tongue, your secrets
enter my secrets without speaking names

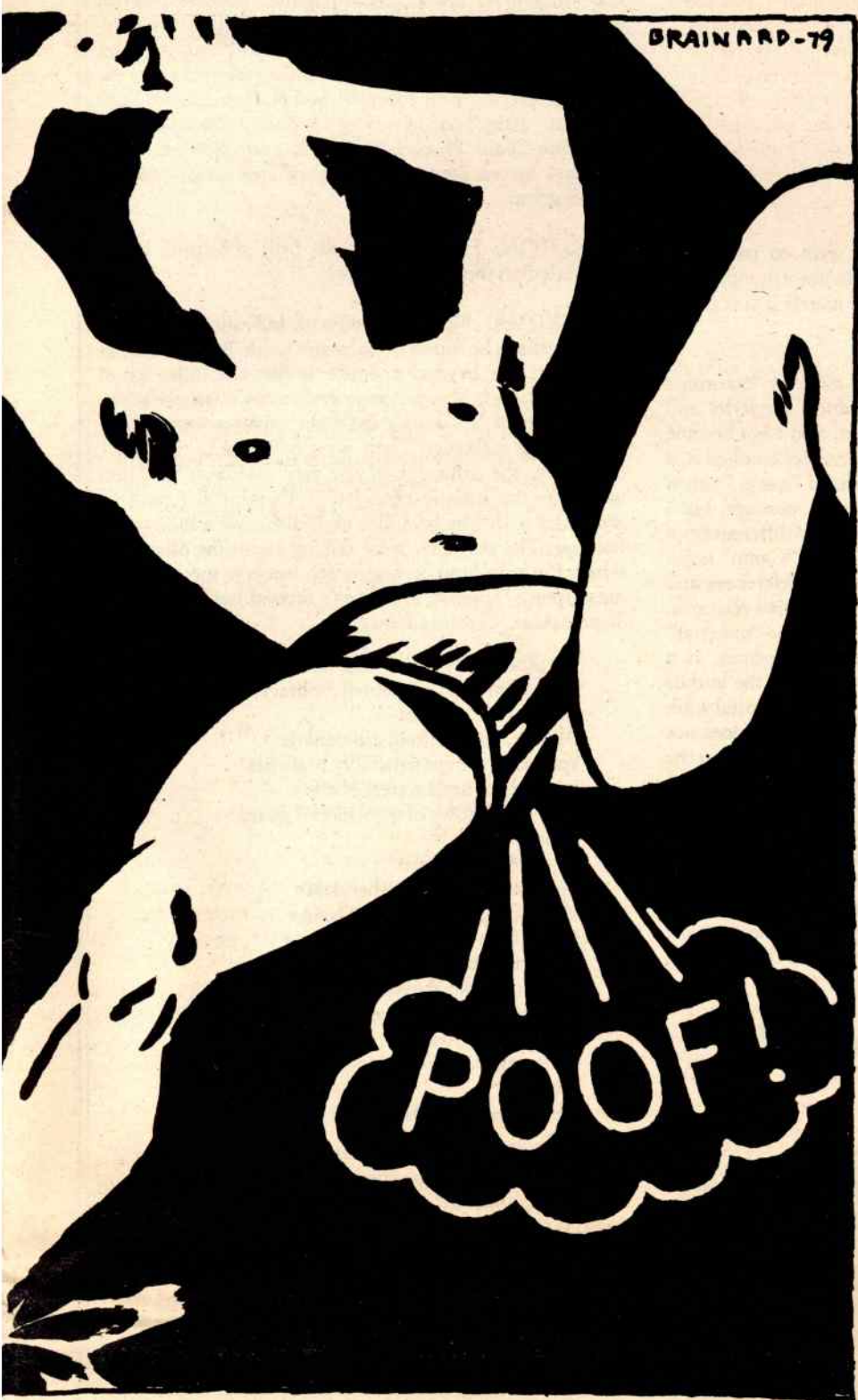
your hair is black, coarse, like a net of
cactus roots, your spines are all inside
sheathed with fierce wisdom from a hurting time —
jaguar claws, but now you trust my whiteness a
little, trust yourself to this raw instant we
betray nothing past, nothing future, raw to the
quick of now, here the brown dunes of your skin
bloom in my eyes, under my lips, you
laugh when my beard strokes your thighs,
o beneath your navel pit what dormant earthshock
waits to be touched with knowing, that sacred
continental fault — ready to be soothed but not
tamed with tender rhythms, and how manly you are
to kiss so strong and so gentle,
our lips on one another's risen
breasts forget we are not women till
in our throats hot worlds of seed
fester our joy with bitter generation,
o we are fresh mud in each other's hands
all over we are shining with mica!

after, you point to me the wounded bird,
you say it's a female, full of eggs,
but it's only a sparrow, male, scuttling
thru the wild mustard and the irises

on my way back to the house, one dark iris spike
opens in my face like your most secret flesh
sweet purple groaning
under sun's relentless tongue

the crouching wastrel bird defies me to kill
with the benison of your woke body still
singing in my teeth
at midnight, i go out to
look at the iris again with a light, its folds
are abundant with your dark absence

Will Inman
Tucson, Az.
9, 10 March 1978



THE SODOMITES OF BAGHDAD
by Di'bil ibn 'Ali (765-860 A.D.)
trans. by Stephen W. Foster

I
Sometimes he uses the arrow of Ali,
sometimes he uses the quiver of 'Amr.

II
Abu Sad, the notorious:
A cock up his ass. How snug!
He sucks it. How sweet!
He smells it. How fragrant!
His ass is a perch for the falcon,
a saddle for the horseman.

III
Abu Sad, with weakness of soul,
allows snakes up his asshole.
Farmers plant their cucumbers
up his ass in large numbers.

IV
All men dip their pens in the inkwell
of Huwayy ibn Amr As-Siksiki.

V
Others boast of their glorious deeds.
Khuzaah boasts about having used his
needle to mend certain holes.

AIRIE PATH
must be eighteen years old. I am twenty-five. The late
ember wind shoots a brave leaf off each tree: brown hands
ckle on stone. Stars are playful tonight, leaping over
h other, tumbling over rooftops as I walk. Looking through
ren bushes, I see lights flicker in after-dinner houses,
bulous TV lout performs unfunny comedy routines. I'm alone.
's alone. Footfalls crash in the silver air of our breath.
: already smoked three cigarettes, mumbled "Your Body Is Stars"
r times, and laughed out loud five times at the clumsy liftings
he moon. I've seen only him, his face hidden in acres of
kness. I'm shy. I won't say hello. Then, almost as we pass,
oice shakes loose and asks if I have a cigarette.

o. We walk together, nameless, our coats brushing twigs
ich stick out like tongues or erections. I'm shy. I won't get
personal. We chat endlessly for six minutes. He stops; white
etlights beam their farthest rays over him. Would I like a
w job he asks. I would. He's "wild" for one. Just off
prairie path, hot sperm drips in icy wind.

Kenneth Pobo

SURVIVOR
"I have come from what
I have survived on."
B. Richardson

I
We live, burn,
sell truths
in this light.

We are hulled and shelled,
parched by a wind of chance
pollinating our breed,
some mad, suicidal drone.

We laugh harshly, unnoticed,
created by the world's fancy
with the sea all plastic,
waves crinkled in the current.

II
Old faggot. Yes, you.
The young ones
come at you,
their dry branches
gut you.

As slow cows eating across the land,
they will tread your stalk,
chew the old fiber,
the dusty leaf
burning in quick sun.

III
Break a sparrow's fall
plunging in the night:
Hear the windrow's slow rustle
mowing down the fields:
Sparkle in night moves
with a limpid moon:
I will make hills
leap at your name.

A slow life is gentle,
twice as long,
feel senses
alive to young touch.

Old one, we live,
burn,
feed memory.

Sitting in a room,
making love to a fear,
turn,
we are gone.

Raymonde Saint-Pierre

LOVE POEMS
after Spicer

1
Do the cauliflowers change when I
touch your cock?
I know the zucchini gets longer.
Yellow blossoms are the first pubes,
like fig-leaves they drop to
reveal a good baseball season.
Monetarily
I seem to remember your voice,
slightly nasal in its adolescence
(butterflies and Budweiser).
the crack of your bat started the
season. The lights were bright.
After that, there was the Sonics.
Two six-packs and one orgasm later,
you unzip the Giants in the
bathroom, fist-fucking the sink.

2
For you I would suck the roots
and branches. This is a tree, it is
poetry.
Boy comes in as an image. Like the
yng ghost of Elpenor.
Nobody's fault but the ladder. Not
Odysseus or Homer's fault.
The ghosts of old chicken queens, too,
arch out of smoking trenches.
"For you I would suck the World Tree."

3
Chicken looks arresting in sable.
I like to nibble his ears. Talking
only gets in the way. Then a
suck or two later, lights out.
Tongue wagging. Later attempts
I brake my way into your silence.
Chicken looks good in sable.
(Naked except for jockstrap.)
condoms full of elephant hunters
stalk the worshipped hardon.
Trophies are spattered with it
as I slip the straps down calmly.
Little-wise-ass. He pumps a quart
of love.

4
There is a real racehorse in the
rhododendrons, drifting with the
other images.
It is a minor tragedy that anything
should be so very excruciating.
But when my lips are locked to your
handsome sweaty home-stretch, what
else can I do but moon, weak no's.
Azaleas, rather than poetry, soothe
his closed eyes, his tight lips.

Dennis Kelley

URIEL

DARK EYES.
INDIAN EYES.
ELECTRIC HAIR.
HE MOVES SILENTLY.
INVITING AIR.

A. Ravarour

A PLATONIC REQUEST

If roses never grow in Spanish Harlem
and the dandelion between the cracks of
my hometown country sidewalk is limited
to whatever holds it there,
and if trees never shine
the sky shades me from you
if dancers never laugh,
then the music's wrong
I feel like an echo
in halls of what will never be
time after time I am
not in love
I'll find you a rose if you wish
and I'll brew fresh dandelion wine
for your thirsty mouth,
and I'll laugh but god knows
I can't dance,
so tell the piano man
to play another tune.

Kim Beavers

LETTER TO VERLAINE
Conception Hospital
Marseilles
May 1, 1891.

Shuffle to warm a rotting body,
intense boredom sickens a soul alone,
across a barren wilderness of sorrows
my heart reaches, revels in your vices,
in your cup I discovered the rapture of blasphemy.
Weary of living, fearing to die,
forgetting the horror of the holy oil,
a desire which the tooth of no pain can wound,
I ask of your bed deepest sleep.
Do you remember our old delight?
Does your heart throb at my very name?
Have I not sweated the sweat of your dark nights?
Harar was full of niggers
and there were no doctors there,
nothing but a faithless slave to neglect you.
Soaked with acrid odor of carbolic
and sweet-sick incense of suppuration,
plaster grey of dispensary walls
a lair of demons,
swarms in tattered banners
torn from the balconies of the sky
ooze out to dig a bloody pathway to the heart.
"Look at him now," they shriek, "the old pervert
dies!"

Beach of old bones gasp,
choke out their last rattle in broken hiccups
like a sob sliced by bloody breath;
there stirs in the spectral cadaver,
thick as the phlegm of senile lust,
the ancient agonies I have sown.
The siren's silent cave is my dreaming place,
scents of water evoke far oases of paradise,
rising from tide foam, wave froth,
a sea god stretching his limbs nude and glistening,
white bouquets of stars snow down,
dawn shivering in pink and saffron silk,
water lillies, ivory lillies sigh,
naked rose gods writhe,
green myrtle and pale hydrangea cling,
sun drenched adolescents, brown, twist on their
pillows,

caress the savory fruits of puberty.
Adored Pan! Priapic monster!
Black grapes entangle in your golden hair,
drops of pearls drip from your fingers,
dew caught in your fur quivers like diamonds,
your lips whisper poems voluptuous
as the flesh of Syrian peaches.
I'm a boy, my heart ripe
as my body for succulent love,
I will glut myself with nard and oil and myrrh,
for you I don the robe of Cybele, scarlet, skyblue,
let my lovely body be the pasture
of kisses burning as Saharan suns,
or cool as Iceland's moons.
The torturer's lash of pleasure never released,
sweet as the oboe, green as the prairie,
passion of lovers in a mirror deep as the sea,
lovers swimming in mirrors multiply their lust.
Why do you moan on our lips?
Je t'embrasse.
Rimbaud.

Rolf Tor Jarlsson.

THE BOY NEXT DOOR

The boy next door
has just come in
for the night

Across the dark alley
the window peeks at me,
glazed yellow eye
holds him captive.

Cap, gloves, coat,
shoes, jeans, shirt, socks,
undershirt —
he is wearing red jockeyes.

He is a brown flamingo,
comfortable in its nest
and about to roost
but first a yawn, a stretch,
a shaking off of the day.

The eye-prison goes dark,
reflected on its pupil
is myself
looking.

I have a murky beauty
of silent vigil, patience,
guilt
and
loss.

I am being watched.
"Careful, you are being watched."

Keith Jones
2:25 a.m.
March 26, 1977

HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE SPANISH GENERATION OF 1927:

A Conversation with Jaime Gil de Biedma

by Bruce Swansey and José Ramón Enríquez

JAIME GIL DE BIEDMA was born in 1929 in Barcelona, Spain, where he has spent most of his life. He began and developed his work as a poet during Franco's dictatorship; he not only suffered political repression but also the moral repression of a sexist structure. He fought against these repressions and struggled with many of his compatriots for true freedom (gay freedom included) despite his bitterness at not being able to live in such freedom. As a gay poet he looked to the generation of 1927 (García Lorca etc.) and from them he takes his inspiration. De Biedma had an in depth and important exchange of correspondence with another great gay poet, the Spanish-Mexican Luis Cernuda (1902-1963), during the last few years of Cernuda's life. Among De Biedma's main works are: *Compañeros de Viaje* (1959), *Moralidades* (1966), *Poemas Postumas* (1968) and *Las Personas del Verbo* (1975). He has also translated into Spanish, among other works, Christopher Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin*. Jaime de Biedma is certainly an original and very important voice in contemporary Spanish poetry and an important participant in the Gay Cultural Renaissance.

Interviewers: José Ramón Enríquez (b. 1945) is a poet and journalist in Mexico City. Bruce Swansey (b. 1955) also lives in Mexico City and is author of *Prosas para el Boudoir* (1980). The present interview was first published in *El Homosexual Frente a la Sociedad Enferma*, a gay anthology published by Tusquets and edited by José Ramón Enríquez. It is translated into English by Canadian poet E. A. Lacey, author of the poetry collections *Path of Snow* and *Later*.

QUESTION: In the Generation of '27 we find, intimately linked with its literary aspects, an erotic phenomenon which, though not inclusive of all members of the group, can be said to give it a certain colouring, to bear witness to a gay sensibility...

DE BIEDMA: Well, clearly their way of thinking and feeling is closest to whatever the gay sensibility may be...

QUESTION: Isn't it perhaps a bit reactionary to talk of a gay sensibility? In so doing, aren't we justifying the ghetto?

DE BIEDMA: There is indeed a gay sensibility, which is largely a result of the ghetto. That's a fact. But we must not give the impression here that the Generation of '27 is a generation of homosexuals. On the other hand, certainly many of its members were gay. If we accept the list of members of the group originally drawn up by Gerardo Diego in *Antología Parcial* (Partial Anthology), we find that, of the twelve poets included, four are homosexuals and one is bisexual: a high percentage.

QUESTION: An unusually high percentage. It could merely give the impression that a lot of artists are homosexuals and that that's the reason why the percentage is so high. However, in other literary generations it hadn't always been so noticeable.

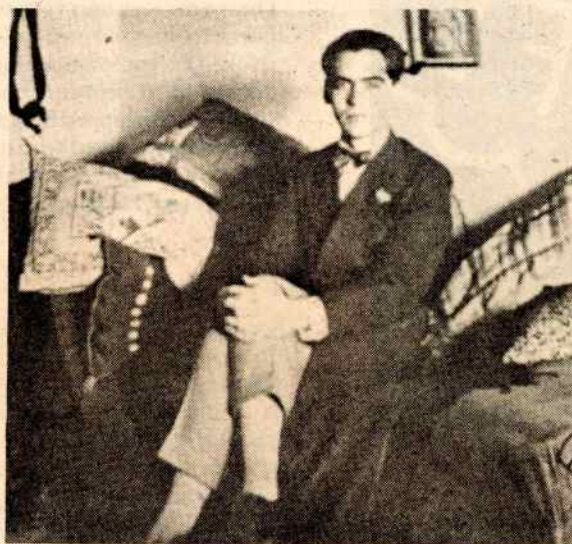
DE BIEDMA: No. But you must bear in mind above all an important difference marking off the Generation of '27 from other previous literary groups: the non-gay members of this group react to the openly, specifically gay sensibility of some of their colleagues by adopting aesthetically similar attitudes. Taken as a whole, the group displays, in its first phase, during the twenties, a distinctly camp sensibility. That is not, I think, a very common occurrence in Spanish literature, even for homosexual writers. For example, Benavente was gay, but if there are indications of a gay sensibility in his work, they are inhibited or deflected, and they almost never serve as the take-off point for a deliberately stylised "campiness."

QUESTION: What do you understand by the term "camp?"

DE BIEDMA: In English-language gay parlance, "camp" meant and means exactly the same as *pluma* [literally, "feather, plume" – TRANSLATOR'S NOTE] does in Spanish gay argot. It was Susan Sontag who – taking as her point of departure a passage from, I believe, Christopher Isherwood's *Prater Violet* – enlarged and universalised the homosexual meaning of the term and applied it to a certain style of artistic creation and to a certain mode of aesthetic appreciation. That was not so long ago. And I apply the word in the same sense when I say that the sensibility of the poets of '27 is frequently a "camp" one. Since then, the word has come into vogue in Spain with a quite different semantic value, though basically still related to the one first proposed by Sontag.

QUESTION: The problem would seem to consist in determining whether "camp" signifies the triumph of a genuinely gay sensibility, or indicates merely a sort of indiscriminate generalised nostalgia.

DE BIEDMA: Yes, you mean that more or less ironic pleasure taken in nostalgia, that fondness for styles and mannerisms that are no longer current, that have become *démodés*. That's the way Spanish television handled it. I don't recall precisely how Sontag defined "camp," when she elevated it to the role of an aesthetic concept, but I imagine that her definition would not be too different from mine, which is undoubtedly inspired by it. "Camp" is the deliberate treatment by the author of the references and themes in his work – feelings, situations, human relations, landscapes, etc., everything that constitutes the "material" of a poem or a novel – as mere formal categories, as a literary genre, as stylistic constructs in which the author participates only ironically, directing a conspiratorial wink of complicity to the "dear reader." If the latter does not catch the wink, if he isn't an accomplice, entering into the spirit of the game, if he takes what are customarily called "the issues" seriously, he will understand nothing and derive no enjoyment from the work. On the other hand, the reader or spectator can play the game for himself and convert something that wasn't "camp" into something that is. Neither Judy Garland nor Concha Piquer nor Estrellita Castro was "camp," or at least they didn't mean to be. What is "camp" is the way we now react to their personalities and their songs.



Federico García Lorca in his home, Granada, Spain 1927.

QUESTION: The distance between the author and the work of art, and that between the latter and its assumed public, are a kind of common code, a shared reference...

DE BIEDMA: Now here I find another difference, that of the English decadents. One can, for example, read *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and give it a "camp" interpretation, but it really isn't "camp." In it, Wilde is a sort of Sunday circuit-preacher of decadence; he takes it all seriously. In contrast, Ronald Firbank, an exquisite artist and a splendid writer, is the king of "camp," precisely because his decadent vision is ironic. And for exactly this reason he seems to me a much more serious writer and a much more convincing homosexual. Although I repeat, as I've said before, it's not absolutely necessary to be gay: a "camp" sensibility, with a greater or lesser degree of accompanying latent homosexual characteristics, may very well manifest itself in a non-homosexual artist. I think that Firbank learned more from *Under the Hill* than from any other source, and Beardsley probably wasn't gay, even if most of his friends were.

QUESTION: Then how can one define this situation? As a victory for...?

DE BIEDMA: As a phenomenon of aesthetic contagion. Artistic circles are very closed and very close, and influences are in the air like influenza germs.

QUESTION: Nevertheless, in the Generation of '27 the influences were almost matched, half and half. Why wasn't it easier for the heterosexual sensibility to prevail?

DE BIEDMA: In their first phase, the "campiest" ones were the older members, who were not gay: Salinas and Guillén, born in 1891 and 1893, respectively. Quite a bit older than Lorca. No, I rather think that "camp," in their cases, comes from another source. Both Salinas and Guillén were very much involved with French literature, at a point when the "classicist" reaction occurred, just after the death of Apollinaire, at the end of World War I...

QUESTION: That is to say, the Generation of '27 didn't so much establish an aesthetic doctrine, a sensibility, as undergo the influence of an already existing sensibility.

DE BIEDMA: Quite possibly some influence reached them from French literature at precisely that juncture. Those were the years not only of the apotheosis of "pure poetry," of Valéry and *La Jeune Parque*; they were also the years of the loves of Cocteau and Radiguet, with their classical "camp" conspiracy of *Le Bal du Comte d'Orgel* and *Plain Chant*. Picasso strays in that direction too, when he takes his vacations from cubism and amuses himself with ingrism.

QUESTION: Has anyone in the field of Spanish letters speculated on these possibilities?

DE BIEDMA: Not that I know of. In France, something could perhaps be found in Cocteau's work. But what seems to me evident beyond a doubt is that the influence of Valéry, which is always mentioned in any reference to the Generation of '27 during the early twenties, was not the only French influence. There were others. And there was, obviously, the influence of the very *ambiance* that prevailed in the artistic *cénacles* of Paris at the time an *ambiance* with which Guillén and Salinas were thoroughly familiar. The poem we were talking about the other day, which I'm very fond of, and which seems to me a "camp" masterpiece, appears in Salinas's second book of poetry, *Seguro Azar* (Certain Chance):

An ultimate princess – the last leaf
of autumn – passes slowly, solitary, down the middle
of the wide avenue!
Blonde, disinherited, morganatic
spouse of the sparrow. Dry branches
present the useless steel of arms,
the double rows of trees mount guard.
Adieu!
The inflamed urban
illuminations offer to her death
electric paradises, white Elysian
fields. Upward, ever upward!
The wind, her destiny, already lifts her,
pure soul, into the heavens.
Adieu! Winter, what an anarchist! Winter.
The green dynasties
enduring transatlantic exile
await
April's trumpet, the certain restoration.

QUESTION: Can one say that, in the Generation of '27, two tendencies can be distinguished and that, in some fashion, one exerted a greater influence on the other, or, at least, is better known?

DE BIEDMA: I think that between 1928 and 1930 the whole atmosphere changes, "camp" attitudes are diluted, and the poets who have the greatest influence in the group are not the same ones as before. Up to this point, it seems to me, the books which most clearly capture the spirit of the moment are Salinas's first two, the first edition of *Cántico* (Canticle), the *Canciones* (Songs) and the *Romancero* (Book of Ballads) ... by Lorca. And Alberti's *Marinero en Tierra* (Sailor on land), of course. In the thirties, "camp," as an aesthetic attitude, is much less predominant, although it appears in certain cases, for example, in Cernuda. There is a famous poem by him, "Los marineros son las alas del amor" ("Sailors are the wings of love"), ... a very interesting poem. In it – and in some others – "camp" is not so much an aesthetic attitude as pure and simple campiness. A specifically gay campiness. Along with the attempt to create, through this campiness, something equivalent to the songs of the period, to a blues melody, a really quite successful attempt.

QUESTION: Whenever one speaks of sailors, one of course thinks of Alberti, who was not gay...

DE BIEDMA: Yes, naturally. Alberti was very "camp." Oddly enough, in the thirties, when Juan Ramón Jiménez was already on very bad terms with the whole group, he published an attack against them, in "El Sol," I think, in which he says that in his days poets sang of women and roses, but the new poets sing of sailor-boys. An accusation of homosexuality directed not so much against Lorca as against Alberti, who wasn't gay...

QUESTION: Is Juan Ramón Jiménez attacking a literary style?

DE BIEDMA: He's attacking a whole sensibility in which the sentiment is not feeling but rather an ironic stylization of feeling.

QUESTION: Getting back to France: at the same time as all the frivolity of "camp" we also find the total seriousness of a Gide, for example.

DE BIEDMA: Gide exerted a very strong moral influence on Cernuda. Cernuda began to become reconciled to his own homosexuality when Salinas prevailed on him to read Gide, not even suspecting that he was helping resolve a personal problem of Cernuda's.

QUESTION: But what Gide represents is almost puritanism: Gide would never be campy.

DE BIEDMA: No, I suspect that Gide loathed campy attitudes; that would surely follow from his Protestant-ministerial temperament.

QUESTION: In other words, there are two schools of thought...

DE BIEDMA: Well, talking about "schools" in reference to something as underground as homosexuality was at that time is perhaps more confusing than enlightening. With regard to the attitude of gays to "camp" art, one could indeed talk of "tendencies," but it wouldn't explain very much. "Camp" art is a manifestation with obvious affinities to gayness, and often revelatory of gayness, but it's not necessarily, inevitably gay.

QUESTION: So a "camp" sensibility can be a gay characteristic found in straights as well . . .

DE BIEDMA: Yes, of course, just as one can be gay and display no "camp" attitudes. I say "display," because "camp" is fundamentally a display, an exhibition, a stage number, whether we utilize it as a form of aesthetic realization or whether it's just plain campiness. In both cases, the audience's complicity and the actor's provocation are the indispensable elements in the game. What Sontag did, in appropriating the gay meaning of the term, was not in the least an arbitrary act. In the final analysis, camp is a complicated and, I would add, fascinating sociocultural creation of the gay ghetto. As an inherent, innate manifestation of the gay personality, it does not exist, not even in those effeminate lads who people say "were born like that." In these latter, it's an instinctive social reflex, a defense mechanism bred of their insecurity *vis-à-vis* other people. Many of them will never even become queens. . . . With true homosexuals who've come out and assumed their gayness, things are very different: campiness becomes a deliberate impersonation which can range from ridiculous parody to "high camp," the ironic stylization of the "queen," that is, the assumption of the image straights have of gays, which naturally doesn't correspond to what any gay person genuinely is, in real life. It is a mythical image, coalescing out of the anxieties, the frustrations and the repressions of conventional "manliness." "Camping it up" is a way of introducing, symbolically, straight moral, social and sexual values into the promiscuity of the gay ghetto, so that everyone can make fun of them and profane them by caricaturing them. Campiness is both a ritual of collective complicity, then, and a refined revenge on all straights, including the straight who one once upon a time thought one would have to be. It is, moreover, of enormous social benefit, rather like dirty jokes and smutty conversations at old boys' reunions and among young draftees in the army. Gay society is very closed and exclusivist and is composed of people who, apart from their gayness, often have very little in common. Campiness is the guarantee of immediate communication. It's the joke that everybody understands and that allows the newest arrival to feel welcome in the club, as if he'd been a member all his life.

As a symbolic provocation, as well it has a serious and admirable ethical significance. By assuming, in ironic fashion, the false image that other people have created for him, what the homosexual is trying to do is demonstrate that he has accepted himself, with all the consequences of that acceptance.

QUESTION: In some of Lorca's poems, for example, "La canción del mariquita" ("The Song of the Little Queen") or the "Oda a Walt Whitman" ("Ode to Walt Whitman"), what distance is he setting up between the subject of the poem and himself?

DE BIEDMA: "The Song of the Little Queen" is quite interesting in this respect. Lorca plays a very careful game. On the one hand, I don't think it had ever occurred to anybody in Spanish literature before Lorca to write a song about a queen. Lorca plays with the theme, he handles it in a strictly witty, ironic manner: he has chosen a topic that interests him and involves him, but, precisely through the use of irony, he keeps it at a distance. So that people who read the poem won't think that the author is a queen.

QUESTION: And in the "Ode to Walt Whitman?"

DE BIEDMA: Here again, he maintains a certain aloofness: there are gays and then there are gays, and I'm one of the good ones. . . . He displays none of the sympathy shown by Cernuda in "El escándalo" ("The Scandal") for the young queens in southern Spain. Cernuda is approving, he's in favor, not perhaps of the form their social protest takes, but of what's behind it, whereas Lorca merely utilizes the queen as a picturesque subject. In Cernuda, there's a sense of affinity.*

QUESTION: And yet Lorca himself shares in this camp sensibility, this code . . .

DE BIEDMA: Lorca was much campier than Cernuda.

QUESTION: This literary ability not to say in poetry what one says in daily life indicates duplicity, a very generalized double game, which we don't find in Cernuda.

DE BIEDMA: The *Romancero Gitano* (*Book of Gypsy Ballads*) is a "camp" book. Those descriptions. . . . It's all very gay.

QUESTION: More gay than "camp."

DE BIEDMA: Distanced, but decidedly gay.

QUESTION: Here he isn't setting up distances: he's singing directly to the gypsy, the man. Here, deeply, unmistakably, he's man celebrating man.

DE BIEDMA: Yes, I think the most important things in that book wouldn't have been written if Lorca hadn't been gay. The *Book of Gypsy Ballads* is profoundly revealing, but only for those who choose to understand: what is aesthetically "camp" is used to blur the traces of gayness, to tone down the gay campiness. And it seems to me that Lorca never gets beyond that level, either in his poetry or in his relations with straight fellow-poets. It never occurred to him to tell Guillén or Salinas that he was gay, for instance.

QUESTION: And yet at the same period Cernuda confesses it openly.

DE BIEDMA: Yes, he was the first to say it. In reality – and this is somewhat amusing – he didn't admit his gayness publicly until 1932. What happens is that, because there's a certain stylistic continuity between "Un río y un amor" ("A river and a love") and "Los placeres prohibidos" ("The forbidden pleasures"), the reader imagines that he's come out openly in "A river and a love," whereas it's really in "The forbidden pleasures," written in 1932, that he makes his declaration. I think the fact that by that date Spain had become a republic had some influence on his decision as well.

QUESTION: That is, there was a wider gamut of possibilities of choice of life-style, a greater pluralism. Besides, legislation under the Republic must have been more enlightened.

DE BIEDMA: It wasn't that much more enlightened. The Vagrancy and Habitual Criminals Act of 1933 was a bitch, in that respect. What had changed was probably the standards of the people who were in power and were responsible for enforcing the law. One of the most important political figures of the day was gay, for example.

QUESTION: Could one perhaps say that Lorca's attitude in *The Book of Gypsy Ballads*, even though he creates a whole metaphysics of gypsy beauty in order to be able to sing of the gypsy, approaches Cernuda's frankness, in that it's a case of a man directly celebrating another man?

DE BIEDMA: Yes, but in those days that might have seemed merely sophisticated, not necessarily gay. Nowadays, I think everyone can see clearly that Lorca was gay, but at that time, if one chose not to understand, like Salinas, Guillén and Dámaso Alonso, for example, "sophistication" was a very convenient excuse. That was never possible with Cernuda, who states his homosexuality openly and writes love poems in the masculine gender.

QUESTION: What was the reaction to Cernuda?

DE BIEDMA: Since they couldn't choose not to understand, they tried to avoid the issue, whenever they could, and that's much harder to do.

QUESTION: Getting back to Juan Ramón Jiménez, did he attack a type of gay sensibility or just Alberti as a person and author?

DE BIEDMA: Alberti and Lorca, and for a very simple reason: because they were the poets who were most likely to overshadow his reputation. Cernuda published *La realidad y el deseo* (*The reality and the desire*) in 1936, but, up to that time, though he was considered by the *cognoscenti* to be a very good poet, he was little known and wasn't talked of as one of the important literary figures of the day.

QUESTION: And Prados? Was Prados an important figure at that period?

DE BIEDMA: He had a lot of personal influence, but he was never a "front-line" poet. The most influential figure in the group during twenties is Guillén, and, along with him, perhaps Salinas. Later, toward the end of the twenties, the *Book of Gypsy Ballads* and *Sobre los Angeles* (*On Angels*) meet with stunning success, and the shift to surrealism and neoromanticism is already detectable.

QUESTION: It's at this point that Lorca's romantic ideal, his liturgy of male beauty, makes its appearance.

DE BIEDMA: No, the *Book of Gypsy Ballads* is earlier – 1928, I think. But if you examine "El Llanto" ("Grief"), which is from 1934, you find, in the celebration of Ignacio's physical attributes, a kind of attitude toward masculine beauty and male arrogance that's . . . what could one call it? Homosexual? Homosentimental? Bear in mind that, in Spanish society, "homosentimentalism" has always been very strong, because the world of personal relationships and social intercourse was almost wholly masculine. The kind of sensibility which the Spaniard still, I think, for the most part values is the masculine kind; it's the one he understands. I've known very few Spaniards who were really interested in the female sensibility. Perhaps the only one was Gabriel Ferrater.

QUESTION: Does neoromanticism bring in a new ideal of beauty which in the end becomes an abstraction allowing everything?

DE BIEDMA: To think of gayness as an operative influence in the sense in which French surrealism or German

romanticism were operative is not really accurate. What we have, rather, is certain attitudes, which in their origin were gay attitudes, which are beginning to be expressed more clearly, less ambiguously, because social pressures are becoming less intense, and which, perhaps precisely because they are not yet too explicit, influence, and are seemingly adopted by, other poets who are not gay.

QUESTION: Nevertheless, in the Generation of '27, we find, besides a poetic style, a life-style which is quite unambiguous, and which must have been rather scandalous even for those who preferred not to understand.

DE BIEDMA: Yes, but all this is happening in a very small, closed society, practically a society of outsiders, in which everybody knows everybody else, and each member knows how much he can say, and to whom he can say it.

QUESTION: Just as in Spain the Republic opened up a series of changes, in Mexico, at about the same time, a certain group of leaders of the Mexican Revolution sponsored the Contemporary Generation, which displayed erotic characteristics similar to those of the Generation of '27. But there was a certain amount of scandal: word of their behaviour got around.

DE BIEDMA: In Spain, an atmosphere riddled with embryonic accusations certainly existed.

QUESTION: But did none of that leak out into the political sphere?

DE BIEDMA: Well, if you read *Madrid, de Corte a Cheka* (*Madrid, from Court to Cheka*) by Foxá, you'll see that a little of it did leak out.

QUESTION: Because it's very odd that Lorca should be taken up as a hero, after being shot, by people who never would have approved of his personal behaviour.

DE BIEDMA: That's because, officially, Lorca was not a homosexual. In part, the antipathy expressed toward Cernuda was due to the fact that he obliged everybody to be aware of what he was. One can't forget that homosexuality had been something absolutely underground in Spain for centuries. I suspect, for instance, that Góngora was gay – something that is absolutely undetectable, or unprovable, in his poetry.* But there's a special kind of vibration in certain passages, and of course there's the fact that Quevedo always said Góngora was queer. In the satirical war between the two of them, Quevedo is the accusing policeman, denouncing Góngora as a homosexual and a Jew . . . Góngora's attacks never go beyond Quevedo's writing and his public personality.

QUESTION: The Inquisition accused Góngora of leading a life of dissipation.

DE BIEDMA: He went to bullfights and hosted poetry readings.

QUESTION: Would his gayness have something to do with these gatherings?

DE BIEDMA: I just don't know. Maybe in the reality of daily life homosexuality was less completely repressed than it seems to us now, looking back . . .

QUESTION: Returning to Lorca, the moral judgment he himself passes on homosexuality is pretty harsh.

DE BIEDMA: That's the case of the "Ode to Walt Whitman": it can be read very easily by a person who prefers not to know what Lorca is. He may think, simply, that Lorca is a very civilized individual, and he will be in complete agreement with the author that there are respectable homosexuals whom one can get along with, but there are also screaming queens, and accepting them is out of the question. The "Ode to Walt Whitman" can be read as a poem written by a straight who understands gays but refuses to comprehend the gay ghetto.

QUESTION: Lorca doesn't accept what he is . . .

DE BIEDMA: The proof that he doesn't is the fact that one of his central themes is the barrenness of love: in Lorca's vision, which is a completely procreative, rural, peasant vision, if you will, a sterile love, a love which doesn't fertilize and reproduce, is accursed. The choice of the theme of *Yerma* (*Barren*) was no doubt a symbol of this obsession of his. I'm not familiar with his gay drama, *El público* (*The Public*), but I imagine that the theme of barren love and its close association with death should appear there also.

QUESTION: From what's known of *The Public*, one would get the impression that there, at last, Lorca was beginning to write gay poetry as such.

DE BIEDMA: I don't know, because one of the alternative titles he gave to *The Public* was *La destrucción de Sodoma* (*The Destruction of Sodom*). The rural-landowner mentality is very marked in Lorca.

* See Cernuda's poem "El Escándalo" translated by F. D. Blanton in *Now the Volcano: Anthology of Latin American Gay Literature*. Gay Sunshine Press, 1979, p. 59.

* Luis de Góngora y Argote (1561-1627), priest, poet of Spanish Golden Age; Francisco Gomez de Quevedo y Villegas (1580-1645), novelist and satirist.

QUESTION: He needs to have a son-and-heir, strong arms to till the soil and the confidence that the family farm will be kept in the family. And so queens repel him, as a mirror of his own sterility.

DE BIEDMA: In that sense, the "Ode to Walt Whitman" is an acceptance of the homosexual, so long as he's pure and a poet, but not of the urban gay-bar queens. This type of hypersensitivity in certain homosexuals who set up a difference between themselves and "the others" was and is very common. And it's a typical consequence of the existence of the gay ghetto.

QUESTION: But it's not a class difference. Is it one of degree of shamelessness vs. discretion, of a certain code of manners?

DE BIEDMA: Yes, it's a matter of being closeted or coming out, of people's knowing. Lorca loathed screaming queens, and that's what he himself was, and he was very much a queen. I now tend to think that his decision to write for the theatre stemmed perhaps from a desire to be able to express himself with greater freedom.

QUESTION: But the ambiguity continues when he uses female characters.

DE BIEDMA: If he manipulates a wide enough range of characters, the public will suppose that the author is not *in* any particular one of them, that none of them is *his* particular mouthpiece. He can thus speak with greater freedom, even though this game of revealing oneself and hiding oneself at one and the same time continues, in fact, to be an ambiguous one.

QUESTION: At the same time as he treats the problem of sterility, in his writings, as would a rural landowner, he rebels against the repression, the suffocation that such a society presupposes.

DE BIEDMA: This kind of rural mentality was not limited to rural landowners. In Spain, in the thirties, ownership of land was still the principal ingredient of social power. The values of Spanish society were still peasant ones.

QUESTION: Values which Lorca rebels against even though at the same time he is shaped by them: that mother earth that might well be Bernarda Alba...

DE BIEDMA: But that seems to me logical enough, in the sense that one can't help hating one's own limitations. Especially if one's a person who feels suffocated in his private life by this kind of public values.

QUESTION: And do other gay members of the Generation of '27, Prados, for example, suffer from the same problem?

DE BIEDMA: The other day I mentioned a poem by Prados which greatly amuses me, because it's so unspeakably brazen and boldfaced. It belongs to a series, "Cinco de Abril" ("Fifth of April"), which is laden with metaerotic connotations, but in which the allusions could hardly be more specific. Here it is:

How well I feel you come down,
how slowly now you're entering,
alive and hot, in my body,
just like a fountain, burning,
flowing out of yourself!

...
You are so warm! Your arm,
trembling, flames now on my chest.
You have poured yourself entire
through my eyes, now you're inside
my flesh, under the tree
of my pulses, in its shadow
under the dream:
complete, inside the dream!

Read the whole thing: it's a sort of ode to the pilotless cock. It's incredible that people could have frowned when Cernuda spoke out clearly, and yet swallowed something like this without a blink. Or take the beginning of another poem in the same series, called "Amor" ("Love"):

Your back and my chest,
my chest upon your back...

QUESTION: Then what we have in Prados is not just a "camp" sensibility any longer, but a gay attitude toward life, aggressively so, in fact.

DE BIEDMA: Yes, but note that in these poems there's no explicit indication of the sex of the beloved. Accordingly, those of Prados's contemporaries who so desired could ease their minds by thinking of Emilio's metaerotic sublimity, since Prados had an established reputation as a sort of lyrical superarchangel, a thousand leagues removed from the vulgar contingencies of everyday life.

QUESTION: Besides these very overt, obvious examples, is there any covert, underground poetry in the Generation of '27? In Mexico, certain unpublishable sonnets by Novo are known to exist...

DE BIEDMA: There's *The Public*. And there's a group of poems which for a quarter of a century was thought to have

been lost, and which is being talked about again now, Lorca's *Sonetos del amor oscuro* (*Sonnets of Dark Love*). One of them is in the *Obras Completas* (*Complete Works*): *Amor de mis entrañas, viva muerte* (*Most intimate of loves, my living death*)...

QUESTION: Perhaps in these sonnets Lorca spoke more freely, without pressures.

DE BIEDMA: Many people were familiar with them. Lorca had read them to friends during the last months of his life. In one of them, the one I've just mentioned, the poet pleads with his lover to write to him. I don't know if they've disappeared, or if the family has hidden them, nor do I know what stance Lorca strikes in them. It would be rather peculiar if they had just vanished: there was no reason for his house in Madrid [then under Republican control - TRANSLATOR'S NOTE] to be ransacked, and I don't think his family's house in Granada was. I suspect the originals are in one or the other of the two houses...

QUESTION: And underground poetry by Prados?

DE BIEDMA: I've checked in all his published writings to see if I could find - as I thought I might - the poem which Emilio Prados once sent to one of his lovers in order to break off relations with him. That fact alone shows how bent they were on sublimating things in those days: I mean, nobody, but nobody today would think of breaking up an affair by sending his lover a poem. It gives one the feeling that they wanted to turn homosexuality into something else, to freight it with a different significance, a significance not purely homosexual, to raise it, instead, to metaerotic heights - in other words, that desire to believe that there were, on the one hand, the pure exponents of "Uranian love," like Walt Whitman and Lorca, and, on the other hand, the gay-bar queens... The person to whom that poem of Prados' was sent recited it to me; like a fool, I didn't copy it down, and now all I remember is a line-and-a-half (it's very phallic, like everything by Emilio Prados): "Y yo, de pie, San Sebastián de mí mismo" ("And I, erect, my own self's Saint Sebastian")... Maybe when the first generation of the relatives of the poets dies off, those poems will see the light. I don't know.

QUESTION: Now, concerning Cernuda. Could one say that Cernuda's stance is less Spanish, more European? He's perhaps the only one of the group who dares to break through the web of deceit and pretense and publish everything.*

DE BIEDMA: Yes, I think in part that's what caused his isolation; to what extent, I'm not sure, but there may be some element of truth in his complaints. The trouble in these cases is... For example, I recall having heard Guillén speak about a poem by Cernuda which at the time I hadn't read - a very lovely poem written in 1951, on the death of André Gide. Guillén would confine himself to reciting - inaccurately - the last line of the poem: "ya van quedando pocos..." ("so few are left now..."). Then he would pause maliciously and add: "And he's the one who says so..."

QUESTION: They were very hard on Cernuda in every way.

DE BIEDMA: Oh, I don't know if they were as bad as he said they were. There may have been a vein of paranoia in Cernuda: none of them ever expressed any doubts about his being a great poet.

QUESTION: Did Cernuda make any attempt in his writings to theorise on homosexuality?

DE BIEDMA: He left some notes. I'm looking for *Letras* (*Letters*), a book by Carlos Pelegrín Otero, in which these notes are quoted. Here it is: "...perversion, third sex, 'childish games,' here and there, at one period or another, in every country, in every age, the same inclination, the same preference, with its different nuances, distinct, contradictory and even conflicting, has appeared, appears and will always appear. In spite of ridicule, in spite of reprovals, in spite of laws, whatever happens in nature, whatever nature permits by the fact of letting it occur, is normal, proper and canonical. There are the hypocrites, who try to pass it over in silence, the indifferent, who let it take its course, the brave, who adopt it as a cause; their number is legion, much greater than people suppose..." Now there's a point here at which I'm not in agreement with Cernuda, and that's in the reference to Goethe which follows and which is one of those Germanic idiocies: justifying homosexuality because the male body is supposedly objectively more beautiful than the female body! In that case, if it's a question of beauty, go and sleep with a black panther, which is infinitely more beautiful than man and woman put together! "Goethe justified it by saying that the male body is more beautiful than the female body. Was Goethe completely impartial? Mann alludes to one of his amorous entanglements. I recall having heard Federico García Lorca exclaim, in riposte to Juan Ramón Jiménez's stupid comparison of poetry with a naked woman: "Naked woman? A naked man!" Cervantes, through experience, must have known well the charm of adolescent beauty: he demonstrates that in one of Sancho's adventures on his

Island. Why? Why man and not woman? Why Mars and not Adonis? Today we still know nothing concerning one preference or the other. The human male takes shape, grows up, and we cannot predict what his sexual tastes will be, nor is he responsible for them, any more than he is responsible for the colour of his eyes, for his height, etc. ... During the process of his childhood development, the preference is formed, and he is not to blame for it, nor ought he to suffer the consequences of it. ... There's one feature here which we can note again and again in the Generation of '27: their confusion of homosexuality with worship of beauty. That serves, of course, as a justification.

QUESTION: It seems odd that Cernuda should need to resort to this kind of justification.

DE BIEDMA: If we look at Cernuda's own tastes, what we always find is a charming young animal: he doesn't see a human being before him; he replaces the human being with an archetypal image.

QUESTION: That's no doubt also a consequence of the ghetto.

DE BIEDMA: Yes, but I think more so in his time than today. That excessive emphasis placed on physical beauty is less common in the gay community today than it was 30 years ago. Whenever Cernuda talks about homosexuality, he puts beauty in the foreground, and the fact is, of course, that beauty is as relevant to heterosexuality as it is to homosexuality: what we like we consider beautiful.

QUESTION: And can Juan Gil-Albert be considered a member of the Generation of '27?

DE BIEDMA: I think so. He was friendly with all of them, and he's only a few years younger than they.

QUESTION: He is a poet who has assumed and accepted his sexual identity; he even takes quite a militant stance in the various liberation movements.

DE BIEDMA: Quite militant, indeed. But the country has changed so much, the world has changed so much.

QUESTION: We had spoken of a kind of reaction, in the Generation of '27, against the preceding Generation of 1898, against their "seriousness."

DE BIEDMA: What is really noticeable is a change in sensibility from that of the previous literary generation, that of 1898, or what was called Modernism. And it's curious that the Spanish Modernist *fin-de-siècle* decadent movement was not in the least homosexual, not even implicitly. Now, as I said before, outside of private conversations, homosexuality was never explicitly expressed in the Generation of '27, either. Outside, that is, that little group of "very close friends" which Cernuda tried to create as a subgroup, in an essay written in 1932.

QUESTION: A subgroup of Andalusians or of gays?

DE BIEDMA: It's very unlikely that the criterion of choice was exclusively homosexuality. They were all younger, for one thing, than some of the older poets. But it's curious that Alberti should be absent from Cernuda's proposed subgroup.

QUESTION: Andalusian, but straight...

DE BIEDMA: That may have been for another reason. When Cernuda published that article, Alberti already belonged to the Communist Party and was off on a completely different tangent.

QUESTION: From a biographical point of view, the Generation of '27 has been very little studied. Why? Because of repression?

DE BIEDMA: There's a passage in which Cernuda speaks of his sojourn in Paris at the age of 27 and says: "I allowed myself no... distractions." I think that's the word he uses, but, anyway, the meaning is crystal-clear: I didn't go to bed with anyone. Cernuda was late in accepting himself. We know something of Serafin, who inspired "Donde habita el olvido." ("The Dwelling-Place of Forgetfulness"), and who died in Mexico; as I recall, he was a young fellow who had worked in the Altolaguirre printing firm. There was a young English poet who was a very close friend of Cernuda's, Stanley Richardson, who of course was gay, and who fathered a poem in *Invocaciones* (*Invocations*), "Por unos tulipanes amarillos" ("For Some Yellow Tulips"), which is the story of their first bedding-down. As for Salvador, the Mexican who inspired *Poemas para un cuerpo* (*Poems for a Body*), I imagine he must still be alive today, and I'm sure lots of people know him... I think that Cernuda took his homosexuality with so much high moral seriousness partly because he was so late in accepting himself.

QUESTION: And perhaps because of Gide's ethical influence.

DE BIEDMA: Yes, but he'd read Gide ten years earlier, in 1921 or '22, and in 1929, in Paris, he still doesn't allow himself any "distractions"... Of course, in Mexico, in 1951 or '52, in *Variaciones* (*Variations*), "Dúo" was suppressed, a prose poem that recounts a sexual interlude with a fourteen-year-old boy.

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*Luis Cernuda (1902-1963). Spanish poet who lived in Mexico toward the end of his life. See his poems in the anthology *Now the Volcano*. Gay Sunshine Press, 1979.

A MATTER OF HONOR : HANS BLÜHER AND MAGNUS HIRSCHFELD

by Richard Mills

Hans Blüher, a 24-year-old German, published *The German Wandervogel Movement as an Erotic Phenomenon* (*Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen*) in 1912 as the third and final volume of his history of the Wandervogel movement. Postulating that homosexuality was the driving force behind the German youth movement, the book aroused immediate controversy and created a long-lasting scandal. Leaders of the Wandervogel did everything in their power to discredit Blüher's book, but succeeded only in ostracizing Blüher from "polite" society. Not until the advent of World War I did the book cease to be an object of controversy. In the years after the war, interest in Blüher and his ideas abated, and his succeeding books failed to attract the attention of the general public. His last book appeared in 1953 and was met with indifference; by the time of his death in 1955 he was just another forgotten writer.

Almost a quarter of a century has passed since Blüher's death. In that span of time the gay liberation movement has been reborn, homosexuality has re-emerged as a topic of public debate, and the documentation of previous struggles for gay equality has begun. As a result, an increasing amount of attention is being directed to those pioneer figures who were among the first to publicly address the "problem" of homosexuality. Although generally forgotten today, Hans Blüher was one of those pioneers. *The German Wandervogel Movement as an Erotic Phenomenon* (hereafter referred to as *GWMEP*), for example, is one of the most important of the early treatises on homosexuality. Furthermore, Blüher's writings shed new light on Magnus Hirschfeld's Scientific-Humanitarian Committee (*das Wissenschaftlich-humanitäre Komitee*), and raise fundamental questions about Hirschfeld's scientific integrity. Any history of the early homosexual emancipation movement will be incomplete without a careful assessment of Hans Blüher's contributions to it. The following article attempts to present his most important thoughts on homosexuality, and to answer the questions raised by his collaboration with Magnus Hirschfeld and the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee.

WANDERVOGEL — THE GERMAN YOUTH MOVEMENT

What was the Wandervogel? Translated literally, the German word "Wandervogel" means "wandering bird" or "migratory bird," and is often translated as "bird of passage." The word is also used to describe a person who does not lead a settled life, such as a "rambler." While these meanings are still valid, they have been completely overshadowed by the word's usage as a name for the German youth movement. This movement, which existed in the first half of the twentieth century, is the phenomenon dealt with in Blüher's book.

A group of male students banded together in 1896 at a Gymnasium¹ in Steglitz, then a small town next to Berlin. They founded a club which soon became known as the Wandervogel.² The organization's activities centered around excursions into the countryside. Expeditions were decidedly on the primitive side, at least when compared to typically middle class trips of the time. Members usually cooked for themselves over campfires, and nights were spent either outside or on straw "beds" inside barns. Aside from extended trips, excursions were generally undertaken on foot, and "roughing it" was the order of the day.

The entire Wandervogel style was enough to dismay any "respectable" parent, and it often did. In fact, the formation of the Wandervogel can be understood as a direct reaction to the increasingly bourgeois nature of German society at the turn of the century, when traditional, land-connected values were being discarded in favor of Industrial Age ideals. Unhappy with what they saw as a wholesale disavowal of the past, the Steglitzer students hoped to develop a fraternal organization that would counteract these trends.

Strong bonds of comradeship and loyalty developed between the members of this first Wandervogel group, of which Blüher was a member. The combination of strong emotional ties between members and the lack of adult supervision proved to be most attractive to youth. New groups sprang up all over Germany, and by 1907 groups had been organized in Switzerland and Austria as well. By 1913 there were approximately 800 different Wandervogel or Wandervogel-inspired groups, with a total membership in excess of 25,000.

As the youth movement attracted more and more adherents, Wandervogel councils were created, composed of "sympathetic" but "concerned" adults. They took on the sponsorship both of individual groups and the movement as a whole. Although barred from any direct participation in the groups, the councils did exercise a good deal of influence over them, as is demonstrated by the gradual inclusion of girls into the movement.

In the beginning, Wandervogel groups were exclusively male; females were not allowed to join. This arrangement did not sit well with parents, teachers, and school officials.



Hans Blüher

They soon voiced the suspicion that the Wandervogel was alienating their sons and pupils from the distaff sex. Accordingly, the councils undertook efforts to bring females into the movement. They were partially successful — by 1907 a number of female Wandervogel groups had been created. However, the establishment of these groups did little to integrate the sexes. Most groups had either male or female membership; only a minority were actually mixed. On certain occasions, such as solstice celebrations, Wandervogel members of both sexes did indeed join forces. But otherwise they went their separate ways. Not until after World War I did this situation change in any significant way.

As has already been noted, adults were not granted any supervisory capacities within the Wandervogel. Nevertheless, many were welcome participants in the groups' activities. Their participation, however, was always contingent upon one factor: the willingness of the individual groups to permit it. As a result, only those adults who understood and sympathized with the Wandervogel spirit were accepted into its ranks. Such people were fellow comrades, both in spirit and in deed.

One such person was Wilhelm Jansen, a man in his 40s. Introduced to the Wandervogel by Blüher, Jansen quickly became very active and popular in it. Indeed, his popularity was so great that rumors soon started to circulate that he was engaging in sexual relationships with several of his youthful male friends. These rumors precipitated a major crisis of the youth movement in 1910. Public denunciations of the "pederast clubs" were soon made, and a full-scale witch hunt against homosexual members and leaders was initiated.



Magnus Hirschfeld

During this crisis much was said, but little could actually be done. Jansen and his followers split away from the parent organization and formed their own group, the Young Wandervogel (*der Jungwandervogel*), while the remaining Wandervogel groups reconstituted under both old and new names.

By 1912 matters had calmed down considerably. But the appearance of *GWMEP* touched off yet another uproar over the presence of homosexuals in the movement, one that was ended only by the outbreak of World War I. While the war effort put the controversy to rest, it also dismantled the youth movement. A great many Wandervogel members rushed to help defend their "fatherland," and thereby forced the Wandervogel into a premature retirement.³

A "CONSERVATIVE" THINKER

Hans Blüher was born on February 17, 1888 in Freiburg (Schlesia) to solidly middle-class parents, and grew up in Berlin. In 1902 he joined the first Wandervogel group. In 1907 he received his Abitur,⁴ and remained active in the youth movement for two more years. His first major publication, the three volume history of the Wandervogel, appeared in 1912.

Blüher studied a variety of subjects at universities in Basel and Berlin, including philosophy, German literature, classical philology, biology, and evangelical theology. However, he never completed his studies. He was married twice, had two children, and spent most of his life in Berlin. Like many other German authors, he was forbidden to publish during the Third Reich. His later writings, of which there were many, never attracted public attention to the same extent as the Wandervogel history, although they did receive a measure of critical consideration. By the time of his death on April 2, 1955 in Berlin, Blüher was a largely forgotten writer.

In addition to the Wandervogel books, Blüher's most important works are: *The Role of Eroticism in Male Society* (*Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft*), 1917; *The Axis of Nature* (*Die Achse der Natur*), 1949; and *Deeds and Days* (*Werke und Tage*), 1953.

Blüher is best remembered today for his Wandervogel history, but he considered himself to be a philosopher, and later in his life he disclaimed interest in his youthful Wandervogel exploits. His philosophy centered on a metaphysics of Christianity and nature. It owed much to Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, as is demonstrated by its affirmation of the "superior person." A conservative thinker who rejected liberalism and socialism, Blüher's ideas have played no role in modern German thought. However, the recent republication of many of his books, including the Wandervogel history, may indicate that a reconsideration of his works is in the making.

THE YOUTH MOVEMENT AS EROTIC PHENOMENON

Blüher's book on the erotic aspects of the Wandervogel was written in 1912. Scientific study of homosexuality was then in its infancy. Magnus Hirschfeld, the foremost sexologist of his time, had developed a theory of "intermediate sexual types" that was clearly erroneous, even to many of his contemporaries. And while Otto Weinberg's views on sexuality were founded on firmer ground — the fundamental bisexuality of man — they led him to conclusions that were as false as Hirschfeld's theories. Out of the mass of material written about homosexuality during this time, perhaps the most accurate statements were produced by Sigmund Freud, and even they have been severely criticized.

Blüher was a disciple of Freud. He shared Freud's convictions that man is basically bisexual and sex is the all-important component of human nature. Nevertheless, Blüher's views on homosexuality differed substantially from those of Freud. Not only did Blüher consider homosexuality to be a perfectly natural phenomenon, as Freud did only belatedly,⁵ but he further believed that male homosexuality was the foundation upon which all forms of nation states are built. The preliminary development of Blüher's theories about homosexuality is contained in *GWMEP*.

The book is unquestionably a landmark in the field of sexual theory. It is a serious and original consideration of the function of homosexuality in Western culture. Due to the circumstances of its publication, it also throws a new light on the early homosexual emancipation movement. In the following section, a highly condensed presentation of the book is presented, based on the second edition. It should be noted that when Blüher talks about homosexuality, he means *male* homosexuality. Convinced as he was of the innate inferiority of women, female sexuality was of little interest to him.

GWMEP begins with the assertion that the Wandervogel was an inevitable reaction on the part of German youth to the rigid society into which it was born. In its original form, the Wandervogel was simply an alternative to the constraints imposed by the German educational system. But it soon was transformed into something much greater: an independent lifestyle evolved *for* and *by* young people. Taking its cue from the earlier era of German romanticism (1798-1830), the Wandervogel offered youth the chance to escape bourgeois German society by retreating back to nature. Taking on the form of a struggle between opposing cultures, the Wandervogel entered the battlefield to take up the age-old fight of youthful idealism against adult realism.

But how was this accomplished? What made it possible for the lifestyle created within the Wandervogel to differ *significantly* from its bourgeois parent? The answer is simple: the Wandervogel was founded upon homosexual, as opposed to heterosexual, sentiments.

In the great majority of cases, it is quite clear that there was very little physical sexuality to be found within the Wandervogel. However, the lack of direct sexuality did not preclude the existence of strong homosexual feelings in the organization. The validity of this assertion is obscured by the commonly accepted understanding of sexuality as carnality. But such a definition is inaccurate. It focuses solely on the purely genital, and disregards the true breadth and scope of sexuality. In fact, the boundaries of sexuality are almost without limits. Freud has demonstrated that sexuality is the actual catalyst for many human actions, even those that seem to be entirely unrelated to sexuality. Thanks to him, it can no longer be denied that our sexuality is a primary determinant of our behavior from the earliest days of infancy on. Freud has, for example, shown that childhood neuroses are often rooted in sexual conflicts.

Social relationships are the most common expression of sexuality. The "attraction" which people feel toward each other is, in fact, the most frequent expression of sexual feelings.

To say that social interactions are rooted in sexuality is not to say that they must take on the form of carnal lust. Indeed, the opposite is closer to the truth; sexuality can take on an infinite number of forms. Love need not always be genital. Indeed, it most often is not. Love and lust are

separate forms of a single phenomenon: sexuality.

When speaking of sexual attraction, a necessary component is the sexual object, the person – or sometimes the thing – sexuality is directed to. The sexual object is not limited to members of the opposite sex, although that may seem to be the rule. Friendship between members of the same sex is also rooted in sexuality, and, given the proper circumstances, can take on genital form. Although this does not often occur, there is nothing abnormal about it when it does. Such exceptions to the rule are neither pathological nor criminal; they are merely *different* expressions of feelings common to all people.

In the beginning, the Wandervogel was an organization open only to males. Members spent much of their leisure time in each other's company, and interactions with females were generally kept to a minimum. Indeed, they were often considered to be in bad taste. Each group centered around its leader, usually a young man in his early twenties, who was generally 3 to 4 years older than the eldest of his charges. These leaders aroused the interest and enthusiasm of "their" boys, and in turn were happiest when in the company of "their" youths. The most successful leaders were those who were indifferent to women; their energies were directed to their own sex. These men were homosexually inclined, even when they were not aware of it. However, the use of the word "homosexual" in this context is misleading, because it incorrectly emphasizes the genital component of their personalities. For these men, the act of sex was not of primary importance. Therefore, it is more accurate to refer to them as "inverts." Their desires and interests are identical to those of heterosexuals, and differ solely in the choice of objects.

In order to understand the success of the youth movement, one must acknowledge the homosexual component of its leaders. Had they not been willing to give so generously of their time and energy, the Wandervogel could never have flourished. And only their love of other men prompted them to act so generously.

A recognition of the essential role played by these men in the Wandervogel does not, however, satisfactorily account for the popularity of the youth movement. In order to fully comprehend the mechanism of its success, it is also necessary to examine the role played by the youths. Just as the leaders were attracted to their boys, so were the boys attracted to their leaders. In both cases this attraction was sexually based. The boys' attraction took a form different from that of the leaders, but it was equally important for the growth of the movement. The leaders were "active," were the lovers, while the youths were the beloved, and hence "passive." The exchange of love between leaders and followers was the true foundation upon which the Wandervogel was built. It is worth noting that in many ways, these relationships resembled those found in ancient Greece, where older men were responsible for the education of youths, giving them emotional, intellectual, and physical nourishment.

Sexuality is a two-sided phenomenon. The first is the social instinct, the human need for companionship. Although sexual in nature, its utmost limit is fleeting, non-intimate physical contact with the beloved. The other side of sexuality is comprised of the carnal lusts aroused by physical contact, as well as all direct sexual activity.

The distinction between these two aspects of sexuality is ambiguous and fluid in the extreme. Affection can be transformed instantly into carnal desire. But this is not always the case. Heterosexual love often remains within platonic limits, as is demonstrated by the non-physical love found among members of a family. The same holds true for homosexual love. It should, however, be noted that homosexual love usually does not exceed platonic limits.⁶

The homosexual love between leaders and followers which was institutionalized in the Wandervogel generally stayed within the limits of comradeship. Occasionally these boundaries were exceeded, but such occurrences were indisputably exceptions to the rule.

It is important to realize that the practice of inverted genitality cannot be traced to anatomical, medical or psychological defects or problems. Inverts do not suffer from malformed sex organs, nor are they "sick" in any medical sense. They do not suffer from their inversion, and do not wish to be cured of it. Contrary to popular belief, they are also not women trapped in men's bodies. The sexual interests of such men are simply directed to other men in the same way that heterosexual men are interested in women. Inverts differ in no way from non-inverts except in their selection of love objects.

Although there are no essential differences between inverts and non-inverts, there are marked differences in their effectiveness as teachers of youth. Time and again, case histories have demonstrated that the effectiveness of a leader was directly proportional to the degree of his sexual inversion. Similarly, the youths' interest in the Wandervogel was proportional to their interest in the same sex. Most youths were either alternately or simultaneously attracted to both sexes. Those who eventually chose women invariably dropped out of the Wandervogel, while those who developed a primary commitment to their own sex and evolved into "heroic males" (Männerhelden) retained a life-long interest in male youth.

There are five sexual types of men, ranging from the exclusively heterosexual to the wholly homosexual. The exclusively heterosexual man is the one least suited to teach young people. The second kind, men who satisfy their sexual needs with women but are socially dependent upon their own sex, make excellent teachers, as do bisexuals. However, true bisexuals are found only rarely; generally, there is a preference for one of the sexes. A fourth type – the man who satisfies his sexual needs with other men but

fulfills most of his social needs with women – must exist, although Blüher has not met any of them. The fifth and final type of man is the exclusive homosexual. Such men are the focal points of all youth organizations, and are often revolutionary figures. Although uninterested in women, they are nevertheless more considerate and just towards them than most heterosexual men.

When the behavior of "heroic males" is compared to that of their heterosexual counterparts, one is led to the conclusion that heterosexuality is basically "isolationist." A male/female pair tends to close itself off from others. Homosexuals, on the other hand, are more "social," and tend to form groups and communities. The Wandervogel is one such community.

The structure of society is a result of man's bisexual nature. The heterosexual man has largely sublimated his natural affection for his own sex. His homosexual feelings manifest themselves only in his political and social activities. The family unit is a consequence of heterosexuality, while homosexuality is instrumental in the formation of larger units. Political states are founded upon same-sex attraction.

[At this point in the second edition, Blüher interrupts his exposition in order to discuss recent events within the Wandervogel. In 1910 accusations about homosexual acts in the movement were made from both within and without the organization. Many of the Wandervogel leaders were most diligent and vocal in their efforts to rid it of all homosexuals. The fact that so many leaders were willing, and indeed eager, to attack homosexuals within the movement was cited by many of Blüher's critics as evidence that proved his theories were wrong. After all, they reasoned, if the Wandervogel leaders were in fact homosexually inclined, why would they rally against themselves?

Blüher replies to this criticism by saying that men who are most vociferously anti-homosexual are actually engaged in a desperate fight against their own natures. Citing Freud's research into the mechanisms of repression, Blüher characterizes these crusaders as "inquisitors" – severely repressed individuals who take up the fight against open homosexuals in a last-ditch attempt to conceal their own confused sexual feelings. The people who have not come to grips with their own inversion are the ones who are most outraged by those who have. Such "inquisitors" are neurotics who cannot cope with their sexual feelings. Their insecurity forces them to attack those who have succeeded where they themselves have failed. The presence of such people in the Wandervogel, therefore, does not refute Blüher's theories, but instead confirms them.]

Blüher then returns to his primary train of thought:

Western culture has failed to comprehend the importance of same-sex affections for the last two thousand years, and holds such feelings to be perversions, worthless and contemptible malformations of sexuality. While a minority of people see through this faulty reasoning, many more do not. The fact that many acknowledged homosexuals are neurotic and unstable must be seen as a consequence of societal disapproval of homosexuality, and not as a result of any inherently damaging consequences of homosexual behavior or feelings themselves. The "inquisitors" are sexual ruins, and only illustrate the inability of Western culture to cope with the issue of sexuality.

Homosexual feelings are neither degenerate nor depraved. They are natural components of each person's sexuality, and should not be suppressed; in fact, they should be *accepted* for the positive benefits they bring to society. Same-sex affection does not necessarily, nor even usually, lead to genital contact between members of the same sex. And this is for the better. Nevertheless, when such contact does occur, it should be accepted and recognized for what it is: an expression of love. At best, the suppression of homosexual feelings can only result in neurotic complications. In spite of the reactionary influences of religion, convention, and common-place morality, the inexorable progress of science will force mankind to discard the false veils of prejudice. In their place will arise a true understanding of the variety of human sexual experience, and an acceptance of all its many facets.

THE REACTIONS TO "GWMEP"

Were GWMEP to be published in present day America, it would almost certainly provoke a strong reaction. Blüher's thesis that homosexuality is a natural and positive component of human nature would be much ridiculed, while his characterization of bisexual and homosexual men as the best possible teachers would be attacked from many sides. Accordingly, it requires very little imagination to picture the outrage and scandal created by the book's appearance in 1912. The following letter is a typical example. It was circulated less than three months after the book's publication.

Frankfort on the Main, February 1913

TO ALL SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Brochures bearing the title "The German Wandervogel Movement, an Erotic Phenomenon," which have been distributed to school principals, teachers, and parents, could create the impression that their author, a Mr. Hans Blüher, is in some manner affiliated with the Wandervogel. We would like to bring your attention to the fact that the Federal Council of the Old Wandervogel, to which organization Mr. Blüher once belonged, has circulated a statement "that years ago Mr. Blüher was excluded from the ranks of the Wandervogel due to his more than peculiar views."

In the name of the Federal Council of the Wandervogel we furthermore deny emphatically that there is or has been a homosexual tendency in the Wandervogel, a tendency which Mr. Blüher believes is at the core of *every* youth organization, including the Wandervogel. We declare that all those who are homosexually inclined will be removed immediately and permanently from the Wandervogel.

It goes without saying that all such books, which are of medical interest solely for a psychic assessment of the author, do not belong in the hands of young people.

It is our hope that all other German youth organizations which are affected in the same way by the "new ethics" will join us in refusing to associate with the author and the content of his book. We earnestly request you to inform the teachers of your institution with our viewpoint on this matter.

[signed] The Federal Council of the Wandervogel

MAGNUS HIRSCHFELD AND HIS FOREWARD

The controversy engendered by the publication of GWMEP came as no surprise to Blüher. He had, in fact, anticipated it. Publishers whom he had tried to interest in the book declined to take it on because of its "delicate" subject matter. Therefore, Blüher decided to publish the book himself. He asked Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, the foremost German sexologist and gay liberationist of the time, to preface the book with a few laudatory words. Hirschfeld enthusiastically consented. The full text of his preface follows:

The author of this work has asked me to preface it with a few words of introduction.

Scientific investigation of the problem of "sexual inversion," admissible only in the last few decades, was first undertaken by psychiatrists. It was therefore only natural that this question was initially and primarily treated from a clinical standpoint – and in a wider sense from that of the natural and biological sciences.

In my works on homosexuality, I too started out on this path. However, the ever-increasing profusion of the materials which I have obtained has led me to the conviction that homosexuality is not an exception in a pathological – that is, misapplied – sense, but instead is a biologically based variation of human sexual drive which has been present in every epoch and is found everywhere in approximately the same proportion.

The biological point of view necessitated the study of the homosexually disposed in terms of their psychic and physical characteristics, understanding and describing these people as special types of the genus homo.

Blüher's work seems important and significant to me precisely because it examines this subject in a way different from most other works on the subject. The author attempts to link the phenomenon of homosexuality with a characteristic element of our society. In so doing he has contributed in a most interesting way to our knowledge of the manifold points of contact between society and sex, points which the uninitiated often do not perceive.

It must here be emphasized that Blüher, in the manner of the Freudian school, uses the concept of sexuality in a much broader fashion than is usually the case. Accordingly, he considers emotional complexes to be homosexual which are not limited to the well defined types of this temperament.

It cannot be denied that Freud pointed out the paths for our investigation of the processes and problems of the mind which lead us into the depths of the subconscious. It is here, peering in the buried regions of sublimated and concealed mental processes, that we find causes and correlations, the comprehension of which enables us to understand many otherwise inexplicable occurrences of man's conscious mental life.

Although I am not in complete agreement with Freud's general assumption of sexual motives, I nevertheless cannot fail to recognize how justified a broadening of the concept of sexuality is, nor how valuable the recognition of more or less latent sexual motives is for our comprehension of all psychic processes.

Within this mode of scientific endeavor the author of this work has made an important and ingenious contribution to the understanding of homosexuality and its importance for our entire mental and social life. After all, it cannot be doubted that there are indeed many threads originating in this special type of person which are interwoven in the fabric of normal life, nor that the roots and seeds of same-sex emotions play a not unimportant role in our social life. I am of the opinion that public discussion of such relationships can be only beneficial.

In no area of human life has the conscious and unconscious game of "hide-and-go-seek" avenged itself so bitterly as in the area of sexuality. A work like the present, which helps us perceive the diversity of the sexual *causa movens* [motivating factors, trans.], will in any event encourage earnest reflection and contribute to a more complete understanding and usage of nature's sound intentions.

The actual content of Blüher's work matches my own impressions of many Wandervogel supporters with whom I am acquainted. I hope with all my heart that this most remarkable work will be accorded an unprejudiced and sympathetic reception.

Berlin, the summer of 1912,

Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, M.D.⁸

COLLABORATING WITH THE SCIENTIFIC-HUMANITARIAN COMMITTEE

It is not surprising that Blüher's book aroused a veritable storm of outrage and disapproval. Nothing, not even the support of experts such as Hirschfeld, could have prevented this. However, the widespread criticism of the book's thesis also served to promote the book most effectively, and it sold very well indeed.

After the initial furor abated, Blüher started work on his next book *The Role of Eroticism in Male Society*, and a long essay entitled "The Three Basic Forms of Homosexuality: A Sexological Study" ("Die drei Grundformen der Homosexualität: Eine sexologische Studie"), both of which were based on the theories developed in GWMEP. The essay appeared in the second, third, and fourth issues of Volume XIII of *The Yearbook for Intermediate Sexual Types* (*Das Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen*). Published by the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee, the *Yearbook* was under the general editorship of Hirschfeld. The first installment of Blüher's essay was prefaced with the following editorial comments:

In accordance with the tried and true principles of the Yearbooks, we are publishing the following essay even though the author's understanding of various concepts is at variance with our own views. While we cannot agree with him entirely, we do believe that this attempt to bridge the gap between Freud's teachings and those found in the Yearbooks is highly commendable. This hold true especially when [the attempt] is made in such a thoughtful and stimulating manner as is the case with Hans Blüher's present work.⁹

Judging from this prefatory note, it seems clear the "The Three Basic Forms of Homosexuality" was published in the *Yearbook* despite fundamental differences between Blüher's views on homosexuality and those of the journal's editors. However, the note's implication that the *Yearbook's* editor was open-minded enough to publish views at variance with his own was denied explicitly by Blüher one year later in the second edition of GWMEP, published in 1914. Hirschfeld's foreword to the book has been replaced with a long introduction by Blüher. In it, he claims that portions of his essay were suppressed and/or altered by Hirschfeld because they contained statements directly opposed to the views of Hirschfeld and the Committee. To quote:

[...] Very significant sections were suppressed without my knowledge [...] The main section was concerned with the connection between homosexuality and societal decay. On the basis of theoretical considerations and inductive observations it attempted to demonstrate that the possibility of such a connection could not be fundamentally denied. Homosexuality could develop—or to put it more accurately—could break out in places where it did not previously seem to exist [...] When Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, as he told me, suppressed my chain of reasoning "out of editorial considerations" and "expediency" in the interests of homosexuals (i.e., the Committee membership), he may properly be characterized as a concerned shepherd for this circle of homosexuals (whom he considers to be exemplary representatives of all members of the inverted type). But then he must also stop claiming to be the representative of an incorruptible scientific institution.¹⁰

Blüher also objects to the very name of the Committee. He states that the Committee's use of the word "humanitarian" is misleading and incorrect. Its membership consists of:

... two groups; the first are the homosexuals themselves, who need help, while the second is comprised of the physicians and jurists who want to help them. The first group is not guided by humanitarian feelings because it is seeking help for itself. And the second group also cannot justifiably claim it is guided by humanitarian motives, because it is remunerated for its efforts. While remuneration for professional help cannot be faulted, it is unethical to single out this particular medical assistance as humanitarian. Any such assistance is just as humanitarian.¹¹

After attacking the corporate integrity of the Committee itself, Blüher proceeds to vilify the personal integrity of the Committee's membership. He calls them degenerate, and goes on to say that their generally effeminate appearance and behavior, combined with their insistence upon the "purely phallic orientation of homosexuality,"¹² proves them to be inferior specimens of manhood.

In concluding his criticism, Blüher claims that it is impossible for any independent researcher to collaborate with the Committee, parenthetically adding that it was for this reason that Benedikt Friedländer split away from the Committee and founded his own group, the Community of the Special (*die Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*).

Almost four decades later, Blüher published his memoirs in a volume entitled *Deeds and Days*.¹³ He once again describes his involvement with Hirschfeld and the Committee, but does so from a much more personal perspective. His description is so intimate and detailed that it deserves republication here in its entirety.

A SERIOUS FAUX PAS

After completing my monograph on the erotic make up of the Wandervogel, it was necessary to undertake two kinds of protective maneuvers; the Wandervogel had to be protected, and so did my book. The first was easy; I publicly declared that my explication of the Wandervogel's erotic make-up dealt solely with the time period covered in my book. That was, of course, a sham, as it was intended to

be. For if my interpretation revealed a law which explained a process of nature, and if the Wandervogel groups were part of nature, then the drama of male society would have to keep repeating itself, which of course it did [...]

In order to be prepared for all eventualities, I submitted the manuscript to a lawyer and asked if it could possibly fall into the category of "immoral writings" and therefore be subject to prosecution by the state. He replied that he did not see the remotest possibility of this, but since Bavaria was also a part of Germany, it was impossible to be sure. Since I was self-taught and had no title to protect me, he advised me to submit my manuscript to a well known psychiatrist who was a specialist in this field, and ask him to write a foreword—a sort of imprimatur—for it. And whom could he recommend to me? I asked. No one else could come into question but Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, who was the best, as well as a legally recognized expert in this field. Magnus Hirschfeld...? I thought. The name sounds strange. I didn't know him, but had heard that he was the most prominent of those fighting for the repeal of paragraph 175 [the German law that outlawed sodomy, trans.], which, however, was of no interest whatsoever to me. So I wrote a very polite letter to him asking for his help. I received an immediate and positive answer requesting that I send him my manuscript. And within a couple of days his highly enthusiastic consent to write a foreword arrived. He also invited me to stop by, as he would very much like to make my acquaintance. In those days I thought naively that "he" was a completely masculine pronoun and left no room whatsoever for variations of substance in it.



WANDERVOGEL IN HESSEN UND AM RHEIN

HEFT 5

NOVEMBER 1912

Illustration by Hermann Pfeiffer

The next day I, a modest enough youth, rang the famous man's doorbell, and was greeted by a flitty being who instantly reminded me of the intermediate meaning of the word "he" in this circle. If this keeps up, ... I thought. But I couldn't turn back now because Hirschfeld had already written his foreword and I was in no position to reject it, especially since concepts like rank, race, physiognomy, character, instinct, etc.—in other words, things of importance to me—were simply not applicable to this circle. Here you were merely a "person," which they considered to be an improvement. Only the so-called "nobility of spirit," discovered by Kurt Hiller, was valid here, but I wanted no part of it. I was led into the study of the "Wise Man of Berlin" (as he was called), and what I saw there filled me with horror. Sitting on a silk covered fauteuil, legs under him like a Turk, was an individual with bloated lips and cunning, dimly coveting eyes who offered me his fleshy hand and introduced himself as "Dr. Hirschfeld." He and his colleagues, he said, had read my manuscript about the Wandervogel with the greatest enthusiasm, and congratulated me on my endeavor. He then gave me the foreword to my book. He did this with a certain movement that almost prompted me to ask, "And what do I owe you?" If I had been only three or four years older, I would have excused myself most speedily after having seen what sort of company I had fallen into. But I was still too young, and would not or could not refuse a friendly invitation to "come to one of our meetings." Besides which, I was simply curious. And after all, the "Scientific-Humanitarian Committee" sounded, as Peter Simpel put it, confidence inspiring.

When I showed up for one of the intimate meetings—the doorman was once again the flitty being—I found a strange gathering. The first to greet me was a corporal with a deep bass voice; he was, however, wearing women's clothes—demimonde—with a short train. Despite the oppressive heat he was wearing a hat which was decorated with a large ostrich feather, in the style of the ruling empress. "A so-called transvestite!" commented Dr. Hirschfeld, whose nickname was "Aunt Magnesia," and introduced us. In so doing he referred to me as Dr. Blüher, which I let pass. "I secretly run around this way," the monstrosity told me.

"My wife doesn't know, but this is my actual sexual release." (Hopefully he won't start releasing right now, I thought to myself.) "By the way, I'm not queer!" Then a most beautiful youth appeared, definitely the most sympathetic of them all. "A hermaphrodite!" said Hirschfeld. "Why don't you come to me during my office hours tomorrow, you can see him naked then. That's all right with you, isn't it, Friedel?"—"But of course!"

I saw him there. He had normal male genitals, but body hair like a woman, as well as well formed breasts. Such hermaphrodites have their own charms when they are young and pretty; you're never quite sure where to start, Eros takes over, and you're standing at a crossroads. Actual confrontation with such a being is the best way to demonstrate the differences between the androgynous and the bisexual, which scientists are always getting mixed up. You grasp instantly that they are two completely different things. The biological constitution of the youth is androgynous, whereas my psychic reaction is bisexual. For I would have to lie if I were to say that the sight of him didn't enchant me. It could almost have resulted in a rendezvous [...]

"Look over there, the person to the left who's talking with [Walt] Laurent. He has a severely [deformed urethra].¹³ You do know what that is, don't you?" Yes, I did know that, because I was familiar with Neugebauer's magnificent volume on hermaphroditism in man. "But he is a very extreme case. The so-called 'ridge' is split open all the way from the tip of the penis down to below the testes; it's almost a vulva. If you'd like to see..."—"no, thank you, but thank you."—"Ah yes, the things science has discovered; most interesting, don't you think? And then there's you and your Wandervogel..." I began to feel ill, especially since Hirschfeld has started to caress me. But then somebody motioned for the meeting to begin; everybody sat down and stopped talking. An older gentleman in his sixties, good looking and emphatically well dressed, recited a poem. It was addressed to a sixteen-year-old youth, full of yearning and suffering, and broke out in sorrow that this youth was totally insensible for the physical charms of the aging gentleman. I turned to Laurent, who was the only kindred spirit in this pack of lemurs. "Tell me, haven't you noticed that we're in a downright brothel here?"—"But of course I have, and that's the only reason why I'm here."—"In that case it's all right." I left soon afterwards.

The only things that still bound me to this strange club of degenerates was the *Yearbook for Intermediate Sexual Types*, which I believed to be scientific, and in which I had been promised the publication of my article "The Three Basic Forms of Sexual Inversion." The *Yearbook* was very expensive; to make that palatable, it was also illustrated, which gave it an unmistakably pornographic touch. Its authors received no payment; only its "editor," Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, did. My article was being set and was supposed to demonstrate my pronounced opposition to the so-called "intermediate types theory." Unsuspecting as I still was, it never entered my mind that intellectual freedom might be restricted here. After all, freedom is the byword of all minorities, the meaning of which is forgotten only when they possess the reins of power and can throw their own opponents into prison. Therefore I was more than a little surprised to discover that the printed text of my article had been arbitrarily falsified in favor of the intermediate types theory with which I disagreed. When I confronted Dr. Hirschfeld with this, he agreed that my objections were entirely justified, and that we had the same views on the subject (what shamelessness!), but it just wasn't the right moment to dwell on this. The public had already accustomed itself to the concept of "intermediate sexual types," and it mustn't be confused on the issue! As though I were interested in the repeal of paragraph 175! But that is how one minority treats the honor of others.

My hair was standing on end. Never before had I witnessed such a complete disregard of truth and science, such absolute neglect of our most important values for the sake of simple self-interest. I had forgotten that even here I was in the middle of a brothel and was helpless against its ethics. I quickly excused myself from the dark man of honor.

The first thing that I did was destroy the remaining copies of my monograph containing Hirschfeld's foreword and ordered a new edition. This was also necessary out of scientific considerations, since I had meanwhile received numerous confirmations of the correctness of my views [...]. Therefore only this second edition is authoritative. I wrote a foreword for it in which I announced my disassociation from Dr. Hirschfeld and removed his foreword. I pointed out the falsification of my text and thereby accused one of that era's most respected scholars of deliberately falsifying scientific research. It was obvious that I considered Dr. Hirschfeld to be an infamous impostor. Even without the protection of his foreword my book made its way unchallenged. A sufficient number of state prosecutors have had it in their hands, and were forced to put it aside because its scientific purity and ethical integrity were simply impossible to challenge [...].¹⁴

THE THREE FORMS OF HOMOSEXUALITY

What is to be made of this reminiscence and Blüher's personal biases. While Blüher was not a Nazi, he did believe that certain racial, physiognomic, and behavioral characteristics were preferable to others.

Given these beliefs, it is not surprising that Blüher was deeply offended by the disdain for conventional morality and the displays of effeminacy which he found within the ranks of the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee. And when coupled with Blüher's brash temperament and in-

tolerance for views differing from his own, it is easy enough to dismiss his negative descriptions of Hirschfeld and the Committee's membership. Blüher has often been harshly criticized for this tendency to exaggerate, and these descriptions are another case in point.

Nevertheless, Blüher's denunciation of the scientist Hirschfeld as a fraud cannot be so easily brushed aside. The kind of falsification that Blüher attributes to him is methodologically unacceptable to any scientist. Although the editorial comments preceding "The Three Basic Forms of Homosexuality" are not signed by Hirschfeld, they certainly were published with his approval. Even if he himself did not write them, he agreed with their content, and therefore bears responsibility for them. As a result, if Blüher's accusations against Hirschfeld can be proven to be justified, it will no longer be possible to accept Hirschfeld's work at its face value — any or all of it may be spurious.

"The Three Basic Forms of Homosexuality" begins with an open letter from Blüher to Sigmund Freud. It is the public continuation of his private correspondence with Freud on the subject of sexuality. In it Blüher stresses that he himself has no personal stake in the clarification of sexual questions such as this, but instead is interested solely in "scientific and moral truth."¹⁵ In addition, Blüher also expresses his admiration of and indebtedness to Freud's work.

The treatise begins with a discussion about society's views on homosexuality. Blüher takes the position that homosexuality is something that should be accepted, and not merely tolerated, because everyone has homosexual components to one degree or another. Therefore, knowledge about homosexuality will benefit all people, and not just homosexuals. But there are many factors which block the acceptance of inverted sexuality. Religions have always been virulently anti-homosexual, while the public activities of certain homosexuals have also hindered efforts at enlightenment. Although meant to educate the public, such propagandistic efforts usually manage to merely enrage the general public.¹⁶ On the other hand, people who believe that simple equality in the eyes of the law will eradicate prejudice against homosexuality place too much trust in the legal system. There is only one way to effectively educate people about the true nature of homosexuality, and that is through the dissemination of objective information obtained through scientific research.

Blüher then addresses the question of homosexuality's supposed abnormality. He denies that it is necessarily pathological, and instead affirms its equality with heterosexuality. He criticizes the prevalent psychiatric view of homosexuality, commenting that psychiatrists are acquainted only with those homosexuals who have not come to terms with their natures. Self-accepting homosexuals, or "heroic males" as Blüher terms them, are as healthy as any heterosexuals.

The "heroic male" is an exemplary type of man. His innate nobility is the living proof that such people have a place in society. The positive influence they exert on youth is reason enough for their existence. Like Socrates and Plato, they are everything civilized men should be.

What is sexuality? It is not merely the use of genitals in physical contact, but instead is "everything that is instinct."¹⁷ Man's sexuality is two-edged, and directed to both sexes. Sexual, and therefore homosexual feelings, do not necessarily take on genital forms. While the borderline between heterosexual affection and lust is often indistinct, homosexual affection often finds fulfillment without any physical sexual contact. This difference between heterosexuality and homosexuality is reflected in the institutions based upon them. Heterosexual love leads to nothing beyond coupling. Homosexuality, on the other hand, leads to social groupings, up to and including political states.

Otto Weininger claimed that it is a female characteristic of man to love another man. Blüher disagrees with this statement and all theories based upon it, such as Hirschfeld's theory of intermediate sexual types. When considering the physical differences between men and women, it is apparent that there are indeed intermediate types, people with vestigial sexual organs or abnormally large ones, for example. But such people are an exceedingly small minority; anatomically speaking, most people are exclusively male or female. Nevertheless, the existence of these few intermediate types does prove the basic androgyny of mankind.

People like Weininger used this fact to claim that homosexuals possess more feminine components than the average male, and that therefore the effeminacy of a man is the cause of his homosexuality. If this statement is true, it should logically follow that the greater the degree of a person's androgyny, the more pronounced his homosexuality will be. However, this is not always the case. The effeminate dandy of the turn of the century, for example, was almost always heterosexual. Therefore, it is apparent that the degree of a person's androgyny is not synonymous with the degree of his inversion. To wit: "If a person is homosexual, his homosexuality can always be traced back to the inherent bisexual nature of every person."¹⁸

Sexuality can take on an infinite number of forms. Just as there are men who love men in a masculine, or "aggressive" way (the "heroic males"), there are also men who love men in a feminine, or "passive," way. Such men are the so-called "effeminate inverts." Such homosexuals have a much harder time in life than "heroic males" do, because they are inverted and effeminate. Society disapproves strongly of such individuals, and often turns them into neurotics. However, those strong enough to brave societal disapproval become, through virtue of their struggle for existence, some of the most interesting people imaginable. They are mediators between the sexes. Possessing the feelings of women and the sexual openness of men, they are the best

commentators on femininity.

In addition to the "heroic male" and the "effeminate invert," there is one more type of homosexual: the suppressed homosexual. Such a person denies his homosexuality, and therefore has to suppress his sexual feelings. Such self-oppression results in two kinds of individuals: persecutors and paranoics. Both types are created by the suppression and sublimation of homosexuality. Blüher cites two psychiatric cases of Freud's and Jung's as proof for this assertion.

"The Three Basic Forms of homosexuality" concludes with Blüher's statement that illnesses can be cured, but instincts can only be controlled. In cases of latent inversion, it is imperative to make the inversion manifest. Then, depending upon its strength and emotional significance, the inversion can either be cultivated or brought under control. In either case, the individual will be able to understand and accept his sexual disposition, be it homosexual or heterosexual. In turn, such acceptance will enable the individual to successfully suppress the perverse impulses (i.e., homosexual impulses in heterosexuals or heterosexual impulses in homosexuals) that arose during childhood.

THE SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY OF MAGNUS HIRSCHFELD

As printed in *The Yearbook for Intermediate Sexual Types*, "The Three Basic Forms of Homosexuality" does not readily lend corroboration for one of Blüher's claims against Hirschfeld. Blüher's claim in *Deeds and Days* that "the printed text of my article had been arbitrarily falsified in favor of the intermediate sexual types theory with which I disagreed"¹⁹ is clearly unjustified. There are several places in the article which unequivocally express Blüher's rejection of this theory, and none which support it. The validity of Blüher's other allegations against Hirschfeld cannot, however, be so easily tested. Blüher's claim that various sections of his manuscript were suppressed without his consent, for example, can only be tested by comparing the text of the article as printed in the *Yearbook* with the text of a version authorized by Blüher. In his foreword to *GWEP* Blüher states that he arranged for the unexpurgated version to be published separately.²⁰ But did he actually do so? When the Hans Blüher Archive reprinted the treatise in 1965, the (anonymously revised) text of the *Yearbook* version was used. It would seem reasonable to assume that the Blüher Archive would have reprinted the authorized version of the article, if it really did exist. And yet, this was not the case. Therefore, the question is: Did Blüher actually publish his own version of "The Three Basic Forms of Homosexuality?"

The answer is yes. In fact, it was published just as Blüher had claimed: in 1913 by the Max Spohr Verlag in Leipzig. This version is, however, exceedingly rare and hard to come by. Presumably that is why it was not used for the 1965 reprint.

The article bears the title "The Three Basic Forms of Sexual Inversion," a change which is not surprising, since Blüher preferred to use the term "inversion" in lieu of the word "homosexual." But aside from the title change, the authorized version is remarkably similar to the one in the *Yearbook*. It begins with the *Yearbook's* editorial disclaimer of some of Blüher's views, and the page opposite the article's beginning is a full page advertisement for none other than the *Yearbook*.²¹ Careful comparison of the two texts leads one to the conclusion that the authorized version was reprinted directly from the *Yearbook* — the typesetting is identical. Aside from the single substitution of one word for another,²² the two versions appear to be the same. And they are, with the sole exception of their conclusions. Blüher's version is two pages longer than the *Yearbook's*, and ends on an entirely different note.

"The Three Basic Forms of Homosexuality" concludes with the statement that every individual's acceptance of his sexual disposition will enable him to successfully suppress the perverse impulses that arose during childhood. But "The Three Forms of Sexual Inversion" goes on to state that these perverse impulses are suppressed by the conscious personality and the awareness of social responsibility. The question is then asked: What happens when these inhibitions lose their strength through exterior influences such as alcohol? Blüher answers the question by stating that a decadent form of homosexuality can appear in such cases. This kind of homosexuality is in fact truly perverse. Instead of being an inborn inclination, it is the result of a surfeit of heterosexuality. A libidinal regression, it can lead to the misuse of young males, and it signifies the loss of societal responsibility.

Blüher then asserts that this was the carnal psychology (die Lustpsychologie) of the Romans. Their pederasty was created through a loss of inhibitions, and can fairly be termed a symptom of decadence. In sharp contrast to such decadent inversion is Hellenist inversion, one that grows out of a people's inner vitality. The inversion that developed within the German youth movement was Hellenistic and hence positive, whereas the typical forms of "big city" inversion are forms of Roman style decadence, and should be deplored.²³

The fact that the *Yearbook's* typesetting was also used in Blüher's version helps substantiate his claim that part of his article was suppressed. Evidently the complete article was typeset, and then its conclusion was deleted before going to the printer. However, it should be noted that only one section was removed, and not several, as Blüher claimed.

It is easy to understand why Hirschfeld did not print the article's conclusion. Not only does it divide homosexuality into healthy and unhealthy forms, but it indirectly classifies the members of the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee as examples of the unhealthy category. Given such statements, it is almost a tribute to Hirschfeld that he still

printed the article.

In spite of this, Hirschfeld must be faulted for publishing a shortened form of the article without consulting its author. And he is further discredited by the fact that he did not inform the *Yearbook's* readers of his deletion. Indeed, the editorial disclaimer at the beginning of the article implies just the opposite.

This does not speak highly of Hirschfeld's practices as an editor. While he did not go so far as to falsify Blüher's article, he did treat it and its author in a manner that was less than honorable. On the other hand, the reasons for his actions are easy to empathize with.

Were this the end of the story, it would be difficult to fault Hirschfeld for anything more than a lack of honest communication with his author and his readership. Obviously, editors have every right to edit the manuscripts that they publish. But just as obviously, authors have the right to be informed of editorial changes in their manuscripts before they appear in print. By not notifying Blüher of his editorial deletion, Hirschfeld breached the rules of common courtesy between authors and editors. But by itself, his omission is not grave enough to place his scientific reputation in jeopardy. Sadly, however, this is not the end of the story.

Eight years later — in 1932 — the *Yearbook* published an article by Dr. Arthur Weil entitled "Hans Blüher and Homosexuality."²⁴ In the course of the article, Dr. Weil refers to Blüher's accusations against Hirschfeld as follows:

Blüher complains about the fact that Hirschfeld did not publish the full text of his article, in which he tried to demonstrate the connection between homosexuality and societal decay on the basis of theoretical considerations and inductive observations, in [our] quarterly journal. Actually, he should be grateful to [Hirschfeld] for this. After all, in his "The Role of Eroticism" he himself recognizes that inversion has nothing to do with decay, but instead is always a natural occurrence."²⁵

Weil's remarks are most interesting in two regards. Firstly, they confirm that it was indeed Hirschfeld who suppressed the conclusion of Blüher's article. Secondly, they justify Hirschfeld's action by saying that Blüher eventually changed his mind about this idea anyway.

The self-serving sentiments contained in Weil's statements are shocking. From addressing the question of Hirschfeld's surreptitious suppression of Blüher's conclusion, they brazenly attempt to excuse Hirschfeld's behavior with Blüher's later change of mind. And the fact that Hirschfeld chose to allow a second party — and that eight years later! — to publicly attempt a justification of his actions only makes matters worse. Instead of admitting to an error in judgement, Hirschfeld refused to even acknowledge it.

Given these facts, we again face the question of Hirschfeld's scientific integrity. Was it destroyed by these actions? Personally, I would not go so far as to summarily reject Hirschfeld's integrity out of hand. Clearly, he was not always able to admit to his mistakes. Although a serious fault, it is not necessarily a completely damning one. But it cannot be denied that Hirschfeld proved deficient in a matter of honor. As a result, another question refuses to be put to rest: How often was this the case?

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FOOTNOTES

¹The German Gymnasium is an educational institution that approximates the American high school.

²The word Wandervogel was found by the students on a gravestone located in a Dahlem cemetery (Dahlem is a section of Berlin). The gravestone inscription reads as follows: "Wer hat euch Wandervogeln/Die Wissenschaft geschenkt/Dass ihr auf Land und Meeren/Die Flügel sicher lenkt/Dass ihr die alte Palme/Im Süden nicht verfehlt/Dass ihr die alte Linde/Im Norden wieder wählt?"

³The youth movement was resurrected after World War One and continued until the Nazi takeover of Germany in 1933. See the following two books for more information: Howard Becker, *German Youth: Bond or Free* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946) and Walter Z. Laqueur, *Young Germany* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962).

⁴The "Abitur" represents the successful conclusion of studies at the "Gymnasium," and is analogous to the American high school diploma.

⁵See the article on Freud in *The Body Politic*: Herb Spiers and Michael Lynch, "The Gay Rights Freud," *The Body Politic*, No. 33, pp. 8-10, 25.

⁶If the statements attributed to Hirschfeld in the book *Sexual Anomalies: The Origins, Nature, and Treatment of Sexual Disorders* (New York: Emerson Books, Inc., 1956) can be believed, then Blüher and Hirschfeld agreed on this point, as is indicated by the statement found on page 199 of *Sexual Anomalies*: "The more homosexual, so to speak, a man is, the slighter are the contacts which satisfy him."

⁷Hinrich Jantzen, *Namen und Werke, Biographien und Beiträge zur Soziologie der Jugendbewegung*, Vol. 2 (Frankfurt am Main: dipa-Verlag, 1974), p. 38.

⁸Hans Blüher, *Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen: Ein Beitrag zur Erkenntnis der sexuellen Inversion* (Tempelhof-Berlin: Verlag B. Weise, 1912), pp. 5-7.

⁹*Das Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen/Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Homosexualität* Hereafter referred to as *JfsZ*, Vol. XIII (January 1913), Number 2, p. 139.

¹⁰Hans Blüher, *Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen: Ein Beitrag zur Erkenntnis der sexuellen Inversion* (Tempelhof-Berlin: Verlag B. Weise, 1914), p. 10.

¹¹Ibid., p. 8.

¹²Ibid., p. 13.

¹³The German description is "eine schwere peniscrotale Hypoadie," in: Hans Blüher, *Werke und Tage/Geschichte eines Denkers* (Munich: Paul List Verlag, 1953), p. 333.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 330-335.

¹⁵*JfsZ*, Vol. XIII (January 1913), Number 2, p. 140.

¹⁶This comment is a veiled criticism of the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee.

¹⁷JfsZ, Vol. XIII (January 1913), Number 2, p. 154.

¹⁸JfsZ, Vol. XIII (July 1913), Number 4, p. 419.

¹⁹Deeds and Days, p. 334.

²⁰GWMEP (1914), p. 10.

²¹Blüher's version of the article and the *Yearbook* were both published by the Max Spohr Verlag. It is possible that the publisher included the advertisement without consulting Blüher. But that is just a guess. In any case, the situation is rather peculiar.

²²The word "Abirrung" for "Perversion," in: Hans Blüher, *Die drei Grundformen der sexuellen Inversion (Homosexualität)/Eine sexologische Studie* (Leipzig: Verlag von Max Spohr, 1913), p. 77.

²³This conclusion contains many questionable and contradictory ideas, as do all of Blüher's writings. It is worth noting that almost everything Blüher ever produced was subjected to vehement attacks from all sides. He himself was often characterized as a charlatan, liar, dilettante, etc. A careful investigation of these

claims and Blüher's ideas would undoubtedly yield interesting results. However, such an investigation lies beyond the scope of this article. The events discussed in the article seem to be reliable, and therefore I see no need to go into any greater detail here on the topic of Blüher's reliability as a source.

²⁴Dr. Arthur Weil, "Hans Blüher und die Homosexualität," in: *JfsZ*, Vol. XXI (January and April 1921), Numbers 1 and 2, pp. 3-39.

²⁵Ibid., p. 36.

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A NOTE ON THE TRANSLATIONS

In order to preserve the flavor of the originals (which I believe makes an important statement about the period), the German texts have been translated as literally as possible. Please bear this in mind when reading them. All translations are by the author.

TIMOTHY IN THE HAY

A Short Story

by Lyle Glazier

When I was a boy growing up in the country near Chickering Falls, I had a friend Will Cosgrow two years younger who was with me most of the time. We used to horse around on the barn now wrestling and ripping open our trouser flies. Sometimes we would amuse ourselves poking grassblades into each other's urethra till the blood came.

When I got to be fifteen Willy's company didn't fully match my desire but he was what I had and we were pretty much inseparable.

Willy lived in a big frame house, the biggest on our dirt side road. His uncle, his mother's brother, a tinsmith lived in a small square house across the road. Timmy was a muscular, rosy-complexioned man much younger than his sister, probably eighteen or nineteen. He worked at home on piece work for some company whose agent came once a week to pick up the shaped fragments of tin.

In the summer of the year I was fifteen the farmer who owned the meadow in back of Uncle Timmy planted a cornfield which grew up to the back line of Timmy's property. Timmy ate lunch at his sister's and very day about quarter to one would appear on the porch, belch and cross the road and enter the cornfield. Then in a few minutes he returned breasting the high stand of corn, and entered his back door. Except for the tap of his hammer and the snick snick of his shears he would not be heard or seen for the rest of the afternoon.

One August day Willy, as usual having swallowed his lunch whole, appeared at my house at 12:30 just as I came out from my lunch of bread and butter and a glass of milk.

"Come on," Willy said mysteriously. "I want to show you something."

I expected something like a new catcher's mitt or a bat or perhaps a new carpenter's saw out in his father's shop.

Instead of any of these, he led me cautiously around back of Uncle Tim's and into the cornrows all the way to the back of the lot, where a field of goldenrod and various other high weeds took over. He motioned me into the weeds where we squatted out of sight.

In a few minutes the corn rustled and Uncle Timmy appeared. Willy nudged me. Facing the tall weeds, Uncle Timmy unbuttoned his pants, and took out his cock and began to piss a spattering, copious stream. He held his cock with two fingers and absentmindedly stroked the length while the water flowed. With the last drops he shook his tool vigorously and started to put it away, thought better of it and, cupping his palm, began to stroke briskly, closing his eyes in pleasure.

It was my first full view of a grown man's cock, plump and long, the bulb swelling purple with pumped-in blood. I would have liked to reach from hiding and touch it, but as my excitement grew, Uncle Timmy seemed to take stock of his self indulgence and think better of it. He pouted his stiff cock inside his pants, buttoned up and turned back through the cornfield. There was something curious about his reticence. He had looked straight where we squatted, as if he had his eyes on us. That was impossible, I thought. We were much too well concealed. I thought he would never have revealed himself if he'd known we were there. And yet I was sure he had an inkling about us.

The next afternoon we were there in hiding again. This time it was even more as if our presence was known. Uncle Timmy, after pissing, instead of buttoning up, knotted the ends of his shirt flaps behind his back revealing his muscular belly. Then he unbuttoned every button of his pants, laying back the folds of the fly till the pants slid partway down onto his hips. He began with deep strokes to beat his cock, his tight balls rising and falling with each stroke.

A blissful happy expression came into his eyes which, slitted, yet were focused on the very spot where we squatted. He drew the loose skin fully back revealing the bulging tip. He wetted his fingers with spit and massaged around the bulb until flecks of foam appeared. With one finger he collected some of the foam, then licked it off his finger. He cupped his full hand tightly and pumped the engorged full length, hand flying till at last, stock still, hand braced against his groin, he held the firm base root, then gradually released pressure till the milky liquor spurted in long looping ribbons over the corn and onto the fringes of weeds. With his free hand he caught some of the flow and carried it to his mouth.

Just at that moment, Willy, his muscles cramped, shifted in excitement, caught one foot in a morning glory vine, and sprawled at his uncle's feet. Out of sight, I held my breath. Uncle Timmy clutched at his pants, then furiously buttoned

up. He reached down then and caught his nephew by the ear, drawing him upstanding.

"If I ever find you here again, Willy, I'll skin your hide. I'll tan you within an inch of your life!"

I shrank farther into the weeds, hardly drawing a breath, listening to their loud retreat. Uncle Timmy had Willy by the ear marching him through the corn. Willy shrilly belated, swearing he never again would spy. Just as they went from sight Uncle Timmy flung a glance backward over his shoulder. Trembling I shivered. I felt exposed as if a thousand rifle balls had driven into my flesh. The hurt of fear gave way to a delirious penetration as if heart and soul had been bared. I was all tenderly open. In the tall weeds, for an hour or more I lay spilled on the parched ground.

The next afternoon Willy did not show up at my house after lunch. I couldn't help myself. I couldn't hold back. I just had to sneak along by the brook, cross over along the fencerow, and station myself in the jungle of goldenrod, milkweed, and feathery stalks of hay.

At his regular time Uncle Tim came breasting through the corn rows. I heard him before I saw him, heard the corn blades crinkle as if with wind. Then I heard his heavy tread. Quickly, Uncle Timothy was disclosed; rosy cheeked, eager eyed he seemed to hurry along. He drew out his stream of piss, seeming to enjoy every trickle. When the flow stopped, he shook his cock free of water, then made no show of putting it away. Instead, he took off his shirt and flung it over a high corn stalk. Then he dropped his pants to the ground, stepped free, and stood naked, his hard body exposed.

His cock was firmly erect, quivering in spasmodic jerks as if anticipating the touch of a hand. But instead of touching himself, Uncle Timmy folded his arms behind his back and started walking straight where I hid. His mouth was partway open, his eyes shut like a sleepwalker's. I saw the quivering tip of his cock jerking with his walk and with its own impatient need. I could hardly believe I was seeing what I had dreamed of during my sleepless night.

When he was directly in front of me and no more than two feet away, he began to stroke himself, slowly at first then whipping furiously till I wished he would slow down. I could hardly see the cock for the furious motion. When the stream of milk exploded, it sprayed through the weeds onto my hands and face. I reached with my tongue and licked my wet cheeks and got the thickness of the sauce and the slightly bitter ammoniac taste. The cock began to shrivel. On my face the coating was drying, tightening the skin. Swiftly, as if regretting his judgment, Uncle Timmy turned and went to put on his clothes. If he knew I was there, he had given no sign except his having approached so near.

I thought he wouldn't come next day, but he did. This time he was fully as eager as if he had been thinking about it all night, as I had.

When he stood naked in front of me, he didn't unfold his hands from behind his back, simply jutted forward his hips till his twitching cock was a foot in front of my face. His eyes were squeezed shut as if he ruled out responsibility for anything I might see.

I reached from my ambush and gently touched the hard bulb. A groan came from his lips. He lurched toward me till I was stroking him hard. I massaged the swollen tip and ran my fingers around the white veined sunken collar with its slight cream of scum. I was breathless with joy, loving the feel of its leaping, as if the cock would wrench itself free from my hand. Why did it try to escape from what it was loving so much? I balanced myself, squatting behind my screen of weeds and working on him with both hands. I wanted to rub my cheek against the tight drawn bulb of his cock. Though his eyes were closed, I was afraid to come out of hiding. Juice began to flow from the tender lips. He reached around with one hand and moistened his fingers and licked them. He thrust his index finger into his mouth and drew it out with a smacking suck. He moistened his fingers again and held them for me to lick. By now I comprehended his make believe. As long as his eyes were tight shut, it was as if I weren't there. We could do anything we pleased. I leaned toward him, no longer fearful to expose my face. I was coming fully out of hiding when he spurted under my hand and flung a torrent of heavy ribbons spluttering over my face. I fondled his cock with both hands while the long contractions continued. My face was streaming with juice. He leaned forward and with his tongue licked my cheeks, washing me clean. He opened his

mouth over mine in a long warm kiss. Then, eyes still closed, he returned for his clothes and disappeared through the corn.

I thought of him that night, unable to sleep, remembering the look of him and the touch of him and reliving the warm cover of his kiss. His lips over mine seemed to draw me out of myself and pull me inside his mouth. I wanted to put my lips over his cock.

The next day I could hardly wait. He dropped his clothes and approached with tight shut eyes. As soon as he stood naked before me I was kneeling cradling his hips. With my tongue I touched lightly the small slit between those lips at the tip of his cock. The cock leaped away and came back. My tongue touched it again. Again it leaped. He freed his hands from behind him and brought them around to the back of my neck, fondling, fingering my back hair, pushing, pushing my head closer, closer to his groin. I opened my mouth and took in the hard round bulb, sucking it in like a plum. The juices flowed on my tongue. While he pressed hard with his hands, I opened my mouth and throat and gagged on the length of his cock. I did not withdraw but opened wider, feeling his thrust, his deeper dive against my unlatched Adam's apple. I loved to feel him there, the whole hard stem of him, all his throbbingness. It was as if I contained him inside. He was no longer separate, we were joined, our twinned blood beating in one mingled pumping wave. It was for me as if I were no longer single but had realized my dream of being a double self, perfectly joined with the one whom I could feel straining at one and the same time to cancel himself and realize himself in my throat. When he came in a gushing flow, I managed to take it without choking. I held onto him then and refused to let him go. At last I could feel him dwindle, the cock began to slip away. He leaned and kissed my eyes. He opened his mouth on mine. I was sure his eyes were tight shut when he drew me against him hard and ran his fingers over my ribcage and fitted his hands over my buttocks. My own cock was hard against him but I was staisfied not to be stroked. He slipped a finger into the crack of my ass, drew it back, wetted it, and gently massged. I wanted him there inside.

When he was gone from me, I was still quivering with my own repressed joy. It was enough to have given him pleasure. I lay on the ground and imagined him lying over me. My finger felt where he had felt. There seemed to be a new world of sensations there where he had fondled. A myriad of tiny glands seemed to have sprung into life. I imagined him inside quickening, massaging, kneading with the stout finger of his cock.

That night I hardly slept.

When he came next day he carried a small jar of cream, which he set carefully on the ground as he undressed. He came to me with his eyes shut. After I had handled his cock, then sucked it and opened my mouth on his balls, he gently pulled me up and slowly undressed me and knelt and took my cock in his mouth. It was so lovely being inside, but I clung to his cock with one hand, unwilling to let him free. I drew him back into my nest in the weeds and we lay together on the ground, his mouth still over my cock, while I was trying to put mine on his. Very patiently and tenderly he placed his creamed fingers against the tight hole of my ass. While we sucked each other's cock, he massaged gently with cream in a small circular motion, then spreading it wider and deeper. I opened to his fingers. It was sunup, all rosy glow, a sudden suffusion in the heavens. He turned me on my side, and I could feel him pressing against me, all my feeling concentrated on that small spot where he nudged like fire and ice. I reached back with one hand to feel his cock coated slippery with cream. I guided it to my hole, felt the hurt, winced, then the push, then the joy of him inside, first the bulb, then the half, then the length, then the root thrusting hard against my soft coiled-tight muscle. For a time he was still, planted securely in me. His head rested on my shoulder. He reached around me with his right hand and softly took hold of my cock and began to fondle with creamy fingers while he was moving slowly inside. It was better than the day before when I held his life in my throat. Today I had him deep inside where all my pulsating glands could feel his cock tip working, working to give pleasure back to his nerves, sharing sensations with me, sending the joy to our brains. Each time I closed my muscular grip, tightening my drawstring over the stem of his cock, he would close the grip of his fingers containing my thinner stem. We were containing each other. There was no hurry. We could go on and on. I turned my head with a wrench of my neck and found his mouth. I could feel him body and soul, his whole hardness and softness inside. Inside he seemed to expand touching every liquefied gland. I had his loving cock inside and his moving hand on my cock; he was expanding in me, I was expanding in him. His eyes were shut tight. He was softly murmuring. He sighed and his head fell from my shoulder to my arm. I sighed while we flowed together as if we could never part.

BOOK REVIEWS

GAY THEATER

Gay Plays: The First Collection, edited by William M. Hoffman. Avon Books, 493 pp., 1979. \$3.50, paperback.

Homosexual Acts, edited by Ed Berman. Inter-Action Inprint, 142 pp., 1975. \$3.75, paperback.

Two Plays by Doric Wilson: A Perfect Relationship and The West Street Gang. Sea Horse Press, 260 pp., 1979. \$5.95, paperback.

The Shadow Box, by Michael Christopher. Avon Books, 125 pp., 1977. \$2.25, paperback.

Oscar Remembered, by Maxim Mazumdar. Personal Library, Suite 1607, 145 Marlee Avenue, Toronto, Canada M6B 3H3, 71 pp., paperback.

Joe Orton: The Complete Plays, introduced by John Lahr. Grove Press, 448 pp., 1976. \$4.95, paperback.

reviewed by Larry Puchall

In a manner more direct, immediate and accessible than the other arts, theatre offers the tantalizing possibility of distilling human experience, of presenting the continuous which lies beneath the discrete, fragmentary incidents of commonly perceived experience. This shock of recognition can strike us at many levels running from the slick but incisive wisecrack to the universally registered theme of high tragedy. Regardless of where it hits, the shock makes us aware that truth is happening here — there is a resonance occurring between what is taking place on stage and a sometimes unconscious wisdom within the viewer.

Drama which is capable of sounding universal resonances is exceedingly rare; archetypal human situations must be filtered through culture and cultural boundaries are not always open; if a viewer cannot comprehend the cultural context in which a drama is set, he will be blocked from comprehending any cross-cultural import the play may contain. Most drama is not even aimed at the vaults of universality but seeks more humbly to illuminate a particular corner of experience, but the problem is the same: no acceptance of context, no illumination. In many cases, no presentation.

This is the central dilemma of those dramatists who seek to portray the experiences of gay people. The initial prejudice against this particular cultural context traditionally has been so strong that the possibility of presentation of gay-oriented work has been choked off. The history of the use of gays as characters in drama is marked by somewhat varying but basically rigid cultural "permissions": gays can be portrayed on stage *only if* they meet tragic ends, are the butt of jokes, are the evil, perverted source of unhappiness in the lives of others, etc. Plays seeking to broaden that spectrum simply did not get written and, if they did, did not get widespread exposure.

The signs that all of this is changing are obvious. What may not be quite as obvious is the fragility of the change. What gets seen is what will sell and what will sell depends on the nature of the cultural permissions at any given time. These permissions can contract as well as expand, posing a continuous ethical dilemma for those interested in gay drama.

In the process of trying to get my own play produced, I was told by more than one person, "Don't write gay plays. At least don't try to launch your career with a gay play. Write something else first then you can get away with whatever you want." More than one agent told me, "Your play is just fine, but we don't think we can find a producer for it." As far as commercial theatre is concerned, any work which strays too far from the cultural permissions is an unwise investment. The bottom line is simply that it is another classic American "sell out or shut up" proposition.

The plays under review here represent varying responses to this situation. Clearly in the "breakthrough" category are William Hoffman's *Gay Plays* collection and Ed Berman's *Homo-Sexual Acts*. Hoffman's introduction to his volume is a useful, concise history of gays in theatre. Though he carps at the phrase, his definition of a "gay play" as "one whose central figure or figures are homosexual or one in which homosexuality is a central theme" is certainly adequate. I have a bit more trouble with his definition of "gay theatre" as a "production that implicitly acknowledges that there are homosexuals on both sides of the footlights." Unless we are to conclude that camp and "a love of fantasy and myth and a particular juxtaposition of comic and tragic styles of performing" are uniquely gay attributes, I find this conception unclear.

Hoffman's choice of plays for this "first collection" is basically sound; *T-Shirts* presents the Robert Patrick *persona* in its best, most rounded form: the playwright-writer, not getting younger, alternately repulsed and compelled by what he perceives as gays' emphasis on youth and sex, wanting yet fearing intense emotional involvement. The musical *Boy Meets Boy* needs a production to be appreciated; on paper it reads as a one, not-too-funny joke. Lanford Wilson's *The Madness of Lady Bright* is an expert portrayal of (again) the tortured, desperately lonely gay man. *Cornbury* by editor Hoffman and Anthony Holland is a very interesting look at an actual governor of colonial New York who was at least transvestite, if not gay. Susan

Miller's *Confession of a Female Disorder* is marred by an embarrassing amount of preaching, but is dramatically effective nonetheless as the story of a woman's breaking through other people's versions of herself and discovering her love for women. *A Late Snow* by Jane Chambers is a more elaborated interplay of a cautious yet aware academic and her lovers past, present and future. In contrast to most of the plays about gay men, these two plays by lesbians exude a warm optimism about the possibility of fulfillment in gay relationships.

Two plays in the collection stand out, though for different reasons; Joe Orton, represented here by *Entertaining Mr. Sloane*, is clearly the most developed dramatist in the group and his play is not particularly concerned with the gay experience *per se*. More on him later. *The Killing of Sister George*, though a fine play, probably should have been left out; it has had considerable commercial exposure due largely to the fact that it does stay within cultural permissions: "George" is pathetic, bitchy and meets her tragic end.

Ed Berman's *Homosexual Acts* is not nearly the achievement to be found in *Gay Plays*. The plays in this volume were all presented at the Almost Free Theatre in London in 1975 by a theatre collective calling itself the Gay Sweatshop. While the project itself is admirable, the plays, by and large, are not. First, the collection is overloaded with plays by Robert Patrick. Patrick writes exceedingly well but in a narrow vein. There are simply too many variations on his *persona* and themes mentioned above. Laurence Collinson's *Thinking Straight* is a rather obvious portrayal of a gay playwright speaking through heterosexual characters. *Ships* by Alan Wakeman has interesting moments but lacks the incisiveness that short plays must possess to rise above the level of the skit or exercise.

Doric Wilson, along with Robert Patrick, is probably the most frequently produced of the "new" gay playwrights. Two of his most popular plays, *A Perfect Relationship* and *The West Street Gang*, are presented in one volume by the Sea Horse Press. Wilson's dialogue has a ricochet quality to it — he rarely writes lines of more than one or two sentences and his characters trade wisecracks like vaudeville pros. *A Perfect Relationship* concerns two roommates who go to extraordinary lengths to deny that they are lovers yet cannot separate nor truly commit themselves. Wilson is certainly on top of an important theme, yet the treatment and characterizations are somewhat shallow, even for a "domestic comedy." *The West Street Gang* is a broad, lively satire of just about everyone on the gay scene and comes off better. The "gang" is an odd assortment of New York barflies who inhabit a rather sleazy West Street bar; their moment of glory arrives when one of the troupe captures a young punk who has been involved in a series of "fag beatings." They plan a "trial" of the man but are interrupted by the media-hungry meddlings of both the Gay Activists and "Bnita Aryant." The dénouement is appropriately absurd as the locals triumph over the political stars.

By Hoffman's definition, Michael Christopher's *The Shadow Box* is a gay play since two of its major characters are gay. Yet the central concern of the play — how people cope with terminal illness — is so pervasive that the play doesn't "feel" particularly gay at all. The deserving winner of the 1977 Tony and Pulitzer Prize takes place in an experimental resort-like community for the terminally ill; the action shifts between a "middle American" type and his family, a gay intellectual, his lover and his ex-wife and an elderly woman and her self-sacrificing daughter. While it may be important politically to create the category "gay play" to draw attention to plays which speak very directly to the gay experience, it is pointless to argue whether a play in which gayness is less prominent is or is not a "gay play." After all, what does the label tell us about the content or the quality of the work? In this case, the play does not need a category to draw our attention to it: it is wonderfully lyrical and touching with an exquisite sense of rhythm.

Though differing totally in subject matter from *The Shadow Box*, *Oscar Remembered* shares some of its poignancy and lilt. The person doing the remembering in this one-man show is Alfred Lord Douglas whose adoration of his beloved Oscar was not strong enough to prevent him from colluding with his father to bring about his ruin. The concept is marvelous, but one wishes that more conflict and character exploration were built into the monologue than that which we are given. "Bosie" Douglas has the possibility of being a fascinating and complex character, but too much of the play is given over to reading directly from Wilde's letters and poetry and recalling incidents instead of reenacting them. Nonetheless, the monologue written and originally performed by Maxim Mazumdar is an interesting and worthwhile work.

Joe Orton would be a likely candidate for gay canonization — a fallen, tragic culture hero — were it not for the fact that the nature of his life and work make any talk of such elevation into total nonsense. His life was dedicated to the destruction of every form of saint his overstuffed British culture could muster and his plays are littered with their corpses, usually literally. Orton was a gay man who wrote seven plays and was murdered at the age of 34 in 1967 by his lover Kenneth Halliwell, a terribly neurotic *artist manqué* who found Orton's success and growing emotional independence unbearable.

Orton is one of those rare playwrights who present to the world a truly unique vision and succeed in elaborating on it with increasing power and precision. He took a thoroughly cynical, despairing perspective on the human condition and put it through the wringer of classical farce, resulting in that blend of the macabre and Marx Brothers typically referred to as "black comedy." The characters in Orton's plays (*Entertaining Mr. Sloane*, *Loot* and *What the Butler Saw* probably the best among them) are real people gone

unhinged, yet they believe in the absolute reality and logic of themselves and their actions just as much as you and I. Judging by the information provided in John Lahr's excellent biography *Prick Up Your Ears* a major reason for the failure of some of the early productions of Orton's plays was that their directors couldn't figure out how to play Orton. This is unfortunate since the answer was there for them to see in the works of any of the great screen comics, but especially the Marx Brothers: you take the insanity completely seriously at all times; you don't allow for a second that what you are doing is not taking place in an absolutely real world. So what if a band of completely amoral scavengers are hiding stolen money inside a mother's coffin and are fending off a police inspector who says things like:

How dare you involve me in a situation for which no memo has been issued. . . . Every one of these fivers bears a portrait of the Queen. It's dreadful to contemplate the issues raised. Twenty thousand tiaras and twenty thousand smiles buried alive! She's a constitutional monarch, you know. She can't answer back. (*Loot*)

Play it straight and it'll work. As trite as it may sound, Orton's death robbed the modern theatre of a voice of major importance.

Probably the key to Orton's greatness was his ability to extend beyond the cultural permissions in a dramatically compelling manner. This is essentially the challenge facing all gay-oriented playwrights (one might easily argue *all* playwrights): to illuminate previously hidden areas of human experience with full theatrical fervor. The challenge to the gay community is to support and nurture this effort. For as this supposedly liberated decade draws to a close, the fact remains that if gays want to see their diverse, beautiful and not-so-beautiful fragments of experience distilled into some kind of dramatic truth, they are going to have to take the means of production into their own hands. They cannot depend on or expect traditional commercial outlets, including the highly touted "regional theatre" movement, to provide them with this forum. The full weight of the broader culture tends to pull against gays — fame, fortune and power do not appear to lie in local gay theatre and that trinity is not an easy one to ignore. Yet given the choice of growth, excitement and community on the one hand and *Grease* on the other, whither goest?

JN. WILLIAMS/T. MEYER NEW WORK

Elite/Elate Poems: Selected Poems 1971-75, by Jonathan Williams (Jargon Society, 1979) 220 pages, softbound, \$10.

Uranian Roses, by Tom Meyer (Catalyst Press, 315 Bantyre, Ave., Scarborough, Ontario, Canada, 1977) paper.

Staves Calends Legends, by Thomas Meyer (Jargon Society, 1979) hardbound, \$17.50; softbound.

Reviewed by Steve Abbott

In the early 1960's, when I was just starting to write poetry, I had the good fortune to meet Jonathan Williams at the University of Nebraska. Chatting informally about his days at Black Mountain, he gave the following poetic advice which I've never forgotten: "The syllables in a poem should fall into each other like a line of dominoes or like James Dean falling against his liquor cabinets in the movie *Giant* when Rock Hudson slugged him." Explaining his technique thru an example of Americana is pure Williams. Few poets so versed in Classical studies are so equally tuned to popular culture. Throughout his poetry, the one informs and throws light on the other. But Williams is also unique in that he so carefully follows his own advice. Take, for instance, his brief poem "Big Red Meat":

"harmful
if swallowed"

armful
if wallowed
if
allowed

Each stanza is a linguistic reduction and derivation of the stanza previous but the overall effect, in tension with the blatant yet finally poignant sexual meaning, reverberates far beyond the poem's apparent brevity and simplicity. As with an excellent rare vintage wine, a mysterious and sensuous aftertaste lingers in the reader's mind. Says Guy Davenport of Williams in his introduction: "Such spareness belongs to the lyric and to satire, and all of his poetry is one or the other."

Elite/Elate (the title itself, not only a poem, but also a fitting summation of Williams' poetics) is actually a compilation of five books:

Pairidaeza (A Celebration for the Garden at Levens Hall, Westmoreland), *Imaginary Postcards* (Glints Grikes Gripes Glints), *Adventures with a Twelve-Inch Pianist Beyond the Blue Horizon*, *A Celestial Centennial Reverie for Charles Edward Ives* (The Man Who Found Our Music in the Ground), and *Untinears and Antennae for Maurice Ravel*. These titles indicate Williams' wide and erudite enthusiasms: landscape, travel, music (both popular and classical), popular culture, and language itself (with emphasis on Greek and Latin). Yet while Williams is the penultimate gentleman, he also exudes a sense of humor and sexual frankness that is delightfully bawdy.

The poems I most enjoyed and which I believe would be of greatest interest to *Gay Sunshine* readers are the forty in *Imaginary Postcards* and the *Adventures*, dedicated to Bette Midler, which consist of a poem a day from March 30 to April 22, Shakespeare's birthday. Many of these are found poems such as "The First Three Lines of the Sign on the Door of the Church of St. Michael and All Saints, Hubberholm, Langstrothdale Chase, Yorkshire." The actual poem is much shorter than its title:

AS YOU ENTER THIS
CHURCH PLEASE WIPE
YOUR FEET AND MIND

Or this "A Sign in the Lune Valley . . .":

HEAVY PLANT CROSSING

Postcard poem no. 8 is simply the title and author of a book, whether found or made up hardly matters:

THE CASE OF THE CRASTER KIPPER
By Aguppy Crispy

The sound is pure play and, as with the delights of homosexuality, poetry according to Williams needs no further purpose or justification. "Such tunes will make/your boogie/ooze" as he says in "Homage to R. Crumb." Other poems are longer and more in the mode of ethical meditations such as "Lexington Nocturne."

Uranian Roses by Tom Meyer are "imitations, cullings, reworkings and take-offs" after the Greek poet Strato who lived during the reign of Hadrian (117-138 A.D.). Williams quotes Meyer in his introduction: "I arranged them in a sequence which tells the story of an older man who loves boys in general . . . The poems in such a sequence give a sad and unloving shape to the kind of false eros that makes men chase boys and boys toy with the hearts of men." Since such love is always brief, Meyer's poems celebrating such love are likewise brief:

Naked thigh – lightning eye.	Hard as I try to look the other way
A boy's well-knit body –	I hardly get by before my eyes
Love's net.	are over my shoulder.

At first glance, several of these poems might appear too simple, banally simple in fact, until one realizes the fragments are to be not only read separately but together, reading across the page horizontally, whereupon they take added meaning:

He who hides must someday seek	Tender sapling bend for me
Kiss me	The right time the right place

Staves Calends Legends is a much longer work by Meyer and a knowledge of Old English and Celtic lore would be helpful to its appreciation. Meyer shows himself aware of the dangers of this difficulty in the following poetic digression:

It is not this poet's intention to puzzle his readers
or bar them from the poem with such webs or 'ties' as
these but to make a music for heart & mind, 'bookish'
as a few of its bars may be, must be.

The 'referential' makes the assumption that we all
share a common body of available knowledge as long as
fields & libraries remain unburned. It is perhaps
easier, therefore more 'natural' – hence authentic –
to know that elder berries are blood-purple than it
is to learn that the king Egil sung of (Eric Bloodaxe)
was as evil a man as Nabuchodonosor (who dreamed of a
tree quaking . . .)

'Bookishness' can cause the same kind of atrophy in a
poem as the distance from the dance causes in music.
Once the foot stops tapping the music fades. Once
footsteps are footnotes and interrupt emotion the
heart stops beating . . .

For the most part Meyer succeeds in energetically moving his music forward even during his most difficult passages. Later sections in the book evince an elegant simplicity. The following section is from "A Poem for Jonathan Selva":

but wait
how can we bed down
at the edge of something
so wide & endless?
Let's bury its glow
in our hearts' ash
& in the morning have its ember.

In a world so torn by faction and fashion, the poems of Tom Meyer and Jonathan Williams are an oasis for the human spirit. They remind us that the real value of our lives cannot be measured by quantity, by what or how much we do, but rather by quality, our ability to simply look and listen and take in the fullness of life itself. Having no other philosophy or morality to preach, this poetry is finally the most edifying.

These books can be ordered directly from the distributor:
Gnomon Dist., Box 106, Frankfort, KY 40602.

STARS STAND STILL

Later: *Poems 1973-1978*, Edward Lacey. Catalyst Press, 315 Blantyre, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada. MIN 256.

reviewed by Richard Ronan

Perhaps we select and relate to the poets we read in much the same way that we select and relate to our friends and intimates – seeking a certain sympathy and congruence, but also seeking a border-zone where our differences can be seen and revered. If this is so, it is easy to find a friend in Edward Lacey's poetry and also a soul which resembles our own in many ways.

Mr. Lacey is a Canadian-born poet who travels, it seems, continually in foreign places, hearing languages which most of us have never known. The titles of his poems are exotic, even to the point of being mythically to the American stay-at-home: "Cacahuamilpo," "Las Caquamas: Mazatlan," "Chefchaouene." His work includes translations of Cesar Vallejo and Jorge Luis Borges, beautiful renderings which all the more thoroughly make of him a figure errant and fluent in another world. Still, his native Canada, though a world he has left, is much evident in his book. I've been told by Canadian friends that they've felt their country to be an enigma, a non-entity. ("Canada is a figment of Ontario's imagination" was once the current joke). Mr. Lacey echoes this in several of his poems:

Living material
is needed; I am left only
one day older, and still with the Canadian
fear of experience, fear of life. Go now into the irrevocable,
day that I have not lived.

to be Canadian is to have missed a role
of top or bottom; as it were, to touch, come

without the tickling. And the empty land
waits, white and silent, its Maker's command.

Clearly, the sense of a failed and abandoned culture is strong within him (– feelings which, I recall Margaret Atwood once delineating as victim options and strategies). What-might-have-been a home isn't; never had been: one is a free agent in a amorphous, borderless commonwealth. This is part of the foreignness in these poems which makes one sad – not the presence of what is foreign to you or me especially; more the presence of something which is foreign to itself.

Much of this is expressed in an oddly ambivalent sympathy for the homeless, the displaced and disinherited – a nameless Indian, begging coins for his tuberculous wife; the dying Pompidou, observing with strained stoicism 'I did not believe one could suffer so much.' In a strong piece, entitled 'The Island,' Mr. Lacey tells the story of finding a dog trapped and starving to death on an island.

I thought of returning
to Flores for food, and bringing it to the island;
but food would only prolong the suffering,
and we were due to leave the following morning . . .
Meanwhile, the dog was trying to lick our boots
and barking – joyfully now – its sharp young bark,
curving its body in a kind of dance,
as puppies do, certain of swift release,
confident in the sound of human voices.
It had never done anyone any harm,
and human gods were just and could work miracles . . .
we pushed off from the island with its hospital
and its green jungle and the rotting monkey fetus,
rocking through choppy water back to Flores,
pursued by the diminishing sound of the dog's barking . . .

One comes away from such sympathy aware of the poet's lost sorrow and lost anger, perhaps also of the hollow painless pain of a world seen as both brutalizing and meaningless. In this sense, Mr. Lacey's poems are those of an Essential Foreigner. Their sad vision strives continually to be complete, to be the sadness itself. But every thorough-going world-view maintains its denied elements, in miniature in its very midst. In *Later*, the motifs of restless mobility, of flight from and toward something only implied, is contrasted with images, like the doomed dog, of stasis: the perfect boy, cast in stone and in memory, a dream of northern snow in the voluptuous tropics, a series of saints' statues and churches – and stars, which stand eternally still, unspeaking, constant, even after they've died. There is classical polarity here – a dream of stillness, a life of journeying – useful and enervating. Many of the poems are made whole by this debate; these are haunting in their loneliness, touching in their brief encounters. Some teeter with the attempts of a basically human and idealist soul to be jaded and unaffected, to immerse itself from assault. Still others seem to wander into moodiness, that great muddler of real feeling and thought; or appear to have been abandoned in early draft, perhaps because such conflict can not always be made whole by a poem. In these poems there is a great tendency toward accumulation. The poet addresses this:

Why so many details? Well, I am compulsive
about them, feel if I get down enough of them
I'll catch the essence that always eludes me.

These lines are taken from a poem entitled, "L'autre, L'insaisissable" – "The Other, the Unknowable," the very thing that the intuitive feels as a palpable, but maddeningly elusive part of every significant encounter, of every worthwhile event. I think this drive is central to Mr. Lacey's

poetry. If a poet who is of this temperament fails to come to terms with this profound seduction by the deepest levels of his life, this seduction by what used to be called a god, if he or she does not adequately house and shape it, permit it to come and go, as the greatest of travellers, then he or she will fight everlastingly with it, lose meaning and, instead, long for stars, lust for children, and watch the tropic snow run muddy to the sea. I suspect that this is the dilemma that informs the constant movement and sudden lapses into stillness that govern these poems, the thing that empowers them and occasionally pulls them out of shape.

Consider the lovely "Meson Brujo."

In it the poet is *not* travelling. He has a house with a fire. Instead, it is an evanescent, sweetly archetypal boy who, as his fire-builder, is the visitor/traveller in the piece. He comes to him, as if out of dream.

– I heard, at least
it seemed I heard a sound, a hesitant tapping
at my door, and I rose in the fire's ambiguous light,
gliding half-asleep over the hard flat tiles,
opened the door effortlessly, as one does in dreams,
and the log-boy came in, cheeks bright red with cold.
There in the fire's dim glow, I watched him undress,
saw the white body define itself from layers of dark clothing,
saw him stand, legs apart, in the rosy dying light,
black hair ingathering round an opening rose,
felt his icy skin, glabrous as myrtle bark,
as he slid into bed beside me . . .

The boy journeys on, away, leaving the poet; he is replaced in the same dream manner by a silent gargoyle of a man who seems to be responsible for the boy's disappearance. To many, this may suggest the price of standing still, of extending one's old vulnerability. And, indeed, it may be just that. The poem, nevertheless, is the finest in the book and a miniature of the process which governs the whole: the visitation of one's utter source and centre and the real problem of negotiating and surviving the coming of this child-man. In "Meson Brujo," the poet/narrator stands his ground, admits the event, is touched by it and faces the after-shocks. This is in contrast to the episodes of ennui, denial, of travelling toward and/or away from, of numbness, suffering without meaning, of waiting. It is in contrast to the following, which ends the book:

A light begins to leave the glistening sea;
the sun descends in blood that climbed in gold;
banana boys await me in the dark
bulbing . . .
Yes, I have come too late to you, La Ceiba.
Ghosts of my youth haunt the silk-cotton trees.

The implications in "Meson Brujo" are of another order. Generally, suffering, loss and meaninglessness imply only each other in the book. But the direction in a work and a life is seldom found in its most conscious and advertised concerns. Suffering, if followed to its end, *can* separate from loss and meaninglessness; one finds then that there is meaning in the pain itself, or, at least, that meaning can dwell in the presence of pain. Perhaps it can also dwell without it. I don't know if Mr. Lacey's book as a whole suggests this, though his finest poem seems to. I suspect it is easier to see the book as made of tears seldom cried. If this is so, it is grievous to see a friend so far away and in such dry sorrow. If this is so, it is the zone where I feel the need to differ.

THE GAY REPORT

The Gay Report: Lesbians and Gay Men Speak Out About Sexual Experiences & Lifestyles. Ed. by Allen Young and Karla Jay. Summit Books, N.Y. 1979. 816 pp. \$14.95

The Gay Report contains the results of the first comprehensive survey of the homosexual community. In 1977 Karla Jay and Allen Young distributed several hundred thousand copies of their survey to lesbians and gay men. Over five thousand of them, between the ages of fourteen and eighty-two, from all over the United States and Canada, filled out the extensive questionnaires about their lifestyles and sexual experiences. This book tells what they said.

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Because they are gay activists, trusted by lesbians and gay men, the authors have been able to obtain information from gay people from every walk of life – many of whom would not cooperate with establishment interviewers and writers. Jay and Young have honored their trust. *The Gay Report* represents a major contribution to our understanding of gay life and consciousness.

The book has been highly acclaimed by well-known gay people: Christopher Isherwood calls it "a first-rate book." Martin Duberman writes that it is "a marvelous book – comprehensive, moving, deeply informative, wondrously free of evasive gentilities." Phyllis Lyon, co-author of *Lesbian/Woman* writes: "The Gay Report gives the world a chance to hear directly from lesbians and gay men about the way they live, the way they think, the way they experience their sexuality. This honest and timely book tells us what it means to be gay in America, the joy and the pain."

THE WORK OF KIRBY CONGDON

by Rudy Kikel

From the start, for me, there were two Kirby Congdons. There was, first of all, the poet of the precious, the "tiny lungs" of whose "mites can bellow air" (*Drawing*), mites whose eyes might be "little theatres" (MD7) and who stumble "in the hairy jungle" of the poet's "protecting hand" (*Animals*). It seems to have been an early and a late intention of this poet to make audible "the easy notes in the straw-colored light" which are "as silent as undiscovered constellations," to quote from an early poem anthologized in *Open Poetry*. First of all, that is, there was the poet of microscopic vision, of tiny lives finding worlds for themselves where the naked eye might see only imposed limitation. How was I to reconcile the poet of circumscribed space with the renegade prosodist of *Dream-Work*, with its repetitious descriptions of ritualized murder and suicide, depressing annals which, according to Ian Young (*Gay Sunshine* 24), were by 1975 "becoming something of an underground classic?" What value could descriptions of mass suicide hold for us, I wondered, and what was the relation of this nihilistic literary undertaking to the Nature miniatures? What unity was there to the work of Kirby Congdon? That was the question I asked myself. And why would I have someone read him? Immediately, two obstacles were in my path: the problem of Congdon's "Nature," and the problem of — what shall we call them? — his male impersonations.

The problem posed not by but for Congdon was one poets have wrestled with at least since the time of the English Romantics. For the city-dweller for whom London had become "one vast mill," Wordsworth, for instance, seems to have prescribed a dose of country living, inasmuch as he believed — or wanted to believe — that Nature "never did betray/The heart that loved her" and that she was capable of leading her lovers from "joy to joy..." This is one partial view. Congdon has another. What the Industrial Revolution seems to have imported into his world was not a problem in perspective but a brutal new lens — in machinery itself — for surveying the status quo. So "Silence," in *Iron Ark*, is said to "(boom) from the foundry of the sun," and sunlight, along with a "wailing rain" in *Black Sun*, to "hammer, hammer/through the polished panes" — and even, when shadows shift, "to tear towers down." Nature in Congdon has the unalterable predictability of machinery — and perhaps a monstrous purpose of its own: when his "Fish" go to sleep in *A Key West Rebus*, "the two long lids/of the ocean's eye,/like two wide jaws,/come tearing down." Even in those rare moments when daylight is seen "as it is" —

*The sun's terror is distant,
the fire of that last symbol, warm and right,
as we take that heat for its own sake;
we will leave the night as that night was
— see daylight as it is.*

— we are reminded of the terrible. The sun is, after all, Congdon's most frequently used symbol for incendiary destruction:

*all bodies burn
and feed the tongue and tooth
of that meticulous fire.
Whether consumed by public use
or smouldering from its own inward decay,
all life in its holy concentration, burns.*

A glance at the terms with which Congdon describes both nature and machinery suggests what special forces they are that this poet hopes to help articulate. If from his sun "comes/a force that pounds rock to scales/winds a galaxy on chains," then the pile driver in *Iron Ark* that "would break and bang/this round world flat" or the jack hammer that would jar the earth "into a shaking mass/of mud and water" may hope to "finish what this world's begun" — as Congdon has his "Blasters," whose "power" is "more than fun," say of themselves. Jarring, breaking, banging, pounding — and having fun at the same time! It doesn't take our readings in *Witchcraft and the Counter-culture* (Arthur Evans) or *Sports and the Macho Male* (Mitzel) — though these Fag Rag books help — for us to realize that the forces with which Congdon identifies are savagely patriarchal. The man who "triumphs" in the world of *Juggernaut* is the hero who cultivates the conventional male "virtues": "he who is stoical, emotionally disciplined, uncomplaining, and finally indifferent to his own — symbolic or real — extinction in the particular game, sport, or endeavor which he chooses to use in the elaborate extravaganzas of his own personal and contemporary Juggernauts." And insofar as Congdon identifies with the patriarchy — in becoming a mouthpiece for it, in casting nature into its mechanical terms — he is a supporter of it.

Of this there is certainly evidence. Not least illustrative of patriarchal identification are the portraits of Congdon in leather gear that pepper his books from *Dream-Work* to *Drawing*. Furthermore, there is a distrust of the feminine that in *Magazine*, at least, which he edits, emerges as downright sexism. Issue 4, we are told, seeks to "illustrate the editor's contention that poetry can and should extract itself from the lady's garden, the gentlemen's parlor, and the

academician's research library" in order to attract the average, intelligent man who "has been taught, by the schools, to avoid poets and poetry as unmanly, unalive, and un-American." What better way to reach him than with a poetry of motorcycles and cyclists, those modern "cowboys" who think of their machines as feminine ("Only when 'she' is successfully mastered and brought to heel is she, the machine, to be trusted") and who represent, according to Congdon, "positive and confident images": "They may be wish-fulfillments, but they are not clowns. They may be adolescent, but they are not hen-pecked."

But this is not the whole story. *Magazine* 3 (1966), even with its cover illustration of a flexed bicep and a clenched fist, proves that Congdon's affiliations with patriarchy have always been uneasy ones. A comment in his review of the then just published *A Moveable Feast* gives us some sense of this ambivalence. Hemingway, we are told, "emphasized the middle-class ideal of what kind of creature the perfect middle-class man is. This man is one who concentrates on scrubbing off all femininity from his image. And this kind of unalloyed image is as unrealistic and finally as neurotic as that of the excessively extrovert 'queen.'" If Congdon can trash the "queen" here — and reflect prejudices of the macho world of little-little magazines? — he is also critical of the man who would disown his "femininity." It is the image of Congdon entirely identified with the patriarchy that is the "unalloyed" — and incorrect — one.

A measure of this ambivalence toward it is best indicated, perhaps, by his determined ambivalence on the subject of machinery itself. When Congdon, in *Magazine* 4, encourages us to effect a reconciliation with machinery, he also adds: "We don't mean to imply that the man and the machine are now one; they must always be in some conflict, and should be. But we do present the motorcycle as strongly representative of our acceptance of, delight in, or reservations about contemporary technology..." (his italics). Furthermore, in the *Gay Sunshine* interview, Winston Leyland manages to elicit from Congdon the paradox that he at once likes motorcycles and dislikes machines. Perhaps the psychological transaction accountable for the poet's double view is best indicated in the editorial of *Magazine* 3, wherein we are urged to "assimilate" machinery into poetry not as evidence of "conflict with nature" but as an "expression of ourselves." This "change suggests that man enjoys and somehow almost shelters himself in the anonymity and the Moloch-like power of his machines." Furthermore, "this surge of our emotions back into the jaws of the indifferent machine which we have created ourselves, appears to be the new frontier for poetry..." Congdon seeks "shelter" in "anonymity" and "power," but he realizes that in so doing he is surrendering himself to the "jaws" of an "indifferent machine." Willing to live a protected life — even if it means dying.

It doesn't take much to extrapolate from these expressed attitudes towards machinery Congdon's views, explicit or not, vis a vis patriarchy. He will shelter himself within it though it kills him — knowing it kills and making its killing known. We are ready, I think, now, to look at *Juggernaut* and *Dream-Work*, both written in 1966 — though *Dream-Work* did not find a publisher until four years later, in Ralph Simmons and Cycle Press. From a gay point of view, these two chapbooks are the essential Congdon. Charged, furthermore, with precisely the ambivalence we discovered in his attitude to machinery and patriarchy, they are expressions of the deathliness of men's culture as it is seen and experienced by one within that culture, and so also expressive of complicity in the suicide of revolutionary selfhood that such identification demands.

Juggernaut is an indictment of Thanatos in its two varieties, as Congdon sees them reflected in American life and society. First, there is death by boredom in a society which has overly regulated its own wild and untamed desires — symbolized by the monster in Congdon's much anthologized "Television-Movie," who unfortunately never really comes and never provides the "escape" people desire from their lives. Confronted with the "dull, dull death/that waits upon the rest of us/behind a desk/behind another desk," the daredevil, the motorcyclist, the horse-opera cowboy, and the cartoon "hero" provide our culture's essential release, courting death in deadly games that are themselves parodies and paradigms of repressed satisfaction, often in *Juggernaut* an explicitly homosexual one: the cowboy whose rod has just "shot off/its stinging load" into the guts of his "partner/villain"

*marries
in love's hate,
and war's own peace,
his mirror's mate;
re-enacts a myth,
a play of words,
a game of wish
and all of it
hides love's hard kiss.*

The games men play — involved in a chase, or chasing a buck — reek with the stench of dispossessed, rejected selves.

The inhabitants of the world of *Dream-Work* seem to live for the moment when, mounted on their motorcycles, they can smash themselves into brick walls, drive off cliffs, or blow themselves to smithereens. To each other's often erotic delight, they are likely to shoot themselves in the mouth or rectum, set themselves afire, allow themselves to be attacked and devoured by wild dogs. On each of *Dream-Work*'s 62 pages are crammed some of the atrocities in this "public and silent commitment to destruction." A commitment entertained — why? Well, for beauty, "sainthood," "psychological release," "the hell of it," as existential as-

sertion of "dignity" in the face of the unalterable conditions of death — and as illustration of the obsession with death in patriarchal culture. All of these and more, I suppose. In the light of Congdon's description of the genesis of *Dream-Work*, however, in the *Boston Gay Review* (4/5) —

I haven't told the book what to say. It is telling me. The ideas in it are spontaneous ones that came originally through dozing off before complete sleep took over at night, or they come from masturbatory fantasies influenced by the inhalation of amyl-nitrate... I don't know where it takes place or who the people in it are. I am a student of its contents as much as the maker.

— we may feel encouraged to seek a deeper or at least another meaning to these proceedings, one that accords with our general sense of Congdon's work.

One clue he does give us: "The individuals in *Dream-Work* are, I think, the anonymous alter egos that we censor from our minds because they do not conform to the kind of behavior society expects of us." Congdon is even more explicit: "The hero... is the self in all of us — without process, or place, because there is no progress forward and there are no cycles around us in which to act or in which to be." "No progress forward" and "no cycles around us in which to act or in which to be" — a nice description, that, of oppression, of a people disenfranchised. And the oppressed population that Congdon would willy-nilly be in communication with in 1966 was the homosexual one. The suicidal "selves" "in all of us" that Congdon gives voice to in *Dream-Work* are, at least in one reading, male homosexual ones, which full of rage against an oppressive patriarchy, are incapable of considering revolutionary activity — and so turn their rage upon themselves, in "self-abuse," seeking their dignity, as Sartre says Jean Genet has sought his, by presenting "inertia as active rebellion." Where Genet's heroes discover dignity in "evil," however, Congdon's find theirs in suicide. At one poignant moment in *Dream-Work*, one of its literally imprisoned figures is "disturbed by the group of individualists who wait half patiently, half insistently, outside the wire mesh of the gate. They hope to get in and adjust all these wrongs." Then, devastatingly: "I and my friends are beyond help, but they do not see that." *Dream-Work* is testimony to the selves slaughtered for centuries by homophobic oppression, lives lived without acknowledged "continuity," traditions, history, meaning. Furthermore, it is dream evidence that the implementing of society's considerable judgment on homosexual passion — that it be rendered invisible — can itself be made erotic. But *Dream-Work* is also — by one doomed to identification with the oppressor, yet fully conscious of the cost of that identification — implicitly a call for change. After *Dream-Work*, there could have followed only more agonized awareness — or liberation. And three years later, there was Stonewall.

If Congdon is able imaginatively to feel his way into the life of a "Conch" in *Animals* —

*No guilt breeds
in the twisting cloisters
of this searching mind,
nor feeds on the grip and wrestle
of this strenuous flesh...*

— it is for the same reason that he can celebrate the actions of an "Acrobat" in *A Key West Rebus*, one "broken" by the "rack" of an indifferent sun but anyway able to "stand against the gravities/on my trembling hands": he is our gay poet of interstitial locations, a discoverer of the immense vistas available to lives that must be lived within crevices. The gods in his world are either sinister or indifferent; in any case, they are not to be deposed. Nor does Congdon suggest that he needs them deposed — not when their intransigence affords opportunities for luxuriant self-surrender; his readers, of course, may come to other decisions — on the unfudged evidence he supplies. An appropriate epigram to the canon of this work may be lines from the "Black Snake" of *Black Sun*, "pinned" on its "vacant/circumference of ground": "Pride on the ground, surviving the fall, has our respect."

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Gay Life in Lima

by Manuel Arboleda G.

As in other parts of Latin America, Gay life in Lima, a bustling metropolis of three million, is most easily observable in the downtown area and in Lima's wealthiest suburb: Miraflores. When evening approaches, the *Ambiente* – or Gay life – begins to jump as Gays from all over come to intermingle with the "straight" crowd in certain cafes, baths, or restaurants, and, of course, to patronize the few exclusive Gay bars and discos in the capital city. The cruising areas are basically confined to the well-illuminated and broad, square, Plaza San Martín, and its adjacent streets, La Colmena (Lima's most important thoroughfare), and the less well-illuminated Jirón Ochoña. Cruising also takes place in some of Lima's most popular cafes and restaurants. El Tivoli, for example, situated in La Colmena, is known to attract a mixed crowd of "straights," Gays, and foreign tourists.

In the prestigious suburb of Miraflores, most of the *Entendidos* – or Gay men – wait for the evening before assembling in groups across the street from a cathedral facing Kennedy Park. Still others congregate in and around the outdoor cafe-restaurant Haiti, located in the modern El Pacifico building. Cruising also takes place in one of Miraflores's two Gay bars. In addition to these bars, cruising also takes place in the nearby Jose Pardo bath house.

All of these places are situated within walking distance of one another; however, the class, ethnic, and racial differences among the Gay crowd seem to create obstacles for interpersonal relations, leading to inner group tensions. Yet, in spite of these basic differences, there are unifying subcultural factors shared by the participants in the *Ambiente*. In a sense, the Gay locales in Lima are an arena where various culturally-defined roles are played by different individuals – not all of whom are necessarily Gay.

Among the most common roles in the *Ambiente* are those regarding sexual techniques in anal intercourse. Indeed, such roles are so well known that it seems that the *Ambiente* itself pivots around the notion of whether one successfully plays the role of an *activo* (insertor), *pasivo* (insertee) or *moderno* (insertor and insertee) in anal intercourse. To be sure, the correlation between these roles and types of personalities has led to the oversimplification that only effeminate males are *pasivos* and, consequently, must bear the stigmatized label of a *maricon* – a common word used to identify certain types of Gays: the equivalent of the term "queer" or "faggot."

In addition to concerns about sexual preferences, *Limeños* are very interested in a participant's age. However, unlike in the US, age is often seen as an advantage. None of these concerns or questions serves as opening lines for cruising. Instead, the most widely-used openers are "Do you have a match?" or "Do you have the time?" If the person seems interested, he will acknowledge positively and will open up a conversation immediately.

In Miraflores, conversations are usually initiated by *pasivos*; they tend to know one another and form easily-observed groups. In most cases, the *pasivos* are seen socializing and simultaneously cruising for *puntos* – "points," or tricks – who drive to the park in their automobiles searching for *pasivos*. These drivers simply park their cars and wait to be approached by interested *pasivos*. In Miraflores, the *activos* are generally older, more affluent, and live up to a masculine image so cherished by the more effeminate *pasivos*. However, not all of the *activos* – or, for that matter – the *modernos*, fit the above characteristic, nor do all of them necessarily drive to the park to cruise. Marvin, a young man in his mid-twenties, and Benjamin, an 18 year-old student, who identify themselves as *activo* and *moderno*, respectively, walk to the park to socialize with some of the *pasivos* and/or to cruise for *puntos*. Older *activos* also cruise the park on foot. Nico, for example, an alleged diplomat, occasionally cruises the park on foot in search of young *puntos*, and, although he basically remains aloof from the park's Gay groups, he is occasionally seen in the cafes, flanked by his young admirers. Gus, a 29 year-old self-employed *activo*, also admires adolescents and walks to the park for the same reason as Nico.

The overwhelming majority of the *Entendidos* from Miraflores's Central Park, as noted, are young *pasivos* ranging in age from the early teens to the mid-twenties. Most of them live in medium-sized families of middle-class roots. However, most of them do not live in Miraflores but rather in various other suburbs of the capital.

It is interesting to note that most of these youths like to dress up in foreign fashion, and some of them enjoy very much to be up to date with the latest US fashions. Raul, one of the most assertive *pasivos* I encountered during my stay in Lima, is always *de moda*; he often wears tightly-fitting pants, high platform shoes and fancy silk shirts. Though drag queens are occasionally seen on the streets of Lima, none of the *Entendidos* from the park cross-dress publicly although some of them like Carlos, a 15 year-old high school student, like to put on nail polish from time to time. An interesting characteristic of *pasivos* is the absence of mustaches. Indeed, the mustache, a sign of masculinity, is often used to distinguish *activos* from *pasivos*.

The importance and rigidity of sex roles can be illustrated by what happens when roles are confused. Marcos's experience in the park is a case in point. One evening, Marcos, an inexperienced 14 year-old *activo*, picked up an interested driver. With the idea of enjoying the role of insertor in anal sex, Marcos hopped into the car. But no sooner had they arrived at the beach that it became clear to both parties that neither one was a *maricon*; that is, neither one was willing to play the role of insertee (*pasivo*). Frustrated, the driver forced Marcos out of his car.

In the bars, the cruising dynamics are not that different from the park. Here too, *pasivos* are more common and obvious than *activos*. The reason may be that since sexual, rather than social, gratification is expected to be the ultimate goal of a real *activo*, it would be more functional to cruise alone rather than in groups. Besides, since not all of the solitary *activos* are necessarily Gay, they would feel awkward convincing other males to participate in homosexual encounters. Thus, solitary individuals venturing to any of the cruising areas by foot or by car are often singled out as *hombres*, a term used synonymously with the term *activo*. As Joselito, a college student, put it. "What else could they be doing alone?"

It should be noted that sexual activities are not confined to the automobile (which cost three times as much as in the US). Abandoned lots and buildings as well as brush areas along the cliffs near the beach are also centers for sexual activities for those without cars or for those who do not want to walk or drive to the coast. Alberto, a Gay youth from a local squatter settlement, prefers to have sex in unimproved lots rather than along the coast line because of reported police harassments. As of yet, there are no motels or hotels with rooms for rent by-the-hour. Such hotels and/or motels like the *kilometro 5.5*, located on the periphery of Lima, cater to heterosexual activities although from time to time they are frequented by Gay men.

No sexual activities take place within the confines of Kennedy Park. As mentioned earlier, sexual activities in the *Ambiente*, whether in automobiles or in the surrounding brush revolve around the preferred technique of anal sex. Oral sex occurs, but in finding a partner, success in cruising very much depends upon compatibility of roles in anal, rather than oral, sex. Understanding the roles is important since in most cases such roles are usually clarified by the "players" before actually engaging in sexual activity. Apparently, the double standards of sexual mores allow males not only to engage in pre- or even extra-marital heterosexual relationships, but also to consider playing the non-stigmatized role of insertor (*activo*) in homosexual encounters. Cross-cultural data from Guadalajara, Mexico, provided by Joseph Carrier (1976:116), and from Mexico City, provided by Clark Taylor (1978:46) have revealed similar patterns of male sexual behavior. In both countries it is not unusual to hear certain groups of young males talk about their homosexual experience with a *maricon*.

It should be noted that despite the *macho*-image manifested by Peruvian males, that is, the overly masculine behavior typified by rugged individualism, insensitivity, super masculine physiques, and domineering behavior, considerable affection between males in public places is not considered to be a function of homosexuality. Unlike in the US, it is socially approved, for example, for a male to walk arm-in-arm with another male as a sign of affection and/or friendship.

Equally noteworthy is the degree of homosexual experience which *macho*-like individuals can engage in without having to bear the stigmatized label of a *maricon*. The following summary, published in *El Comercio*, May 4, 1978, is a case in point. One night, after the conclusion of a party, one 40 year-old male tried to rape a 28 year-old who, in self-defense, killed the would-be rapist. The newspaper reported the incidence as a case of rape – or as it is commonly known in Peru, *violacion del honor sexual*, – without even mentioning the homosexual context. Apparently, the image of the 40 year-old rapist did not coincide with society's image of a *maricon*.

In spite of the assertiveness of some of the *Entendidos*, nearly everyone of the *Entendidos* I talked to would do everything possible to avoid situations where their sexual preference would become known. Indeed, the fear of disclosing one's sexual preference forms an integral part of the personalities of many *Entendidos* and leads many of them to lead a "closeted" life full of secrets, multiple roles, and standards which are commonly known in Peru as the *doble-filo* or double edge. For example, Bobby, an 18 year-old high school student, is known to be very assertive while socializing with his friends in the park. But every now and then, when unexpected or threatening situations arise, Bobby yells to his friends "*buse, buse*" – a term used to signal peers to behave in a more masculine manner. Particularly if the situation is such that a "queer basher" – or *matacalero* – is believed to be nearby.

To be sure, the fear of disclosing one's sexual orientation has often led to an almost complete segregation of one's daily life with one's rendezvous in the nocturnal *Ambiente*. In the United States, *Entendidos* from metropolitan areas as big as Lima, have the option whether or not to be identified as Gay men. In Lima, where personal identity is closely related to personal qualities, the option is more limited; Gay men prefer to keep their participation in the *Ambiente* separate and distinct from their mundane activities. Federico, a young airline employee and a member of the Jose Pardo baths, is a good example of such an individual. His feelings of allegiance to his employer comes first and he would be uncomfortable and guilty if the management ever found out about his sexual orientation. Federico does his best to avoid the park and limits his cruising to the baths and/or to the cafe-restaurant Haiti. He feels the *ambiente* is for the most part *maliado* – a term used to refer to anything with a bad reputation. Moreover he feels the prestige of the airline would suffer a serious blow if they ever found out about his orientation. During a conversation with Edgar, another airline employee, Federico carefully structured the conversation in such a way that he avoided disclosing the name of the airline company which employs him. Edgar feels basically the same way.

Much of the fear of disclosing one's sexual preference can be explained in terms of the structure of Peruvian major institutions such as the media, family structure,

medicine, religion and education which continue to promote myths and fallacies regarding the nature of homosexual behavior. A leading Peruvian psychologist, Baltazar Caravedo, for example, warned parents of the danger of "over protecting" their children. Caravedo claimed that such rearing practices often lead to "drug addiction and homosexuality" among adolescents (*El Comercio*, April 26, 1978). Likewise, a journalist Carlos Alberto Montaner (*ABC magazine* 1977, vol. 31) claimed that homosexuality is really a stage in the life of many adolescents which can be avoided by "proper rearing practices."

Such views lead to serious problems of adaptation and psychological adjustments. Hector, a 21 year-old unemployed male, considers his Gayness a disgrace. He often finds himself depressed because he cannot find a "cure" for his problem. Cesar, another 21 year-old male, had had sex with females on several occasions to attempt to prove to himself that he is not Gay; apparently he inaccurately believes that engaging in sexual activities with females would somehow promote heterosexual feelings and negate all homosexual tendencies.

To be sure, there are other problems which clearly transcend the *Ambiente*. These problems, normally found in any pluralistic or class-based society, stem from the ethnic, class, and racial composition of Peruvian society and result in the kind of social inequality which tend to disrupt Gay unity. For example, in coastal Lima, where the largest number of Anglo-Peruvians (Whites or *Blancos*) are concentrated and where the level of ethnic or racial interaction is extensive, racial rather than ethnic discrimination is far more common both among "straights" and between Gays. Thus, when dark-skinned males from the highlands come to Lima, they are often called *Serranos* – or "highlanders" – and are the subject of racial discrimination by Anglo-Peruvians in general. The dialogue between Luis, a Mestizo youth – or a person of mixed ancestry – and Sandino, an Anglo-Peruvian surfer in his late teens, is a case in point. The blond surfer once made a remark about Luis's "inferior dark-curly hair." Yet Luis never confronted the racial slur by arguing that blond hair is not better or worse than dark-curly hair; instead, Luis stated that Sandino's blond hair is artificial. That is, his blond hair is due to the bleaching process caused by surfing activities. This tacitly endorsed the superiority of "real" blond hair. Indeed, the media constantly endorses, if not promotes, Anglo-Peruvian physical traits (e.g. fair skin, blond hair), and equates these traits with examples of Peruvian male and female beauty. The current billboard advertisement of Aero-Peru, the official flag-carrier of Peru, for example, shows a smiling blond female offering Aero-Peru's hospitality. Given the aesthetic slant towards Anglo-Peruvian traits, coupled with the Peruvian government's weak enthusiasm in promoting Peru's rich Indian cultural heritage, it is not surprising to find a low level of ethnic consciousness and pride among *Entendidos* of Mestizo or Indian background.

As if racial and ethnic differences were not enough, *Entendidos* also have to deal with regionalism, those born outside the capital city are considered *provincianos* (provincials) and considered somewhat inferior to the *Limeños*. Many of these "outsiders" are automatically considered *Serranos* especially if they happen to be somewhat dark-skinned and/or effeminate. Martin, a dark skinned Mestizo (who once received a racial slur from his Anglo friend, Mauricio), confronted two effeminate males from Lima because they were carrying purses and seemed to be wearing wigs. According to Martin, these *serranos* had no business coming to the park dressed as females. When the effeminate males were told that all *Entendidos* should dress like men, one of them remarked that it was his right to dress anyway he pleased and ended the dialogue by calling Martin a *Parquero* (a negative term used to refer to the *Entendidos* who assemble in the park).

As expected, the problem of class discrimination also affects social interaction among *Entendidos* and it seems nowhere more prevalent than in the few bars and discos. Yet, to the degree that class constitutes one of the most salient factors of discrimination in Peru, it cannot be understood independent of racial and ethnic differences.

In short, all of these factors prevent poor Gays from patronizing Gay bars. Other than a few low-income restaurants or bars in downtown Lima, the parks and streets are about the only places low-income Gays can come to socialize and cruise. But, as mentioned above, the class, racial, and ethnic antagonism are also present here.

In summary, given the structure of the *Ambiente*, where one's family life and career is considered much more important than one's social life in the *Ambiente* and where maintaining a "straight" image is also considered important in personal relations, it is not surprising to find that most of the *Entendidos* keep their sexual orientation as much of a secret as possible. Yet, the complexity of the *Ambiente* is such that it also provides Gays with a chance to express themselves in whatever manner they choose (e.g. cross-dressing), if only occasionally (e.g. in the evening), and if only in certain areas (e.g. in the parks and streets).

The concern for discreetness, however, has led *Entendidos* to remain aloof from the various issues that affect them. Scattered police harassment in the parks and streets is a case in point. Indeed, none of the *Entendidos* I talked to considered such acts as examples of police oppression. If these and other issues are to be dealt with politically, *Entendidos* should first struggle to overcome some of their discriminatory attitudes which I feel affect any advance towards Gay unity.

The information in this article, gathered during the month of December 1976 and during the months of April, May, and June 1978, could not have been presented without the valuable comments and criticism I received from Gerald Berreman, Joseph Carrier, Todd Hockstatter, Laud Humphreys and Clark Taylor.

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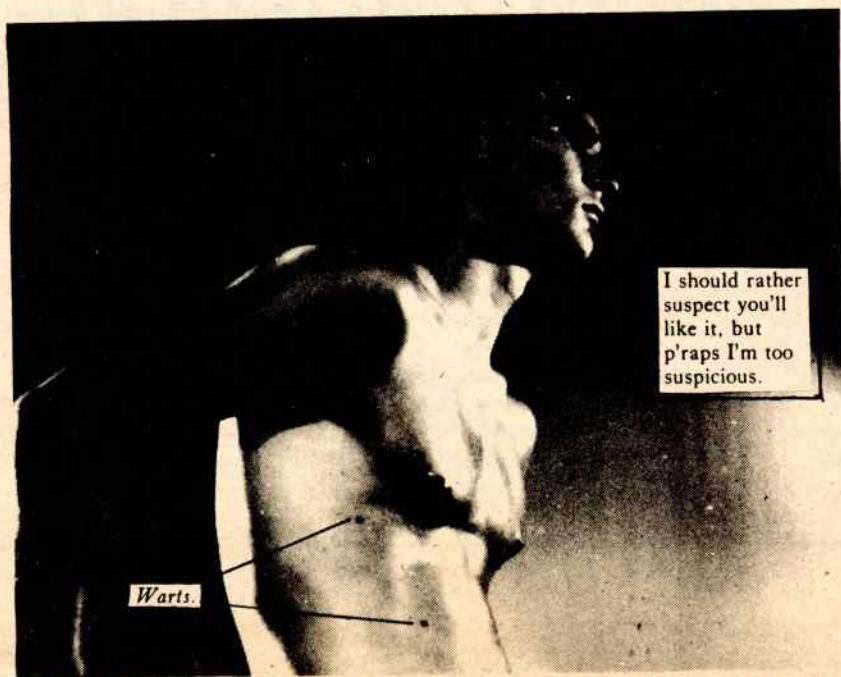
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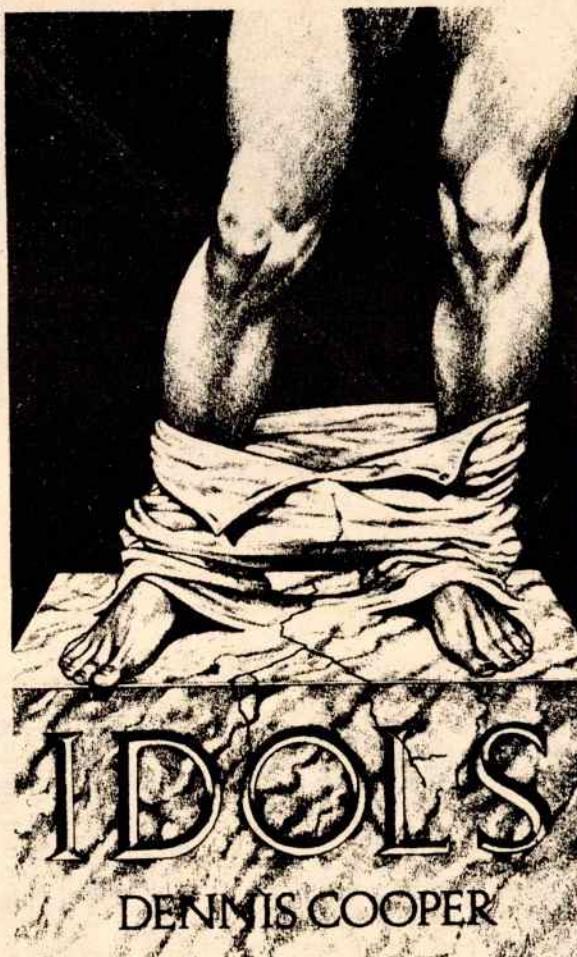
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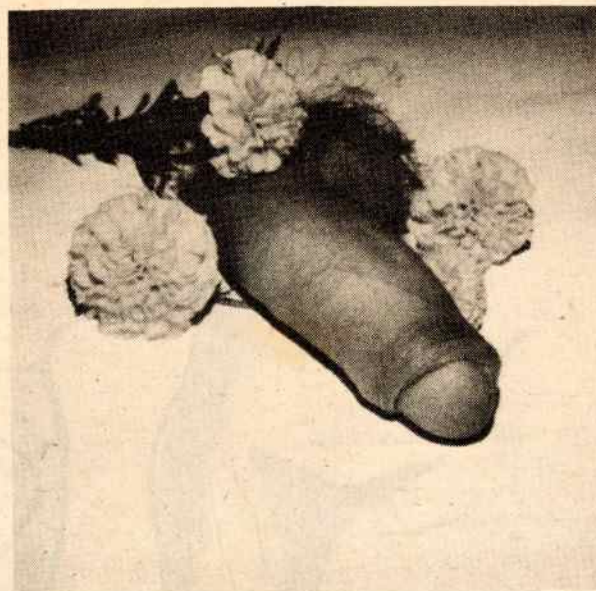
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ROBERT PETERS

DILLINGER IN WISCONSIN

1.

He drives three hundred miles in his Hudson Terraplane. "Leach, you fucker," he exclaims, "I'll get your ass! No cop can keep me tamed." He roars: "Purvis, you scum, kinky-haired Hoover's pretty boy, his kum. Shove this up your southern ass."

Then he misses Evelyn who is in jail. They'd soon be on his trail again.

2.

Hoover's hairy arms flail the roadside trees. The stretch of an Illinois jail cell on the night breeze. Glossy shotgun barrels protrude from groves of white-birch trees. North of Oshkosh, fallow rolling fields. His leg muscles keep on jumping. Jiggling lights from a Model-A ford follow him. He detours. The auto passes. No guns, no horns or whistles.

3.

He looks at who he was before he died - if he should die. That damn gross penis! huge prepuce . . . Even at fifteen it wouldn't let him alone. It seemed made of stone, clumped between his legs, outlined always, obscene, in his overalls or gabardines, big head, bemused, nestling over the small tight balls. He'd clean his glans with spit, and gently rotate it with his thumb and index finger. In school he hated the sperm-stench and smegma in his clothes, the stale wool. He kept to the far corners of the school. Baths were once a week, Saturdays, in a galvanized tub. His dad rubbed his back - or his sister Audrey might - if her husband wasn't home, off playing cards with the boys, or at the picture show.

4.

He has survived. In the pristine Wisconsin woods he'll be secure. No running for a week, he is sure. Good food, good air, good booze. (Had they sprung Billie Frechette? What a surprise!)

He stops to take a leak beside the road. He smiles, yawns, inhales the piney air. The stony road reflects moonlight in its ruts. Utter silence everywhere. Spruce and tamarack. Blueberry swamp.

He thinks of Billie in her bed. He kisses her maroon nipples. He cradles her head, then thinks of how she'd bled when he first took her. His loins are parched.

He rubs his shaft and head with snow. "Billie, Billie," he says.

His tongue moves over his lips. His perineum feels like copper. He strokes his buttocks.

Then he shoots, three charges over a patch of glossy swamp water. He calms. Two more hours to Little Bohemia.

NIGHT VISITOR

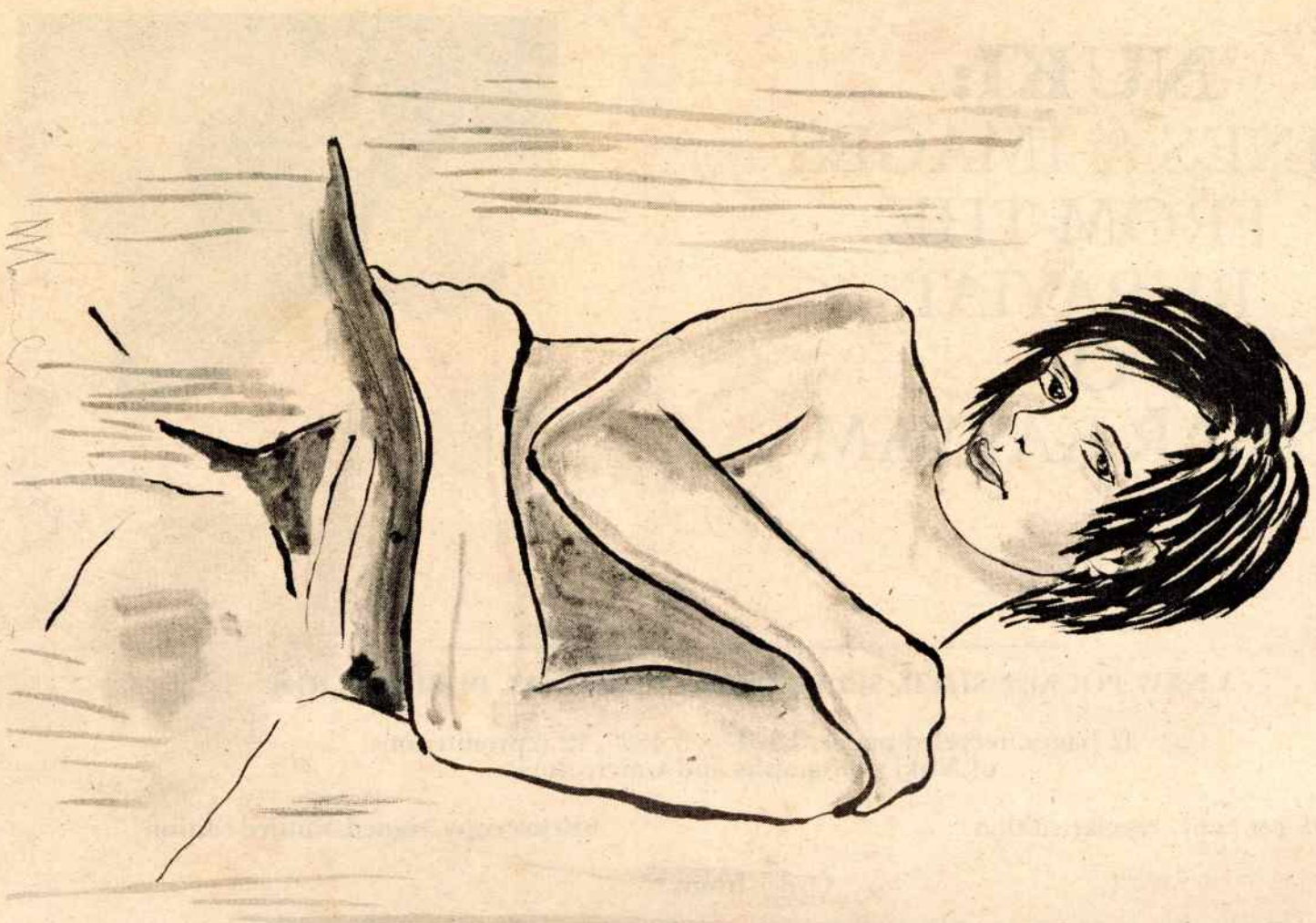
Night sweat on his face, the hard breathing, agate moonlight shed through the window as the outlaw, white-throated, in a white open shirt with rolled sleeves taps the sleeping boy's shoulder. The musky breath, the parted lips, a trace of a beard. He lifts the boy from his bed. He holds him sheetless, nude. The boy tastes his mouth, the soft fleshed inner lip, the tongue, the zinc-taste of warm mouth water. "Take me!" the boy pleads. The creaking is the roof's wind. The brittle spikes of the home. Dillinger's agate throat.

SONG FOR DILLINGER

He visits me in my sleep. There is gun-powder on his breath. There is brandy on his chest. He has not bathed this week. His arms smell like geraniums. They'll never find him here. The law men won't suspect the asphodel protected in this swamp of loving night. The radio is off, the clock-dial shines. A squirrel dashes over the roof. A sigh of wind. I protect him.

GAY SUNSHINE

A JOURNAL OF GAY LIBERATION



Drawing by Manuel, 1979

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