

SUMMER 1988
\$5.00

OUTLOOK

NATIONAL
LESBIAN
& GAY
QUARTERLY

IS THE NAMES QUILT ART?

**ZUNI
AND GAY**

**ROBERT PATRICK'S
AIDS COMEDY**

**WHY GAY LEADERSHIP
IS HARD TO FIND**

**ARE
LESBIANS
AND GAY MEN
ADDICTED TO
ADDICTION PROGRAMS?**



Recently, I talked with a black lesbian from New Orleans who boasted that the black community has never had any "orange person like Anita Bryant running around trying to attack gay people." Her experience coming out to a black male roommate was also positive and caring. For every positive story one might hear about gay life in black communities, there are also negative ones. Yet these positive accounts call into question the assumption that black people and black communities are necessarily more homophobic than other groups of people in this society.

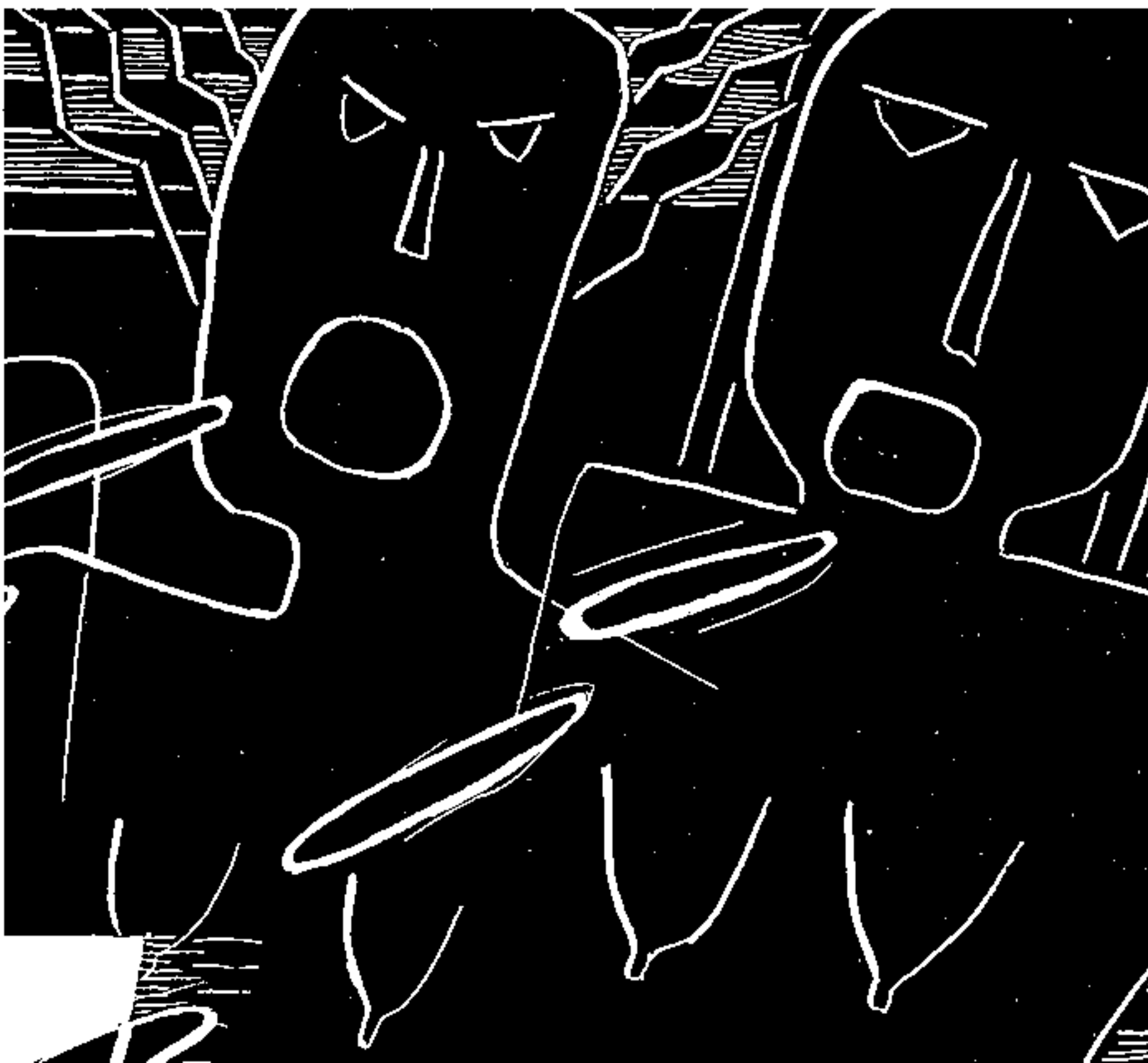
Bell Hooks, page 22

Lesbians...have played a major role in the direct action movement, often providing leadership not only for the separate women's actions...but [also] for the movement more generally. The role of lesbians in the movement highlights a question that concerns the movement as a whole: whether a minority subculture can provide the spark for political mobilization that transcends its own boundaries.

Barbara Epstein, page 26

Those who find the idea of a gay superhero implausible should recall that several years ago, Captain America had a gay character: Cap's friend from childhood, Arnie Roth. "He lived with a man," says a former Marvel Comics editor, "and though the word gay was never used, it was clear that he was." But Arnie was wounded, and his roommate killed, by Cap's arch-enemy, Baron von Zemo. Arnie moved to Florida to recover his health, and for several years, the magazine had no identifiable gay presence. Then in 1985, Cap met a supervillain named MadCap...

Steve Gregg, page 80



CONTENTS



Summer 1988

ART	5	E.G. Crichton	Is the NAMES Quilt Art?
COMMUNITY	10	Ellen Herman	Getting to Serenity: Do Addiction Programs Sap Our Political Vitality?
CROSSCURRENTS	22	Bell Hooks	Reflections on Homophobia and Black Communities
POLITICS	26	Barbara Epstein	Direct Action: Lesbians Lead the Movement
	33	David Jernigan	Why Gay Leaders Don't Last: The First Ten Years After Stonewall
AIDS	50	Robert Patrick	Pouf Positive, A Comedy
ROOTS	56	Will Roscoe	The Zuni Man-Woman
SEX	68	Mary E. Hunt	Celibacy—The Case Against: Liberating Lesbian Nuns
	75	Toby Johnson	Celibacy—The Case For: Monks, Mystics & Men's Communities
CULTURE	80	Stephen Gregg	Comics in the Closet: The Subtext in Captain America
BIBLIOFILE	86	Jenny Terry	Locating Ourselves in the History of Sexuality
QUEERY	95	Tom Ammiano & Jeanine Strobel	Terms of Enqueerment

Cover: NAMES Project Quilt, detail, panel by Peter Divenere, photo by Matt Herron.

Advertisements begin on page 92.



OUT/LOOK, National Lesbian and Gay Quarterly (ISSN 0896-7733), is published quarterly by the OUT/LOOK Foundation, 347 Dolores Street, San Francisco, California 94110 USA.

Rights: All rights reserved. Contents copyright 1988 by the OUT/LOOK Foundation except where otherwise noted. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited.

Publishing Board:

- Peter Babcock
Debra Chasnoff
Jeffrey Escoffier
Kim Klausner
Michael Sexton

Art Coordinator:

E.G. Crichton

Associates:

- K. Smokey Cormier (art)
Loring McAlpin (art)
Ellen Herman (editorial)
Diane McCarney (design)
Brynn Breuner (design)
Vanessa Tait (circulation)

1988 Advisory Board:

- Roberta Achtenberg
Dennis Altman
Ken Dawson
John D'Emilio
Michael Denny
Judy Grahn
Audre Lorde
Regina Minudri
Pat Norman
Ron Sable

Special thanks to:

- Pat Cull
Lisa Duggan
Michelle Echenique
Suzanne Israel
Ruth Henrich
Shannon Hickey
Janet Kornblum
Mark Leger
Casey McElheney
Esther Newton
Dana Sachs
Evelyn Shapiro
Mary Vaskas
Trip Weil

Correspondence: OUT/LOOK welcomes letters to the editor, queries, unsolicited manuscripts and artwork. Submissions cannot be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is included and no responsibility is assumed for loss or damage. Letters may be edited for length. Address all editorial, business, and subscription correspondence to OUT/LOOK P.O. Box 146430 San Francisco, California 94114-6430 (415) 626-7929.

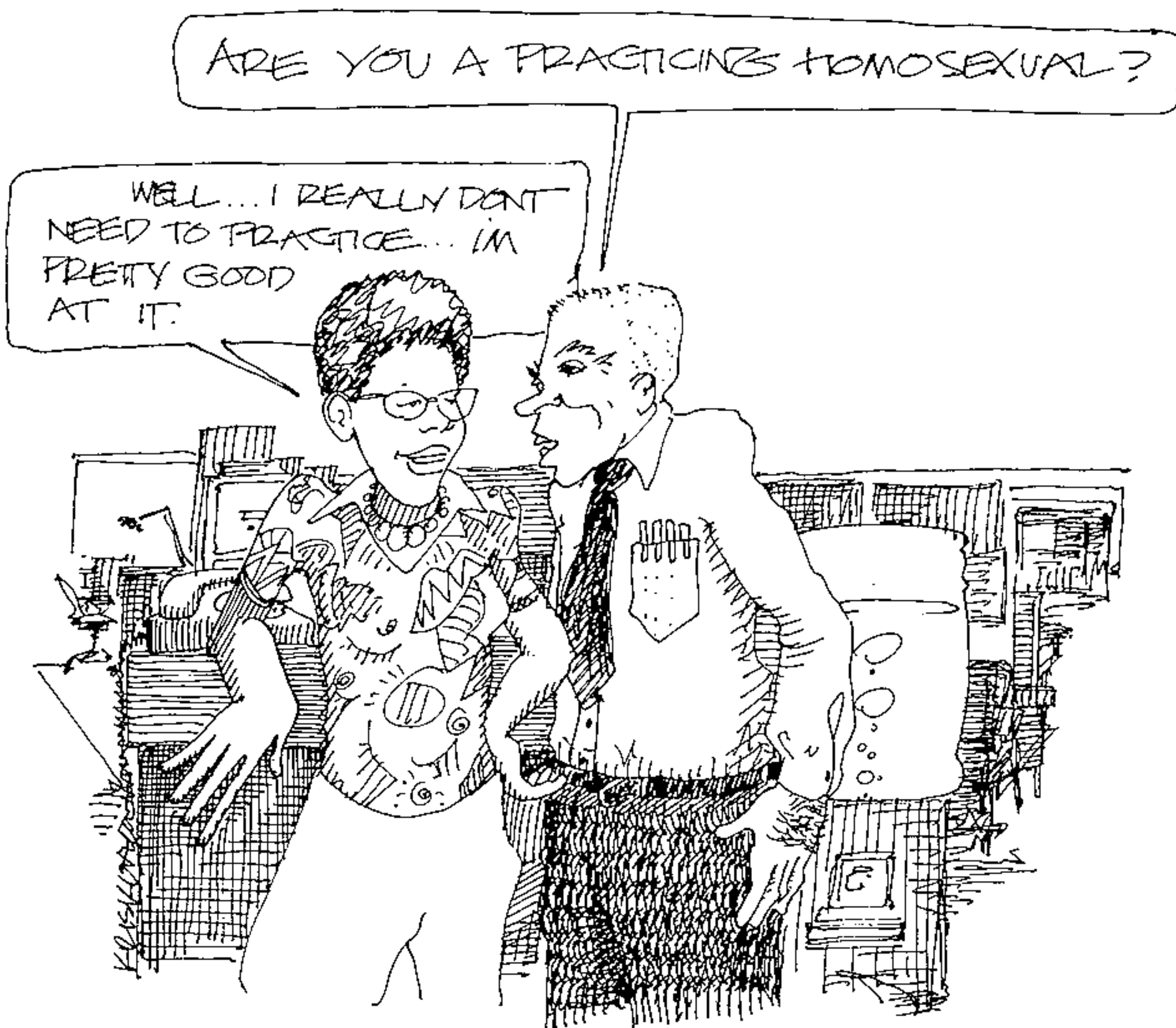
Postmaster: Send address changes to OUT/LOOK, P.O. Box 146430, San Francisco, CA 94114-6430. Application to mail at second class postage rates is pending at San Francisco, California and additional mailing offices.

Publication of the name or photograph of any person or organization in articles, advertising, or listings in OUT/LOOK is not to be construed as an indication of that person or organization's sexual orientation (unless stated specifically). Opinions expressed in the pages of OUT/LOOK do not necessarily represent the opinions of the editors, unless stated specifically.

Subscriptions: Annual rates are \$19 for individuals, \$26 for libraries and institutions, and \$24 international. All rates are in \$US.

Advertising: Rates available upon request. Contact Paul Petrella Communications, 711 West Lake, Suite 500, Minneapolis, MN 55408, (612) 827-7245.

KRIS KOVICK



WELCOME

IN OUR PREMIER ISSUE, we welcomed you to the new, national forum for discussion of lesbian and gay culture, politics, and opinion. With this issue, we want to thank you for the warm, enthusiastic welcome you've given OUT/LOOK. Your letters, orders of gift subscriptions, and notes and calls of encouragement add up to a response that exceeded our dreams.

We are pleased to inform you that you are not alone. Our print run for the first issue of OUT/LOOK was 9,000; close to 15,000 copies rolled off the presses for this issue. Thousands of readers, from all 50 states, as well as overseas, have subscribed (the return rates on our subscription promotion make direct mail experts salivate). And we've just begun to infiltrate bookstores and newsstands. So far, OUT/LOOK is a best-seller in most of the places that carry it; stores from Durham, North Carolina to San Francisco sold out of the first issue in only a few days.

After a solid year of all volunteer efforts, we finally were able to hire our first, half-time staff person, and to move out of our bedrooms into a real office. One of the things this will allow us to do over the next several months is to work with distributors to place OUT/LOOK in hundreds more stores across the country. We're also launching a library subscription campaign (Harvard has already placed its order, which seems like a good sign.) So, if there are bookstores or libraries where you'd like to see OUT/LOOK, please show them your copy and let them know about us.

While most of our story is a happy one, there was one significant growth pain. After an extensive search for a printer, we decided to go with The Sheridan Press in Hanover, Pennsylvania. You sound like a thoughtful journal, they said. As long as you're not pornographic, there won't be any problem.

We explained that we would occasionally run sexually explicit sentences or graphics, but always in the context of an article addressing an issue of concern to our readers. There are plenty of sex magazines out there; OUT/LOOK has a different

mission. Okay, they said — you're on.

We proudly shipped off our production boards. Happy as clams, we decided to take a few days off before plunging into the second issue. Next thing we know, the hammer of censorship came slamming down. Two of the graphics in the first issue were too "immodest" for the Sheridan staff, so they broke our contract and refused to print the magazine.

The offending images were the Kris Kovick cartoon (with the c-word in the caption) accompanying JoAnn Loulan's writing about lesbian sex, and an Annie Sprinkle photo revealing—gasp—bare nipples in Lisa Duggan's article about the latest in lesbian fashion.

Both were playful images about women's sexuality; interestingly enough, neither one was distinctly lesbian. They were funny (at least to us), not particularly erotic, and by no means pornographic. But, as we were painfully reminded, freedom of speech does not mean freedom of owning the press. And while it may be okay to be cerebrally gay, it's still not okay when girls just wanna have fun.

We scrambled to find an open-minded printer, and a few weeks later, OUT/LOOK was rolling off the presses of McNaughton & Gunn in Ann Arbor, Michigan. So that's why many of you received your first issue of OUT/LOOK a few weeks later than promised.

Meanwhile, we're more determined than ever to stick to our original mission: to create an ongoing national forum for men and women that showcases the erudite and the sublime in the same setting. The texture of lesbian and gay male experience runs the gamut from having fun in bed to researching and theorizing in the head. We can only grow by letting each other in on all the aspects of our lives. With your help, we'll continue to do just that. ▼

Aw Shucks

■ Wow! Wow! Wow! *OUT/LOOK* is the best thing that's happened to this community all year.

Sean Strub
New York, New York

■ Bless your little lesbian and gay hearts—you've done something truly wonderful. I felt so proud when I pulled this magazine out on the bus. I read it in the bathtub and cried tears of sympathy, exaltation, and anger at our individual and collective struggles. I read it in bed with my lover and we cried and laughed and loved with a sense of connectedness to the "others." It's rare to be so moved by a magazine.

Diane Bramble
Boulder, Colorado

Marching Insights

■ I am thrilled, elated, ecstatic, and nearly orgasmic at the strictly high-grade publication you've put together.

Paul Horowitz's insightful piece on the March on Washington reminded me of something we would all do well to remember. Often those of us who toil day in and day out to organize our movement become embroiled in intracommunity squabbles over the very finest political points. Most often, our rank and file is not only unaware of these machinations, but they also really don't care about our closely held and sometimes subtle differences in political approach. Having attended the March organizing meeting in New York in November 1986 and having listened to the endless harangues at the floor microphones, I attest to their ultimate irrelevance for the 650,000 people who came for the march itself.

I don't think it means that movement workers shouldn't strive to reach consensus on our common goals and, sometimes, work autonomously when we can't reach consensus. Rather, I think the task

for us is to disagree and debate the fine points, but then weave a whole political cloth of purposeful language that is accessible, not simple-minded, and expressive of our one fundamental goal: that not one of us ever again be afraid to say we are joyously, affirmatively, proudly queer.

Sue Hyde
Washington, DC

■ You published one of the first attempts at analyzing the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. I thank author Paul Horowitz for taking on such a task.

I disagree with many of his criticisms and find the article highly contradictory, particularly his advocacy of dropping the debates for the demands of the march. Many of these debates and demands provided the basis for diverse people to work together towards a common goal. They also provided the basis for active coalition building with other civil rights communities. Beyond participation at the march events themselves, hundreds of endorsements were obtained, and articles appeared in a variety of women's, and minority publications. The demands were brought up at events not centered in the lesbian and gay men's community; lesbian and gay rights were addressed more seriously and legitimately than ever before in many of these instances. Care must be taken so that in the name of inclusion, coalition and good will, we do not drop out the steps it takes to get us to that place.

Local organizers were given autonomy from the National Steering Committee to organize in an appropriate way for each community. The following stipulations were made: that organizing bodies must be composed of 50 percent women and 25 percent lesbians and gay men of color. In many national meetings, our representatives reported drawn out

discussion on the commitment towards the co-sexual and multi-racial, multi-cultural balance. In light of the particular diversity of our community, we are going to have to address these issues, perhaps more than other minority groups. Perhaps the large number of people who attended the march was in part because we took the time to address these issues.

Douglas Conrad
San Francisco, California

Windows on Other Worlds

■ I am impressed by the substance of the first issue of *OUT/LOOK*. I think I've learned more about the lesbian "experience," if I can call it that, than I have in three years out as a gay man in the community. It seems we've been too busy identifying roles and politicking to just sit and listen to each other.

The work by Barbara Rosenblum [*Living in an Unstable Body*] was very compelling. I realized I had begun dismissing other health issues as insignificant compared to the AIDS crisis, and I am now seeing how narrow a focus that is. Her words opened up avenues of understanding—of my mother and her hysterectomy, or of my grandfather and his heart attacks. She and her partner, Sandra, displayed remarkable humanity and compassion—a challenge for all of us in this day and age.

The article by Hunter Pearson about her involvement as a care-person for a person with AIDS, the story of Gladys Bentley, the journal of Meredith Maran—all helped to preserve and clarify our self image. These, and the other pieces in this issue, don't just inform, they challenge our intellect and our hearts.

Martin Casey
Davis, California

IS THE NAMES QUILT

IT IS BEAUTIFUL, powerful, and inspirational. But is it art? The NAMES Project Quilt started in San Francisco with one cloth panel to commemorate one AIDS victim. In a little more than a year it has grown to over 5000 panels from every region in the country. For each person who has taken up needle and thread, paint, and mixed media to create a piece of the Quilt, there are many more who have walked among its connected grids, often in tears. No one with this experience would deny its force and magic as a national symbol of the AIDS tragedy. But from where does this power derive? Why has the NAMES Project Quilt captured our hearts and minds like no other project to come out of the gay community? One answer lies in the Quilt's power as art: art that lives and grows outside established art channels.

The NAMES Project organizers promote the Quilt as the "largest community arts project in the nation." They are aided by a national media that is surprisingly willing to report on events surrounding its display.

The art world, however—that ivory tower that is reported to us via a handful of glossy national art magazines—has overlooked the Quilt. The art critics who write in these magazines are not rushing to interpret the Quilt's significance in the history of art.

Art is important, most people agree, but the reasons why are sometimes elusive. There is nothing elusive, though, about the NAMES Project Quilt; it is extremely concrete as visual communication. This accessibility is exactly what throws the Quilt's status as "real art" into question. Unlike much of what we find in galleries and museums, the Quilt has a connection to our daily lives that seems unrelated to the remote world of "high art," or "fine art"—art that is promoted by critics, museum curators, and art historians. To understand the source of discrepancies about how our culture defines art, it helps to look at some of the assumptions made about art and who makes them.

Art, in Western culture, is first and foremost made by the

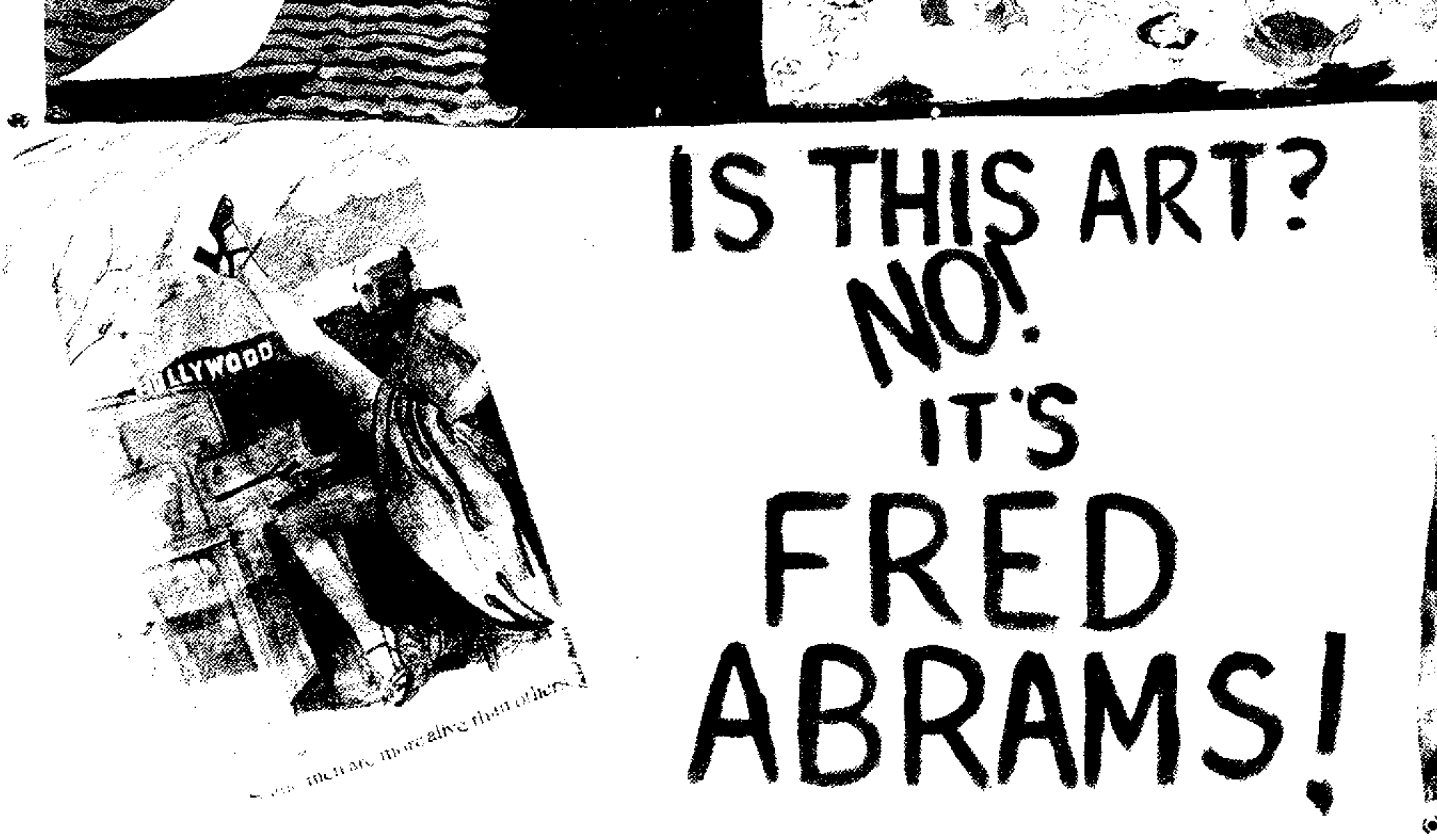
artist—that individual genius whose work and life we come to recognize through a network of museums, media, dealers, and historians. Despite the fact that a myriad of people make art, a very select few are promoted in a way that grabs our attention. This process works like any good marketing strategy: we are told which art is hot, and why, by those who seem to know best. As a result, our taste is inevitably influenced by what appears to be an objective window on aesthetics. It is very hard to regard art found outside these institutional channels as serious. We don't go to the local craft fair to find serious art. It is not the needlepoint your grandmother did, nor the sketches you do in your spare time. And it's not a project like the NAMES Quilt that thrives entirely outside the art world. "Real art" is a luxury item for sale in an elite marketplace that takes it away from the artist's hands, and any community connection we might relate to.

Critics argue a bit about art, trying to maintain the illusion of democratic options, but they

by E.G. Crichton

E.G. Crichton lives in San Francisco, makes art, goes to school, works on OUT/LOOK, and writes computer manuals. In her spare time, she writes about art.

ART?



IS THIS ART? NO! IT'S FRED ABRAMS!

PHOTO BY MATT HERRON

essentially define "good art" around a fairly narrow set of assumptions. It is virtually impossible to understand most modern mainstream art without the translation of these intermediaries. They generally promote obscurity as a desirable feature, and cast accessibility in an untrustworthy light; art we can too easily understand is more like entertainment. And, if you want to include a social message, make it vague at best.

Given this milieu, it is no wonder that potential art fans often feel suspicious of famous artists, seeing them as con-artists instead who try to fool us into thinking their enigmatic puzzles are great art. In contrast, the Quilt seems trustworthy partly because we are the artists. Although not for sale on the art market, it generates important funding for local AIDS services networks. It is not the offspring of a famous artist, yet its scale is monumental and attention grabbing. And it isn't found where most important art is found; the "museums" where we view the Quilt are convention centers, pavilions, gymnasi-

ums, and the Capitol Mall—hardly the retreats of high art. Yet one thing is clear: the Quilt has succeeded in creating a visual metaphor for the tragedy of AIDS that transcends individual grieving to communicate beauty and hope. What more could be expected of a great work of art?

IF THE establishment art world places the NAMES Quilt outside the holy realm of high art, other art traditions do not. In the early seventies, feminist artists working within the art world successfully revived an interest in the folk art of quilting and sewing bees—"low art" historically associated with women. New materials explored during this period gained acceptance as legitimate fine art ingredients: cloth, clay, and rope, for example. Many artists, both male and female, started to inject more personal and autobiographical content into their work. In general, the division between high and low art melted a little.

Several large-scale projects

were also organized that introduced the idea of bringing together many people's labor into one artistic vision. Judy Chicago attracted hundreds of craftspeople to her "Dinner Party" project. The end result was a huge and complex installation illustrating the lives of specific women throughout history with china place settings around a huge table. In a very different project, the artist Christo engaged the help of hundreds of people to set up a "Running Fence" of fabric that wound for miles through northern California countryside, focusing attention on the land and its natural contours. In both cases, people skeptical about the initial vision were drawn in and became enthusiastic through participation. Chicago and Christo are the rare mainstream artists whose work and vision have crossed out of the exclusive art world to be accessible. The Vietnam War Memorial, designed by an architectural student named Maya Ying Lin, set a precedent for the simple naming of victims of a tragic war instead of merely

immortalizing the warmonger leaders.

Tribal art from all ages has influenced Western artists interested in introducing ritual to their work. The holistic integration of art with the spiritual and survival needs of a community, characteristic of tribal art, appeals to many of us brought up on the doctrine of “art for art sake.” Many artists have also been influenced by ancient art like the prehistoric Stonehenge. Monuments like this reveal a very different set of assumptions about art and the artist. No one knows exactly who created them—their massive scale obviously required the labor and creativity of many people, over many life spans. It seems as though the individual artistic ego was not important here, and that art had a function in society beyond visual aesthetics.

The contemporary art that is perhaps most similar to the NAMES Project Quilt are the *arpilleras* created by anonymous Chilean women resisting the fascist junta ruling their country. Pieced together from scavenged factory remnants, these patchwork pictures use decorative imagery to protest specific government policies or to commemorate “disappeared” political prisoners, often relatives of the artists. They are smuggled out of the country to communicate the conditions in Chile to the rest of the world. The *arpilleras* are also the only surviving indigenous Chilean visual art, now that murals have been destroyed and artists of all kinds murdered and imprisoned.

What the NAMES Project Quilt has in common with

feminist, environmental, ancient, tribal, and Chilean art is a tradition of collaboration, a mixing of media, and an emphasis on process that makes the reason for the art just as important as the finished product. In art like this, the individual artist’s identity is less important than the purpose of the art in the life of a community or people. This purpose might be the need to remember a part of history in a visual way, a means of marking time, or a tribute to the dead created not by a government, but by those who mourn. The NAMES Project Quilt started as one panel, one person’s need to commemorate a dead friend. It soon expanded to a collaborative vision with a plan for how the Quilt could grow: panels approximately the size of a human body or a casket; panels to remember people who are most often cremated and leave no grave plot to visit; panels sewn together into grids—individual lost lives stitched together, woven into an enormous picture of the effect of AIDS.

This vision is dependent on the contributions of a growing number of individual artists who work alone or with others to stitch and paint a memory of someone they loved. They do this in the best tradition of quilting, using pieces from the person’s life, articles of clothing, teddy bears, photographs, messages to the dead from the living who mourn them. People who have never before felt confident about making art testify about the healing nature of this participation in a larger artwork—one that also allows them to “come out” around AIDS. Instead of mourning

alone, they link their grief to others both visually and organizationally. Finally, in keeping with the unifying principle of the whole Quilt, they stitch or paint the person’s name who died, committing that name to an historical document that physically shows real people, not mere statistics.

Art needs an audience. The NAMES Project Quilt has an unusually large one: hundreds of thousands of us across the nation who have walked amidst the panels, stood in the sea of colorful memories, cried, found panels of people we’ve known, hugged strangers—in general been awed, moved, and inspired by the power of the total vision. We, the audience, have received much of the healing communicated by the artists through the ritual reading of names and physical beauty of the quilt. It is a rare work of art that can transcend its material components to communicate this kind of collective power. A political demonstration could not have done the same. Neither

It is a rare work of art that can transcend its material components to communicate collective power. A political demonstration could not have done the same.

could a single memorial service nor a walk through a graveyard.

THERE ARE other reasons the Quilt is effective art. The quilt form itself feels very American. It is almost apple pie in its connotations, and when used to communicate thoughts and feelings about AIDS with all the stigma, a powerful dialectic occurs. Tangible evidence of individuals who lie outside of society's favored status gets woven into a domestic metaphor. The Quilt reveals that these people had domestic lives of one kind or another—family, friends, lovers who banded together to make the panels. The quilt form historically is a feminist metaphor for integration, inclusiveness, the breaking down of barriers, the pieces of someone's life sewn together. It is not surprising that women and gay men would pick up on this traditional women's art. Sewing and weaving have been

Tangible evidence of individuals who lie outside of society's favored status gets woven into a domestic metaphor.

metaphors for life, death, creation, and transformation in many cultures. Just as the spider weaves from material that is pulled from inside, women have woven their ideas and emotions into cloth decorated with the symbols of their culture. The NAMES Quilt picks up on all these traditions.

The grid pattern is another important part of the Quilt's effect as art. Formed by a huge (and growing) number of individually made panels, the pattern signifies inclusiveness and equality. Unlike a cemetery where class differences are obvious, this grid unites the dead regardless of who they were. It is as though the dead are woven together, visually mirroring the networks the living form to create the quilt. Within this grid pattern there is an amazing and unplanned repetition of imagery. Items of clothing dominate—remnants of someone's wardrobe, T-shirts, jeans, jewelry, glittery gowns, and sashes. Teddy bears are common, too, a kind of cuddly accompaniment to the dead, a lively symbol of rest and sleep. The dates that show up so often are shocking because of the abbreviated life spans they illustrate. Some of the most powerful panels contain messages written directly to the dead, stitched or painted: "Sweet dreams," "I miss you every day."

The NAMES Quilt bridges the gap between art and social consciousness. Art is too often peripheral to our society, seen as superfluous fluff. Political activism, on the other hand, is often perceived as uncreative and separate from culture. The Quilt is a rare successful inte-

gration of these two worlds so separate in Western culture. We should be proud of an art form that originated in the gay community and that is able to communicate beyond to other communities. What is communicated is as complex as any art would strive for, something that will have historical significance beyond all of our lives. Developed outside established art channels, shown mostly in non-art environments, the Quilt could nevertheless teach the art world a great deal about organization, collaboration on a grand scale, and the communication of an aesthetic that crosses many boundaries. Very few artists or art projects are able to reach so many people in such a way.

Parts of the art world have started to hear about the quilt. At least two or three well known artists have created panels. In Baltimore, the Quilt will not be hung in one of the pavilions, gymnasiums, and civic centers that house the Quilt elsewhere on its national tour—it will be hung on the walls of the Baltimore Art Museum. Organizers are excited by these developments, viewing them as evidence of the far-reaching effects of the Quilt. But what will happen to the present spirit of the Quilt? Will focus turn to "famous" panels more than others? Will museums become a more targeted locale for the Quilt, changing the vantage point from ground to wall? These are important questions because so much of the Quilt's power lies in its existence outside the official art world. It would be unfortunate if the category of "non-artist" became accentuated by more of a focus on "real" artists, and

NAMES Project Quilt, Square 184 Key to Back Cover Photograph

<p>Brian Gougeon 1959-1987 Made by Frank Herron and Lawrence Raines, who write:</p> <p>"This panel was constructed from one of Brian's own compositions, with the addition of several of his favorite images—clouds and palm trees and pyramids. 'When it rains it pours' was just one of the clichés Brian used to highlight his amusement at our desire to understand the mystery of life and reduce it to a simplistic phrase."</p>	<p>Bill Knox 1948-1987 Made by Dennis Q. Edelman, who writes:</p> <p>"The panel ... is intended to portray the deep richness of spirit and intellect and the personal strength that belonged to Bill Knox. The silver rose was Bill's special passion. He liked the simple beauty of its form and color and ... requested that a single silver rose be placed upon the communion table at his memorial service. [It] symbolized for Bill the power and beauty of life."</p>	<p>Tony T. Trancoso, Jr. 1958-1985 Made by Kevin Bradfield, who writes:</p> <p>"Tony was a handsome man whose wild black hair caught everyone's eyes. He really brought a lot of joy to people and he did it with his flowers [in his florist business]. It was hard to lose Tony from this life, not just his physical being, but the dreams inside of him, dreams and thoughts that were shared with no one else but me. Dreams that we thought would, in time, come true."</p>
<p>David McAlexander Made by Rick Osmon and Gregg Cheever.</p> <p>"David, I hope this is some of the flash we'd see if you were here now."</p>	<p>"Chaz" Made by Brad J. Martin, who writes:</p> <p>"Known as Chaz, Charles, La Contessa Carlotta Carot and Carlotta, my friend Charles Klein was as varied in personality as his many names. Why did I use a gold lamé dress to represent him? I think it is because this was such a beautiful part of him that not much of the world got to see. . . . Chaz was like a real jewel and wherever he went, whether it was as Chaz or Carlotta, there was always the aura of an 'event' around him. I miss him immensely."</p>	<p>D.S. Made by Debra Resnik (one of the NAMES Project Tour staff)</p> <p>D.S. was Debra's hair-dresser. He used to come to her home and those of her friends to cut their hair. Debra writes that "he died very early in the epidemic, very ashamed, very embarrassed, with loving friends nearby."</p>
<p>"Wood" Made by Stephen Mack</p> <p>Wood belonged to a group of radical faeries from Nantucket.</p>		

INFORMATION COURTESY OF THE NAMES PROJECT

More information about the quilt can be found in the new book *The Quilt: Stories from the NAMES Project*, published by Pocket Books, written by Cindy Ruskin, with photographs by Matt Herron. Proceeds from the sale of the book benefit the NAMES Project.

Tony Pfafflin
Made by Peter Divenere
(Detail on front cover.)



PHOTOS BY MATT HERRON



intimidated wider participation. I would hate to see the Quilt swallowed up in the land of institutional art and co-opted from its community roots.

WE SHOULD be proud of the Quilt, but we should also stand back and reflect on its process as often as necessary. The NAMES Project is growing at an overwhelming pace, one that demands a look at how centralized the vision can remain. The power of the Quilt is fully communicated when people walk among the squares, physically becoming part of the vast grid, feeling tiny in scale compared to the whole. Its power also lies in its capacity to educate about AIDS in the universal language of quilting. I am concerned that continuing centralization will make the Quilt unwieldy, both in organization and in size. Will continuous expansion make it impossible to display in one location? Will people have to see it only in pictures, or only in its home resting place of San Francisco?

What about communities deeply affected by AIDS but not yet familiar with the NAMES Project Quilt? In New York City, for instance, women of color and their children form a growing percentage of victims, yet I wonder how many panels reflect this. A continued centralization of the Quilt could stand in the way of the outreach that makes the Quilt's vision so powerful. One possible solution would be regional quilts that are more accessible to people. Smaller cities have already created their own quilts and displayed them locally before

THE TOUR: The NAMES Project Quilt is touring cities throughout the US through the summer. In October it will return to Washington, DC for the first anniversary of its original unfolding at the 1987 National March for Lesbian and Gay Rights. This year the Quilt is expected to reach 10,000 to 15,000 panels, more than twice the size of its original display. The remaining tour dates are:

Detroit, MI	July 6-7	Seattle, WA	July 23-24
Chicago, IL	July 9-11	Portland, OR	July 29-30
Minneapolis, MN	July 15-17	Washington, DC	October 7-9

sending them to join the larger work. This link to something larger is an important part of the Quilt process, and it could easily continue with local areas concentrating on new outreach before joining together regionally. Stores in areas where there are many AIDS deaths could be organized to hang quilt grids in their windows. People could get involved who would never travel to Phoenix, or Baltimore, or other places on the tour, people who would never hear about the Quilt through existing channels.

It must be hard to think about giving up control of a project that has been so successful so quickly—especially in an age of media co-optation of art and social movements. But one of the most important roles the Quilt has played is as a tool for organization: individuals networking to make panels, groups networking to form local quilt tour organizations. A central vision has been important and may be for some time to come. But AIDS is unfortunately with us for longer than that, and the vision could become stronger by branching out. The ritual unfolding of the panels and reading of names might change from region to region. New cultural influences would add new dimensions. The Northeast's Quilt might take on a very different character from the Southwest. These differences would be exciting and would expand the Quilt's

dimensions as art. It would reach more people. And the inevitable difficulties of large organization would be strengthened by more autonomy at the local level. People could still feel part of a larger-than-life whole, yet not be subsumed by an abstraction out of reach. If four football fields of panels are overwhelming, is ten necessarily better?

These are questions and reactions I have amidst my own emotions about the power of the Quilt and its significance as art in an age when the institutions of art can be so devoid of spirit. Art and artists survive regardless of art market trends, and most art will never be seen in a museum or gallery. It is the art made by your neighbor or your lover, the art that someone is compelled to make for reasons other than money. I hope the Quilt will never be a commodity on the art market, never owned by an individual or corporation, never laid to rest in one museum. The NAMES Project Quilt is a living, breathing, changing work of art, one that was inspired by grief and grew to communicate hope. Let it continue to live in good health. ▼

Matt Herron, a photojournalist for 25 years, is currently writing and photographing about the AIDS crisis.

*a*NYONE WHO CARES to go looking can find serenity. It leaves tracks: neat rows of folding chairs lined up in musty church basements; the dull buzz of fluorescent lights in hospital lecture halls; schoolrooms where half-erased algebra problems remain on green blackboards. Literally hundreds of thousands of people across the country and around the world make regular trips to such places—as often as once each day. They are members of 12-step and other “recovery” programs.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is the oldest and best known of these self-help programs, and its structure and philosophy have served as models for others: Narcotics Anonymous (NA); Overeaters Anonymous (OA); Incest Survivors Anonymous (ISA); Emotional Health Anonymous (EHA); Emotions Anonymous (EA) Gamblers Anonymous (GA); Al-Anon and Alateen (programs for family members and friends of alcoholics); and most recently, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (SLAA).¹ The only requirement for membership in any of them is a desire to stop substance abuse or change a compulsive behavior.

There is strong impressionistic evidence that, in the past few years, these programs have become so popular within the gay and feminist communities that they virtually constitute a 12-step “movement.” Although many people know, through personal contact, that 12-step programs, especially AA, have literally been lifesavers, the programs sometimes have the look and feel of modern-day cults. They describe themselves in universal terms, pride themselves on excluding no one, suggest that their “fellowships” are supportive without ever being critical, and claim to offer a philosophy of spiritual enlightenment without any religious trappings. To the uninitiated, this description might sound like old-style evangelical religion or even like New Age pop psychology with a do-you-believe-in-magic touch thrown in for good measure.

I have never been a member of a 12-step program. In order to write this article, I attended a lot of meetings and talked to many people. Some of what I learned surprised me; all of it involved me. I have asked certain key

Gett
to Ser

**Do
addiction
programs sap
our political
vitality?**



ing enity

by Ellen Herman



Ellen Herman works at South End Press in Boston, Massachusetts. She has written for Gay Community News, New Directions for Women, Sojourner, Women's Review of Books, and Zeta.

questions about the nature of addiction and the methods these programs offer for recovery: whether all the problems addressed by a variety of 12-step programs are fundamentally the same; what resources and analyses feminism and gay liberation have developed in response to addiction and other personal life crises; whether 12-step philosophy has anything to say about politics; what needs these programs are addressing that could or should have been met by political movements; and how living in a "just say no" culture can change the meaning of all of the above.

The Recipe for Recovery

The "steps" (see p. 13) are the heart of Alcoholics Anonymous and all the programs based on the AA model. They are twelve specific actions that the programs urge individuals to take and then repeat. They are the programs' official recipe for recovery, the ingredients of an addiction-free life. Their purpose is "to relieve pain and suffering, fill our emptiness, help us find the missing something, help us discover ourselves and the God within us, and release great quantities of the energy, love, and joy dammed up inside ourselves"²—all with a minimum of discomfort and a maximum of self-awareness.

Addiction has always been a dead-serious reality, and the fact that I.V. drug use and sexual behaviors favored by many gay men put people at high risk for AIDS has made the lethal consequences of addiction even clearer. The currently accepted estimate is that the rate of alcoholism and drug addiction among gay men and lesbians is about three times the rate in the general population—about one in three compared to one in ten.³

Unlike medical professionals, therapists, or some political activists, 12-step programs do not dwell on the "whys" of addiction. It is simply understood that anyone who uses substances or activities in a way that interferes with living has an addiction problem.

Accordingly, programs offer very simple explanations and a decidedly behavioral approach, two important reasons why they seem to work for so many people. They pay serious

**Feminist and gay
12-step program
members complain
that their political
movements did not
make good on
promises to create
supportive spaces
where people could
go to air and heal
the traumas of daily
living.**

attention to ordinary pain by requiring people to pay attention to it themselves: taking inventories (steps four and ten); admitting wrongdoing (steps five and ten); making direct amends (steps eight and nine); praying and meditating (step eleven); and carrying the message of spiritual awakening (step twelve). "Working the steps" one by one, and then repeating them indefinitely, gives people at least two things that neither science nor politics seems to trust people with consistently: a largely self-determined behavioral routine and permission to understand our problems differently at different stages in our lives, in ways that make sense to us even if they don't to anyone else.

Day to day, what programs offer members are handy directories of meeting times and places, "approved" literature on a range of topics, and slogans to live by, like "one day at a time" and "let go and let God." A set of 12 "traditions" governs program structure. Members are strongly urged to attend meetings frequently, although meetings are completely voluntary. Still, it is not unusual for individuals to participate in four or five each week for many years running. Meetings roughly follow a standard format: an opening statement, a speaker who comes prepared to tell his or her story, time for spontaneous sharing by those present, and a closing statement. When people speak, they do so for as long as they like without interruption. No one responds directly to anything that is said. There are slight variations on this format, and a meeting in rural Nebraska would certainly feel different than one on Castro Street in San Francisco, but a 12-step meeting anywhere would be easily recognizable to anyone who had ever attended one before. Predictability is the point.

Programs encourage a "sponsorship" system, where individuals who have been in the program for a while act as "buddies" for newcomers, orienting them to program philosophy and structure. In addition to their sponsors, members have no trouble finding willing ears outside meetings. Telephone numbers are exchanged and used, at all hours of the day and night, when people need help or support, or

just want the comfort that comes from making contact with other human beings who care.

The Gay/Feminist Flood

Pick up almost any gay newspaper or resource guide and you will find listings for gay meetings, ads for "co-dependency therapy," and notices like this one: "SOBER, PROUD AND FREE, Friendly 12-stepping woman, 31, needs home..." Feminist publications from *Ms.* to *off our backs* also routinely publish letters by readers who identify themselves as "ACOA" (adult child of an alcoholic). Many women's centers that operate as crucial information clearinghouses and gathering places for feminists also offer a wide and growing variety of 12-step meetings for anyone interested.⁴ During the past five years, organizers of women's music festivals and other such events around the country have started providing "alcohol and chem-free" spaces as a routine part of expressing their commitment to a feminist culture of inclusion. Women's bookstores have done a booming and steady business in recovery books and cards ("Expect Miracles—They are only 12 steps away!") during the past few years. Workers at New Words, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, have even created a new category in the store's accounting system to keep track of what they say are literally hundreds of sales.

The number of "official" gay and women's meetings offered by the programs is astonishingly large. In the Boston area, for example, AA lists 20 weekly gay meetings (one specifically for lesbians) and 60 meetings for women. Al-Anon offers ten gay, two lesbian, two women's, and one bisexual meeting, with names like "Amazon Lesbians" and "Glitter and Be Gay."

There are few ways to document accurately the number of gay or feminist (or any other kind of) members of 12-step programs, since one of the 12 traditions specifies "anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films." The overwhelming consensus though, among the 12-step members and social service professionals I interviewed is that gays and feminists

have flooded the programs in recent years, and that the vast majority of predominantly gay meetings are “unofficial” (not designated by a “G” in program directories). People spoke repeatedly about the “phenomenal” growth of the programs, about “constantly overflowing” meetings, and about a 12-step consciousness among gays and feminists that has “spread,” “mushroomed,” and “gone wild.”

Although feminism and gay liberation both tried to mend the personal/political split that seemed to be just a fact of life in progressive social movements, feminist and gay 12-step program members complain that their political movements did not make good on promises to create supportive spaces where people could go to air and heal the traumas of daily living, including addiction. One AA member described her experience this way.

I was very politically active up until the point when I entered the program, and ever since then I've thought maybe I'd get myself back into politics, but there is something connected for me in being sober and being afraid of political activism, being afraid of how I felt when I did it, like using drugs and feeling out of control. [In my political organization] I felt like I had to be such a together person, do a lot of work, take a lot of responsibility. People saw me as a very reliable person, but I felt that the people around me didn't realize I was falling apart inside.... What I think now is that it was more important for me to get my personal shit together than to do the political work I was doing because I couldn't do good political work while I was such a mess.

It is ironic that many feminists and gay people felt, and continue to feel, that pressing personal concerns—like addiction—are often invisible within the movements that offered slogans like “the personal is political.”

There are other important differences between belonging to a political movement and being a member of a 12-step program. Progressive organizations typically require people who may or may not like one another to get together often and for interminably long periods of time, to plan events or campaigns, divide chores, assign responsibilities, and periodically check in on the progress of their projects. When it's all over and everyone is com-

pletely exhausted, it's time to meet again for a humorless evaluation, a less-than-sincere session of criticism/self-criticism, or both.

Twelve-step programs literally require nothing. Meetings are always short and always start and end exactly on time. You can show up if you feel like it or skip it if you don't. If you do go, the format will be familiar no matter where you are. You listen. You might choose to share your story or socialize after the meeting. When it's all over, you leave with no

The 12 Steps

1. *We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.*
2. *Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*
3. *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.*
4. *Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*
5. *Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*
6. *Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*
7. *Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.*
8. *Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*
9. *Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*
10. *Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*
11. *Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.*
12. *Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics,* and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

* This is adapted to the addiction relevant to each 12-step program.

Twelve-step programs provide at least one thing that all people—but especially socially stigmatized people—are desperate to find: a predictably safe place in which to feel understood and accepted.

obligation to anyone and you probably feel better than you did when you walked in.

In a homophobic and male-dominated culture, gay men, lesbians, and feminists are always searching for places in which their sexual and gender identities can be simply facts rather than lightning rods for hostility and violence. At their best, the 12-step programs have been such places. But homophobia and sexism also exist within the programs. As far as I know, only one program—SLAA—explicitly states in its literature that sexual preference is a non-issue.

Alcoholics Together (AT) was a 12-step program founded in Los Angeles by and for gay alcoholics before the AA Central Service Committee would officially permit gay meetings to take place. Although AA has since abolished its formal policy of homophobic exclusion, AT continues to meet regularly in many places (10 times each week at Boston's Gay and Lesbian Counseling Services)—an indication that homophobia within AA may be unofficial now, but it's still there. The subtle and crude versions of sexism are also alive and well. Program literature routinely uses sexist language, although this seems to be changing slowly. A few women's meetings I attended simply replaced every instance of "God" with "Goddess." Women, however, also described feeling "unsafe" in mixed meetings with men, and lesbians and gay men talked about being "invisible" when surrounded by straight people in 12-step gatherings.

While homophobia and sexism may be alive and well in 12-step programs, one clear reason why feminists, gay men, and lesbians may have found 12-step programs so welcoming ultimately is their structure, which can best be described as decentralized democracy. The 12 traditions that govern the structure of 12-step programs feel familiar to people with experience in grassroots political movements. They guarantee open membership, group autonomy, financial self-sufficiency, and a non-professional and non-political status, among other things. These are the reasons women and gay people have been able to organize meetings of their own.

Twelve-step programs provide at least one thing that all people—but especially socially stigmatized people—are desperate to find: a predictably safe place in which to feel understood and accepted. Safety was almost tangibly present in many of the meetings I attended, and I believe the feeling of uncritical acceptance people find there may be one of the biggest reasons they flock to the meetings. The safe environment has been purchased at a rather high price, however: a community culture that does not allow room for direct reaction or interaction of any kind, criticism in particular.

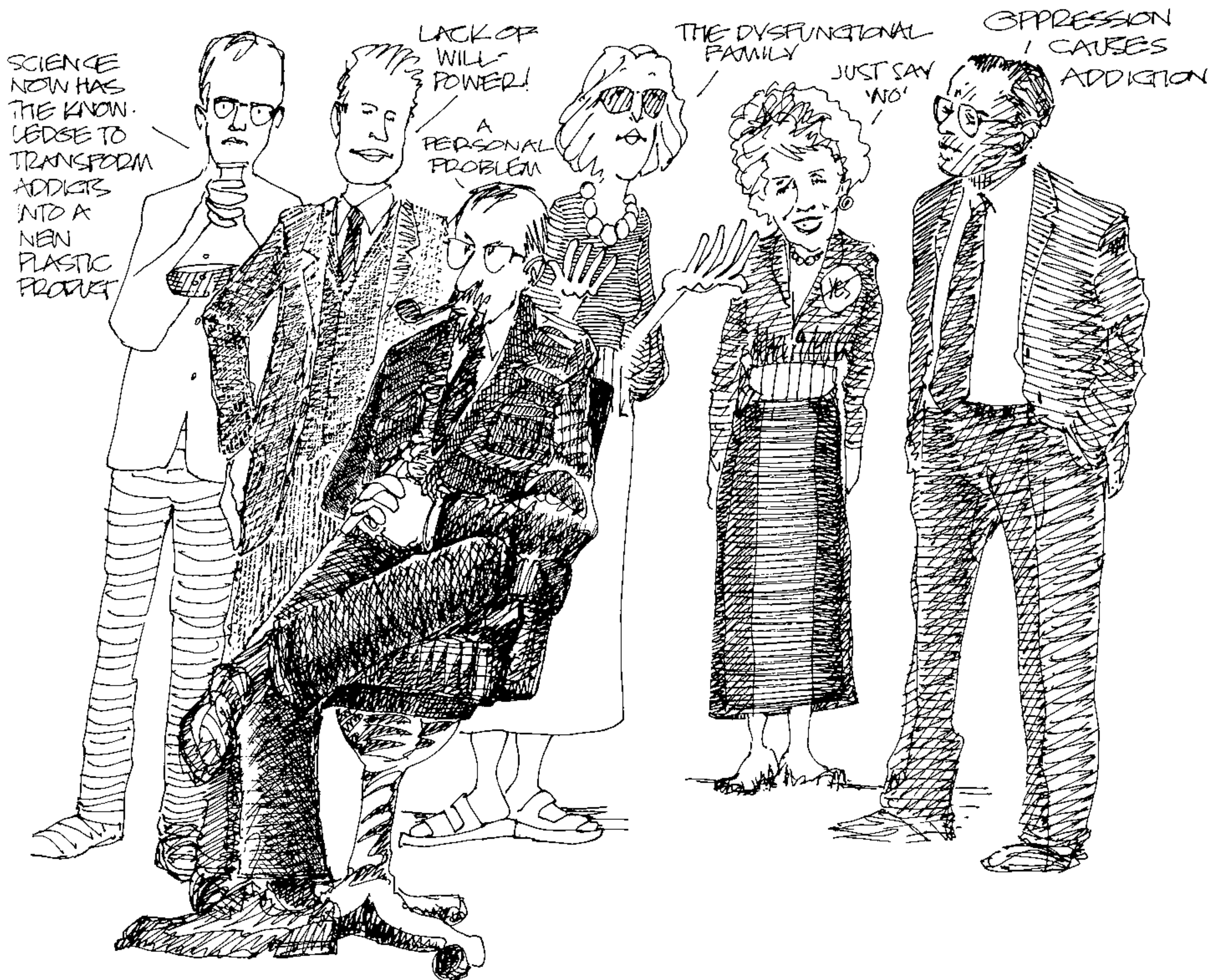
Addiction is Addiction is Addiction?

They look alike, but are all the 12-step programs really the same? Does it make sense to change compulsive eating behavior with the same techniques alcoholics use to keep sober? Is sexual addiction different from food addiction, and are they both different from addiction to mind-altering substances?

Food is something we all need to live; none of us ever needs drugs or alcohol, but alcoholism and drug addiction are characterized by a physiological process of dependence completely unknown to most overeaters or "sex and love addicts." Food can be a way for people to establish and maintain relationships, express their cultural identities, or spend leisure time. At least one progressive political analysis of food and eating conflicts directly with the 12-step approach of Overeaters Anonymous: fat liberation.

In particular, feminists exposed cultural imperatives about the physical body—what it was supposed to weigh, look like, feel like, smell like, and act like—and pronounced accepted notions of clothing, diet, and appearance to be among the causes of women's self-hatred. Gay liberation as an organized movement has had less to say on this topic, but fat liberation is developing a voice within the gay community. Activists have pointed to ideal physical types that may be queer but are "fat-oppressive" nonetheless: the androgynous dyke with the curveless body of a teenage boy

THE CAUSES OF ADDICTION

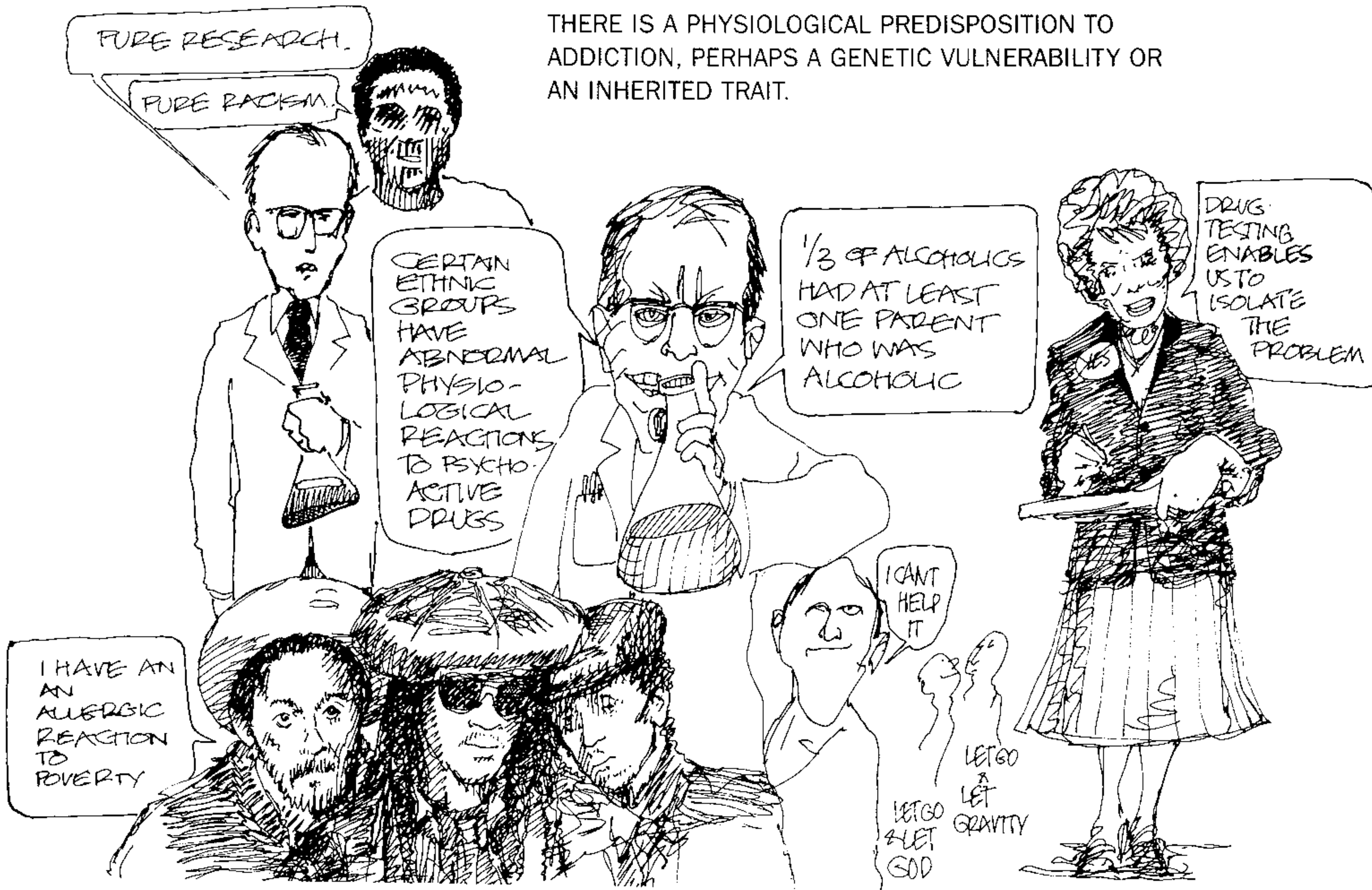


and the clone with a mania for Nautilus machines and the muscles to prove it. Fat liberationists have developed the very convincing argument that fat itself is far less of a health or self-esteem issue in the lives of fat people than are endless cycles of debilitating diets or stereotypes about what fat (and thin) people must be like.

Sex is no more a survival need than alcohol. Yet like the desire for food, the desire for sex often exceeds the body's need to satisfy the

basic hungers of human emotion and spirit. It can be a tremendous source of pleasure, and so most people do not choose long-term celibacy. That people are "dependent" on sex because they enjoy how it makes them feel about their partners or simply look forward to the next time they have an orgasm can be considered perfectly ordinary, slightly neurotic, or completely obsessive. Whether an individual feels sexually "normal" or "abnormal" is determined by social attitudes as much as by the

THE BIOLOGICAL MODEL



specifics of sexual pain and pleasure in her or his own life.

SLAA (Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous) is a relatively new program; it was founded in Boston in 1976 by recovered alcoholics. The SLAA pamphlet entitled "40 Questions for Self-Diagnosis" asks: "Have you ever wished you could be less emotionally dependent?...Do you find yourself in a relationship you cannot leave?...Do you believe that sex and/or a relationship will make your life bearable?" I think many people—certainly large numbers of women—would be inclined to answer yes to questions such as these. Does that make us all "sex and love addicts"?

What exactly does recovery involve for an SLAA member? According to members, the

goal is to find love and sex within a "true partnership," a kind of relationship (generally understood to be monogamous) that does not fuel the addiction. If no committed, continuing relationship is possible, then total sexual abstinence is called for as the only method of maintaining "sexual sobriety." Clearly, a traditional hierarchy of sexual values is being upheld: monogamy is the healthy ideal, and celibacy is preferable to promiscuity.

Many of the gay men with whom I spoke about SLAA said the program is a way for them and others to cope with AIDS and AIDS anxiety. At a time when sexual desire itself has started to feel lethal, and a virus that is transmitted sexually is killing incredible numbers of gay men and others, it is not surprising that

people have started identifying sexual feelings as symptoms of uncontrollable disease or addiction.

Whatever one thinks about overeating or sexual "addiction," it is clear that feminists, gay men, and lesbians in OA and SLAA are dealing with food, sexuality, health, and other important issues that were and are explored politically within the women's and gay liberation movements. Likewise, the insights adult children of alcoholics have developed about the emotional consequences of growing up in "dysfunctional" families can be traced, at least partially, to a feminist analysis of the family, which understood that institution to be oppressive to women, children, and gay people.

The 12-step approach does not take up the significant differences between addictions or people. Although I assume that differences do exist, 12-step programs simply consider them to be beside the point.

The War on Excess

The programs level contradictions and differences by implying that all substances and activities are addictive when they enable the user (or doer) to "numb out," and suggest that people are trying to fill painful psychological/spiritual voids that no substance or activity can actually satisfy. Can and should all human pain be collected into one big bundle labeled addiction? What about the feelings of pleasure that people derive from food, drugs, alcohol, sex, and a host of other substances and activities? Are these merely self-delusions, the sneaky evidence of addictions-in-the-making? Or are 12-step programs just adding to the dose of guilt we are already handed by a pleasure-phobic culture?

If defining addiction is tough, the "just say no" campaign has made it even tougher by throwing every manner of "excess" into the addiction pot and suggesting that a stiff upper lip can lick everything from a monster federal deficit to urban crime. "Just say no" sounds catchy and you have probably seen it on everything from milk cartons to football stadium billboards, but what the slogan is really saying

is that self-control is the entire answer, that standing up to _____ (fill in the blank) is an act of moral significance, and that the people who do so are strong and true, whereas people who don't are unable to because they are pathetic weaklings. This trend toward championing the heroism and romanticizing the virtue of sheer will is probably a significant contributing factor to the growth and popularity of 12-step programs.

The current war on drugs, sex, and other modern "evils" is a hypocritical effort to rub out the cultural changes of the past two decades by masquerading as a caring crusade. Take, for example, the dismal state of sex education. The Reagan administration has suggested that parents instill "chastity" in their children by whatever means they see fit. Millionaire John LaCorte recently made national headlines with his modest contribution to the "just say no" campaign: an offer to pay \$1000 to any girl who guarded her virginity until age 19.⁵

AIDS educators know that they too must play by rules that put them in an impossible bind. They can squeak by only as long as they say "no" to frank discussions about sexual pleasure, as a recent case in Massachusetts clearly illustrates. In November 1987, when it looked like a long-fought-for state gay rights law might finally pass, opponents of the bill created extensive publicity about sexually explicit AIDS education materials and succeeded in killing the bill for yet another year. Even "friendly" legislators and liberal governor Michael Dukakis self-righteously demanded an explanation from the AIDS Action Committee for a pamphlet distributed to gay men in the bars called "Safer Sex Can Be Sensuous." Dukakis and the legislators said they were offended.

As for alcohol and drugs, if our government were really interested in eradicating substance abuse, it would be spending time and money on rehabilitation, but it is not. In January 1987, while Nancy Reagan was having her picture taken with born-again drug addicts, her husband cut nearly \$1 billion from the national anti-drug budget and actually

The current war on drugs, sex, and other modern "evils" is a hypocritical effort to rub out the cultural changes of the past two decades by masquerading as a caring crusade.

The programs' core concept—accountability for one's actions—is decidedly apolitical: the responsibility for both addiction and recovery rests squarely within the individual.

recommended that not a single federal dollar be spent on treatment programs.⁶ Meanwhile, 30 million Americans undergo drug screening today—in prisons, workplaces, sports, the military, and on campuses—and some estimates hold that 50 percent of the working population will be tested regularly for drugs by 1992.⁷

Douglas Ginsburg is the most ironic casualty in the war on drugs to date. Nominated to the Supreme Court in the aftermath of the Bork defeat, revelations that he smoked marijuana while teaching at Harvard Law School not only forced him to exit the confirmation process before it began (his swan song was a half-hearted call for young people to “just say no” in spite of Ginsburg’s own errors), but brought forth a chorus of unsolicited confessions from politicians across the political spectrum that might have been comical if it hadn’t seemed so mandatory. Dope-smoking has clearly become a litmus test that all public figures must pass. “Do you now or have you ever...?” may have conveniently eliminated the prospect of a Supreme Court justice with libertarian to right-wing views, but the point of the question was as much to stamp out the radical political legacy of the 1960s as it was to stigmatize anyone caught red-handed with drugs.

It was a coded warning to anyone who remains attached to values associated with the counterculture: personal freedom, experimentation, and pleasure, to name just a few. Politically, that means us—feminists, lesbians, and gay men. We have little to gain from jumping onto a “just say no” bandwagon that equates pleasure and experimentation with addiction. We and all that we represent will be among the first things sacrificed.

No matter where the political winds are blowing, however, the 12-step programs are determined to ignore them. In fact, avoiding public controversy at all costs is one of the programs’ most consistent structural features. The tenth tradition specifies: “Our fellowship has no opinions on outside issues, hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.” This tradition implicitly recognizes that diverse individuals with conflicting view-

points participate in 12-step programs, and it concludes that a formal, non-political identity is the only logical way to preserve internal unity and prevent groups from being diverted from their purpose by secondary issues. Some important questions do remain, however, about the political implications of 12-step philosophy and structure.

The programs’ core concept—accountability for one’s actions—is decidedly apolitical: the responsibility for both addiction and recovery rests squarely within the individual. In particular, the programs’ philosophy that addiction is a “disease” emphasizes the person and problem in isolation from any outside social forces. This may ease some of the guilt that people feel for pain that they and others have experienced. One Al-Anon member, in great relief, told me: “I make no decisions. The disease does. I am sick.” This kind of language and the steps themselves constantly refer people back to themselves with the message that their old negative ways of thinking and behaving are the sources of their pain. Consequently, only new, positive approaches, nurtured by the programs themselves, will produce serenity.

I rarely heard any speakers in meetings—whether recounting stories of assault, workplace hassles, or matters of the heart—mention directly the realities of physical power, economic inequality, racial bigotry, or sexual coercion, even in instances where these were clearly being described. This is true even in Women for Sobriety (WFS), a “new life” program for women alcoholics that differs from 12-step programs in that it tries to identify the unique recovery needs of women. For example, one WFS member was talking happily about her new job as a clerical worker in a big law firm but started sounding anxious when she described her new boss as “a man with a bad reputation for kicking his secretaries around like dogs.” She concluded that this worrisome situation was really a test of her sobriety and she resolved to “meet the challenge to be a pleasant person, no matter what.” Because meeting rules do not permit direct responses from others present, and also be-

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL MODEL



IF THE CULTURE PUTS A HIGH DEGREE OF VALUE IN ALCOHOL, THE INCIDENCE OF ALCOHOLISM WILL BE HIGH. IF CERTAIN GROUPS AREN'T VALUED, THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO BECOME ADDICTS.

MANY WOMEN BEGIN THEIR IMMEDIATE DRINKING WHEN LIFE-SITUATION CHANGES ARE COMMON: DIVORCE, MENOPAUSE, EMPTY-NEST SYNDROME.

cause no larger social context is officially recognized, no one in the room suggested to this young woman that she did not deserve to be treated like an animal or that she was the potential object of sex discrimination. As far as the program went, the answer was for her to "think positive."

"Powerlessness is My Goal"

The conflict between seeing responsibility in purely individual or purely political terms comes up right away, in the first of the 12 steps: "We admitted we were powerless over _____⁸ —that our lives had become unmanageable." For many feminists, lesbians, and gay men in these programs, this step is problematic because it turns a progressive political practice of empowerment on its head. Unlike the women's or gay movement, 12-step programs are anything but laboratories in which to experiment self-consciously with forms of personal and political power. But because people generally do not like living with intense contradictions, politically aware and active 12-step members creatively manage the conflicts between their politics and their 12-step experiences. Here is how one politically

sophisticated lesbian explained the importance of taking the first step, admitting powerlessness, and another sticky concept, the Higher Power.

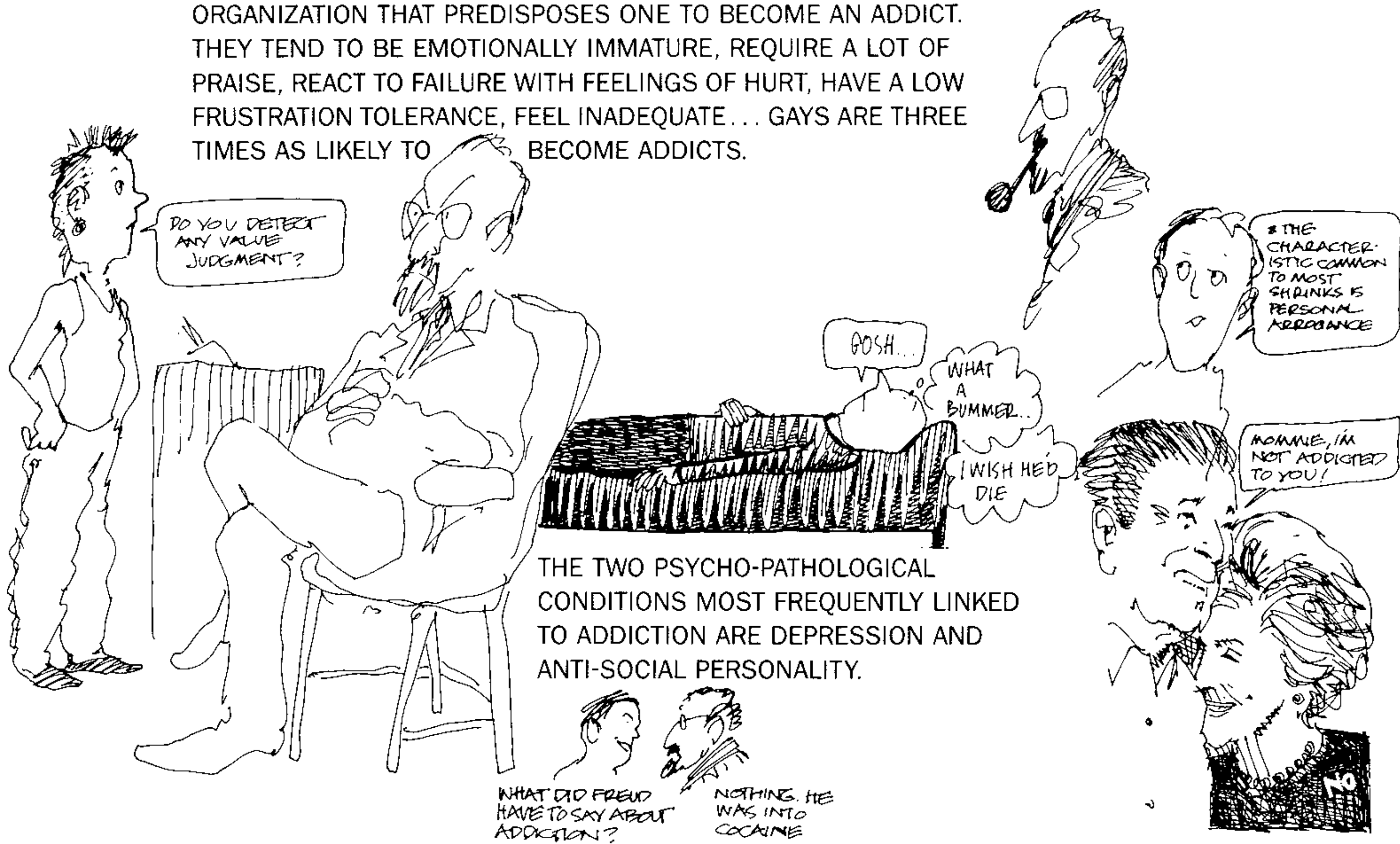
When I was first getting sober, AA was completely in opposition to my experience as a politico because one of the big words was powerlessness. Every activist's hair stands on end at the idea of embracing powerlessness, which you're supposed to be wild about in AA....I found a way to rework the philosophy. It was clear to me that the minute you "give up," you begin a process of empowerment....The big stumbling block for me was the whole God thing....To me, this was completely patriarchal and repugnant. So someone suggested a concept of God that wouldn't offend me—historical materialism [the orthodox Marxist theory of history].

Members who aren't quite as good at fine-tuning the 12-step approach to their own personal philosophies are simply reminded to "take what you need and leave the rest," a handy slogan designed to minimize conflict and help people feel comfortable.

Ironically, the programs seem to be places where women in particular can safely express the feelings that the women's movement first identified as the result of sexism and then criticized in individuals: passivity, confusion,

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL

THERE IS AN "ALCOHOLIC PERSONALITY," A TYPE OF CHARACTER ORGANIZATION THAT PREDISPOSES ONE TO BECOME AN ADDICT. THEY TEND TO BE EMOTIONALLY IMMATURE, REQUIRE A LOT OF PRAISE, REACT TO FAILURE WITH FEELINGS OF HURT, HAVE A LOW FRUSTRATION TOLERANCE, FEEL INADEQUATE... GAYS ARE THREE TIMES AS LIKELY TO BECOME ADDICTS.



© KRIS KOVICK

Kris Kovick is a cartoonist from San Francisco. Her work reflects her experience as an Adult Child of Parents.

powerlessness. As one woman explained:

I have finally learned to accept fear. I have finally learned to accept confusion. I have finally learned to accept passivity. I think that powerlessness is the whole point of the program, overcoming the will, giving in, giving up. Powerlessness is the same as serenity. It is my goal.

The consciousness-raising groups of the early women's movement were also extremely supportive spaces where personal sharing contributed to a sense of common female experience, which in turn generated commitment and community among individuals who had previously felt alone. Personal transformation, when it occurred, was simply considered to be one logical consequence of developing an analysis of gendered power and making social

changes on behalf of women. Powerlessness in all its forms was challenged. Living a serene life was not the point; personal and political liberation were.

The custom fit of the 12-step experience is undoubtedly part of its appeal, but in the context of a "just say no" culture, it risks distorting personal pain to the point where people who really do not have addiction problems are encouraged to think they do. The most striking evidence of this is that many people who do not fall into any of the programs' target groups (such as alcoholics, overeaters, drug addicts) are regularly attending meetings and adopting the 12-step philosophy as their own. The presence of "non-addicts" is controversial in some, but not all meetings, where addicts consider them to be "diluting" the program and dis-

tracting members from their main goal of recovery.

There are some people—I won't say they're addicted to the programs because that's not an appropriate use of the word—who do use the programs as a crutch. The meetings aren't about making friends. They're about changing your life.

But for many, the programs *are* about making friends, and it is not at all unusual for members' friendship networks to change radically, even completely, after entering the program. For some, this is a necessary part of learning that friendships that do not revolve around alcohol or drugs are possible. For others, the programs are just new ways of feeding never-to-be-satisfied hungers for visibility and recognition and a place to experience unrealistic interactions dressed up as recovery. The latter experience is nothing but a new form of dependency.

Getting to Serenity

Substance and other abuses clearly exist, taking horrible tolls on individual lives, and total abstinence must be supported for those who feel it is their only non-abusive option. But just because many things can be dangerous does not mean that they always are. Positive and negative potentials exist side by side. Drugs, sex, food, and other things can be quite wonderful. We should be as determined to defend our right to pleasure as we are to eradicate the reality of our pain. To some degree, our dignity as a society will be measured by our success or failure.

Progressive political movements should be taking notes on what is so appealing about the recovery movement. Political leaders and artists inspire us with visions of peace and social justice; activists discuss and strategize; foot soldiers do the work of getting us from here to there. Meanwhile, we all have to get through the day. Getting through the day might mean staying away from a bar, finding a friend to cry with in a moment of sadness, or having wonderful sex all afternoon. It might just be another day at work. Whatever it

means, it is what the women's movement and the gay movement should be about. Changing the structure of political power is not as possible, certainly not as meaningful, when changing ourselves is absent from the agenda.

There is no doubt that 12-step programs have helped people get through a lot of days. But they do nothing to decipher or change the larger context in which time passes, especially in a "just say no" culture that would like to wipe out progressive gains for good.

Political movements can address the larger context, and they have something unique to contribute to the recovery process: an understanding that prevailing cultural messages affect how people feel about themselves just as much as "think positive" slogans do. Self-hatred and self-love are not matters of luck or fate; they do not come and go only on uncontrollable tides of will power. People struggle for and against them, and they will be won or lost just as all contests of power are won or lost. We must keep our eyes on the prize of pleasure even when we are in pain, not allowing suffering to become a symbol of sin or sainthood, not endorsing sickness as a test of moral character, and not making addiction a pre-requisite for support and community. If we succeed, we may all get to serenity. ▼

We should be as determined to defend our right to pleasure as we are to eradicate the reality of our pain.

¹ This list is not intended to be comprehensive. Because of the autonomous structure and self-help philosophy of 12-step programs, new ones seem to spring up with great regularity.

² *The Twelve Steps for Everyone...who really wants them* by Grateful Members (Minneapolis, MN: CompCare Publishers, 1975), p. 13.

³ Susan Greenwood, Gay and Lesbian Counseling Services in Boston, personal communication.

⁴ The Cambridge Women's Center, for example, currently provides space for weekly meetings of Women for Sobriety, NA, and lesbian Al-Anon.

⁵ "Just Say No—Till You're 19," *Newsweek*, December 7, 1987, p. 75.

⁶ *Steal This Urine Test: Drug Hysteria in America* by Abbie Hoffman with Jonathan Silvers (New York: Penguin Books, 1987).

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4, and press release.

⁸ Each program uses different words. AA uses "alcoholism"; OA uses "food," and so on.

Reflections on Homophobia Black Communities

by Bell Hooks Illustrations by Paloma Negre

RECENTLY, I WAS at my parent's home and heard teenage nieces and nephews expressing hatred for homosexuals, saying that they could never like anybody who was homosexual. In response I told them, "There are people you love and care about that are gay—so just come off it." They wanted to know who. I said, "The who is not important. If they wanted you to know they would tell you. But you need to think about the shit you've been saying and ask yourself where it's coming from."

Their vehement expression of hatred startled and frightened me, even more so when I contemplated the hurt that would have been experienced had our gay loved ones heard their words. When we were growing up, we would not have had the nerve to make such comments. We were not allowed to say negative, hateful comments about the people we knew who were gay. We knew their names, their sexual preference. They were our neighbors, our friends, our family. They were us—a part of our black community.

*Bell Hooks teaches in the Afro-American Studies Department at Yale University and is the author of *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* and *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (both published by South End Press). This essay is part of the forthcoming book, *Talking Back*, to be published by South End Press in late 1988.*

The gay people we knew then did not live in separate subcultures; they lived in our small, segregated, black community where work was difficult to find, where black folks lived in densely populated neighborhoods, where many of us were poor. This poverty was important; it created a social context in which structures of dependence were important for everyday survival.

Sheer economic necessity and fierce white racism compelled many gay black folks to live close to home and family—as did the joy of being with the black folks they knew and loved. This meant, however, that they had to create a way to live within the boundaries of circumstances that were rarely ideal, no matter how affirming. In some cases, this meant a closeted sexual life; in other cases, within a given family setting, an individual could be openly expressive, quite out.

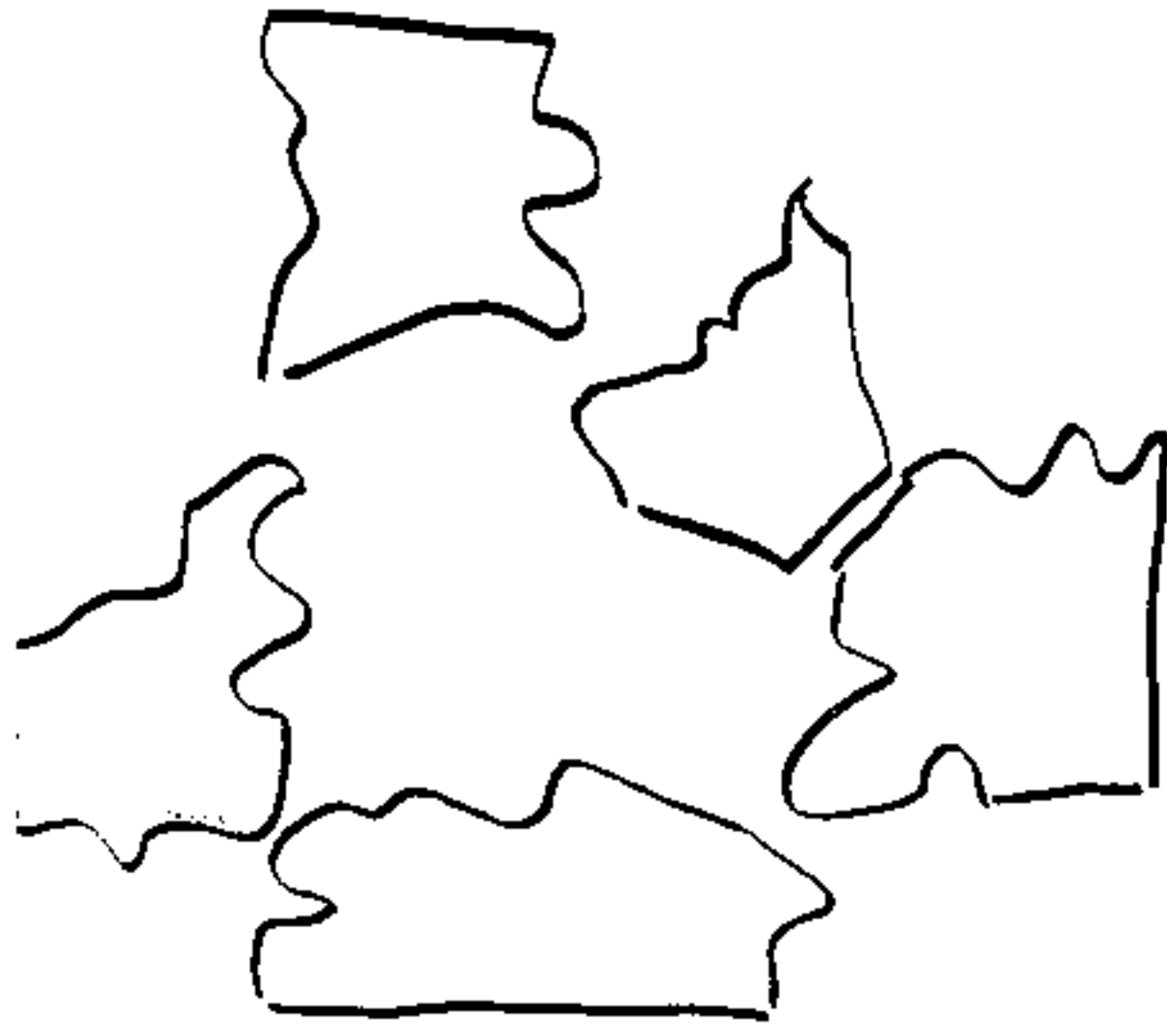
THE HOMOPHOBIA expressed by my nieces and nephews, coupled with the assumption in many feminist circles that black communities are somehow more homophobic, more anti-gay rights, than other communities in the United States, provided the stimulus for me to write this piece. Initially, I considered calling it "Homophobia in the Black Community." Yet it is precisely the notion that there is a mono-

lithic black community that must be challenged.

Black communities vary. Urban and rural experiences, for instance, create diversity in culture and lifestyle. I have talked with black folks who were raised in southern communities where gay people were openly expressive of their sexual preference and participated fully in the life of the community. I have also spoken with folks who say just the opposite about their towns.

In the particular black community where I was raised, there was a real double standard. Black male homosexuals were often known, talked about, and seen positively; they played important roles in community life. Lesbians, however, were talked about solely in negative terms, and the women identified as lesbians were usually married. Often acceptance of male homosexuality was mediated by material privilege—homosexual men with money were part of the materially privileged ruling black group. They were influential people in the community and were accorded the regard and respect given to others in that group. This was not the case with any women.

In those days, homophobia directed at lesbians was rooted in a deep religious and moral belief that defined womanness through bearing children. The prevailing assumption was that to be a lesbian was "unnatural" because one would not be



participating in child bearing. There were no identified lesbian parents. Interestingly enough, there were men known to be gay who were caretakers of other folk's children.

I have talked with black folks who recall similar circumstances in their communities. I have spoken with many older black people raised in tightly knit, small, southern black communities. A majority of them suggest that there was tolerance and acceptance of different sexual practices and preferences.

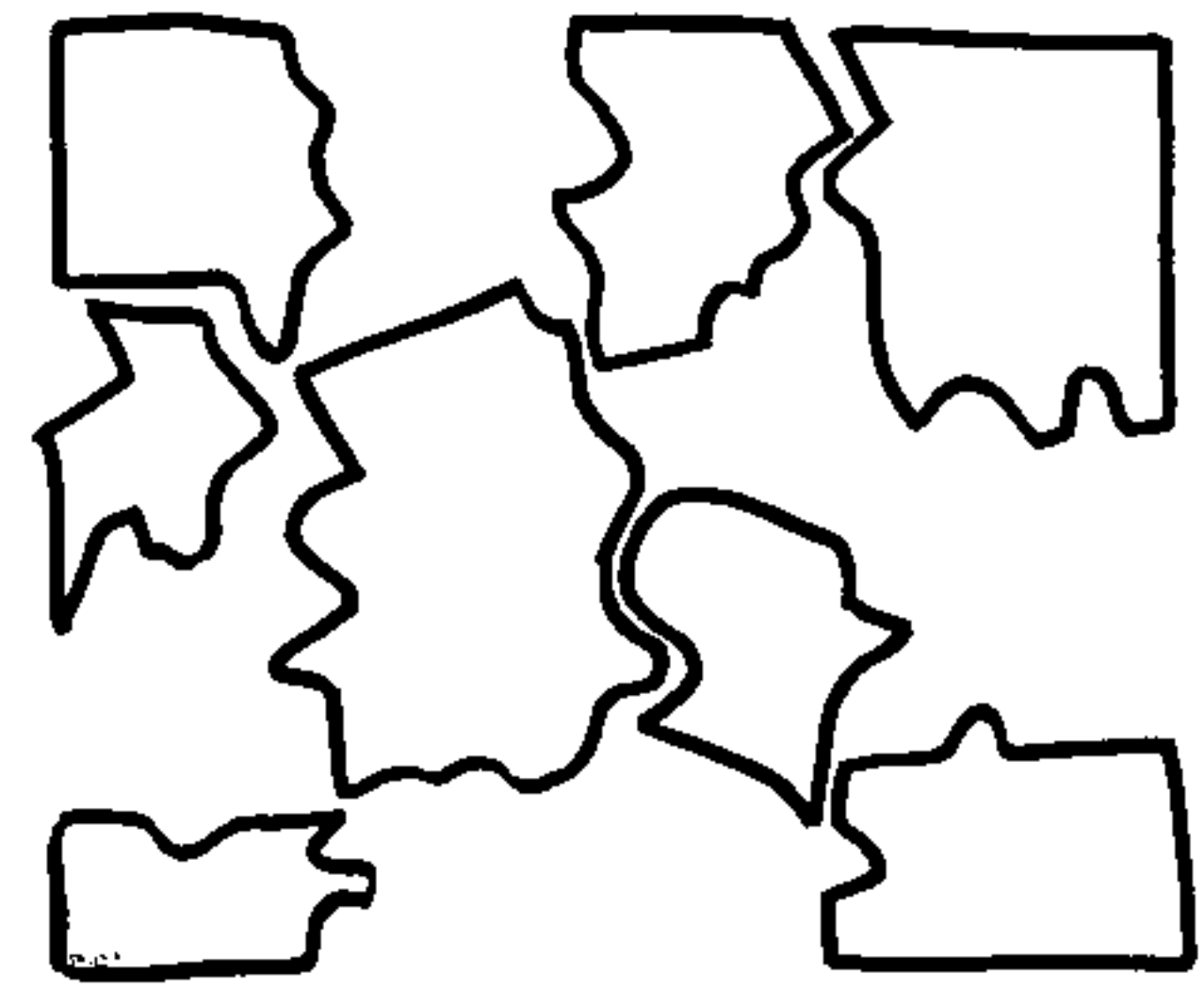
Today there are new versions of this story. One black gay man I spoke with felt that it was more important for him to live within a supportive black community, where his sexual preferences were known—but not publicly visible—than to live in a gay subculture where this aspect of his identity could be expressed openly. Recently, I talked with a black lesbian from New Orleans who boasted that the black community has never had any “orange person like Anita Bryant running around trying to attack gay people.” Her experience coming out to a black male roommate was also positive and caring.

FOR EVERY positive story one hears about gay life in black

communities, there are also negative ones. These positive accounts call into question the assumption that black people and black communities are necessarily more homophobic than other groups of people in this society. They also compel us to recognize that there are diversities of black experience. Unfortunately, there are not enough oral histories or autobiographies that explore the lives of black gay people in diverse black communities. We often hear more from black gay people who have chosen to live in predominantly white communities, whose choices may have been affected by undue harassment in black communities. We hardly hear anything from black gay people who live contentedly in black communities.

Black communities may be perceived as more homophobic than others because there is a tendency for some black individuals to express anti-gay sentiments in an outspoken way. I talked with a straight black man from California, for instance, who acknowledged that to bond in group settings, he often made jokes poking fun at gays or expressing contempt for them. In his private life, though, he was a central support person for a gay sister. Such contradictory behavior seems quite pervasive in black communities. It speaks to ambivalences about sexuality in general, about sex as a subject of conversation, and about feelings towards homosexuality.

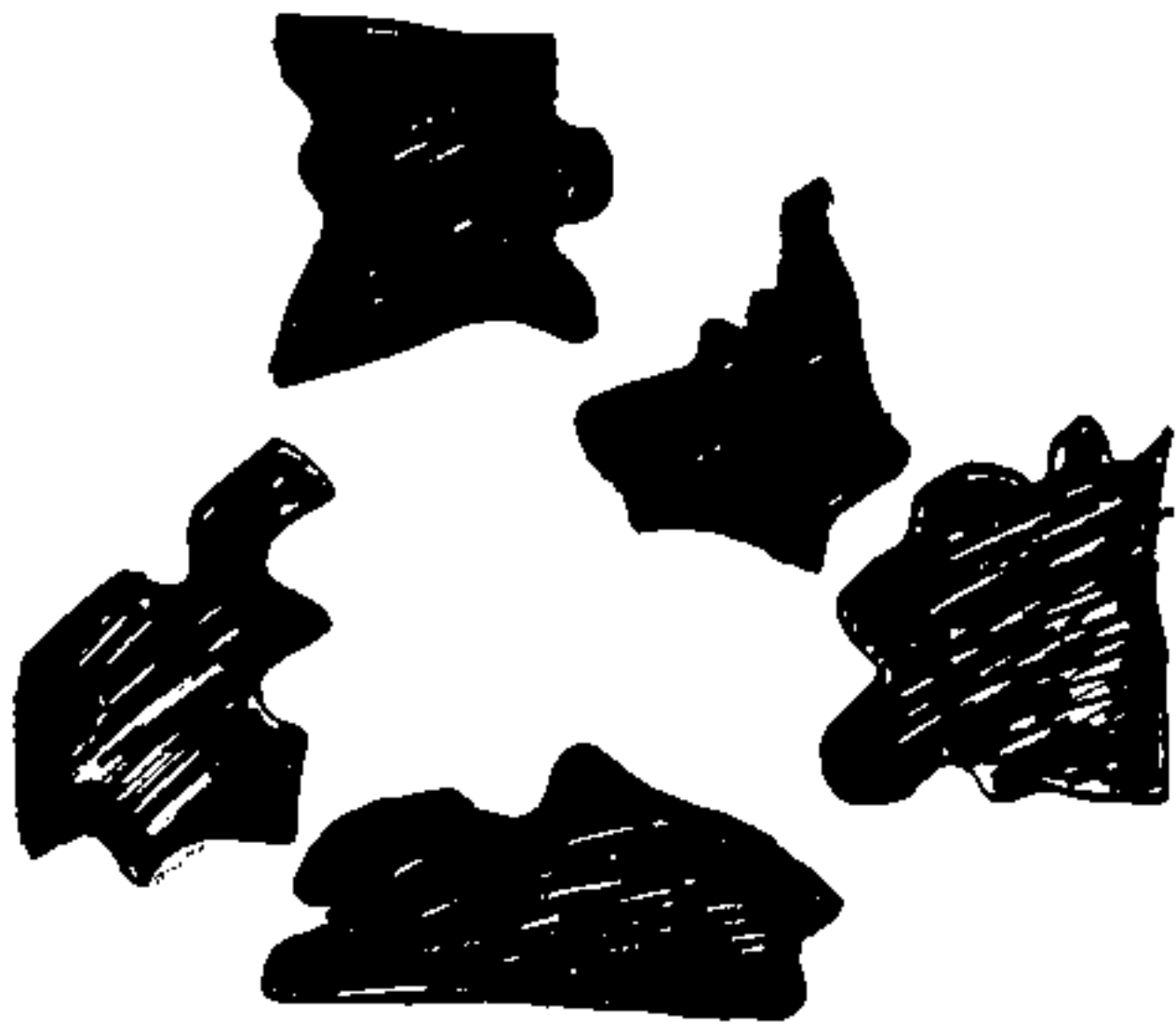
There is also a distinction between black people overtly expressing prejudice towards homosexuals, and homophobic



white people who might never make overt negative comments, but who have the power to actively exploit and oppress gay people (in housing or employment, for instance). While both groups perpetuate and reinforce one another, the truth is that the greatest threat to gay rights does not reside in black communities.

It is far more likely that homophobic attitudes can be altered in environments where they have not become rigidly institutionalized. Rather than dismissing black communities for being more homophobic than other communities, it is important for feminist activists (especially black folks) to examine the nature of that homophobia and to challenge it in constructive ways.

Clearly religious beliefs and practices in many black communities promote and encourage homophobia. Many Christian black folks (like other Christians in this society) are taught in church that it is a sin to be gay—ironically by ministers who are themselves gay or bisexual. In the past year, I talked with a black woman Baptist minister who, while very concerned about feminist issues, expressed very negative views about homosexuality. She explained that she is against homosexuality because the Bible teaches that it is wrong. In her



daily life, though, she is tremendously supportive and caring of gay friends. When I asked her to explain this contradiction, she argued that it wasn't, because the Bible also teaches her to identify with those who are exploited and oppressed, and to demand that they be treated justly.

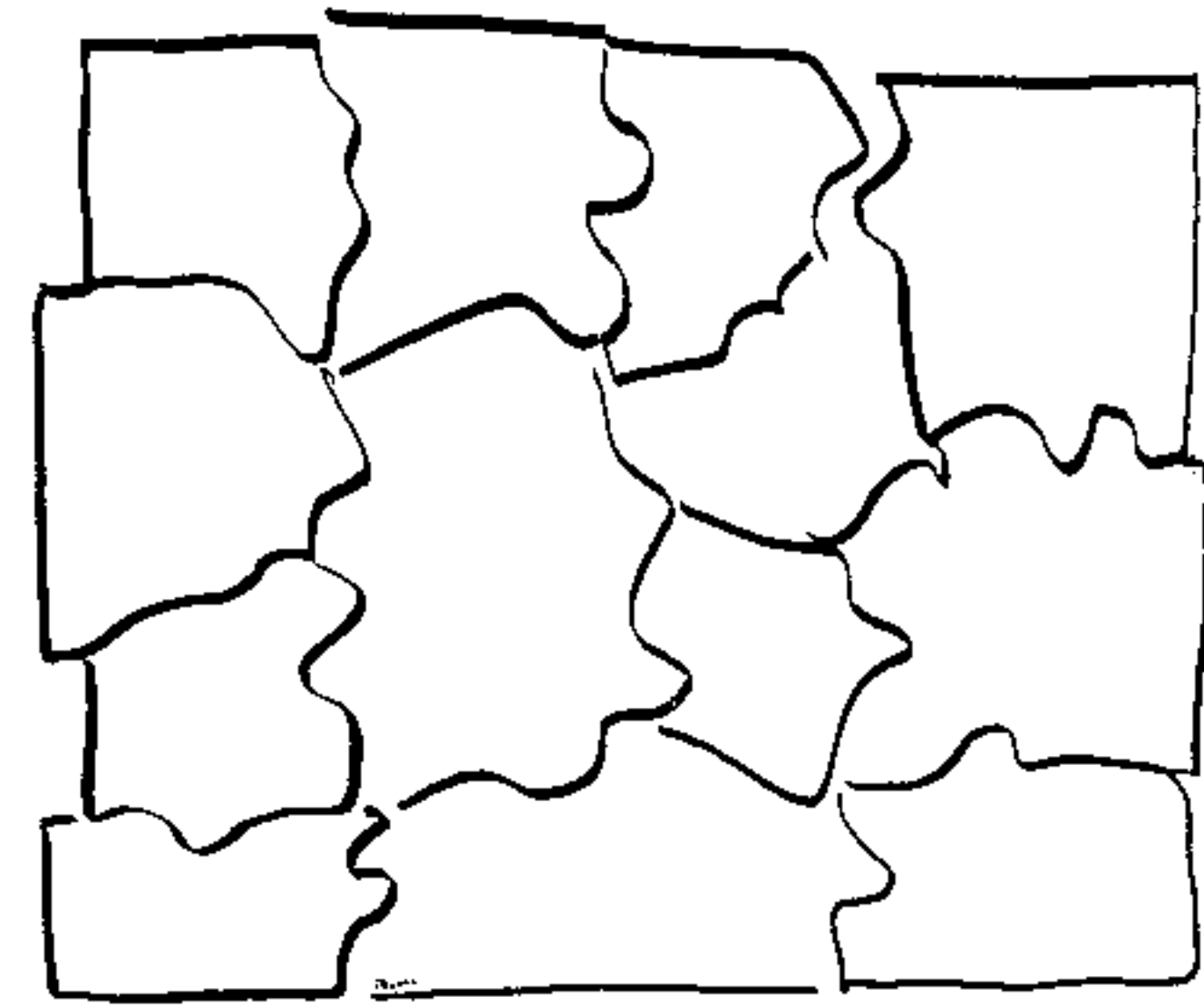
The contradictions and homophobia that underlie this minister's attitudes indicate that there is a great need for progressive black theologians to examine the role black churches play in encouraging persecution and hatred of gay people. Individual members of churches in black communities should protest when worship services become platforms for preaching anti-gay sentiments. Often individuals sit and listen to a preacher rage against gay people and simply think the views expressed are amusing or outmoded, and dismiss them without challenging them. If homophobia is to be eradicated in black communities, though, such attitudes must not go unchallenged.

THE NOTION that homosexuality threatens the continuation of black families seems to be gaining new prominence. This line of thinking has resurfaced, for example, in discus-

sions among black people all over the United States about the film *The Color Purple* (as well as Alice Walker's novel itself, which includes a positive portrayal of two black women being sexual with one another). In one editorial about the film, media commentator Tony Brown stated, "No lesbian relationship can take the place of a positive love relationship between black women and black men"—even though Walker does not at all suggest that lesbian relationships exist in competition with heterosexual ones.

Heterosexual men are not the only folks who see homosexuality as a threat to family life. Just a few weeks ago, I sat with two black women friends eating bagels, and one of them expressed her intense belief that white people were encouraging black people to be homosexuals to further divide black folks. She attributed to homosexuality the difficulties many professional heterosexual black women have finding lovers, companions, and husbands.

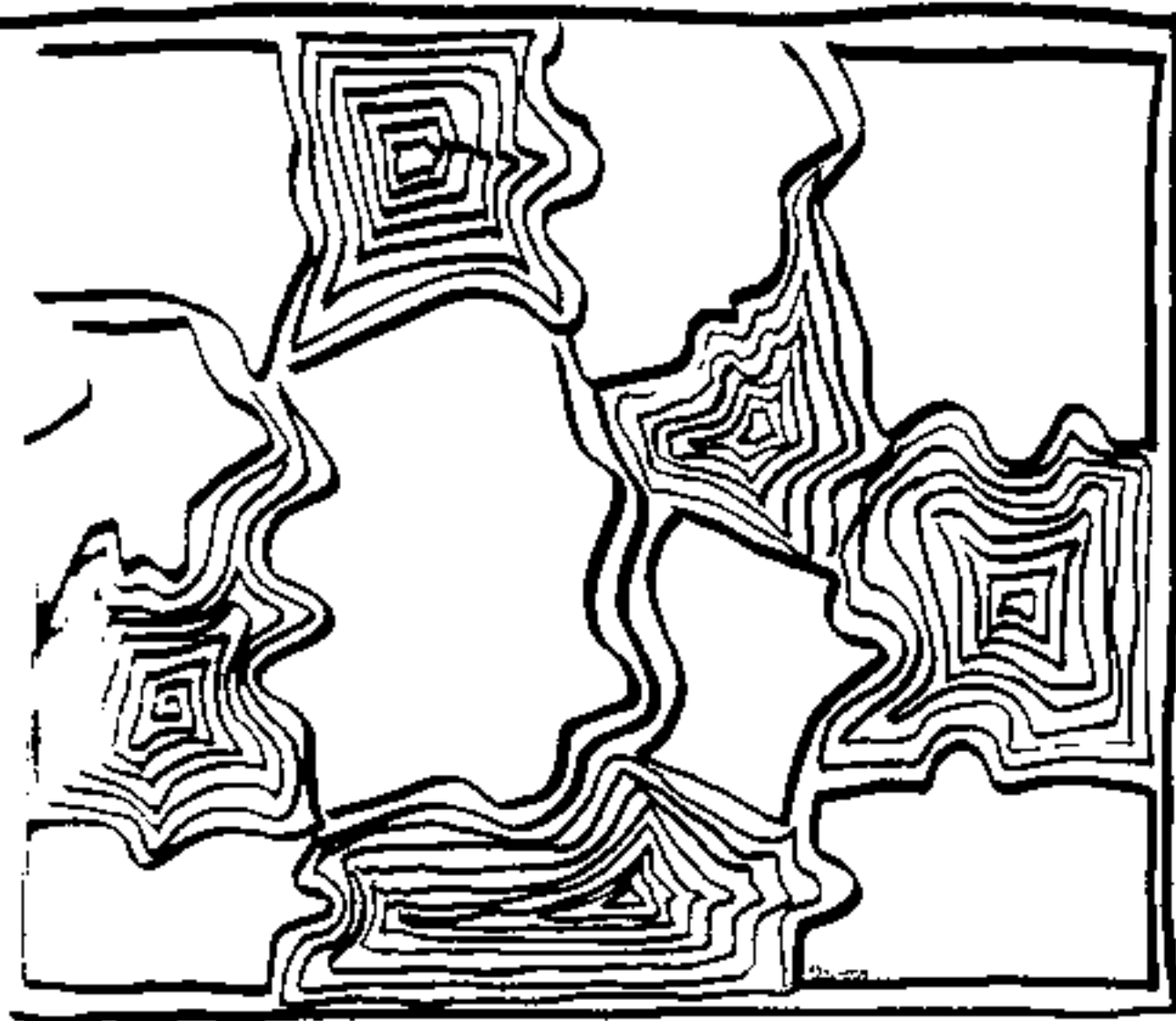
We listened to her and then my other friend said, "You know we are not going to sit here and listen to this homophobic bull without challenging it." We pointed to the reality that many black gay people are parents—proof that their sexual preference does not threaten the continuation of black families. We stressed that many black gay people have white lovers and that there is no guarantee that were these individuals heterosexual, they would be partnered with other black people. We argued that people should be able to choose and



claim the sexual preference that best expresses their being. While it is probably true that positive portrayals of gay people encourage people to see this as a viable sexual preference or lifestyle, it is equally true that compulsory heterosexuality is promoted to a far greater extent than homosexuality. We suggested that we should all be struggling to create a climate where there is freedom of sexual expression. This woman was not immediately persuaded by our arguments, but at least we had given her different perspectives to consider.

AN ISSUE THAT is rarely discussed, but should be in order to strengthen solidarity between black folks irrespective of sexual preference, is that of allegiance. Just as black women are often asked which is more important, the feminist movement or the black liberation struggle, which are you first—black or a woman, gay people face similar questions. Which are you identified with first—the political struggle of your race and ethnic group, or the gay rights struggle?

This is not a simple question. For some people, there are concrete situations in which they are compelled to choose



one identification over another. When one black family I know learned of their daughter's lesbianism, for example, they didn't question that she was gay, but were upset about the racial identity of her lovers. Why white women and not black women? Her gayness, expressed exclusively in relationships with white women, was threatening to her family because they perceived it as estranging her from her blackness.

Little is written about this struggle. To a grave extent, these relationships, like all cross-racial intimate relationships, are informed by the dynamics of racism and white supremacy. Black lesbians have spoken about the lack of acknowledgement of one another at social gatherings where the majority of black women present are there with white women lovers. Unfortunately, such incidents reinforce the notion that one must choose between solidarity with one's ethnic group and solidarity with those with whom one shares a sexual preference.

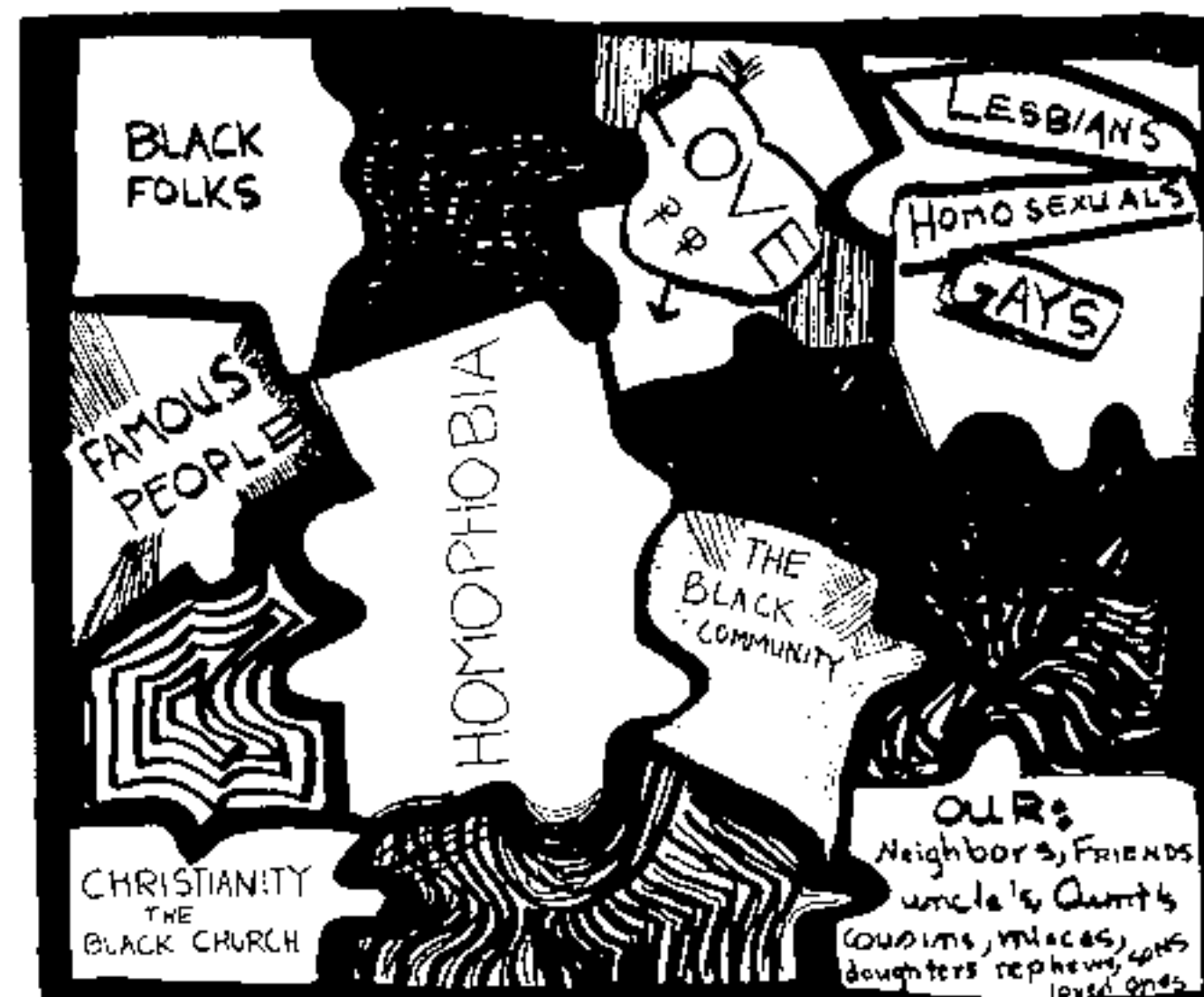
Black liberation and gay rights struggles are both undermined when these divisions are promoted and encouraged. Both gay and straight black people must work to resist the politics of domination expressed in sexism and racism that leads

people to think that supporting one liberation struggle diminishes one's support for, or stands in opposition to, another struggle. Our struggle against racism must be linked to all struggles to resist domination, including the gay rights struggle.

White people, gay and straight, could also show greater understanding of the impact of racial oppression on people of color by not attempting to make these oppressions synonymous, but instead show the ways they are linked yet differ. Often black people, especially non-white gay folks, become enraged when they hear a white person who is gay equate their experience of oppression with the suffering people experience as a consequence of racism. Too often, saying that these oppressions are synonymous minimizes or diminishes the particular problems people of color face in a white supremacist society.

Many of us have been in discussions where a black person struggles to explain to white folks that, while gay people of all colors are harassed and suffer exploitation, there is a significant difference that arises because of the visibility of dark skin. Often homophobic attacks on gay people occur in situations where knowledge of sexual preference is indicated or established. In many such situations, there may be an apparatus of protection and survival in simply not identifying as gay. Most people of color have no such choice.

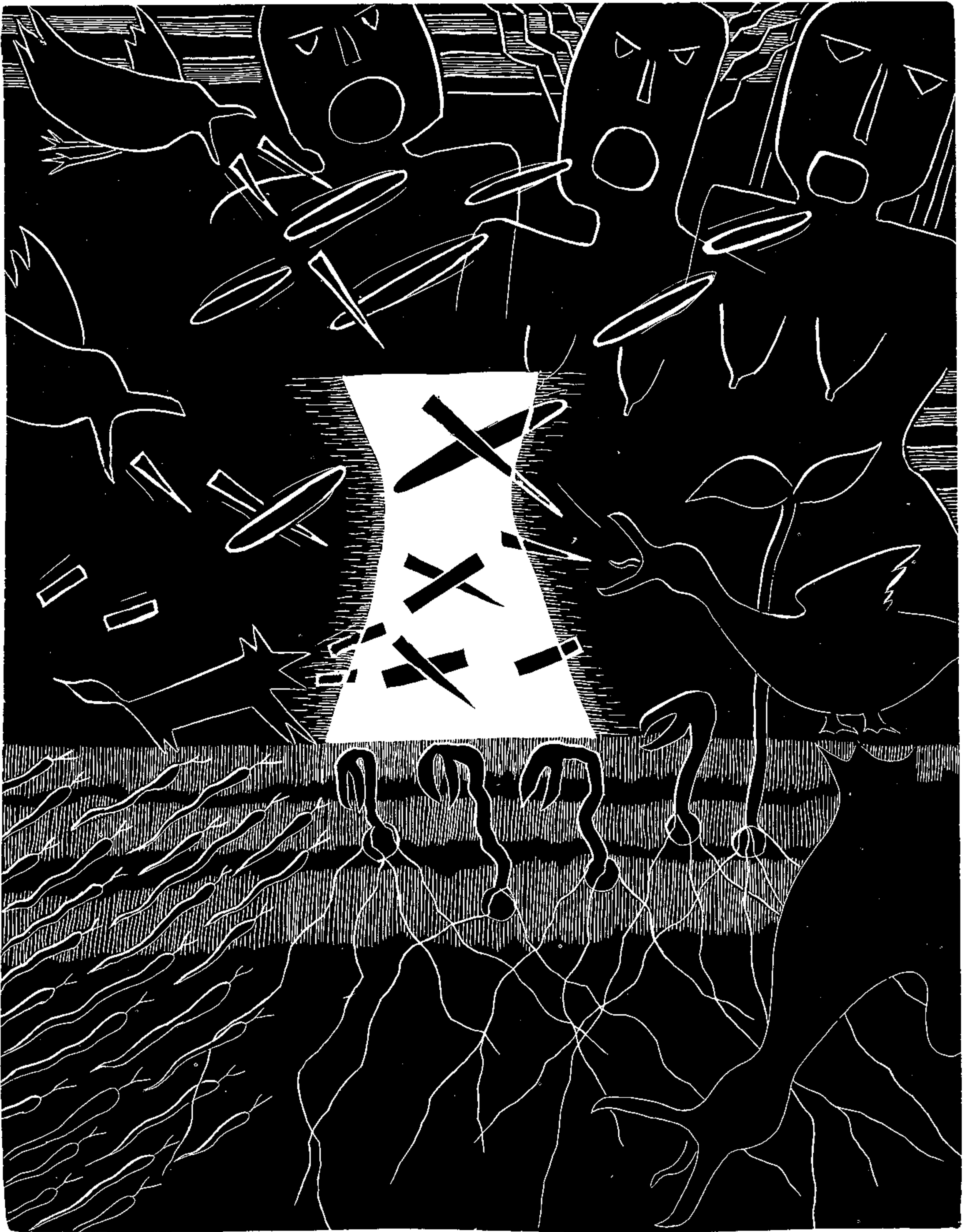
Often black gay folk feel extremely isolated because there are tensions in their relation-

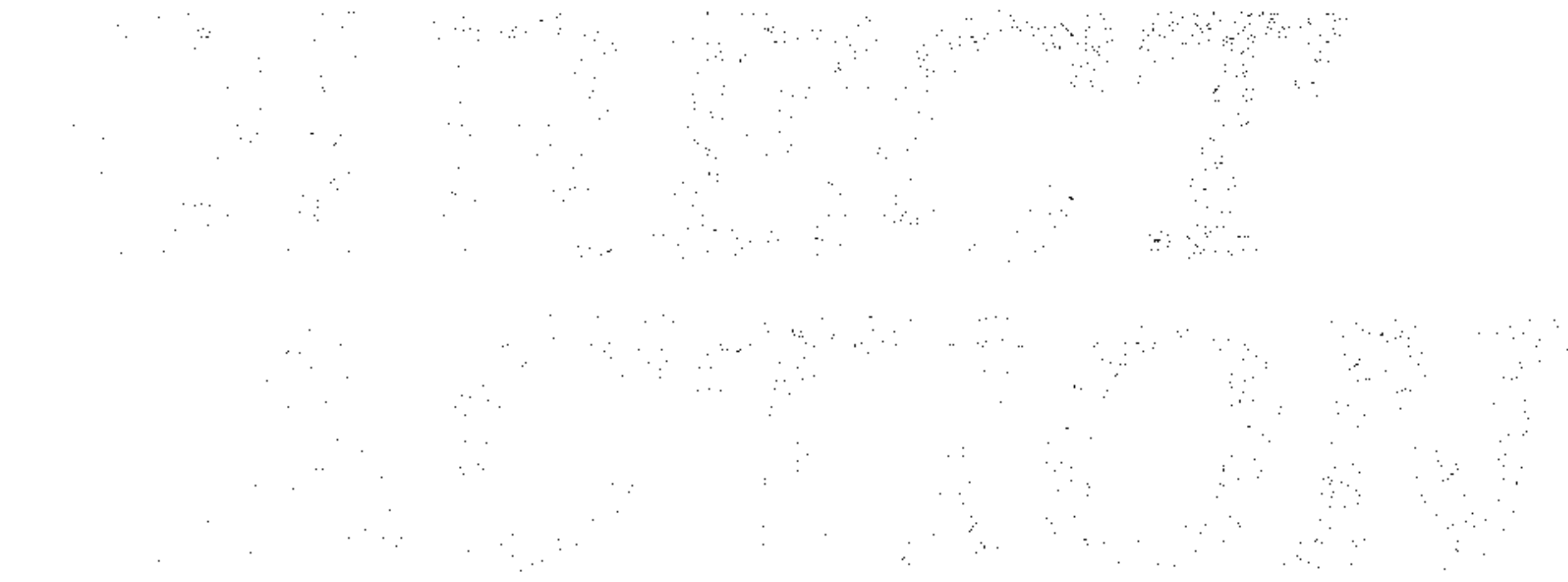


ships with the larger, predominantly white gay community, and tensions created by racism within the black communities around issues of homophobia. Sometimes it is easier to respond to such tensions by simply withdrawing from both groups and refusing to identify politically with or actively participate in any struggle to end domination. By affirming and supporting black gay people both within and outside our communities, we can help change the pain of such isolation.

It is essential that non-gay black people recognize and respect the hardships gay black people experience, and extend the love and understanding that is essential for the making of an authentic black community. One way we show our care is by vigilant protest of homophobia. By acknowledging the union between the black liberation struggle and the gay rights struggle, we strengthen our solidarity, enhance the power of our allegiances, and further our resistance. ▼

Paloma Negre has been a poet and an artist since the age of five.





LESBIANS LEAD THE MOVEMENT

THROUGHOUT THE late sixties and early seventies, separate women's organizations played the major role in the development of feminism. But in the late seventies and the eighties, a new variant of feminism has begun to emerge out of the direct action movement. Though the major organizations of the direct action movement have consisted of both men and women, there have also been separate women's groups and actions, and while sexism has hardly been eradicated, feminism has been taken more seriously in this than in any previous movement of men and women in the United States.

Many women who had been part of separate women's organizations in the early seventies were, by the end of that decade, becoming interested in applying their feminist perspective in a broader context, and were drawn to the anti-nuclear movement because of its link with environmentalism, and its openness to a visionary perspective. The effort to link feminism, environmentalism and nonviolence has enriched all three perspectives, and in particular, has produced a variety of feminism that has the potential to transcend some of the limitations of earlier strands of feminism.

The variety of feminism that has flourished in the direct action movement—rooted in radical feminism and linked to women's spirituality—has given the movement vitality and has also posed important intellectual and political questions. At the same time, radical feminism and feminist spirituality have reinforced the anti-intellectualism of the move-

ment, creating barriers to any systematic examination of the issues that they raise.

These currents of feminism have been particularly associated with lesbians, who have played a major role in the direct action movement, often providing leadership not only for the separate women's actions and organizations within the movement, but, especially in its most recent phase, for the movement more generally. The role of lesbians in the movement highlights a question that concerns the movement as a whole: whether a minority subculture can provide the spark for political mobilization that transcends its own boundaries.

A New Form of Protest

The largest separate women's actions within the direct action movement have been: the two Women's Pentagon Actions, in 1980 and 1981, which brought thousands of women to Washington to encircle the Pentagon and to express their opposition to war through theater and ritual; the Seneca Women's Peace Camp of the summer of 1983, which paralleled the British Greenham Common encampment with a massive women's presence adjacent to the Seneca Army Depot in upstate New York (a facility used by the Department of Defense to store nuclear weapons); and a Mother's Day Action at the Nevada Test Site, north of Las Vegas, in 1987, which drew thousands of women from around the country, many of them linked indirectly if at all to the counter-cultural core of the direct action movement.

by Barbara Epstein

Illustrations by
Paula Kristovich

Barbara Epstein is active in the peace movement and teaches history and women's studies at University of California, Santa Cruz.



There have also been countless smaller women's actions linked with the direct action movement, some on occasions such as Mother's Day and some simply part of the ongoing efforts of groups of women associated with the movement.

The first Women's Pentagon Action came out of the conference "Women and Life on Earth: Ecofeminism in the 1980s," held in early 1980, which brought together women involved in the anti-nuclear and environmental movements and women who, with the decline of organized radical feminism in the mid-seventies, had become involved in feminist spirituality. For many of these women, the conference represented a re-entry into politics, this time into a women's enclave that was part of a larger mixed movement. The conference attempted to bridge political and spiritual concerns, and it called for a politics opposed to militarism, patriarchy, and other forms of oppression, a politics that would rely on direct personal expression, empowered by symbolism and drama. The first Women's Pentagon Action, planned to embody the vision expressed by the conference, was called for November of that year.

On Sunday, November 17, 2,000 women gathered in Washington. Workshops on a range of feminist topics provided an opportunity for the women to become familiar with one another before the action. Monday morning began with a march through Arlington Cemetery. As the women approached the Pentagon, they were joined by drummers and four women carrying large female puppets, each symbolizing a different stage of the demonstration: one was in black, for mourning; another in red, for rage; a third was yellow, for empowerment; and the fourth puppet, in white, symbolized defiance.

The impact of the action was due not to its numbers (which were not particularly large), but to its aesthetics, which broke away from the traditional rally format of speakers and audience, allowed greater participation and personal expression, and made a more striking impact. Some of the ideas employed at the Women's Pentagon Action were adopted by

women's groups elsewhere in the country, the most popular being the idea of using weaving as a metaphor of women's power against hated institutions (and as a way of injecting color into actions). The plan to weave shut the doors of the Pentagon with brightly colored yarn came from a Vermont affinity group, the Spinsters, who had used it in demonstrations against a local nuclear plant.

Three years later, feminists in the Finger Lakes area of upstate New York discovered that the Cruise missiles being sent to the Greenham base in England actually were shipped from a location close to home—the Seneca Army Depot in Seneca Falls. Given the fact that Seneca had been the site of the first feminist convention in the United States in 1848, this seemed an ideal place to establish a women's peace camp—a sister presence to the women's encampment at Greenham Common. Money was raised and a piece of land adjacent to the Army Depot was bought; ownership was placed in the hands of the thousand or so women who participated in organizing the camp. The encampment itself began at the end of May, 1983; over that summer, about 15,000 women came through the camp at one point or another.

Many of the women in the camp were lesbians, and the camp had a pronounced counter-cultural tone. The camp, located in a conservative rural area, met with considerable hostility, and the local police protected the rights of those connected with the camp with great reluctance. At one point, roughly a hundred women embarked on a 15 mile "walk for peace" (for which a parade permit had been obtained) from the historic home of Elizabeth Cady Stanton in Seneca Falls to the encampment. As they passed through the town of Waterloo, the women were met by an angry crowd of several hundred people, many of them waving American flags, blocking the way. The women sat down in the road; some people in the crowd began to threaten violence. The sheriff ordered the crowd to disperse and arrested the 54 women who were still sitting in the road, charging them with disorderly conduct.

Since the mid-eighties, the feminist counter-culture, which had been the base of the feminist presence in the direct action movement, has become less visible. But the appeal of direct action has expanded to groups of women closer to the mainstream. In 1987, a Mother's Day Action was held at the Nevada Test Site, a stretch of land in the Nevada desert where the US tests most of its nuclear weapons. The action was organized largely by the women of the American Peace Test, a group that had originated as the direct action committee of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign and amicably had left that organization when it became clear that the Freeze would not sponsor direct action. The action was also sponsored by the Nevada Desert Experience, a Catholic anti-war group that has maintained a presence at the test site for many years. Because of the cost of travelling to the site, and the relatively mainstream sponsorship of the action, the 2,000 women who came to the action were older and straighter than participants in previous women's actions. While the counter-culture was present, it was not dominant. Roughly 700 women were arrested after climbing over the fence to the test site.

The Lesbian Connection

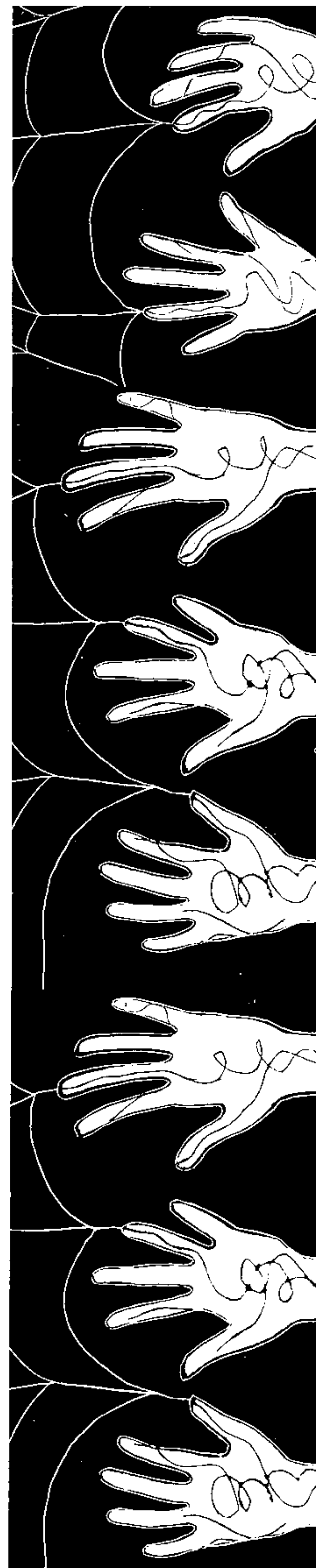
Lesbians have played a particularly salient role in the direct action movement, especially in its more recent phases. In the late seventies, groups of lesbians, mostly from the country, participated in the Clamshell Alliance, which mounted a series of demonstrations against a nuclear power plant under construction in Seabrook, New Hampshire. There, they were more ready than others to engage in militant and outrageous actions. Some women saw them as an inspiration; others found them an embarrassment. The same was true of the Livermore Action Group (LAG), which, in the early eighties, organized a series of protests against nuclear weapons research at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Feminist Cluster of LAG, which consisted of all-female, mostly lesbian, affinity

groups, gave feminism a strong presence in the organization, and at times pushed the limits of nonviolence.

During the jail stay that followed the large 1983 protest at Livermore, Bibles were handed out to the women; two members of the Feminist Cluster, discovering negative references to homosexuality, took their copies into the bathroom where they burned the offending pages. They were discovered by a guard and given additional time. The debate that ensued among the protesters, over whether and how to support these women, reflected strong and quite divided feelings over what they had done, and over the tendency of the more militant women to stretch the limits of nonviolence in the name of feminism.

Quantitatively, lesbians have been a major element in the direct action movement. About one third of the women from LAG who were jailed for two weeks in 1983 were lesbians; there was a similar percentage the year before. Lesbians have made up a much larger share of those participating in women-only actions; they made up a large majority of those participating in the two Women's Pentagon Actions, and in the Seneca Peace Camp. Lesbians have maintained a much larger presence than gay men in the direct action movement; though gay direct action groups have begun to organize around the AIDS issue, there have been no men's actions paralleling those of women.

Lesbians have also played a large and increasing role in the leadership of the direct action movement—and not only of its women's component. This has been especially true in the rural and semi-rural areas where lesbians who were active in the movements of the sixties and seventies have settled. In northern New England, especially Vermont and western Massachusetts, groups of lesbians have played major roles in anti-nuclear actions. In Key West, Florida, a group of lesbians centering around the pacifist writer Barbara Deming have provided the core for ongoing actions at the Key West Naval Base and at Cape Canaveral. In St. Augustine, Florida, a group of lesbians who own and live together in adjacent houses have organized Seeds for Peace, a



Groups of lesbians were more ready than others to engage in militant and outrageous actions. Some women saw them as an inspiration; others found them an embarrassment.

group which has been the moving force in peace and environmental actions in the area.

Lesbians have also come to play a major role in direct action in many cities, and on a national level. In Boston, a group of women, mainly lesbians, has provided leadership for the Pledge of Resistance (an organization opposed to US intervention in Central America) as well as for anti-war direct action more generally. In April 1986, when a large demonstration was held in Washington against the CIA, it was mainly lesbians who organized and led its direct action component in which 600 men and women were arrested. For the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, it was lesbians from the direct action movement who provided the nonviolence training for civil disobedience at the Supreme Court.

Many of the women who organized these actions say they are not surprised to find themselves, and other lesbians, in positions of leadership in movements for nonviolent direct action. Once one has come out of the closet, they say, taking other kinds of risks is easier. Their marginality gives them a stake in fundamental social change and their grounding in feminism gives them an understanding of the interconnectedness of many issues—an understanding that is usually less developed among gay men.

Some argue that lesbians and gay men have always played important roles in movements for social change—in the peace movement, the left, and the civil rights movement. But previously, when lesbians and gay men were prominent, it was as individuals. In the direct action movement, and to some extent in the peace movement more generally, networks of lesbians have begun to play a major role.

Feminist Philosophies & Direct Action

The philosophy that guides the direct action movement links feminism with ecology and a utopian social vision, and attempts to bridge politics and religion (or spirituality). This philosophy has been constructed primarily by women whose background and frame of refer-

ence is the women's movement, in most cases specifically radical, or cultural, feminism. The two main varieties of feminist world-view that have emerged in the context of the movement are anarcha-feminism and ecofeminism. Both have been strongly influenced by feminist spirituality, but in both cases there has also been tension between more spiritual and more political/intellectual currents.

Anarcha-feminism was introduced to the direct action movement by a group of anarchists who originally came together as student



activists at Stanford, subsequently fanned out to Santa Cruz and San Francisco, and collectively became involved in the Abalone Alliance in time to have a major impact on the Diablo Canyon blockade of 1981. Peggy Kornegger, the author of an influential anarcha-feminist piece, argued that radical feminism and anarchism were natural allies. Both perspectives, she pointed out, were based on critiques of dominance; both sought to replace

power relations with equality. She argued that women's consciousness-raising groups—small, leaderless groups based on face-to-face relations—embodied anarchist principles, and that because of their history of powerlessness and lack of legitimacy, women were readily drawn to anarchist philosophy.

Other anarcha-feminist authors echoed and developed these themes. Carol Ehrlich wrote that the fundamental goals of anarchism and radical feminism were the same: "not to 'seize' power, as the socialists are fond of urg-



ing, but to abolish power." Kytha Kurin argued that in order to achieve its own goals, the radical feminist perspective must move beyond gender separatism and become, along with an ecological perspective, the guiding philosophy of a movement of men as well as women.

By the latter part of the seventies, many feminists were coming to regard separatism as an inadequate strategy; part of the attraction of

anarcha-feminism was that it addressed this problem without rejecting the radical feminist analysis that had been associated with that strategy. But anarcha-feminism was not equipped to address another problem of the women's movement, described, in the title of Jo Freeman's famous essay, as "The Tyranny of Structurelessness." The piece argued that every group has leaders, that informal leaders are less accountable and therefore more dangerous than formally recognized ones, and that anti-leadership ideology had weakened the women's movement by providing a rationale for crippling attacks on the key activists who had helped the movement find direction.

Meanwhile, a related tendency calling itself ecofeminism was developing on the east coast. The term was first used by the French author Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974 in her book *La Feminisme ou la Mort*, and was adopted by the group of women who, in 1980, held the conference "Women and Life on Earth: Ecofeminism in the 1980s." Ynestra King, a coordinator of the conference, was working toward a synthesis of ecological and feminist perspectives.

Ecofeminism has been the basis for a more substantial intellectual tradition than anarcha-feminism, and as a result has maintained a presence even as the movement with which it was originally associated has gone into decline. Several books written in the late seventies, including Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature* and Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology*, began to develop a perspective based on the attempt to join radical feminist and ecological concerns. In the eighties many more works have appeared that identify themselves with ecofeminism, particularly Carolyn Merchant's *Death of Nature*, Charlene Spretnak's collection, *Politics of Women's Spirituality*, and an issue of *Heresies* devoted to feminism and ecology. Margot Adler's account of witchcraft in the United States, *Drawing Down the Moon*, and Starhawk's *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics*, both straddle the worlds of paganism, feminist spirituality, and ecofeminism. In 1986, a conference entitled "Ecofeminist Perspectives" in Los Angeles attracted 1500 activ-

In previous movements, when lesbians and gay men were prominent, it was as individuals. In the direct action movement, and to some extent in the peace movement, networks of lesbians have begun to play a major role.

ists and scholars, suggesting that there is a growing audience for this approach.

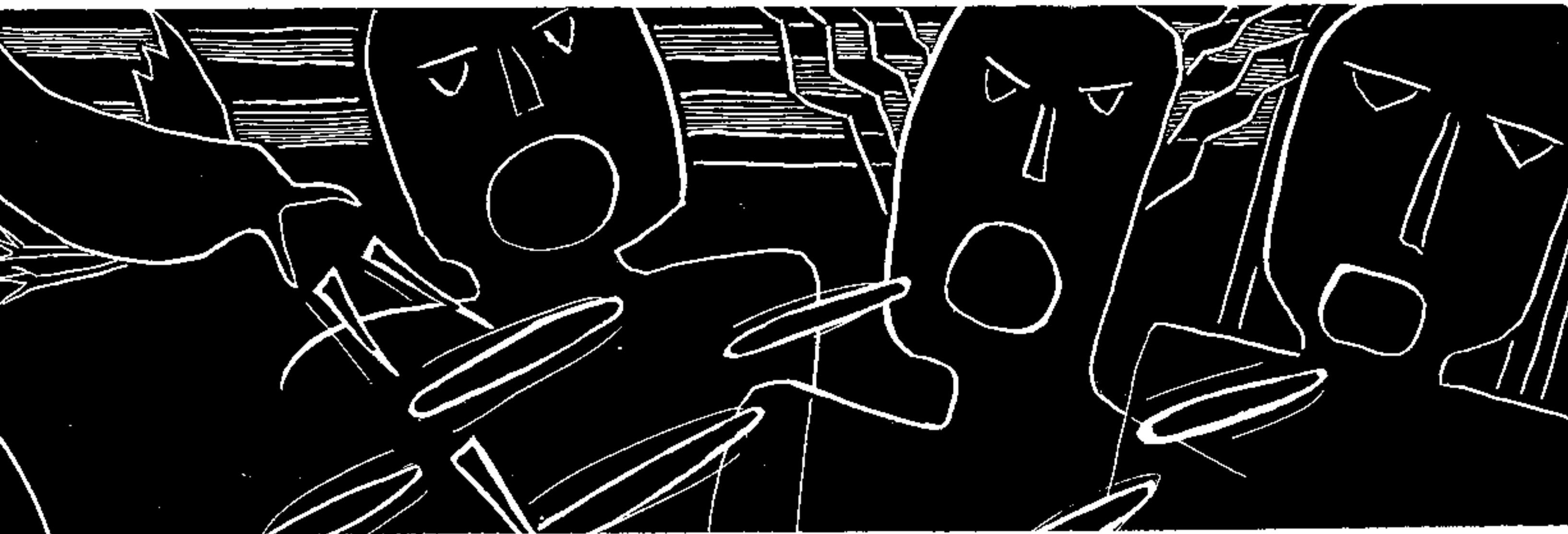
Ecofeminists argue that patriarchy, the domination of women by men, has been associated with the attempt to dominate nature. Men have attempted to justify their attempts to dominate nature by associating it with women; this objectifies both women and nature by placing them in the category of the "other," and involves a denial of both human links with the natural world, and men's feminine side. Ecofeminists believe the despoliation of the environment, violence, and militarism are rooted in the culture of domination; they argue that these problems have become major threats to the human race, and must be overcome.

Anarcha-feminism and ecofeminism both intersect with paganism or witchcraft and feminist spirituality. Together witchcraft and feminist spirituality have had a strong impact on the direct action movement as a whole. Margot Adler's *Drawing Down the Moon* and Starhawk's *Dreaming the Dark* both emphasize the radical and feminist implications of witchcraft, and have drawn many young radical feminists into its orbit. Feminists were drawn to witchcraft for several reasons: its association with goddess figures; its anti-hierarchical implications and respect for nature; a desire to find a religious tradition that did not involve worshipping a transcendent male god; and, in part, because of its theatrical potential and shock value.

In spite of the fact that the direct action movement is not primarily concerned with issues that are specific to women, and that it is a movement of both men and women, feminism has provided the glue for the movement as a whole and the leaven for the distinctive political philosophy that has emerged within and around it.

Intellectually, the role of feminism has been pivotal. It has been key to placing the concepts of empowerment and personal transformation at the center of the direct action movement's concept of its mission. Many people—both men and women—have been drawn into the movement because it is based on consensus and on the broader effort to implement a radical egalitarianism generally referred to as "feminist process."

Feminism—specifically the version that is rooted in radical feminism and women's spirituality—has been the main basis for an approach in the direct action movement to define its goals and evaluate its successes differently than many earlier movements have. Feminism has been the key influence in leading the movement to regard its mission as the transformation of consciousness: the self-transformation of those within the movement, as well as the construction of a community in which new values can be realized and which can provide a lasting base for political action. ▼



Paula Kristovich lives in San Francisco and drives a school bus.

Why Gay Leaders Don't Last

THE FIRST TEN YEARS AFTER STONEWALL

by David Jernigan

RICHARD C. WANDEL

SOcial movements need leadership. Leaders offer role models, images of power and purpose. They also provide organizational acumen and direction, and for the press, a focal point for the articulation and publicizing of the concerns of the traditionally disfranchised. Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, Geraldine Ferraro and many others in the women's movement have served this function; Martin Luther King, Jr., Jesse Jackson and others have done so in the movement for black liberation. Although not always chosen democratically, they have nonetheless spearheaded impressive organizational efforts bringing political muscle and social change to disfranchised groups.

In this time of health crisis, more gay men and lesbians occupy positions of visible leadership than ever before. Yet there is still no gay or lesbian leader of national significance who leads gay and lesbian people. The gay movement has seen many leaders come and go. Some, like Harvey Milk, were killed off by forces outside the gay community; many more, though, apparently were forced out of visible



1

2

3

Front row: Marty Robinson (1), Jim Owles (2), and Arthur Evans (3), original members of the Gay Activists Alliance, September 1970, New York

David Jernigan is a west coast writer, researcher, and activist who has conducted workshops on gay and lesbian leadership development in the United States and Europe.



RINK FOTO

José Sarria, left, 1984

leadership by "burnout," frustration, their own inability to maintain the allegiance of their followers, and a myriad of other reasons—stated and unstated.

Are there structural features peculiar to the gay movement that have made long-term, national leadership difficult? Do gay and lesbian people tend to attack or abandon our leaders more than others? Or is the lack of national leaders merely the result of the movement's relative youth? If there are any features of the gay movement that have rendered leadership particularly difficult, what does this tell us about the nature and state of the gay movement itself?

These are important questions which our movement must address. This essay offers at best a preliminary attempt to answer them, by looking at visible leadership in the gay movement in its first decade post-Stonewall. There are thousands of gay and lesbian people who played crucial roles in the movement in some form during this period. While their contributions should not go unrecognized, there is a good argument for emphasizing visible leadership. As a heavily stigmatized people, gay men and lesbians have had to use visibility as a major stratagem in taking on the negative images which gay oppression has painted of us. Positive image-building, and the development of visible, positive role models has been key.

Several themes about leadership can be drawn from our history as a movement:

1) The development of leaders as role

models has been complicated by a changing and evolving understanding—both within and outside of the gay movement and community—of what it means to be gay or lesbian. This changing understanding is inseparable from the trajectory and gains of the gay liberation movement itself. As the movement made concrete gains, the possibilities for being publicly gay and publicly a gay leader broadened. Ironically, this progress in liberation led to changing and often conflicting "job descriptions" for the gay leader. Within the movement, disagreements over the definition of the gay identity have contributed to the failure of leaders to achieve broad national backing.

2) Within the gay movement, the internalization of gay and lesbian stereotypes by gay and lesbian people has impaired our ability to recognize and support leadership. Attacks on leaders have been endemic, and often have come in the same language as that of the external oppression. Leaders have faced charges of immaturity, of puerile fascination solely with things sexual, of being untrustworthy, of not being really committed to gay people, of not being "really gay," or conversely, of being "too gay."

3) Throughout the history of the movement, there has been a general ambivalence about leadership: Do we need it? Is it inherently oppressive? This, as well, has led to punishing those who take initiative.

4) Notoriety has been repeatedly confused with leadership. The importance of seizing media attention and turning stereotypes on their heads led to a series of so-called leaders who in fact were media creations with no organizational base and no strategy beyond their own self-presentation.

Early Models of Leadership

While the Stonewall riots in 1969 are generally considered the starting point of gay liberation, the leadership which emerged post-Stonewall actually fashioned itself in reaction to the "homophile" leadership of the fifties and sixties. In the homophile period, the relationship between the level of oppression which gay

The homophile movement's dominant strategy lay not in developing gay and lesbian leaders, but rather in finding heterosexual experts to attest to the trustworthiness and respectability of homosexuals.

men and lesbians faced and the kinds of leadership that emerged is clear. Low profiles were the norm for homophile movement leaders. Despite the founding of a wide variety of homophile organizations in the fifties and sixties, by 1969 membership in gay organizations barely surpassed 5,000 men and women, with only a few hundred publicly identified as gay men or lesbians.¹ With so few members, there is a sense that every person who chose to become a part of the movement was a "leader," whether by actively founding an organization, editing a newsletter, or simply being among the first to join a professedly homophile group.

The homophile movement's dominant strategy lay not in developing gay and lesbian leaders, but rather in finding heterosexual experts—mental health practitioners, lawyers, educators and the like—to attest to the trustworthiness and respectability of homosexuals. Visible homosexual leadership first emerged in San Francisco in the early sixties, when drag entertainer José Sarria ran as an openly gay candidate for city supervisor in the wake of a campaign by police and Mayor Warren Christopher to "clean up" the city's "homosexual problem." Sarria, the first openly gay candidate in the nation, garnered only 6,000 votes, but his campaign inaugurated a tradition of openly gay electoral activism in San Francisco.

Sarria offered an early model of using the notoriety of open homosexuality to gain attention for gay rights. His candidacy provided an early focal point for organizing, as the self-sacrificial acts of other firsts—such as the first openly gay football player, army sergeant, public official—would do later.

Outside of San Francisco, the most visible leaders headed the Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C. (MSW), and the Mattachine Society of New York (MSNY). MSW founder Dr. Franklin Kameny, an astronomer fired by the Army when his homosexuality was discovered, lobbied the legislative and executive branches to end discrimination against homosexuals in federal employment. MSW's brand of direct action consisted of small groups of "appropriately groomed" gay men (in coats

and ties) and lesbians (in skirts) picketing in front of the White House, or at Independence Hall in Philadelphia every Fourth of July. MSNY president Dick Leitsch also took on discrimination and legislative issues, but he carefully differentiated his own personal lobbying activities from the liberation activities occurring in other movements in the sixties:

Power lies not in the number of members or the total of names on a list....It lies in how effective your organization is in achieving the goals of the homophile movement. This is not a plea for "gay power" or "lavender power." It is a plea for those charged with leadership positions in homophile organizations to make the voice of the homosexual heard in the community.²

That Leitsch felt he had to make this differentiation is indicative of changes occurring outside the homophile movement which were expanding possibilities for visible gay and lesbian leaders. A new generation of leaders would reject the behind-the-scenes approach of the homophile activists in favor of the public and confrontive tactics used by the black and women's liberation movements.

Leading With Little to Lose

Rioting by New York City bar patrons who were responding to a routine police raid on the Stonewall Inn on June 27, 1969 brought the gay movement literally into the streets and into the mainstream of New Left protest. Whereas "gay" and "gay is good" had been used by homophile activists, in the hands of gay liberationists the term "gay" came to define a lifestyle, a personality, a commitment to a myriad of personal and social changes. "Homosexual," conversely, represented life without liberation, gay people without the gay consciousness or identity which came with liberation. For the first time, gay began to mean an identity that was self-determined, staking out a



Frank Kameny, 1986

PATSY LYNCH/COURTESY OF THE ADVOCATE

social territory by confronting dominant images of gay people.

Differing views of identity formed a strong line of demarcation between the gay and homophile movements. That “gay” was initially synonymous with confrontation is important to understanding the philosophy of the movement and the style of leadership which emerged in the first years after Stonewall. Simply to identify publicly as gay was a political act—a confrontation. The early gay liberation organizations capitalized on this as an almost exclusive organizing strategy. They encouraged and required gay visibility to confront societal stereotypes about gays. Gay pride parades epitomize this approach: mass visible confrontations of the dominant culture, establishing social space for open homosexuality. Leadership and organizational issues were secondary to the struggle to establish a beachhead of gay visibility.

The Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was the first major gay political organization founded post-Stonewall. Its chief targets were gatekeepers of social space: the police (a popular countercultural/New Left target anyway); the medical/psychiatric establishment; the media (one early effort focused on persuading the *Village Voice* to allow the word “gay” in news articles and personal advertisements); and the New York City Council, where activists lobbied for legislation protecting gays from discrimination in housing and employment.

GLF’s New Left politics led to a commitment to rotating leadership, free-form discussion sessions, and ad hoc project groups and cells—rather than to the development of any sort of hierarchical structure. This lack of organization frustrated its own members’ efforts to turn their organization’s promise of a movement into reality. Such an atmosphere intentionally militated against the development of

Taking advantage of their ability to “pass” in largely heterosexual crowds, GAA members infiltrated everything.

individual leadership. The odyssey of two gay male leaders of the period is instructive: Marty Robinson and Jim Owles had left MSNY for the more militant and confrontive atmosphere of GLF. They left GLF within a year of its founding because of its sexual politics and structural weaknesses. According to historian Toby Marotta,

they had come to believe that since GLF’s “structureless structure” permitted anyone to introduce any concern at any time, it ensured that no consensus could be protected from the unsettling arguments of newcomers and that nothing could be made binding on any who disagreed with decisions reached. In the end, Robinson, Owles, and others who set out to form a reformist alternative to GLF were motivated almost as much by their desire to have a group that was effectively organized as by their ideas of what its aims should be.³

Robinson, Owles and ten others set out to establish a gay liberation organization serving gay people. Like the homophile leaders (and unlike GLF), they wanted a single-issue focus—gay liberation—but using the confrontational politics and rhetoric that had informed GLF’s efforts. They wanted to organize more explicitly on behalf of gay people in the present, as opposed to attaching a gay caboose onto the New Left railway. They eschewed any reference to revolution in the title they chose for the new organization: the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA).

It was in GAA’s structure that the twelve founders most clearly strayed from prevailing models in the women’s and gay movements, and more specifically, from the rotating monthly chairs and ad hoc committees of GLF. GAA’s reformist constitution created titled leaders: a president; vice president; secretary; treasurer; and delegate-at-large (elected annually and paid small stipends). It also established standing committees which eventually grew to cover such areas as women’s issues, publicity, the street, political action, legal issues, community relations, municipal and state government, and state and federal affairs. This structure enabled the members of GAA to work for the single goal of gay liberation on a variety of different fronts simultaneously and



Del Martin, center, 1984

with greater success than the more diffuse GLF.

Although it encouraged activism in many forms, GAA became best known for its tactic of simply making GAAers—and thereby gay people and gay concerns—visible. While GLF had been content to present gay issues as part of the revolutionary program of the New Left, GAA members went everywhere in pursuit of a hearing for gay people. GAA's signature was the "zap," a tactic somewhat akin to a gay kamikaze raid on "establishment" figures and strongholds. Taking advantage of their ability to "pass" in largely heterosexual crowds, GAA members infiltrated everything from political rallies to meetings of the Village Independent Democrats, to the offices of *Harper's* magazine and the studio audience of the "Dick Cavett Show."

The zaps succeeded at making gay individuals and gay issues more visible than ever before. They required participants to be more visible as gays than ever before, sometimes just in a crowd or a meeting, sometimes—as with Cavett—visible to a national audience. Mere participation in a zap could bring an individual high status within the movement. Individuals who chose to zap commanded respect from within the movement for their decision to be radically "out." In the social climate of 1969 and 1970, the decision to zap—or in any other way be fully and radically out—meant eschewing traditional career paths and throwing

one's lot in with the movement.

The zaps were less successful, however, as a route to building a mass movement. Zapping encouraged notoriety rather than leadership. Those who participated had little to lose, and were self-selected. Only those with the means and leisure to put in long hours for next to no pay, but also to accept that for the foreseeable future most standard career routes would be closed to them, could afford to take leadership.

Zapping was also primarily a male activity. The growing visibility of the men, their sexism, and the growing self-consciousness of lesbians as a result of the women's movement led to early schisms along gender lines. While the men achieved notoriety and prominence, the legwork of building a movement—staffing committees and work groups, providing services and so on—seemed to come "naturally" to the lesbians, just as traditional forms of visible leadership came "naturally" to the men. Tension between the male and female wings fueled many of the early attacks on movement leaders. Lesbian activist Del Martin's letter of farewell to the men in 1970 exemplifies the ways in which movement activists echoed the language and stereotypes of gay oppression in their criticisms of each other:

[I had hoped] that you were my brothers and that you would grow up, to recognize that freedom is not self-contained....I will not be your "nigger" any more. Nor was I ever your mother. Those were stultifying roles that you laid on me, and I shall no longer concern myself with your toilet training....As I bid you adieu, I leave each of you to your own device. Take care of it, stroke it gently, mouth it, fondle it. As the center of your consciousness, it's really all you have.⁴

Gay oppression defined gays as "immature"; it is no coincidence that a recurring criticism of gay leaders within the movement is for their alleged "immaturity."

Women left the united movement in large numbers in the early seventies. Their departure to form separate liberation groups, either around lesbian or more generally feminist issues, was part of the proliferation and fragmentation of organizations and activities which characterized the early seventies. Dif-

fering perceptions of gay experience and identity fed this fragmentation as well. Early movement writings were rife with "analyses" of who gay people are and what they are "really" like. Yet each such analysis implied a different strategy for organizing and leading. For instance, as Marotta writes, two of the co-founders of GAA began early on to move in very different directions:

Owles gauged that most homosexuals thought they managed rather successfully and needed to be seduced into believing that they had anything to gain from becoming involved in politics. [Arthur] Evans, on the contrary, held that most homosexuals harbored repressed rage and that one had to prick gay facades to tap deep-seated anger and trigger political involvement.⁵

The deep disagreements over basic issues left the small group, which took leadership early on in New York, scarred by division and mutual attack. Jim Owles served two terms as president of New York's GAA. What was notable about his defeat in the 1971 GAA presidency race was not so much that fellow GAA founders Marty Robinson and Arthur Evans were also defeated, but that Owles is reported to have said that "he was running to stop Robinson from being elected, and Evans...said he was running to stop Owles."⁶

In 1972, GAA elected Dr. Bruce Voeller, a research biologist and former associate professor at Rockefeller University, to be its next president. While Voeller began his term as a well-credentialed radical activist, again issues of organization and leadership led to an exodus from a leading gay liberation organization. Voeller and several other GAA officers had grown increasingly dissatisfied with GAA's diffuse focus and politics, and with the limits on the executive's power to act without express consent of the membership. In a dispute over the latter issue at the group's regular business meeting on October 4 of that year, Voeller suddenly resigned. News and Media Relations Committee chair Ron Gold's resignation followed Voeller's. Vice-president Nathalie Rockhill had already resigned a month earlier for "personal reasons."

Together, the three then approached Dr.



Bruce Voeller

DAVE WALTER/COURTESY OF THE ADVOCATE

Harold Brown about a concept they already had been discussing. Brown had served as administrator of health services in the Lindsay administration from June 1966 to December 1967, and then as professor of public administration at New York University School of Medicine. On October 3, 1973 he announced his homosexuality and pledged his support for the gay rights movement in a major public address and a front page interview in the *New York Times* which appeared the same day. His announcement stunned the non-gay world and elated the gay press. The *Advocate* called Brown's coming out "perhaps the biggest single boost since a similar revelation by novelist Merle Miller nearly three years ago [also on the front page of the *New York Times*]."⁷ Brown told the *Times* that his decision to come out had been prompted by the efforts of GAA to get a gay civil rights bill passed by the New York City Council. He later told the *Advocate*:

Though I had helped [GAA members] behind the scenes, really I was like the other successful homosexuals I know [Brown subsequently claimed that between a quarter and a third of Lindsay's top advisers in the sixties had been homosexual]. I stayed hidden and let these gallant boys and girls work hours and days and even be beaten up in a fight that I really should have joined.⁸

While many of the public coming outs simply led to notoriety, Brown's act actually inspired organization. On October 15, 1973, the National Gay Task Force was born. Brown was the first chairman of the board; Voeller, Rockhill and Gold were among its first paid staff

people, with Voeller as executive director. Brown's prestige and support enabled Voeller and company to put together the most credentialled openly gay group the movement or the non-gay world had ever seen. NGTF's founders planned an annual budget of \$200,000, part of which would pay five full-time staff members.

NGTF was the most ambitious and tightly organized effort of the movement thus far. Modeled on the NAACP, it aimed to be a nationwide membership organization advocating for gay people. The planned relationship between membership and staff represented a major structural innovation over the GAA model. In NGTF, the members, who qualified as such by paying membership fees, would elect the board. The board then supervised the staff work. In practice, this set-up left a great deal of power and discretion in the hands of the executive director—Voeller—and the staff.

Voeller claimed that democracy within the new organization would eventually come through power of the purse—whether and how many gay people elected to join and pay annual membership fees. If joining was an indication of interest, however, most gay people wanted no part of NGTF. At the end of 1974, its staffers were working for \$87.50 a week—less than they could have received on welfare or unemployment. NGTF received \$65,858 in 1975, far below its projected \$200,000 budget. At the end of 1976, NGTF had 2,500 members. In contrast, NAACP had 442,000, and NOW had 55,000.⁹ Low wages and lack of support took their toll on the NGTF staff. By mid-1975, Voeller was the only original staffer remaining. At the New York gay pride parade in 1975, the crowd greeted mention of two entities with resounding hisses and boos: the Catholic Church, and Bruce Voeller.

NGTF's early failures can be written off, to some extent, to the growing pains of a new organization. But other factors militated against its success as well: GAA co-founder Arthur Evans' attacks on the structure of NGTF exemplify the ambivalence about leadership and the anti-authoritarian trend in the

movement, as well as resentment at a perceived elitism and hegemonism:

By the deliberate design of its founders, NGTF will be tightly controlled from the top down (much like a big-business corporation.) Those on the top will have "M.D." or "Ph.D." or "the well-known" attached to their names. The founders make no secret of one of their basic goals: to create a group where gay members of the professional class will be "comfortable."¹⁰

The *Advocate's* New York correspondent at the time, George Whitmore, commented on the movement's ambivalence towards the Task Force and the leadership style it represented:

Perhaps the Task Force brags too much about its accomplishments, but the fact is that it is accomplishing something. Others obviously disagree. Is it unpopular because it brags? Because it isn't radical enough? Because it's political? Your guess is as good as mine. I am positive that gay people don't want leaders. A simple recitation of the list of past leaders would illustrate that; most of them flaked out, burned out, or lost their credibility—fast.¹¹

Had NGTF restricted its activities to the high-level lobbying and pressure campaigns for which it was probably best suited, it might have attained a higher level of popularity in the movement and community at large. But the organization's survival depended on a high profile and visible successes. Voeller's attempt to set up a nationwide emergency phone tree to be used for rapid community mobilization irritated the organizations it was designed to unite and sidestepped the basic issues of organizational democracy—what would be considered an emergency and who would decide. The need for visible victories led to a string of questionable press releases which undercut NGTF's credibility within the movement.

Voeller claimed that democracy within the new organization would eventually come through power of the purse. If joining was an indication of interest, however, most gay people wanted no part of NGTF.

Leadership of the Elect?

The aggressively public tactics of GLF and GAA drew attention to the events unfolding in New York. New York also seems to have been the center for early theoretical discussions about the nature of the movement. However, on the West Coast, and particularly in San Francisco, a corps of leaders was developing whose accomplishments and visibility would soon eclipse those of the New Yorkers. Since Sarria's 1962 supervisorial campaign, organizations such as the Society for Individual Rights (SIR) and the Tavern Guild nurtured a growing tradition of electoral work, and helped promote a community aware of itself as a legitimate political minority with a specific political agenda. The leaders who developed in San Francisco were expert at the very back-room lobbying activity which Evans and others in New York had decried.

By 1969, the concept of a gay voting bloc in San Francisco had already gained some credence. In late 1971 SIR co-founder Jim Foster came up with a new innovation—a gay Democratic club. According to Foster,

"We organized the Alice B. Toklas Memorial Democratic Club for a single purpose:" to be eligible to attend the statewide convention of the California Democratic Council, an influential non-party coalition of grassroots Democratic Party activists, in early 1972. Alice, under Foster's leadership, drew on the expertise he and others had developed in the past eight years of mobilizing gay voters by taking campaigns to the heart of the gay community: the bars, baths, and businesses in the growing gay ghetto. On the strength of his

work with Alice, Foster won a delegate seat at the Democratic National Convention in Miami where he and Madeline Davis, a lesbian delegate from upstate New York and a member of the Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier, argued on national television (albeit at six a.m.) for a gay rights plank in the party platform. In

June 1972, Foster protégé Earl (Rick) Stokes garnered 44,469 votes in a losing bid for a seat on the San Francisco Community College Board. Although Stokes was unsuccessful, his showing was strong enough to dispel any doubts about the existence of a formidable gay voting bloc in San Francisco.

The differences between the New York and San Francisco experiences are instructive. One finds far less discussion and disagreement concerning identity issues in San Francisco during the late sixties and early seventies. The resulting higher level of unity facilitated the growth of a stronger political movement. Furthermore, the focus on electoral activism offered a route for mass participation in the gay movement that was considerably less risky than the radical coming out policy encouraged by GLF, GAA and their imitators. In the privacy of the voting booth, gay people could participate without publicly disclosing their gayness. The California electoral activists also could point to clear victories, including having a central role in the repeal of the state's anti-sodomy law in 1975.

But the electoral strategies also carried with them their own brand of leadership self-selection. Again, those who took visible leadership tended to be those who could afford to. In New York, the early leaders could afford it because they had nothing to lose, but in San Francisco it was because they had well-developed financial bases, either within the gay community or from independent wealth.

David B. Goodstein, who beginning in 1971 would provide much financial and managerial skill to the burgeoning lobbying and electoral work, was a former stockbroker and attorney who lost his job when he mentioned to his employer's wife that he was a homosexual. Goodstein subsequently used his professional skills as well as his considerable private fortune, first, to set up the Whitman-Radcliffe Foundation, originally a fundraising arm of the efforts to abolish California's anti-sodomy law and later a major social-service provider, and then to buy out the *Advocate* and convert it into a major nationwide magazine and a mouthpiece of the emerging gay "middle



Rick Stokes, 1982

RINK FOTO

class." Goodstein founded Whitman-Radcliffe, and hired Foster to be its first executive director, with the "conviction that the gay movement had to find ways to build organizations controlled by stable, responsible persons who could enlist the support of Gays who are economically and professionally successful."¹²

Foster and Stokes, the two other most visible Alice leaders, did not come from wealthy backgrounds. Both, however, built their positions on the wealth of San Francisco's sizable gay ghetto—Foster by convincing bar and bathhouse owners to donate a portion of their profits and time to protecting their patrons through Foster-backed political organizations, Stokes by investing in one of the city's most popular bathhouses.

These men were frequently the first gay activists that non-gay politicians met. This, and their efforts to ingratiate themselves with those politicians, gave them increasing connections and clout as the gay movement grew. The result of this dual self-selection process was the creation of two strands in the gay movement, each working from different class positions and a very different view of how to effect change.

At times, they worked in tenuous coalition, as at the 1972 Democratic convention when 20 people sat-in outside while Foster and Davis watched the gay rights plank go down to defeat inside. But more often they were at odds. The radicals accused Foster and company of selling out street people and transvestites, and of using the movement to further their own careers. *The Advocate* generally sided with the "moderates." An early 1973 editorial referred to the radicals as immature "destroyers." Again, the language of accusation reflected social stereotypes of gay immaturity:

But perhaps to some, helping gays isn't as important as the fun of pulling down the pillars, the joy of parliamentary maneuvering, the vicarious pleasure of plotting, then the final tantrum. Now *there's* the real fun—the climax of it all—more fun even than sex. Remember how mom and dad always caved in at the final tantrum? Wasn't that great? Isn't



Elaine Noble and Jim Foster, 1978

it still great, boys and girls? Wipe your nose, Johnny, your mental age is showing.¹³

This kind of attack seems to have led many gay and lesbian people to eschew movement participation entirely, and to view those who participated in visible leadership positions with ridicule, at worst, and embarrassment, at best. In the midst of a particularly acrimonious struggle between the two camps over control of the Whitman-Radcliffe Foundation, Foster remarked,

the fact of the matter is that when you look around, we are an infinitesimally small number of people compared to the gay community as a whole. If you doubt me, just go to the bars, the restaurants, the operas, the theatres....And the fact is, that somehow we have to convince these people who have money not to be hostile to us, not to look upon us as some kind of embarrassment—which *they do*.¹⁴

Conditions outside the gay movement also militated against broad participation. As long as the "job description" for a gay leader entailed loss of the freedom to pursue major

non-gay careers, those who elected to offer their talents to the gay movement did so underground. An interesting underground partnership between openly-gay activists and high-ranking closeted gay city employees began mid-1974 in New York City. In a paper delivered to the American Political Science Association in June 1975, political scientist Kenneth Sherrill described the new organization as

a gay political infrastructure that has ties to the government and the organizations of our state's political parties. A relatively recent and growing phenomenon, this infrastructure has been used for purposes ranging from getting gay people out of jail to getting gay people jobs to cutting bureaucratic red tape. In a sense, the functions of the political machine are being performed by gay politicians for gay people, yet the vast majority of politicians are unaware of this, and most gay people do not know where the functional equivalent of the clubhouse is.¹⁵

Until early 1974, all of the members of this infrastructure, dubbed the "New York Study Group," held executive-type positions in New York City or State government. They fell into one of two categories: either they held "sensitive establishment political jobs" and were "not known to have a gay sexual orientation by

anyone other than members of the Study Group and possibly their immediate family and closest friends," or they had "establishment political jobs and have made their gay sexual preference known on the job and elsewhere—but not made it dramatically known."¹⁶

In 1974 Ethan Geto, Democratic party activist and special assistant to the Bronx borough president, proposed expanding the group. A member of the second category, Geto was then "living platonically" with GAA president and former student activist Morty Manford. Impressed by Manford, Geto convinced the Study Group to add a third category of members: officers of New York gay organizations. Eventually the Study Group included members of NGTF, GAA, Lesbian Feminist Liberation (an organization founded by disaffected lesbian GAA members), and the National Coalition of Gay Organizations (started by Manford in 1976 to coordinate demonstrations at the Democratic convention). None of the other members of these organizations knew of the Study Group's existence, or that their associates were members. All members pledged to maintain the confidentiality of those not "out" publicly.

David Goodstein, 1978



RICK GROSSE/COURTESY OF THE ADVOCATE

A sharp awareness of the price of visible gay leadership continued through the mid-seventies. When a closeted delegate to the 1976 Democratic National Convention was asked whether he would ever consider being an openly gay candidate, he replied, "Are you kidding? I want to get something done. If I were to come out that would have to become the main thrust of my politics...any other issue would get buried."¹⁷ Even as the weight of oppression eased over the course of the decade, those willing to be openly gay resisted being stereotyped as "politically gay." An openly gay Carter press aide complained in 1976 that

I only have so much time in my life to be politically gay. The movement has to understand that there are those of us who want to work the establishment side of the street...Sure it's fun to demonstrate when all it takes is one Sunday afternoon. But the way to change things is to work with campaign people on a one-to-one level. It takes more time, but it will produce far more change."¹⁸

Openly gay or lesbian political leadership, thus, remained heavily conditioned by the perceived limits (such as unemployment or pigeonholing) which gay oppression continued to place on those who chose it.

Notorious Or Not Gay Enough

Five gay or lesbian people achieved national prominence in the mid-seventies. None of them came from the ranks of the gay movement, and none of them lingered on the national stage past 1978. Two of these—Army sergeant Leonard Matlovich and football player David Kopay—gained notoriety rather than leadership status. Their notoriety helped push forward the ongoing debate with the dominant society over what gayness was or could be, and was derived in part from the fact that they were, as *Advocate* news editor Sascha Gregory-Lewis put it, people "heterosexual America can swallow."¹⁹ By providing personal testimony that gay could be "normal," in terms of at least some aspects of the male sex role, they encouraged others who did not identify with the early seventies radical image of

gay liberation to consider that the emerging gay identity might include them as well.

Three others gained fame through electoral successes. Allan Spear was elected to the Minnesota State Senate in 1972, where he still serves today. He came out publicly in 1974 shortly *after* being re-elected. Spear downplayed his homosexuality, commenting that "I don't want to be typecast as a gay legislator. I'm a legislator with concerns in a variety of areas, who also happens to be gay." Aside from stints on the boards of NGTF and Gay Rights National Legislation (GRNL), he eschewed national politics entirely, despite pressure from movement moderates to cut a wider swath.

Elaine Noble parlayed her Boston political connections into a successful bid for a seat in the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1974, making no secret of her lesbianism. She elected not to run for a third term in 1978, citing a House redistricting plan that put her in competition with one of her closest political allies, Barney Frank. (Seven years later, having reached the U.S. House of Representatives, Frank would acknowledge his own homosexuality, but prior to this he was assumed to be, and supported the assumption that he was, heterosexual.)

Movement moderates besieged Noble with speaking engagement offers which carried the weight of imperatives. At the same time, both Noble and Spear came under heavy criticism from activists to their left in their home cities. The attacks on Noble and Spear generally came in the form of "not gay enough." In Minneapolis, former University of Minnesota student body president Jack Baker attacked Spear for not moving fast enough on gay rights and for not including the right to adopt children and civil rights protection for transvestites and transsexuals in his legislative efforts. In Boston, Noble's efforts at backroom lobbying, combined with her failure to get a gay rights bill through the House, brought her the dubious distinction of being the second most criticized public figure by Boston's collectively-run newspaper, *Gay Community News*.

MORGAN GWENWALD



Madeline Davis

A closeted delegate to the 1976 Democratic National Convention who was asked whether he would ever consider being an openly gay candidate replied, "Are you kidding? I want to get something done."



Leonard Matlovich, 1980

Noble's reflections on her experience are illustrative of the confusion in the "job description" of a gay leader which arose from the badly-divided movement. Noble felt she was in a

no-win situation with gay people. If I tried to be the best politician I could be, some gay people gave me flak because I wasn't being gay enough or responding enough to the gay community....The gay community expected me to be on call 24 hours a day. It was like they felt they owned me....The irony of it is that these gay people didn't elect me. The majority of the gay people who are out in the gay community not only don't live in my district, they don't vote in my district....[Those gay people who were unhappy with me were] only a handful of individuals, but a handful's enough to make your life miserable....The only thing I can say is that a handful of people are far more comfortable being represented by somebody who is a straight male. It's sort of like blacks. There was a time in history when blacks, some blacks, felt they'd rather have a sympathetic liberal white speak for them. I think that's where we are....The level of self-hate right now among gay people is so damned high that if, when you start trying to work in a sane manner, you ask, "What are you doing constructively?" it has a self-hate backlash.... They can't swing at the straight world, so they swing at the person nearest them.²⁰

The ambivalence about leadership, which Spear and Noble faced, grew in the mid-seventies with the rising influence, on young gay

activists, of the women's movement's philosophies about collectivism and its own ambivalence about strong individual leadership. Even as they took leadership, these young activists avoided leadership roles. UCLA student Dave Johnson in 1974 singlehandedly convinced his university to fund a Gay Awareness Week and organized it himself. But he told the *Advocate* he feared a leadership role, because leading did not fit his definition of being gay. Johnson described his gayness as

making a personal statement about myself...it involves not just talking about collectivism, not just talking about breaking down stereotyped roles, but actually doing it, in my own life. Men are bribed to be non-human, bribed with power. I was bribed, and the most radical thing I can say is I'm gay, which means I will not take your power; I will not take your domination. I'm going to be a human being; I'm going to love my way; I'm not going to play your roles.²¹

A significant segment of the gay and lesbian press—notably Boston's *Gay Community News*—was ready to attack any visible and reasonably forceful gay or lesbian leader for taking the bribe from the patriarchal society, and it gave little positive press to visible leaders of either sex. Distrust of any model of strong personal leadership was also a feature of most leftist gay organizations of the period. One of the founders of Bay Area Gay Liberation (BAGL), a mid-seventies group of gay leftists in San Francisco, spoke for many of his comrades when he told the *Advocate* that in his view, "it's probably healthier to have an extreme distrust than an extreme trust of leaders."²²

Harvey Milk and the Flexible Identity

Although his untimely death in 1978 brought him greater national coverage than anything he did while living, Harvey Milk was nonetheless the most compelling and successful gay leader to emerge in the mid-seventies. Superficially he appeared to be a bundle of contradictions who alienated nearly every sector of the movement. He was a small businessman at odds with San Francisco's gay business asso-

ciation, the Golden Gate Business Association (GGBA), and a leftist who refused to work with the main gay left group in San Francisco, BAGL. These paradoxes were, in fact, part of Milk's success: not accepting a label as a certain type of gay leader, he proved able to work with a broad range of individuals and groups—gay and non-gay.

In August of 1973, the pony-tailed proprietor of Castro Camera took very practical issue with the Jim Foster/Alice club philosophy of backing sympathetic non-gay politicians instead of encouraging gays to run for office themselves. Harvey Milk decided to seek election to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. In a column for the city's gay newspaper, the *Bay Area Reporter*, Milk wrote:

Masturbation can be fun, but it does not take the place of the real thing. It is about time that the gay community stopped playing with itself and get [sic] down to the real thing. There are people who are satisfied with crumbs because that is all they think they can get when, in reality, if they demand the real thing, they will find that they indeed can get it.²³

With five seats open, Milk placed tenth in the 1973 supervisorial elections, winning 17,002 votes. Out of step with the Alice club's strategy, Milk was denied its support. The two non-gay politicians backed by Foster and Alice placed seventh and eighth. Foster blamed Milk for his candidates' losses.

"Masturbation can be fun, but it does not take the place of the real thing. It is about time that the gay community stopped playing with itself and [got] down to the real thing."

Undaunted, Milk spent the next four years building a personal political base by running for office at every available opportunity. In 1975, he placed sixth in the supervisorial race. In 1976, he challenged Foster's choice, non-gay Art Agnos, for a state assembly seat and lost by 4000 votes. Milk's presence on the political scene split gay electoral efforts at the same time that his populism attracted to electoral work gay leftists who had previously shunned reformist politics. Within the gay community, he built a coalition based in his own neighborhood in the Castro, and included some of the gay constituencies that Foster et al. would have preferred to forget: transvestites (José Sarria was an early endorser), and recent gay immigrants to San Francisco (like Milk himself) with few financial resources but a strong interest in preserving and strengthening the safety of the ghetto.

But Milk's support stretched far beyond the gay community. Although he made no secret of his gayness, he seldom mentioned gay issues outside of the gay community, and his campaign literature did not indicate his homosexuality. For this, the *Advocate* dubbed him "the 'missing person' in gay lobbying efforts" and charged that he was "reluctant, outside the gay community, to speak to gay issues."²⁴ Milk debunked the concept of the "gay vote," claiming that

there's a myth in San Francisco about the gay vote, a myth about the number of gays in San Francisco, a myth in San Francisco about the gay precinct. I live in a "gay precinct," and if 20% of the voters are gay here, that's high.²⁵

Like Minnesota's Allan Spear, Milk refused to be merely a gay candidate. He combined fiscal conservatism and small-government populism with a strong pro-labor stance and a championing of the city's ethnic minorities. Gradually he garnered major endorsements from labor, Hispanic, and Chinese organizations.

Milk worked tirelessly in three elections without success, but each time building a slightly larger base of support. Foster and the Alice club continued to oppose him; in response to their attacks, Milk countered that

Milk used stereotypes of gays—both positive and negative—to attract attention to himself and his causes. He aggressively courted publicity, and used his gayness before and after his election as a media angle.

Foster and his entourage were part of machine politics, and that their end of the gay movement was dominated by "those who have the most money [who think it's enough] to show you can do it [be a successful gay person]. That's not what the gay movement is about."²⁶

The success of a district elections initiative paved the way for Milk finally to win a seat on San Francisco's Board of Supervisors. In November of 1977, he beat Rick Stokes, the gay attorney who was the ex-president of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, founding president of the Golden Gate Business Association, bathhouse investor, and Foster protégé. In his victory speech, Milk likened his gayness to Kennedy's Catholicism, saying, "If I do a good job, people won't care if I am green or have three heads."²⁷

Milk thus established electoral credibility, but combined this with a growing notoriety. He used stereotypes of gays—both positive and negative—to attract attention to himself and his causes. He aggressively courted publicity and used his gayness before and after his election as a media angle. He was expert at coming up with quotable phrases like his standard opening line on the stump: "Hi, I'm Harvey Milk, and I'm here to recruit you." A former Broadway producer, Milk viewed politics as theater, and himself as a symbol. In his own way he carried forward the tactics of GAA in the early seventies, "zapping" the media with a constant stream of press releases, interviews and quotable speeches.

As a gay leader, Milk was unique in the mid-seventies: self-selected, but with electoral support; unafraid to be open, but with the political savvy not to let himself be limited by the confines of the gay movement or the gay ghetto. He drew on the traditions of the gay community and identity, employing camp humor and tapping into a communal sense of outrage at the injustice of oppression. But certainly one of the keys to his success was his ability to adjust his gay identity, when necessary, in order to work in coalition with and attract the support of other disfranchised groups.

In the crucial fight against the 1978 Cali-

fornia Briggs Initiative [which would have prohibited employment of gay people in public schools], Milk became a key statewide spokesperson. After his successful election effort, he turned his mobilizing know-how to recruiting even more volunteers to canvass against the Briggs Initiative. By June his San Francisco Gay Democratic Club had surpassed Alice in numbers, and ran major canvassing operations every weekend. Leftists in San Francisco formed the Bay Area Committee Against the Briggs Initiative (BACABI) and worked closely with the Milk machine. BACABI clones appeared in at least eight other California cities, using similar tactics and working in loose coalition. Wealthy gays joined with liberal non-gays to form Concerned Voters of California (CVC) to fight Briggs. CVC emphasized its compatibility with the grassroots effort, and devoted its resources to a statewide media campaign.

Milk challenged Briggs to one-on-one debates anywhere in the state. Whether the venue was conservative or liberal, he greeted Briggs with a prepared set of one-liners designed for their quotability. In response to Briggs' claim that the average homosexual had more than 500 sexual partners Milk remarked, "I wish." When Briggs argued that homosexual teachers would engender homosexuality in their students, Milk replied that if children really emulated their teachers, there would be many more nuns in the world.²⁸

In the anti-Briggs campaign, the gay movement seemed at last really to have it all: money; unity; and a visible, capable, and credentialed spokesperson. Thousands of gay people took the risk of being publicly identified to assist in the campaign. The combination of unprecedented gay unity and visibility, and equally unprecedented bipartisan support from non-gays, left Briggs and his initiative completely isolated. By election day, he had garnered endorsements from only three organizations: the state Nazi Party, the KKK, and the Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs Association. On election day, the ordinance went down to stunning defeat, losing by a two-thirds margin.

Elsewhere, gay rights ordinances were

repealed in Eugene and Wichita. But the movement's successes far outweighed these setbacks. Well-organized, amply-funded, and united campaigns run by professionals, defeated the backlash, not only in California, but in Seattle as well. In his *Advocate* column, Goodstein crowed that "we have entered a new phase of our community's development...1978 is marked by our community's being spearheaded by young, middle-aged and older gay men and women of substantial education, economic means and professional skills."²⁹

The resources and discipline brought to bear in California and Seattle were impressive. In the wake of these major electoral challenges, the movement's national organizations also experienced a renaissance. NGTF swelled to a staff of fourteen and a budget of \$350,000. At Milk's suggestion, grassroots activists across the country began to plan their first coordinated effort since the early seventies: a 1979 march on Washington, D.C.

Yet, for all the activity, the organizational growth and concrete progress made in 1978, by the end of that year only one major leader had emerged into national visibility: Harvey Milk. On November 27, 1978 former fellow Supervisor Dan White shot and killed Milk and pro-gay Mayor George Moscone. The aftermath of Milk's death and White's trial brought the first gay riots since Stonewall, but part of the tragedy of Harvey Milk's life and death is that there was no replacement ready to fill his shoes as an outrageous, aggressive, and visible movement spokesperson.

Lessons To Be Learned

Why was Harvey Milk the only gay leader of this period to even approach national prominence? What can be learned from his case, as well as from the negative examples of others, of resistance to the gay liberation movement today? The paucity of leadership in this period was certainly in part simply historical. The changing relative safety—or lack thereof—to identify as gay affected the development of leadership. The decisions of early leaders to go

after visibility affected the risk/reward ratio of leadership. As they established a beachhead of visibility, and as more diverse kinds of gay and lesbian people came out, the job description of a visible gay leader began to change.

The early activists inadvertently caused their own obsolescence. By aping the rhetoric and forms of the civil rights and women's movements, they helped gay activism win legitimacy first in left-wing and then in liberal circles. Within four years, advocating for gay rights (not liberation) became a respectable form of political activity in the left wing of the Democratic Party. In the mid-seventies, NGTF and the gay democratic clubs began to present opportunities for activism as a part-time activity. This increased participation in the movement overall, but also transformed the job description of movement leader from a self-sacrificing "new human" living the revolution to the more traditional model of administrator,

Harvey Milk, Castro Street Fair, 1978



fundraiser and organizer of large groups of people towards specific goals. Leaders could either move with the changes, as did Owles in initiating New York electoral activism and Voeller in founding NGTF, or be left behind.

The definition of a "gay leader" reflected the evolution of the gay identity itself. Beyond the obvious commonality of engaging in homosexual behavior, no one knew for certain what gays had in common. In the face of oppression, the pre-Stonewall homosexuals had created a subculture with "back regions" of relative safety, and stigma symbols—words with double meanings, tonal inflections, clothing, or hair styles—to identify themselves to each other without risking discovery by the larger society.³⁰ When the post-Stonewall activists repudiated the homophile movement, they rejected these invented commonalities as well, replacing them with their own set which could serve more visibly to identify gays to each other and the rest of society. Those who disagreed with the new definition of being gay were dubbed "not really gay." They were "self-oppressed." That is, their definitions of their own gayness still retained vestiges of the oppressor-defined homosexuality of the pre-liberation era.

As the movement grew, definitions of gay identity proliferated. Homosexuality remained oppressor-defined, but the possibilities for what homosexual identification could mean mushroomed as gay men and lesbians with diverse public images achieved greater visibility. Initially, the meaning of "gay" within the movement was quite narrow: while GLFers assumed an inherent gay affinity with New Left ideals, GAA's founders assumed an inherent gay unity around issues of sexual liberties and gay civil rights. The *Advocate*, particularly during Goodstein's tenure, attempted to mold the gay identity into something approaching middle-class respectability: "You are employed and a useful, responsible citizen. You have an attractive body, nice clothes and an inviting home."³¹

Yet unity within that movement was always very tentative. Essentially, the movement had only two basic goals in common:

eliminating the proscriptions against homosexual behavior and eradicating the stigma attached by the society to those who either appeared to engage, or admitted to engaging in such behavior. Not surprisingly, efforts aimed at achieving these narrow goals were the most successful undertakings of the movement. Efforts to build a "gay politics" beyond this least common denominator were largely unsuccessful. The factionalization of the movement may be attributed to the lack of an *a priori* common viewpoint provided by being gay. "Being gay" meant something very different to gay feminists, gay democrats, gay businesspeople, gay professionals, or gay leftists.

The development of leadership was further complicated by the fact that each conflicting view of "being gay" not only entailed its own gay agenda, but also its own image of the gay leader. Each faction felt and often expressed a need to project its vision of what gays are really like through exemplary figures (designated "leaders" by most, except for some of the left and feminist factions). If the leader promoted by one faction—NGTF's Voeller, for instance—exemplified the wrong qualities in the eyes of another faction, say the left-feminists running *Gay Community News*, the dissidents not only refused to follow him, but also considered it a necessity to repudiate him as a true member of the collectivity, as a "real gay." To succeed, a leader not only had to prove he or she could weather failure, criticism, and repudiation from fellow gays, but also had to be able to be gay visibly without embracing any unitary definition of gayness. Only Harvey Milk proved equal to the task.

Implications For 1988

Which of the four themes concerning the non-development of visible national leadership identified here remain relevant today? The growth and diversity of the gay movement and gay and lesbian communities has provided an answer of sorts to the first one. In proliferation, the gay identity has defined itself as diverse. The life or death threat posed by AIDS has markedly changed the risk/reward ratio of

The development of leadership was further complicated by the fact that each conflicting view of "being gay" not only entailed its own gay agenda, but also its own image of the gay leader.

coming out. Rock Hudson exemplifies the degree to which post-diagnosis coming out loses much of its sting.

The notoriety which ten years ago went to Matlovich, the sergeant, today attaches to Matlovich, the person with AIDS. People with AIDS have taken important steps in leadership in recent years, but as long as cure and treatment remain distant hopes, this is a constituency which will be spokespersons on the basis of their condition rather than because they are able to provide long-term visible leadership.

To a certain extent, the AIDS crisis has required moving beyond our ambivalence about strong leadership, as it has made evident the need for visible and forceful advocates on the national and local scene. AIDS has also provided a place for the professional and organizational gay and lesbian leader, as it has required the development of permanent and effective service institutions within the gay community. In the training of service volunteers, we have the first organized leadership development in the gay movement outside of

the gay churches.

We are still not unified around a gay liberation agenda, and are reluctant to claim as leaders or true fellow gay liberationists those who disagree with our agenda and our vision of the gay identity. The attacks continue to come in the language of internalized oppression. Throughout the AIDS crisis, those who have argued for safer sex have been targeted as "erotophobic" and "self-hating," the latest variants on "not really gay."

Milk's success came in creating a specific agenda for gay liberation in the context of a broader progressive agenda for all people. His refusal to be a "gay candidate" is instructive: his non-gay support helped him to weather the factionalism of the gay community. His solitary status in the seventies, and to a certain extent, in the movement's history since, speaks to our need to unify, to build coalitions, to laugh off attacks from without and within, and to offer support and assistance rather than criticism and rejection to those willing to lead nationally and visibly. ▼

Rink Foto has been photographing lesbian and gay life for 20 years, coast to coast.

Morgan Gwenwald is a photographer living in New York who has covered the lesbian and gay movement extensively.

Rich Wandel is a New York photographer who succeeded Jim Owles as president of GAA and photographed for the newspaper "Gay."

¹ John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 219.

² Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 210.

³ Toby Marotta, *The Politics of Homosexuality* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1981), p. 143.

⁴ *The Advocate*, 10/28/70 - 11/10/70, pp. 21-22.

⁵ Marotta, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

⁶ *The Advocate* #79, 1/5/72, p. 16.

⁷ *The Advocate* #125, 11/21/73, p. 2.

⁸ *The Advocate* #125, 11/21/73, p. 2. See also Howard J. Brown, *Familiar Faces, Hidden Lives: The Story of Homosexual Men in America Today* (New York: Harcourt-Brace-Jovanovich, 1976).

⁹ *The Advocate* #204, 12/1/76, p. 7.

¹⁰ *The Advocate* #124, 11/7/73, p. 24.

¹¹ *The Advocate* #134, 3/27/74, p. 3.

¹² Interviewed by George Mendenhall in *The Advocate* #128, 1/2/74, p. 14 [11 months prior to Goodstein's purchase of *The Advocate*].

¹³ *The Advocate* #106, 2/28/73, p. 36.

¹⁴ Quoted in *The Advocate* #106, 2/28/73, p. 21. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁵ Quoted in Lee H. Solomon, "The Closet Politics of New York's Study Group" in the *Advocate* #216,

6/1/77, p. 41.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁷ *The Advocate* #196, 8/11/76, p. 9.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁹ Sascha Gregory-Lewis, "The Cannibalization of a Hero" in *The Advocate* #180, 12/31/75, p. 7.

²⁰ Interview by Sascha Gregory-Lewis in *The Advocate* #233, 1/25/78, p. 11.

²¹ *The Advocate*, #143, 7/31/74, p. 14.

²² *The Advocate*, #181, 1/14/76, p. 36.

²³ Quoted in Randy Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), p. 75.

²⁴ *The Advocate* #191, 6/2/76, p. 4 of political supplement.

²⁵ Quoted in *The Advocate* #187, 4/7/76, p. 12.

²⁶ Quoted in *The Advocate* #187, 4/7/76, p. 12.

²⁷ Quoted in *The Advocate* #230, 12/14/77, p. 8.

²⁸ Shilts, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-231.

²⁹ *The Advocate* #259, 1/25/79, p. 5.

³⁰ See Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Identity* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), pp. 81, 100 for a fuller discussion of back regions and stigma symbols.

³¹ *The Advocate* #156, 1/29/75, p. 3.



Pop! Positive

A Comedy by Robert Patrick

(The SETTING is ROBIN's apartment on an upper floor of a building in New York's Greenwich Village. It features everything a retentive queen would have acquired living in New York from 1967 through 1987.)

(Posters are layered on the walls. The earliest are vivid old movie three-sheets, then Pop-Art, some Beardsley, some "personality posters" of Kennedy and Che, some psychedelic rock and religion, some gay power, some gay theater, Evita and Annie, disco stars, opera, est, Dolly Parton, and finally flyers for AIDS benefits. As a constant tone, in every layer are photos torn from increasingly explicit male nude magazines.)

(A clothes rack holds garments ranging from fluffy sweaters and chinos through jeans and ponchos, gowns and boas, glittered jump suits, rhinestoned t-shirts, yellow rain slickers covered in graffiti, military uniforms, djellabas, and finally a few stern business suits.)

(A revolving wire paperback rack holds hundreds of volumes. A shelf holds a complex stereo system and innumerable records and tapes. Many dead plants hang from the ceiling, along with a dusty crepe-paper piñata in the shape of Miss Piggy, and a mobile whose dangling elements are a star, a dollar sign, a peace sign, a hypodermic, a gold record, a muscle man, a Rolls-Royce, a computer, and Tinker Bell.)

(Propped up in a wicker peacock chair is ROBIN, an emaciated man of about forty. He wears pajamas and has a coverlet over his lap. Beside him is a table covered with sickroom paraphernalia, flowers in a vase, condolence cards, a telephone, and an unactivated answering machine.)

(Through a window beside him, we see a church steeple and an early morning sky.)

(At rise, ROBIN is writing something on a pad across his knees.)

ROBIN

(With a final pencil flourish)

There! That just about says it!

(He tears it off, weakly, folds it, and looks for a place to put it, deciding finally on his pajama pocket.)

Now. Let's see if we can still manage a limerick.

(He writes and speaks:)

There once was a Manhattan queen—

(Phone rings. He ignores it.)

—With nothing that she hadn't seen—

(Phone rings.)

—'Til they said, "No charades."

(Phone rings. He grows annoyed.)

"You're a person with AIDS."

(Phone rings.)

"Abandon all plans for the screen?"

(Phone rings.)

"You'd better put down that marine?"

(Phone rings.)

"Don't subscribe to a new magazine?"

(Phone rings.)

Mom didn't turn on your machine.

(Answers phone.)

Okay, I can't make little songs out of my
great sorrows;

I may as well talk to you.

But be advised:

If you're calling to tell me you've got it,
Save our breath.

Just say, "ditto,"

And leave me to my beads.

Oh, Bob!
Of course you haven't got it;
Who'd give it to you?
Except a good-hearted U.S.O. Girl like me?
And *we* were 'way back in the Sixties,
When the word "AIDS" was preceded
By the words "American Military."

How am I?
Well, when I think of what I've got, I feel like
shit,
But when I think of how I got it, I can't com-
plain.
How are you?

I know you've called.
I hate those *Twilight Zones* where people
install phones in their coffins,
So I haven't been answering mine.
This exception is not because I still love you,
But because I've written some hilarious last
words.

I want someone literate listening, in case I
croak
While Mom and Sis are out at Morning Mass.
They're here to identify the body—
Which millions could do in the dark—
And to pray for the soul,
The mind being unknown to them.
You, I presume, have called to glean piquant
detail

On what it's like to die as I have lived,
A sociosexualogical statistic.
I know you writers, you're life's hungry
men.
Well, here's a fairly poignant paradox for
your next play:
I came home from a rally for gay rights
Only to learn I have the great gay wrong.
Wait, that isn't a paradox, is it? It's an irony
It's an irony; it's one of life's little ironies
Like Anita Bryant turning out to be right.

Bob, don't bother to answer back.
Anything said to me at this point
Might as well be written on a decomposing
squash.
The brain goes first, you know—
Except for the portions dedicated to pain,
Which are apparently immune.

"Do I need anything?" Oh, how droll.
Wait, I may have just enough strength for a
comeback to that:
No, I don't need anything. I already have
Cancer, pneumonia, and my mother at my
side:

Pouf Positive will be published in the forthcoming Untold Decades: Seven Comedies of Gay Romance (St. Martin's Press).

Robert Patrick is in the forefront of today's flowering of gay male playwriting. The author of over one hundred plays, he is perhaps best known for Kennedy's Children.

TABBOO (Stephen Tashjian) is an artist living in New York.

Artwork by Stephen Tashjian





All the things that make life worth leaving.
How's that?

Come over? Be serious! How do you think I
look? I look like Mia Farrow, halfway
through *Rosemary's Baby*.

I want you to remember the Botticelli flower-
child I once was.

God!

I was the prettiest queen that ever paraded
for peace

And now I'm something that needs to be
burnt after death.

I was pretty, wasn't I?

...Bob?

All right, smart-ass, you can answer that one,
But think before you speak.

(A chime rings.)

Well, saved by the cliché; aren't *you* the lucky
one.

That's the church bell.

One stroke means it's seven-thirty.

At eight it's a David O. Selznick production
up here.

And Mom and Sis will come crawling
upstairs on their knees,

Muttering rosaries.

So I'm yours til eight o'clock or the end of
time,

Whichever comes sooner.

Oh, wait; what's that couplet by old A.E.

Houseman:

"And he shall hear the stroke of eight
And not the stroke of nine."

About the condemned man in *his* cell?

Hah!

Condemned for not being condommed!

The wit and wisdom of the living dead.

Like it? I leave it to you. Want anything else?
Records? Tapes?

The history of western music from Mahalia
to Michael Jackson?

I want to give it all away

Before some tool plays disco at my funeral

And the record gets stuck

And nobody can tell

And the service lasts forever!

But I'm being negative.

Wanna hear some positive funeral plans?

I want to be freeze-dried and cut in half

And made into ballerina plaques.

No, actually, I insist on being cremated;

It's my last chance to get my ashes hauled.

No, actually, I want to be mixed with grease-
paint

And used for blackface for Diana Ross drags.
Then I want my Mastercharge and all my
I.D.

Clipped together

And flung to the cutest kid in Sheridan
Square!

And I don't want you reading any of your
crappy monologues

Or mine.

I already cremated all my so-called "works."

Oh, shut up. I was not a real writer

Which you, of course, are; I apologize for
that base canard.

All I had was a knack for cute coffee-table
metaphors,

Like:

"Joan Collins is as vulgar as Christmas in
Mexico!"

Or remember I called that nervous friend of
yours,

"As delicate as *The Glass Menagerie* in
Braille."

And of one of my own true loves—not you—
I was heard to quip:

"His cock is like cake, his balls are like bells,
But his ass is like ice."

Thanks.

Wait, those aren't metaphors; they're similes.
That's me: Simile Dickinson.

Forgive the low level of repartee at this end.
I haven't been reading anything except con-
dolence cards.

A pixieish fellow P.W.A. sent one that says,
"What do you give the man who has every-
thing?"

I'm designing one to be sent by well-
meaning, helpless friends like you.

It shows a quadruple amputee, saying,
"I'm behind you one hundred percent."

And, of course, Mom has been reading to
me.

Oh, Shirley MacLaine's latest volume, what
else?

Shirley claims we pay in each next life
For our sins in the last one.

Well, Shirl, girl, we've streamlined the
process this time.

Your up-to-date pervert is dying in the fast
lane.

No, I'm not going back into the hospital.
I abhor the term, "legally alive."

God, think of the great men who have
nibbled on me,
And now I'm nothing but a snack for a virus:
Something that can't decide if it's an animal
or a plant.

Let me tell you, it's no picnic *being* one.

There's nothing they can do:
AIDS is the gift that keeps on giving.
My luck:

I got this sweet Indian doctor, who kept
Folding and unfolding his eyeglasses like a
Rubik's Cube.

He asked very shyly if he could take blood,
Urine, snot, stool, semen, and saliva speci-
mens.

I said, "Sure; then can we do what *I* like?"
Oh, and I used one of *your* lines on the poor,
sweet sap.

He, very delicately informed me
There was a lot less chance of getting it
If one had been "Wot dey call a 'topman.'"
I couldn't resist it.

I said, "Doc, I've always been a topman;
You can get it further up you that way!"
Then the diagnosis came up "Bingo!"
He warned me to watch out for the depres-
sion

That *often* accompanies a diagnosis of AIDS.
So I said, with a show of great relief:
"AIDS! Oh, doctor, thank God; I thought you
said, 'Age!'"

You know my motto:
Brighten the coroner where you are.
I tried to make up by offering to be a subject
For any cute tricks that science might want to
try.

And he said,
"Mister Wood, we cannot use you as an ex-
perimental animal,"
And I told him,
"Doc, I'm an effeminate queer;
I've never been used as anything else!"

Except by you, Bob, yes, we know that, we
were truly in love.
That was love, wasn't it? No wonder it went
out of style.

No, no, I'm sorry, what you said is true:
When you fucked me over that tenement
bannister

With the Dayglo Peace signs flaking off the
walls,

It was "The balcony scene of the Sixties."
Christ, I used to be so clever; now I'm
reduced to quoting you.

I was clever.
When I was just a little girl in the East Bay,
California,
I noticed that "East Bay" was Pig Latin for
"Beast."
But I knew I had found my niche when I
realized
That "Alice Faye" was Pig Latin for "phal-
lus."

Yes, isn't that good?
You think we can interest the virus in 1930s
musicals
And it'll turn queer and stop reproducing?
Scratch that; you have to be born to royalty.
That's how that lovely old 1940s closet queen
Who brought me out used to put it: "Born to
royalty?"
He'd spot some hunky number and lean over
to me
And whisper, "Do you think *he* was born to
royalty?"

Meaning was he a queen.
"Born to royalty." "Sigh. God knows I was.
Twelve years old, I rummaged through the
biggest
Country-western record barn in central
California
And came up with the only Marlene Dietrich
album on the West Coast.
You have to born with that instinct.
And all by my little lonesome I found Walt
Whitman,
And Aubrey Beardsley, and dying my bangs
with lemon juice,
And ordering everything a size small,
And outlining my eyes with ball-point pen,
So when the boys made me cry, they
wouldn't see anything running.
When my age became the socially-conscious
"We Generation,"
I had to fight for my right to riot in pink
high-heels.
And when we o.d.'d on politics
And became the "Me Generation,"
I drove to New York on a lavender motor-
cycle
After using my last Sunshine Acid to spike
the communion wine!

No. I should have. I could have been Jimmy
Jones.
I could have been a contender.
Instead of a drab example of the "De-Genera-
tion,"

Turned into a serving of sushi for a flock of plankton!
 But let's not talk about me when I'm gone.
 Where was I anyway; oh, yes:
 We're-born-that-way, we're-part-of-nature's-plan. That riff.
 Well, it's trite but it's true.
 Where would the world be without its fairies?
 Well, we may be about to find out, mayn't we now?
 And you, you've been too ugly for a decade
 For anyone to fuck with, you'll live to see it:
 A world without fairies.
 Bloomington's, of course, will have to close.
 There will be no girl singers to speak of and speak of and speak of.
 Whole strains of ferns and poodles will die out.
 Plaid shirts will be marked down to three ninety-five in memoriam.
 Of course, fairies have been dying out
 Since the Seventies Marlboro Macho movement.
 If I live 'til noon, I'll never understand the clones,
 Trying to look like the bullies that beat us up in the schoolyard.
 They're living proof—wherever that term still applies—
 You don't have to learn to be gay;
 You have to learn to act straight—
 Which may be the origin of the verb "to ape!"



Thank you!
 Why, if it hadn't been for a few effeminate holdouts like me,
 The color beige might have vanished from the face of the Earth!
 Ah, God! Ah, god! Ah, God!
(He grips his abdomen in pain, breathes hard, finally speaks:)
 Well, give yourself a gold star; you noticed.
 Yes, Bob, I'm tiring myself out.
 I'm not having an experience I care to prolong.
 Remember those fantasies of attending your own funeral?
 It isn't as much fun as we thought it would be.
 Stay on the line; those snappy last words may be imminent.
 Hah!
 It's my party and I'll die if I want to!

I'm sorry. I'm being cruel. What a way to go.
 Look, you're okay, I'm not okay, okay?
 Okay.
 I'm dying. Everybody dies
 Except for two unconfirmed reports from Bethlehem and Pennsylvania.
 Why does this take my generation by such surprise?
 Did they think we were all just going to go into re-runs?
 Must one go through the five official stages
 On learning one's about to lose all one's weight forever?
 What are those five stages again:
 "Anger, denial, bargaining, depression, and acceptance."
 Well, back up: here comes my acceptance speech.
 "I am now and I have always been a flaming faggot,
 Responsible for style in its every manifestation.
 I have my own five steps:
 Flippancy, sentimentality, sarcasm, camp, and smut.
 Those got me through life, and deity damn it,
 They'll get me through death!"
 Now shut up or I'll stop loving you.
 I expected you to write something to make me live in infamy,
 Like Shakespeare promised his poor Elizabethan pushover:
 "Not marble nor the gilded monuments
 Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme."
 Welllllllllll,
 As it turned out,
 The gilded monuments of princes are major tourist attractions,
 And nobody knows who the hell the sonnets were written for,
 Buuuuuuuut—
 Oh, don't cry.
 I love you.
 You're brilliant.
 That was a base canard.
 You're a wonderful writer.
 I am less than the dust upon your laurels.
 You're probably the greatest living gay playwright.
 Or with any luck soon will be.
 Look, how's this for comfort?
 We were the last two white people ever to fall in love.

That oughta rate some space in the "Whatever Became Of?" books.
 And there are no challengers on the horizon.
 How can anybody fall in something as awful
 as love
 When they're being careful.
 Before my condition started warranting
 quarantine,
 I knew two kids:
 Lovers, into safe sex, monogamous out of
 terror.
 One night they were each jerking themselves
 off
 While fucking the other—with vibrators—
 And one of them's arms got tired, so he
 switched hands,
 And his lover hops out of bed, screaming,
 "You switched hands!
 You might have got some of your precum on
 your fingers
 And it might crawl up the vibrator into me!
 Are you trying to kill me?"
 Naked, except for rubber gloves and a
 banana-flavored condom,
 With an electric dildo still revolving in his
 ass.
 Not what is called a "first, fine, careless rap-
 ture,"
 Now is it?
 Oh, *don't*.
 You're right, you're always right, yes, yes, of
 course,
 Love will survive.
 They couldn't kill it with those purple hair-
 dos
 They can't kill it with a plague.
 Boys will fall in love with each other's
 earlobes
 If all else should fail.
 Because it was never really about sex, was it?
 It was about love?
 Yes, I know you did.
 Yes, I know you do.
 Yes, I do, too.
 I'm sorry we broke up, too. I was a fool.
 No, wait, maybe you were the fool. How did
 we break up?
 You told me we had to cool it for a week
 because you caught crabs
 And I thought it was a lie because you didn't
 love me,
 And I took up with that jailbait street-meat
 for revenge

And you went off in a huff to save world
 drama, yes,
 I thought I remembered it being about love.
 Well, and looky here now where we are.
 I love you.
 You love me.
 We're having a deathbed reconciliation fade-
 out.
 That oughta satisfy two students of *montage*.
 Dear Lord, I'm suffering like a living thing.
 Sex may be safe, but love never is.
 (*A church bell rings.*)
 Ah, saved from the fate worse than—
 (*Looks out window.*)
 Lemme look. Yeah, there's Mom and Sis,
 rushing from judgement.
 (*Bell*)
 I can see the church and the sky
 And the old International Stud Bar.
 (*Bell*)
 No, fool, it's a restaurant now like everything
 else.
 How did they clean that back-room?
 (*Bell*)
 Probably poured polyurethane
 To level the ruts left by my knees.
 (*Bell*)
 No, don't call again.
 Use that new phone-sex service.
 It promises troll-free calls.
 (*Bell*)
 If you have to do something, write me a
 funny AIDS play.
 Of course you can.
 (*Bell*)
 It's the biggest joke played on us since sex
 itself—
 And with the longest punch line.
 (*Bell*)
 I don't want you to call.
 If God wanted us to be friends with our old
 lovers,
 He wouldn't have made them such creeps.
 Goodbye. I love you. Shut up.
 (*Hangs up. Feels for the folded paper in his pa-
 jama pocket, takes it out, unfolds it, reads it
 aloud:*)
 "At least I'll never have to hear the term
 'Life-style' again."

CURTAIN ▼

THE ZUNI MAN-WOMAN

ON A COLD December day in 1896, six great warrior-birds, the Sha'lakos, ten feet high with beaks that snapped and eyes that rolled in their sockets, descended from the southern mesas at dusk to the outskirts of the ancient village called the Anthill at the Middle of the World. That night they would dance in the six houses newly erected to receive them—for one night, all night—diving, bobbing, careening madly to the awe and delight of the onlookers. They would bestow their blessings of increase and health, and receive in turn the prayers of the people for snow and rain in the season to come.

There was little to distinguish the Sha'lako festival of 1896 from any other observed by the Zuni Indians from time immemorial up to the present day. The Zunis and their ancestors have occupied the same location in western New Mexico for two thousand years or more—long enough to view their homeland as the middle of the world. In 1896, however, one of the families selected to host a Sha'lako god included a “noted and prominent” Zuni named We'wha (WEE'wha). An accomplished artist and craftsman, an active participant in religious and ceremonial life, We'wha had served as a cultural ambassador for the Zunis when he traveled to Washington in 1886 and shook hands with the president. Six years later, he spent a month in jail for resisting soldiers

sent by that same government to interfere in his community's affairs.

We'wha was also a berdache, to use the currently accepted anthropological term, or *Ihamana* in the Zuni language, a man who combined the work and social roles of both men and women, an artist and a priest who dressed, at least in part, in women's clothes.

In 1896, We'wha had labored long and hard in preparation for the Sha'lako, carefully laying the stone floor in the large room where the bird-god would dance. Not yet fifty, he nonetheless suffered from heart disease, and, according to his white friend, anthropologist Matilda Coxe Stevenson, the effort proved too much. When the time came for the arrival of the god, We'wha could not attend. He was “listless and remained alone as much as possible.” Stevenson, who refers to We'wha using female pronouns, joined her friend of over fifteen years in his final hours.

We'wha was found crouching on the ledge by the fireplace.... Only a few days before, this strong-minded, generous-hearted creature had labored to make ready for the reception of her gods; now she was preparing to go to her beloved [Sacred Lake, site of “Zuni heaven”]....

We'wha asked the writer to come close and in a feeble voice she said, in English: “Mother, I am going to the other world. I will tell the gods of you and Captain Stevenson. I will tell

by Will Roscoe

Will Roscoe has shown his slide-show on the American Indian berdache—the “Zuni Man-Woman: A Traditional Gay Role”—on both coasts. As coordinator for the History Project of Gay American Indians, he edited Living the Spirit: A Gay American Indian Anthology (St. Martin's Press, 1988).

them of Captain Carlisle, the great seed priest, and his wife, whom I love. They are my friends. Tell them good-by. Tell all my friends in Washington good-by. Tell President Cleveland, my friend, good-by. Mother, love all my people; protect them; they are your children; you are their mother...."

She leaned forward with the [prayersticks] tightly clasped, and as the setting sun lighted up the western windows, darkness and desolation entered the hearts of the mourners, for We'wha was dead.¹

Among the Zunis, the death of the berdache We'wha elicited "universal regret and distress." Similar sentiments existed in as many as 130 American Indian tribes known to have had male and female berdache roles.² What is it that American Indians saw in these men and women who bridged genders that Western civilization has overlooked or denied?

I have focused on the Zuni berdache in order to study how this role fit into a specific cultural context, to look at all its social, economic, and religious facets as well as sexuality and gender. I cannot share here all that I've learned about We'wha and the Zuni philosophy of gender (I am writing a book to cover that!), but I would like to describe how I arrived at my interpretation of the Zuni berdache and why, in particular, I have abandoned the cross-gender model. In the process, I hope to explain why I refer to the Zuni berdache—or *lhamana*—as a "traditional gay role."

Life and Times of We'wha

By any standards, We'wha was an important member of his community. Stevenson described him as "the strongest character and the most intelligent of the Zuni tribe." The anthropologist Elsie Clews Parsons referred to him as "the celebrated *lhamana*." Robert Bunker, an Indian agent at Zuni in the 1940s, wrote, "We'wha, that man of enormous strength who lived a woman's daily life in woman's dress, but remained a power in his pueblo's gravest councils."³ Today, nearly a hundred years since his death, Zunis still remember stories about We'wha.



We'wha

"We'wha, that man of enormous strength who lived a woman's daily life in woman's dress, but remained a power in his pueblo's gravest councils." Today, nearly a hundred years since his death, Zunis still remember stories about We'wha.

Born in 1849, three years after the United States seized control of the Southwest from Mexico, he lived to witness the influx of U.S. anthropologists, missionaries, Indian agents, traders, tourists, and settlers that threatened to disrupt Zuni life and overrun Zuni lands. He made important contributions to his tribe's response to these events. He helped develop commercial markets for traditional crafts, and he forged friendships with non-Indians who became advocates for Zuni interests.

Traveling to Zuni on a government-sponsored expedition, James and Matilda Stevenson met We'wha in 1879. Matilda Stevenson found the berdache well-qualified as an anthropological informant. We'wha "possessed an indomitable will and an insatiable thirst for knowledge"; he was "especially versed in their ancient lore."⁴ We'wha became a key informant for Stevenson's exhaustive report on the Zunis, published in 1904.

Although We'wha wore female clothing, his masculine features seem obvious to us today.⁵ Stevenson described him as "the tallest

person in Zuni; certainly the strongest."⁶ Still, for many years, she believed We'wha was a woman. Other visitors were told by the Zunis themselves that We'wha was a man. "It was the comments of her own friends, Zunis," noted one traveler, "that first made me 'wise' to the situation as to her sex."⁷ When Stevenson did discover the truth, she wrote, "As the writer could never think of her faithful and devoted friend in any other light, she will continue to use the feminine gender when referring to We'wha."⁸

The Zunis, however, never ignored the fact that We'wha was male. As Stevenson herself observed, the Zunis referred to *lhamanas* by saying, "'She is a man'; which is certainly misleading to one not familiar with Indian thought."⁹ In this usage, "she" connotes a social role, while in English "she" connotes biological sex. I use male pronouns in writing of We'wha to convey in English the same understanding a Zuni had: that We'wha was biologically male. In fact, Zuni berdaches underwent one of two male initiation rites, and they participated in the all-male societies responsible for portraying the gods, or *kachinas*, in sacred masked dances. In an 1881 census of the tribe, We'wha's occupations were listed as "Farmer; Weaver; Potter; Housekeeper"—the first two are traditionally men's activities, the last two women's.¹⁰

Like berdaches in many tribes, We'wha was a crafts specialist. He was known for his skill in both pottery and weaving. His early sales to collectors like Stevenson and the writer-lecturer George Wharton James prefigured a key development of the twentieth century—the emergence of commercial markets for native arts, an important source of economic independence for many Southwest Indians today. We'wha was also one of the first Zunis to earn cash. After Stevenson showed

him the benefits of using soap to wash clothes, he went into business doing laundry for local whites.

In 1886, We'wha spent six months with the Stevensons in Washington, D.C. While Indian visits to the national capital were frequent in the nineteenth century, few Indians stayed as long or maintained as high a profile as the Zuni berdache We'wha.

According to Stevenson, We'wha "came in contact only with the highest conditions of culture, dining and receiving with some of the most distinguished women of the national capital."¹¹ He met Speaker of the House Carlisle and other dignitaries. In May, he appeared at the National Theatre in an amateur theatrical event sponsored by local society women to benefit charity. According to a newspaper account, We'wha received "astounding" applause from an audience that included senators, congressmen, diplomats and Supreme Court justices.¹² In June, We'wha called on President Cleveland and presented him with a gift of his "handiwork."¹³

An article from a local paper illustrates the typical reaction of Washingtonians to the Zuni berdache:

Folks who have formed poetic ideals of Indian maidens, after the pattern of Pocahontas or Minnehaha, might be disappointed in Wa-Wah on first sight. Her features, and especially her mouth, are rather large; her figure and carriage rather masculine.... Wa-Wah, who speaks a little English, and whose manner is very gentle, said that it took her six days to weave the blanket she wears.¹⁴

During his stay, We'wha demonstrated weaving at the Smithsonian and helped Stevenson and other anthropologists document Zuni traditions. He continued to follow Zuni religious practices, offering corn meal and making prayerstick offerings (normally a male activity) for the summer solstice, an important Zuni religious occasion. Despite his easy adaptation to Washington society, however, We'wha remained unchanged. His attitude towards the white world is conveyed in a story that Edmund Wilson heard at Zuni in the 1940s: "When he returned to the pueblo, he assured his compatriots that the white world



In 1886, We'wha spent six months with the Stevensons in Washington, D.C. While Indian visits to the national capital were frequent in the nineteenth century, few Indians stayed as long or maintained as high a profile as the Zuni berdache We'wha.

were mostly frauds, for he had seen them, in the ladies' rooms, taking out their false teeth and the 'rats' from their hair."¹⁵

One incident from We'wha's life is especially revealing. In 1892, a young Zuni named Nick Tumaka was accused of witchcraft. Witchcraft—the anti-social use of tribal magic for revenge or personal gain—was the only real crime at Zuni. Nick came under suspicion because he had been raised by whites, spoke English, and rejected Zuni religion.

One night the Zuni governor gave Nick some whiskey. Nick got drunk and claimed to have witch-like powers. The bow priests—leaders of the warrior society—attempted to try Nick, which meant hanging him from the rafters of the old mission until he confessed. Nick called for help and was rescued by white friends who sent for soldiers from nearby Fort Wingate.

A small army detachment arrived to arrest the Zuni governor. At his doorway, however, the soldiers were met by the governor's "younger brother"—We'wha, one of the "tallest and strongest" members of the tribe. Lina Zuni told the story of what happened next to anthropologist Ruth Bunzel:

[The soldiers] were going to take my sister's husband.... His younger brother, although he was a man in woman's dress, got angry. He hit the soldiers. When they were going to take his brother, although he pretended to be a woman, he hit them. He was strong. He stood, holding the door posts, and would not let them come in.¹⁶

The soldiers returned in full force—nearly two hundred men armed with guns and field artillery. The circumstances, and the potential for disaster, were similar to those at Wounded Knee, where three hundred Indians had been killed in 1890 by trigger-happy soldiers. We'wha, the governor, and the leading bow priest were arrested. We'wha spent a month in jail at Fort Wingate.¹⁷ These arrests were an attack on the political and cultural independence of the Zunis. It was in this same period that the Pueblo Indian agent wrote to a school teacher at Zuni, "It is going to be quite a task to do away with their custom of the men wearing



female dress, but I have made up my mind to make an effort to do so."¹⁸

The Puzzle of the Pants

We'wha's physical resistance against U.S. soldiers was uncharacteristic of Zuni men, let alone someone who had presumably crossed genders to become a woman. In fact, as my research proceeded, it became clear that We'wha was not crossing genders, but *bridging* or *combining* the social roles of men and women.

In terms of *religion*, for example, We'wha had been initiated into a male kiva society and fulfilled such male religious roles as reciting prayers on ceremonial occasions and making prayersticks. At the same time, he was knowledgeable in the religious lore of women—for example, the rites and observances that surrounded pottery making.

In terms of *economic* roles, We'wha participated in both male and female activities. He specialized in weaving and pottery, which were male and female crafts, respectively, in most pueblos. He apparently engaged in farming, too—another male role. At the same time, he helped manage his family's household, a woman's role.

We'wha bridged genders in terms of *kinship* roles as well. The Lina Zuni used the kinship term for "younger brother" to refer to We'wha. The part he took within his household, however, was that of daughter or sister.

Finally, in terms of *behavior*, We'wha's self-assurance and independence stood out from both men and women. He traveled widely in the white world at a time when few Zunis had ever left the reservation, and his resistance against the soldiers was particularly remarkable.

In short, although We'wha wore a woman's dress, he didn't "act the part."

Folks who have formed poetic ideals of Indian maidens, after the pattern of Pocahontas or Minnehaha, might be disappointed in We'wha on first sight. Her features, and especially her mouth, are rather large; her figure and carriage rather masculine.



We'wha
weaving
belt

The inappropriateness of a cross-gender model is best illustrated in the rites observed by We'wha's family following his death in 1896. According to Stevenson, "After the body was bathed and rubbed with meal, a pair of white cotton trousers were drawn over the legs, the first male attire she had worn since she had adopted woman's dress years ago."¹⁹ The body was carried to the cemetery in front of the old Zuni Mission. According to Zuni custom, men were buried on the south side of this cemetery, women on the north. Where was We'wha buried?

When Elsie Parsons asked a Zuni elder this question, he replied, "On the south side, the men's side, of course.... Is this not a man?"²⁰

If We'wha had crossed genders to become a woman, as the gender-crossing model posits, why the pants, and why was he buried on the men's side? I call this problem "the dilemma of the dress" or "the puzzle of the pants."

Zuni Gender: Raw and Cooked

Answers came from my study of Zuni philosophy and two key concepts in Zuni thought: the categories of the "raw" (*ky'apin*) and the "cooked" (*'akna*). "Raw" people include animals, natural elements, and supernatural beings. They are unfixed and can change form

easily. They are powerful and, for this reason, dangerous.

The Zunis extend these concepts to human beings. "Cooking" is a metaphor for individual development. Newborn infants are "raw" because they are unsocialized. Adult Zunis are "cooked" because they have learned the forms of Zuni culture and have assumed adult roles in the social and religious life of the tribe. In Western terms, the "cooked person" might be described as "civilized" or "cultured."

"Cooking" is marked by a series of initiations which occur at key points in the life cycle. In these rites, individuals are identified with symbols of an ideal natural and social order. These include gender symbols which are relatively undifferentiated at infancy, but increasingly specialized as the individual reaches adulthood. The Zunis view gender as an *acquired* trait, an outcome of becoming a "cooked" person.

Of course, the Zunis are aware of the biological differences between males and females. The first religious symbol bestowed on the child is a perfect ear of corn. Male infants are given a single ear of corn; females a double ear, in which two ears have grown together. The "raw" material of both is the same, however—seeds of corn. And like seed, biological sex represents only a potential—it requires nurtur-

If We'wha had crossed genders to become a woman, as the gender-crossing model posits, why the pants, and why was he buried on the men's side?

"I'M GIVING A slide show at Zuni!"

My San Francisco Indian friends were impressed but skeptical. Many had left reservations—the "rez"—to escape homophobia and sexism. Now I was about to take my slide show on Zuni berdaches back to the rez. "You'll love it!" one gay Indian assured me. "You're brave!" another warned.

For the past fifteen years lesbians and gay men, Indian and non-Indian, have been recovering the history of the berdache role in North America. But the connection between the sexual definition of gay identity in Western culture and the economic definition of berdaches typical of American Indians (individuals who do the work of the other sex) is not immediately apparent. Randy Burns, cofounder of Gay American Indians, declares, "These are our traditional gay Indian ancestors." But getting from there (dress-wearing men and warrior women) to here (urban gay lifestyles) has taken inquiry, reflection, and dialogue.

In 1986, I began presenting my research on the Zuni Indians of New Mexico in a slide-lecture, "The Zuni Man-Woman: A Traditional Gay Role." I argue that the berdache role included not only sexual, but social, economic, and religious dimensions, and that this multi-dimensional model

can help us redefine our more limited category of "homosexuality." As the scope of my research grew, however, I felt the need to present my work to Zunis before I could consider my project complete. How to do this, however, eluded me until two anthropologists working with the tribe attended my slide show. They provided me with detailed advice on how to approach the tribe. "Zuni runs a little like Latin America," I was warned, "but in its own special way."

I began by writing to the tribal council requesting permission to present a lecture in the pueblo. I wanted to benefit from the reactions of a Zuni audience, I explained. My program would describe "key events and personalities" of the late nineteenth century. "I also have a good deal of new material on We'wha," I added, "a weaver and potter who spent six months in Washington in 1886, and the unique role he filled in the tribe."

The tribal council approved my request and referred the letter to the tribal archivist. By happy coincidence, I ran into her a few days later at the Museum of the American Indian in New York City. That personal connection helped the process that followed. We eventually scheduled presentations at both the tribal building and Zuni High School for November 1987.

The plane from Los Angeles to Albuquerque flew directly over Zuni. The village sprawled below us with Corn Mountain, the dramatic red and white mesa, to the south, and Twin Buttes to the north. Backtrack-

History Comes Home:

Gay Studies on the Rez

ing from Albuquerque to Gallup, the nearest white town and the nearest motel, took the rest of the day.

We arrived in Zuni the next morning. The first sight was encouraging: a bright red flyer announcing the event on the window of the arts and crafts shop in the tribal building. As soon as we had downed some black coffee and Zuni bread with the archivist, we were taken to meet the tribal council, beginning a round of introductions that continued throughout our stay. At two o'clock that afternoon, I gave my first talk to a Zuni audience—a crowded classroom of teenagers at Zuni High School.

How would the We'wha play on the rez? When Bradley Rose agreed to join me, we joked that his role would be to keep the car running while I talked.

In planning my slide-lecture for the Zunis, however, I knew I

We'wha

could count on their interest in Zuni culture and history. I felt I could build a bridge to We'wha by placing him in the context of traditional society. I made the idea of "continuity-in-change" my theme, and I identified four traditional Zuni strategies for dealing with change, tracing them from prehistory through the European period. These were: friendship (forming alliances with outsiders), adapting (accepting new products and practices but integrating them into existing categories), adopting (transforming individuals and groups into Zunis by teaching them Zuni culture), and resisting (confrontation with outsiders). After introducing these strategies, I discussed how they were used by four Zuni leaders of a hundred years ago—and here I included We'wha, placing him on the same level as governors, war leaders, diplomats, and priests. If I was wrong about Zuni acceptance of berdaches and the high regard for We'wha, I would surely find out!

That my first presentation would be at the high school certainly added to my anticipation. My worst fear was that once the students saw pictures of We'wha they would start to giggle—and not stop. Adult Indians, of course, might simply denounce me on any number of grounds.

But my fears were unrealized. We'wha provoked giggles—but in the end, as I described his trip to Washington, D.C. in 1886 the laughs were on white society, so willing to accept the six-foot tall Zuni berdache as an "Indian maiden"



and "princess." The public presentation that evening was also a pleasant surprise. Despite a variety of scheduling problems, we filled the room. When the archivist showed up with a tray of cheese and jars of punch I felt at home—food is always a part of successful Indian events.

After I spoke, members of the tribal council made closing comments. "This was a very good program," one of the councillors began, "and we thank Mr. Roscoe very much, *but...*" Brad and I exchanged nervous glances. "But have our children seen this history?" To that, of course, the archivist and I could reply that his children had indeed seen the program, that afternoon.

Soon after our arrival, we were befriended by a young Zuni who became an unexpected source of introductions and information. Like We'wha,

he had "an insatiable thirst for knowledge." The time we spent together driving around Zuni and the outlying countryside proved constantly interesting as he drilled us in our pronunciation of Zuni words and shared endless details about Zuni customs, places, and people. He took a particular interest in the berdache kachina. He xeroxed an illustration from an old anthropological report and took it to an older relative to learn more about the figure. We left Zuni excited by our new contacts and touched by the warmth shown us. ▼

ing and cultivation before it will yield anything of social value. In the Zuni view, biological sex may distinguish male and female infants, but it does not make them men or women—that takes social intervention, “cooking.”

Traditionally, until children receive a name at the age of five or six, they are addressed simply as “child,” without reference to gender. Boys, to achieve adulthood, undergo two initiations. The first emphasizes the symbols of agriculture and the role of men as farmers. In the second, the initiates encounter fearful warrior kachinas who represent male roles in hunting and warfare.

With this insight into the Zuni philosophy of gender, it is possible to unravel the “puzzle of the pants.”

Zuni berdaches receive the first male initiation “just like the other boys.”²¹ However, boys who manifest berdache interests do not receive the second male initiation. This means that, while they are eligible to participate in some male religious activities, berdaches were not eligible to participate in the male activities of hunting and warfare. The Zuni berdache, in Zuni terms, is an “unfinished” male—not an ersatz female.

These concepts explain the rites observed at We’wha’s burial. At birth, in his raw state, We’wha was male. In the process of becoming a cooked person, however, he specialized in the roles of women, combining these with male roles. At death, he became raw again, returning to the spirit world the way he had arrived in this one, as a biological male. Therefore, he was buried on the male side of the cemetery. He was clothed in a woman’s dress to symbolize his outward, social identity, with pants beneath the dress to symbolize his original state as a male.

We’wha was a specialist not just in women’s work but in cultural work in general. Bridging genders meant drawing from the economic, social, and religious roles of both men and women to create a unique synthesis, neither male nor female.

In the Zuni theory of individuation, males and females begin from the same raw material. Gender arises through “cooking” and it be-

comes the basis for other specializations—work roles, social roles, kinship, and religion. At the same time, the Zunis recognized a danger in too much division of the sexes. The differences between men and women could become mutually exclusive, their interests at odds, the basis for mutuality undermined. The supernatural counterpart of the berdache, the kachina, Ko’lhamana, helps bridge this division.

Ko’lhamana (*lhamana*, or berdache, plus *Ko-*, the prefix for “supernatural”), appears in a key episode in the Zuni origin myth. The Zunis and their gods encounter an enemy god people and a war erupts. The Zunis are farmers, while the enemy gods are hunters. The Zunis are led by male war gods, while the enemies are led by a warrior woman. At first, neither side can win. Then, the enemy gods capture three of the Zuni kachinas, including Ko’lhamana, and they hold a dance to celebrate. But Ko’lhamana is unruly and uncooperative. The warrior woman puts him in a woman’s dress and tells him, “You will now perhaps be less angry.”²²

While there are several variants of this myth, the outcome is always the same—the warring people merge, and balance is restored between hunting and farming, male and female. These events were commemorated in a ceremony held every four years. The enemy gods entered the Zuni village bearing freshly killed game. Ko’lhamana was the first of the captured kachinas.²³

Ko’lhamana’s costume symbolizes the economic and sexual themes of the myth. The mask is the same as that of the rain dancer and farmer kachina, Kokk’okshi. But Ko’lhamana also carries the warrior’s bow and arrow. Normally, these symbols would never be combined, since the violence of warfare and hunting is inimical to agriculture. Ko’lhamana

“Cooking” is a metaphor for individual development. Newborn infants are “raw” because they are unsocialized. Adult Zunis are “cooked” because they have learned the forms of Zuni culture and have assumed adult roles in the social and religious life of the tribe.



We'wha was a specialist not just in women's work but in cultural work in general. Bridging genders meant drawing from the economic, social, and religious roles of both men and women to create a unique synthesis, neither male nor female.

also wears a woman's dress and, at the same time, a man's dance kilt over the shoulder. The hair is done half up in the female style and half down in the male style.

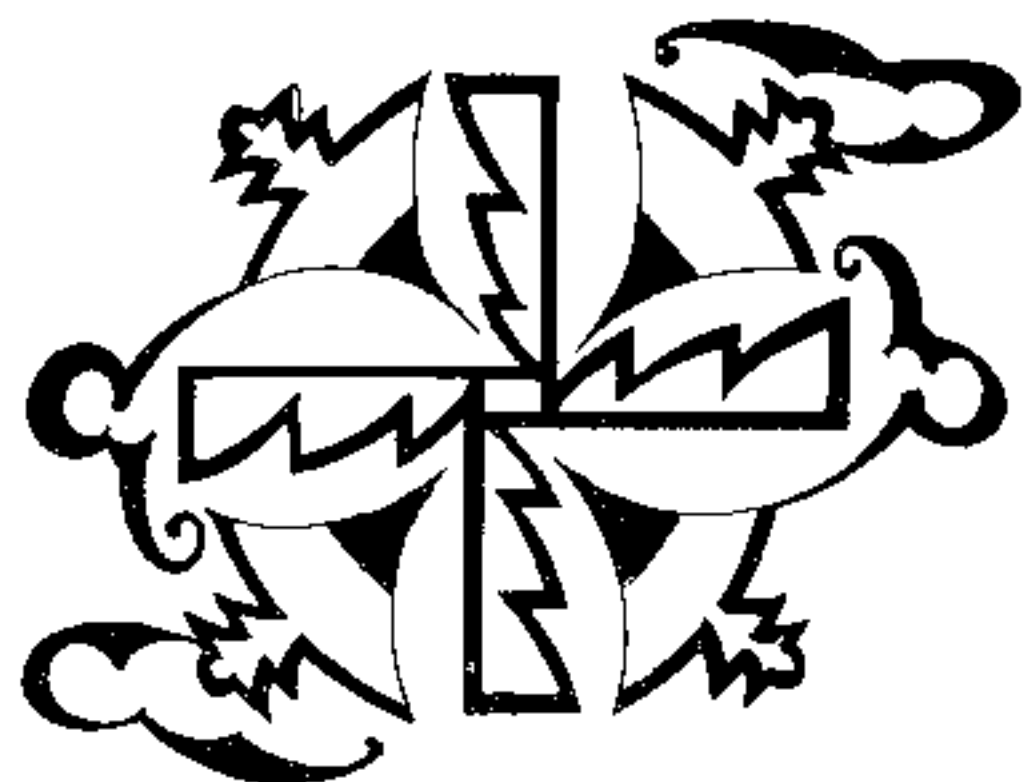
The ability to hold these opposites together is what makes Ko'lhamana supernaturally potent and, by extension, what makes the actual *lhamana* extraordinary as well.

The Problem of Terms

Harriet Whitehead has argued that the cross-gender features of berdache roles were society's way of constraining individuals to one or another role, by re-integrating variance into gender norms with the requirement that male berdaches pretend they are female. In this way, society prevents a potential opportunism—individuals who seek both male and female sources of prestige and power.²⁴

The Zunis did indeed expect berdaches to contribute to the community—as all individuals were expected to do—but their contribution actually derived from their variance. They were valued precisely because they contributed something neither men nor women offered. Their variance was not ignored or disguised by the social fiction of gender crossing. The Zunis always acknowledged the biological gender of berdaches. At the same time, they looked for the positive potentials of berdache variance and encouraged berdaches to apply these potentials for the good of all.

We might conceptualize berdache status as a distinct gender. If we do so, we should talk of *four* genders, not three, since the many tribes with both male and female berdaches used distinct terminology for the two cases—a point that anthropologist Evelyn Blackwood stresses.²⁵



Why do I refer to the berdache as "a traditional gay role"?

Discussing alternative gender roles in the English language is difficult. The question is, what English words best describe Indian berdaches? The earliest European accounts called them sodomites or hermaphrodites. But these terms already force us to choose between sexuality and gender. In fact, in the twentieth century this same dichotomy has been perpetuated by the choice between homosexual and transvestite or transsexual.

The meaning of transvestite has been smudged by anthropologists. This term was coined in 1910 by the German sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld to refer to men with an erotic desire to wear female clothing—an act usually performed in private by men who, in daily life, fulfilled normal roles. This is still the meaning of the term today as it is used by those who call themselves transvestites. Given this definition, we can see that We'wha's perfunctory cross-dressing does not qualify.

Was We'wha a transsexual? This is an even newer category, introduced in 1948 to refer to individuals who wish to change gender permanently. But if this were the motivation in We'wha's case, why didn't he attempt to act and look more feminine? As I've shown, We'wha's behavior was not typical of Zuni women.

Finally, there is homosexual. We do know that some Zuni berdaches married non-berdache men and that others enjoyed more casual relationships with men. In Kinsey's terms, this qualifies as homosexual behavior. Such contact was not pseudo-heterosexual, in the sense that berdaches were substitute women, because, as I've shown, the Zunis did not deny the biological gender of berdaches. The problem with homosexual lies elsewhere. In American Indian societies, berdaches were viewed in terms of their religious, economic, kinship, and social—not just sexual—roles. There are simply no Zuni equivalents for our single-dimensional categories of homosexual and heterosexual.

In short, we need a term which connotes *more* than sexuality and, for that matter, more



We'wha holding child

than gender variance—a term that refers to a multi-dimensional social role, not just a single dimensional trait. I believe gay is the closest equivalent in English. Even so, the berdache category was broader than any of our categories. Some of the individuals who once filled this role might today identify themselves as transsexuals, bisexuals, or transvestites—as well as homosexuals. However, even if the Zunis had had such a thing as transsexual surgery, they still would have had a berdache role, because the social, economic, and religious contributions of berdaches were unique, different from those of either men or women.

A second reason for my use of gay is the evidence I've found of continuity between traditional berdache roles and contemporary gay American Indians. By the mid-twentieth century, Zuni boys considered "berdache material" no longer adopted women's dress. According to John Adair, they often moved to Gallup and did "women's work" in the white world—cooking, cleaning, laundry, child care, etc.²⁶ At this juncture, Indian men who might have become berdaches begin to look and act like gay men in today's terms.

But the most interesting evidence regarding this transition is the testimony of Zunis themselves. While at Zuni recently, I was told that as the berdache role has changed, so has the Zuni word for berdaches. Instead of *lha-*

mana, people now say *lhalha*, and the word is used to mean "homosexual." Zunis discuss the subject among themselves all the time, I was told, but talking about it with Anglos is considered "dirty" or "pornographic"—i.e., sexual.

A final reason that I refer to berdache status as "a gay role" is the result of my conversations and dialogues over the past four years with gay and lesbian American Indians. I found that some knew about the berdache as a living tribal tradition, while others have learned about the role the same way I have—through research. But all affirmed a continuity between the berdache tradition and their own lives as gay Indians today. They never used the terms transvestite or berdache, and they disliked homosexual because of its narrow focus. All preferred gay.

For example, I asked Beth Brant, a Mohawk, "What does the berdache have to do with gay roles today?" She said, "It has everything to do with who we are now. As gay Indians, we feel that connection with our ancestors."²⁷ Randy Burns, a Northern Paiute and cofounder of Gay American Indians, told me, "We are living in the spirit of our traditional gay Indian people. The gay Indian person is probably more traditional and spiritual and more creative than his or her straight counterpart because that was the traditional role we played."²⁸

Berdaches were not branded as threats to gender ideology; they were viewed as an affirmation of humanity's original, pre-gendered unity—a representation of collective solidarity that overcomes the division of male and female.

All affirmed a continuity between the berdache tradition and their own lives as gay Indians today. They never used the terms transvestite or berdache, and they disliked homosexual because of its narrow focus. All preferred gay.

Drawing from the wisdom of her Navajo background as well as a contemporary feminist perspective, Erna Pahe best explains the special contribution of the gay role—and her comments provide a fitting closing to this discussion:

In our culture, in our little gay world, anybody can do anything. I mean, you find some very good mothers that are men. And you find very good fathers that are women. We can sympathize, we can really feel how the other sex feels. More so than the straight community. The straight community is so worried about staying within their little box and making sure that I look like a female when I'm out there, or that I really play the role of the male image.

I think that society is ready for that kind of atmosphere where we don't have to compete against each other over sexual orientation, or we don't have to feel like the men play a bigger role in society than women do. I think it's time for that neutralness, where people can understand just how to be people....

There's a lot of caring in gay people that is towards all lifestyles, from children, all the way up to grandparents. Society is getting used to it now because of this sensitivity. I think it might wear off after a while—we'll get everybody thinking like us. Even dealing in politics, we're a lot more aware of

everything.... We are special, because we're able to deal with all of life in general. It's very special.²⁹

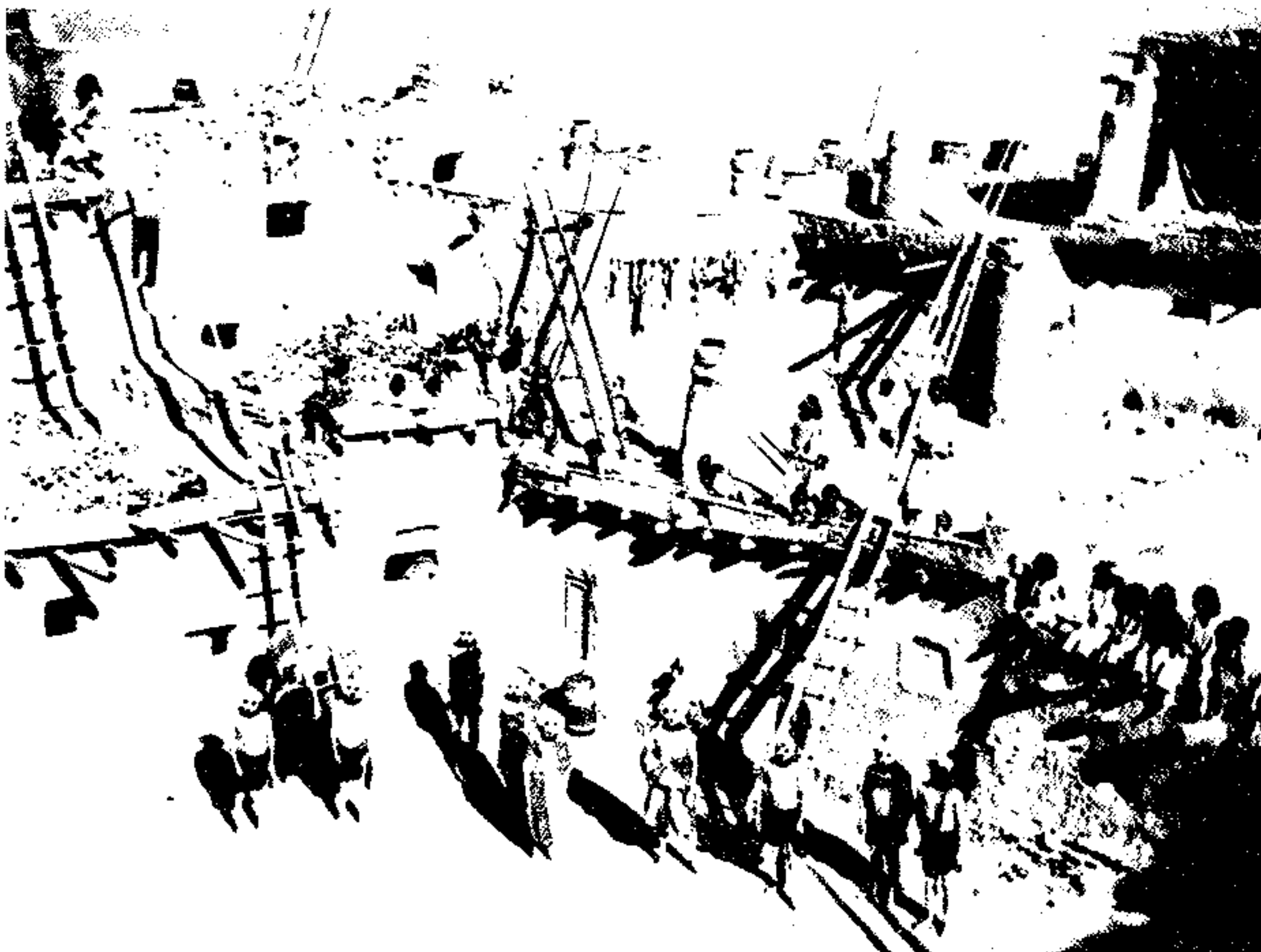
As Paula Gunn Allen points out, in seeking political and cultural recognition today lesbians and gay men are only restoring to America the gayness it once had. ▼

References

A version of this paper was originally presented at The New Gender Scholarship conference, at the University of Southern California, February 13-15, 1987.

Harry Hay first drew my attention to the berdache in 1982, when he shared with me his extensive research and notes compiled thirty years earlier. In 1983, he arranged a trip to New Mexico, to explore its pueblos, ruins, villages, and people, inaugurating my love affair with that fascinating and beautiful land. Bradley Rose has also shared this odyssey and knows its joys and frustrations. Paula Gunn Allen, Clifford Barnett, Evelyn Blackwood, Randy Burns, John Burnside, John DeCecco, Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Erna Pahe, David Thomas, and Mark Thompson all deserve thanks. I cannot name them here, but I would also like to acknowledge the individuals and groups throughout the country that have sponsored my slide-lecture and shared their homes and hearts with me. I have benefited as well from my work with Gay American Indians of San Francisco. In 1987 I received a fellowship from the Van Waveren Foundation, and this made it possible for me to present my work at Zuni and begin writing a book. Finally, thanks are due to the tribal council and the people of Zuni.

COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES TRUST FUND BOARD



Sacred Dance Plaza of the Zuni, circa 1879.

¹ Matilda C. Stevenson, "The Zuñi Indians: Their Mythology, Esoteric Societies, and Ceremonies," *Bureau of American Ethnology Annual Report* 23 (1904), 311-12.

² See Will Roscoe, "A Bibliography of Berdache and Alternative Gender Roles Among North American Indians," *Journal of Homosexuality* 14, no. 3/4 (1987), 81-171.

³ Stevenson, "The Zuñi Indians" 20; Elsie Clews Parsons, "Notes on Zuñi," *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association* 4(3-4) (1917):253; Robert Bunker, *Other Men's Skies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1956), 99-100.

⁴ Stevenson, "The Zuñi Indians" 37, 311.

⁵ One of the common misconceptions regarding berdaches is that they always or completely cross-dressed. A closer look at the evidence from many tribes reveals that berdaches often combined male and female clothing, or dressed in a unique (neither male nor female) manner.

⁶ Stevenson, "The Zuñi Indians" 310.

⁷ George Wharton James, *New Mexico: The Land of the Delight Makers* (Boston: The Page Co., 1920), 63-64.



Zuni pueblo, circa 1895.

⁸ Stevenson, "The Zuñi Indians" 310. In fact, Stevenson used both male and female terms in referring to berdaches.

⁹ Stevenson, "The Zuñi Indians" 37.

¹⁰ Frank H. Cushing, "Nominal and Numerical Census of the Gentes of the Ashiwi or Zuni Indians," ms. 3915, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Weaving was a men's activity among most Pueblo Indians, although less strictly so at Zuni.

¹¹ Stevenson, "The Zuñi Indians" 130.

¹² *Evening Star* (Washington), 15 May 1886.

¹³ Stevenson to Daniel S. Lamont, 18 June 1886, Grover Cleveland Papers, Library of Congress.

¹⁴ *Evening Star* (Washington), 12 June 1886.

¹⁵ Edmund Wilson, *Red, Black, Blond and Olive* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 20.

¹⁶ Ruth Bunzel, "Zuni Texts," *Publications of the American Ethnological Society* 15 (1933), 49.

¹⁷ I have researched these events in Pueblo Agency Records, RG 75, National Archives, Denver and Records of the United States Army Continental Commands, RG 393, National Archives, Washington.

¹⁸ Robertson to DeSette, 19 August 1892, Pueblo Agency Records.

¹⁹ Stevenson, "The Zuñi Indians" 312-13.

²⁰ Elsie Clews Parsons. "A Few Zuni Death Beliefs and Practices," *American Anthropologist* 18 (1916):253; Elsie Clews Parsons, "The Zuñi La'mana," *American Anthropologist* 18 (1916):528.

²¹ Parsons, "The Zuñi La'mana," 527.

²² Stevenson, "The Zuñi Indians" 37.

²³ This ceremony lapsed when the caretaker of key songs and prayers died without an apprentice.

²⁴ Harriet Whitehead, "The Bow and the Burden Strap: A New Look at Institutionalized Homosexuality in Native North America," in *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality*, ed. Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead, pp. 80-115 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

²⁵ Evelyn Blackwood, "Review of *The Spirit and the Flesh and Beyond*," *Journal of Homosexuality*, forthcoming.

²⁶ Personal communication, 29 September 1986. See also, Elsie Clews Parsons, "The Last Zuñi Transvestite," *American Anthropologist* 41:338.

²⁷ Will Roscoe, "Living the Tradition: Gay American Indians," in *Gay Spirit: Myth and Meaning*, ed. Mark Thompson, pp. 69-77 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 74.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 75.

²⁹ "Speaking Up: An Interview with Erna Pahe," *Living the Spirit: A Gay American Indian Anthology*, ed. Will Roscoe (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988).



CELIBACY: THE CASE AGAINST

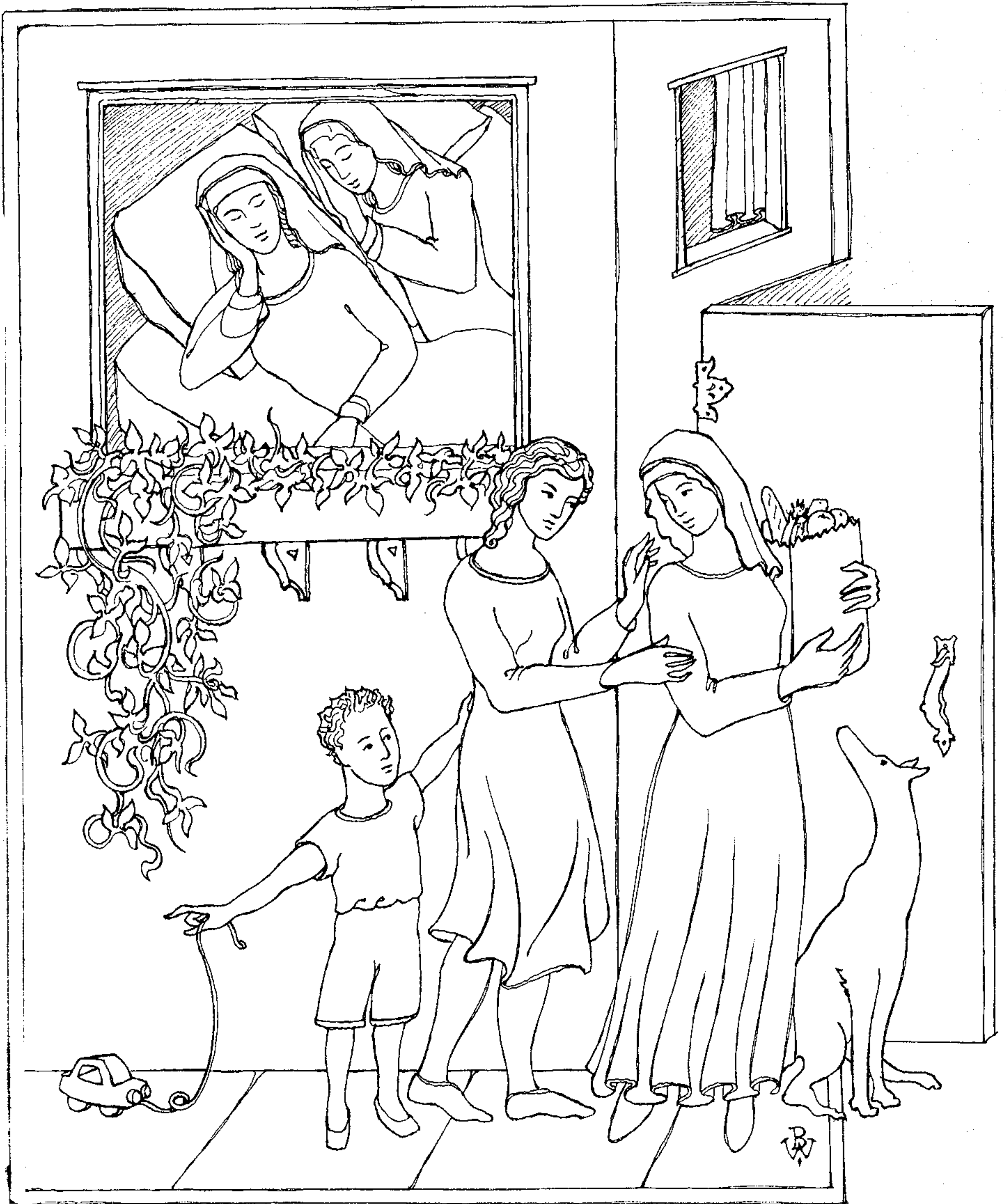
Liberating
Lesbian Nuns

By Mary Hunt

Illustrations by Brian Williams

SISTER JOAN is a member of a canonical community. She lives with Sister Barbara, a member of another congregation. They both work as advocates for poor people in the rural South. They are lovers. Neither plans to leave her community. Both hope that no one will find out about their life together.

Sister Marcia is a member of a progressive religious community that supports her work among people with AIDS. Her lover, Sister Anne, is a doctor. Their community is pleased that they live together since rents in their neighborhood are high. They discuss the contradiction between their public vows and their private conduct, but neither is inclined to leave the community. Their close



friends know about their life-style, but so far no one has brought it to the attention of community leaders. Besides, several of the leaders appear to live in coupled relationships themselves. And the community keeps a running tab at the local women's bookstore.

Sister Susan just broke up with her lover, Kate, a married woman with five children. The relationship had come as a shock to both of them. Work at the local school, where Susan is the principal and Kate the president of the PTA, had spilled over into long evenings. Kate's husband traveled constantly; he was glad she had such a good companion in Susan. And Susan lived alone, so her sisters were glad she had some companionship, too. It was a first for both of them. But, in time, though both were deeply in love, neither could handle the intensity. After all, a nun and a married woman are hardly likely to be lovers—or so it seems.

These stories, composites based on real people, illustrate how compulsory celibacy limits the lives of mature women in religious communities—every time a “particular friendship” is broken up, every time a woman is forbidden to develop a sexual relationship as the price of membership, every time women refuse to touch one another for fear of being misunderstood. Such denials are an intolerably high price to pay for maintaining women's canonical communities.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES, variously called convents or religious orders, and their members, known as sisters or nuns, are an essential part of the Roman Catholic Church. In the United States there are about 100,000 sisters, half as many as 20 years ago. At their peak, communities such as the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Sisters of Mercy had scores of women in their training or formation programs all over the country. Now, such groups are lucky to have three or four. The median age for members is about 60, a sure sign that the

Compulsory celibacy, commonly assumed to mean abstaining from heterosexual contact, was not a remarkable burden in the past.

end of religious communities as we have known them is near.

Women become nuns for a variety of reasons, all of which are subsumed under the term “having a vocation,” that is, a calling to live in community with other women under vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. In recent years poverty has meant economic sharing rather than impoverishment. Obedience has come to mean communal accountability for decisions on work and living arrangements. But the meaning of chastity has not changed much.

Some women joined religious communities because the work or mission of the group attracted them. Others joined for the access to education and upward mobility that the orders provided. And still others, I would judge the majority, joined for seemingly inexplicable reasons.

When pressed, women often acknowledge the influence of a nun who was a beloved teacher, mentor, or role model and who was living a life-style that looked appealing. Usually that life-style stood in stark contrast to one's mother's in that it included no biological children, no husband, and plenty of self-directed activity. But the vows, especially celibacy, were part of the package as well.

It is no wonder that these groups of religious women seem to have a higher percentage of lesbians among them than in the population at large (though until recent years such matters were unspoken). Nor is it any wonder that compulsory celibacy, commonly assumed to

mean abstaining from heterosexual contact, was not a remarkable burden in the past.

CLASSIC FEMINIST theory now includes Adrienne Rich's powerful essay "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence."* Rich argues that the existence of lesbians is obscured by the fact that heterosexuality is the norm in a patriarchal culture. Until this norm is transformed, she argues, the lives of lesbian women will remain hidden, and the variety of lesbian experiences will be lost. Rich suggests that there is a "lesbian continuum," a way of talking about all women's potential and actual ways of loving women. While the lesbian continuum has generated great debate, the basic argument, that compulsory heterosexuality is a constitutive part of patriarchy and that all women fall somewhere on the continuum, is increasingly well accepted.

Rich is correct that compulsory heterosexuality has a negative impact on all women, especially lesbians. An equally compelling case can be made for the negative impact of compulsory celibacy, even in the freely chosen situation of canonical communities. Compulsory celibacy is the antidote to the fear of what will happen to women who are self- and community-identified without dependence on men. It robs women of choice by circumscribing their possibilities. Without compulsory celibacy, differences between women would diminish and choices would increase. In the church, the artificial, male-constructed barrier between so-called lay women and so-called nun women would fall away. Likewise, society as a whole would be forced to abandon celibacy as the calling card for the "good woman" (symbolized by the Virgin Mary who was not only celibate but had a child—a difficult, if not impossible, act for any woman to follow).

Those who have asked why celibacy is "a given" and what religious communities would look like without it have been given nebulous

answers. Many who leave communities because of compulsory celibacy think they have outgrown it rather than that it is unreasonable to begin with. If a woman wants to be a part of a religious community she must still accept this discipline. Amen.

Heterosexual women have been raising questions about compulsory celibacy since the mid-1960s when many decided to leave the church because of it. But lesbian women *within* religious communities open the possibility of a viable option to celibacy within the community without making other substantive changes—such as becoming co-ed, or allowing members who are married or have children.

A lesbian nun has the possibility of living in an emotional/sexual relationship with a

A nun and a married woman are hardly likely to be lovers—or so it seems.

woman who may or may not be part of the community—an option that is exercised every day. The challenge to the church comes when people start to acknowledge this situation publicly. Then the compulsory nature of celibacy becomes obvious and conflictual.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL effects of compulsory celibacy are difficult to assess. The prohibitions on loving in an integrated way, which compulsory celibacy invokes, make it extremely difficult for friendships to flourish. It is not that all friendships must include sexual expression. Rather, when sexual expression is denied, a friendship cannot move through the natural cycle of increased intimacy which of-

* Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Signs*, 5, No. 4, (1980), pp. 631-60.

ten includes some consideration or exploration of sexual dynamics.*

Religious communities, for all of their emphasis on community, produce some very lonely people when celibacy is enforced. Conversely, some of the healthiest people in the communities, those most involved in leadership and innovative ministries, have deep friendships that include sexual expression.

At stake with compulsory celibacy is something even more insidious than a prohibition on sex for nuns. It is the loss of choice over love and life-style that translates finally into a loss of autonomy. Like Benedetta Carlini and Bartolomea Crivelli, two nuns who had a spectacular romance during the 17th century, today's nuns have no choice but to accept

Lesbian women open the possibility of a viable option to celibacy within the community without making other substantive changes.

celibacy if they wish to live in canonically connected communities. This requirement creates a serious conflict because those same communities are women's spaces that have been created to nurture and enhance women's relationships with one another.

An easy solution would be to say that women should not join these communities in the first place. But, in fact, few organized women's groups have succeeded like religious communities in providing economic sharing, meaningful work, and joint strategizing for social change. To lose the accumulated property, the women's traditions, and the sisterhood of centuries to a patriarchal church seems too high a price to pay. Yet, to maintain these benefits at the expense of choice for individual women is dearer still.

THEOLOGICALLY, COMPULSORY celibacy for women is on shaky ground, especially when it comes to lesbians. The definition of celibacy, based on the Latin *coelebs*, meaning bachelor, is clearly founded on male experience, especially that of male sexuality. A man can cause pregnancy, thus his sexual capacity has to be controlled. Since inheritance laws would have permitted a priest's offspring to receive the land and goods of the parish, celibacy was prescribed for priests. Gradually a theological rationale was embellished to promote the "tradition." It is important to realize, however, that material considerations preceded this logic.

Sexual expression between women presents no such specter of pregnancy. To the contrary, sex between women does not require contraception nor threaten the need for an abortion. Thus the fundamental reason for celibacy, based on the false norm of male experience, is undercut.

It is also argued that celibacy is a tradition, that canonical communities have always required it. Without detailing the history of celibacy, it is important to reiterate that this tradition, even if true, is again based on male experience. Several contemporary writers have attempted to distinguish between celibacy for priests and chastity for members of religious communities. Some have tried to develop a notion of the "sexual celibate." No contemporary theological writer seems to face the real issue, namely that compulsory celibacy is an ecclesiastical discipline, not a matter of divine revelation. As such it can be changed if those in power would relinquish their hold.

Compulsory celibacy is used to keep a certain decorum, an order that lesbian nuns, by their very existence, defy. It is not their alleged sexual activity that is the main problem. What is at stake is the challenge that they present to the whole church about the importance of well-integrated and freely chosen sexuality.

* See my forthcoming *Fierce Tenderness: Toward a Feminist Theology of Friendship*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row), 1989, for a fuller treatment of women's friendships.

I do not pretend to understand totally what motivates a small number of people to choose celibacy unfettered by connection to a canonical religious community.

Lesbian nuns who define celibacy for themselves in terms that do not preclude sexual activity, or those who simply consider their public vow invalid because of its patriarchal definition, are left with many contradictions. They run the real risk of being forced, usually by other women and sometimes by their own guilt, to leave their religious families. They may be branded unfaithful or lacking in integrity insofar as their private interpretations of the vows are concerned. And worse, they may be prevented from being open to the serendipitous experience of love that comes when one least expects it.

Heterosexual nuns experience the same veiling as it were, but contemporary lesbian/gay movements, coupled with the women's movement, have given lesbian nuns a newfound boldness. Ironically, while doubly oppressed when compared with their heterosexual counterparts, lesbian nuns seem to be challenging structures that, if changed, will improve the lot for heterosexual women as well.

WOMEN IN canonical communities may charge me with insulting or degrading them by pressing the point that celibacy is compulsory—as if they have been robbed of choice. After all, they assent to their vows. I mean to affirm their choice to be with women in religiously focused communities. But there is no intrinsic reason for celibacy to be a part of that commitment unless the control of women is taken for granted. Moreover, if women were to develop communities free from patriarchal expectations, it is not clear that celibacy would

figure in at all. My sense is that as women understand compulsory celibacy, it will disappear, even though some will choose to live celibate for reasons of their own.

It takes time to free ourselves and our imaginations from the shackles of patriarchy, but it can be done. The language of mystery has shrouded many discussions of celibacy. I do not pretend to understand totally what motivates a small number of people to choose celibacy unfettered by connection to a canonical religious community, but I do know that whenever such language abounds there is something dubious to explore.

What makes one person love another is equally mysterious. But “celibacy for the kingdom” is not mysterious. It is a rationale used to mask who is king and what power the kings exercise. Celibate love is raised to a higher level in an exercise in body hating, woman controlling, or both. Such is not the stuff of mystery but of oppression. A free choice for celibacy among members of religious communities would be possible *only* if membership were not conditioned by it. Until then, not even members of canonical communities can claim celibacy voluntarily.

Celibacy is not usually a lifelong choice for people outside of canonical communities. Most people have occasional celibate periods, even if they are married. With the serious health threat of AIDS, some people are choosing celibacy as a way to limit their risks. But in general, celibacy is not something to which most people aspire. Above all, it should not be confused with a sexual preference; celibacy is a choice one makes within the context of sexual preference. It is accepted or chosen for a brief period, rarely celebrated, and cheapened when forced.

As sexually active lesbians in canonical religious communities become increasingly vocal about their experiences, we will have new insights for understanding the impact of compulsory celibacy. For now, women who are sexually active in religious life commonly react by leaving. Canonical communities, fear-

“Celibacy for the kingdom” is not mysterious. It is a rationale used to mask who is king and what power the kings exercise.

ing that their relationships with the Vatican may be in jeopardy if such activities become known, often set ultimatums and subtly encourage women to live out their sexual explorations, both homosexual and heterosexual, beyond the limits of the community.

The first step is usually exclaustation, a period of time away from the community. Then an indult of secularization, popularly known as leaving the community, can follow. The language alone is enough to give a clear message. Secular and not canonically connected people are sexually active; religious life and sexual activity are mutually exclusive.

I SUGGEST THREE preliminary steps toward overcoming compulsory celibacy as we recognize and celebrate the legacy of lesbian nuns and thus honor the dignity of all women.

First, I urge that canonical religious communities sever their ties with the Vatican. I realize this is a radical suggestion, but I consider it *sine qua non* for women's autonomy. The control exercised to maintain compulsory celibacy is the same control that prevents women's ordination and that presumes to dictate women's reproductive choices. Until women and women's experience on their own terms are part of the decision making, the canonical connection is simply a noose.

Second, knowing that the severing of the canonical cord may not happen soon, I urge women in religious communities to develop a trusting context in which frank discussion of women's experiences of love and sex can take place. This might necessitate declaring a mora-

torium, such as a month during which all such discussions would be considered totally off the record. Only when the terror of telling is broken down can we really call each other sister. Then perhaps the poignancy of love well lived, love lost, of love simply waiting to be shared will be part of what moves the hearts and minds of people in power.

Third, I urge that communities begin to talk about and celebrate their own lesbian heritage. It is important to use the word lesbian to break down the taboo. Again, I realize the radical nature of my suggestion, but I make it as a way of underscoring how deeply ingrained the problem is. We must go to the root of the problem, and dare to speak the unspeakable before we can honor the real memories of our sisters, not the whitewashed, glossed-over images of them that we need in order to keep the whole system from collapsing.

Eventually, compulsory celibacy and all of the repressive apparatus that surrounds it will collapse under its own dead weight. Then healthy, loving, freely chosen relationships can flourish for women who choose to bond in communities. It is to these relationships that women bring our communal and religious best, and it will be because of them that society will move more quickly to a new social order. ▼

Mary E. Hunt, PhD., is the co-director of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER) in Silver Spring, Maryland. She teaches, lectures, and writes on religion and feminism, and is an editor of the Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion.

CELIBACY: THE CASE FOR


Monks, Mystics & Men's Communities

by Toby Johnson

"I HAVEN'T HAD sex with anyone since December 1984," an attractive gay man remarked to me recently. "It just isn't worth the risk."

In these days of AIDS, most gay men are deciding to move out of the fast lane. Some apparently are ending up—to maintain the metaphor—in the parking lot. Those who decide for safety's sake to eschew sexual activity with other people are liable to find themselves isolated and lonely.

Other men, of course, are settling down in comfortable domestic partnerships. For those who have never been exposed to HIV, this is a solution to both AIDS and to loneliness. Others find such domestic arrange-

ments unavailable. After all, some have been looking for "Mr. Right" all their lives; just because there's a scary disease around doesn't mean he'll be any easier to find. In fact, the search itself now seems fraught with danger. And many gay men have simply never wanted to settle down with a lover in a mimic of straight marriage.

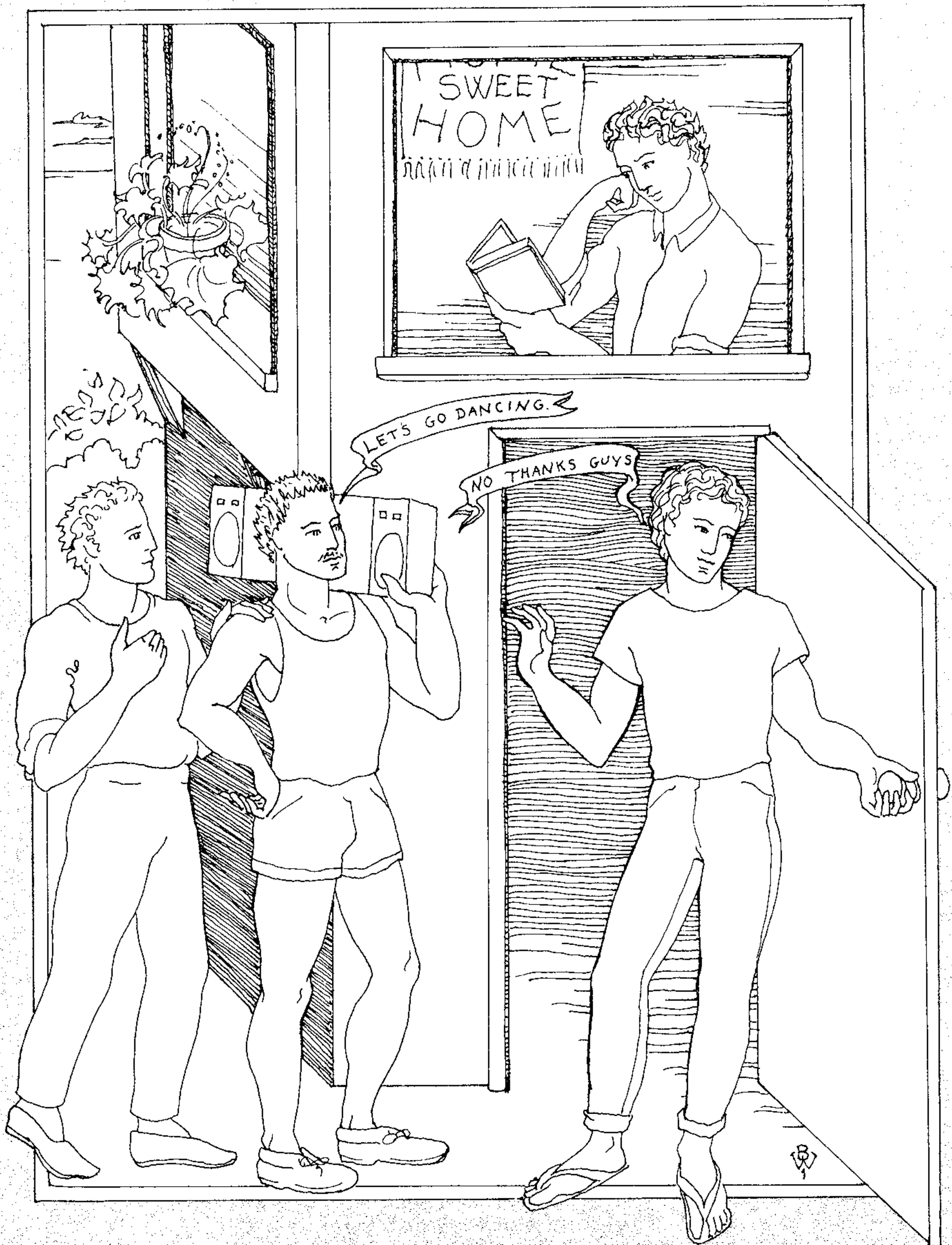
Maintaining a sex life may be especially difficult for those who are HIV positive. They may feel betrayed by their past sexual activity. They may feel unwanted. They may feel a natural reluctance to enter into a "long-term" relationship with the very real possibility that one or both partners may become seriously ill. They may settle for

occasional recreational safe sex, or they may want to avoid sexual relationships altogether. Safe sex notwithstanding, exposure to other people's microorganisms—of all sorts—may hasten the onset of disease.

The fact is, regardless of what miracle cures may be found in the future, AIDS has changed gay life. The "good ol' days" are never coming back. Sex alone may no longer be the basis of the gay male life-style. This

Toby Johnson, PhD., is a psychotherapist and writer. He currently lives with Kip Dollar in San Antonio, Texas.

*Johnson's most recent work, *Plague: A Novel about Healing* (Alyson, 1987), examines spiritual and attitudinal approaches to AIDS.*



need not result in a loss of direction for the gay movement. After all, there's always been more to gay life than sex.

One of the differences between the terms *homosexual* and *gay* is that the former refers specifically (and only) to sexual activity, while the latter (the aim of the liberation movement) also includes the notion that sexual orientation creates community. Because homosexual orientation throws people into exile and alienation, gay people band together to support and encourage one another: we are "special" and our specialness binds us together.

In practice, however, many of the institutions of gay life have indeed centered on sex (witness, for instance, the intensity of the debate in San Francisco over closing the baths). New institutions and models of gay life may be needed, models that continue to give meaning to the principles of liberation and that foster the best parts of the gay spirit in spite of the tragedy we've suffered.

Perhaps unwittingly, a major consequence of the AIDS tragedy in gay culture has been an awakening of what might be called spiritual concerns. For many gay people, AIDS has brought a premature acquaintance with death and a consciousness of serving the sick and needy. Such awareness of the fragility and transitoriness of life has long been considered a foundation for spiritual development. *Spiritual* here does not mean religious. It means seeing oneself and one's life in a larger context in which it makes sense to ask personally transcending and otherwise

Because we've grown up with Christian sex-negative attitudes, we tend to see celibacy as a great sacrifice.

meaningless questions such as, "What is life for?" "What's the meaning of all this?" and "Why do we die?"

"I'VE PRACTICALLY become a monk," the attractive gay man continued. As a former monk myself, having been (like a seemingly large percentage of gay men and women) in Catholic religious training for several years after high school, I was especially sensitive to his meaning. For many years I've noticed that among openly gay people, especially activists, there are a surprising number of the ex-religious. It makes sense, of course. The gay movement has almost always been one of abstract principles of justice and fair play. And the inordinate amount of energy it takes to live openly as a gay person often resembles pure religious zeal. (During the late seventies, when hooded sweatshirts were an integral part of the gay costume, it seemed that deep-seated monastic tendencies were showing up in fashion.)

Today, celibacy, a word imported from the monastic tradition, has become current among gay men to mean the decision not to be sexually active. Because we've grown up with Christian sex-negative attitudes, we tend to see celi-

bacy as a great sacrifice. But for homosexuals of the past, it may often have seemed like a real escape from social pressures and a wonderful opportunity to develop personal interests. For some today, like the sexually inactive man with whom I was talking, celibacy may seem a real escape from life-threatening pressures.

Technically, celibacy does not mean abstaining from sex. In the terms of Catholic religious life, celibacy (the obligation imposed by the vow of chastity and by ordination to priesthood in the Roman tradition) is the obligation not to marry. Of course, since that tradition taught that sex should only be enjoyed within marriage, celibacy de facto excluded sexual activity, including masturbation. Certainly that tradition was (and is) sex-negative. The emphasis, however, was not on avoiding sex, but on avoiding marriage and family.

Priests, monks, and nuns were enjoined to celibacy out of the observation that spiritual ideals are more likely to flourish when free from the demands of the cycle of coupling and reproduction. Family values were important, but ultimately limited; the truth is that life is fleeting, immortality through offspring is illusory, and material success is just dust in the wind. Celibacy and its sister

virtue, poverty, were intended to propel the spiritually-minded individual outside the concerns of normalcy.

Historically, monasticism probably developed, in part, to provide a place for people who didn't belong, who had little or no interest in marrying and having children. In the Dark Ages, the clan or family (with the economic strength of primogeniture) was the center of everything. In an agrarian economy beset with constant warfare, offspring were paramount. Men and women who didn't feel sexually driven to marry and have children—those whom we might guess in hindsight were homosexual—needed a place in society.

The monastery and convent gave them a legitimate role in society, in many cases doing what gay people are still especially good at: teaching children, nursing the sick, counseling the troubled, developing philosophical insights, brewing liqueurs, cooking, creating art, defining sensibilities and tastes, and providing them an opportunity to develop deep same-sex communal relationships. It should not be surprising that in a world that by our standards was pretty hung up on sex, these relationships would not be defined as sexual. At the same time, the status as "non-breeders" gave the monks a spiritual/philosophical perspective, a critical stance on society from which, at least in theory, they could lead the masses in constructive directions (such as founding universities, for instance).

Perhaps the traditional intentional community structure

of the monastery, with its emphasis on nonromantic, brotherly affection, simplicity, and concern with philosophical and spiritual matters could provide some modern-day gay men with a contemporary life-style model.

IN HER BOOK *Ordinary People as Monks and Mystics*, northern Californian organizational psychologist Marsha Sinetar presents a contemporary re-evaluation of monastic identity. From interviews with modern-day individuals who've opted out of the mainstream to live simple, ordered, perhaps solitary but contributive lives, she distinguishes two motivations for choosing such an unconventional life-style. These correlate with the terms in her title: monks and mystics.

The monks choose to free themselves of the pressures of financial, material, and sexual pursuit. The mystics choose, in addition, to facilitate heightened aesthetic sensibilities and a critical stance on reality. Though the people Sinetar interviewed chose, rather unmonklike, to live alone, such like-minded individuals might join together in a loose-knit community to support one another in a life of simplicity and consciousness development.

Most interesting about Sinetar's ideas is that they suggest a life-style based on principles and virtues of old-time monasticism without the baggage of the Church and Christian myth. She reminds us that simplicity of life, solitude, and silence have long aided

individuals in confronting the significant spiritual issues raised by personal isolation and the realization of impermanence and mortality. In very rough fashion, her categories also correlate with what I have identified here as two major changes in gay life: the shift in sexual and relationship patterns, and the concern with death and spiritual matters.

Perhaps the tragedy of AIDS requires a major reevaluation of modern society with all of its sexual demands, skewed values, pathogenic pressures, and health-threatening emotional stresses. Perhaps it might make some of us ready to retire from the world in an age-old tradition and seek a simpler, saner life.

For those of us who were religious in our youth (even though, often, our real motive was to avoid having to deal with heterosexuality) monastic life still may be appealing. I think an awful lot of us would like to go back *if we could* bring our gay identities and sophistication with us and not have to deal with obdurate, righteous ecclesiastical superiors waiting to slam shut closet doors. Maybe it's time we start looking for creative, insightful, "gay" ways of recreating monasticism.

What gay consciousness has to offer to the celibate, simple life is the modern-day discovery that sex is good for you. Sex has multiple functions in human consciousness: to express bonding and biological intimacy between two individuals; to release stress and stimulate the nervous system; and to provide pleasure, joy in life, and bonding in community.

Former religious Joseph Kramer of the Body Electric School of Massage and Rebirthing in Oakland, California, has written and spoken extensively about recreational, nonromantic sex (masturbation, alone and in a group, and erotic massage) as a spiritual discipline and "food for the soul." Such ideas could contribute significantly to the development of sex-positive ideas as part of the celibate life. For all the threat, horror, and tragedy of AIDS in the eighties, the reassessment of sexuality must not lose touch with the sex-positive messages of liberation. The sexual revolution isn't over. It is simply refining its strategies.

WITH ENRAGING slowness, medical science plods toward effective treatments and a preventive vaccine for AIDS—a vaccine that may turn out to do nothing for the estimated millions already exposed to the virus, most of them gay men. Health activists, like Larry Kramer, once of New York's Gay Men's Health Crisis, call for civil disobedience and massive political action, while most homosexual men across the country wait in stunned apathy for somebody else to do something.

Perhaps some of us will do something by deciding we'd be much happier and live fuller, longer lives if we exercised our freedom and chose to liquidate our possessions and move into collective farms, communes, and artists' colonies in the countryside. After all, gay liberation developed out of the

What gay consciousness has to offer to the celibate, simple life is the modern day discovery that sex is good for you.

sixties counterculture with its idealized notions of such alternatives. Now with the 20 years of maturation and economic sophistication and practical know-how gained since the Summer of Love, a battle-scarred generation might be ready to re-embrace those teenage utopian ideals.

Perhaps many of us will find that the answers to the devastation of AIDS lie in discovering solitude and examining the big questions about life and death. There is certainly a continued need for political action, lobbying for scientific research, and experimentation with medical solutions. We have reason to be outraged. But what's the point of going to the grave outraged? *Requiescant in pace.*

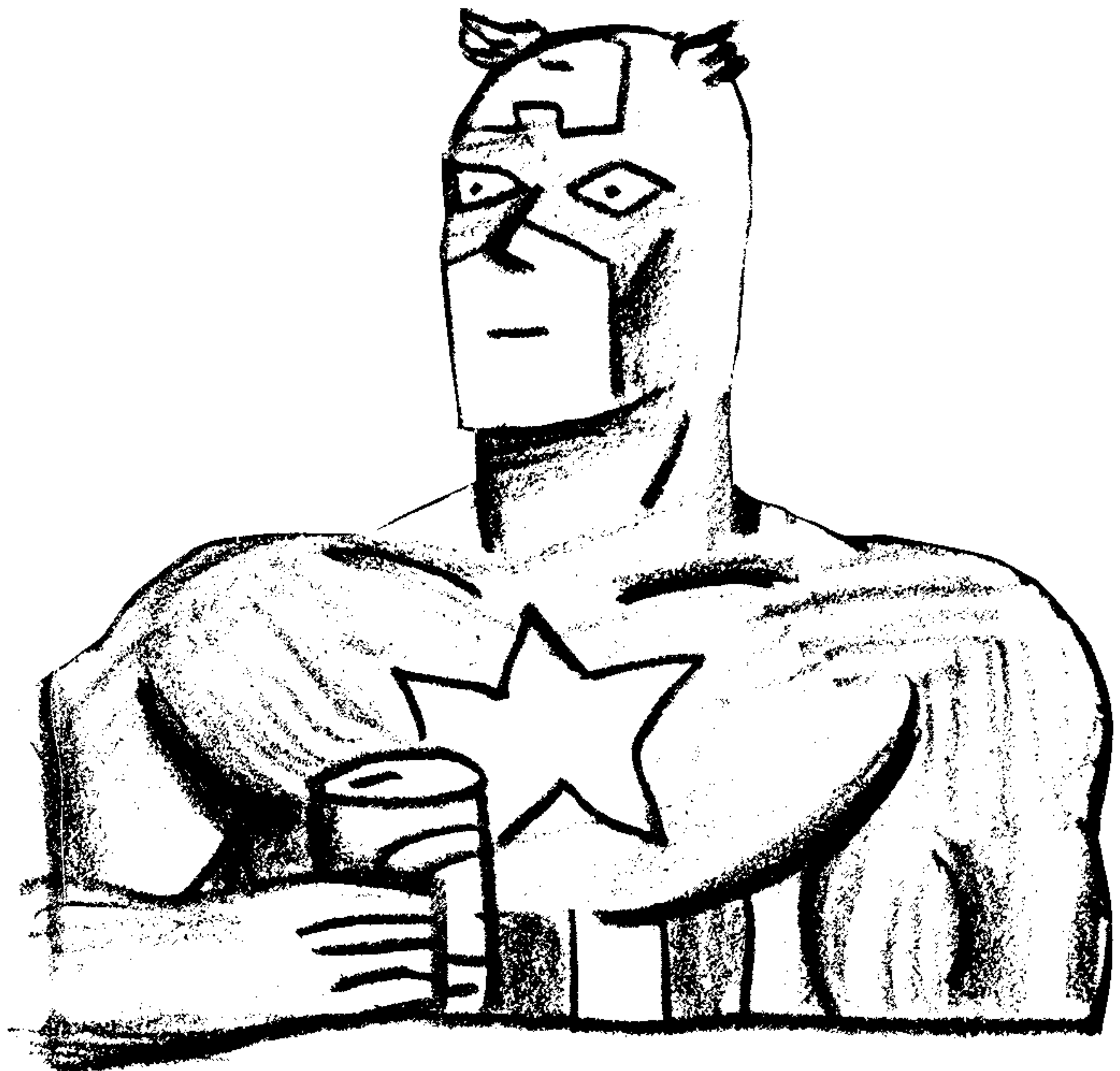
I, for one, hope to find a big house for my lover and me somewhere in the woods of northern California. I already know of people doing something similar in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina. Around us I'd like to develop a community of old and new friends involved in meditation and exercises for the raising and merging of consciousness, a community engaged in a variety of cottage industries such as beekeeping, psychotherapy, creative arts, and, most specifically, gay tourism.

As more gay people enter into couples, they'll be needing

things to do together to keep interest and excitement in their relationships. Already we're seeing a major growth in travel-related industries catering to gay people. A bed and breakfast guest house, run by the community, would bring in financial resources and introduce prospective new members to the life-style, and, hopefully, in a grand tradition, create a stimulating ongoing salon for spiritual and intellectual stimulation and growth.

Indeed, providing lodging for travelers and retreatants has almost always been one of the functions of the monastery. With our gay ingenuity we certainly ought to be able to recreate the best parts of an otherwise disappearing institution while simultaneously cultivating our souls and growing old gracefully. ▼

Brian Williams is a printmaker and illustrator who has studied in Berkeley, Padua, and Rome. He created the Renaissance Tarot Deck.



COMICS IN THE CLOSET

THE SUBTEXT IN CAPTAIN AMERICA

by Stephen Gregg

NEVER FORCE anyone out of the closet. It's an axiom of gay life. When the person is ready to come out, he or she will do so. But what if the person is a public figure? What if he's a man so well known and respected that his coming out could inspire straights and gays alike? What if he's been increasingly open about his sexual preference of late? Steve Rogers is such a man.

Yes, it's true. Captain America is gay.

And because he's gay, Marvel Comics' *Captain America* has served as a forum for discussion of topics not normally found in comic books. In the last three years, issues of *Captain America* have commented—albeit mostly allegorically—on friendships between straights and gays, homophobia, AIDS, and even (“I’d be lost without my trusty shield”) safe sex.

Those who find the idea of a gay superhero implausible should recall that several years and several writers ago *Captain America* had a gay character: Cap’s friend from childhood, Arnie Roth.

“He lived with a man,” says a former Marvel Comics editor, “and though the word *gay* was never used, it was clear that he was.” But Arnie moved to Florida, and for several years the magazine had no identifiable gay presence.

Then, in 1985 (in issue 309), Cap met a supervillain named MadCap. MadCap is an exaggeration of a stereotypical gay male. He wears yellow and pink tights, skips rather than runs, and dangles his wrists while saying silly things. When he

Stephen Gregg is a writer in New York City and has written three plays.

returns to the Coney Island hideout that he has decorated with pictures of men, MadCap sings "Home...home for the strange, where the queer and cantaloupe play."

The stereotyping isn't a sign of bigotry on the writer's part. Villains in comic books are differentiated by their powers, their costumes, and their mannerisms of movement and speech. To introduce a villain who's gay (and more important here, whom the other characters perceive as gay) the writer has to rely on external symbols. Part of the point of making MadCap overtly gay is to condemn the homophobic reactions he

provokes. In an opening sequence, a gang of would-be fag bashers gets more than it can handle when it tackles "the fruitcake." And Nomad, Captain America's partner, hates MadCap. Nomad is hotheaded, immature, and, in later issues, criminally violent. Regular readers know to mistrust his opinions. His homophobic pledge not to rest until he "beats the prance off" MadCap is the comic's condemnation of his prejudice. Though MadCap dominates two issues of *Captain America*, he and the Captain will never fight. MadCap battles only punks, gangsters, and Nomad. In each case, he's the

one to root for.

At about the same time that MadCap appears in the magazine, *Captain America* begins to offer clues that its title character is gay as well. There is, for example, a long homoerotic sparring sequence ("Watch your backside, Captain!") with his friends the Black Knight and Starfox. During the fight, Starfox tries to disarm Cap with his power to stimulate the pleasure centers of the brain. The ploy fails, as Cap explains, because he was already enjoying himself so much that the tactic did little to alter his mood.

And then there's Cap's fear of heterosexual sex. It's a fear

Illustrations by Juan Botas



that manifests itself when he meets a female villain named Diamondback. With her skin-tight costume, bright red lipstick, and enormous breasts, Diamondback is a comic-book version of a loose woman. She and Cap team up briefly to track down another villain. As they fly in her hovercraft, Diamondback tries to seduce him. When he turns her down, she snatches the ignition key from the craft and drops it down the front of her costume: "Let me reword my proposition, Cap—either you promise to let me have my way with you or I'll let this saucer crash! That is, unless you want to search me for the key—which might be a lot of fun, too!"

Given a choice between sex with Diamondback or death, Cap chooses death. At the last moment, she yells, "You cold fish!" and starts the hovercraft herself. Is this honor, or performance anxiety? Cap claims it's the former, but what he does next doesn't seem so much noble as afraid. He finds a parachute and is about to jump from the saucer, when Diamondback offers to land. When they touch ground, he leaps out and runs away.

But wait! say longtime readers. Surely Captain America doesn't always avoid sex. After all, doesn't he have a fiancé? He did. Two years ago, Cap was still engaged to be married to Bernadette Rosenthal. But of late, he's seemed increasingly uncomfortable with Bernadette (whom Cap, wishful thinker, calls Bernie). He's more likely to try to tiptoe past her

Juan Botas is an illustrator living in New York.

door (she lives in the apartment below his) than to stop and see her. Most of the times we see Cap and Bernie together, he's leaving her. In issue 314, Cap swings out the window as a dejected Bernie thinks: "Oh Steve...it's so hard to have a normal relationship with a guy like you." In 315, Cap—again headed out the window—asks, "Sorry Sport, can it wait?"

Silhouette of Bernie, hand on forehead: "It always does."

As a reader points out in a letter, "Bernadette Rosenthal (remember her) must have the patience of Job to put up with the Living Legend's lack of attention to her." Not quite Job, apparently, for by the time that letter was printed, Bernie had called off the engagement and gone to law school.

Mark Gruenwald, who's written *Captain America* since July of 1985, denies that Cap, or even MadCap, is gay. As he explains it, Cap is indifferent to Bernie because he's "married to his country. He doesn't have much time for personal relationships." But Gruenwald's explanation doesn't fit the evidence. Cap has time for personal relationships, but only with men. He's always had a sidekick, a best friend. The worst day of his life was the day his original partner, Bucky Barnes, died. After Buck, he teamed up for a while with Rick Jones, and then with the Falcon, one of the first important black characters in comicdom. And after the Falcon there was Nomad and then D-man.

Cap cares about his partners. He's forever leaping into danger to save them. And considering that it happened over 40 years ago, Bucky Barnes's death

occupies an enormous amount of Cap's thoughts. In the letters column, a reader laments Cap's search for a "Bucky substitute."

Friendships between straight and closeted gay men are the subject of innumerable scenes in gay novels. The gay character falls in love while the straight character grows uncomfortable. Cap, whose being in the closet gives a whole new meaning to the term "secret identity," seems to need a male companion. But all of his partners since Bucky have left him, citing a need to stretch their wings (literally, in the case of the Falcon). When Nomad leaves Cap, he seems to sense that the parting will be harder on Cap than it is on him. He chooses his words hesitantly:

"I'm really glad you were here to see this [his defeat of MadCap]. It makes what I have to say a bit easier. Lately it occurred to me that it might be for the best if, uh, we broke up our relationship!" Three panels later, the issue ends with Captain America silhouetted on a pier, looking more than a bit lonely. At least Batman had Robin.

But Cap rebounds quickly from losing Nomad. He has to in order to fight a vigilante who calls himself "the Scourge of the Underworld." For nine months, Scourge popped up in *Captain America* and other Marvel Comics to assassinate minor supervillains, "members of the Underworld" as he calls them. The Underworld is a community with enough similarities to the gay community that a character who attacks it can reasonably be suspected of being a metaphor for AIDS. Most of Scourge's victims are male, live



in New York City, and have a secret identity. They congregate at The Bar with No Name, a drinking establishment spoken of in whispers throughout the Underworld.

Of course, there are problems with letting Scourge serve a metaphor for AIDS. First, in this analogy gay men are represented by villains. This is a minor problem. The difference between comic book heroes and comic book villains often lies not so much in how they view the law as it does in how they perceive their powers. Heroes see their powers as a responsibility, villains as an opportunity. Villains often wear devices to give themselves powers. Heroes' powers are almost always innate, or the result of an accident.

So it is in *Captain America*. The villains who gather at The Bar with No Name are opportunistic rather than evil. They're sympathetic characters, more

likely to rob banks than to hurt anybody.

A more obvious, and more serious, problem with letting Scourge symbolize AIDS is the suggestion that the disease chooses its victims. We can minimize this objection if we choose to see Scourge not as a metaphor for AIDS but for how AIDS is perceived, and especially for how it was perceived in the early stages of the epidemic. Scourge sees himself the way religious conservatives see AIDS; he claims to kill only "the most flagrant perverters" of justice.

And the reactions of the members of the Underworld to the mysterious killer mirrors the reaction of the gay community to the first rumors about AIDS. Attendance at The Bar with No Name plummets. Villains become paranoid and even fatalistic. Blacklash, a jewel thief, tells Cap: "I don't give a hang about my rep anymore. I'll

be dead soon anyway."

But the most common reaction to Scourge is that something must be done about him. Eighteen supervillains gather at the bar to discuss how to protect themselves. Their suggestions parallel those that have been offered to stop AIDS. One villain, clearly in favor of more research, says: "Let's put up a million dollar reward." His more conservative peer, pleading for abstinence, suggests that they "all go into hiding."

"How 'bout calling in SHIELD [the Marvel CIA]?" says one safe-sex advocate.

Other suggestions ("Kill all the superheroes") are more desperate, because the villains are desperate. Windowless and secret, The Bar with No Name resembles a pre-Stonewall gay bar more than the well-publicized bars one finds today. The clientele, too, is more uniformly closeted than one would find in the 1980s. Because they can't

reveal themselves, the members of the Underworld are helpless.

Probably without meaning to, the comic asks the question, What would have happened if AIDS had hit in the 1950s instead of the 1980s? What if there were no advocacy groups, no money for research, and no way of spreading information except the grapevine? The comic, again probably unintentionally, answers the question; Scourge kills all 18 of the villains who attend the meeting at the bar.

But help is on the way. Of all the superheroes, only Captain America takes on Scourge. That they fight further suggests Cap is gay, since Scourge is sworn to kill only members of the Underworld. If we accept Scourge as

AIDS, and Captain America as a gay man, then his shield is a large red, white, and blue condom, and their climactic battle is a three-page advertisement for safe sex. Again and again, the shield stops Scourge's bullets.

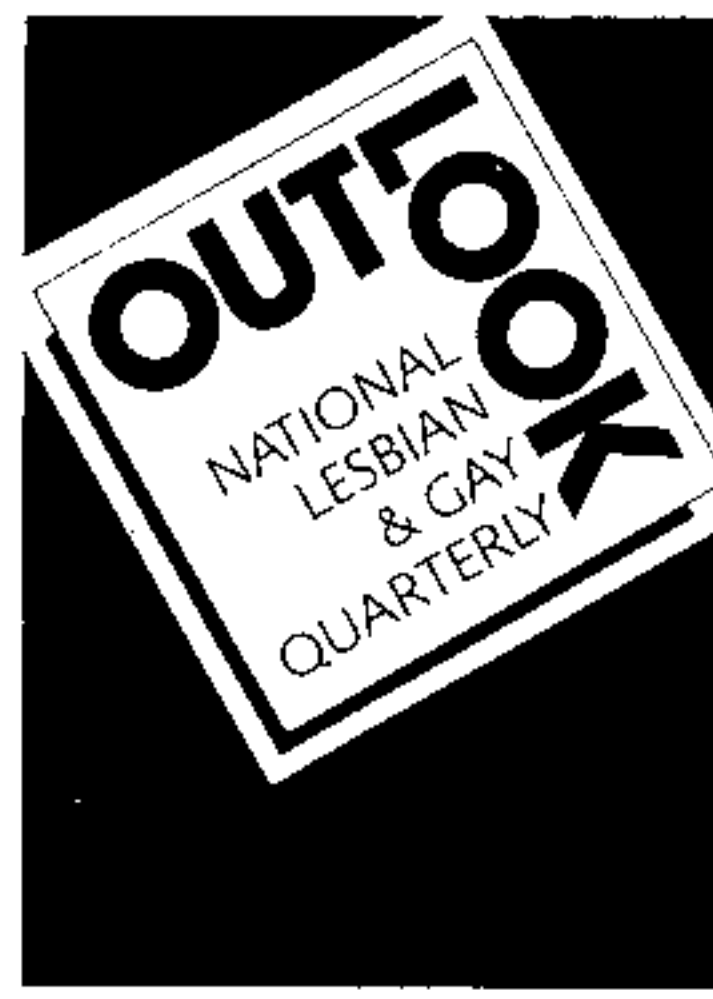
Cap defeats Scourge in issue 320, but there's more than a hint that he'll be back. What is less certain is whether the recent openness about Cap's sexuality will continue. One would hope so. Just as the seventies saw black crime fighters enter comics, so the eighties should introduce gay heroes. And the easiest way to do it would be to have an already established hero come out of the closet.

Perhaps (don't hold your breath) Captain America will

find a new partner. After several adventures together, Cap will point out that coordinating their missions would be a lot easier if they lived together. Several months after they've taken up residence in a Brooklyn Heights brownstone, a reader will point out there seems to be only one bedroom in their apartment. The editors will reply that no, it is a two-bedroom apartment, but will sidestep the question of how many of the bedrooms are in use. Two issues later, after some intense sparring, Cap will put his hand on the new partner's shoulder in that characteristic way he has, and give him a quick, patriotic kiss on the cheek. The word *gay* will never be used. But it will be clear. ▼



THESE DRAWINGS WERE NOT CREATED BY MARVEL ARTISTS. NOR ARE THEY INTENDED TO PORTRAY MARVEL ARTWORK OR STORYLINES.



SUBSCRIBE

Use the card inside the back cover.

ORDER VOL. 1, NO. 1

Purchase by mail our Premiere Issue, Spring 1988.
See the ad and order form on Page 92.

GIVE A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION TO A FRIEND

Or to your Mother. Only \$16 for one year.
Send us the name and address of the person to receive
the Gift Subscription, plus your name and address,
with a check for \$16.

We'll send them a note and
we'll start the sub with the next issue.

OUT/LOOK
NATIONAL LESBIAN & GAY QUARTERLY
P.O. Box 146430
San Francisco, California 94114
USA

Locating Ourselves in the History of Sexuality

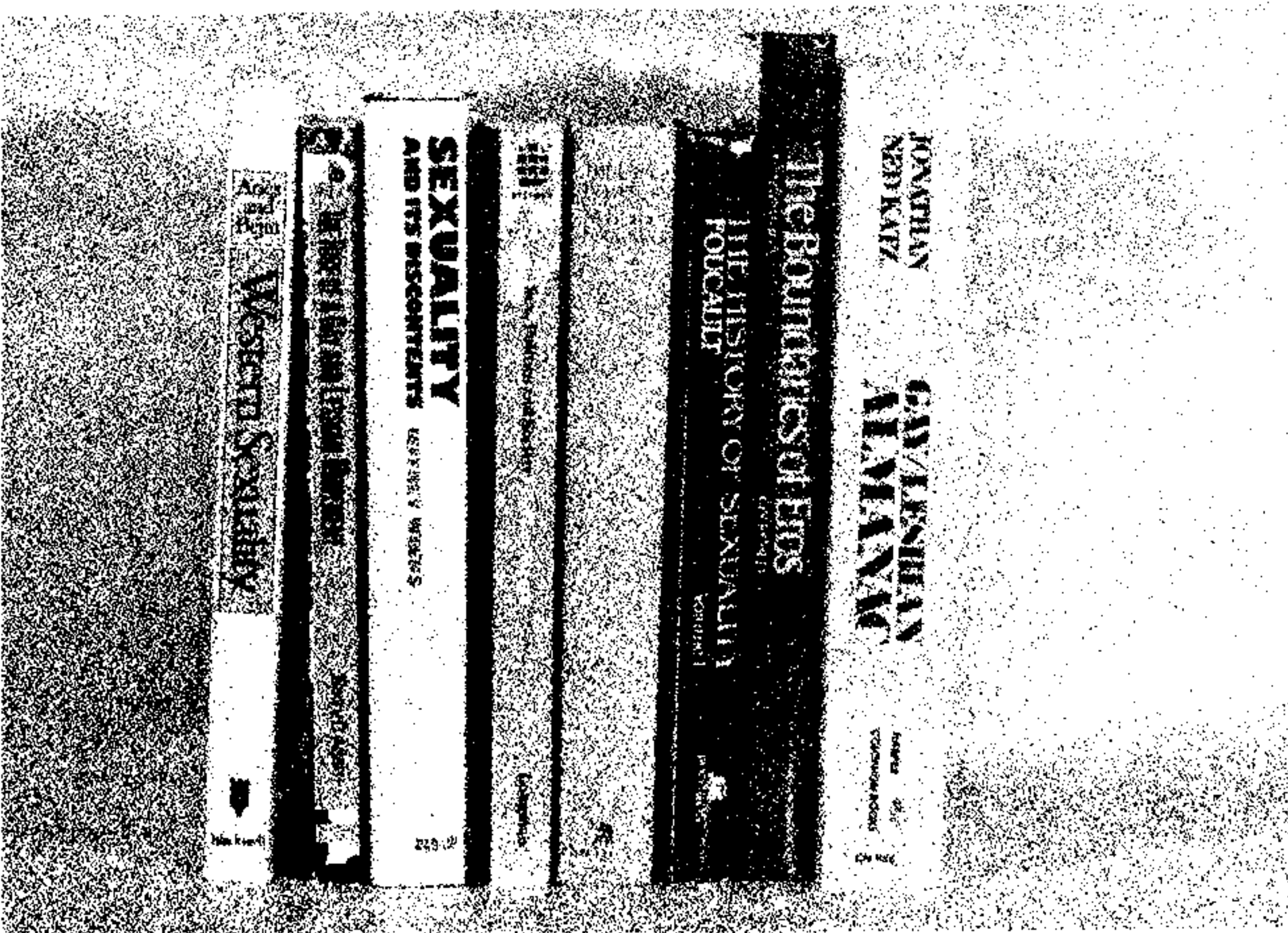
by Jennifer Terry

WE LESBIANS AND GAY men are people whose existence and survival has been threatened by forms of cultural and political censorship and amnesia; history is important to us. Commemorations of historic events provide us with times of celebration, reaffirmation, and sometimes mourning.

Every year thousands of lesbians and gay men gather together to celebrate gay pride on the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots of 1969. On our marches, at our rallies, and in the archives of our lives, historical sensibility and memory play important parts in the construction of our political and sexual identities. Memories of coming out, of feeling that first thrilling moment of desire, or pain, or courage—these are all part of our political, psychic, and historical identities.

History is all around us. We are always making history either through events of the present that will grow in significance as we move into the future, or as we uncover bits and pieces from the past to find influences, traces, and emergent possibilities that contributed to our various situations now. The political work of making history is something lesbians and gay men have put at the center of our movement.

The NAMES Project, an exhibition of memory and mourning, is making history in both senses of the phrase. Those who have passed on through struggles with AIDS and ARC should not be forgotten—they are part of the movement; they reflect the traces of all of us; they remind us of the emergence and emergency of lesbian and gay life in the late twentieth century. In remembering them, those of us who are now alive are attempting to ensure that, unlike Sappho's writing, we will not be fragmented, torn apart, erased. We act in the present to appreciate our past and to prevent our omission from the future.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY SMOKEY CORMIER

It is often at our expense that the "norm" is defined.


SEXUALITY HAS recently become a great fascination among historians and cultural critics. Much of their work talks about the emergence of identities that many of us have claimed, transformed, or resisted as deviants. In Michel Foucault's ground-breaking work, Volume One of *History of Sexuality* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), the theorist of Western culture and history talks about the emergence of a "discourse" about sexuality. Contrary to what is believed about the prudish "silences" of the Victorian era, Foucault describes the growing "incitement" of talking and thinking about sexuality near the end of the nineteenth century. The intense focus on sexuality stimulated the construction of categories of identity based on sexual practices. First, though, came the categories of deviance—sexual practices outside of reproduction. In many ways the "norm" was defined not for what it was but for what it was not. At this moment in history, sexuality and identity became crucially interlocked. We became our perversions.

We who occupy the marginal territories—the territories of deviance—were studied according to a moral and political agenda that excluded and devalued us. What is particularly significant, though, apart from the role of sciences such as medicine, psychoanalysis, and sexology, is the increased visibility of people who forged lives in the margins. It was not simply the study of sexuality that was important but the creativity of people who introduced new ways of being sexual and who resisted the pressures of powerful norms then under construction. Possibilities for new ways of acting and being in the world emerged during the contest over deviance and normalcy. The pervert, the prostitute, the obsessive masturbator were deviant identities devised to stabilize the "normal" center. But communities that grew out of these identities became

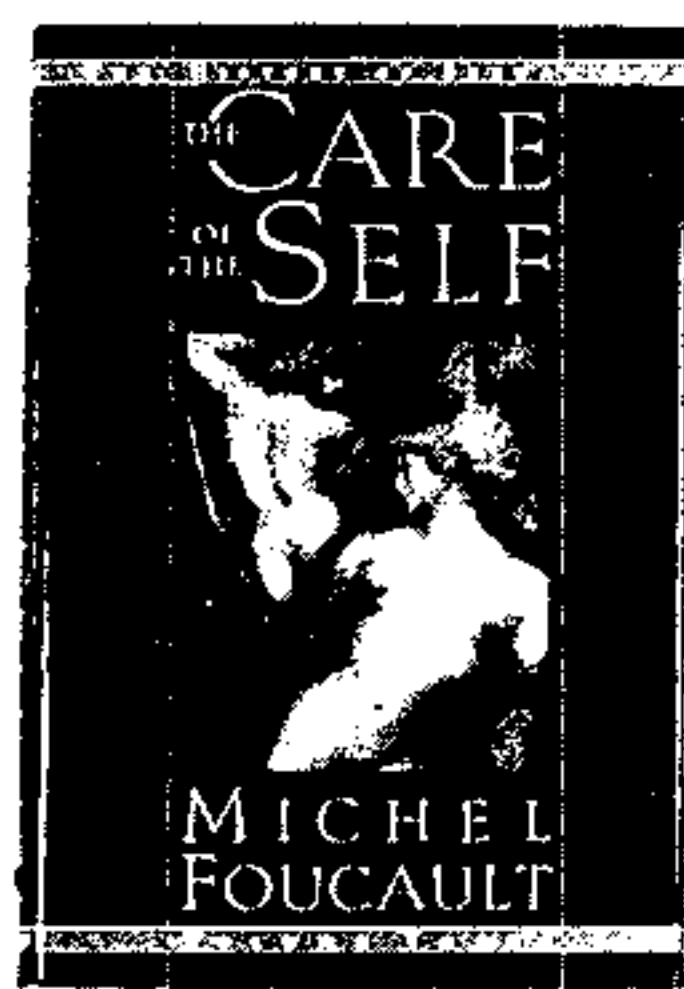
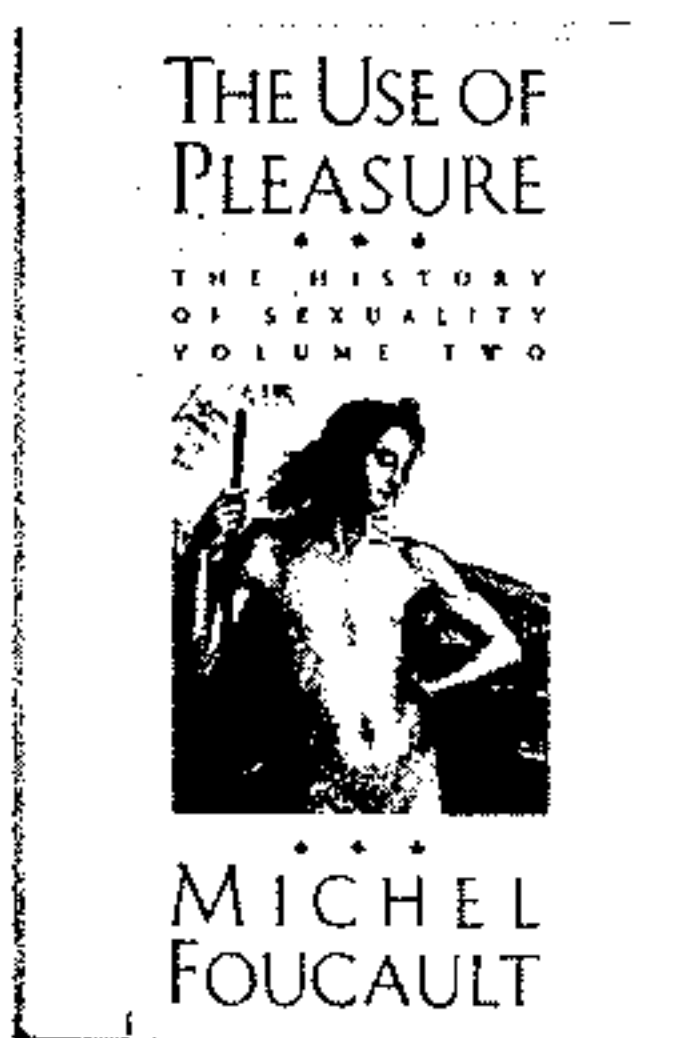
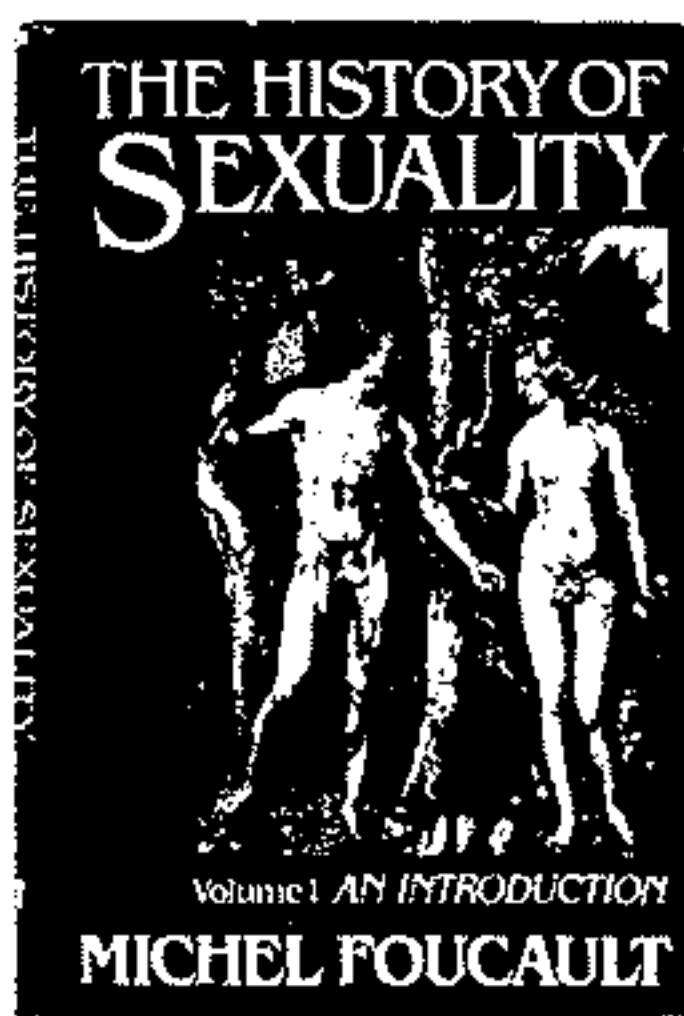
sites of "counter-discourse"—resistance to a Trojan Horse of normalcy.

The introduction of terminology is part of this history. The word "homosexual" as a noun describing an identity, rather than an adjective describing an act, emerged at this moment. And we see from our present position that this shift has become important to a political standpoint on identity. *Being queer, you are a queer.* This was the historical moment when the individual was isolated by capitalism as a "free" wage earner and when questions of psychology were posed about the individual psyche. At this same moment, the turf of identity became the grounds for resistance, a terrain on which the internal order of the psychological met the larger social context of political struggle. So we find in history traces of the identities we now claim. The field of contest may look different and be more cruel or more liberating, but we are still at the margins and it is often at our expense that the "norm" is defined.

WE HAVE NOT been silent nor do we want to pass into the future as silence. In contrast to the love that dare not speak its name, homosexuality in the twentieth century is the love that just won't shut up. In our communities the archivist is a political activist since preserving the things surrounding or constituting lesbians and gay men is an undertaking frequently under attack. In this field of contest, of threat of erasure and amnesia, of obliteration, this study of the emergence and the craft of preservation is crucially political. The Lesbian Herstory Archives in New York, for example, have become central to cataloging aspects of some of our lives so that (unlike Sappho, whose writings barely survived the



Jennifer Terry is a graduate student in the History of Consciousness program at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She is writing about the historical roots of homophobia, which manifest in popular representations of AIDS and in policy responses to the epidemic.



homophobic and misogynistic hostility they provoked) we will not be easily forgotten.

Much of the scholarly and political work being done in the "history of sexuality" is authored by us because we are at the center of this historical talk about sexuality. We are both the actors and recorders/theorists of this history. Our emergence and participation in the talk about sexuality is different from those squarely at the center. We, in contrast, are the ones living these new possibilities and often putting ourselves on the line for it.

What follows is a select bibliography of recent works on the history of sexuality, which provide strategies for understanding our emergence and preserving our history. Some of the works listed are not specifically about lesbians or gay men but provide an intellectual framework from which to develop our own thinking and being. This short listing emphasizes what has now come to be known as the "social construction" approach to sexuality in history. The social construction approach argues against the conception of "natural" or biologically innate sexuality that is true for all human beings. Instead it argues that sexuality results from complex formulations and ideologies about desire and the body, particularly how any given society enforces its beliefs about appropriate sexual behavior and acceptable sexual identities. For example, feminist theorists have relied on the social constructionist model for arguing that distinctions between the genders are not innate.

This is different from the "essentialist" approach to questions of sexuality, which assumes that sexuality is a basic force, sensation, or drive that is constant but expresses itself differently depending on the historical and cultural context. The essentialist or "drive" theory of sexuality in history often frames issues in terms of suppression or liberation, analyzing the visibility or invisibility of certain forms of sexuality at various moments as matters of celebration, tolerance, or repression. An essentialist would consider homosexuality to be the same regardless of the time and place of the historical actor. According to the essentialist approach, Socrates and Michel Foucault,

two homosexuals, have much in common in this realm of the flesh—they both had sex with men. And when we do not find homosexuals in history, it is because the power of a given society is operating to make that visibility impossible.

ONE CAN FIND many historical analyses that fall somewhere between the social constructionist and essentialist approaches, most notably the work of lesbian feminist historians. Lillian Faderman's classic *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1981) looks at various historical moments and texts in a framework that allows many different kinds of relationships between women to be embraced as "lesbian" relationships, regardless of the presence or verifiability of genital contact. Faderman acknowledges that different places and periods allowed for different kinds of sexual and affectional expression but that all of these might be seen as lesbianism.

We have no one moment of discourse that "creates" lesbianism, even though the identity of "the lesbian" was formulated around the same time as the term "homosexual" entered the modern vocabulary. The story of lesbian sexuality is made more complex not only by the discourse of deviant sexuality in the late nineteenth century, but by the myriad expressions of male sexuality in which women appear as objects.

Annotations provided here are necessarily limited to summary remarks; extensive description or criticism is not possible given space limitations. This is meant to offer lesbians and gay men a list of works that may help us to think critically about our place in history and how we might continue to make history in our own theoretically different ways.

Foucault and the Emergence of Sexuality

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, (trans. by Robert Hurley) (New York: Vintage Books, 1980).

This is the introductory volume of a projected five-volume series (the author completed the first three volumes and died in the middle of writing the fourth). Foucault lays out a theoretical discussion of the emergence of the discourse of sexuality in the late nineteenth century. Here is the now famous refutation of the "repressive hypothesis" where Foucault argues that instead of interpreting Victorian prudery as silence about sexuality, what was really happening was that sexuality was being written about, talked about, thought about more than ever before. Foucault's notions of the deployment of sexuality and technologies of sex inquire into the ways sex is empowered in the recent history of the West. He discusses law, medicine, and political organization of power in relation to historical understandings of sexuality, and traces the shift from forms of sexual behavior into categories of identity.

Weeks, Jeffrey. *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800*, (London: Longman Press, 1985).

Weeks draws on some of Foucault's theoretical framework when analyzing the empowerment and regulation of sexuality in Britain. The introductory chapter is an interesting discussion of thinking historically about sexuality. Chapter six deals with the construction of homosexuality in an explication of Foucault's ideas. Weeks examines historical and political ideas about sexuality throughout this important work.

Weeks, Jeffrey. *Sexuality and Its Discontents*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985).

Weeks brings together his historical thinking in a series of analyses of contemporary sexual politics. The book consists of four parts: Sexuality and Its Discontents, the Sexual Tradition, the Challenge of the Unconscious, and the Boundaries of Sexuality. From a social constructionist position, Weeks considers several key aspects of sexuality: notions of identity, desire, diversity, moralism, science, and "nature." This is an important demonstration of his genealogy as adapted from Foucault.

Chauncey, George, Jr. "From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality: Medicine and the Changing Conceptualization of Female Deviance," *Salmagundi* No. 55-59 (1982): 115-46.

Chauncey analyzes the discussion of "perversion" in the late nineteenth century to show the transition between theories of sexual inversion (homosexuality understood to be acting opposite one's gender identity) and sexual object choice (our more common notion of homosexuality,

defined as an attraction to someone of the same sex). The article also critiques Foucault by suggesting that the medical profession did not determine *a priori* the categories of sexual identity that people later claimed as identities, but that homosexual men and women living their lives in sub-cultural settings *became* the study of doctors and sexologists. For Chauncey the existence of gay people preceded the discourse on sexuality instead of being spawned by it: an important distinction, considering the power of those on the margins and the power of the discourses over them. They may have simultaneously been strengthened by the identities they claimed, but they were also pathologized in their claims.

Walkowitz, Judith R. *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

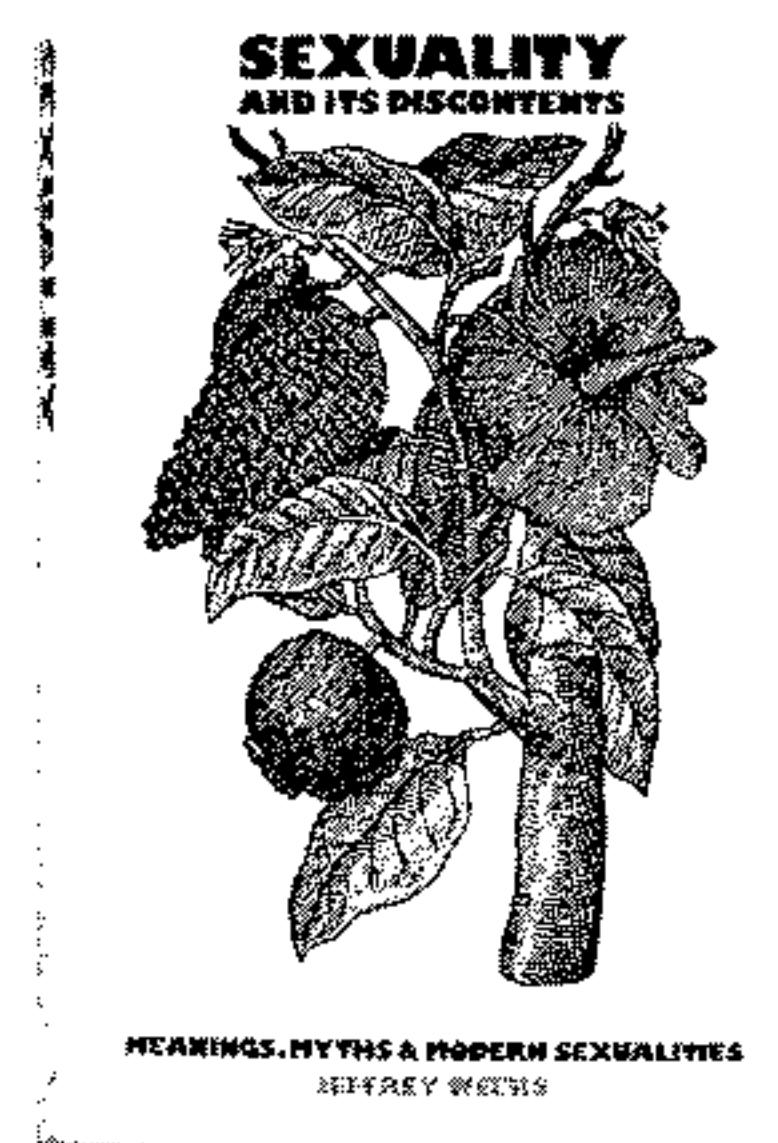
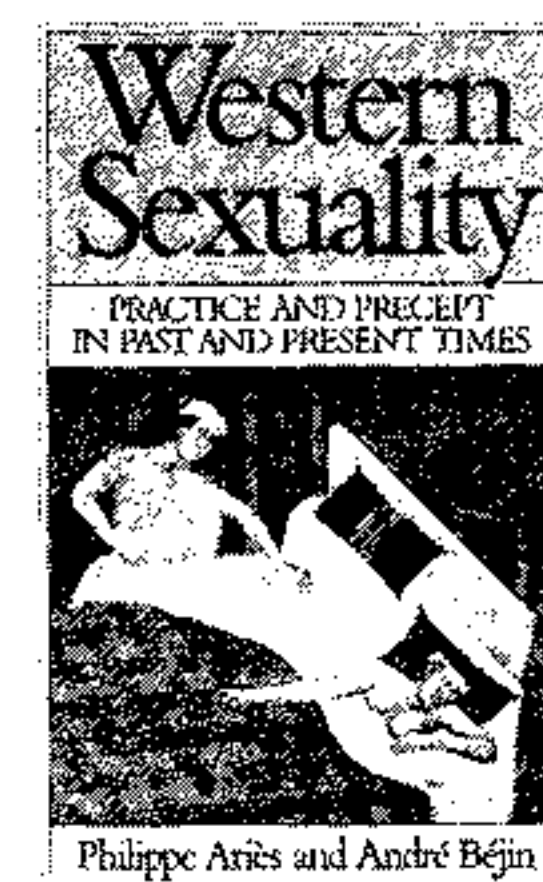
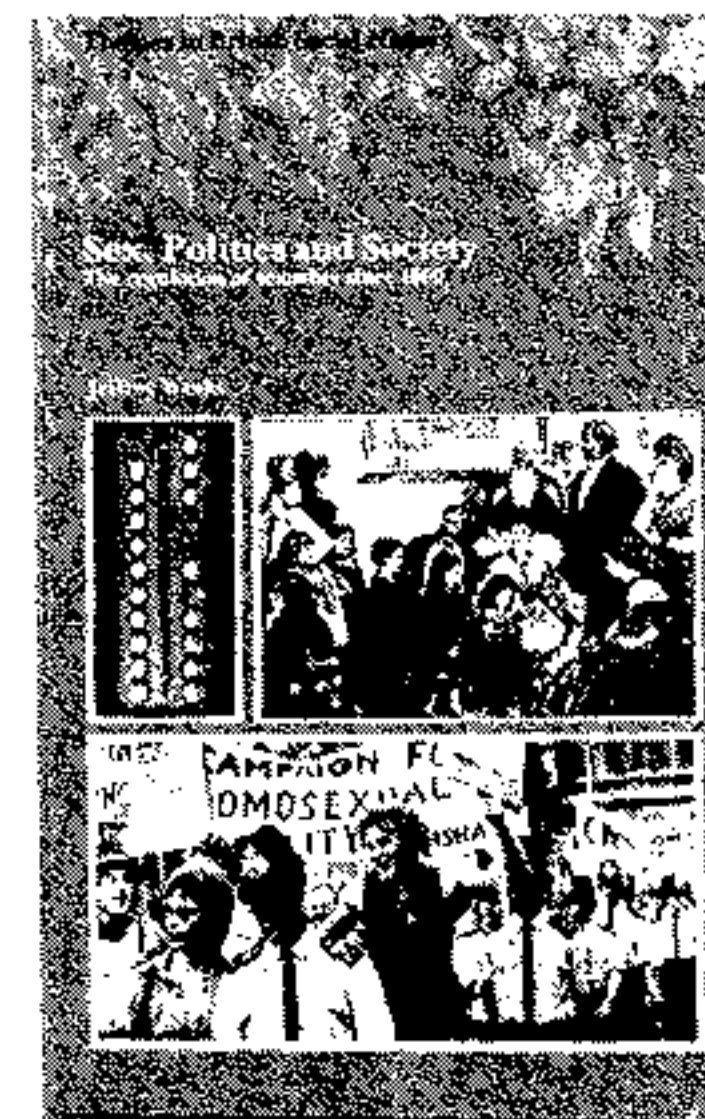
Walkowitz uses a Foucaultian framework for examining attitudes toward prostitution in Victorian England. Charting the passage and repeal of legislation aimed at curbing venereal disease, Walkowitz shows the increasing articulation of state power over the identification and behavior of prostitutes. The medico-legal construction of a modern identity called "prostitute" was essential to the state's expansion of power into the realm of sexuality.

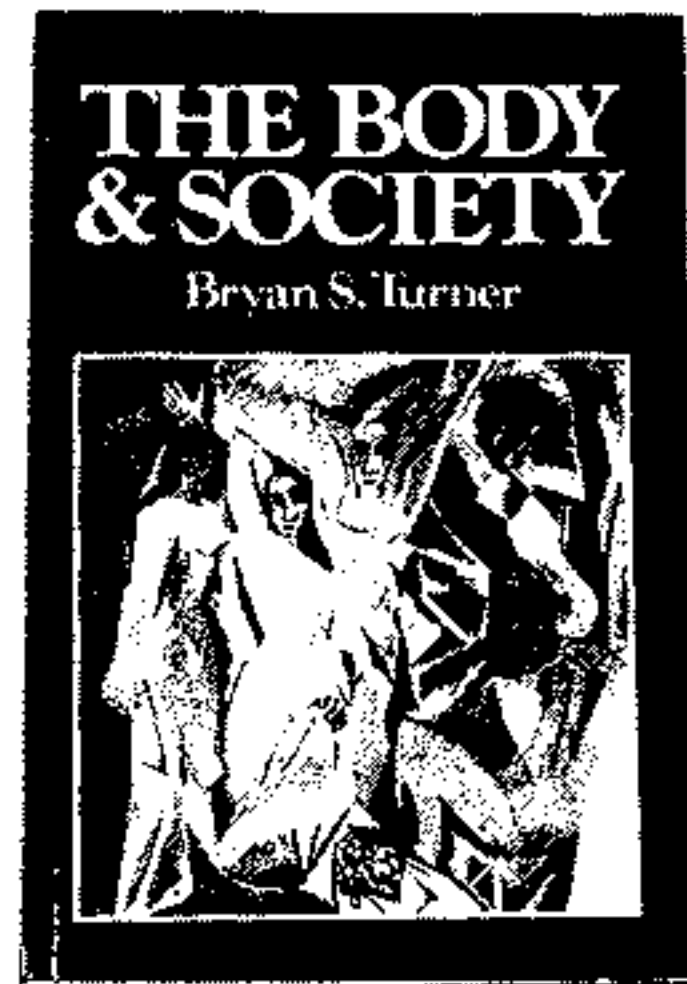
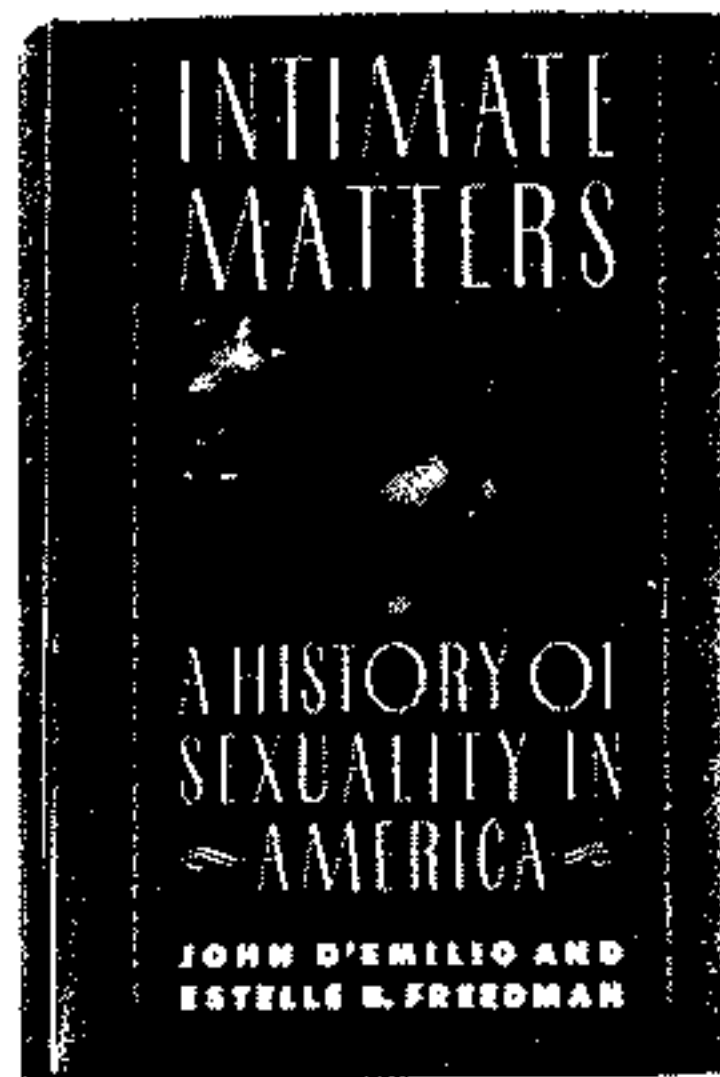
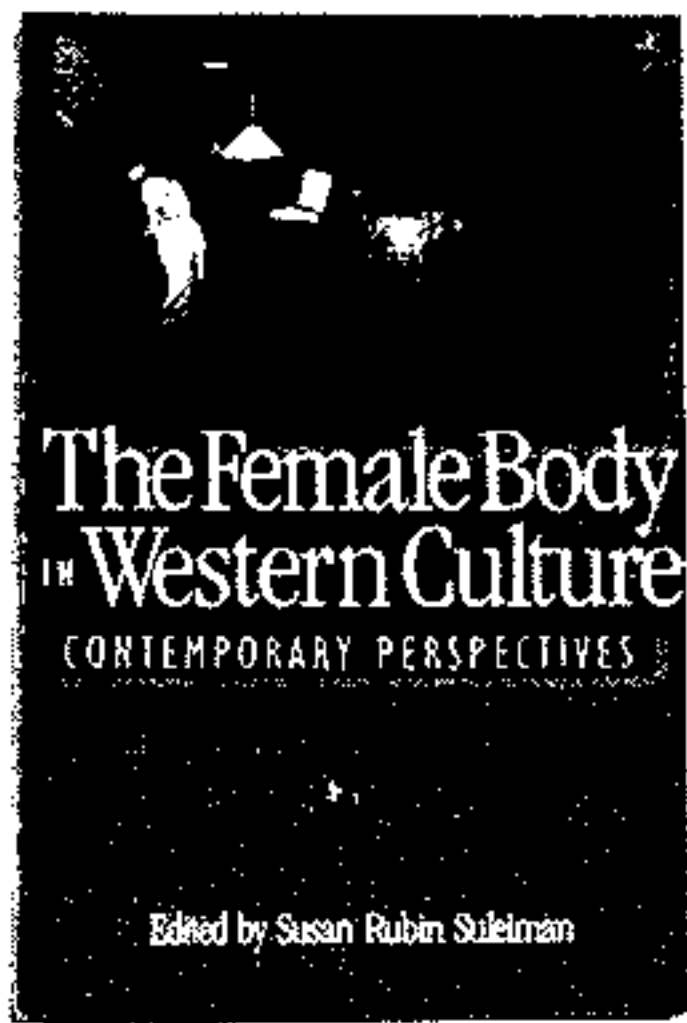
Davidson, Arnold I. "Sex and the Emergence of Sexuality," *Critical Inquiry* No. 14 (Autumn 1987): 16-48.

This critical essay examines recent scholarship about the history of sexuality, including Foucault, Philippe Aries, and other big names in the field. Davidson focuses on the relationship between the emergence of psychiatric ideas about sexuality and shifts in styles of medical reasoning in terms of "ethical descriptions of sexual practices." Davidson discusses how nineteenth century psychiatry, which focused on sexuality, saw it as "the externalization of the hidden, inner essence of personality." Sexuality and individuality were crucially linked.

Aries, Philippe and Andre Begin, ed. *Western Sexuality: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times*, (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1985).

This collection of essays includes recent French social science perspectives on the study of sexuality. The focus is not primarily on sexual behavior, but on attitudes toward sexual behavior at various points in history. Foucault, the English social scientist Robin Fox, and others are included. Attitudes toward chastity, male homosexuality, prostitution, desire, and marriage are examined at various moments in Western history. Like much of the prominently featured French scholarship on sexuality, this collection includes the work of only one woman. In spite of this shortcoming, this is an important contribution to the history and theory of sexuality.





Turner, Bryan S. *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory*, (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

Turner's work is part of a growing literature on the history of the body, which is frequently linked to the history of sexuality. Chapters on the mode of desire, the sociology of the body, the body and religion, bodily order, and patriarchy (Eve's body, government and the body, and disease and disorder).

Suleiman, Susan, ed. *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985).

Essays authored by feminist theorists and cultural critics. Sections include Eros, Death, Mothers, Illness, Images, and Difference.

Considerations of Sexual Politics in History

Brake, Mike, ed. *Human Sexual Relations: Towards a Redefinition of Sexual Politics*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982).

This collection includes writings by Freud, Wilhelm Reich, Max Weber, Georg Simmel, Sartre, Kinsey, de Beauvoir, Masters & Johnson, Gagnon & Simon. In its notable section on sexuality, sexual politics and contemporary theory are writings by Meaghan Morris on Foucault, Rosalind Coward, Jeffrey Weeks, Monique Plaza, and Michelle Barrett.

History of Sexuality Before the Twentieth Century

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume II: The Use of Pleasure*, (trans. by Robert Hurley) (New York: Pantheon, 1986).

Second in the series. Foucault goes back to antiquity to discuss forms and understandings of sexuality among Pagans and early Christians. His focus on desire and the nature of the desiring subject frame an analysis of ancient notions of pleasure and pursuit of the "good life." This volume explores the way early Greek and Latin texts treat sexuality in all its forms. Foucault explores perceptions about the pleasures of the body, which preceded the emergence of identities based on sexuality.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume III: The Care of the Self*, (New York: Pantheon, 1987).

Third in the series. Foucault looks at the fascination with hygiene, among other forms of self-consciousness, in the period before identities based on sexuality emerged.

History of Sexuality in the Twentieth Century

Berube, Allan. "Marching to a Different Drummer: Lesbian and Gay GIs in World War II," in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, ed. by Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983). (See below for more information on this anthology.)

Berube draws on oral histories and archival research to find the roots of contemporary gay and lesbian political identities which emerged during World War II. This work is part of the genealogy of the present gay and lesbian movement. Berube traces the conditions that made the emergence of political identities possible and analyzes the interaction between new homosexual identities and the oscillations of repression and tolerance in the military.

Costello, John. *Virtue Under Fire: How WWII Changed Our Social and Sexual Attitudes*, (New York: Fromm International Publishing Corp., 1987).

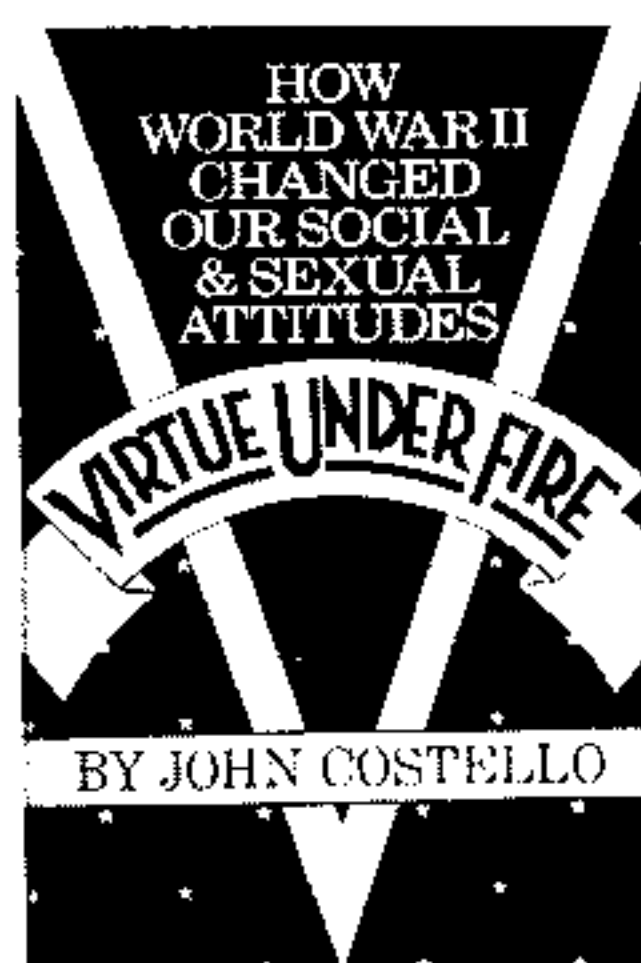
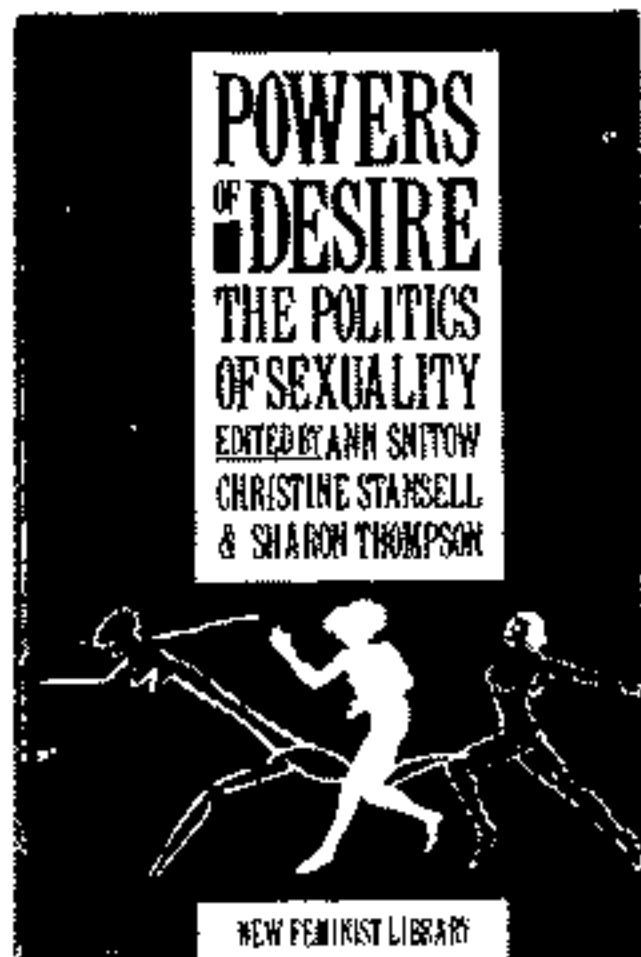
Looking at history after the emergence of sexual identities, this scholarly work focuses on how sexuality is considered in the post-World War II period.

Freedman, Estelle and John D'Emilio. *Intimate Matters*. (New York: Harper & Rowe, 1988).

This book is thoroughly documented and well written. D'Emilio and Freedman chart a gradual but decisive shift in the way Americans have understood sex and its meaning in their lives. In the colonial period sex was seen as a disruptive force unless confined to marriage and harnessed to reproduction. Slowly this "reproductive matrix" gave way to a more liberal view of sexual pleasure as a "value in itself."

Snitow, Ann; Stansell, Christine; and Thompson, Christine, ed. *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983).

This collection of essays was generated by the so-called "sex debates" in feminism of the early 1980s. It includes several important historical articles about the emergence of gay and lesbian identities. John D'Emilio's essay on capitalism and gay identity examines the relationship between individualism created by changes in the modes of production and the possibilities for political and erotic identities that capitalism generates. Atina Grossman's essay on the rationalization of sexuality in Weimar Germany looks at a period in which different sexualities were tolerated. Adrienne Rich's famous essay on compulsory heterosexuality is reprinted here. Her



concept of the "lesbian continuum," like Faderman's notion of lesbianism, encompasses women in romantic friendships as well as women who have had genital contact with each other. It offers a way of seeing forms of "lesbianism" at moments in history before our contemporary notion of lesbian identity. This is a very important contribution by feminists to the discussion of sexuality in history.

Lesbian and Gay Historical Works

Katz, Jonathan. *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the USA*, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1976).

This voluminous work covers gays and lesbians from 1566 through the 1970s. Katz gathered primary sources to fill in the missing parts of American history. It is a terrific source of materials on "great gays in history."

Katz, Jonathan. *Gay/Lesbian Almanac: A New Documentary*, (New York: Harper & Rowe Publishers, 1983).

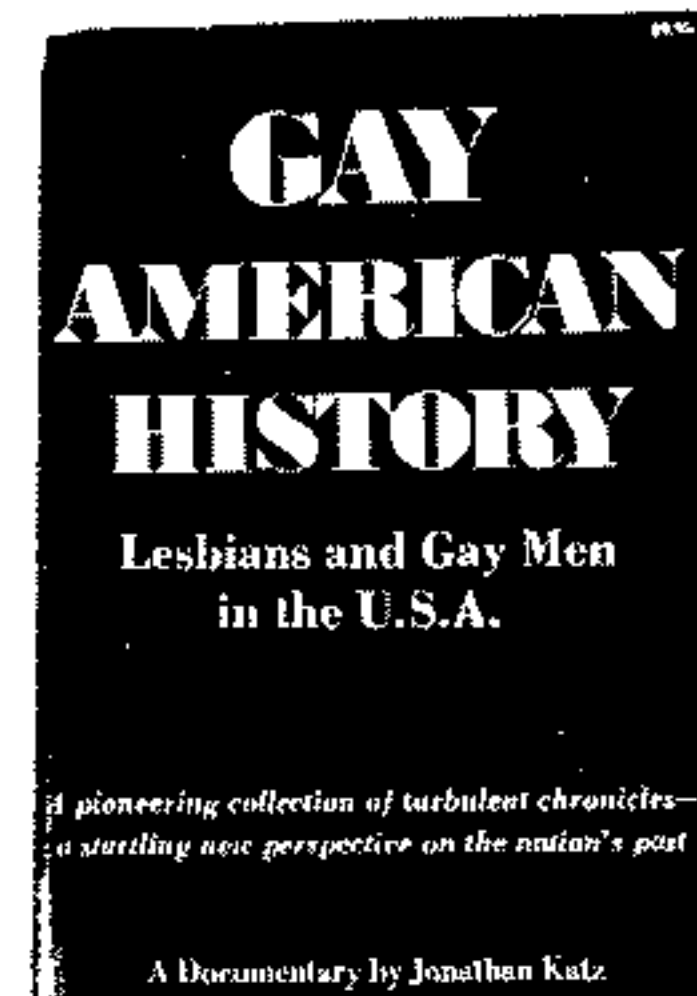
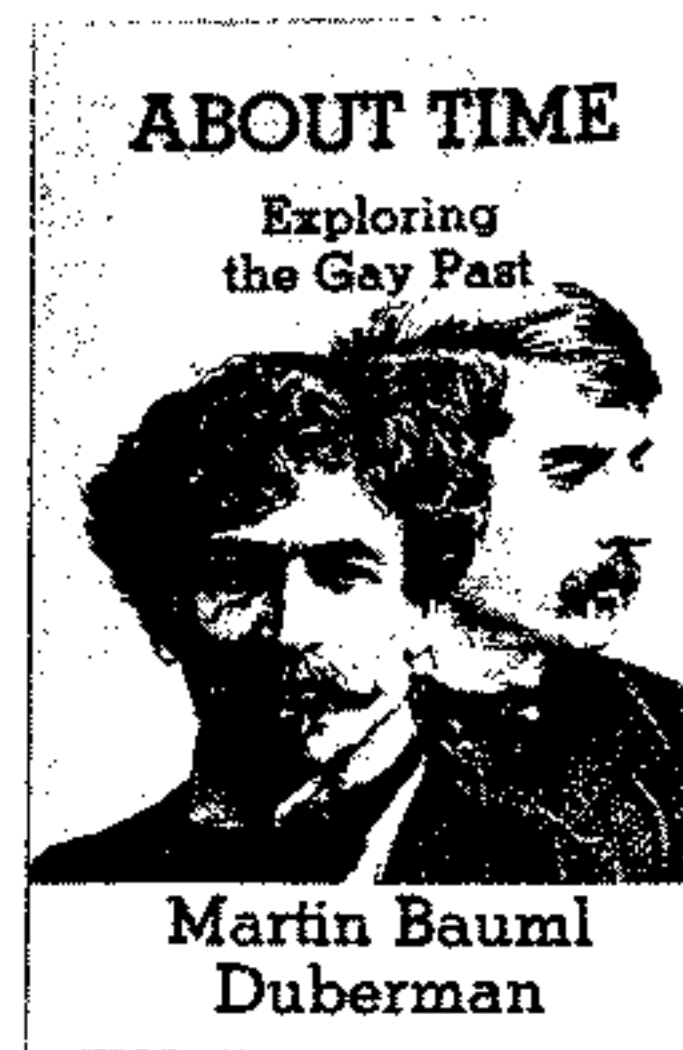
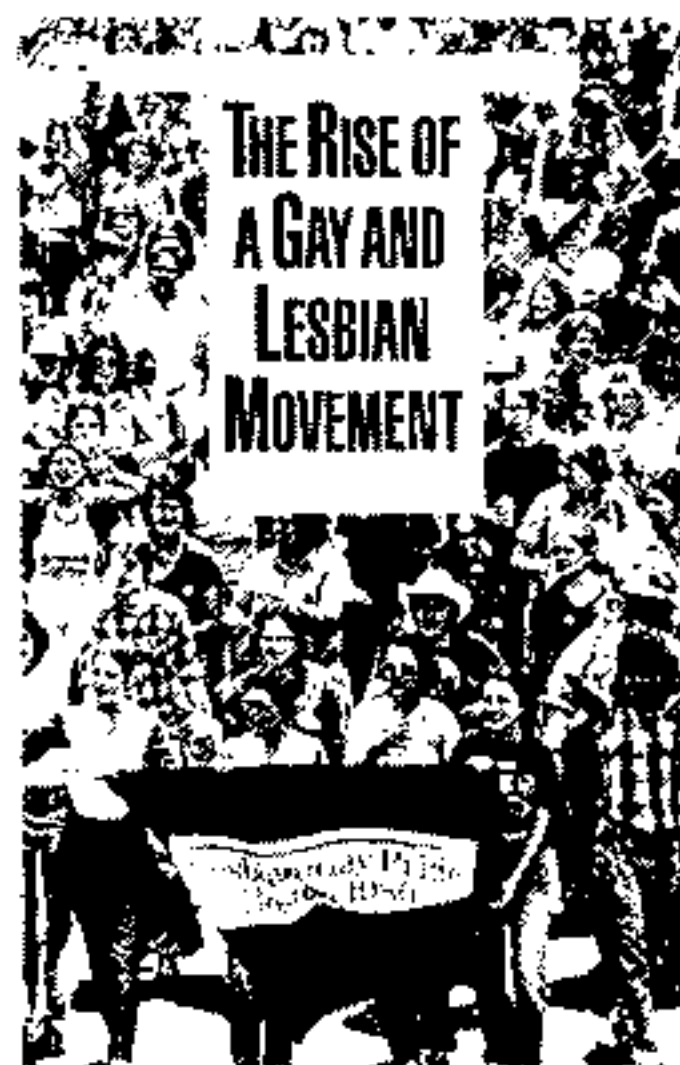
Katz provides documents and brief introductory essays to two major periods in American history: the colonial period from 1607-1740, and the modern period marked by the "invention of the homosexual" from 1880-1950. Excellent sources for placing lesbians and gay men into the straight history of the U.S.

Duberman, Martin Bauml. *About Time: Exploring the Gay Past*, (New York: Gay Presses of New York, 1986).

Duberman divides his book into three sections. Part one comprises historical documents from 1826 through 1965 covering "the Perils of Masturbation," Hopi Indian sexuality, and the Kinsey studies, among other topics. Part two consists of essays by the author from 1972-1982 on such subjects as Anita Bryant's campaign against homosexuality, homosexuality and the military, and racism in the gay world. In part three, Duberman becomes an historical actor by including excerpts from the diary he kept in the late 1950s. His current reflections on those experiences allow him to think about his part in the history of contemporary gay politics and identity.

D'Emilio, John. *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of the Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

This is an historical account of the emergence of gay/lesbian communities and politics, particularly in the post-World War II U.S. D'Emilio traces the emergence of sexual identity through the 1950s into the movements for social change of the 1960s, and concludes with a chapter on the rise of the gay liberation movement. This is an example of a work done from "inside" gay consciousness, written from the perspective of one who has been a part of gay life since the Stonewall riots but recognizes the importance of tracing the history that came before Stonewall.



Weeks, Jeffrey. *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the 19th Century to the Present*, (London: Quartet, 1977).

This is the pioneer historical work that applies the social construction of sexuality approach to homosexuality. Weeks records the growth of homosexual law reform from the harsh oppression of the end of the nineteenth century up to the liberating impact of the gay movement in the 1970s. Changing political and social responses toward homosexuality and by homosexuals themselves are placed in their historical context.

Adam, Barry. *The Rise of the Gay and Lesbian Movement*, (Boston: Twayne Press, 1987).

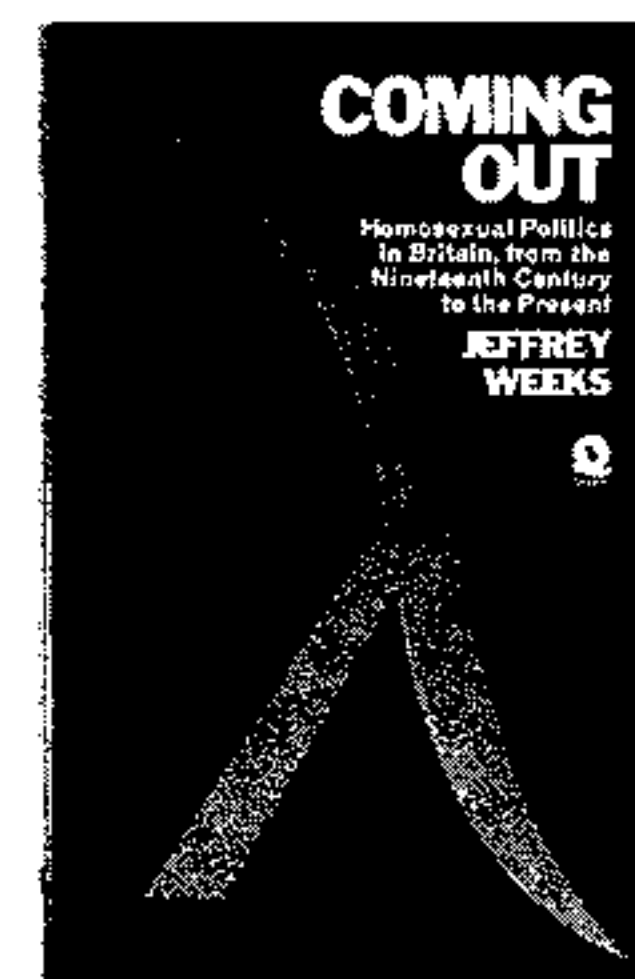
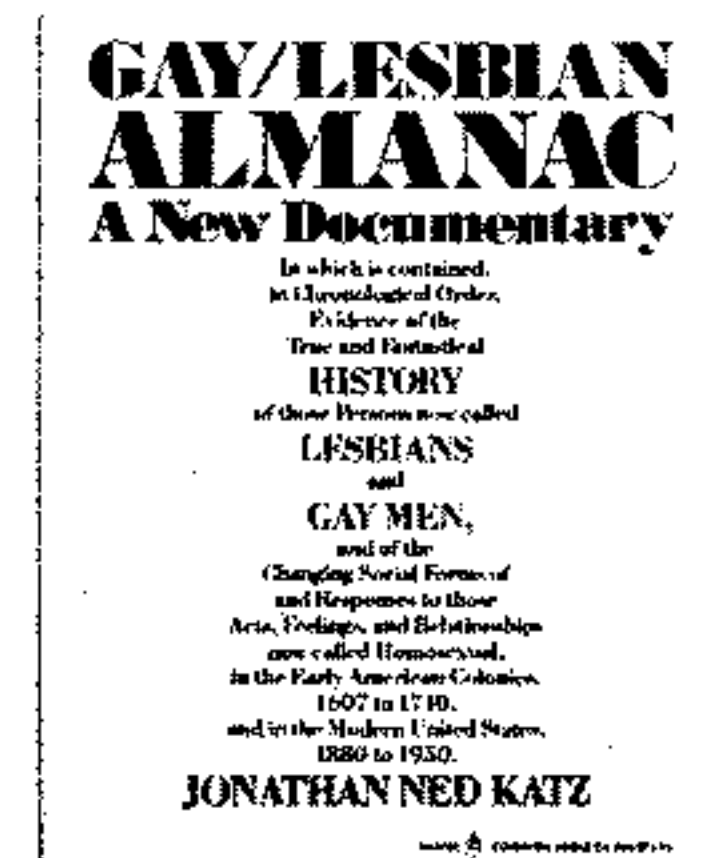
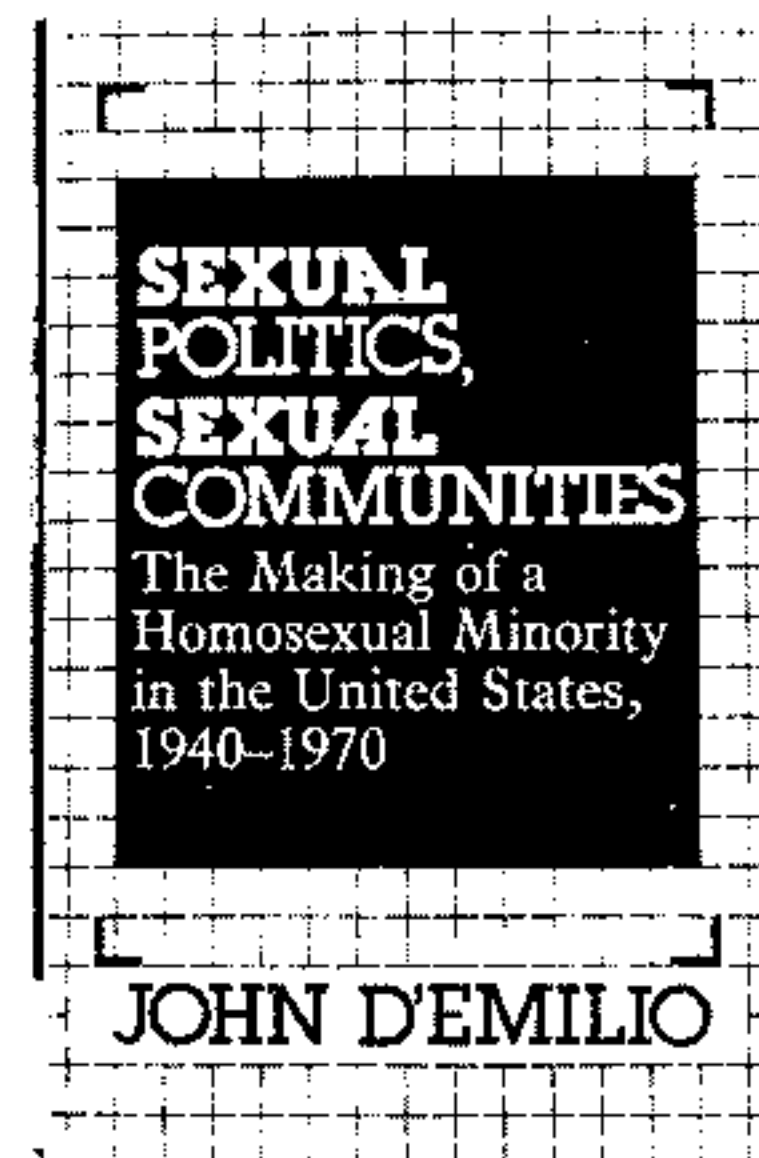
Adam traces the development of gay and lesbian movements in various Western countries through rich primary material. His theoretical framework is somewhat problematic; it suggests that there is a progressive historical trend toward increasing liberation. This might be read critically against Foucault's first volume which argues that power is dispersed into many places which creates new grounds for resistance and struggle. Instead of liberation, Foucault argues that we have a new and perhaps more complicated field of dispersed and disguised power relations.

Freedman, Estelle. "'Uncontrolled Desires': The Response to the Sexual Psychopath, 1920-1960," *The Journal of American History*, 74(1), June 1987: 83-106.

Freedman, a scholar of women's history and sexuality, analyzes the rise of "sexual psychopath" laws in the context of the legal and medical structures that dealt with sexuality. Freedman explores interesting questions about the construction of "perverts" and "sexual psychopaths," particularly in the context of Foucault's notion about defining deviance as a means of determining the norm.

Chauncey, George, Jr.; Duberman, Martin Bauml; and Vicinus, Martha, ed. *Reclaiming the Past: The New Social History of Homosexuality*, (New York: New American Library, 1989).

This forthcoming volume will include essays from historians and theorists of sexuality, including David M. Halperin, whose study of sex practices and their meaning in Classical Athens is entitled "Sex Before Sexuality." Halperin's work is informed by Foucault's idea of the twentieth century as the "century of sexuality" but he looks back in time to consider how sex practices were thought about. Keep your eyes open for this collection.



OUTLOOK
NATIONAL
LESBIAN
& GAY
QUARTERLY

Don't miss this limited opportunity to receive the 112-page Premiere Issue of the U.S.'s first lesbian and gay quarterly.

ORDER TODAY!

PREMIERE ISSUE FOR SALE

To: OUT/LOOK, P.O. Box 146430,
San Francisco, CA 94114.

Enclosed is \$7.95 (includes postage). Please send me Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1988, in a plain wrapper.

PLEASE PRINT

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP CODE _____



GIOVANNI'S ROOM

America's world class
gay, lesbian & feminist book store.
featuring

Monthly lists of new women's and
new gay men's books.

Current AIDS bibliography, abuse
booklist, foreign-language booklists.

Credit Card orders accepted.

Visit our newly expanded & renovated store
or phone us for mail order information.

1-(800)-222-6996 (outside PA)

1-(215)-923-2960 (inside PA)

345 So. 12th St. Phila., Pa. 19107

EXPERIENCE

OUR STYLE



EL MIRASOL VILLAS

A Private Resort Hotel

Discover our magic...

*... why so many of our guests
return year after year.*

Call or write for our special
Outlook vacation package
(800) 327-2985

525 Warm Sands Drive
Palm Springs, CA 92264
(619) 327-5913 in CA.

(Color Brochure upon request)

We're out for freedom... nothing less!

The National Gay & Lesbian Task Force is out for gay and lesbian freedom. Freedom to live our lives openly and proudly. Freedom from second-class status, violence and discrimination. Freedom to love. And nothing less than freedom will do.



Anti-violence Project Director Kevin Bechler testifies before Congress.

The Task Force Lobbies Congress and the Executive Branch to push for gay and lesbian civil rights and for a balanced response to the AIDS health crisis. NGLTF also lobbies at the state level, in the private sector, before professional organizations, unions, religious groups, and feminist and progressive groups.



Task Force staff at work

The Task Force Works as a resource center for over 2,000 local gay and lesbian groups, as a research and information hub on gay issues, as a nerve center for the gay liberation movement.



Anti-violence poster

The Task Force Organizes

to end violence, to repeal laws that criminalize gay/lesbian sexuality, to fight stereotypes of gay people in the media, to press for the civil rights of people with AIDS and HIV antibodies, to push reproductive freedom, domestic partnership and much, much more.

Come out for freedom! Join us!

I'm OUT FOR FREEDOM, and here's my membership fee at the OUTrageous rate of \$30.00!

I'm already a member, and I know freedom isn't free! So here's my additional donation of \$_____

Please send me more information about NGLTF and NGLTF membership.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

As a Task Force member, you receive: a subscription to our informative quarterly news-letter topical mailings on a wide range of subjects Task Force publications for free invitations to special events across the country, and the chance to select and serve on our Board of Directors.

Please make checks payable to NGLTF and mail to NGLTF at 1517 U Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. (202) 332-6483.

NGLTF, 1517 U Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009 (202) 332-6483



join us . . .

Smoke Tree Villa

YEAR ROUND WOMEN'S RESORT

1586 East Palm Canyon Drive

Palm Springs, California 92264

RESERVATIONS

619 - 323-2231

TEN PERCENT REVUE

WORDS AND MUSIC BY
TOM WILSON WEINBERG

Cassettes
available from
ABOVEGROUND RECORDS

Box 497, Boston, MA 02112

\$8.95

INCLUDES POSTAGE AND HANDLING

"A SPIRIT OF CHEERFULLY ASSERTIVE MILITANCY, TEMPERED WITH HUMOR AND MUSICAL SAVVY. A BRISK MULTI-STYLED SCORE. THE CAST HAS REFINED A POLISHED ENSEMBLE VOCAL STYLE!"

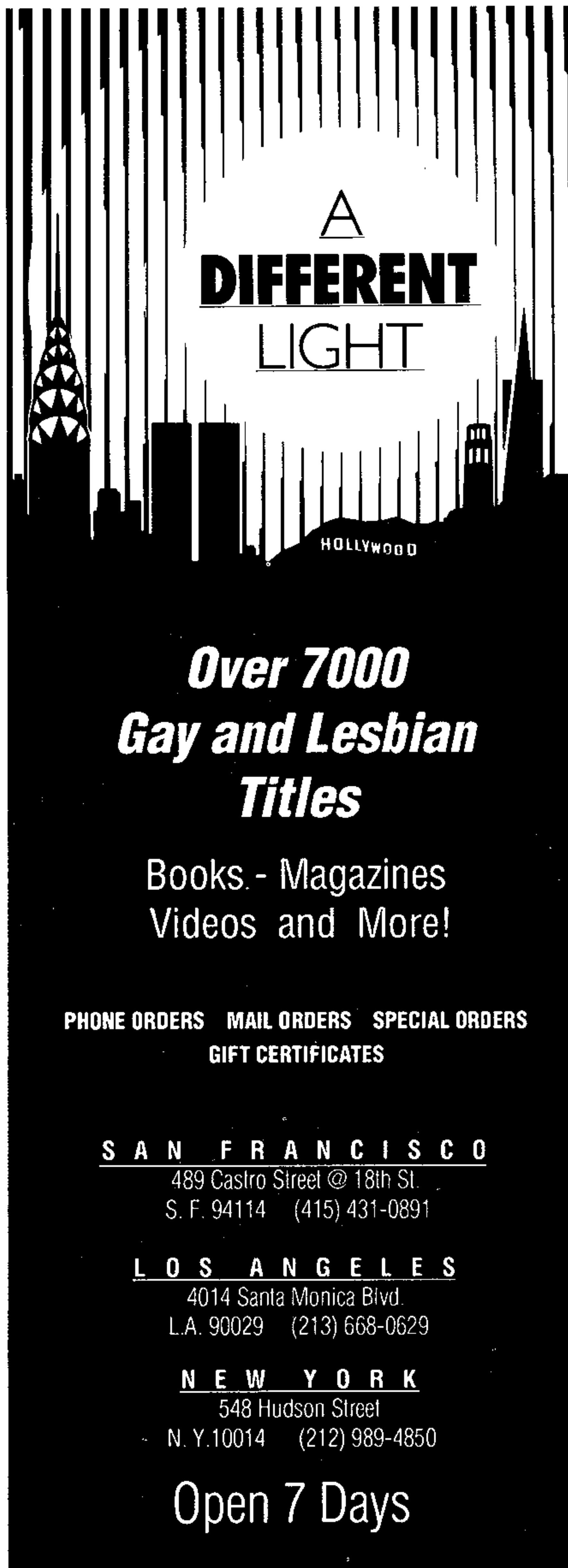
—STEPHEN HOLDEN
NEW YORK TIMES

"FUNNY! LIVELY! WEINBERG IS A GIFTED LYRICIST AND MELODIST. THE CAST IS EXTREMELY ENGAGING. THE DIRECTION AND CHOREOGRAPHY ARE SIMPLE AND STRONG. THIS IS A GAY OLD TIME!"

—HOWARD KISSELL
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

"A SNAPPY REVUE!"

—NEW YORK POST



A DIFFERENT LIGHT

**Over 7000
Gay and Lesbian
Titles**

Books - Magazines
Videos and More!

PHONE ORDERS MAIL ORDERS SPECIAL ORDERS
GIFT CERTIFICATES

SAN FRANCISCO
489 Castro Street @ 18th St.
S. F. 94114 (415) 431-0891

LOS ANGELES
4014 Santa Monica Blvd.
L.A. 90029 (213) 668-0629

NEW YORK
548 Hudson Street
N. Y. 10014 (212) 989-4850

Open 7 Days

"The James White Review's editors and their contributors together are producing a valuable contribution not only to the American literary scene, but to our self-affirmation and eventual survival as a people."

Gay Community News

The James White Review

a gay men's literary journal

Annual subscription: \$10 (USA)
\$17, two years \$12 Canada \$15 (Foreign)
Sample issue: \$2.50 \$12 (Institution)

The James White Review
PO Box 3356, Traffic Station
Minneapolis, MN 55403

QUERY

In each issue of OUT/LOOK, you'll find a new survey on an issue that touches our lives. Sometimes the surveys are for real and sometimes...

The responses you sent in to the survey on sexual preference and employment in the first issue of OUT/LOOK have arrived in droves. We will publish an analysis in OUT/LOOK #3.

TERMS OF ENQUEERMENT

(Oy Vey! Yet Another Survey!!)

by Tom Ammiano & Jeanine Strobel

What do au courant fags and dykes really feel and know about each other's pride, passion, history, herstory, their story, police story whatever? San Francisco-based comics and activists Tom Ammiano and Jeanine Strobel unscientifically and whimsically check your oil and tune your zeitgeist. Please spare us and keep your response completely confidential.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

For men & women

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1) Age:
<input type="checkbox"/> New
<input type="checkbox"/> Under
<input type="checkbox"/> Middle | 8) Religion:
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern
<input type="checkbox"/> Western
<input type="checkbox"/> Nautilus | 14) Domestic Partners are:
<input type="checkbox"/> A cleaning service.
<input type="checkbox"/> Two people living together out of wedlock.
<input type="checkbox"/> Two people living together out of lox.
<input type="checkbox"/> Nancy Reagan Vista program for housemaids. |
| 2) Pre-Occupation:
<input type="checkbox"/> The past
<input type="checkbox"/> Myself
<input type="checkbox"/> Others
<input type="checkbox"/> All of the above | 9) Role Identification:
<input type="checkbox"/> Butch
<input type="checkbox"/> Femme
<input type="checkbox"/> Egg | 15) Closet Case means:
<input type="checkbox"/> Not open about sexual orientation.
<input type="checkbox"/> A smart valise, (not to carry on).
<input type="checkbox"/> Roy Cohn look-alike & smell-alike.
<input type="checkbox"/> Not "OUT." |
| 3) Grossest Income: _____ | 10) What ring do you find most exciting?
<input type="checkbox"/> Nose
<input type="checkbox"/> Nipple
<input type="checkbox"/> Wedding
<input type="checkbox"/> Bathtub | 16) "OUT" means:
<input type="checkbox"/> Manifestly proud and affirmed of lesbian/gay identity.
<input type="checkbox"/> Three strikes.
<input type="checkbox"/> "Not in," as in, "We're sorry, Cheryl Crane can't come to the phone right now, she's 'not in,' she's 'OUT.'" |
| 4) Class:
<input type="checkbox"/> Upwardly mobile
<input type="checkbox"/> Downwardly mobile
<input type="checkbox"/> Immobile | 11) How do you classify yourself?
<input type="checkbox"/> Child of an adult-child.
<input type="checkbox"/> Adult-child of an adult.
<input type="checkbox"/> Child-adult of a lunatic. | |
| 5) If anatomy is not destiny, are you:
<input type="checkbox"/> Male
<input type="checkbox"/> Female
<input type="checkbox"/> Mormon | 12) A beard is:
<input type="checkbox"/> A woman who covers for a gay man.
<input type="checkbox"/> A late, great "trés Flambé" chef.
<input type="checkbox"/> Hirsute chinny chin chin.
<input type="checkbox"/> Not to be confused with fag hag. | |
| 6) Member?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I have one.
<input type="checkbox"/> No, I don't. | 13) A fag hag is:
<input type="checkbox"/> A couplet, a part of haiku.
<input type="checkbox"/> A woman who hangs around gay men exclusively.
<input type="checkbox"/> A chainsmoker.
<input type="checkbox"/> A trendy boutique in Provincetown. | |
| 7) Business:
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you mind your own?
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you mind other people's?
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you have a (girl), (boy) in every PORTfolio? | | |

TRUE FALSIES

(Check the appropriate choice)

Questions for men:

- 1) Clitoris is the name of a mouthwash. T F
- 2) Bull is a term meaning a disruption in Billy Jean King's China Shop. T F
- 3) Famous product most likely invented by a lesbian: the elastic waistband. T F

Questions for women:

- 1) Nellie is a term that means everything that Ed Meese is not. T F
- 2) Famous product most likely invented by gay male: call waiting. T F
- 3) Gag reflex means laughing on cue. T F

continued on next page

MULTIPLES

(Circle the appropriate choice)

For men:

- 1) A girl is:
 - A diminishing term for a woman.
 - A Fran Leibowitz construct.
 - Not the real Lassie.
 - A Michael Jackson mantra.
 - What I throw a ball like.
- 2) A Turkey Baster Baby is:
 - An artificially inseminated child.
 - No visitation rights on Thanksgiving.
 - Hedda Gobbler.
- 3) Dildoes are:
 - Sex toys.
 - Prairie home companions.
 - Messy at airport security check points.
 - Banned at the White House.
- 4) Misogyny is:
 - Institutionalized hatred of women.
 - Runner up in a Phyllis Schlafly Beauty Contest.
 - Haute Couture.
- 5) A Lipstick Dyke is:
 - Someone who values luster over bounce.
 - Cher in Silkwood.
 - Desert Hearts chapstick.
- 6) A Women's Festival is:
 - Where women reclaim and celebrate themselves.
 - Will never happen at the Club Med.
 - A place where you'll never find the toilet seat up.
 - Where skins outnumber the shirts.
- 7) Lesbian humor is:
 - Tongue in cheek.
 - An oxymoron.
 - Only a moron can't appreciate it.
- 8) What things have you learned from lesbians?
 - That you don't have to experience menstruation to be on the rag.
 - How to pronounce the word menstruation.
 - That sitting in a circle doesn't always mean mutual masturbation.
 - That Goddess is not the name of a salad dressing.
- 9) Lesbian couples are:
 - Proliferating.
 - Breaking up that old gang of mine.
 - Sitting around reciting free verse and eating pot brownies.
- 10) My first exposure to a group of lesbians was:
 - Dinah Shore Golf Tournament
 - Veterinarian's Office.
 - Midge Costanza Fan Club.

For women:

- 1) Most of the gay men you know are:
 - Lesbian-sensitive
 - On television.
 - Real Estate Agents.
 - Blonde.
- 2) Your first exposure to a large group of gay men was:
 - Catechism.
 - Indoor tanning salons.
 - The Vienna Boys Choir.
- 3) How do you perceive gay men:
 - With your eyes.
 - From afar.
 - Better after a couple of beers.
 - Like sisters.
- 4) Where do gay men come from?
 - Dominant mothers, submissive fathers.
 - Greece and the Mid-West.
 - Immaculate conception.
 - Immaculate homes.
- 5) What do you think of drag?
 - It is a dazzling defiance of gender-roles.
 - I'm allergic to it.
 - I only wear it when I have to work downtown.
 - It has helped me to see Liza Minnelli in a new light.
- 6) A top is:
 - In the missionary position, someone who assumes the role of Tarzan.
 - A dreidel.
 - Doris Day sleepwear.
- 7) A bottom is:
 - In the missionary position, someone who assumes the role of Jane.
 - Timothy.
 - Cagney to Lacy.
 - Lacy to Cagney.
- 8) What have you learned from gay men?
 - When they ask you to bring some dish they're not talking potlucks.
 - Sissy doesn't always mean Spacek.
 - That sphincter muscle is not a shellfish.
 - That queenliness can be next to Godliness.



Subscription Order

I am sending this card in my own envelope with a check for **\$16**, for one year, four issues.

Bill me, instead, at the rate of **\$19**, for one year, four issues.

PLEASE PRINT

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

OUT/LOOK
P.O. BOX 146430
SAN FRANCISCO,
CA 94114

Institutional rate:
\$26 for one year,
four issues.

OFFER EXPIRES JAN. 31, 1989

Subscription Order

I am sending this card in my own envelope with a check for **\$16**, for one year, four issues.

Bill me, instead, at the rate of **\$19**, for one year, four issues.

PLEASE PRINT

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

OUT/LOOK
P.O. BOX 146430
SAN FRANCISCO,
CA 94114

Institutional rate:
\$26 for one year,
four issues.

OFFER EXPIRES JAN. 31, 1989

Subscription Order

I am sending this card in my own envelope with a check for **\$16**, for one year, four issues.

Bill me, instead, at the rate of **\$19**, for one year, four issues.

PLEASE PRINT

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

OUT/LOOK
P.O. BOX 146430
SAN FRANCISCO,
CA 94114

Institutional rate:
\$26 for one year,
four issues.

OFFER EXPIRES JAN. 31, 1989