

GBB

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WORK IN PROGRESS

1. Professor Richard Plant reports that the writing of his comprehensive book on the fate of homosexuals in Hitler's Third Reich is more than half complete. The research has required several extended trips to Europe in order to collect rare documents and to interview survivors. Plant's book will treat both the ideological basis for the persecution, in which Heinrich Himmler's role was of paramount importance, and the actual conditions in the camps, which were particularly cruel. A special problem has been posed by the translation into English of the convoluted terminology of the Nazi bureaucracy and propaganda apparatus. Today, thirty-five years after the collapse of Hitler's regime, its persecution of homosexuals remains largely unknown to the general public. Richard Plant's book should serve to correct this ignorance.

2. Paul D. Hardman is conducting research on the monarchist movement in the era of the American Revolution, when a camarilla arose to place the homosexual Henry of Prussia on the throne here. Baron von Steuben, who was probably gay, played a central role in the affair. Needless to say, this movement has been altogether excluded from textbooks and general accounts of the American Revolution. If you can help with documents or information, write to Paul D. Hardman, 1782 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94109.

3. Barbara Grier (Gene Damon) announces that work has begun on a new edition, the third, of her classic bibliography, *The Lesbian in Literature*. The new edition will incorporate more extensive cross-reference features to make it easier to use, and will be about twice the size of the previous volume. Publication is targeted for late 1980 or early 1981. If you know of unusual items that should be included, write to Barbara Grier, C/of Naiad Press, 7800 Westside Dr., Weatherby Lake, MO 64152. Incidentally, the Naiad Press now issues a varied line of lesbian books under their own imprint; ask for the list.

4. Michael Young and Larry White, cofounders of the Triangle Area Gay Scientists (a social organization of students and professionals in the physical, biological and mathematical sciences or engineering), are preparing an anthology of essays exploring the experience of gay men and lesbians who are students and professionals in the sciences. The intent of the volume will be to demonstrate the difficulties, the joys and the distinctive features in the lives of gay men and lesbians in these extremely non-stereotypical fields.

Concepts to be explored in this collection will include the effect of sexual orientation on career choice and career change, particular instances of conflict in the various fields, conditions for gay and lesbian scientists in academia, government and the private sector, homophobia and sexism inherent in the subject matter and

structure of science, the interaction of the gay scientist with the larger gay community and its institutions, and the gay scientist's reaction to scientific research about gay people.

The essays will be authored primarily by working and former scientists, as well as students. Contributions will be based on personal experiences and theoretical considerations illuminating the relationship of sexual orientation with the social, emotional and professional realities of careers in the sciences.

Potential contributors are encouraged to contact Young and White at PO Box 1137, Chapel Hill, NC 27514, for a more detailed prospectus of the project. Please include an indication of scientific background and proposed area of contribution.

Young, a graduate student in neurobiology, and White, a former synthetic organic research chemist, have been working together for over two years organizing gay scientists in North Carolina and are in contact with others throughout the United States and Canada. They edit an organizational newsletter, *The Proceedings Of The Triangle Area Gay Scientists*.

5. From Cincinnati comes a proposal for a collection of essays on gay and lesbian history in the United States to be edited as a book by a history professor with editorial experience and publications. If you are interested in submitting an article-length essay (either previously published or unpublished), send two copies or a proposal to Walter Williams, 2898 Marshall Avenue, Apt. 3, Cincinnati, OH 45220.

6. Richard J. Follett is writing a doctoral dissertation at the University of Michigan on the teaching of gay literature. He welcomes articles and course listings, rationales and syllabi, and especially personal accounts from people who have actually taught courses in the area of gay studies. Write to Richard J. Follett, Instructor, English/Journalism Department, Miami-Dade Community College, North Campus, 11380 N.W. 27th Avenue, Miami, FL 33167.

7. Mack McNeal is continuing his research on the circle of Alexander von Humboldt. He asks: "Does anyone know of the existence of a painting, portrait, or drawing of Carlos Montufar (1780-1816)? He was born in Quito, Ecuador. He attended the Royal College of Nobles in Madrid, and he lived some years with Alexander von Humboldt. Montufar became a Colonel in General Bolivar's army. He is buried somewhere in Ecuador. There is a tiny and faint facial portrait of Montufar in a 1928 edition of *Diccionario Biográfico del Ecuador* that may have been copied from a full length painting that still exists." Write to Mack McNeal, 1285 Rancheros Rd., Pasadena, CA 91103. □

COVER: The ancient Greek coin on the cover depicts the god Dionysos, who has inspired both ancient and modern speculations concerning alternative sexuality.

GAY BOOKS BULLETIN

CONTENTS

BOOK REVIEWS

Adler, Cooperation Between the Sexes: Writings on Women, Love and Marriage, Sexuality and Its Disorders	17
Barthes, A Lover's Discourse: Fragments	6
Baxt, A Queer Kind of Death	11
Bayer, Tangier.	10
Bell and Weinberg, Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity	3
Bristow, Vice and Vigilance: Purity Movements in Britain Since 1700	21
Brome, Havelock Ellis, Philosopher of Sex	20
Chapman, Harry Stack Sullivan.	17
Deford, Big Bill Tilden	12
Evans, Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture	19
Finney, Christopher Isherwood: A Critical Biography.	8
Fraser, The Death of Narcissus	18
Gay, The View from the Closet.	11
Gilman, Decadence: The Strange Life of an Epithet	7
Grumbach, Chamber Music.	9
Honoré, Sex Law.	15
Jay and Young, The Gay Report.	4
MacNamara and Sagarin, Sex, Crime and the Law.	15
Peele and Brodsky, Love and Addiction	14
Pivar, Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control!	21
Raymond, The Transsexual Empire.	13
Rivera, et al., Hastings Law Journal	16
Scopettone, Happy Endings Are All Alike.	9
Sears, The Sex Radicals: Free Love in High Victorian America.	21
Vining, A Gay Diary	12
Zurcher and Kirkpatrick, Citizens for Decency: Antipornography Crusades as Status Defense.	21

ARTICLES

Cervantes, The Homosexual Century.	26
Dynes, Homophobia—Liberal and Illiberal	2
Israel, Sour Grapes Revisited.	27
Wright, Whatever Happened to the Gay Struggle in the German Federal Republic	24
Work in Progress	Front Cover
Notes on Publications	27

STAFF

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Book reviews and articles from 2 to 6 double-spaced, typewritten pages in length are invited for possible inclusion in future issues, as well as brief reports on planned or ongoing research, forthcoming books, or other gay scholarship activities of interest to readers. Contributions should be submitted along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Subscription orders, editorial contributions and all correspondence should be mailed to: *Gay Books Bulletin*, Gay Academic Union, Inc., PO Box 480, Lenox Hill Station, New York, N.Y. 10021.

HOMOPHOBIA – LIBERAL AND ILLIBERAL

Wayne Dynes

Over the past several years we have become all too familiar with the views of Anita Bryant, Phyllis Schlafly and their allies. Fusing old-fashioned anti-homosexual bigotry with resistance to the advance of the women's movement, they piously cloak their opposition under the guise of defending the family and traditional patriotic and religious values. We have also become more aware of the dangers that lurk in the assertive rise of the New Right, a constellation of determined political forces that was exposed in a crusading series of articles by Sasha Gregory-Lewis in *The Advocate* in 1977. The leadership of this ominous trend seems to have passed to the Christian Voice lobby, which claims to reach some 30 million television viewers a week. As recently reported in *Newsweek*, one spokesman for Christian Voice has said "We are declaring war on homosexuals."

What seems less predictable, however, is the increasing flow of reservations about homosexual rights and rationalizations of the status quo from the camp of mainstream liberals, the very group that rallied most vigorously in past years to defend the rights of Jews, Black people and other ethnic minorities. The history of this disturbing tendency goes back to 1970, the year after Stonewall, and it has sounded an ugly counterpoint to our movement ever since.

In September of 1970 *Harper's* published an article called "Homo/Hetero: The Struggle for Sexual Identity" by Joseph Epstein. Seeking to trace the roots of his aversion to homosexuality, Epstein recalled several personal experiences where he felt that his manhood had been threatened by aggressive homosexuals, culminating (interestingly enough) in an incident involving a fellow civil rights worker in the South. The article was to become notorious for Epstein's genocidal proclamation that if he had the power he would wipe homosexuals off the earth. Tragically, the writer was apparently unable to detect any link between the discrimination against Black people, whom he had gone south to help, with attacks on the homosexual minority, which he would extinguish. Mr. Epstein, seemingly unrepentant, is now editor of *The American Scholar*.

The only good to come out of Epstein's self-righteous exercise in bigotry is that it provoked the distinguished writer Merle Miller to publish an eloquent rejoinder in *The New York Times Magazine* (January 17, 1971). Miller's coming out was electrifying, and it drew a massive outpouring of supportive mail. He then expanded the article into a book, *On Being Different: What it Means to Be a Homosexual*.

Harper's also provided a launching platform, in July of 1973, for the liberal Republican George Gilder. In the book from which the article was excerpted, *Sexual Suicide* (1973), he glibly attacks both the women's movement and the gay movement. He believes that anatomy is destiny, and that the roles of women and men must always be distinct, even beyond biological constraints. Those who deny this axiomatic truth are eroding the family. Procreative sex, Gilder holds, is our "primal tie to the future"; all else is sexual suicide. Gilder's book was to be quoted with approval in *The Anita Bryant Story*.

The Gilder polemic was expanded (though without acknowledgement) by a Columbia University psycho-

analyst, Herbert Hendin, who became a favorite "authority" on homosexuality for *The New York Times*. Hendin's *The Age of Sensation* (1975) is a pseudo-scientific study based on interviews with some 400 college students. The doctor presents a generally bleak picture of contemporary youth lost in a maze of drugs and promiscuity, unable to feel anything deeply. His homosexual case histories are all dismal, leading to the following conclusion: "Homosexuality is only one sign of existing disruption of the family. . . . While oppression and intolerance of the individual homosexual is both cruel and foolish, the notion that social approval is a way of dealing with the question is equally destructive and mindless. . . . the more we distract ourselves from the individual tragedies involved, and the less chance we have to reverse the forces that tear the sexes apart and encourage homosexuality." The dominant tone is one of stern disapproval of permissiveness, though some slight recognition is beginning to be accorded to the vigorous campaign for homosexual rights.

In the second half of the 1970s we find a greater effort to grapple with the case for homosexual rights in order to refute it. This resistance is conducted by a whole series of figures who had been generally identified as left-liberal, some with strong civil liberties credentials. Such seemingly progressive journals as the *Village Voice*, *Commentary* and *The New Republic* opened their pages to the liberal backlash trend. Of this group it will suffice to examine the arguments (if that is what they are to be called) of one writer, Jeff Greenfield, author of "Why is Gay Rights Different from All Other Rights?" in the *Village Voice* for February 6, 1978. He begins by conceding that gay people have a case based on the right to privacy; what happens in the bedroom is not the law's business. But he goes on to reject the idea that gays are a class—like Blacks, women, and the handicapped—which has suffered discrimination historically and which deserves redress through government action. The fact that gays can pass by remaining in the closet, Greenfield argues, has saved them from the systematic discrimination that has afflicted the other groups. (One wonders what he would say about the Marranos of Spain, who had to keep their Judaism a dark secret in order to survive; where they not really discriminated against?) In fact, even though we can't see them, gay people are doing all right today. As long as they remain in the closet they will not attract public scorn. Gay assertiveness, Greenfield holds, is strategically inconvenient at this point in time. "The American Right is clearly going to use this as another club with which to beat liberals to death. And what passes for an American Left is going to find this issue . . . another diversion from the business of working for political and social justice." There we have it: gay complaints are trivial and irrelevant to the true pursuit of social justice. It all seems too much to believe. First homosexuals are terrorized so that most of them live their lives in hiding and fear. Then they are told that they are fortunate indeed in having the consolations of the closet!

Similar arguments have been put forward by Nat Hentoff, Nicholas Von Hoffman, Adam Walinsky, and Garry Wills, all of whom have strong liberal credentials. (The defection of Hentoff, who has called himself a First Amendment absolutist, is particularly disturbing.) The

(continued on page 28)

BOOK REVIEWS

HOMOSEXUALITIES: A STUDY OF DIVERSITY AMONG MEN AND WOMEN

Alan P. Bell and Martin S. Weinberg

Simon and Schuster, New York, 1978, \$12.95, 505 pages

After the completion of his second great report *Sexual Behavior in the American Female* in 1953, Alfred Kinsey began energetically collecting case histories for a third volume on homosexuality. After his death in 1956 this project was shelved, while the Institute he founded at Indiana University underwent a number of changes. In the late sixties the project was revived with the encouragement of the National Institute of Mental Health, but without using Kinsey's case histories. Why this large corpus of material was neglected is unexplained apart from Institute Director Paul Gebhard's cryptic remark (in the Preface to the present book) that "sex research had progressed beyond the pioneering stage." Bell and Weinberg, the two authors, had demonstrated an interest in the subject through their supervision of the compilation of a somewhat lacklustre and incomplete *Homosexuality: An Annotated Bibliography* in 1972. Weinberg also authored (with Colin Williams) two monographs on homosexuality: *Homosexuals and the Military* (1971) and *Male Homosexuals: Their Problems and Adaptations* (1974). Finally Bell and Gebhard undertook a pilot study in Chicago, which remains unpublished.

In June of 1969 recruiting of interviewers was begun in San Francisco and much of the work was accomplished before the end of that year. The data obtained essentially antedates the impact of the Stonewall Uprising and the affirmation of the present gay movement. Unlike Kinsey, Bell and Weinberg apparently did little face-to-face interviewing of their own, preferring to function as entrepreneurs supervising others. Some of the actual interviews, it seems, were conducted over the telephone. A disturbing omission is the fact that nowhere in the present published volume is the actual questionnaire administered to the subject reprinted. Even Jay and Young provide this in their gossipy *The Gay Report* (see below). On the whole, it must be stressed that readers should not be too quick to accept the proffered mantle of Kinsey as a protective cover for this book, despite the proclamation on the dust jacket: "An Official Publication of The Institute for Sex Research founded by Alfred C. Kinsey." Its value, like that of any other piece of sociological research, must be assessed on its own terms. But it is fair to say that the new work poses a number of grave methodological problems which make it unlikely that it will ever attain the authority of the two great studies authored by Kinsey himself. A second volume is promised (indeed the manuscript is said to be finished), but from what is known about this sequel, it seems safe to predict that it will leave most of the questions raised by the present study unresolved.

The new volume may be briefly described. It splits down the middle into two main parts: an expository text, followed by an extensive body of statistical tables. The narrative first section has been broken up into a series of small chapters as an aid to quick consultation; regrettably, the prose style in these is hardly scintillating, and at times downright sloppy and ambiguous. The tables in part two are clearly set forth, though it should be noted that they

represent a distillation of more comprehensive breakdowns which are apparently available on tapes at the Institute. Preliminary testing suggests that parts one and two fit well together, so that the tables do support and extend the statements made in the expository text. Equal attention is given to men and women, and there are separate data on Black people. So far, so good.

The difficulties begin with the sample. The San Francisco area, which has long been famed as a gay mecca, does not offer precisely the most typical environment for the American homosexual. It is uncertain what extrapolations must or could be made to meet the lifestyles of the homosexual in, say Chillicothe or Jacksonville, where the situation is less open on a number of levels.

Another drawback of San Francisco lies in the fact that the city is one of the few areas left in the United States where one can still comfortably get along without a car. The car culture has effected an enormous series of changes, including patterns of homosexual socialization and cruising. Concentration on a survival of the preautomobile culture can lead to serious skewing. (Of course, as B. Bruce-Briggs showed in his brilliant polemic *The War Against the Automobile*, New York, Dutton, 1977, a snobbish contempt for the car culture is one of the most salient characteristics of the New Class of academic intellectuals.)

Within the Bay Area itself, uncertainties arise about the "universe," the population entity embraced by the survey. Evidently most of the interviewers began with what is termed "the gay world," the usual milieus of bars, baths and other gathering places. It is not clear how far efforts were successfully conducted to reach people outside the penumbra of this world. Were any gay athletes or police interviewed, for example? What about the truck driver whose outlet is 60% homosexual, but who would take violent exception to any attempt to label him as such? And what about the quiet couple living in the Sunset district who never go to bars and baths? Homosexuals have developed many types of protective coloration; they have had to. It is unclear how far the program of discovering the full spectrum of homosexual behaviors ("homosexualities") has actually succeeded. In fact, one has to ask: who do the authors understand is a homosexual person and who is not? Here again, of course, the strangely neglected Kinsey had a clearer answer, with his 0-6 scale.

Beyond these crucial uncertainties regarding the proper targeting of the sampling universe, there remain problems stemming from the quality of the interviews, as alluded to above. Some sloppiness clearly occurred. There are some mysteries also about the statistical handling of this data, once the kinks were ironed out (in so far as this was possible). There is not one method but several that may be used in undertaking cluster analysis. These methods depend on the particular choice of algorithms. No indication of the algorithmic option selected is provided.

Out of the analysis there emerged, apparently like Athena from the brow of Zeus, the now-famous pentad of categories: close-coupled, open-coupled, functional, dysfunctional and asexual. The crystallization of these five categories (which forms the main basis for the claim that the book for the first time shows a spectrum of homosexual behavior rather than a monolith) is claimed to be purely inductive and empirical. This assertion invites challenge on several grounds. First, such labels as "dysfunctional" and "asexual" are scarcely value-neutral. Then, the definitions of the labels are excessively vague and overlapping. No adequate consideration is taken of

drift from one category to another over time. As the distinguished sex researcher John Gagnon has remarked: "The big problem is that such states can scarcely be viewed as personality types. They are too transitory. An uncoupled person could change from functional to dysfunctional. A [close-] coupled, faithful person could become unfaithful." (In general, a longitudinal perspective is almost entirely absent from this study.) It is disturbing and even bizarre that the largest bloc of cases—27% for women and 28% for men—falls outside the categories altogether. That is to say, there is a sixth category of "don't knows," which is the biggest of all.

Moreover, there is the strange fact that no such categorization was developed for the heterosexual controls—and this in a study which claims to offer the first nuanced profiles of homosexuals in comparison to heterosexuals. It is permissible to speculate about what would have happened if this differentiation of the control group had been accomplished. On the one hand, it might have been found that there was a surprising number of heterosexual "dysfunctionals" too, thus disturbing the straight liberal audience toward which this book is targeted. On the other hand, if there were more homosexual than heterosexual "dysfunctionals," this finding would undercut the hidden message that suffuses the book: that homosexuals are, in the last analysis, "jes' folks."

The writers stress the fact that Black people were taken into account, whereas they had been excluded from Kinsey's original studies. But it is not certain if there are enough of them, or if class skewing has occurred. That is, are there enough working-class Blacks to show the Black homosexual population as a whole, or are the respondents primarily drawn from the more accessible pool of middle-class Black gays?

Further study will in all likelihood reveal other defects lurking in this long-awaited work. Enough has been said, however, to indicate that it does not deserve the posthumous accolade of following in the steps of Alfred Kinsey. In fact, once its flaws become fully known, it may even serve to tarnish his memory. Will the promised second volume help? It will apparently try to meet the criticisms that the first volume is essentially statistical rather than individual, and doesn't deal with longitudinal development—origins of sexual orientation, growth and changes in direction. However, volume two may have new faults of its own, especially in the area of aetiology. (Amazingly, perhaps revealingly, the charlatans Bieber and Socarides are listed as consultants for the present volume.) The sampling and interpretive faults exposed in volume one cannot be easily redressed in volume two.

It may be conceded that the work may have a certain limited usefulness in combatting the more egregious kind of Anita Bryant bigotry, which portrays homosexuals as an undifferentiated mass of devils. Others though, in various camps, will come to recognize *Homosexualities* for the pallid document of liberal tolerance that it is. The book is no adjunct to the already battered diadem of American sociology. To quote John Gagnon again: "At bottom *Homosexualities* is an exercise in a certain kind of ideology. Its attempt to subsume the field and to redeem homosexuality by social-science bookkeeping should antagonize both scientists and political activists in the gay world. . . . For all its liberal tolerance *Homosexualities* is a shallow and emotionally guarded book, a poor successor to the works of Kinsey. Unhappily it has absorbed most of the research money devoted to homosexuality in the last decade." Enough said. □

GAU-NY Scholarship Committee

THE GAY REPORT

Karla Jay and Allen Young

Summit Books, New York, 1979, \$14.96, 861 pages

THE SPADA REPORT

James Spada

Signet (New American Library), New York, 1979,

Paperback, \$2.50, 339 pages

First came *The Hite Report*, a sex survey which achieved "best seller" status. Now these two books attempt a similar success with homosexual respondents: *The Spada Report*, concerned exclusively with gay men; and *The Gay Report*, with lesbians as well.

By the standards of professional survey research, these two "surveys" are quite inadequate from a methodological standpoint, and their contribution to a scientific understanding of present-day homosexuals in the United States is negligible. The books are not entirely without value, however: *The Spada Report* (the better conceived of the two) is a good read, and both books contain occasional flashes of insight, humor and human interest from the men and women who responded to the questionnaires.

Both the Jay-Young team and Spada used an approach modeled on that of Shere Hite (*The Hite Report*): design a lengthy questionnaire; disseminate it as widely as possible; and then process the answers of those who respond.

Young and Jay estimate that perhaps 400,000 men received or were exposed to the male questionnaire. A grand total of 4,400 questionnaires were returned (2,500 of which were an abridged version printed in *Blueboy* magazine). Thus, in effect, a 1% return rate. (A professionally conducted mail survey would be considered a disaster if it achieved a return rate 50 times as great.) Since the respondents were not selected through any sampling technique, but rather selected themselves, it would be hazardous to assume they were in the least typical even of the groups which were exposed to the questionnaire. In other words, data from *The Gay Report* are not properly projectable to any universe at all beyond the sample of those who returned the questionnaire.

To be sure, Jay and Young concede that they "do not claim to have a scientific or representative sample of lesbians and gay men." In practice, however, this caveat is often disregarded in interpreting their "findings."

The questionnaire designed by Jay and Young is very inept. Above all, the questionnaire is vastly *too long*—it seems that most of their respondents required many hours to fill it out, and many worked on it for weeks or even months! One may admire such intrepid respondents, but alas, they are unlikely to be typical either of those exposed to the questionnaire or of gay men or lesbians in general.

Jay-Young's "Lesbian Questionnaire" contains 99 checklist questions (closed-ends). These are followed by far over 100 open-end questions, to be answered by the respondent in her own words and at any length. The "Gay Male Questionnaire" is even longer, with 108 closed-ends and at least as many open-ends.

Most of the checklist questions employ verbal rating scales: a 5-point attitude scale ("very positive" to "very negative"), a 7-point frequency scale ("always" to "never"), and a 5-point importance scale ("very important" to "very unimportant"). There is nothing wrong with these scales, but in *The Gay Report* they are employ-

ed excessively, mechanically, and often quite inappropriately. Many of the questions are awkward, pointless (Q. 1: "How important is sex to you?"), or even foolish.

In contrast, *The Spada Report* relied almost entirely on open-end questions. The questionnaire is not reproduced, as in the Jay-Young book, a serious and inexcusable omission. However, a count of questions indicates a little over 50 open-ends—still long, but much better than the Jay-Young questionnaires. Further, Spada's questions are better formulated—better focused and written in simple, straightforward English, in contrast to the stiff and affected language often encountered in Jay and Young.

The great bulk of both books consists of comments made in response to the open-end questions. This is probably to the good, since it is clear that the volunteered comments—printed in quotation marks—represent only the opinions of *individuals*, and therefore the reader unfamiliar with the standards of survey research will be less tempted to make statistically unwarranted projections.

Since the questions in the Jay-Young book are generally less to the point, and the authors less selective, the ratio of chaff to grain is much higher in *The Gay Report*. However, the reader who persists through the 800 pages of *The Gay Report* will find items of interest. Some of the respondents' comments on therapy, for example, are enlightening: "I wasted approximately four years plus with psychiatry trying to be 'cured.' What a waste of time and money! When my therapist left town to take a government position, his instruction to his successor was that I should return to my wife. Hell, I'd never left her." "The shrink I went to listened to me for eight weeks, saying *nothing*, and then said that I wasn't sick enough to need *further* treatment. Since he had said nothing for eight weeks, I had to agree that I didn't need 'further' treatment."

Ideological biases obtrude in the Jay-Young book. These consist, for the most part, of received liberal and feminist dogma. Antimale comments abound in the lesbian sections of *The Gay Report*, edited by Karla Jay, but few antifemale sentiments find their way into the male section, edited by Allen Young.

Karla Jay asserts that many lesbians do not regard the dildo as a penis substitute, and she considers "astute" the comment made in *Loving Women* by the Nomadic Sisters that "to many lesbians a penis is a dildo substitute!" One shudders to imagine what the Nomadic Sisters say in their less astute moments.

Jay and Young share a trendy feminist aversion to transvestitism (of both sexes), pomography, and attractiveness—a concept they can recognize only as "relating to a certain 'type'" or as seeking "'looks' in general."

Karla Jay inveighs against the evil prejudice of "lookisms," which she describes as "defining beauty in stereotypical WASP American terms—slimness and other physical attributes." She extends the struggle against "lookism" to the brave fight now being waged on the West Coast by the Fat Liberation Front against the "discrimination faced by overweight individuals," and she regrets that "most lesbians avoided overweight individuals." Surely this is an odd ideology which would require us to regard individuals suffering from obesity as being no less attractive than those not so afflicted.

Jay and Young seem to believe that attractiveness has no material or objective basis whatever, but is rather all in the head: all relative and subjective. This is liberal egalitarianism to the point of blindness, and responsible, I

believe, for the way in which Young and Jay pose questions on sexual acts, styles, and preferences. In the "Gay Male Questionnaire," the men are asked to rate frequency of practice and positiveness of attitude towards many practices which the more classically inclined might regard as reified, perverted, or at least unappealing—a few of which being: humiliation, urination, enemas, defecation, nipple clamps, vibrators, fist-fucking, accujacks (masturbation machines), finger-fucking, foot fetishism, jockstraps, underwear, etc. I find it highly significant that while the "Gay Male Questionnaire" so exhaustively covers such practices as these, which may be accompanied by guilt, self-hatred, and inhibition—along with the sex-related use of ten different drugs—it totally omits the one classic technique of male-male sexuality: interfemoral or intercrural intercourse—that is, intercourse between the thighs or legs. (See Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, reviewed in *GBB*, No. 2.)

The closest approach the "Gay Male Questionnaire" makes to the sexual practice most venerated by the ancient Greeks is when the men are asked: "On the average, how often do you engage in placing your body against your partner's body so that your penises rub together?" They are to respond to this question first with the frequency scale, then with the positive-negative attitude scale. One objects first that the question is not only clumsily worded, but misleading. Men do not place their bodies against each other's as a means of rubbing penises. The purpose of full body contact is full body contact. Second, what one might wish to know here is how much the respondent enjoys the practice, how much he desires it, and how often he does it. The objectives are not well realised through the two scales used.

Spada has a chapter entitled "Women," and with seven well-formulated questions he obtains some interesting and perceptive replies. A substantial minority of the men who responded to his questionnaire had had sex with women, which some found satisfying, while others did not. The Spada questionnaire asked two questions which are exemplary in getting to the heart of a male-male orientation: "What is it about men that you find more sexually attractive than women?" and "What can an emotional relationship with a man offer you that one with a woman cannot?" These questions elicited vivid, perceptive, and enlightening answers, a few of which follow: "The whole male body is sexually attractive to me. The lines which are trim and solid looking are very appealing. To me women are like uncooked bread dough, soft and unappealing." "When I make it with a man, we have sex as equals." "Men feel better through their muscles, and they smell better." "Men are naturally handsome—most women have to wear makeup. . . ." "I like the ability of men to be so gentle while being so strong." "A man feels the way I feel." "(the relationship) offers freedom."

The interpretive comments of Allen Young and James Spada are usually sensible, but those by Karla Jay are often fatuous in the extreme. For a not untypical example: Karla Jay reasons that the reason why New York City had only one lesbian bar prior to the Stonewall riots in 1969 was "because with less income, lesbians couldn't buy a lot of alcohol." Indeed! And as we walk through the slummier parts of New York, we are always struck by the total absence of bars—after all, the poor can't afford to "buy a lot of alcohol!"

Karla Jay does not hesitate to rewrite history in the interests of feminist mythology. She refers to the "pink triangle homosexuals and lesbians were forced to wear in German concentration camps under Hitler." False.

Homosexual men did indeed wear the insignia of the pink triangle in Nazi concentration camps, where they were put to death. But there were no explicit legal sanctions of any kind against lesbians under the Third Reich. Lesbians did not wear the pink triangle.

Similarly, Jay (or perhaps Young) describes thus the Stonewall Riot of 1969: "On that occasion, lesbians and gay men attending the Stonewall Inn. . . fought back against police who were raiding the bar." This is feminist wishful thinking. The Stonewall Inn was a *men's* bar, and those who rioted were *men*. It does no service to our movement to confound the *was* with the *ought to have been*.

A final example: Karla Jay describes the gay liberation symbol, the lambda, as "the Greek letter symbolizing strength through unity—originally the symbol of the Greek city-state of Sparta." No. The lambda was adopted as a symbol by founders of the Gay Activists Alliance in New York City because the lambda was a symbol of "activity" in physics. I do not consider their reasoning to have been brilliant, but these nevertheless are the facts.

Although statistical tables play a minor part in *The Gay Report*, and even less in *The Spada Report*, they are shockingly bad: in both books there are meaningless tables which consist of raw numbers sprawling for pages; tables with no groupings; tables where no bases are shown; tables where whole percents and tenths are mixed up inconsistently; tables with no means or medians, where such were needed; tables rank-ordered by frequency of response rather than the logical progression of the stubs; and so on. The intention seems to be to impress the reader with a flourish of "scientific" thoroughness, but the result is statistical illiteracy. If the authors had consulted a professional in survey research, they might in a few hours have produced correct and meaningful tables, rather than the absurdities that were published.

In conclusion, these books are not without interest, especially *The Spada Report*. However, I cannot feel that our cause is advanced by such seriously flawed "research." On another occasion I have sharply criticized Irving Bieber's work on methodological grounds. Having done so, I would be using very much a double standard if I were uncritically to accept the "findings" of *The Gay Report*. Science is ultimately on our side. Let us not do violence to her philosophy, nor her standards. □

John Lauritsen

A LOVER'S DISCOURSE: FRAGMENTS

Roland Barthes, Translated by Richard Howard

Hill & Wang, New York, 1978, paper \$5.95, 234 pages

Roland Barthes's most recent book is many things. To use his own description it is a "portrait" of the "amorous subject" speaking to himself of "the other (the loved object), who does not speak." It is a series of fragmented paragraphs, alphabetically arranged, with marginal glosses and footnotes, on the language of cliché and hyperbole we all speak when in love. It is an illuminating discussion of Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and an occasional commentary on the Wertherism that dominated an entire age and is still very much with us. It is a compendium of many of the most memorable and provocative statements on love and related topics by thinkers as diverse as Ruysbroeck, Winnicott, Laban, Freud, Boehme, Wagner, and Proust (to name only a few). It could even be considered the second and equally elliptical volume of

Barthes's autobiography (the first being *Barthes by Barthes*) in which he discreetly reveals his homosexuality.

As one has come to expect from the author of such influential works as *Mythologies*, *The Pleasure of the Text*, and *Sade/Fourier/Loyola, A Lover's Discourse* is something very special, both a departure and a continuation for France's "most important writer-intellectual since Sartre," as Sontag has called him. It depends on what you stress. If the Barthes you wish to emphasize is the one frequently opaque and usually humorless, then *A Lover's Discourse* might seem the work of a different man, for here he turns his attention, with considerable wit and self-deprecating humor, to a topic far more accessible than Saussure and Racine. Barthes, however, is also the analyst of toys, fashion, soap-powders, the striptease and the face of Garbo, a catalog in which love, which has become almost a packagable product of Western culture, is right at home.

Barthes analyzes the "figures of speech" or "phrases" that occur to the lover when confronted by various incidents in his role of he-who-loves: for example, waiting for the loved person to telephone, overhearing gossip that demystifies the other, or imagining that he has failed his beloved in any number of ways, most of them trivial. The phrases of the lover, spoken in solitude in an imaginary discourse between himself and the absent other, are drawn from an "image-repertoire" that all lovers share and the Barthes compares to "the printout of a code (in other times, this would have been the code of courtly love, or the Carte du Tendre)." That most of these figures are cliché proves less a drawback than a recommendation for Barthes, one of whose strengths lies in the discovery of the significant in what others ignore or no longer see or hear. As he says at one point in the discourse, "*everything signifies*."

In the unfolding of his discourse Barthes brilliantly touches on a variety of topics, including the differences between a correspondence and a love letter, the way that the lover is always "miraculously feminized" through love, the lover's rediscovery of the "infant body" through the solvent of tears, the reasons why Achilles and Patroclus are the perfect couple, and the meaninglessness of the familiar exchange "I-love-you/So-do-I."

One of the delights of the work is the way it is constructed. Any one familiar with *S/Z* and *Barthes by Barthes* will recognize the pattern. Barthes divides the work into numerous sections, all of them short, some of them only two or three paragraphs. Each section, beginning with "*S'abimer/to be engulfed*" and ending with "*vouloir-saisir/will-to-possess*," focusses on a particular phrase from the lover's image-repertoire. Drawing from novels, psychology, mysticism, Platonism, Zen, linguistics, conversations with his friends, and events from his own life, Barthes elaborates on the figures in an ingenious manner almost musical. In fact, Barthes refers to the "sentence-arias" that run through the lover's head and the way that each figure "is repeated to satiety, like the motif of a hovering music." However, these notes or sections are not arranged in any order that might contain or imply meaning but are put into what Barthes calls "the absolutely insignificant order" of the alphabet.

To a certain extent Barthes's structure intentionally discourages any reading of the work as "the history of a love," namely his own. But the temptation to do just that (and the evidence with which to do it) are strong, for there are a series of guarded epiphanic revelations of the splendors and miseries of Roland Barthes in love. Many of the examples are drawn from Barthes's own life as a

lover, with the object of his affections invariably another man, although always tactfully referred to by initial. For example, in speaking about the "unknowable aspect" of the beloved, Barthes says:

Of everyone I had known, X was certainly the most impenetrable. This was because you never knew anything about his desire: isn't *knowing someone* precisely that—know his desire? I knew everything, immediately, about Y's desires, hence Y himself was obvious to me, and I was inclined to love him no longer in a state of terror but indulgently, the way a mother loves her child.

What comes through most clearly throughout *A Lover's Discourse* is the extent to which Barthes himself enacts the rigid scenario of the lover, a kaleidoscope of contradictory emotions that, according to Barthes, is "a kind of lunatic sport."

At one point Barthes, who wants us to reconsider the myth of the close link between love and aesthetic creation, says that the person who would write of love confronts a region where language is simultaneously both "excessive" and "impoverished." Barthes, however, in his fragmented combination of the analytical and the personal, avoids succumbing to either the "empty too-much" or the "pure too-little." *A Lover's Discourse* belongs to a handful of modern classics including Stendhal's *De L'Amour*, de Rougemont's *Love in the Western World*, and Rilke's letters on love, which add to our understanding of the emotion of love while also, especially in Barthes's case, delighting and entertaining. □

Eric Sklepowich

DECADENCE: THE STRANGE LIFE OF AN EPITHET

Richard Gilman

Ferrari, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1979,

\$8.95, 180 pages

The word "decadence" has gathered an especially rich halo of connotation about it. The vocabulary provides a rough-and-ready label for a kind of collective anxiety that has infected Western Civilization ever since the early Renaissance in fifteenth-century Italy. What if our own society, instead of continuing to advance, were to falter and stagger, suffering in the end the dismal fate of the Roman Empire? Perhaps the decline has already become inevitable. Civilizations have, Giambattista Vico insisted in the eighteenth century, their *corsi* and *ricorsi*. What has proven to be the most riveting event of history, the historical dissolution of the mighty Roman state, could well recur. Indeed, some have been gloomily confident that it will recur; it is only a matter of time. *De nobis fabula narratur*.

The concept of decadence has often been regarded as the negative counterpart of the idea of progress. According to some the two notions are incompatible. Historical optimists (including, interestingly enough, Edward Gibbon) have held that there will be no decline and fall this time around, for our civilization has ensured that the rhythm of progress will be an unceasing one. Yet it is possible to combine the two antithetical ideas of progress and decadence. One way of fusing them is to draw on a kind of body politic image. Societies, it is claimed, are like individuals: they are born, grow to maturity, and then fall into senescence and death. Progress may ascend to great heights, but eventually a turning point is reached, and

then it's down hill all the way. Currently, in this country anxiety about the spread of sexual freedom and supposed erosion of the family combines with a sense of frustration about the limits of American power in international affairs to suggest to some that, after much genuine progress, an inexorable process of decline and fall—decadence in short—is at work among us.

Certainly Richard Gilman in his opening pages has no trouble illustrating the current vogue status of the word decadence from the remarks of such opinion-makers as Pauline Kael and Mick Jagger. Recently, the decadent image of New York gay life has been exploited by novelists Andrew Holleran and Larry Kramer (see *GBB*, I, 1 and 2). In fact, a far more damaging image of our city's homosexual community will shortly be spread to a larger public in the William Friedkin film of Gerald Walker's mean and homophobic novel of 1970, *Cruising*. There is endless talk of decadence these days, and quite often it functions to put down homosexuals, as it has in the past. The first writer to link tolerance for homosexuality with social decline seems to have been the Early Christian Father, Salvian, writing in the fifth century of our era.

After evoking, through striking quotations, the link between the present journalistic vogue of decadence and the later nineteenth century in France, the decadence par excellence, Gilman settles down, on page 40, to a historical account. Omitting the forerunners of the idea of decadence in the Ancient Near East (this is a pity, because they are fascinating), he mentions the names of the Greeks Hesiod and Plato, dwelling somewhat more in detail on the Romans Horace, Lucretius and Cicero. Although the Early Christian writer St. Cyprian is aptly cited, Salvian fails to appear. Finding little to his purpose in the Middle Ages, Gilman picks up the thread in early modern France with Claude Duret in 1595. He then discusses in some detail the French writers who have come to be inseparable with the idea of decadence: Sade, Baudelaire, Huysmans and Verlaine. The scene shifts to England with George Moore, Walter Pater and (examined in some detail) Oscar Wilde, whereupon we are shunted somewhat abruptly to the period after World War II, to focus at length on C.E. M. Joad's rather overrated study *Decadence* (1948). The narrative then comes full circle with the current epidemic of the term. In today's usage it is almost obligatory to chastise contemporary American society by linking it with the "divine decadence" of doomed Weimar Germany.

It should now be clear that the history of the concept of decadence is of real importance—for the history of ideas in general, for contemporary social analyses, and for the rhetoric of homophobia. Gilman has undertaken a significant and necessary task. How has he acquitted himself?

The scholar must register keen disappointment at the absence of footnotes, bibliography and an index. In fact Gilman has read widely—perhaps too widely, for his book turns out to be not very original—but he has the habit of referring to his sources in an offhand, conversational manner: "X declares" or "it has been said that." Unless one is already quite familiar with the theme, as this reviewer is, the sources will be hard to track down. The novice will experience frustration in feeling that so much of the action is going on offstage, so to speak. But if, on the other hand, one already knows the material, what is the use of this book? Gilman's background is that of a practitioner of the "higher journalism," a freewheeling critic of theatre, novels and the contemporary scene. In New York City terms he is a typical "Zabar's intellectual." Over the years he has contributed many pieces to *Partisan*

Review and *Commonweal*, and their essay format does not encourage precise documentation of sources. But he should have realized that this undocumented mode of exposition is unsuited to what purports to be a serious contribution to the history of ideas.

Unfortunately, Gilman lacks the methodological training to accomplish his task. By electing to concentrate on the word *decadence* rather than the concept—the signifier instead of the signified—he has crippled himself. As Arthur O. Lovejoy, the founder of the strict discipline of the history of ideas in America, always stressed, the important thing is to focus on the *unit-ideas* themselves, whatever verbal dress they may assume from one epoch to another. This fetish of a particular word leads Gilman to ignore the cognate term “degeneration,” which also has a history traceable back to classical antiquity and which became one of the favorite slogans of normative cultural criticism at the end of the nineteenth century, thanks to Max Nordau’s once-famous indictment, the book *Entartung* (“Decadence”).

One final drawback concerns a subject of particular interest to readers of this journal. Although the book bears a dedication to one of the most prominent closet cases in American academia, mention of the application of *decadence* to homosexuality is rare and incidental. In an earlier book, *A Confusion of Realms* (New York, 1969), Gilman publicly identified himself as heterosexual. In order to understand his attitudes further it is worth taking a closer look at this earlier book, where our author demonstrates an extraordinary double standard in evaluating works by minority writers. While Eldridge Cleaver is honored with extravagant praise and treated as literally beyond criticism (essentially because he is Black), Gilman has this to say about John Rechy, a gay Chicano: “There exists these days . . . a hangup on perversity and perversion as sources of aesthetic truth, and John Rechy’s lugubrious book is its masterpiece.” Here is an abusive use of the idea of *decadence* under the guise of the words “perversity” and “perversion.” Once again, it is the concept that matters, not the particular words. Probably Gilman’s consciousness has evolved somewhat over the past decade. He no longer feels confident in simply linking the ideas of *decadence* and homosexuality, but he can’t break free of his prejudices enough to explicitly rule out some such link. For those interested in the concept of *decadence* as a pejorative label for homosexuality—and this is a topic of major significance—the present book is *Hamlet* without the Prince.

In fact Gilman has a very primitive notion of historical semantics. He speaks of words which just “hang on” beyond their proper life. Surely this is an inadequate way of putting things. His solution to the muddle that surrounds any attempt to define the notion precisely is simply verbicide: let’s kill the word by ceasing to use it. This is not the way things work in language. Vogue words are in fact more likely to be retired if everyone uses them *too frequently*—remember “relevance” and “cooptation” from not so long ago—rather than by studied avoidance. In any event, the concept of *decadence* has been with us for too many centuries and is too intimately linked to understandable curiosity about the course and purpose of human history to be expelled from our collective consciousness in this facile manner.

These inadequacies notwithstanding, the book may be read for its sometimes forceful rephrasing of borrowed ideas and as an anthology of striking quotations. Scholars, however, should proceed directly to other books, including the monographs that Gilman cannibalized. The fol-

lowing are the four most important: A.E. Carter, *The Idea of Decadence in French Literature, 1830-1900*, Toronto, 1958; Koenraad W. Swart, *The Sense of Decadence in Nineteenth-Century France*, The Hague, 1964; Philippe Jullian, *Dreamers of Decadence*, New York, 1971; Matei Calinescu, *Faces of Modernity: Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch*, Indianapolis, 1977. For a curious attempt to provide a theoretical justification of the concept, see Lawrence Haworth, *Decadence and Objectivity*, Toronto University Press, 1977. □

WD

CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD: A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY

Brian Finney

Oxford U. Press, New York, 1979, \$13.95, 336 pages

This new biography follows Jonathan Fryer’s slighter work on the same subject after less than two years (see review in *GBB*, I, 1). It is characteristic of Christopher Isherwood’s easy-going and generous nature that he should cooperate in the making of two more-or-less authorized biographies, in contrast to his late friend W. H. Auden, who austere refused to countenance any such activity at all. Finney’s book reflects a great deal of hard work. In addition to conducting many interviews over the years with Isherwood and his friends, Finney seems to have read and pondered virtually all the printed reactions to the writer’s work over the years. He is thus in a position to accomplish a triple task: a factual narrative of Isherwood’s life; a descriptive and critical account of the works; and a reconstruction of the intellectual milieu as mirrored in the critical responses. Each statement is carefully documented as to source, whether from primary books making up the canon, secondary printed items, or archival material in Isherwood’s possession. Although this book is dense with facts, it reads clearly and fluently. There is a real attempt to grapple with the deep problem of the relationship between creative work and autobiographical experience, though here no doubt more can and will be said.

While Isherwood’s experience as a homosexual is not scanted (it is hard to see how it could be in any serious biography), it would have been well to learn more details of his recent work in support of homosexual rights, especially his role in One, Inc., the pioneering Los Angeles organization. At the outset the author states (a trifle too obtrusively) that he is heterosexual, but he believes that, because of his general sympathy for (unspecified) “minority” viewpoints, he can bridge the gap between his own experience and that of his subject. Some doubt is cast on this claim by his repeated suggestion that Isherwood has been revising his earlier views in the light of his current “militant” homosexuality. Finney goes so far as to speak of “homosexual chauvinism” in *Christopher and His Kind*. The habitual misspelling of Hirschfeld as “Hirschfield” serves to undermine confidence that he is knowledgeable on German and homosexual affairs, arguably the two most salient themes of Isherwood’s work.

Such flaws notwithstanding, Brian Finney’s biography of Christopher Isherwood is as definitive as such a book can be with its subject still happily with us, and far outdistances Fryer’s earlier attempt. The latter, though a secondary contribution, may still be read for some enlightening anecdotes and especially for the genuine impression it conveys of Isherwood’s miraculous youthful-

ness. Because of its efficient marshalling of much necessary information, Finney's new work deserves a place on the shelf next to Isherwood's own volumes. □

Vladimir Cervantes

CHAMBER MUSIC

Doris Grumbach

E.P. Dutton, New York, 1979, \$8.95, 213 pages

Grumbach's third novel is an exquisite jewel. It is a fictionalized autobiography of Catherine MacLaren, the widow of Robert MacLaren, an American composer who closely resembles Edward MacDowell. Catherine is ninety years old when she is writing her life history. Because she belongs to an earlier era, she is naturally reticent about personal revelations, but she is also too old to care how the public will react to her disclosures. So she decides to make her last effort one of capturing the truth about her life rather than of meeting the expectations of a government granting agency in creating an "authorized" biography of her composer husband.

The plot is quite simple. Catherine met her husband at an afternoon tea given by her piano teacher. She was a shy cloistered teenager; he was a promising musician in his early twenties. They were married shortly thereafter, hardly knowing each other at all. They immediately returned to Europe where Robert continued his studies. For Catherine the marriage was cold and loveless; Robert did not even provide companionship. He was a truly dedicated composer who spent his waking hours totally involved in his music. A few years later Robert completed his studies and returned with his wife to Boston. Very shortly, he would be the first native composer to achieve fame. Engagements and honors poured in, yet he had little time to enjoy them, as he was already seriously ill with syphilis. The couple moved to Saratoga Springs to give him more quiet, but his life ebbed away speedily as no one at that time really understood his malady. Robert MacLaren died in his early thirties.

In the final stages of his illness, Catherine is assisted by a nurse, Anna. It is Anna who explains the nature of Robert's disease to Catherine. When a fellow composer, Churchill Weeks dies of the same illness shortly thereafter, Catherine is able to piece together the meaning of love letters between the two men which she had once seen. Also, after her husband's death Catherine finds her first satisfying love with Anna. They share a home and a tender loving relationship for several years until Anna dies as a result of influenza which she contracts while serving as a nurse. Catherine lives on, with little but memories to sustain her. After MacLaren's death a foundation is established in his name and endows a music colony which lasts several years. When a student who is jealous of Anna's love for Catherine burns down the music studios, there is no money to renew the project. MacLaren's fame had declined and new money could not be raised. After Anna dies, Catherine lives on as a semi-recluse on the remaining small funds.

This simple plot is woven into a novel which is as lovely as fine old lace. It is sustained by tender insights and stylistic elegance. American critics tend to favor huge novels with pretentious themes, and because of its very narrow scope and small size this gem of a novel will probably be overlooked. It forms company with a few other American novels of underrated value, intimate works which portray a single character or relationship. The

important novels it most resembles are Willa Cather's, *A Lost Lady* and Edith Wharton's, *An Age of Innocence*. All three tell the story of an unconventional love hidden beneath a surface of restrictive social mores. Each is a recorded reminiscence that allows the reader to ponder the consequences of an action while it still unfolding. All are successful because the author has managed to evoke the past with great accuracy and affectionate nostalgia. The past is viewed ambiguously: a mixture of disapproval of strict conventionality and a longing for its simplicity. Although these novels were written across the span of the last 50 years, it may not be just coincidence that they all deal with the decades at the turn of the century. Each transports one to the sentiments and mental processes of the earlier time.

In *Chamber Music* Catherine struggles to discover her true feelings beneath the mask of conventional realities and the reader is involved in the emotional struggle rather than just passively regarding life at a distant period.

Grumbach is clearly aware of the small scope of her book. One of the points that is repeated throughout is that MacLaren was mainly successful as a miniaturist in music. This novel is also a miniature, but none the less extraordinary of its small size. The lesbian relationship is drawn with loving tenderness, one of those rare cases in fiction where one is able to believe in an all-consuming affection. The social context of male homosexuality is well described. Both composers, Weeks and MacLaren, marry women despite their homosexual love. (It is a duty that is expected of them, not an attempt to hide their orientation.) Neither man is really sexually attracted to his wife or even emotionally involved with her. As the women have been trained to neither understand or enjoy sex, they do not find anything unusual in the situation. Catherine, for example, assumes her own inadequacies are responsible for her husband's lack of interest. The lesbian relationship is invisible to a less sophisticated public quite used to seeing a widow living with a housekeeper or companion. The existence of homosexual relationships in the sexually repressive era at the end of the nineteenth century is well delineated, but what is even more exceptional is that the experiences are conveyed as they would be from the consciousness of one whose ideas were formulated in that earlier period. The achievement is considerable. A reader with sensitivity should be deeply moved by *Chamber Music*. □

JL

HAPPY ENDINGS ARE ALL ALIKE

Sandra Scoppettone

Harper & Row, New York, 1978, \$6.95, 202 pages

Happy Endings Are All Alike is about two teenage lesbian lovers who reside in your typically affluent suburban community. Gardeners Point, "about 100 miles from New York" seems much like East Hampton. Janet Tyler and Peggy Danziger are intelligent, popular and attractive high school seniors, and the novel opens with the start of their relationship. The reaction of family, friends, and the general community to their lesbianism is one of the themes of the book. Attitudes are realistically described and run the gamut from relaxed acceptance to disgust and anger. The second major theme is the problem of rape. A mentally disturbed young male nicknamed "Mid" sees the two women making love in a secret hiding place in the woods. Mid, who is a few years younger than the women, is desperate to satisfy his own lust, and is en-

raged that the women are able to give each other such pleasure. When Janet lingers behind after Peggy leaves, he brutally and violently rapes her. The ensuing investigation and trial detail the usual lack of sympathy for female rape victims and the difficulties in prosecution of a rapist even where fault is obviously and completely one-sided. The two themes are interwoven to show how the strain of the trial and the decision of whether to prosecute burden a previously tranquil relationship. Because the law permits disclosure of everything about the sexual life of a rape victim whether or not it is relevant, once Janet decides to force the police to prosecute Mid, it makes her relationship to Peggy completely public.

Measured by its own limited intentions, the book is very successful. While it can be read profitably by adults, it seems to be directed mainly at a teenage audience. The jacket cover describes it as a book for people "twelve years and up." Unsympathetic social attitudes to rape and lesbianism are demonstrated here, but none of them is probed deeply. Favorable reactions are also much too facilely drawn; it is still too difficult to imagine most families being as immediately accepting of lesbianism as Janet's is without a considerable time of adjustment to the new knowledge. Few families in my experience manage such an excellent level of communication between parents and teenage children, and few allow such freedom of expression as that depicted here. This open communication makes the discussion of lesbianism far easier than it would be for most American families. And too, it seems that most teenagers, male or female, do not adjust quite so easily to their own awareness of homosexual feelings as the book suggests. Finally, it is unusual for anyone to establish a first relationship without more snarls than are pictured here. Janet and Peggy seem to accept their attraction for each other without any self-doubts and their affair grows stronger without a single serious problem.

The rape issue, by contrast, is treated more realistically. The extremely hostile attitude of many men is sharply drawn, and the stresses the rape places on Peggy and Janet's love is clear. Unfortunately, the book ends without resolving the issue posed in the rape trial, and it leaves one dissatisfied.

A notable achievement of the book is that it makes its points without being heavyhanded. The style is graceful, and filled with brisk, clever dialogue. Janet's brother, Chris, and her friend, Bianca, are cleverly conceived and executed character types who provide breezy humor and comic relief for what might otherwise have been an overdose of serious social message. If the book lacks depth in not probing issues very deeply, it nevertheless achieves a fast, engrossing pace.

For those who teach this is an excellent book for high school readers or young college students with some initial questions about lesbianism or feminism. It should serve a purpose similar to that served by the novels of Patricia Nell Warren for male homosexuality. □

Allegra Langsam

TANGIER

William Bayer

E.P. Dutton, New York, 1978, \$9.95, 350 pages

Only one-fifth of this novel contains references to homosexuality, but the references are significant enough to form a major theme of the plot, deserving careful examination.

This is William Bayer's sixth book since 1966. He lived in Tangier and has now returned to the United States. This novel contains the usual disclaimer ("All the characters in this novel are fictitious."), but since there is one scene which includes an unflattering portrayal of the adolescent Crown Prince of Morocco, who is hardly a fictitious character (whether or not the portrayal is correct), and since Bayer must have based his characters in some way on real persons he had seen in Tangier, this disclaimer must be taken with a grain of salt.

The handling of the gay theme in this novel recalls Tennessee Williams' *Suddenly Last Summer*, in which an American goes to an underdeveloped foreign nation, patronizes the local hustlers, and is finally murdered by them because they resent the shame of being exploited. A book has recently appeared which deals with the real-life murder of an American woman by her Mexican hustler/"lover." So Williams was not unrealistic about this resentment of the masses, which in gay situations, could be increased by the homophobia of hustlers who consider themselves completely heterosexual. In *Tangier*, the native slums lie at the foot of a hill crowned by the mansions of rich foreigners who exploit the masses, sexually and otherwise. At the end of the novel, the masses riot and attack the hill. The novel stresses the exploitative and "decadent" lifestyle of these foreigners, and the burning resentment of the locals. One of the main characters is a police inspector, Hamid Ouazzani, whose younger brother had been a kept boy. Hamid devotes himself to driving the foreign homosexuals away with the aid of a Canadian pederast named Robin Scott, whom Hamid has blackmailed into his service.

It may well be that Bayer is a socialist, and that the whole novel should be interpreted as standard leftist propaganda, complete with set speeches by resentful Third World activists. The novel does not, however, suffer from *agitprop* simplifications or other elements which would undermine the literary or entertainment value of the book. The book is amusing even if the condemnatory "message" is, never far from the surface. The homosexual characters, with few exceptions pederasts from English-speaking countries, have a prominent place in Bayer's rogues' gallery of exploitative foreigners, and their Moroccan boy-friends are hardly among the good guys of the plot. In particular, there is Mohammed Seraj, a.k.a. "Pumpkin Pie," the kept boy of a rich Paraguayan pederast. "Pie" is a schizophrenic, thief, liar, and savage murderer. The various chickenhawks are etched in acid: bitchy, two-faced, exploitative, cynical, and foolish. Exhibit Alpha:

"Oh, come, Patrick," Robin said. "What you say is cruel—to corrupt them with all your stuff and then throw them back on the dungheap when you're done."

"Not cruel at all, my boy. The dungheap's precisely where they belong. It's good for them to be there. Builds their characters, you see. Anyway, they can study me, and when I'm done with them they can sink or swim on their bloody own. . . ."

This is from the only totally gay chapter in the book, "The Picnic." At the end of the chapter Robin Scott muses about his departed gay guests. These words dot his reflections: "nasty," "foul," "pathetic," "pathos," "suffering," "absurd," "incompetent," "bitterness," "spite," "pretensions," "cruel," "self-deceiving fools," "flawed" and "powerless"; and this, mind you, is stuffed into only

one paragraph!

I have said that all of the gay characters are pederasts, a fact which by itself is enough to make many gay readers shudder, especially as Hamid is given to making speeches about wicked corruptors of children, "vice," and so forth—just like Whitehouse and Bryant and Hoy. But the idealistic pederast who reads this book will also cringe at the portrayal of "all" pederasts as cynics and exploiters, light-years away from Greek Love and its sensitive and caring practitioners. Hamid says to Scott, "It's racism, really—exploitation. Our boys are booty to be plundered, animals to be penetrated and used." Here we have an irresponsibly sweeping condemnation of all homosexuals, all pederasts, all Westerners. Of course, by now Americans should be used to such attacks. Every day Marxists tell us about evil Americans; feminists and effeminists tell us about evil males; lesbians tell us about evil pederasts; the straight Press tells us about evil homosexuals; anti-racists tell us about evil white people; and so forth. Bayer, in effect, has done the same thing that the French Communist Party did in early 1979—equated all homosexuals with pederasty, and denigrated all pederasts as child-molesters, while also adding on the accusation of Western Imperialism.

There are homosexuals and pederasts who are socialists, and they have said that it is their intention to teach heterosexual socialists to be tolerant to them. Well, they had better begin with Bayer, and before he attempts his next novel. Meanwhile, this reviewer, who is not unfamiliar with Tangier, can say that this novel reminded him of the most memorable aspect of the city in question—the pervasive smell of horseshit. □

Stephen Wayne Foster

A QUEER KIND OF DEATH

George Baxt

St. Martin's Press, New York, 1979, \$4.95, 249 pages

As part of its "gay series," St. Martin's Press has republished this 1966 mystery novel which won fine notices when it was first released. The setting for the novel is New York's gay subculture, and the victim is an attractive, young hustler, Ben Bentley, with a penchant for blackmail. Seth Piro, the narrator, is a bisexual writer who was much attracted to Ben and is determined to tell the story of his killing. The detective on the case is one Pharaoh Love (isn't that surname precious?), a black gay male who certainly belongs in the fictional pantheon of bizarre, police types. A supporting cast of caricatures (both gay and straight) fills out the list of suspects.

The plotline, central to the success of a who-dunnit, is excellent, and the novel's original reviews were sound. As Anthony Boucher noted, in a 1966 *New York Times* review, there is some compromise with strict fairness to the reader, but it does not greatly detract from one's ability to solve the mystery or from the general enjoyment provided by the book. All the necessary clues are there, but cleverly hidden or confounded with red herrings. The characters are delightful; the dialogue is good and the description of the gay milieu generally accurate.

Boucher also said that people might find the book shocking because of its lack of criticism of the gay subculture. But thirteen years later, its depictions seem so ordinary even commonplace in New York, that few readers would find them even mildly surprising. The mysteries of Richard Hall and John Paul Hudson by contrast, tell a great deal more about "the wild side," the easy pro-

miscuity in parts of the gay world. While Baxt describes a typical New York gay bar of the sixties, as well as an exceedingly elegant party and some of the more mercenary relationships of kept men, he ignores the less elegant, less bourgeois aspects of gay life. The lack of negative criticism about a gay orientation which was unusual in 1966 is hardly so in 1979.

Solomon Hastings, in "Homosexuals in the Mystery: Victims or Victimizers" (in Dilys Winn's *Murder Ink*, New York, 1977), compared the three Pharaoh Love mysteries (of which *A Queer Kind Of Death* is the first) to a gossip column in *Women's Wear Daily*, moving about glamorous society and meant as intentional high camp. For those who wish to consider some lesser known and earlier mysteries involving gay characters or a gay environment Hastings' article is recommended.

Mysteries like *A Queer Kind Of Death* make no pretense to edify or instruct, but nevertheless provide as good a description of the gay subculture as one can find in far more pretentious books. One wonders why St. Martin's has chosen to reprint this mystery story when much more serious material is in greater need of republication. Also, a price of \$4.95, for a paperback of ordinary length, seems excessive. With these caveats, the novel should please whodunit fans, at least. □

JL

THE VIEW FROM THE CLOSET: ESSAYS ON GAY LIFE AND LIBERATION, 1973-1977

A. Nolder Gay

Union Park Press, Boston (P.O. Box 2737, 02208), 1978, \$3.00, 108 pages

One indisputable dividend of the new openness of the post-Stonewall years has been the emergence of the personality of A. Nolder Gay, who has shown that there is no incompatibility between a free spirit and a critical intelligence. In a series of delightful, sometimes poignant columns in Boston's *Gay Community News* he has made us familiar with his own views about many pressing and not so pressing issues of the day, as well as those of his companion. A. Younger Gay and his alter ego, the cat Mischief. Then, as a result of some obscure, and now forgotten editorial disagreement, A. Nolder left *GCN* to write for Boston's rival organ, *Esplanade*. It was worth getting the new paper just to lay hands on his column. Now pressures of other duties have restricted somewhat his production of these scintillating pieces. But compensation is afforded by this book.

The original columns have been rearranged according to theme: memories of earlier days, observations of current life styles, "aging gayly," the movement, special occasions, Boston rambles, other gays, and "just for fun." The two main themes are gay diversity (including the interaction of the generations) and the perennial charms of Boston. (Despite some occasional anti-New York static emanating from that quarter, this Gothamite reviewer, at least, retains the feeling that Boston is a kind of second home, though circumstances have prevented my spending much time there). Some of the pieces contain little essays reporting the results of A. Nolder Gay's forays in search of half-forgotten personalities of the past; people whose stories should not be lost to us.

Recently a new genre of gay book has sprung up which attempt to explain to straights who we are and what we do. Of all the representatives of the type *The*

View from the Closet is the first volume I would put into the hands of a curious heterosexual person. In its pages they will meet as fine a personification of the gay life style as one could expect to find anywhere.

It is probably already clear, in any event that the glowing blend of urbanity, wit and good feeling that this book so richly decants is impossible to describe or even to convey by selective quotation. You must buy the book. □

Buddy von Lausitz

A GAY DIARY: 1933-46

Donald Vining

The Pepys Press, New York, 1979, \$5.95, 500 pages

Vining's Diary, though valuable historically, is unlikely to interest the average reader. Samuel Pepys he isn't. Even with considerable condensation, this printed dairy covers a span of about fourteen years in almost five hundred pages of small print. But as in Kantrowitz's recent *Under the Rainbow*, there is little of intrinsic interest in the author's life. The title is also somewhat misleading. Certainly the author is a homosexual, but his sexual orientation is not the chief subject of his interest at the time he writes. One hundred pages pass before there is any mention of even a homosexual attraction, and there are only a few references in the first half of the book. The next 150 pages include a significant amount of discussion about the author's sexual interests; only in the last 100 pages does his sexual and romantic interest come to the fore in keeping with the title. The slow evolution of his homosexual orientation and adaptation to the gay subculture is a very accurate representation of one individual's process of "coming out," but I doubt that many readers will fight through the tediously ordinary details of Vining's life to read about it. Only one with the propensities of a prospector would be willing to sift through so much dirt for a few miserable nuggets of insight.

The diary begins when Vining is a fifteen-year-old high school senior in a small, eastern Pennsylvania town. He lives with his mother, who has long since been separated from his father, and they eke out a precarious existence on her commissions selling encyclopedias. His first year at Carnegie Tech ends after a single semester because his has not money to pay his tuition. Two years later, he attends West Chester College, and most of his diary entries are about his amateur theatre activities. Although aware of his orientation at this time, it plays almost no part in his life. Next he attends Yale drama school and begins to work seriously on a career as a playwright. His homosexual interest become of greater concern to him, but he mainly describes "crushes" on which he was incapable of acting. He had only a few actual sexual experiences and he found them so unsatisfying that he thought of himself as asexual.

After finishing at Yale, he works in an army canteen in New Jersey, and then comes to New York where he is a clerk in the YMCA (he certainly found interesting jobs). He works for a short time in California and then returns to New York. He uses his spare time pursuing a career as a writer, and some small pieces are published.

Gradually his sexual interests began to absorb more of his time and energy. He learned how one meets sexual partners in movies, in the YMCA, in Central Park, and in an occasional bar. While many things about cruising are similar to today, the dangers of being brutalized by a trick

or harassed and arrested by the police were more serious, and Vining was a victim of both of these problems until he became more familiar with his way around the gay world.

He slowly becomes more sexually adept and finds more enjoyment in his sexual experiences. He begins to look for a relationship rather than just sex partners, fumbling badly at first and becoming wiser in his choices over a period of time. One can watch as he grows more relaxed in the gay social world. The lifting of the economic stress of the Depression can be seen on Vining and his mother. Although he is never financially successful, he is less subject to economic pressures as time passes and this influences his entire life.

Various diaries and journals of gay individuals have recently been put into print (see *GBB* 1, 2, for reviews of the works of Lane; Matthiessen and Cheny) Vining's is far less interesting than any of the others, either from a literary perspective or in terms of the intrinsic interest of his experiences. Useful mainly as a source for the social historian, it can help to provide a picture of the gay subculture in New York and to a lesser extent in Los Angeles during World War II. It shows the process of "coming out" at the time for at least a single individual, and gives some insight into the life styles of gay men and the specialized argot used in the community. The similarities of the gay subculture are striking. The differences, in terms of the probability of arrest and the impossibility of living openly, or at least as openly as one can as after the post-Stonewall gay rights movement, are also clear.

The diary does show that mental anguish about one's sexual orientation was not always a part of gay people's lives. While Vining has used some of the vocabulary from the "illness school" of psychology, and speaks of "perversion," there is only a single entry in the diary where he speculates on the causes of his homosexuality. However slow he may have been in making sexual contact, he seems to have avoided any special guilt about them, and never once considers whether he might be able to change.

Other than for its value as social history, I cannot imagine anyone being patient enough to plow through this lengthy work. The original, unabridged manuscript remains in the Yale University Library and would probably serve the purposes of a social historian far better than the printed work. Unlike other personal narratives, reading bits and pieces at random will not be rewarding. There are almost no annotations to interrupt the flow of the continuous reading, but this also makes individual entries in the diary more difficult to understand out of context. The unattractive layout and small print increase the difficulties of reading as well as making the price seem ridiculously steep. Overall this is a book of limited appeal. □

JL

BIG BILL TILDEN

Frank Deford

Simon & Schuster, New York, 1976, \$8.95, 286 pages

This important biography of an outstanding sports figure is the expansion of a two-part magazine article originally published in *Sports Illustrated* in early 1975. Tilden is generally considered to be the finest tennis player in the history of the sport. He completely dominated every tournament for almost the entire decade of the 1920s. The tennis aspects of Tilden's life dominate

this biography, of course, but there is considerable discussion of his homosexuality. Although it was public knowledge, since he was twice arrested for solicitation, Tilden's homosexuality has usually been dismissed or ignored in writings about him.

Tilden's sexual expression was unusual, even within the social constraints of the United States in the second quarter of this century. His homosexual interest was only in teenagers. His first sexual contact, at the age of ten, consisted of mutual masturbation with another boy, and this relationship lasted for five or six years. He had similar sexual encounters with a fellow student at the University of Pennsylvania, but these were his last contacts with men of his own age. He was never very active sexually, but he became more so towards the end of the thirties, as his tennis fame diminished. He began to solicit young men, sometimes in public places, and he was probably blackmailed several times before his arrests. Tilden was always ashamed of his own body, and never appeared nude in a locker room. When he had sex with his young partners, it consisted merely of fondling the boy's genitals; apparently he would never open his own fly or get an erection, and he considered both anal and oral sex to be perverted.

Ironically for someone who had so little sexual activity and who never had any contact socially with other gay men, Tilden was unsuccessful in hiding his preferences. The erotic character of his intense interest in younger players and attractive blond ball boys did not escape the attention of others. Tilden was protected from discrimination by an upper-class background and his phenomenal athletic success, but as his fame began to wane people's true feelings were exposed. After his first arrest, he found it next to impossible to get a teaching job, and was refused the right to play at most clubs where tournaments were held. Several players publicly expressed their disgust of his homosexuality. It is interesting to note in passing that European players were considerably more blasé about Tilden's homosexuality than their American counterparts.

After his second arrest, Tilden was convicted and sent to jail mainly because of his own stubbornness in refusing to plead guilty at his trial. Against the advice of his attorney he defended his case, and a homophobic judge decided to use him as an example. And this despite the fact that the young man whose parents wanted Tilden prosecuted was probably a street hustler who took the initiative in seducing Tilden for purposes of blackmail. Tilden was sent to jail and forced to seek psychiatric treatment upon his release.

Because he had saved no money from his years of fame and because there was no possibility of earning a living after release from prison, his last few years were truly tragic. Few in the tennis establishment tried to help him, most refused to even speak to him. Since his death, the personal details of his life have been glossed over in most writing about him, though while his public achievements in tennis are still lauded. Frank Deford has done us a service by providing a more complete picture of a man who made significant accomplishments despite the homophobia of his times that denied him full and free sexual expression.

Regrettably, the author knows a great deal more about tennis than about sexuality, but he makes an attempt to be fair and reasonably nonjudgmental. There are, however, a few major flaws; occasional references to stereotypes about effeminacy and an uncritical reliance on Irving Bieber's theory of causation. Tilden's mother is described as a "textbook case." More important,

Deford seems to be unaware of how social pressures influenced Tilden's sexual development or how Tilden's difficulties resulted from people's attitudes toward his homosexuality rather than from the homosexual impulse itself.

In a short part of the book Delford speculates on the role of gays in American professional sports. He disagrees with Kopay's claims (*The David Kopay Story*) that reasonable numbers of gay men are found in all sports. He dismisses what he labels as the "macho myth," but still feels gays are found in only a few sports. No evidence is offered, however, to support these conclusions.

Despite these limitations, the book can be read profitably. One of its strengths is that the book doesn't flinch from treating Tilden's homosexuality openly and fully. The book should at least make a contribution toward ending the public misconception that male homosexuality and athletic prowess are incompatible. □

JL

THE TRANSEXUAL EMPIRE: THE MAKING OF THE SHE MALE

Janice G. Raymond

Beacon Press, Boston, 1979, \$12.95, 220 pages

Although the possibility was envisioned by the Roman Emperor Heliogabalus, the first authenticated case of an operation purporting to change a man into a woman seems to have taken place in Denmark in the early 1930s. The term transsexual was introduced by Dr. Harry Benjamin in 1953, the same year that Christine Jorgensen made headlines. A decade later Johns Hopkins Hospital gave its imprimatur, for the first time in the United States, to the procedure. Today, transsexuals, pre- and post-operative, are ubiquitous on the TV talk shows, and public curiosity is apparently insatiable. The ultimate form of sociobiological plasticity seems to have arrived.

Since the great majority of the operations sought and performed are from male to female rather than vice versa, Janice G. Raymond is justified in concentrating her challenging study on the Jan Morris and Renee Richardses. She advances some powerful reasons for scepticism regarding the claims of the advocates of such surgery, as well as of some satisfied post-operatives, who would have us believe that a genuine conversion from one gender to another has been achieved. She points to the uncontrovertible fact that a shift from XY to XX chromosomes, which would be essential for full femaleness, is not accomplished, and that the maintenance of secondary female characteristics requires a lifetime dependency on medical intervention through hormone injections. Transsexuals must always live in fear that they may be cut off from their supply of the drugs that keep them looking like women. Clearly transsexuals cannot menstruate, be impregnated or bear children. Then, too, on a psychological plane, the shaping of gender identity is, for all of us, a long Odyssey, beginning with life in the womb and developing through infancy, adolescence and adulthood. The acquisition of the conditioning of a lifetime (not to mention the sloughing off of a different conditioning) cannot be attained through surgery, hormone therapy, or even studied mimicry of the desired sex. For all these reasons the author seems justified in regarding the operation as simply a complicated form of castration. Thus, her neologism, "male-to-constructed-female," makes sense. It may seem cruel, after all the pain and travail that these

people have undergone, but their claim to be accepted as women simply cannot be taken at face value.

Raymond charges that the medical proponents have neglected to ensure proper followups of those who might be unhappy about the results of their surgery. Great mental anguish and actual physical malfunctioning are often the result, but these unhappy outcomes receive little publicity. In fact they are hushed up. Raymond sees the whole program as one of medical opportunism, providing renown, and, of course, money, to those who are involved in it. Hence the title, *Transsexual Empire*. Now there is considerable truth in the contentions of Ivan Illich and others that the authoritarianism and greed of large sectors of the American medical establishment are becoming overweening. Yet it does not seem clear that transsexual operations are, or threaten to become, a very large share of the overall American medical empire. It has many richer provinces to exploit. (Recently, in apparent vindication of Raymond's critique, The Johns Hopkins Hospital, the leading center for transsexual operations, has announced the cessation of such surgery.)

Raymond plausibly suggests that the operations need to be set in a larger social context. She holds that the present society is characterized throughout by the total dominion of patriarchy or male supremacy. Since every component institution must be in accord with this overarching purpose, she sees the operations as amounting to a male attempt to expropriate the very essence of femininity. Having enslaved women, the power structure may now be contemplating simply eliminating them altogether, and replacing them by surrogates: male-to-constructed-females. As a putative social policy this seems paranoid. Yet the fact that it can be seriously entertained by such a lucid scholar as the author of this book suggests that something is even more seriously wrong with communication between the genders than we had thought. As yet, one notes no enthusiasm by members of the American power elite to undergo such operations themselves, or to offer their sons for them. The practice is viewed with ridicule and disgust, or at best with tolerant amusement. Raymond's error lies in part in the premise that patriarchy is so pervasive as to permeate each and every corner of our society, so that everything that happens, however much it seems to go against the current, must be somehow "objectively" operating to fulfill the plan. In anthropology this tendency to exaggerate the cohesion of a society, perceiving it as a kind of prisoner of one totalizing principle, is known as "functionalism." Clearly, in a complex industrial society such as our own, there are degrees of domination, and the type of society that the Ayatollah Khomeini is striving to establish in Iran will be much more nearly total in its patriarchalism than anything we have seen here. In the United States, though male domination is indisputable, some real enclaves of female autonomy exist, and always have existed. The publication of Raymond's own research is itself proof of that.

It is not clear that the author has been successful in debunking a somewhat more positive explanation for the urge that some men feel to switch genders. These men may have perceived that for some it seems, on balance, more advantageous to be female than male. Women do have some genuine privileges in our "sexist" society, and they are less afflicted by some major hangups than men are. So the decision to undergo surgery may represent the rational outcome of a cost-benefit analysis. But to admit enclaves of exception would not be in keeping with the author's radical stance; it smacks of reformism and she tries to exclude it.

Casting our attention forward to possible futures, one cannot be sure that the overthrow of the present "patriarchal" order would lead to something markedly better, any more than the supercession of capitalism by so-called socialism in large parts of Eurasia has produced clear advantages for the inhabitants of those regions. Even if one were certain that it would work, the changeover—necessarily involving the blocking and reversal of so many deeply rooted conditioning mechanisms—could not be accomplished right away. Hence the quandary of those who reject therapy in favor of revolution: what does one do while waiting for deliverance to come? And it could be a very long wait. So it does not seem that the solution to the problem of gender dysphoria lies in this direction in the foreseeable future. Perhaps there must be a realization that some life-niches are simply unsatisfactory.

An incidental bonus of the book is a critique of the fashionable cant about androgyny. Raymond shows that in many instances this recommendation, rather than an equitable merger of the sexes, amounts to a male effort to capture feminine values and thereby ensure continued dominance.

All in all, this is a polemic that makes one think. It presents extensive research and reflection in clear and forceful language. In the reviewer's opinion, Raymond is more successful in questioning the glib rationales that have been advanced for transsexual procedures (including the perennial, but ludicrous image of a "woman's soul in a man's body") than she is in demonstrating her own explanation of transsexualism as part of a male scenario to dispense with women altogether. Instead of seeking their extinction, the typical macho man would be more likely to urge their eternal presence as objects of exploitation. Slavery is evil, but it is not the same as genocide. Women are, of course, right to oppose such exploitation, and to generate countervailing power against it, but it is seriously to be doubted whether they are threatened with being replaced by these "constructed females." Women are too essential to any sane image of humanity for any large number of men, gay or straight, to contemplate their elimination with any equanimity. Indeed, most of us would rather see the human race perish altogether, than to allow one-half of it to be lost. □

Vladmir Cervantes

LOVE AND ADDICTION

Stanton Peele and Archie Brodsky

Signet Books, New York, 1976, paper, \$2.25, 309 pages

The first page of the Introduction to *Love and Addiction* stirs interest. "Addiction has as much to do with love as it does with drugs. We often say 'love' when we really mean, and are acting out an addiction—a sterile, ingrown dependency relationship, with another person serving as the object of our need for security." Misunderstanding the nature of addiction makes our lover-relationship vulnerable to self-serving dependency.

Peele and Brodsky trace the historical development of various cultural attitudes towards drugs ranging from opium to marijuana and explain the persisting effects of earlier patterns on the present use of drugs. They arrive at a startling conclusion which they proceed to amplify: "Where the experts have gone wrong, of course, is in conceiving of the creation of dependence as an attribute of drugs, whereas in reality it is an attribute of people." What it takes to gratify psychological needs determines the price we will pay to satisfy addiction for people,

drugs, activities, institutions. The pain of absence is irremediable until the stimulation is supplied or self-control is achieved.

Some addicts replace one stimulation or outside control with another to survive and avoid unwanted responsibility. This can be a temporary lifesaving procedure in breaking the "chain of reciprocal dependency that locks us into our past." Regeneration goes beyond substituting one addiction for another. Effective rehabilitation motivates the addict to want outside his addictive group and prepares him to cope with the rest of the world.

The authors describe the psychological conditions that lead to addiction. They contend anything that can release consciousness can be addictive. The addict is filled with fear, not rebellion; recoils from challenges; seeks outside-control, not self-control. The stronger the addiction becomes, the more difficult it is to deal with basic anxieties. Withdrawal symptoms are expressions of fear at loss of sole source of reassurance in a threatening world. "The difference between not being addicted and being addicted is the difference between seeing the world as your arena and seeing the world as your prison."

Addiction is rooted "in childhood dependency needs and stunted family relationships." This statement is illustrated by case studies of lovers, famous and not-so-famous. A series of questions is posed for the reader's self-analysis of the quality of his own lover relationship: 1. Does each lover have a secure belief in his or her own value? 2. Are the lovers improved by the relationship? 3. Do the lovers maintain serious interests outside the relationship? 4. Is the relationship integrated into the totality of the lover's lives? 5. Are the lovers beyond being possessive or jealous of each other's growth and expansion of interests? 6. Are the lovers also friends?

Anything can be an addiction, "love and marriage, home and school, medicine and psychiatry, drugs and religion," but nothing has to be. "Practically speaking, we can only make the personal decision to treat something as an addiction on the basis of how much we see it hurting us, and how much we want to be rid of it. Accepting ourselves in our imperfection, though with insight and determination to change, we are ready to become responsive beings."

Love and Addiction has a style that can make it a landmark in the field of self-study. It is not the result of a definitive survey or of exhaustive research. Peele and Brodsky are aware of these approaches to their topic, but they chose a different, perhaps more difficult approach, which may result in their work being overlooked by scholarly journals while it is being read by addicts and their friends. Hurting people who know about addiction from personal experience can benefit from this popular approach. □

Robert Park

SEX LAW

Tony Honoré

Duckworth, London, 1978, £8.95, 200 pages

SEX, CRIME, AND THE LAW

Donal E.J. MacNamara and Edward Sagarin

The Free Press (Macmillan), New York, 1977, \$4.95, paperback 291 pages

After two centuries of political independence one might think that the ties linking United States legal theory

and practice with those of Britain would have disappeared. But even now Britain remains a kind of jurisprudential *eminence grise* because of both the inherent conservatism of the shared Common Law tradition, and the overarching role of the English language. For example, the shibboleth "to deprave and corrupt" has long been a staple of obscenity decisions in this country; yet this phrase is, in fact, part of the Hicklin standard, enunciated by Lord Chief Justice Cockburn in 1868. The reception and continuation of Hicklin in this country shows that English legal influence has not been confined to Common Law traditions laid down before 1776, which is normal and indeed ineluctable, but that a substantial penumbra of legal thinking has continued to affect this country from the other side of the Atlantic. With regard to homosexuality, recent opinion in Britain—whether positive, as in the liberal Wolfenden Report (1957), or negative, as in Lord Patrick Devlin's preposterous *The Enforcement of Morals* (1965)—tends to be particularly resonant on these shores.

At first glance the new volume on *Sex Law* would seem to merit respectful attention in North America. Honoré's credentials are solid: he is Regius Professor of Civil Law at Oxford, and author of a substantial monograph on Tribonian, the chief architect of Justinian's *Corpus Juris Civilis*. He writes in a flowing and accessible style, and does not hesitate to use street language where appropriate. Although the text is relatively compact, it is buttressed with an extensive apparatus of references to cases and opinions, including some American examples. The book's range is impressive: marriage, cohabitation, women as victims, homosexuality and prostitution are all considered. In each chapter the author first lays out the existing social situation, then the (British) law as it stands, and finally offers suggestions for change.

The initial impression is one of liberality and fair-mindedness. Honoré advocates some major changes, including the legalization of prostitution and the lowering of the age of consent for homosexual conduct to eighteen (to accord with heterosexual legislation). Yet serious problems arise in the reasoning, and particularly in the discussions of homosexuality. Honoré believes that three broad reasons have prevailed for the legal proscription of same-sex acts: the need to promote population growth, protection of the family, and the supposed "unnatural" character of homosexual acts. Although he admits that recent social shifts have blunted the force of the first two, he nonetheless insists that (male) "homosexuality tends to undermine the economic position of women, most of whom look for support to their husbands." The Oxford professor is confident that the nuclear family will continue in pretty much its present form, and that men and women will in general be called "to do their duty" within it. Women will be out of the labor force while birthing and caring for the children, and men will support them. Thus, his grounds for the discouragement of homosexuality appear to rest in large measure on the maintenance of the present system of gender inequality. Fortunately, such an argument is not destined to cut much of a swath in this country, except among the Phyllis Schlafly contingent. Honoré also justifies the exemption of lesbians from legal sanctions; this is all right, he smugly avers, for they suffer in other ways. In his view both forms of homosexuality are to be discouraged, and children must not be brought up to believe that a gay life style is a valid option.

Throughout his various arguments on homosexuality Honoré adheres to a position not unlike that of Lord Devlin. The law—or at least the magistrates—has a duty to guide behavior according to prevailing moral standards.

"In education . . . courts are entitled to give some effect to the moral preferences of society." Any prolonged contact with British courts reveals a tradition of paternalism that is happily less tolerated in the United States. This tradition of judicial imperiousness would appear to go back to a period when in much of rural England, the lord and the judge were the same person. It also reflects the British lack of anything comparable to our Bill of Rights. One begins to see more clearly why the American Revolution took place.

This book offers some interesting arguments and useful documentation for the comparative law scholar. Our habits of legal Anglophilia notwithstanding, its actual influence on this side of the water will probably remain limited, and, on balance, we should be thankful for this.

Sex, Crime and the Law by Donal E.J. MacNamara and Edward Sagarin (a.k.a. Donald Webster Cory) would at first appear to provide the needed American counterpart to Honoré. The scope is ambitious with substantial chapters on forcible rape, sex between adults and minors, prostitution, homosexuality, and pornography. As an added bonus the writers offer shorter discussions of such topics as exhibitionism, cross-dressing, and even obscene telephone calls. Closer examination yields disappointment, however, for the authors seem to have sacrificed depth for breadth of coverage.

In the introduction MacNamara and Sagarin admit that the concept of a "sex crime" is a contested one. They discuss but do not endorse the idea of getting rid of the category altogether. It does not in fact seem to be deeply rooted in either the Common or the Civil Law traditions. Our two guides are not strong on legal history or philosophy. Claiming to be hewing to a middle path between the moralists and the "sexual freedomists," they produce an essentially descriptive account, largely sociological in emphasis. They achieve their dispassionate presentation, at the expense of an amorphous indeterminacy, of the "on the one hand, on the other" variety. Their stance is a fairly liberal one—the recommendations of the Model Penal Code are endorsed—but the general inconclusiveness of tone and argument deprives the book of force.

In some respects *Sex, Crime and the Law* is reasonably well documented, with notes, bibliography and glossary. Lack of references to cases makes the book of little use to the lawyer. The main value of this essentially introductory work will be to high school and college students who wish a first orientation to some topic of current social concern. It is unlikely to do them harm, but it will hardly inspire, either. This is a book to borrow from somebody else's library. □

Sean Eichenbaum

"Symposium: Sexual Preference and Gender Identity"
HASTINGS LAW JOURNAL, Vol. 30, No. 4, March 1979.
198 McAllister Street, San Francisco, CA 94102, \$3.00

A single issue of a law review may at first glance appear to lie outside the normal purview of *GBB*. Yet this publication contains two long articles, in effect small books, that will probably long be read by those concerned with homosexuality and the law. In fact, in view of our society's lamentable tendency to criminalize homosexual behavior, they are of real interest to anyone concerned with same-sex relationships. At the price, the issue is a remarkable bargain.

Of the seven articles comprising the symposium, two

are truly exceptional. The first of these studies, "Our Straight-Laced Judges: The Legal Position of Homosexual Persons in the United States" (pp. 799-956), is by Rhonda R. Rivera and paints a very broad canvas. Professor Rivera, of Ohio State University, attempts nothing less than a comprehensive review and analysis of the legal position of homosexuals today throughout the United States. The wealth of documentation in the 938 footnotes—citations of legal cases and secondary sources—is impressive. Even advanced specialists in the field of homosexual civil rights will find nuggets of real value here. The article will certainly take its place as an essential reference for lawyers.

The sheer scope and bulk of Rivera's attempt commands respect and attention, yet the order of presentation of the material is, for the layman at least, less praiseworthy. Only towards the end of the article, on page 942, does one reach the heart of the matter: the criminalization of homosexual behavior. This crucial topic ought to have been set at the beginning. In each separate instance, it is criminalization, and whether a state constitutes what is termed a "reformed" or "nonreformed" jurisdiction, that determines the framework in which all other legal proceedings occur. Once a state has advanced to reform status, (decriminalization), the older repressive legislation and decisions luckily become obsolete. Reform is a watershed, therefore, and the status of the jurisdiction is decisive in the choice of legal strategy in each locality. Since this fundamental distinction is postponed until almost the close of the lengthy article, it becomes difficult to see the forest for the trees. A second problem is that of determining the cut-off date for individual states; sometimes Rivera's data extends until 1978, at other times it ceases before. This produces a certain unevenness in overall treatment. Needless to say, it is essential for lawyers to have the very latest information. But the wealth of citations should make this article a goldmine of data for the historian as well as the lawyer. Rivera essentially supersedes E. Carrington Boggan et al.'s pioneering *The Rights of Gay People* (Avon paperback, 1975), though the latter will still be usefully consulted by laypeople seeking a clear and sympathetic introduction to the field.

The second major article in this landmark issue of the *Hastings Law Journal* is "Sexual Autonomy and the Constitutional Right to Privacy: A Case Study in Human Rights and the Unwritten Constitution" (pp. 957-1018) by Professor David Richards, of New York University. The two articles are in some respects complementary, for Richards concentrates on key issues in legal reasoning rather than Rivera's vast and complex pattern of current practice. His arguments show a remarkable subtlety and power of discrimination. They are nurtured not only by recent work in legal theory, but confront also a number of issues posed by the whole Western philosophical tradition; thus Aristotle, Augustine, Hume, Kant and Nietzsche are all discussed. Richards' work is of critical value to the historian of ideas as well as to the legal scholar.

A crucial distinction Richards brings out is that of separating what he terms countermajoritarianism, the right for minorities to be protected against the majority, from the influential strain of legal utilitarianism, which if pursued to its ultimate consequences, may indeed give support to just such a tyranny of the majority. Richards takes care to root these perceptions in the American traditions of the early days of the Republic, as reflected in our institutions and in the Constitution. The article will be found stimulating by anyone who has even remotely

considered these issues. It is hard to dispute Richards' forceful and well supported conclusion that criminalizing the homosexual minority is not consonant with our most cherished traditions.

Readers of Richards' book, *The Moral Criticism of Law* (Encino, CA, 1977), will find here the same care in using language, the same willingness to follow an argument as far as need be without bludgeoning it to death, and the same limber use of citations and references. This article is an important landmark: it deserves to be read, carefully studied and applied. □

Evelyn Gettone

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE SEXES: WRITINGS ON WOMEN, LOVE AND MARRIAGE, SEXUALITY AND ITS DISORDERS

Alfred Adler

Edited & translated by Heinz L. & Rowena R. Ansbacher
Anchor Books, Garden City, 1978, paper \$3.95, 468 pages

HARRY STACK SULLIVAN: HIS LIFE AND HIS WORK

A. H. Chapman

Putnam, New York, 1976, \$8.95, 280 pages

Freud appointed Alfred Adler (1870-1937) President of his Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in 1910. But friction soon developed and the leading apostle found himself subjected to a heresy trial. According to Freud, his fault lay in the fact that he "denies the importance of the libido and traces everything back to aggression." Taking a few followers with him, Adler started a secessionist Society for Individual Psychology. Under socialist auspices he established a famous children's school in Vienna. Although his psychiatric teachings were transplanted to America, the tendency he founded never fully recovered from the dislocations of World War II. When one considers his views on homosexuality perhaps this is just as well.

At first glance, Adler's ideas retain a certain appeal as an alternative to Freud's system because of their greater accord with common sense. Ultimately, Adler sees human existence as a goal-oriented striving for power. He developed the idea of the inferiority complex, and is thought to have invented the term "life style," which was to enjoy an enormous vogue after his death.

Alfred Adler was not a systematic expositor of his own thought. He seems to have struggled to put forth short paragraphs, stringing these together to form articles and books. In this collection by the Ansbachers these fragments have been somewhat reorganized according to topic. Footnotes permit one to date the sources, and in general the selections seem to mirror faithfully the master's views.

As the title suggests, the present collection—the compilers' third—has been produced to meet the current interest in women, gender roles and sexual variation. In his early days Adler seems to have regarded the female as definitely inferior, and his key notion of masculine protest is founded on the idea of the male's need to overcome feminine weakness in himself. In the 1920s his views mellowed, as he came belatedly to grips with Social Democrat August Bebel's book, *Women and Socialism* (1885). But there remained a gap between the rhetoric of his espousal of gender equality and his actual beliefs. He continued to hold that biology placed definite limits on women's achievement, especially in the sphere of employment,

even though these limits had been exaggerated by Victorianism. His paternalistic approach to the matter is aptly symbolized by his remark—intended in all seriousness—that women ought to erect a statue to him for everything he had done for them! Never a revolutionary, Adler advocated the usual psychiatric goal of adjustment to the prevailing social reality. This put him in the paradoxical position of admitting that the existing order was distorted about the roles of men and women, but women make themselves neurotic by opposing it.

His views on homosexuals were unambiguous: he placed them among the "failures of life," together with prostitutes and criminals. The full flavor of his dismal preceptivism is best conveyed by quotation.

Rejection of homosexuality is spontaneously founded in the social feeling (*Gemeinschaftsgefühl*), and grows and diminishes in accordance with the strength of the social coherence. Consequently, the homosexual will always meet with the difficulties of social ostracism, legal measures, the reproach of sin.

Tragically, a similar appeal to popular feelings was made by the Nazis only a few years later in order to justify the persecution of Jews and psychoanalysts, together with homosexuals. But Adler had failed to see that freedom is indivisible. Expanding on this theme, he asked,

Why do most people take an actually hostile attitude toward homosexuality? Why do they consider it a sin, a vice, or a crime, and why is it treated in most civilized countries as a punishable offense? ... Alone the logic of man's living together, the urge to preserve the human race—in short, the inherent communal feeling in man—is what compels people toward the energetic rejection of homosexuality.

Generalizing, he opines that "homosexuality is an expression of great discouragement and hopeless pessimism."

These views constitute a recycling of earlier religious and legal taboos into pseudoscientific principles. Examined critically, they represent little more than a pandering to popular prejudice.

The brief quotations just cited show the venom of Adler's homoerotophobia as standing in great contrast to the restrained utterances of Sigmund Freud. They are more in accord with the hysterical rantings of certain Freudians who settled in the United States, such as Edmund Bergler and Karl Menninger. It seems likely, then that despite the general proscription of his work by Freud, and the guardians of his psychoanalytic Politburo, Adler's ideas nevertheless seeped in. There is, in fact, some justice for the book's long concluding essay in which the Ansbachers try to show that their hero's current influence is much greater than usually supposed. The overarching task for the historian is to explain how, in transplantation to America, psychoanalysis was gradually altered so as to come into close accord with repressive middle-class values, thereby becoming simply an instrument of social control. Institutionalized psychiatry in America lost whatever little emancipatory content it had once possessed in Europe. The results for homosexuals have been disastrous, and despite the effective debunking performed by Hans J. Eysenk, Thomas Szasz, Dorothy Tennov and others, much remains to be done.

Standing in sharp contrast to the bigoted Adler, Harry Stack Sullivan (1892-1949) is the only major theoretician of psychiatry definitely known to have been homosexual. Raised in a remote rural environment in Upstate New York, he failed to complete his first year of college. Instead he obtained a dubious medical qualification

in 1917 from a "diploma mill" in Chicago. The memory of these early struggles left a permanent mark on Sullivan, causing him to dissemble and even lie. After his reputation had been secured, he continued to feel a pervasive sense of unease and to lash out unaccountably at colleagues. This sort of life history helps to explain why he assigned a major role to anxiety in his theorizing and teaching.

He spent much of his life in hospital situations, tackling especially difficult cases of schizophrenia, which orthodox psychoanalysis refused to consider. In 1927 he adopted one of his patients, a fifteen-year-boy, James, who became his secretary and companion. Although Sullivan's clinical practice showed great courage and a considerable degree of success, he was not easy to get along with. His extreme defensiveness was the product of the two great uneasinesses that plagued his life: the fear that his lack of professional training would be revealed, and the dread of public exposure as a homosexual—as a "physician who could not heal himself," in keeping with the censorious ideas of the time. Not surprisingly, Sullivan increasingly sought relief from these pressures in alcohol.

Even now his theories are hard to grasp. He is sometimes classed as a neo-Freudian, but he was given to bitter attacks on the Viennese thinker. He was bold (or foolhardy) enough to throw out the concept of the Unconsciousness altogether. During his lifetime Sullivan published only one book. Due to the deficiencies of his early education this volume, and the posthumous ones compiled by disciples from notes they had taken at his lectures and consultations, remain opaque. He held that interpersonal relations forged in the social arena, rather than deep-seated inner conflicts, are the key to the development of the self. Anxiety and the quest for security are the major poles in the dynamic of self-affirmation. In general, one cannot help being struck by the theoretical poverty of Sullivan's system. During his lifetime, this thinness was compensated by his intuitive perceptiveness in the therapeutic and teaching situations. His disciples have been able to continue his example only imperfectly, and it is likely that the tendency he started will gradually fade away.

A.H. Chapman deals frankly with Sullivan's homosexuality and early training deficiencies. He grapples valiantly with the task of clarifying the axioms of the Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry. What he does not come to terms with is the likelihood that Sullivan would have been more creative as a theorist and much happier as a person had he not been hobbled by psychiatry's institutionalized prejudice against homosexuality. □

WD

THE DEATH OF NARCISSUS

Morris Fraser

Secker & Warburg, London, 1976, £4.90

I recall, from college, Dr. Russell Nye's comments on Leslie Fiedler's study, "Come Back to the Raft, Huck Honey." "The first time you read it," he said, "You think, 'My God, why didn't I ever see that?' The second time, you realize why: He's wrong." That is precisely the reaction to a fascinating but wrongheaded work, *The Death of Narcissus*, by the British psychoanalyst Morris Fraser, which, in its psychological-literary critical method, bears more than a passing resemblance to Fiedler's study.

It is Fraser's supposition that by analyzing the literary works of paedophilic authors, or works with paedophile themes, with reference as well to the authors' life histories, information may be gained on the causation and

possible treatment of this sexual variant. The central six chapters of the book are devoted to such a psychological-literary examination of the works of James Barrie, Hugh Walpole, Forrest Reid, Henry James, Lewis Carroll, George MacDonald and F.W. Farrar, with additional examples from authors as different as Thomas Mann, Edgar Allen Poe, Charles Kingsley, Oscar Wilde, J.F. Bloxham, Howard Sturgis, Michael Davidson, Vladimir Nabokov, Roger Peyrefitte, Michel Tournier and Angus Stewart. To this point, Fraser is to be commended; this is the first time, to my knowledge, that anyone has dealt with this body of literature seriously and critically in terms of its obvious connecting theme. The analysis, skillfully conducted, reveals a series of major Jungian archetypes which pervade the literature: the primordial child; the wise old man; Narcissus and identification with a 'mirror' image; the mystic possession of the love object through death; and other minor ones. The literary analysis is thorough; I can think of only one or two missing authors who would also fit the analytic system—such as R.N. Chubb or C.J. Bradbury Robinson—and its marshalling of examples is almost awesome.

But that reveals the first flaw in Fraser's work. Despite his defense of psychological-literary methods in the first chapter, Fraser's method has a critical weakness: it convinces only so long as you can continue to ring up further relevant examples. Quite apart from some literary howlers in the process, such as Fraser's almost comic assertion that the governess-narrator of Henry James's "Turn of the Screw" is James's image of himself "in 'drag'" (p.54), sooner or later the reader begins to form his own list of works that *don't* fit the analytical system. The evidence amassed may provide a key to understanding the literature, but can never conclusively 'prove' any theory, or rule out alternative understandings.

And when Fraser moves from literary criticism to psychiatric theory, the problems multiply. The result of the literary analysis, he contends, is to demonstrate that paedophilia is essentially a deviant form of homosexuality. He accepts as self-evident that all homosexuals are to some extent narcissistic, projecting their love onto an image of themselves because of a failure to identify with their father; for paedophiles, he argues, this inversion occurs at a very young age when, unable to resolve Oedipal conflicts by identifying with their father, and rejected by their mother, they fix their love upon themselves—and growing up, they continue to project love onto an image of themselves at the critical age. To begin, this theory, though tempting, has never been thoroughly demonstrable in psychiatric case studies; the "absent" father, et al, is not present in all cases, even among Fraser's authors; nor can it explain how others, growing up in what should be classical situations, go straight. Moreover, by identifying all paedophiles as homosexuals, Fraser suggests that heterosexual paedophiles are a minority within a minority within a minority. They are "created" he asserts (quite without clinical evidence), during his discussion of Lewis Carroll, p. 43, 166ff., when the "inversion" occurs at such a young age that gender identity is not yet fixed. Such an assertion flies in the face of all the clinical and legal evidence I am aware of, for research has shown that heterosexual paedophilia is much more common than boy-love. Heterosexual paedophilia is under-represented in literature; perhaps we might charitably say that here Fraser was misled by his method. Why more boy-lovers than girl-lovers have put pen to paper is quite another question.

The book is finally flawed by Fraser's blind assertions

(perhaps, more accurately, his presuppositions) that homosexuality is "an unsatisfactory way at best" and requires therapy (p. 232); and that paedophilia is invariably harmful—if not physically, then psychologically—because the younger partner is "frightened" by the adult's "unequal" and "out of control" passions (p.51, 232). Vast evidence contradicts the former, and an increasing amount of evidence coming from Europe, though unrecognized here, flatly contradicts the latter. Though Fraser does advocate the "talking cure," he at least rejects aversion therapy and chemical castration as both barbaric and ineffective

The book is well indexed, and has a good bibliography, but its presuppositions, method and conclusions are all flawed. Because Fraser has collected and begun the serious thematic examination of the literature of paedophilia, particularly boy-love, the book does deserve a place on the scholars' shelf. But the relation between homosexuality and paedophilia suggested by his evidence remains problematic. □

Donald H. Mader

WITCHCRAFT AND THE GAY COUNTERCULTURE

Arthur Evans

Fag Rag Books, Boston, (Box 331, Kenmore Station, Boston, MA 02215), 1978, Paperback, \$5.50, 180 pages

In the heady years of gay activism in New York City immediately after the Stonewall Uprising Arthur Evans became an almost legendary figure, prominently visible at every march, zap and rally. (He is depicted as Paul in Arthur Bell's memoir *Dancing the Gay Lib Blues*.) At the same time Evans was pursuing a doctorate in the history of philosophy at Columbia University. Several years ago he shifted his focus and settled in Northern California, working at manual occupations. During this whole period he has maintained a passionate interest in a putative relation between witchcraft and homosexuality in European history; a preliminary report of his findings appeared in *Fag Rag* in 1974-75. The present book stems, therefore, from an effort to fuse activism, lifestyle and scholarship. I shall seek to assess its success in the latter sphere.

Following the amateur medievalist Margaret Murray, Evans argues that medieval witchcraft represented neither a Christian heresy nor a marginal aberration, as is generally held, but rather a survival of a once-powerful "universal religion" which had stretched from Ireland to the Near East. This older faith, practiced by an essentially matriarchal society, honored the Great Goddess "who was associated with womb-like caves" and also (Evans insists) a Horned God, whose service was much cultivated by homosexual men in those days. His emphasis on the Celtic manifestations of the supposed Old Religion is probably to be understood as the outgrowth of a personal search for ethnic "roots." Needless to say, this ancient society was ecologically sound, in total harmony with Nature and the animal world.

A subsequent chapter switches signals, when Evans seeks to extend these notions to the North American Indians, where the well-documented, but still imperfectly understood figure of the berdache, or transvestite shaman, proves an irresistible lure. Whether these New World practices are to be understood as an extension of the Old Religion, or simply a parallel phenomenon, is not made clear. At any rate it's nice, for a change, to have the Indians on the side of the good guys. As the book proceeds, the

idealized and mythic character of Evans' vision becomes increasingly apparent: he conjures up a lost Edenic world of deep reverence for nature, sensual gratification and egalitarianism, from which all alienation and selfish striving are banished.

Of course such a Golden Age never existed. By overwhelming consensus, anthropologists and historians agree that there is no evidence that any truly matriarchal society ever prevailed, whether in Europe or elsewhere. Evans interpolates scholarly references in several languages, but he cites selectively and misleadingly. For example, he seeks to buttress his matriarchal assumptions by frequent references to Robert Briffault's *The Mothers*, without mentioning the devastating criticism this work has been subjected to since its first publication in 1927. (Misleadingly, Evans mentions only the 1969 reprint.) The concept of the Great Mother Goddess, though rather widely diffused now in popular writings, is an anachronistic construct that syncretistically merges various deities with the authentic Magna Mater of Anatolia. The assimilation of the Celtic Cernunnos (the Horned God) to the Greek Dionysos is apparently Evans' own work. His wilful co-optation of Joan of Arc for the cause is achieved through a palimpsest of quotations from several thoroughly outdated works. There is much nonsense about the cult of Diana, the Bogomils and Cathars, and hallucinogenic drugs. In short, Evans draws eclectically from a heterogeneous collection of secondary works, and glosses over the discrepancies among them, in order to cobble together a beguiling but false myth of a lost Golden Age for gay people and women.

In the opening chapter he attempts to disarm criticism in advance by ridiculing mainstream scholarship as a mere tool of class oppression. "The professionals have suppressed Gay history, just as they have suppressed the truth about Third World people, women, the poor, the imprisoned and the insane (sic). . . . Trained professionals, including Gay ones, are the *least* suited to teach us, for they have been most assimilated into the lifestyle and values of the ruling class." This anti-intellectualist credo provides a convenient carte blanche for myth making. As one reads further, however, it is surprising to see the text peppered with references to scholarly authorities, the great bulk of whom are clearly heterosexual males—the very group ostensibly guilty of the obfuscation that has concealed for so long the wonders of the Old Religion. The use of linguistic evidence is uncritical and slapdash: with stunning insouciance, Evans transposes the modern senses of "fairy" and "faggot" to male homosexuals of the Middle Ages.

In the final two chapters the book's true character as a present-minded tract emerges. The post-Stonewall era has been a severe disappointment, and the new macho styles of gay men are, Evans believes, a sellout to patriarchal militarism. Naturally, this is a cunning conspiracy on the part of the ruling class to head off the coming Fairy Empire. But it is still not too late for gay people to break our ties with the military-industrial goons and to forge links with the oppressed of the Third World. It may be necessary to resort to violence, he allows. But somehow through the coming turmoil and destruction we will win our way back, back to that low-technology paradise that our guide claims to discern in the mists of European prehistory. Evans' concept of historical process is a simple determinism. Since the present state of advanced industrialism has produced a society that is bad, smashing it will automatically bring forth the good life. When small is truly beautiful, the fairies will resume their rightful heritage.

Each reader must decide for him or herself what view to take of Evans' political program. To me, it suggests a new Dark Age. Some of the rhetoric is extraordinary; at one point he even says, "Our natural allies...are...the insane." He sees establishment plots and conspiracies everywhere, and is reduced to a desperate call for Baader-Meinhof tactics to reverse the trend.

The earlier, historical part of the book is advocacy scholarship at its worst—a self-indulgent fantasy that is a travesty of research. Historical agents are viewed in terms of the crudest contrasts: witches, Celts and Amerindians are eulogized; Christians, Romans and capitalists are excoriated. In view of the overtones of animal worship in Evans' Eden, we are reminded of Orwell's "Two legs bad, four legs good." Evans' own shift from graduate student to manual worker may make personal sense, but surely it is infantile, if not megalomaniacal to project this preference back through all of human history. Since he seems to have had the benefit of a good deal of help in concocting this fantastic brew, his reconstructions possess a certain appeal. But the addiction is not good for you: caveat lector.

For those who wish to pursue the subject further, two recent books cut through much of the nonsense that has accumulated about the witches: Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, London, 1975; and Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1976. □

Harlan Samoyed

HAVELOCK ELLIS, PHILOSOPHER OF SEX:

A BIOGRAPHY

Vincent Brome

Routledge & Kegan Paul, Boston, 1979, \$21.50, 271 pages

Recent seismic shifts in sexual behavior and concomitant advances in sex research have directed attention to the neglected pioneers in this field of investigation. No one is more suited for such a reappraisal than the protean figure of Henry Havelock Ellis (1859-1939), who, more than any other writer—in the English-speaking world at least—created the atmosphere for the emergence of the modern attitude toward sex. In a prolific career Ellis combined the roles of literary critic, poet, social commentator, newspaper columnist, philosopher and medical writer. His greatest impact came, however, with the seven volumes of his masterwork, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1897-1928), which present a wealth of data with an emancipatory assurance that is still exhilarating. Indeed, the first monograph to appear in the series, *Sexual Inversion*, advanced such a favorable and nonjudgmental view of homosexuality that one recent commentator has gone so far as to call it an "apology," which it is not.

Ellis' approach to homosexuality anticipated later developments in three important ways. First, he adopted an interspecies perspective, citing the available documentation for same-sex activity among several animal populations. Secondly, he showed that among humans it had occurred in many times and places without attracting persecution or opprobrium. This suggested that the Victorian revulsion toward such behavior was culturally relative and probably transitory, rather than absolute. Finally, he included a thirty-page roster of Great Homosexuals of Western Civilization, a procedure already anticipated by Carl Heinrich Ulrichs. While this strategy of assembling a

litany of famous names may be seen as a special pleading, it was nevertheless of value at the time in combatting those theories holding that homosexuality is part of a larger phenomenon of degeneracy.

Parenthetically, this biography has a curious history. The research and writing, evidently, were largely completed in the 1950s, when differences with Francoise Delisle, Ellis' companion, who had given the author many manuscripts and letters, blocked publication. Only after her recent death did it become possible to issue the present book, which has apparently been considerably reduced in bulk and slightly revised to take account of more recent research. (It has recently been announced that the Mugar Memorial Library of Boston University has acquired the Havelock Ellis Archive; it will shortly be opened to scholars.)

Brome's biography, addressing both the life and the works of Ellis, is constructed around two main themes. The first concerns the women in his life: Olive Schreiner, a brilliant but mercurially impulsive writer (who, perhaps fortunately for Ellis' serenity, retired early to her native South Africa); his lesbian wife Edith Lees; and finally Francoise Delisle, the companion of his later years. Examining Ellis' relations with these women permits not only the exploration of his personality and sexuality, but also his attitude toward the emerging women's movement, which he supported enthusiastically. Unfortunately, Brome chooses to accentuate the personal eccentricities and shortcomings of his subject, often placing him in an unfavorable, even comic light. The reasons for this interpretive strategy become clearer when we explore the second main theme. Increasingly, as the book develops, Ellis is depicted as locked into a long duel of wits with Sigmund Freud. Much influenced by Ernest Jones, Freud's own biographer and disciple, Brome leans more and more to the side of the Viennese, claiming finally that "As a psychologist Freud succeeded where Ellis failed." (p. 253).

There are several difficulties with the strategy of playing off Havelock Ellis against the Viennese savant. To retroflex Freud's currently monumental fame back into the formative period of modern sex research seems at least anachronistic. While Ellis had a healthy respect for Freud's work, he referred also to Cesare Lombroso, Mangus Hirschfeld, Iwan Bloch, and many other contemporary writers. Sex research during this formative period of 1890-1915 was a concert of voices, hardly a duet. Freud, moreover, was something of a latecomer to the discussion, and borrowed many elements for what were to prove fatefully influential structures from the pioneers, including Ellis. Having undertaken to present a dramatic battle of wills, Brome further elects inexplicably to tie one of Ellis' hands behind his back by scanting his often very acute criticism of Freudian dogma. Havelock Ellis advanced cogent arguments against infantile sexuality, dreams as wish fulfillment, the Oedipus complex, homosexuality as arrested development, and the tendency to find evidence for a phenomenon in its opposite. His comments on this last practice are characteristically measured and telling: "There are some psycho-analysts who, when they see acknowledged signs of homosexuality, accept them, as most people do, as the signs of homosexuality. But when

they see the reverse, even a strong antipathy, they accept that also as a sign of homosexuality, the reaction of a suppressed wish. 'Heads, I win,' they seem to say; 'tails, you lose.'" Although Brome quotes this passage, so strong is his devotion to psychoanalysis—he has previously written a book on Freud's early circle—that he proceeds to ignore it in his wilful misinterpretation of Ellis' own sexuality, to which we will return presently.

Ellis' critical strictures about the main theories of Freudian psychoanalysis, which occur in scattered places throughout his vast output, should be collected, since they can make an important contribution to the current and necessary reexamination of the logical status of psychoanalysis. (For some insights in this regard see chapter I of Paul Robinson's *The Modernization of Sex*, New York, Harper Colophon, 1976, which, despite its brief compass, is probably a sounder introduction to Ellis' thinking about sex than Brome's partisan effort.) With the present *Dämmerung* of the once-accepted certainties of Central European psychoanalysis, Ellis' more humane and open-textured approach is certain to increase in appeal. Particularly valuable is the example of his therapeutic practice. Instead of trying to get those who came to him to accept a prefabricated dogmatic structure, he concentrated on encouraging them to articulate their own feelings. He was opposed, incidentally, to any effort to "cure" homosexuality. Above all, he did not take money for his advice.

Most disturbing is Brome's application of Freudian theories to the evaluation of Ellis' own personality and sex life. Sometimes he is so belittling as to remind one of the notorious Freud-Bullitt dissection of Woodrow Wilson. Following some other writers, Brome makes a great deal of Ellis' eroticization of urine ("undinism" as he later termed it), which was seemingly "imprinted" on his psyche by a childhood incident with a maid. Then there is much insistence on his impotence, which is not proven. It should be obvious that a sensitive man married during his mature years to a lesbian, whom he truly loved, might experience some uncertainties in the realization of sexual congress. Brome turns Ellis' tenderness and patience in sometimes trying circumstances against him, alleging a pervasive masochism. Ellis, of course, was not perfect—one detects a certain cognitive dissonance in the contrast between his preoccupation with the rearing of children and his own lack of offspring—but Brome's approach is unnecessarily denigratory. Can it be that the author is projecting his own missionary machismo (which this reviewer has observed at first hand in London) onto his subject, whom he finds wanting? Perhaps also the frustrations of his quarter-century-long project began to get to him. Certainly one could easily turn Brome's Freudian reductionism against him, by saying that his effort to belittle Ellis stems from an Oedipal reaction against the domination the older man exercised over him for such a long period.

The strangest consequence of Brome's Freudian prejudices is his ascription of that old bugaboo "repressed homosexuality" to his subject. This is supposed to have been caused by the classic agency of the close-binding mother (not proven) and to be attested by his lifelong impotence with women (highly exaggerated). It would be pleasant to welcome Ellis to the already impressive roster of great homosexuals, but this just cannot realistically be done. Brome is unable to document even the slightest instance of same-sex dalliance. This lack of personal involvement makes Ellis' sympathy and even-handedness in his

volume on homosexuality all the more impressive and convincing.

Brome is a professional writer, not an academic. Generally speaking, he has a novelist's fluency with words, and occasionally reaches real eloquence, but some passages are hastily drafted, and verge on illiteracy. Brome's efforts to update the point of view, incorporating a few meagre insights culled from today's women's movement, are patchy, and there is no attempt to come to terms with the gay movement at all. But the surpassing flaw of this book, is Brome's insistence on subjecting Ellis to the procrustean ordeal of vulgar Freudian interpretation. Havlock Ellis is great enough to survive this disappointing biography, and readers would do better to spend time with *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* instead. In these majestic pages lie the roots of our modern consciousness.

WD

VICE AND VIGILANCE: PURITY MOVEMENTS IN BRITAIN SINCE 1700

Edward J. Bristow

Rowman & Littlefield, Totowa, NJ, 1977, \$22.50, 274 pages

PURITY CRUSADE: SEXUAL MORALITY AND SOCIAL CONTROL, 1868-1900

David J. Pivar

Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, 1973, paper \$3.95 308 pages

CITIZENS FOR DECENCY: ANTIPORNOGRAPHY CRUSADES AS STATUS DEFENSE

Louis A. Zurcher, Jr., and R. George Kirkpatrick
U. of Texas Press, Austin, 1976, \$17.50 cloth, \$5.95 paper, 412 pages

THE SEX RADICALS: FREE LOVE IN HIGH VICTORIAN AMERICA

Hal D. Sears

Regents Press of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, 1977, \$15.00, 342 pages

Of the four books here reviewed, Bristow's has the broadest time span, and may be regarded as a kind of key to more particular research. The story he tells is fascinating, appalling and sometimes hilarious. He introduces a large gallery of men and women who were obsessed by what they regarded as the eleventh commandment: "Thou shalt mind thy neighbor's business." Since the issues raised are apparently destined to swell in importance in the 1980s, an examination of the origins of repressive movements in Anglo-American tradition takes on a certain urgency.

Bristow indicates that "there were four peaks of antivice legislation: the 1690s, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the 1880s, and the early twentieth century." Comparative study discloses certain patterns. "Each was fed by religious revivals that converted young men and channeled waves of sublimated energy against the erotic. Each left behind an important antisexual legacy to carry on the struggle against sexual vice after the original fever had died down.

The first phase was engendered by a widespread sense that public order was breaking down. The traditional

Bawdy Courts, reestablished half-heartedly under the Stuart Restoration, were ineffective, and there was no police force in the modern sense. As a result, the 1690s witnessed the remarkably popular Societies for the Reform of Manners, which sprang up to fill the breach. The moral fervor that permeated them was fueled by the late-seventeenth-century revival of Anglican spirituality. Although the Societies did concern themselves with prostitutes, madams and homosexuals, vice had not yet acquired its modern narrow definition, so that such organizations also included violations of the sabbath and swearing within their purview. As the Societies gathered force, the homosexual "Molly Houses" became favorite targets: in 1726 more than twenty were broken up.

In the course of the later eighteenth century the Societies gradually faded away. But again a new wave of religiosity appeared, combining with revulsion toward the godless French Revolution as an alien force fostering both sedition and moral licence. The Evangelical William Wilberforce (1759-1833) was the moving spirit behind the formation of the Society for the Suppression of Vice in 1802. This same Wilberforce is also known to history for his vigorous and influential advocacy of the abolition of slavery. Religious fervor, however, and self-righteousness in general, may be directed at various objects, including slavery and sexual freedom. History seldom confirms the division of human beings into neatly contrasting categories: sheep and goats, emancipator and oppressor. Sadly, it is all too easy today to think of public figures who call for the emancipation of one minority while advocating the continued suppression of another.

The third great wave, which Bristow covers in florid detail, occurred in the later Victorian period. Borne again (no pun intended) on a wave of religious revivalism (this one stemming in part from America), the reformers concentrated on prostitution. The eloquent Josephine Butler, leader of the first phase of the Victorian movement, concentrated her attention on repealing the notorious Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869, which permitted women in specified districts to be arbitrarily siezed and brutally examined for venereal disease. Butler was libertarian and antistatist, but eventually more rabid figures, such as the aptly named William Coote, turned the movement towards moralistic repression of all kinds. Once again an organization, the National Vigilance Association, arose in 1885 to channel the work. Bristow rightly calls the year 1885, "the most remarkable in the history of Sexual Politics." In this year William Stead's sensational journalistic campaign against the "maiden tribute" (teen-age prostitution) came to a head. The resulting agitation led to the passage, again in 1885, of the Criminal Law Amendment Act raising the age of consent to sixteen. It was to this act that Henry Labouchere, a radical member of Parliament, attached his notorious amendment outlawing, on pain of two year's hard labor, acts of gross indecency between males in private as well as in public. It was under this amendment that Oscar Wilde was prosecuted. As so often happens when moral fervor is aroused, something was given to one oppressed group, while something was taken away from another.

Edwardian times, constituting the fourth wave of the general tendency, saw a continuation of the agitation about prostitution, now generally known as the White Slave Traffic. As lurid tales spread about the abduction of young English girls and their incarceration in foreign bordellos, the campaign developed ugly xenophobic and anti-Semitic overtones. Jingoism is also evident in the concern that vice might sap national strength and hamper

Britain in the upcoming struggle with Germany. In the late Victorian and Edwardian periods some sex education was attempted. Characteristically, however, the brochures and lectures provided by the National Vigilance Association played upon fears about masturbation and venereal disease. What little genuine sex information survived was wrapped in a thick cocoon of religious and patriotic rhetoric. Most odious were the prosecutions of art and literature; books by such distinguished writers as Zola, Nietzsche, Havelock Ellis and D.H. Lawrence were banned.

Several general conclusions emerge from this complex tale. First, a genuine concern about the health of the nation and of groups within it can easily spill over into a desire to regulate and punish. Secondly, a surplus of religious fervor has been repeatedly built up utilizing social mechanisms forged at the time of the Reformation; this surplus has often found its outlet in antvice activity. Thirdly, a laudible concern with helping some groups—prostitutes and slaves—often consorts all too readily with efforts to suppress others—homosexuals and writers. This whole tangled story is fraught with ambiguities and ironies, which have brought unnecessary misery on countless human beings.

Regrettably, Bristow's ambitious account of a momentous series of struggles is somewhat flawed. The writing is often unpolished and repetitious, and sometimes the author's attitude towards his subject is far too solemn. Kooks and fanatics do not deserve the tribute of a mincing fairness. Space allocations are unbalanced, for the first two waves—of great importance for later developments—are crowded into the first seventy pages of the book. Worst of all, there is an inadequate treatment of homosexuality. This gap can be partially filled by referring to H. Montgomery Hyde's general account, *The Love That Dared Not Speak Its Name*, Boston, Little, Brown, 1970; to an article by Randolph Trumbach, "London's Sodomites: Homosexual Behavior and Western Culture in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of Social History*, XI, 1977, pp. 1-33; and to two complementary volumes: H. M. Hyde, *The Cleveland Street Scandal*, New York, Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1976, and Colin Simpson, et al., *The Cleveland Street Affair*, Boston, Little Brown, 1976.

Moving to the other side of the Atlantic, David J. Pivar's more narrowly focused *Purity Crusade* reveals a number of significant links and parallels between the third phase of the British movement and its American counterpart. The British development was catalyzed by a new current of Evangelism, which was largely transatlantic in origin. And the word and concept of "vigilance" was taken from the American experience. Yet the British movement, which could rely on memories of earlier native predecessors, quickly developed a coherence and centralization that the American tendencies could not match. Partly because of the international nature of the White Slave Traffic itself, the British movement sought an outreach to other countries. Accordingly, a British mission was dispatched to the United States in 1876 to stimulate the still somewhat tentative American efforts.

Far more than in Britain, the antislavery campaign provided a model and a source of moral energy. The satisfaction of the abolitionist demands in the Civil War left a large reservoir of surplus moral fervor that demanded an outlet. Here, as in Britain, the immediate target was prostitution, and the parallel Negro slavery/white slavery suggested to the reformers that they style themselves the New Abolitionists. As in England, the moral purity drive largely overlapped with the women's movement. There was great resistance at the outset on the

grounds that prostitution was a subject that decent women should never even venture to talk about, together with the notion that discussion would only serve to publicize and thereby augment the evil. Eventually these taboos were overcome, and women felt free to speak out.

Repressive aspects were, of course, not absent. The American advocates of moral purity found natural allies in the temperance movement, especially when advocates of smashing booze found that sex was an exciting topic that served to hook potential adherents, who could then be recruited for temperance as well. An even more unfortunate alliance was with the proponents of censorship, especially the odious Anthony Comstock, whose name has become a byword for the prurient suppression of art and literature. In spite of this despicable support for censorship, the new frankness and the concern about venereal disease led to a certain development of sex education, which reached the high schools and the Boy Scouts. Such efforts were sometimes rationalized by stirring up fears of the "race degeneration" that would ensue if youth was not taught to make proper use of its genitals. Female chauvinism was not always avoided: the purity crusaders were rightly concerned for the unfortunate prostitute and the illegitimate child, who must be saved, but they recommended castrating male "sex criminals." The general notion that men must be raised to women's high level suggests a "sugar-and-spice" idealization. Still to be investigated is the link between the Vice Commissions which sprang up in many American cities towards the end of the century, and the more recent proliferation of police Vice Squads, which have so grievously harried gay men.

The American advocates of purity went beyond their British and European peers in developing a grandiose vision of a radiant future. Unlike decadent, played-out Europe, America could lay the foundations for a society of hitherto unknown harmony. Unfortunately, in the pursuit of this utopia, coercion could not be avoided, and the new society would be organic or monistic, with individual choice severely restricted. As Pivar aptly remarks, "The ugly side of reform was . . . the totalitarian implications reflected in its elitism and contributions to censorship." A hundred years later, there are signs that agitation for a new totalitarianism, nourished by sources from both the Right and the Left, is growing up around the issues of pornography, child abuse and rape. Once more a longing for the coercive purging of a flawed society is coming to the fore.

In his British study Bristow locates the sources of the purity campaigns in surplus religiosity and in the pervasive sense that something must be done to restore public order in default of adequate governmental intervention (vigilantism). To these factors Pivar adds, for America, the continuing abolitionist momentum and a native utopian strain, a belief that through clean thoughts and vigorous action we might really create a perfect society. In both countries, of course, the nineteenth-century purity movements existed symbiotically with feminism, which had both repressive and libertarian aspects.

For one facet of moral repression, the impulse to censorship, *Citizens for Decency* offers a different kind of explanation. Zurcher and Kirkpatrick (and their six collaborators) are sociologists, and their exposition is rather theory-laden. In contrast to the previous two books, which necessarily rely on printed sources and documents, *Citizens* does have the advantage of being based on face-to-face encounters with real people. Employing direct observation of rallies and a questionnaire for individuals, the authors tracked antipornography crusades in the early

1970s in two cities, one in Michigan and the other in Texas. In this way they sought to capture the grassroots nature of the campaigns, together with the character and background of those who supported them. Zurcher and Kirkpatrick draw from this material a kind of class analysis: the antiporn activists are people who have become insecure because of a perceived threat to their status, and have organized a symbolic crusade to defend the integrity of their traditional life style. They are alarmed that the number and power of persons electing alternate life styles seems to be dangerously increasing in their communities. Unlike those who are perceived as purveyors and consumers of pornography, the antiporn crusaders are strongly attached to traditional religious values and practice, often rural in background, relatively uneducated, and family oriented; some display the traits of the so-called "authoritarian personality." Their opposition to the spread of what they label "filth" is, then, an enactment of their opposition to an expanding group, which they view as the agent of undesired social change.

The concept of a symbolic crusade, fundamental to *Citizens for Decency*, is borrowed from an earlier monograph by the historian J.R. Gusfield, who explained the rise of temperance efforts in nineteenth-century America as a nativist reaction against the influx of foreigners, who could be simultaneously stigmatized as boozers and deprived of their pleasures. Zurcher and Kirkpatrick's explanation may indeed be valid for the well-known species of Bible-thumping redneck conservative ensconced in the American heartland—Mencken's *Boobus Americanus*. This patronizing explanation may, however, encourage a certain complacent acquiescence in the view that with increasing education and sophistication the sense of threat will diminish. And, indeed, things are changing in the heartland; an August 12, 1979, *New York Times* report from Des Moines, plausibly taken as typical, indicates a tolerance for marijuana and homosexuality that would have been unthinkable ten years ago.

Yet the matter is not so simple, for the motives propelling censorship efforts are quite varied. We are currently witnessing a surge of antiporn sentiment among middle-class feminists, who are neither rednecks nor supporters of the status quo. Nor are they notably preoccupied with the Biblical injunctions. (Paradoxically, both the rednecks and pro-censorship feminists would say that their crusades are intended, among other things, to strike at the pernicious influence of the other!) Purity crusades can be mounted by groups that see themselves as on the way up, as well as by those who fear that their influence is declining. Nor is uncertainty of social status the only factor. We must never forget the residues of centuries-old puritanism, transmitted by (but not limited to) the Judaeo-Christian ethos. As some nineteenth-century utopians insisted, a perfect America must be a pure America. Many Marxists, both here and abroad, have agreed.

Despite these caveats, some aspects of the Zurcher-Kirkpatrick analysis are persuasive: antipornography crusades are indeed symbolic, for the porn is seen as simply one part of a noxious sociocultural syndrome (whether this be labeled the counterculture, male chauvinism, or capitalist decadence). The crusades are thus intended to promote solidarity among the crusaders and to put the enemy on notice that countervailing power is being marshalled.

Our last volume, Hal D. Sears' *The Sex Radicals*, provides a strong gust of fresh air. This engaging book por-

(continued on page 28)

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE GAY STRUGGLE IN THE GERMAN FEDERAL REPUBLIC?

Leslie Kirk Wright

The author of this article was actively involved, on and off, with gay activist organizations in southern West Germany between 1974 and 1978.

The French May 1968, and not Stonewall, initially set the political climate for gay liberation in West Germany. Subsequently, the North American example was emulated because it seemed to work. The first liberationist organizations were set up in 1971. Rosa von Praunheim's film *Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers, sondern die Situation, in der er lebt* ("Not the Homosexual is Perverse, but the Situation in which He Lives") sent several small groups of gay university students into the streets of Germany's larger cities. Full of enthusiasm but inexperienced and ill-prepared, they handed out flyers and announced that the new age of gay liberation was at hand. The first flyer circulated by the HAM (*Homosexuelle Arbeitsgruppe München*) in 1971 was typical. It read,

After the homosexual minority having played the role of scapegoat and whipping post for two millennia, we think it's time now to organize the emancipation of us homosexuals out of the ghetto. . . . We, the *Homosexuelle Arbeitsgruppe* are not an academic homo circle, but an activist group with a *critical conceptual basis*. This group of like-minded people is creating the chance for the individual to affirm his self-esteem. The primary goal, however, is to fight openly and publicly against the morality of bourgeois society. [cited from *Fliegenpilz*, No. 3 Munich, 1973, p. 10.]

Although these groups often drew as many as 50 to 100 fellow gay students to their meetings in the first couple of years, the original energy fizzled out rapidly and has, in the meantime, all but completely died out in many university towns. Ironically, it has been private individuals and the straight media which have reached the population at large and succeeded in projecting a more positive image of gays. Even the activist term, *schwul*, which denotes "gay" but more accurately translates as "queer" or "fag," is inching its way into current usage.

The rise and decline of the West German gay movement has been discussed, debated, disavowed, and deplored perhaps more widely than any other aspect of gay emancipation in this country. The problems, at least to a certain extent, would seem to lie on the Left, in the form of a two-pronged dilemma with both elements working against each other. On the one hand, gay activists often call themselves Leftists without having had much experience or contact with the broader Left. On the other, this "Leftist" strain does share the West German Left's preoccupation with ideology, abstracting the blood out of concrete issues and debating them as if the participants were enrolled in a graduate seminar on Hegelian philosophy.

Another underlying problem within the West German gay movement is that the vast majority of activists are university students or professionals who have recently been graduated. They belong to the intellectual elite of a markedly elitist and class-conscious society. Their activities are often channeled into recreating the university classroom situation, espousing ideological platitudes currently in vogue among the sometimes hostile straight Left-

ists (who are often thoroughly ignorant of all aspects of homosexuality), and disguising immediate personal problems or personality conflicts between members of a given group as "objective," theoretical debates. This academic pedantry has tended to alienate not only many gay students, but also gays from the lower-middle and working classes—not to mention the majority of straight society.

This situation and its detrimental effects have been documented in a few publications. *Unfähig zur Emanzipation?* (U. Hoffmüller and S. Neuer) and *Fliegenpilz* (No. 3, Munich, 1978) address themselves to this phenomenon. *Seminar: Gesellschaft und Homosexualität* (R. Lautmann) and *Der unterdrückte Sexus* (J. Hohmann, ed.; see review in *GBB*, 1,1) mention it in passing. Gay movement periodicals such as *Schwuchtel* and *emanzipation*, neither with a circulation of more than a few hundred, are often short-lived and supplement, rather than replace, coverage of movement news carried by the commercial West German gay press. Why does the noted director Fassbinder disassociate himself from the West German movement? Why has Rosa von Praunheim gone to the United States? Why have erstwhile gay activists fled to the gay underground of Berlin?

The infamous Paragraph 175 of the German criminal code, which prohibited homosexual acts, was liberalized in 1969, to permit consensual acts between men over the age of 21. Groups in northern Germany (in the states of Hamburg and Northern Rhine-Westphalia) have formed a coordinating committee, the *Nationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft Repression gegen Schwule* (NARGS), and have successfully brought the persecution of gays under the *Berufsverbot* to the attention of the Russell Tribunal. (The *Berufsverbot* refers to legislation requiring the exclusion of "subversives" from state employment—a kind of West German McCarthyism.)

Movement activities in the form of task forces and public statements have forced some institutions to re-examine and revise their official policies. The Catholic and Lutheran state churches no longer condemn homosexuality outright. *Stern*, the leading glossy weekly, printed an article in early 1979 in support of gays, albeit "respectable" middle-class ones. The entertainment industry is cashing in on gays as the latest in chic; *Travestie* (impressions) has long been an acceptable tradition of German cabaret fare. The Left has acknowledged the existence of gays and, occasionally, refrains from dismissing us as an excrescence of the petty bourgeoisie. And there has been an occasional political group or a publication which has offered concrete support in the form of a public platform from which to speak.

The most damning documentation of persecution of gays, the film by the IHB (*Initiativgruppe Homosexualität Bielefeld*), Rosa Winkel: *Das ist doch lange vorbei . . .* ("Pink Triangle: That Was a Long Time Ago . . ."), presents case histories and interviews with several men persecuted illegally for their homosexuality, including a student, a teacher and a lawyer. Unfortunately, this film is rarely seen outside of private viewings arranged by activist groups on a local level.

Two more positive facets of the West German move-
(continued on page 25)

SOUR GRAPES REVISITED

Laura Israel

It is now fifteen years since Doubleday first issued Jess Stearn's *The Grapevine*, which he wrote as a sequel to *The Sixth Man*, a psychosociological study of gay men. Everyone found the idea of his doing a similar treatment of lesbians inexplicably amusing, he says; at a party, once, a man snickered at him.

Stearn's books on psychic power, immortality, astrology, and other dubious topics are written in a kind of "gee-wiz" style, but only in his two books on homosexuality does he adopt a tone of sympathetic but fastidious disapproval of his interviewees. His heterosexual credentials are presented early and often. He approves of his subjects only when and if they disapprove of themselves.

The Grapevine's case histories could have been drawn from *Modern Romance* or *True Confessions* magazines, as a contemporary researcher's were. (Dr. Frank S. Caprio's *Female Homosexuality*, published by Citadel Press in 1954, is truly hilarious.) Jess Stearn could have written murder mysteries on science-fiction or westerns, and journalism would not be greatly impoverished.

Stearn's softcore is the perfect companionpiece to *The Well of Loneliness*. Both are thoroughly homophobic and horribly written. (Even Radcliffe Hall's friends declined to defend her "dreadful, earnest book" as literature; they were simply opposed to censorship.) If between the World War thousands of women mimicked Stephen Gordon it seems not unlikely that many others found role models in *The Grapevine*, which also sold well.

Stearn met many of the gay activists and researchers of the 1950s and 1960s, including sociologist Dr. Evelyn Hooker, the first to study nonpatient gay males. He was, he tells us, a staff writer for *Newsweek* magazine. He worked with Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon in the early years of Daughters of Bilitis. Although he obviously

couldn't "pass," as Deborah Wolf apparently did while studying the San Francisco lesbian community in the early 1970s, Stearn had good access to good sources. Why, then, is his book so bad?

Valerie Taylor, who wrote quite a few pulps herself during the Ike/Jack years, has mentioned a similarity in technique between *The Grapevine* and three books by Marijane Meaker of the "Oh God, ain't it awful?" type. (*We Walk Alone*, 1955; *We, Too, Must Love*, 1958; and *Carol In A Thousand Cities*, 1960; pseud. Ann Aldrich) Aldrich set a valuable precedent by writing nonfiction about lesbians as a lesbian, but a lot of hardcore excused itself by using this "My perversion is making me miserable" line, as well as by listing the author as "Dr. So-and-so".

A serious work that was written in this interview/case history/opinion style is Martin and Lyon's *Lesbian/Woman*. The authors' perversion not only failed to make them miserable, in time, they even ceased to regard it as perversion. Glide Publications, a San Francisco small press, brought out *Lesbian/Woman* in 1972. The McCall Publishing Company, which had commissioned it the year before, mysteriously refused this positive and moderate book upon completion.

Stearn, who solemnly repeated every cliché about lesbians from the medieval to the modern (including some which are, unfortunately, true), didn't seem to have any trouble getting *The Grapevine* into print. Perhaps this book is bad because badness sold, during the Cold War years, or publishers thought so. What is remarkable about the "revolution in publishing" of the 1970s is not that lesbian books are available (lesbian books have apparently always been printed and only sometimes burned) but that good books, written by lesbians, are finally being published.

The German Gay Movement from page 24

ment should be mentioned. *Brühwarm*, a gay consciousness raising theatre group which uses the vehicle of gender-fuck drag, is currently touring with their third show. *Rosa Winkel Verlag*, a first attempt at a gay publishing house, has brought out less than ten titles since 1975, and is constantly teetering on the brink of financial disaster.

The gay *Subkultur*, namely the gay bars, flourishes. There are literally hundreds of gay bars in West Germany, in the cities as well as tucked away in villages and in the countryside. Although activists may rail against them, they remain one of the few places where gays can meet and talk, as well as cruise. Activist organizations sometimes sponsor gay dances, which draw crowds of up to 100 to 200. Here people can get together and find acceptance without being forced into political argument. The debates continue as to whether such dances reinforce a ghetto mentality.

A recurring problem within an activist group is the schism between the well-read and ideologically primed, "older" faction, and the newcomer faction. Organization is usually informal and the core group rarely has more

than ten or fifteen members. Most newcomers, be they newly politicized, in the painful process of coming out, or simply curious, rarely come back after two or three plenum (general) meetings. They are explicitly ignored; activists don't seem to know how to deal with strangers and are afraid or unwilling to admit outsiders into "their" group.

And the debates continue unchanged since the first days in 1971 and 1972. The past two years have seen a number of organizations and related projects—periodicals, theatre groups, alternative meetings places—collapse from inertia and frustration. There is no sense of community, and activists are themselves often incapable of action because they have little experience and are afraid to let their gayness become publicly known. This is regrettable, since there is only a slight chance of physical abuse, and homosexual acts are legally permitted.

There are other societal factors which contribute to the present situation. The State is still placed above the individual. Class-consciousness is built into the educational system. Propriety and decorum, together with general pressures to conform, are overwhelming in a

(continued on page 28)

THE HOMOSEXUAL CENTURY

Vladimir Cervantes

On Tuesday Evening, October 9, 1979, a large crowd gathered in an east Greenwich Village screening room for the American premier of a new French gay film by Guy Hocquenghem and Lionel Soukaz. Hocquenghem is widely regarded as one of the leading theorists of gay liberation in France (his book *Homosexual Desire* has been translated into English), and the event was awaited with considerable anticipation. "The Homosexual Century" has encountered bureaucratic harassment in France: its auteurs, who have arranged English-language dubbing, are hoping to market it extensively in the United States.

The first of the film's four parts, and the most successful, is a lyrical recreation of Baron von Gloeden's life in Taormina, where he employed local teenagers as models for his now famous photographs. This segment captures an easygoing hedonism that is unfortunately not sustained in the rest of the film. The second segment, which is narrated by a woman, concerns Magnus Hirschfeld's Institute in Berlin. After some rather routine scenes portraying the day-to-day operations of the Institute, we see it invaded by the triumphant Nazis, who burn its records and library, and arrest its personnel, including, incredibly, the Director himself. In fact, Hirschfeld was traveling on a round-the-world voyage, and wisely remained outside Germany as the Nazis consolidated their power. It is hard to see how this falsification contributes to either the dramatic force or the poetic truth of the narrative. It simply makes Hirschfeld seem stupid, which he was not. The lesbian narrator then tells the story of her deportation, together with the other workers at the Institute, to a concentration camp. This is a major historical inaccuracy, for lesbians were not systematically exterminated under the pink-triangle category; only gay men were. This tokenist concession to lesbian interests will not satisfy any expectations of cosexuality, since the rest of the film is, by the auteurs' choice, entirely male.

There is another problem. Both Hirschfeld's presence and the implication of planned lesbian extermination in the Third Reich are historical untruths of a certain tendency. This tendency, which is important for the overall assessment of the film, is to increase the perception of victimization. This is hardly necessary, in view of the enormous roster of real crimes that have been committed against us. A recent trend in some gay and feminist ideology is to universalize victimization. Apart from its masochistic aspects, this tendency blurs important distinctions of the depth and character of oppression from one era to another. We need to begin to realize that one of the essential steps toward *overcoming* our victimization is to stop thinking of ourselves as eternal victims.

The third segment returns to a more lyrical mode. It is a celebration of a certain freedom that homosexuals enjoyed in Europe in the 1960s—before the impact of Stonewall. We see many shots of teenage boys sunbathing and caressing one another, together with montages of posters and photographs of pop groups. This portion seems to enshrine a nostalgic picture of the auteurs' youth. For this writer, who lived in Europe during most of this ostensibly halcyon decade, the picture is not convincing. A pall of restrictive respectability hung over everything in those days.

The fourth and final segment returns to the depressing mood of the second. It is entitled "1980." The story line focuses on an (apparently) Australian businessman who is in Paris for a brief stopover. Wandering innocently into a big gay bar on the Right Bank, he is picked up by a French queen (impersonated by Hocquenghem himself) and we are taken on an endless tour of Paris, as the queen tries to put the make on Mr. Macho. He is completely thwarted, and goes off concocting a phony story of success to relate to his friends.

This film has many technical shortcomings. It was necessarily made on a low budget, since commercial prospects for recouping the investment were viewed as uncertain. The sets are often inadequate, and the casting unconvincing. In segment one, for example, the "Sicilian" boys don't look the least Sicilian. The dubbing of the English text varies greatly in style and quality, and is sometimes incomprehensible. When it can be heard, it contains strange things. Homosexuals are said to constitute a separate species. They "sprang up like weeds in Europe after 1869." Apart from the grotesque self-image of a weed epidemic, this last observation confuses a change in conceptualization (the word homosexual was invented in 1869) with an increase in incidence. Of course, there were just as many homosexuals in 1860 as in 1880, but different names were used for them. Each segment is introduced by sub-Godardian title cards, crudely scrawled and proffering thanks to various helpers. The general effect, then, is amateurish: it is almost a home movie.

One could, nevertheless, forgive this amateurishness if the film had something new and valuable to say. Unfortunately, it offers neither. In the live discussion that took place after the screening Hocquenghem tried to disarm questioners by saying repeatedly that he was himself uncertain of the meaning of the individual segments and of their sequence. This really will not do. The assembling of these four segments must be interpreted as some kind of parable of the experience of a whole human group over the last 100 years. Tonally, there is, as has already been indicated, an alternating sequence, with parts one and three, which have an upbeat cast, contrasting with two and four, which end in defeat. The conclusion of the film with a pessimistic statement (which is very much drawn out) seems to say that all our efforts towards the emancipation of homosexuals are futile. In the end we are just pathetic queens vainly seeking the approval of a superior heterosexual culture that despises us. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. Indeed, the last scene reminds one of the obligatory unhappy ending of a 1950s gay novel, in which if the hero is not killed he is at least punished by being rejected and put down. (At one point, indeed, it did seem as if the Parisian queen would follow the old cliché of throwing himself into the Seine.)

All in all "The Homosexual Century" is a most disappointing statement to have originated from the brain of a supposedly leading theorist. For all his verbal dexterity in manipulating the verbal counters of the post-Structuralist Parisian milieu, Hocquenghem is revealed as possessing a very low consciousness.

Clearly, then, the poor technical quality of this film is not compensated by the purity of its intentions. It is laced with pessimism and self-contempt. Contrary to first appearances, it is no contribution to gay liberation, but rather to its opposite.

NOTES ON PUBLICATIONS

1. From Philadelphia Barbara Gittings, Coordinator of the Gay Task Force of the American Library Association, reports continuing progress in the tenacious effort, now nearly a decade old, to persuade public and academic libraries to acquire adequate collections on homosexuality. The Task Force has just published a useful pamphlet of tips for nonlibrarians.

Called *Censored, Ignored, Overlooked, Too Expensive? How To Get Gay Materials Into Libraries*, the pamphlet explains library selection policies in a general way and tells what an individual or a group can do to get a library to buy more gay books and periodicals. There are also sections on what to do if the library refuses your request, on why gay books are sometimes kept where you have to ask for them, and on donating materials to the library.

The pamphlet costs \$1.00 prepaid, checks payable to "Barbara Gittings-GTF" at PO Box 2383, Philadelphia, PA 19103. Bookstore and bulk order discount available.

A new, expanded edition of the classic *A Gay Bibliography* will shortly be available from the same source for \$1.00. The Task Force also has separate lists: "Gay Aids for Counselors" (2 copies, 30¢); "Gay Materials Core Collections List" (2 copies, 25¢); "Gay Materials for Use in Schools" (25¢); "Gay Resources for Religious Study" (2 copies, 30¢); "Gay Teachers' Resources" (2 copies, 25¢); and "A Short Lesbian Reading List" (2 copies, 25¢).

2. Ambitious plans are underway for a new fantasy and science fiction magazine: *Aura: The Gay Magazine of Fantasy*. The editors invite submissions of original fiction and graphics. Write to *Aura* at 236 West 16th St., New York, N.Y. 10011.

3. *The SIECUS Report*, attractively published and edited, is a valuable bimonthly roundup of publications and ongoing work in all areas of sex research. For a one year subscription (\$10.00) apply to Human Sciences Press, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011.

4. From France comes a handsome new publication of 144 pages, *Masques: Revue des homosexualités* (no. 1, May 1979). The articles, by both lesbians and gay men, cover a wide spectrum of opinion in France. There are also contributions by Kate Millett and David Thorstad. Write to *Masques*, C/of Librairie Anima, 3, rue Ravignan, 75018 Paris.

5. The Italian monthly *Lambda* has assumed a newly designed format. Features include: European news, opinion columns, book reviews, entertainment stories and personal ads. For one year, send \$10.00 to Felice Cassolo, C.P. 195, 10100 Torino, Italy.

6. The current issue of *Radical History Review* (No. 20; Spring/Summer 1979) addresses "Sexuality in History." Contributions dealing with homosexuality, generally from a left or Marxist viewpoint, include those by

Blanch Wiesen Cook, Martin Bauml Duberman, Bert Hansen, Joseph Interrante, Carol Lasser, Robert A. Padgug, and Jeffrey Weeks. The issue is available for \$5.00 from MARHO, John Jay College, 445 West 59th St., New York, N.Y. 10019.

7. For some years the currently inactive New York organization "Homosexuals Intransigent!" published a newsletter containing controversial and thought-provoking views. Now a selection, *The Best of HI!*, is available for \$1.00 from L. Craig Schoonmaker, 446 West 46th St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

8. Bibliographer Alan J. Miller has completed three extensive listings of Canadian and international references: "Homosexuality and Employment" (No. 11), "Homosexuality and Human Rights" (No. 12), and "Homosexuals in Specific Fields: The Arts, the Military, the Ministry, Prisons, Sports, Teaching and Transsexuals" (No. 13). All are available *without charge* from the Ontario Ministry of Labour Library, 400 University Avenue/10th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

9. *Swish*, a biannual poetry journal, welcomes subscriptions as well as submissions. Poems (batches of 4-6; max. 20 lines each) should explore sexuality (gay or non-gay, lesbian or nonlesbian) as essential to wholeness. The first issue of ca 80 pp. is planned for Summer-Autumn, 1980, with an April 1st deadline. S.S.A.E. is required. Reporting time: 8 weeks. Payment is in copies only. Louie Crew, Editor, PO Box 754, Stevens Point, WI 54481. Subscriptions are \$8.00 (\$5.00 for individual issues).

Swish aspires to move beyond the important but limited phallic vision of much private, confessional lesbian and gay male poetry. *Swish* encourages shared visions; memorials for casual, nongenital struggles of all sexual outcasts; common ballads, anthems, odes and prayers as well as more personalized lyrics. *Swish* summons the elect—feminists, blacks, criminals, prostitutes, unrepentant Amazons, militant closet queans, nellie bishops, celibate intellectuals, and all other salts—to share there their most articulate reformation hymns.

10. San Francisco has given birth on October 19 to a new publication in newspaper format, *The Voice*. Paul Hardman, the distinguished activist, is editor and publisher. *The Voice* will combine news, especially of legal advances, with cultural and historical articles. Subscriptions are available for \$20.00 (26 issues, or one year) from 1782 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94109.

11. Three pamphlets are now available from John Lauritsen. They are: "Dangerous Trends in Feminism" (presentation to the 1976 GAU Conference), "Rape: Hysteria and Civil Liberties" (an essay-review of *Against Our Will*), and "Feminism & Censorship" (an exchange from *WIN Magazine*). Pamphlets are \$1.00 each postpaid from: Lauritsen, 26 St. Mark's Place, N.Y., N.Y. 10003.

CORRECTION: The second half of the penultimate paragraph of column one of page 10 of GBB No. 1 should read as follows:

Yet never does Trevor-Roper say or even imply that Wilde, to whom he refers at least ten times, was politically anti-authoritarian, or that Rolfe was a major novelist. Instead, Oscar Wilde was simply an aesthete who was put on trial and ruined. Frederick Rolfe, another aesthete, who

called himself Baron Corvo, was a "preposterous" and "socially deviant" character. And Backhouse the forger and confidence man (if that was indeed his "hidden life") was, in Trevor-Roper's closing words, "the Baron Corvo of Peking." And all this is presented not just as popular biography, or as setting the record straight about some important Chinese manuscripts, but as serious cultural history!

The German Gay Movement from page 25

homogeneous society. Getting through everyday life, *der graue Alltag*, can become a major problem; resignation can cripple even the most sincere efforts to challenge established norms.

West Germany is experiencing a neo-McCarthyist period, a time of severe cramping of civil liberties. The *Berufsverbot* and its corollaries have many people fearing for their livelihood and, *ergo*, their lives. When peaceful dissidents of any variety can be so easily cowed, the more violent Baader-Meinhof tactics become more comprehensible as a last resort.

The Sex Radicals from page 27

trays a determined group of men and women (some of the most vigorous of them operating out of Valley Falls, Kansas!), who fought for sexual liberty in Victorian America. Sears' sex radicals are not, however, altogether dissimilar from the purity crusaders. For as the dominant movement derived much of its strength from Protestant religious revivals, so did the free love effort stem from the extraordinary vogue of Spiritualism in mid-nineteenth-century America. The abolitionist experience was another link. It should be made clear that "free love" was not

understood at this time as simple licence or promiscuity, but was based on the idea that there should be no coercion in sexual matters. Coition should be attempted only when a man and woman felt intense spiritual attraction. This brought the movement into headlong conflict with the upholders of conventional marriage. Advocacy of free speech, including sometimes the use of four-letter words, was another source of friction.

The central figure in the story is Moses Harman, a minister turned abolitionist and freethinker. His remarkable periodical, *Lucifer, the Light Bearer*, published from the early 1880s to 1907, was dedicated to free love, sex education and women's rights. The contributors developed a direct, sometimes iconoclastic style that probed the limits of social dissent in the late nineteenth century.

Other members of the sex radical circle included E.B. Foote, a physician who made a fortune with a home medical book crammed with sex information; Edwin Walker and Lillian Harman, who became notorious when their jailhouse honeymoon challenged the right of the state to regulate marriage; Elmina Slenker, who promoted a theory of sexual energy sublimination and the idea that women were the superior sex; and Lois Waisbrooker, Dora Forster and Lillie White, whose ideas were strikingly prophetic of today's women's movement. Among other

Homophobia – Liberal and Illiberal from page 2

latest to weigh in with arguments of this kind is Samuel McCracken, in *Commentary*, January 1979. Unlike some of the critics McCracken has actually made an effort to study the serious literature on homosexuality, and his rhetoric is more muted in consequence. He does compare being homosexual to being fat or a smoker, saying that none of these things makes one a good role model. It is curious that the editors of *Commentary*, which is published under the auspices of the American Jewish Committee, have such trouble in seeing the analogy between the present plight of the homosexual minority and the historical dangers the Jews have faced. The editors cannot understand that the barriers that may be locking into place against homosexuals may subsequently become the model for a broader attack on ethnic minorities. Indeed, we may have seen the start of this ominous development in William Kunstler's outrageous assertion that socialist Vietnam has the right to rid itself of its ethnic Chinese.

No doubt newspaper columnists and article writers will continue to moralize about these matters. The current "heavy" who has welded together some of the more dangerous elements of the trends we have been examining is the historian Christopher Lasch. (As Paul Zweig has noted, his Dickensian surname is apt.) Coming out of the 1960s from a strong New Left position, Lasch has gradually evolved a defense of the family that in some ways recalls that of George Gilder. In his latest book, *The Culture of Narcissism* (1978), he depicts the present age as one of almost universal decadence and alienation, where permissiveness is all too rife. He is not closely concerned with homosexuality as such, but seeks to create a kind of unified-field theory of social malaise, embracing much of what has gone before: modern life is bleak and anomic in the "me decade"; the pursuit of individual awareness is selfish and antisocial; sexual freedom is demoralizing, and serves to cut one off from the future; the family must be restored to its central place in our society in order for us all to lead satisfying lives. The link between this new con-

stellation and Lasch's former radicalism seems to lie in a notion of *community* as a transcendent value, itself an inheritance from eighteenth-century German conservatism, reacting against capitalist individualism. Lasch's alliance with contemporary conservatives is then not so surprising; the potential was there all the while in the New Left package, ticking away like a time bomb. While Lasch is probably not aware of the full dimensions of his intellectual pedigree, he is self-consciously backward looking: he has laid the foundations for a new Victorianism.

His ideas have already penetrated the White House, as seen in President Carter's "not one more drop" speech. Narcissism has become the vogue word of the year. Lasch's ideas may prove to be an important resource in the accumulating armory of the opponents of sexual freedom. The antipomography crusaders, not discussed here, form another major reactionary contingent. It should now be obvious, at any rate, that this whole continuing trend deserves to be watched much more closely than it has in the past.

How can we explain this seeming desertion on the part of those whom one might have expected to hold high the Enlightenment ideal of emancipation? No doubt the fault lies partly in the eclectic character of the whole liberal tradition, which has proved hospitable both to conservative and radical ideas, each with its totalitarian component. Then too, explanations must be sought in the individual psychology of the writers. Their homophobia must be traced to the same occult sources as the homophobia of so many others, who are less highly educated and less articulate.

What should now be clear is that politically we cannot afford to place all our eggs in any one basket. A more diversified approach is needed. It is to our advantage that we have friends all across the political spectrum. We must learn to communicate more effectively with these friends, so that they can work on the muddled homophobes in their midst.

points, they advanced the principle that women must have the right to control their own bodies.

The sex radicals met a formidable nemesis in the person of Anthony Comstock, who restricted the circulation of their literature through his powers of postal censorship. The wrangles that characterized this struggle led to legal formulations of the concept of obscenity that were to last into the 1950s.

The Sex Radicals is fluently written and beautifully printed. Not only has Hal D. Sears brought some fascinating characters back to life, he has recreated a whole largely forgotten movement, one which can provide a model in many ways for our own challenging libertarian

efforts. (For a collection of original texts of the movement, see now Taylor Stoehr, ed., *Free Love in America: A Documentary History*, New York, AMS Press, 1979.)

Taken together, these four books show what a bewildering range of options are available to anyone who seeks to evolve a viable policy for social change in the spheres of sex and sexual expression. Today we very much need to be aware of this history, for it provides a wealth of stratagems to meet the determined opponents of sexual freedom, who seem to be increasing in numbers and vociferousness. ☐

WD

NEW BIBLIOGRAPHY ANNOUNCED

One, Inc., and the Institute for the Study of Human Resources of Los Angeles have contracted with Garland Press to produce a new comprehensive and international bibliography of homosexuality. Founded in part on the 1976 Annotated Bibliography of Homosexuality, the new work will have extensive indexing and cross-referencing features that will make it an instrument of research in its own right. In order to present new types of material of all sort, the number of entries will be increased from 13,000 to about 20,000. Those who have expertise in unusual fields and languages are invited to communicate with the general editor, W. Door Legg, at One, Inc., 2256 Venice Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90006.

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Game-Texts: A Guatemalan Journal. Lovemaking with Latin boys etc. \$4.95 paper; \$15 hardcover.

Carnivorous Saint: Erotic gay poems 1941-1976 by Harold Norse. \$5.95 paper; \$15 signed hardcover.

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