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The Ladder



JANE
KOGAN



\$1.25



purpose of the Daughters of BILITIS

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING
THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

- 1 Education of the Lesbian, enabling her to understand herself and to make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic, and economic implications - by establishing and maintaining a library of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public meetings on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by providing the Lesbian a forum for the interchange of ideas within her own group.
- 2 Education of the public, developing an understanding and acceptance of the Lesbian as an individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices - by public discussion meetings and by dissemination of educational literature on the Lesbian theme.
- 3 Encouragement of and participation in responsible research dealing with homosexuality.
- 4 Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposing and promoting changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group through due process of law in the state legislatures.

MEMBERSHIP in the Daughters of Bilitis is limited to women 21 years of age or older. If in New York area, direct inquiry to chapter. Otherwise write to National Office in San Francisco for a membership application form.

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THE LADDER

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IS HETEROSEXUALITY "NATURAL"?

Myths die slowly and they die hard. The myth of a flat world, with sun and stars revolving around it, is long dead. Most Americans no longer believe in the Biblical explanation of creation, although it was only very recently that the last of the laws prohibiting the teaching of evolution was struck down. Our nation is suffering from the death-agony of the myth of racism. The myth of male dominance and women's "role of submissiveness" still prevails in our society.

One of the myths that very few people have challenged is the belief that heterosexuality is the most natural, mature and perfect way of loving. In order to challenge this belief, one must be prepared to examine the nature of human sexuality in a dispassionate way; and few human beings are quite capable of being dispassionate about sex. Nevertheless, it is possible to try.

The prime argument behind the myth that heterosexuality is most "natural" (and by implication, that other forms of sexual expression are unnatural) is that coitus is necessary for reproduction, and without it the race would become extinct. Yet it does not seem necessary for people to encourage each other to practice heterosexual coitus or to bear children, and indeed the problem throughout history for most peoples was to keep people from bearing children out of wedlock or when they were for other reasons in no financial position to care for their children. And

people today are bearing far too many children. It seems unlikely that they will be discouraged from overpopulating the world by simply encouraging non-reproductive forms of sexuality.

In short, the race is not going to stop reproducing itself, no matter what laws are enacted or repealed. If homosexuality were made legal, and heterosexuality illegal, if bearing children were punishable by death, huge numbers of people would risk death, even by torture, in order to have children.

Most people practice sexual behavior of some sort rather frequently and only occasionally have children. If men and women had sex only during one month of the year, we would still be overpopulated!

The second prop behind the myth is that heterosexual coitus is most pleasurable to the majority. According to the recent study by Masters and Johnson, *Human Sexual Response*, most of the participants reported more intense orgasms were experienced through masturbation rather than through sexual intercourse. According to various studies of female sexuality, most women achieve orgasm rarely, perhaps never in their lifetimes—including women who have borne many children. If heterosexual coitus is so "natural," so "fulfilling," why do women, who are biologically capable of orgasm, have to learn how to achieve it? If the function comes "naturally," why is sex an art that has to be practiced rather than an automatic

affair? Why are women so constructed that their orgasm is most often a product of clitoral stimulation rather than a result of penetration with the penis? The vagina is directly connected with reproduction and the clitoris is not—yet the clitoris is the most sexually sensitive organ in a woman's body.

Freudian psychiatrists have postulated that the "healthy, mature" adult enjoys coitus more than any other sex act. Since the Masters and Johnson study showed that most adults do not react the way Freudians tell us we ought to react, are we to assume that most of us are unhealthy? Or is it possible that the Freudians are indulging in circular and moralistic reasoning? If I tell you that milk is the most healthful food and that you should therefore enjoy milk more than any other food—and that you must be mentally sick if you prefer some other kind of food—you would probably tell me that you feel perfectly fine and that it's none of my business what you eat. It would seem ridiculous to you to define mental health or maturity on the basis of food tastes; yet we do this all the time in the area of sexual preferences.

One may also question the idea that we "ought" to live naturally. We all eat cooked food, wear artificial garments, travel in artificial machines instead of on the feet God gave us—and we don't make a fuss about it. And yet when some fellow performs a sex act with his own natural physical equipment in a way which makes us uncomfortable, we call him "unnatural," raise a hue and cry, and throw him in prison—or worse.

Another prop behind this myth

is the argument that the "purpose" of sex is to reproduce—that God created man in two sexes and that He had a purpose in doing so. Well, if the purpose was to reproduce, I have already demonstrated that this is adequately fulfilled by occasional intercourse. Will anyone say that God commanded men to engage in sex only when a child is the desired result and only in the manner necessary to reproduce? This position, of course, would result in the prohibition of contraception as well as sexual acts in persons who are sterile, women past menopause or in infertile periods. If God's purpose was that we should use sex only for reproduction, why did he create the homosexual, why did He make some people sterile? I cannot believe that He did this only to torment us and lead us into the temptation of sinning against His purposes. I cannot believe that sex was given to us to be enjoyed *only* by those who wish to procreate at the time and forbidden to all others.

The final prop of the myth of heterosexual "naturalness" lies in cultural projection. Men tend to see the universe in terms of their own prejudices and conceptions. In a patriarchal society, man projects a male, father-like god figure to rule the universe. In a matriarchal society, the most powerful god is a female, mother-like figure. The gods always resemble powerful men, women or animals. Men also project sexuality onto the universe.

The Chinese have a myth structure involving concepts of Yang and Yin. Westerners use their language to label everything in sight as "he," "she," or "it." As a matter of fact, the neutral pronoun did not

come into use until very recently in the history of the English language. In Chaucer's time, it was impossible to refer to anything without labelling it as either male or female by one's use of pronouns. It is quite possible that a culture exists which does not label sexual objects as either male or female, but I have yet to hear of one.

According to some recent theories, man is the most sexual of animals. Only men are capable of having sex at any time of year. The human female is the only female mammal who does not have a "heat" period. Humans have larger genitals, in comparison with their physical size, than any other animal.

I can hypothesize that men, who are so highly sexed in comparison to other animals, would have a resultant tendency to project their sexuality all around them, to see even the hills and the sky as having sex. It is also possible that some cultures exist which attribute sexuality only to creatures who actually have sex, and do not see sex where it does not exist; and if such a culture is found, I'd like to hear about it. This psychological tendency might also have no causal relation to the fact that man is a highly sexed species; but in any case, this is certainly worth investigation.

How does this relate to the myth of heterosexual "naturalness?" The majority of the population is heterosexually oriented and this has always been the case for humanity. The majority does not merely project sexuality onto the universe; it projects its preferred brand, heterosexuality. Sky and earth are not seen as two rough males in combat

but as male and female in copulation. The magnetic properties of north and south are seen in terms of sexual attraction between male and female.

And yet the majority, as we know from history, is not always right. The majority once thought it natural that the earth was flat, that kings had a divine right to rule, that blacks were intended by God to serve whites, that women were intended to be subservient to men.

People have a great emotional investment in believing that heterosexuality is right and natural and ought to be practiced, even by those who do not especially want to practice it. I cannot believe that this emotional investment is the result of anything other than emotional insecurity.

When we consider what a difficult business sex is, how fraught with dangers it has been (unwanted children and venereal disease), and how we have all been conditioned to react to sex with fear, embarrassment, secret curiosity, shame, etc.; when sexual performance has been converted into the proof to every man of his adequacy as a human being; when sexual pleasure is more difficult for a woman to achieve, so that men often become angry at a woman's demands for help in obtaining pleasure, or perhaps ignore her needs or convince her that her role in life is to cater to his pleasure and forget her own—when we consider that sex education in schools is still a debatable issue in this country—is it any wonder that most people do not feel at all "natural" about sex, but are basically insecure about it?

And because of this basic insecurity, because of the fears of inade-

quacy, and of perhaps being considered immature, unhealthy and insane, many people are extremely reluctant to examine the nature of sexuality. In the Victorian era, most men masturbated; yet almost every masturbator felt that there was something wrong with him. And all these masturbating gentlemen publicly upheld the notion that their private practices were sinful and sick!

It may be that the myth of normality, the glorified romances where one is supposed to feel "in tune with the universe" which is supposedly vibrating to the

rhythms of sex and love, is simply a vast cover-up for deep feelings of inadequacy, guilt, and lack of pleasure. And the persecution of sexual minorities is simply an attempt to obliterate the evidence that conflicts with our fantasies. People are all so busy buying books about sex, trying to "make marriage work," trying to achieve simultaneous orgasm, trying so hard to label as "sick" anyone who does not subscribe to the myth, trying to legislate morality. If heterosexuality were so simple and natural, would all this be necessary?

by Kim Stabinski

WHAT THE BIBLE DOES AND DOES NOT SAY ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY

Having read Rev. Robert W. Wood's *Christ and the Homosexual* some years back, I was particularly interested in his "Homosexuality and the Church" (*The Ladder*, December/January). Again he strikes some rather poignant notes regarding the Church's tendency to rationalize its lack of positive action in some areas of human concern through deep involvement in other (often lesser) causes.

In rushing to the "amen corner," I pray we readers did not skim too lightly over the Rev. Mr. Wood's point that we need the Church even more than it needs us.

In this age of faint new awakening to our particular needs on the part of the Church, we can ill afford to stand back and watch the seed either grow or wither. We must meet the Church more than half way. Only by integrating ourselves into the religious community can we make our voices heard, can we help tear down the stereotype of homosexuality so prevalent among our Church leaders and laity.

This we can do quietly, calmly. There is no need for soap boxes or self announcements. There is a need for us to be seen, gradually understood, and accepted

as integral parts of our community religious bodies.

And how great is our need as individuals for a personal relationship with Christ through His Church! Faced with myriad problems peculiar to homosexuality in addition to the problems we all face as humans, a firm faith and trust in Christ can be the difference in our total adjustment to life—or lack of it.

The number of us who hold ourselves back from this relationship with Him because of the reluctance of the Church to admit its lethargy is tragic. It brings to mind the point Rev. Wood makes but unfortunately does not develop: "An understanding of what the Bible does and DOES NOT say on the matter will go a long way to opening minds and establishing a moral theology toward homosexuality."

What so many of us fail to realize is that a great bulk of our theology is NOT based on Christ's teaching, but rather on social mores which inevitably had tremendous influence on the human minds attempting to establish guidelines in accordance with His teachings. And once those guidelines are established, change is an interminable process, even when

the fallacy of long-accepted "thou shalt not" s can be shown.

Until the Church can acknowledge the fact, we as homosexuals *must* individually come to understand that the Church's law and God's law are not always the same—certainly not in the matter of homosexual expression.

What does the Bible actually say about homosexuality? Let's not check the Old Testament references, for in with the few comments on the subject there we will become distracted by such sins as eating rabbit (Leviticus 11:6), lobster, clams, shrimp, oysters (Leviticus 11:10-12), or rare steak (Leviticus 17:10)—or of wearing garments "of divers sort, as of woolen and linen together" (Deuteronomy 22:11, KJV).

There are but three direct references to homosexuality in the New Testament. The most widely quoted of these for damning overt homosexual expression is Romans 1:26-27 (KJV): "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into which is against nature; and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another."

Note these key words: *change, leaving*. In order to change from or to leave heterosexuality, one must first be heterosexual.

What we have is an account of bisexual lust—and St. Paul does say *lust*, placing this behavior out of the higher realm of love and devotion. It is interesting to note that this is the only Old or New Testament scriptural reference to sexual relations between females.

In I Timothy 1:9-10 (KJV), St. Paul lumps "them that defile themselves with mankind" into the same condemnation with murderers. Here the word *defile*, used also in deploring lustful heterosexual and bestial practices, is open to question. Does one defile oneself through the actual act—or through the motive of lust and carnal desire separated from all higher emotional planes? Not that St. Paul does not clarify the gender of "them" or the usage of "mankind" as meaning men or the totality of human beings, thus leaving this oft-quoted condemnation of homosexuality quite open to interpretation.

We must keep in mind that the Bible does not now say precisely what it once did—through centuries of transliteration,

translations and interpretations it has been vulnerable to human error. Were we to go back to the ancient Greek (with an understanding of the vernacular of the day) and trace the references to homosexuality from the original language down through the years of revision, we could begin to appreciate the effect of social mores and taboos on the interpreters. Thanks to the Revised Standard Version, we now have the word "homosexual" (I Corinthians 6:9) directly in the Scriptures!

We must also keep in mind that even the original Scriptures were recorded by men—men influenced by Mosaic law and the accepted social views of the day as well as by God.

In considering the effect of social pressures on the Church's teaching in modern days, let us look at some of the things forbidden in the New Testament (KJV quoted) but practiced widely in or sanctioned by our Churches at the present time.

In I Corinthians 7:10-11 and 39, St. Paul spells out what he terms as God's law against divorce and remarriage. Here we notice he places priority on this law over many teachings which he clarifies as being his own judgment—and rightly so. Read Christ's own words in Mark 10: 11-12. Yet how many ministers today unite divorced persons with new partners in the sacrament of marriage—or accept such couples joyfully into their congregations without so much as a furrowed brow!

What minister would quote I Corinthians 6:1-7 to a parishioner involved in court proceedings against one who had injured him? Or I Timothy 2: 9-10 to a woman who wears gold or pearls or a stylish hairdo? Or Hebrews 5:13 to the family serving milk at dinner?

How many ushers would turn the hatless woman from the church door with I Corinthians 11:5-6 and 13? Or the boy with long hair with I Corinthians 11:14? In fact, why do we never question the fact that Christ is always pictured with long hair while St. Paul says "If a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?"

How many female Sunday School teachers and missionaries, women preachers and evangelists would the Church lose if it followed I Corinthians 14:34-35! Even the nuns would find convent life vastly different!

What would happen to our educational system (or to the Church) if the Church began a crusade against women teachers based on I Timothy 2:11-12?

The list could go on and on—and few of us would disagree with the Church's lack of strict interpretation of the Scriptures in such instances. Yet we do wonder how the Church can overlook entire passages which pertain to the majority, while seizing upon a few scattered verses to condemn the homosexual minority—especially when those scattered verses are often much more open to different interpretations than are the verses which go against the grain of currently socially acceptable behavioral patterns.

In observing these discrepancies I am not attempting to berate the Bible, but rather to point out that it was originally written by man, translated and interpreted by man, its doctrines supplemented by man into the broad base of Christian theology. And man is fallible. Even St. Paul, recognizing this, often states that he is giving his own views rather than commandments of God.

We need the Bible as a source to understand Christ—but we need to spend more time observing His spirit as related there rather than the "letter of the law" given by His followers in attempting to spread His message.

Pick up an edition of the Bible with Christ's recorded statements printed in red. Study only His words, comparing His positive approach with the often negative approach found elsewhere throughout the Scriptures. Notice His emphasis on love—His silence on the means of sex but concern only with the motives behind it.

Can we actually believe a Christ of such love, a Christ who recognizes the human need for mortal love and its physical fulfillment as well as for His divine love, can ask that legions of homosexuals either live a life of celibacy or else face eternal damnation? Not the Christ I know!

"I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean" (Romans 14:14, KJV). "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure" (Titus 1:15, KJV).

Only when we as individuals accept the fact that we are homosexual can we begin

to adjust to ourselves and adjust ourselves to our society.

Only when we accept the fact that we have been conditioned to believe man's laws to be God's can we adjust our lives to His love, walking tall, unashamed and unafraid into His Church as Christian homosexuals.

(Kim Stabinski, a 29-year old business-woman currently living in Boston, spent her first twenty-one years in a strict Protestant atmosphere, always active in the Church and a leader in youth activities.

Although she had known years earlier that she is a Lesbian, Kim had not personally accepted that fact and had carefully avoided all contact with homosexuality until near the end of her college years.

Confronted by parents who learned of her sexual identity within months of her first encounter, Kim was overcome with guilt. In spite of her initial contact, she still had not accepted her homosexuality, nor had she questioned the religious teachings which she had been so carefully conditioned to believe.

In grief at the anguish she had dealt her parents, embroiled in conflict between her nature and her Christianity, and seeking a closer relationship with Christ and a meaningful life, she turned in desperation to Catholicism. Four months after her baptism, she received her degree and entered the convent.

While receiving a "crash training course" from her novice mistress to help her adjust to her new religion and to convent life, Kim also took Theology classes at a nearby college and taught in one of her order's schools.

During her year in the convent, Kim finally came to know and accept herself. After that first big step, she began slowly, cautiously, prayerfully to examine—and to question—the Catholic and Protestant positions on homosexuality.

Through the ensuing years, Kim has been gradually developing her own moral theology toward homosexuality, and she is currently working toward presenting this theology in book form. Her goal is to have this book—The Christian Homosexual—in the hands of her publisher within the next year. Upon completion of The Christian Homosexual, she envisions a series of novels of the Ann Bannon variety.)

TWO POEMS by Kim Stabinski

Lines before the Ecumenical Council

veiled silence
veiled tears

You are lifted
behold the Lamb of God
behold Him Who

heads bowed, revering
the striking of breasts

oh Lord i am not worthy
that Thou shouldst come under my roof
but speak the word only
and my soul shall be healed

oh Lord i am not worthy
doubly forced on us
while they receive You
saying
oh Lord i am not
while they

we kneel
in veiled tears
with oh Lord i am not
and no hope

speak the word only

speak it Lord at Thy council
and my soul shall be

Radclyffe said it:
we have not denied You
rise up then, oh Lord, defend us
acknowledge us before the whole world
give us also
the right to our existence

speak the word only

out of the depths
we cry unto Thee, oh Lord
Lord, hear our prayer

acknowledge us
before the whole world
open their eyes, defend
our right to existence

at Thy council
speak the word

and our souls
in legions
shall be

oh Lord i am not

speak the

On T. S. Eliot's "The Hippopotamus"

(While The Church remains below . . .
Wrapt in the old miasmal mist.)

strange

we sin
merely
by doubting
to be sin
that which She calls sin

and in our sin
nothing
we do
being done in sin
can be more than sin
than more sin

yes, mr. eliot, i want to be a hippopotamus

by Helen R Hull

THE FIRE

(Helen Rose Hull, distinguished American novelist and short story writer, was educated at Michigan State and the University of Michigan, and received a Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago in 1912.

She has taught at Wellesley College and Columbia University. Her first short story was published in 1915. Her first novel, *QUEST*, in 1922.

This story, "The Fire," first appeared in the *CENTURY MAGAZINE*, November, 1917. It is a tribute to the universality of her talent that this story still has relevance today in defining the puberty patterns of the Lesbian.

Miss Hull's pertinent fiction includes the aforementioned novel, *QUEST*, N.Y., Macmillan, 1922; *LABYRINTH*, N.Y., Macmillan, 1923; "With One Coin For Fee," s. n., in *EXPERIMENT*, N.Y., Coward, 1940 and *LANDFALL*, N.Y., Coward, 1952.

She has had a varied and successful career, producing over a dozen novels and several collections of short stories and novellas.)

Cynthia blotted the entry in the old ledger and scowled across the empty office at the door. Mrs. Moriety had left it ajar when she departed with her receipt for the weekly fifty cents on her "lot." If you supplied the missing gilt letters, you could read the sign on the glass of the upper half: "H. P. Bates. Real Estate. Notary Public." Through the door at Cynthia's elbow came the rumbling voice of old Fleming, the lawyer down the hall; he had come in for his Saturday night game of chess with her father.

Cynthia pushed the ledger away from her, and with her elbows on the spotted, green felt of the desk, her fingers burrowing into her cheeks, waited for two minutes by the nickel clock; then, with a quick, awkward movement, she pushed back her chair and plunged to the doorway, her young face twisted in a sort of fluttering resolution.

"Father—"

Her father jerked his head toward her, his fingers poised over a pawn. Old

Fleming did not look up.

"Father, I don't think anybody else will be in."

"Well, go on home, then." Her father bent again over the squares, the light shining strongly on the thin places about his temples.

"Father, please,"—Cynthia spoke hurriedly,—"you aren't going for a while? I want to go down to Miss Egert's for a minute."

"Eh? What's that?" He leaned back in his chair now, and Mr. Fleming lifted his severe, black beard to look at this intruder. "What for? You can't take any more painting lessons. Your mother doesn't want you going there any more."

"I just want to get some things I left there. I can get back to go home with you."

"But your mother said she didn't like your hanging around down there in an empty house with an old maid. What did she tell you about it?"

"Couldn't I just get my sketches, Father, and tell Miss Egert I'm not coming any more? She would think it was awfully funny if I didn't. I won't stay. But she—she's been good to me—"

"What set your mother against her, then? What you been doing down there?"

Cynthia twisted her hands together, her eyes running from Fleming's amused stare to her father's indecision. Only an accumulated determination could have carried her on into speech.

"I've just gone down once a week for a lesson. I want to get my things. If I'm not going, I ought to tell her."

"Why didn't you tell her that last week?"

"I kept hoping I could go on."

"Um." Her father's glance wavered toward his game. "Isn't it too late?"

"Just eight, Father." She stepped near her father, color flooding her cheeks. "If you'll give me ten cents, I can take the car—"

"Well—" He dug into his pocket, nodding at Fleming's grunt, "The women always want cash, eh, Bates?"

Then Cynthia, the dime pressed into her palm, tiptoed across to the nail where

her hat and sweater hung, seized them, and still on tiptoe, lest she disturb the game again, ran out to the head of the stairs.

She was trembling as she pulled on her sweater; as she ran down the dark steps to the street the tremble changed to a quiver of excitement. Suppose her father had known just what her mother *had* said! That she could not see Miss Egert again; could never go hurrying down to the cluttered room they called the studio for more of those strange hours of eagerness and pain when she bent over the drawing-board, struggling with the mysteries of color. That last sketch—the little, purpling mint-leaves from the garden—Miss Egert had liked that. And they thought she could leave those sketches there! Leave Miss Egert, too, wondering why she never came again! She hurried to the corner, past the bright store windows. In thought she could see Miss Egert setting out the jar of brushes, the dishes of water, pushing back the litter of magazines and books to make room for the drawing-board, waiting for her to come. Oh, she had to go once more, black as her disobedience was!

The half-past-eight car was just swinging round the curve. She settled herself behind two German housewives, shawls over their heads, market-baskets beside them. They lived out at the end of the street; one of them sometimes came to the office with payments on her son's lot. Cynthia pressed against the dirty window, fearful lest she miss the corner. There it was, the new street light shining on the sedate old house! She ran to the platform, pushing against the arm the conductor extended.

"Wait a minute, there!" He released her as the car stopped, and she fled across the street.

In front of the house she could not see a light, upstairs or down, except staring reflections in the windows from the white arc light. She walked past the dark line of box which led to the front door. At the side of the old square dwelling jutted a new, low wing; and there in two windows were soft slits of light along the curtain-edges. Cynthia walked along a little dirt path to a door at the side of the wing. Standing on the door-step, she felt in the shadow for the knocker. As she let it fall, from the garden behind her came a voice:

"I'm out here. Who is it?" There was a noise of feet hurrying through dead leaves, and as Cynthia turned to answer, out of the shadow moved a blur of face and white blouse.

"Cynthia! How nice!" The woman touched Cynthia's shoulder as she pushed open the door. "There, come in."

The candles on the table bent their flames in the draft; Cynthia followed Miss Egert into the room.

"You're busy?" Miss Egert had stood up by the door an old wooden-toothed rake. "I don't want to bother you." Cynthia's solemn, young eyes implored the woman and turned hastily away. The intensity of defiance which had brought her at such an hour left her confused.

"Bother? I was afraid I had to have my grand bonfire alone. Now we can have it a party. You'd like to?"

Miss Egert darted across to straighten one of the candles. The light caught in the folds of her crumpled blouse, in the soft, drab hair blown out around her face.

"I can't stay very long." Cynthia stared about the room, struggling to hide her turmoil under ordinary casualness. "You had the carpenter fix the bookshelves, didn't you?"

"Isn't it nice now! All white and gray and restful—just a spark of life in that mad rug. A good place to sit in and grow old."

Cynthia looked at the rug, a bit of scarlet Indian weaving. She wouldn't see it again! The thought poked a derisive finger into her heart.

"Shall we sit down just a minute and then go have the fire?"

Cynthia dropped into the wicker chair, wrenching her fingers through one another.

"My brother came in tonight, his last attempt to make me see reason," said Miss Egert.

Cynthia lifted her eyes. Miss Egert wasn't wondering why she had come; she could stay without trying to explain.

Miss Egert wound her arms about her knees as she went on talking. Her slight body was wrenched a little out of symmetry, as though from straining always for something uncaptured; there was the same lack of symmetry in her face, in her eyebrows, in the line of her mobile lips. But her eyes had nothing fugitive, nothing pursuing in their soft, gray depth. Their warm, steady eagerness shone out

in her voice, too, in its swift inflections.

"I tried to show him it wasn't a bit disgraceful for me to live here in a wing of my own instead of being a sort of nurse-maid adjunct in his house." She laughed, a soft, throaty sound. "It's my house. It's all I have left to keep me a person, you see. I won't get out and be respectable in his eyes."

"He didn't mind your staying here and taking care of—them!" cried Cynthia.

"It's respectable, dear, for an old maid to care for her father and mother; but when they die she ought to be useful to some one else instead of renting her house and living on an edge of it."

"Oh,"—Cynthia leaned forward,—*"I should think you'd hate him! I think families are—terrible!"*

"Hate him?" Miss Egert smiled. "He's nice. He just doesn't agree with me. As long as he lets the children come over—I told him I meant to have a beautiful time with them, with my real friends—with you."

Cynthia shrank into her chair, her eyes tragic again.

"Come, let's have our bonfire!" Miss Egert, with a quick movement, stood in front of Cynthia, one hand extended.

Cynthia crouched away from the hand.

"Miss Egert,"—her voice came out in a desperate little gasp,—*"I can't come down any more. I can't take any more painting lessons."* She stopped. Miss Egert waited, her head tipped to one side. "Mother doesn't think I better. I came down—after my things."

"They're all in the workroom." Miss Egert spoke quietly. "Do you want them now?"

"Yes." Cynthia pressed her knuckles against her lips. Over her hand her eyes cried out. "Yes, I better get them," she said heavily.

Miss Egert, turning slowly, lifted a candle from the table.

"We'll have to take this. The wiring isn't done." She crossed the room, her thin fingers, not quite steady, bending around the flame.

Cynthia followed through a narrow passage. Miss Egert pushed open a door, and the musty odor of the store room floated out into a queer chord with the fresh plaster of the hall.

"Be careful of that box!" Miss Egert set the candle on a pile of trunks. "I've had to move all the truck from the attic

and studio in here. Your sketches are in the portfolio, and that's—somewhere!"

Cynthia stood in the doorway, watching Miss Egert bend over a pile of canvases, throwing up a grotesque, rounded shadow on the wall. Round the girl's throat closed a ring of iron.

"Here they are, piled up—"

Cynthia edged between the boxes. Miss Egert was dragging the black portfolio from beneath a pile of books.

"And here's the book I wanted you to see." The pile slipped crashing to the floor as Miss Egert pulled out a magazine. "Never mind those. See here." She dropped into the chair from which she had knocked the books, the portfolio under one arm, the free hand running through the pages of an old art magazine. The chair swung slightly; Cynthia, peering down between the boxes, gave a startled "Oh!"

"What is it?" Miss Egert followed Cynthia's finger. "The chair?" She was silent a moment. "Do you think I keep my mother prisoner here in a wheel chair now that she is free?" She ran her hand along the worn arm. "I tried to give it to an old ladies' home, but it was too used up. They wanted more style."

"But doesn't it remind you—" Cynthia hesitated.

"It isn't fair to remember the years she had to sit here waiting to die. You didn't know her. I've been going back to the real years—" Miss Egert smiled at Cynthia's bewildered eyes. "Here, let's look at these." She turned another page. "See, Cynthia. Aren't they swift and glad? That's what I was trying to tell you the other day. See that arm, and the drapery there! Just a line—" The girl bent over the page, frowning at the details the quick finger pointed out. "Don't they catch you along with them?" She held the book out at arm's length, squinting at the figures. "Take it along. There are several more." She tucked the book into the portfolio and rose. "Come on; we'll have our fire."

"But, Miss Egert,"—Cynthia's voice hardened as she was swept back into her own misery,—*"I can't take it. I can't come any more."*

"To return a book?" Miss Egert lowered her eyelids as if she were again sizing up a composition. "You needn't come just for lessons."

Cynthia shook her head.

"Mother thinks—" She fell into silence. She couldn't say what her mother thought—dreadful things. If she could only swallow the hot pressure in her throat!

"Oh, I hadn't understood." Miss Egert's fingers paused for a swift touch on Cynthia's arm, and then reached for the candle. "You can go on working by yourself."

"It isn't that—" Cynthia struggled an instant, and dropped into silence again. She couldn't say out loud any of the things she was feeling. There were too many walls between feeling and speech: loyalty to her mother, embarrassment that feelings should come so near words, a fear of hurting Miss Egert.

"Don't mind so much, Cynthia." Miss Egert led the way back to the livingroom. "You can stay for the bonfire? That will be better than sitting here. Run into the kitchen and bring the matches and marshmallows—in a dish in the cupboard."

Cynthia, in the doorway, stared at Miss Egert. Didn't she care at all! Then the dumb ache in her throat stopped throbbing as Miss Egert's gray eyes held her steadily a moment. She did care! She did! She was just helping her. Cynthia took the candle and went back through the passageway to the kitchen, down at the very end.

She made a place on the table in the litter of dishes and milk bottles for the candle. The matches had been spilled on the shelf of the stove and into the sink. Cynthia gathered a handful of the driest. Shiftlessness was one of her mother's counts against Miss Egert. Cynthia flushed as she recalled her stumbling defense: Miss Egert had more important things to do; dishes were kept in their proper place; and her mother's: "Important! Mooning about!"

"Find them, Cynthia?" The clear, low voice came down the hall, and Cynthia hurried back.

Out in the garden it was quite black. As they came to the far end, the old stone wall made a dark bank against the sky, with a sharp star over its edge. Miss Egert knelt; almost with the scratch of the match the garden leaped into yellow, with fantastic moving shadows from the trees and in the corner of the wall. She raked leaves over the blaze, pulled the great mound into firmer shape, and then drew Cynthia back under the wall to

watch. The light ran over her face; the delighted gestures of her hands were like quick shadows.

"See the old apple-tree dance! He's too old to move fast."

Cynthia crouched by the wall, brushing away from her face the scratchy leaves of the dead hollyhocks. Excitement tingled through her; she felt the red and yellow flames seizing her, burning out the heavy rebellion, the choking weight. Miss Egert leaned back against the wall, her hands spread so that her thin fingers were fire-edged.

"See the smoke curl up through those branches! Isn't it lovely, Cynthia?" She darted around the pile to push more leaves into the flames.

Cynthia strained forward, hugging her arms to her body. Never had there been such a fire! It burned through her awkwardness, her self-consciousness. It ate into the thick, murky veils which hung always between her and the things she struggled to find out. She took a long breath, and the crisp scent of smoke from the dead leaves tingled down through her body.

Miss Egert was at her side again. Cynthia looked up; the slight, asymmetrical figure was like the apple tree, still, yet dancing!

"Why don't you paint it?" demanded Cynthia, abruptly, and then was frightened as Miss Egert's body stiffened, lost its suggestion of motion.

"I can't." The woman dropped to the ground beside Cynthia, crumpling a handful of leaves. "It's too late." She looked straight at the fire. "I must be content to see it." She blew the pieces of leaves from the palm of her hand and smiled at Cynthia. "Perhaps some day you'll paint it—or write it."

"I can't paint." Cynthia's voice quivered. "I want to do something. I can't even see things except what you point out. And now—"

Miss Egert laid one hand over Cynthia's clenched fingers. The girl trembled at the cold touch.

"You must go on looking." The glow, as the flames died lower, flushed her face. "Cynthia, you're just beginning. You mustn't stop just because you aren't to come here any more. I don't know whether you can say things with your brush; but you must find them out. You mustn't shut your eyes again."

"It's hard alone."

"That doesn't matter."

Cynthia's fingers unclasped, and one hand closed desperately around Miss Egert's. Her heart fluttered in her temples, her throat, her breast. She clung to the fingers, pulling herself slowly up from an inarticulate abyss.

"Miss Egert,"—she stumbled into words,— "I can't bear it, not coming here! Nobody else cares except about sensible things. You do, beautiful, wonderful things."

"You'd have to find them for yourself, Cynthia." Miss Egert's fingers moved under the girl's grasp. Then she bent toward Cynthia, and kissed her with soft, pale lips that trembled against the girl's mouth. "Cynthia, don't let any one stop you! Keep searching!" She drew back, poised for a moment in the shadow before she rose. Through Cynthia ran the swift feet of white ecstasy. She was pledging herself to some tremendous mystery, which trembled all about her.

"Come, Cynthia, we're wasting our coals."

Miss Egert held out her hands. Cynthia, laying hers in them, was drawn to her feet. As she stood there, inarticulate, full of a strange, excited, shouting hope, behind them the path crunched. Miss Egert turned, and Cynthia shrank back.

Her mother stood in the path, making no response to Miss Egert's "Good evening, Mrs. Bates."

The fire had burned too low to lift the shadow from the mother's face. Cynthia could see the hem of her skirt swaying where it dipped up in front. Above that two rigid hands in gray cotton gloves; above that the suggestion of a white, strained face.

Cynthia took a little step toward her.

"I came to get my sketches," she implored her. Her throat was dry. What if her mother began to say cruel things—the things she had already said at home.

"I hope I haven't kept Cynthia too late," Miss Egert said. "We were going to toast marshmallows. Won't you have one, Mrs. Bates?" She pushed the glowing leaf-ashes together. The little spurt of flame showed Cynthia her mother's eyes, hard, angry, resting an instant on Miss Egert and then assailing her.

"Cynthia knows she should not be here. She is not permitted to run about the streets alone at night."

"Oh, I'm sorry." Miss Egert made a deprecating little gesture. "But no harm has come to her."

"She has disobeyed me."

At the tone of her mother's voice Cynthia felt something within her breast curl up like a leaf caught in flame.

"I'll get the things I came for." She started toward the house, running past her mother. She must hurry, before her mother said anything to hurt Miss Egert.

She stumbled on the door-step, and flung herself against the door. The portfolio was across the room, on the little, old piano. The candle beside it had guttered down over the cover. Cynthia pressed out the wobbly flame, and hugging the portfolio, ran back across the room. On the threshold she turned for a last glimpse. The row of Botticelli details over the bookcases were blurred into gray in the light of the one remaining candle; the Indian rug had a wavering glow. Then she heard Miss Egert just outside.

"I'm sorry Cynthia isn't to come any more," she was saying.

Cynthia stepped forward. The two women stood in the dim light, her mother's thickened; settled body stiff and hostile, Miss Egert's slight figure swaying toward her gently.

"Cynthia has a good deal to do," her mother answered. "We can't afford to give her painting lessons, especially—" Cynthia moved down between the women—"especially," her mother continued, "as she doesn't seem to get much of anywhere. You'd think she'd have some pictures to show after so many lessons."

"Perhaps I'm not a good teacher. Of course she's just beginning."

"She'd better put her time on her studies."

"I'll miss her. We've had some pleasant times together."

Cynthia held out her hand toward Miss Egert, with a fearful little glance at her mother.

"Good-by, Miss Egert."

Miss Egert's cold fingers pressed it an instant.

"Good night, Cynthia," she said slowly.

Then Cynthia followed her mother's silent figure along the path; she turned her head as they reached the sidewalk. Back in the garden winked the red eye of the fire.

They waited under the arc light for the car, Cynthia stealing fleeting glances at her mother's averted face. On the car she drooped against the window edge, away from her mother's heavy silence. She was frightened now, a panicky child caught in disobedience. Once, as the car turned at the corner below her father's office, she spoke:

"Father will expect me—"

"He knows I went after you," was her mother's grim answer.

Cynthia followed her mother into the house. Her small brother was in the sitting-room, reading. He looked up from his book with wide, knowing eyes. Rebellious humiliation washed over Cynthia; setting her lips against their quivering, she pulled off her sweater.

"Go on to bed, Robert," called her mother from the entry, where she was hanging her coat. "You've sat up too late as it is."

He yawned, and dragged his feet with provoking slowness past Cynthia.

"Was she down there, Mama?" He stopped on the bottom step to grin at his sister.

"Go on, Robert. Start your bath. Mother'll be up in a minute."

"Aw, it's too late for a bath." He leaned over the rail.

"It's Saturday. I couldn't get back sooner."

Cynthia swung away from the round, grinning face. Her mother went past her into the dining room. Robert shuffled upstairs; she heard the water splashing into the tub.

Her mother was very angry with her. Presently she would come back, would begin to speak. Cynthia shivered. The familiar room seemed full of hostile, accusing silence, like that of her mother. If only she had come straight home from the office, she would be sitting by the table in the old Morris chair, reading, with her mother across from her sewing, or glancing through the evening paper. She gazed about the room at the neat scrolls of the brown wall paper, at a picture above the couch, cows by a stream. The dull, ordinary comfort of life there hung about her, a reproaching shadow, within which she felt the heavy, silent discomfort her transgression dragged after it. It would be much easier to go on just as she was expected to do. Easier. The girl straightened her drooping body. That

things were hard didn't matter. Miss Egert had insisted upon that. She was forgetting the pledge she had given. The humiliation slipped away, and a cold exaltation trembled through her, a remote echo of the hope that had shouted within her back there in the garden. Here it was difficult to know what she had promised, to what she had pledged herself—something that the familiar, comfortable room had no part in.

She glanced toward the dining room, and her breath quickened. Between the faded green portieres stood her mother, watching her with hard, bright eyes. Cynthia's glance faltered; she looked desperately about the room as if hurrying her thoughts to some shelter. Beside her on the couch lay the portfolio. She took a little step toward it, stopping at her mother's voice.

"Well, Cynthia, have you anything to say?"

Cynthia lifted her eyes.

"Don't you think I have trouble enough with your brothers? You, a grown girl, defying me! I can't understand it."

"I went down for this." Cynthia touched the black case.

"Put that down! I don't want to see it!" The mother's voice rose, breaking down the terrifying silences. "You disobeyed me. I told you you weren't to go there again. And then I telephoned your father to ask you to do an errand for me, and find you there—with that woman!"

"I'm not going again." Cynthia twisted her hands together. "I had to go a last time. She was a friend. I could not tell her I wasn't coming—"

"A friend! A sentimental old maid, older than your mother! Is that a friend for a young girl? What were you doing when I found you? Holding hands! Is that the right thing for you? She's turned your head. You aren't the same Cynthia, running off to her, complaining of your mother."

"Oh, no!" Cynthia flung out her hand. "We were just talking." Her misery confused her.

"Talking? About what?"

"About—" The recollection rushed through Cynthia—"about beauty." She winced, a flush sweeping up to the edge of her fair hair, at her mother's laugh.

"Beauty! You disobey your mother, hurt her, to talk about beauty at night with an old maid!"

There was a hot beating in Cynthia's throat; she drew back against the couch.

"Pretending to be an artist," her mother drove on, "to get young girls who are foolish enough to listen to her sentimentalizing."

"She was an artist," pleaded Cynthia. "She gave it up to take care of her father and mother. I told you all about that—"

"Talking about beauty doesn't make artists."

Cynthia stared at her mother. She had stepped near the table, and the light through the green shade of the reading-lamp made queer pools of color about her eyes, in the waves of her dark hair. She didn't look real. Cynthia threw one hand up against her lips. She was sucked down and down in an eddy of despair. Her mother's voice dragged her again to the surface.

"We let you go there because you wanted to paint, and you maunder and say things you'd be ashamed to have your mother hear. I've spent my life working for you, planning for you, and you go running off—" Her voice broke into a new note, a trembling, grieved tone. "I've always trusted you, depended on you; now I can't even trust you."

"I won't go there again. I had to explain."

"I can't believe you. You don't care how you make me feel."

Cynthia was whirled again down the sides of the eddy.

"I can't believe you care anything for me, your own mother."

Cynthia plucked at the braid on her cuff.

"I didn't do it to make you sorry," she whispered. "I—it was—" The eddy closed about her, and with a little gasp she dropped down on the couch, burying her head in the sharp angle of her elbows.

The mother took another step toward the girl; her hand hovered above the bent head and then dropped.

"You know mother wants just what is best for you, don't you? I can't let you drift away from us, your head full of silly notions."

Cynthia's shoulders jerked. From the head of the stairs came Robert's shout:

"Mama, tub's full!"

"Yes; I'm coming."

Cynthia looked up. She was not crying. About her eyes and nostrils strained the white intensity of hunger.

"You don't think—" She stopped struggling with her habit of inarticulateness. "There might be things—not silly—you might not see what—"

"Cynthia!" The softness snapped out of the mother's voice.

Cynthia stumbled up to her feet; she was as tall as her mother. For an instant they faced each other, and then the mother turned away, her eyes tear-brightened. Cynthia put out an awkward hand.

"Mother," she said piteously, "I'd like to tell you—I'm sorry—"

"You'll have to show me you are by what you do." The woman started wearily up the stairs. "Go to bed. It's late."

Cynthia waited until the bath room door closed upon Robert's splashing. She climbed the stairs slowly, and shut herself into her room. She laid the portfolio in the bottom drawer of her white bureau; then she stood by her window. Outside, the big elm-tree, in fine, leafless dignity, showed dimly against the sky, a few stars caught in the arch of its branches.

A swift, tearing current of rebellion swept away her unhappiness, her confused misery; they were bits of refuse in this new flood. She saw, with a fierce, young finality that she was pledged to a conflict as well as to a search. As she knelt by the window and pressed her cheek on the cool glass, she felt the house about her, with its pressure of useful, homely things, as a very prison. No more journeyings down to Miss Egert's for glimpses of escape. She must find her own ways. Keep searching! At the phrase, excitement again glowed within her; she saw the last red wink of the fire in the garden.

STUDENT HOMOPHILE LEAGUE STATEMENT ON THE LESBIAN

(This statement was circulated by the Student Homophile League at Columbia University in New York City during March, 1969, and is reprinted here with permission.)

Like the male homosexual, the Lesbian is engaged through various organizations in a struggle for equal treatment regardless of sexual orientation, in all areas of life—socially, vocationally, and as a citizen. However, she is a victim of double dis-

crimination because a) she is a woman and b) she is homosexual. As a member of these two minority groups, her basic desire is to be accepted as a human being first and given her rightful place in society.

The present percentage of Lesbianism is unknown. Like her male counterpart, the female homosexual leads a very private life and is reluctant to reveal her orientation. Because of the double standard in upbringing, a very large percentage of American women are sexually repressed or "frigid." Many women never enjoy sex, even after many years of marriage. It is therefore impossible to tell what the percentage of Lesbianism would be in our society, should this situation (the double standard) be changed.

Since exclusive Lesbians cannot fulfill themselves through families and children, they often feel a strong drive to self-fulfillment through a career. Employment and salary discrimination hit them harder than any other class of women except blacks, since they cannot depend on a husband's income. As students, Lesbians therefore need help in preparing themselves to be their own breadwinners. They may need special guidance to prepare for a rewarding career and to deal with the problems of being homosexual in our society. Since the realization of one's sexual orientation often occurs during the college years, the Lesbian may experience problems of adjustment at this crucial time.

by Gene Damon

As with the male homosexual, the fear of discovery limits the Lesbian's choice of careers.

In a society where all women are seen primarily as sex objects by the heterosexual male, and are judged primarily for looks and only secondarily for intellectual ability, the Lesbian is often in a state of rebellion against the male attitude. As a person, she refuses to place herself in a position of submission to the "dominant," "aggressive" male. The theory that all a Lesbian needs is a "good man" (or a good sexual experience with a man) is fallacious. Homosexual orientation, in the male or in the female, is practically impossible to change, nor do most homosexuals desire to change.

The Lesbian on campus experiences many social problems. She does not feel part of the group when the other girls discuss dating, engagement and marriage. There is familial and social pressure placed on her to get married, which often leads to great unhappiness when she discovers her true nature. Her social life is limited by the lack of facilities where she can be herself.

The Student Homophile League, whose membership includes homosexuals, bisexuals and heterosexuals, is designed to assist the male and female homosexual in their struggle for equal rights in our society.

paperbound, except for special editions, though they are usually printed on good stock with margins suitable for rebinding. In 1939, the paperback industry, as we know it now, began in the United States; and it has grown to be one of the biggest factors in publishing.

From the publisher's standpoint, of course, the large number of Lesbian paperback originals is a "strictly for money" proposition. The vast majority of these titles are pointless filth—too poor to even consider censoring—and are directed to a voyeur-minded, heterosexual male audience. Beginning in 1950, however, a small nucleus of "good" titles appeared. They were good within specific

limitations. Few of them would qualify as good in a literary sense, although the better range from competently to quite well-written. Plot-wise they became monotonous since, as one non-fiction reading friend of mine once remarked, "There are just so many ways to tell the same love story."

In 1966 it seems clear that the era of good Lesbian paperbacks is about over. The increased freedom in literary expression (ironically assisted by these paperbacks) has pretty thoroughly obliterated the need for paperback novels exclusively dealing with Lesbians. It is interesting, also, to note that now that the Lesbian field is dying (at least those with some actual merit), the male homosexual paperback original is becoming a booming business. It will be enjoyable to watch the end of this trend as well, when the hardback field opens the way to more complete male homosexual novels.

The good Lesbian paperbacks served a definite purpose by satisfying vicariously the need for "happy endings" which are so often lacking in the more literate treatments of the subject. They also provided generally youthful, theoretically romantic figures and contemporary settings. To some extent they were responsible for better public relations with the general public.

The first to appear was, ironically, one of the finest, *Women's Barracks*, by Tereska Torres, Fawcett Gold Medal, 1950, etc. This has become very well known and it is reprinted every year or so. It once was the subject of intense censorship. This appears rather funny in view of the dozens of later titles. The story deals with life in the French women's army during the 1940's and treats lesbianism from several angles, quite honestly and sympathetically. Tereska Torres has gone on to produce a string of successful hardcover novels, all variant or Lesbian to some extent.

Vin Packer's highly unsympathetic, but very well-written *Spring Fire* was published by Fawcett Gold Medal in 1952. This was one of the first to incorporate the specific sexual scenes generally included for several years and it was a best-seller. Today it simply wouldn't have the appeal it did then because of subsequent developments in the field, but it was quite a pioneer and influenced Fawcett's Gold Medal line of books for

years. That same year, 1952, Fawcett published two much more sympathetic and considerably less sensational titles, Nancy Morgan's *City of Women* and Fay Adams' *Appointment in Paris*. Nancy Morgan's book was a "women in war" title. Fay Adams' book remains one of the better minor titles—oddly it was not much noticed and never reprinted. A good sound copy of it today is worth \$5.

In 1954, Ace Books brought out Wilene Shaw's *The Fear and The Guilt*. This was a miserably unhappy book but the unusual setting and characters make it a stand-out even today. It is Lesbian love, hillbilly style, and well handled.

1955 saw the first of the noisy nasty titles of the brilliant, but deliberately cruel, Ann Aldrich. Her *We Walk Alone*, Fawcett Gold Medal, became a best-seller fast and still has an audience although one wonders why. (Ann Aldrich is also Vin Packer.)

John Wyndham's lovely science fiction tale, *Consider Her Ways*, was published by Ballantine in 1956. This was about a world of women only and it is a good book if a wee bit far out for serious consideration in this column. During these first six years from 1950 to 1956, some others appeared, too poor to mention here and the general forerunners of today's several-a-year all tripe type.

The year 1957 began the big boom which foreshadowed the inevitable saturation point. Titles began to vary and at the same time the "set pattern" sympathetic and contemporary titles began to appear. New writers came on the scene and became quite famous in a few years' time. One of the first books of that year was *Odd Girl Out*, by Ann Bannon, published by Fawcett Gold Medal. Set in a college, as so many are, this began a series of titles which rest on the bookshelf of virtually every even faintly literate Lesbian. Ann Bannon can write competently and can hold the reader's attention. This first novel does not compare with her later ones; though it had all of the requirements: youth, sex, love, sex, hope, sex, and no real lack of sympathy. Some touches of psychological insight began creeping into the titles about then and this added fuel to the selling fire.

A little later in 1957, Valerie Taylor began her career with *Whisper Their Love*, Fawcett Gold Medal. This one stuck to the leave them miserable at the

(This article first appeared in two parts in the June and July, 1966 issues of *TANGENTS MAGAZINE*, and is reprinted with permission. There is increasing demand for copies of the old paperbacks from the "good" days of the middle 1950's and early 1960's, and many request information as to which are recommended. Hopefully, this article may be of some assistance to those of you spending time in the second-hand paperback stores.)

The boom in publishing today is the paperback novel. It is not new, except relatively, and it is not indigenous to the United States. In Europe most books are

THE LESBIAN PAPERBACK

end trend, but was a good start. Taylor out-does Bannon literary-wise but missed the audience because she did not develop a continuing character until late in her career and, as all TV fans know, this is the road to success. But Valerie Taylor remains the finest writer in the group.

Three other interesting books appeared in 1957, but interesting for widely divergent reasons. The first, Reed Marr's *Women Without Men*, again published by Gold Medal, was one of the 10 paperback best-sellers of the year among ALL publishing companies. This is its only claim to fame, however, for it is a biased and vituperative study. (Ann Bannon's much superior title, *Odd Girl Out*, was Fawcett Gold Medal's second-best title in sales in 1957. Considering these two titles and their selling success, it is no wonder that the company continued until recently to be the leading paperback publisher in that particular field.) The next title was a mystery whose claim to fame was having a wholly-Lesbian cast, *Murder In Monaco*, by John Flagg, Fawcett Gold Medal (of course). To say the very least it was anti-Lesbian but it was a rather wild departure from the not-so-long-ago dictum that mysteries must not concern sex or controversial topics. The third title was the very beautiful *King Of A Rainy Country*, by Brigid Brophy, Knopf, 1957. This book is as interesting to male homosexuals as to Lesbians and it is cheating in a sense to list it here since it deserved and soon earned a hardback publication.

1958 started with Ann Aldrich's second controversial title, *We Too, Must Love*, Fawcett Gold Medal. This increased her audience and made her a discussion topic in every Lesbian household, however, unflattering the discussion may have been. A second science fiction title devoted entirely to Lesbianism appeared: Charles Eric Maine's *World Without Men*, Ace Books, 1958. This one had its silly side, though, and failed to come up to the expectations of the beginning of the book. Vin Packer, the evil alter ego of Miss Aldrich, produced the nasty but well done, *The Evil Friendship*, Fawcett Gold Medal, 1958.

An author who has since proved to be an enigma was introduced that year. March Hastings' first Lesbian title, *Three Women*, Beacon, was excellent in handling, poorly plotted and too melo-

dramatic, but polemically sympathetic. Since then, she has varied so widely that she cannot be judged. On the one hand, she has several excellent novels in the field but she has also written several of the most degrading titles. Miss Hastings is the Jekyll-Hyde of the field.

By 1959 the boom was a landslide and just checking the hundreds of titles became a full-time job. The first book out was a kind of block-buster and still is: *I Am A Woman*, by Ann Bannon, Fawcett Gold Medal, 1959. This, the second of the Bannon series, introduced her larger-than-life, swaggering butch, Beebo Brinker, who carries off a barroom seduction scene that is surely a classic.

Right on the heels of Bannon's second title, Fawcett Crest brought out Paula Christian's first novel, *Edge of Twilight*. Compared to Bannon's book, it made less splash, but it was as good a title, and in some respects, better. The women involved were somewhat more adult, and this alone was an improvement.

Lesbian paperback production didn't let-down in 1959. Right after, the first Christian book, a novel, *Chris* published by Beacon, appeared. Randy Salem is the author of several books which are most easily described as soap operas for Lesbians. Her people aren't very real though they are fun to read about. *Chris*, in a way, was a second Beebo Brinker. She failed as a heroine to attract as large an audience because she did possess place, position and brains. Bannon wisely made Beebo in the fashion of Western heroes, foot-loose and fancy-free. *Chris* had qualms, and so she failed just a little, but it was an excellent beginning for Randy Salem.

Another debut of 1959 was author Artemis Smith with *Odd Girl*, Beacon. This was an unusually good book, and Miss Smith followed it a little later that same year with *The Third Sex*, also published by Beacon. These were so good, that her third and last book to date was a dreadful disappointment. Unlike other authors who go on to greater heights. Miss Smith never topped her first two books. After the third, she simply stopped writing. This was sad because she wrote very well, better than Bannon or Salem or Christian and nearly as well as Valerie Taylor. Once again it was a matter of gimic. Bannon has an all-star cast full of familiar figures who go from book to

book. Salem can make the peanut gallery weep. Christian plots very well and Taylor writes on a par with Gale Wilhelm. Somehow Artemis fell short.

Valerie Taylor's second novel *The Girls In 3-B*, published by Fawcett Crest, also appeared in 1959. Where her first book was beautifully-written and not sympathetic (the tide hadn't really turned in 1957 and bad endings were required) *The Girls In 3-B* was very pro-Lesbian and was equally well-written. This was still the days of too much sex in the novels, even the good ones. For a few years the field was quite unevenly split, with about 15 to 20 titles not worth mentioning for each good one. This was fine, the good writers could get into print and could push some rather strong propaganda along with entertainment. From 1960 until 1963 a number of the more experienced writers in the field cut out a good bit of the bedroom activity which had somewhat marred the earlier books.

Many other titles of value appeared in 1959. March Hastings published several of her now up, now down, books. Ann Bannon's third title and poorest, *Women In The Shadows*, Fawcett Gold Medal, seemed to be the end of the Bannon series. Fortunately, this was not the case.

Another odd debut came in 1959, when Sloane M. Britian's first novel, *First Person, Third Sex*, Newsstand Library, appeared. The book featured adults in the 30 to 70 year range, a very unusual facet for a paperback since most of them feature young people in line with the American youth-cult idea. It was a welcome change to read about people with mature concerns such as jobs and futures. This book was so good that the many poor titles which later came from the pen of Sloane Britain are not explainable. Her case is similar in this respect to that of March Hastings, but Hastings never did produce even one book as good as Sloane Britain's first novel.

From 1960 to 1962 the quantity of titles became enormous, ranging in the hundreds each year, but the good ones remained small in quantity—growing proportionately, of course, but few enough to be within the book budget of any collector.

The third Valerie Taylor book appeared in 1960, *Stranger On Lesbos*, Fawcett Crest. The first half of this book is moving and literate and had it ended as

well as it began it would be the all time best in paperbacks.

Ann Bannon's fourth and fifth titles, *Journey To A Woman* and *The Marriage*, both published by Fawcett Gold Medal in 1960, dispelled any thought of failure inspired by the third book in the series. The inclusion of an excellent character, Jack Mann, in these titles make them all of interest to the male audience.

Somewhere in this article mention of Sheldon Lord's entertainments is necessary. This is a male-oriented writer who writes anti- and pro-Lesbian novels apparently effortlessly (dozens of them). Many contain good portraits—for example, *A Woman Must Love*, Midwood Tower, 1960.

Carol In A Thousand Cities, by Ann Aldrich, Fawcett Gold Medal, 1960, was Miss Aldrich's third attempt to run down her relatives. In many ways she failed in her effort since the book is primarily an anthology and although her personal contributions were as unpleasant as ever, she did include some of the finer items written by others in the field.

Several dozen titles appeared, primarily between 1957 and 1962, which fall into the worthless category because of too much melodrama, too much sex, violence, sadism, etc. . . . but which also contain some good elements. An example of these many novels which fall into a kind of limbo between the top and the bottom (literally and figuratively) in the field is *The Censored Screen*, by Brian Dunn, Newsstand Library, 1960. The book features so much junk it's actually silly but, buried in all this, is a constructive, romantic and very moving love story. About the same time many well-known professional pulp writers, with acknowledged plotting ability, got on the Lesbian literature bandwagon—some of them (those with some rudimentary knowledge of feminine psychology) doing a creditable job. An example of this group is *Scandal In Suburbia*, by Gardner F. Fox, Hillman Books, 1960.

1961 brought Artemis Smith's third and last book to date. As mentioned previously it was very poor, despite a sympathetic outlook and her undeniable writing talent. The plot was pure hokum, and the title, *This Bed Was Made*, (Monarch) seemed an ironic jibe at the author.

Randy Salem's *The Unfortunate Flesh*, Midwood Tower, 1960, 1961, continued

her happy-ending soap operas, and this one introduced a rival to Beebo Brinker in Jesse Cannon, a six-foot aristocrat. Unfortunately, Salem never used Jesse Cannon in a subsequent novel.

An excellent first novel, never honored by a second, appeared in 1961, *Twilight Girl*, by Della Martin, published by Beacon. The quality in this makes it possible to believe that Della Martin is the pseudonym of an established author. In any case, *Twilight Girl* includes references to obscure literature, etc., that one does not expect in a paperback original.

Both Sloane M. Britain and March Hastings continued their prolific output, each contributing several titles in 1960 and 1961, ranging from very poor to fairly good. Britain's *These Curious Pleasures*, Midwood Tower, 1961, is clearly auto-biographical. (She subsequently committed suicide.)

Paula Christian had two novels in 1961: *Another Kind Of Love*, published by Fawcett Crest, and *Love Is Where You Find It*, published by Avon. These two established her as one of the really important contributors. The books appeared within weeks of each other. *Love Is Where You Find It* over-shadowed *Another Kind Of Love* because it was very reminiscent of Gale Wilhelm's *Torchlight To Valhalla*, not in style, but in story line. Paula Christian definitely out-plots the other major writers in the field though she is not nearly as good a writer as Valerie Taylor. During their peak years, a marriage of their talents might have been fortuitous for both of them.

The last big year for Lesbian paperbacks was 1962, and the number of good titles was truly remarkable. There were so many that only a few can be mentioned here. Joan Ellis' *In The Shadows*, published by Midwood Tower, was well done, and the characterizations in her book, *Gay Girl*, also published in 1962 by Midwood Tower, were excellent. An unusual approach coupled with slick writing marked *My Lovely Adele*, by Adrian Bennett, Avon, 1962. This one made use of a male narrator successfully—a very difficult approach.

Miriam Gardner's *The Strange Women*, Monarch Books, 1962, was over-plotted. This is doubly unfortunate since in its original manuscript form it was many hundred pages longer and intended

for a quality market. The bones left in this edition are bleak beside the original, but the story is miles beyond the average paperback in depth psychology and character motivation.

Two good titles came from the pen of the soap opera girl, Randy Salem, who could have, with persistence, risen from that category. Both *Tender Torment* and *The Soft Skin* published by Midwood Tower in 1962, are well worth owning.

The Flesh Is Willing, by Dorcas Knight, Midwood Tower, utilizes the Southern small town setting and lush atmosphere to bolster the effectiveness of the slight story. Professional writer Bonnie Golightly (who sued Truman Capote over his novel, *Breakfast At Tiffany's*) contributed *The Shades Of Evil*, Hillman Books, which also used the Southern exposure technique. This one is as important to the male audience as the female and is, incidentally, an excellent mystery.

Ann Bannon's last (to date) of her personal series of novels, *Beebo Brinker*, Fawcett Gold Medal, was a sad failure. It is mentioned here only because Bannon's books must all be read for the correct impression. Actually, the most interesting years in the life of the fabulous Beebo have not yet been told—the time between her first successful affair with Paula and her famous seduction of Laura in the second book of the series, *I Am A Woman*.

The unsympathetic but fascinating *Harriet*, by Tom Karsell, Avon, 1962, uses the multiple viewpoint technique to portray a stunner—bitch, butch and all—but quite a girl.

The crowning novel of 1962 was Shirley Verel's *The Dark Side Of Venus*, Bantam. Sadly, this was a hardback in England and thus falls outside the scope of the article because it was only stupidity on the part of the American publishers that kept this out of hardcover in this country.

Although several of the better writers in the field contributed books in 1963, the end of the era was in sight and the number of good titles dropped sharply.

Paula Christian's *This Side Of Love*, Avon, 1963, was a sequel to her first novel, *Edge Of Twilight* (1959), though her fourth paperback appearance. It was and is an excellent novel, helped by literary freedoms in 1963 which were not

yet apparent in 1959.

My Sister, My Love, by Miriam Gardner, published by Monarch, included mild Lesbian incest, always a questionable subject, but was very well-written.

Randy Salem had two entries for the year: *Honeysuckle* and *The Sex Between*, both published by Midwood Tower. The former was very good, the latter only so-so. *Honeysuckle* convincingly examined the "dog days" possible in any kind of marriage, a different approach and a welcome relief from the overuse of glamorous surroundings in lieu of talent.

Ann Aldrich launched her last damnation, *We Two Won't Last*, Fawcett Gold Medal, but it was mellow than the earlier titles and not so unwelcome.

A minor but good enough March Hastings' title, *The Heat Of Day*, Midwood Tower, and Valerie Taylor's *Unlike Others*, also published by Midwood Tower, rounded out the declining year. Nothing needs to be said about the Hastings' book but Valerie Taylor's title was poorly-plotted and saved only by her writing skill.

Ironically, the year 1964, which really proved the sun was setting on this special genre, opened with Valerie Taylor's *Return To Lesbos*, published by Midwood Tower. This was the almost necessary sequel to the 1960 title, *Stranger On Lesbos*. The sequel was lovely, romantic, much happier and, as one had come to expect from Valerie Taylor, beautifully written—but the magic missed somehow and it was less than the original. And on an even more downhill note, this book was followed by *A World Without Men*, by Valerie Taylor, also published by Midwood Tower, in which the action pre-dates *Return To Lesbos* from an entirely different standpoint. It was well-written, but out of step.

The only other paperback of enduring value from 1964 was *Twilight Lovers*, by Miriam Gardner. Monarch. 1964.

1964 did have the usual complement of filthy titles, hundreds of them, and perhaps a dozen "passing fair" entries, easily read, easily forgotten.

1965 opened with Valerie Taylor's *Journey To Fulfillment*, Midwood Towers. This novel belongs in the belated series Miss Taylor created toward the end of her career.

The history of this series is peculiar enough to warrant outlining it here. The first novel of the series, *Stranger On Lesbos* (1960), introduced Frances Ollenfield as one of the two major characters. In the sequel, *Return To Lesbos* (1964), Frances ends up happily with Erika Frohmann. Then in the next book, *World Without Men* (1964) Erika Frohmann's life just PRIOR to meeting Frances is explored. In the final novel, *Journey To Fulfillment* (1965) Erika's early life from childhood on is covered. So the series was inverted in time; a very poor way to hold an audience, and it failed to be as interesting as it undoubtedly would have been had the order been reversed.

Paula Christian had two novels published in 1965, *The Other Side Of Desire*, Paperback Library, and *Amanda*, Belmont Books. Both were far below her usual standards. That they were better than hundreds of others that year isn't necessarily a recommendation.

There were a few others worth reading such as March Hastings' *Abnormal Wife*, Softcover Library, and *Women Like Me*, by Donna Richards, Lancer Books.

One really good novel, *Enough Of Sorrow*, by Jill Emerson, Midwood Tower, mercifully brightened a generally sad picture.

The era began in 1950 and ended in 1965. Hopefully, in many memories, some names will remain bright for years to come: Valerie Taylor, Ann Bannon, Paula Christian and one or two others. But for now; Ave Atque Vale!

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by Florence Conrad, Research Director, DOB

FIRST REPORT ON THE
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH ON LESBIANS

SEX ALONE NOT ENOUGH

In 1966 the Department of Psychiatry of the School of Medicine at Washington University in St. Louis began to develop a research study of homosexuality with the deliberate intention of using only subjects who had *not* been hospitalized for psychiatric reasons nor imprisoned in a state or a federal prison. This plan brought them into working relations with a DOB chapter and into correspondence with the DOB national organization. In the following year, arrangements were worked out by Dr. Eli Robins and intensive interviews carried out by Dr. Marcel Saghir with DOB members and friends. (Some female homosexuals were also contacted through other channels.) Of the 61 women interviewed, four were eliminated because they had been at some time in a mental hospital.

The first fruits of this work are now in print: The February 1969 issue of the ARCHIVES OF GENERAL PSYCHIATRY carries an article, the first of a series on homosexuality, entitled "Sexual Behavior of the Female Homosexual," by Drs. Saghir and Robins. This opening article is of considerable interest to homophiles for its refreshingly modest aims and its willingness to question common beliefs and procedures.

Essentially the paper reports data on the sexual behavior and responses of the 57 females included in the study (55 of whom were predominantly homosexual). It also gives background information

on age, socioeconomic and marital status, etc. of the subjects. Much of this will seem unremarkable to the average LADDER reader (though not to all). I am thinking here of the statistics on homosexual practices predominating, on mean number of partners and relationships (relatively few for most subjects), on active vs. passive role (most subjects were not committed to a rigid role), and other matters. As might have been guessed, the subjects were relatively young, of higher than average socioeconomic status, had the usual religious backgrounds, most had never married.

Findings

Among the findings, recommendations, and observations made by the authors, several are worthy of particular notice:

First, their insistence on non-hospitalized, non-criminal subjects goes beyond their own study. "We hope" they say "that this non-psychiatrically hospitalized and non-criminal sample will serve as a baseline for future investigations."

Second, they adjure, at least in this opening article, theoretical assumptions or hypotheses: "We were interested in the study of homosexuality in order to describe systematically its developmental and behavioral aspects."

Of considerable interest is the conclusion the article draws from the data on initiation into Lesbianism: "About 96% of the subjects stated that their first sexual experience with an adult was of

no significance in relation to their homosexual orientation." Rather, subjects reported that their desires preceded such experience. None, as adults, reported a sexual experience with a partner under age eighteen. For 97%, the first experience with an adult took place *after* subject was sixteen years old. "It was apparent from these findings that female homosexuals do not seek out minors or children."

The interview data on numbers of partners and number and quality of relationships lead the authors to conclude that "homosexual women tend to be relatively stable in their relationships and faithful to their lovers." For example, an overwhelming majority reported relationships of over a year in duration; and in those relationships 84% were faithful to their partners through the duration of an affair. Jealousy (attributed to Lesbians in pathological degree by some doctors) was the reason for the break-up of an affair in only 7% of the cases.

The relatively high educational and training status of the sample suggests to the authors "an indication of reasonably adequate functioning," and that a homosexual woman may be "able to produce and achieve, despite any psychological and social handicaps she might have to cope with."

Psychological Responses Stressed

The most notable thing about this article to me is the attention Drs. Robins and Saghir give to psychological and emotional responses, despite the more obvious (or visible) concern of the article with physical behavior. They note that 100% of the sample report emotional attachments in their homo-

sexual experiences, most of these dating back to preadolescence. They note further that heterosexual psychological responses never occur in the majority of the subjects, despite considerable heterosexual experience.

The authors are impressed enough with this aspect of their study to make an interesting and significant recommendation: They suggest that overt sexual experience *not be used alone* (without emotional or psychological response) as a criterion for the classification of homosexuality. Doing otherwise, they observe, may be misleading when it counts in the homosexual category—schizophrenics, for example, or sociopathic personalities who do not have basic homosexual responses despite their overt actions. The homosexual behavior of such persons, say our authors, "*is classifiable in the context of their total pathology—and not the pathology in terms of the deviant sexual behavior.*" Robins and Saghir are saying here that schizophrenics engage in homosexual activity not because they have an emotional homosexual response, but because their own basically heterosexual orientation has been diverted by their "illness." Instead of classifying these people as homosexuals who are schizophrenic, they might better be classed as schizophrenics who carry on homosexual activity. The category "homosexual," our authors are suggesting, should be restricted to those persons who behave homosexually *and who* have homosexual emotional responses. In this connection, they point out that none of the 61 females interviewed (of whom 57

were included in the study) was schizophrenic, and that all 55 of the predominantly homosexual subjects gave history of both psychological responses and overt experience.

The importance of this suggestion to homophiles is very considerable: Many professionals tend to bolster or found their opinions on homosexuality on observations which suffer from the kind of over-inclusion Drs. Robins and Saghir are talking about. Of course the appropriate basis for classifications is a thorny question in any field. But, if adopted, the Robins-Saghir suggested change in classification, as well as their entire methodology, will help to shift the focus of attention away from the exotic cases

previously favored by medical research, and in the direction of the lesser-known but probably more numerous common garden variety of homosexual. They are not the first whose work indicates an interest in this kind of shift, but they are a welcome addition to the list.

We shall look forward with interest to later installments of their work.

(Editor's Note: The article on which this summary is based is highly recommended reading for those of you with access to a public, college or university library carrying the periodical, ARCHIVES OF GENERAL PSYCHIATRY.)

by Gene Damon



"Am I a woman or a would-be boy? Am I a male homosexual in a woman's body? Who am I . . .," just some of the songs of Sam, in SAM'S SONG, by Shirley Schoonover, N. Y., Coward-McCann, 1969. Sam Stanley is a girl, a woman, a Dane, an orphan with real parents—unloved, unloving, and aware of the situation. For 190 horrowing pages Sam delivers, the real Sam, the "shit" Sam, but all Sam. Is Sam a Lesbian? She says she isn't in about three places, and gives some rather detailed explanation for why she is not. We are left, however, with Sam's own conclusion, as she dresses as a boy and goes off to cruise the male gay bars, there to accidentally meet a lover she has thought was her heterosexual boyfriend. He picks up a very attractive man . . . Miss Schoonover is reminiscent of Canada's wonderful new novelistic talent, Leonard Cohen, and those who enjoyed his THE BEAUTIFUL LOSERS will probably like this.

A reader brought to my attention the book COFFEE, TEA OR ME?, by Trudy Baker and Rachel Jones, N.Y., Bartholomew House, 1967, Bantam, 1968. It isn't important enough or real enough to even put in the statistics, but it should be mentioned because one of the chapters has some pretty unpleasant things to say about another of the homophile publications. It doesn't name the publication and I won't either, but it is a nasty snide bit of business. About what you expect from the kind of book that is made a best-seller by the people who ordinarily do not read anything except the daily paper.

Yet another in the endless list of movies using some sort of erotic hook involving two women because they've learned (they being producers and others interested in money) that this draws large audiences of heterosexual males . . . "Secret Ceremony" would therefore be the better title for SECRET CEREMONY, starring Mia Farrow, Liz Taylor and Robert Mitchum. Capitalizing on the success of the movie, it has been novelized (the book written from the script, a backwards but increasingly frequent way) by William Hughes, Awards Books, 1968.

LESBIANA

Nothing special but ok at paperback cost. Heroine Taylor is haunted by the death of a child, and is "adopted" by Mia Farrow, who then proceeds to attempt to introduce sexuality into the relationship. At the same time, however, she is chasing the male lead, Mitchum, who is supposed to be Taylor's property. Mixed up group . . . (Entire writing history of this was amusing, originally a story by Marco Denevi, then a screenplay by George Tabori, and finally the novel.)

I spent a whole evening reading and browsing through 100 YEARS OF THE AMERICAN FEMALE . . . edited by Jane Trahey, and published by Harper's Bazaar, through Random House, 1967, and I sincerely hope that many of you will reward yourselves with a similar evening. Almost every library will have this (though it is large and expensive and may already be remaindered and thus, a little more easily available).

On November 2, 1867 a new magazine was born, dedicated to the proposition that all women are created better . . . and with such a premise, how could they miss? Miss Trahey's selection and editing in this book provides us with a glorious and very balanced look at women in America from 1867 to 1967. All of the aspects covered in Harper's Bazaar are touched on here in microcosm, with extra emphasis on the quality aspects of the magazine. Readers will want to notice Sarah Bernhardt in her tailored pants suit, a photograph taken in 1869, quite awhile before Marlene Dietrich, Mercedes de Acosta and Garbo were trotting around in them. An article by Amelia Earhart on flying garb, and pages of the fashions of the 1920's and 1930's, and the broad shouldered look of the early 1940's. The first section of literature reprinted from the magazine includes the explicit story, "Life Sentence", by Kay Boyle, which is the pertinent chapter from her novel, MONDAY NIGHT, and this first appeared in Harper's Bazaar in 1938 . . .

After the first literature section we go on to more women in pants, literary quips and in-jokes to an unusual drag item on page 99. Back to flying on page 100 with

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Jacqueline Cochran and a delightful still of Katherine Hepburn dressed for her silly movie on Earhart, ca 1940.

Sprinkled through the book are photographs, dozens of them, of celebrities and neo-celebrities, many of them by Richard Avedon.

The second literature section includes Jane Bowles Lesbian short story, "Camp Cataract," which first appeared in the magazine in 1949.

W. W. Norton and Co., publishers of May Sarton, have reprinted her first autobiography, *I KNEW A PHOENIX*, because of the popularity of the recent, *PLANT DREAMING DEEP*. The new edition of *I KNEW A PHOENIX* (1969) has photographs . . . and that makes it a must even if you have the first edition.

And if you missed *ABSOLUTE BE-GINNERS* by Colin MacInnes, when it first came out here in 1960 (London, MacGibbon & Kee, 1959, N.Y., Macmillan, 1960), it is available in a trilogy, *THE LONDON NOVELS OF COLIN MAC-INNES*, N.Y., Farrar, Straus and Grioux, 1969.

Raymond Spence, author of *NOTHING BLACK BUT A CADILLAC*, N. Y., Putnam, 1969, gets his title from Eldridge Cleaver's *SOUL ON ICE*. When a group of black men in prison were asked whether they preferred black or white women, one replied: "I don't want nothing black but a Cadillac," and this more or less expresses the desires of hero, Joady, black, handsome virile and willing . . . The publisher is pushing him as a hero similar to the twin heroines, Candy, and Kitten, of recent fictional fame (infamy?). The homosexual characters that dot the cast, male and female, are much like those you expect to find in the Tenderloin of any large city. There is an extended sequence with a butch and her girlfriend that is very very funny, albeit the worst possible kind of propaganda. Joady, after an encounter with an unbelievable blond, falls in with a sociologist of idiot proportions, in a gay bar, and then into the personal lives of several of its inhabitants. The evening ends in a broom closet, with too many active participants. Recommended with some reservations. Only if you can laugh and sort out the social levels involved. Mr. Spence is a good writer, said to be a jazz musician living in Vancouver, Canada. This is his first novel, and you'll want to watch for

his second.

The London publisher, Charles Skilton, Ltd., has brought out a fine edition of Sappho's extant poetry, extensively reworked by poet Beram Saklatvala. The book, published in late 1968, is very beautifully bound and worth the enormous tariff of 50 shillings. The publisher did not provide the exact cost in American money, and, in any case, for those of you who will want this, it's best you write directly to the publisher at 50 Alexandra Road, London, S. W., 19, England. *SAPPHO OF LESBOS: HER WORKS RESTORED*, actually contains all of Sappho's writing, plus the imaginative addition of Mr. Saklatvala, a concise and oddly unsatisfactory biographical sketch, and the wholly irrelevant "Sappho To Phaon" by the Roman poet, Ovid. The latter is pretty questionable since Sappho's connection with Phaon is probably the least true recreation of her life, though historians have worked hard to saddle her with this event to take away the "onus" of having to admit that the greatest lyric poet of all time was not only a female, but a Lesbian (in all senses of the word). The volume is extensively indexed and this is very useful, particularly to those of you who have not read extensively in the history of this period, some 2600 years ago. There have been many dozens of editions of Sappho's poetry. From these many, I long ago chose a small group of the (in my opinion) better editions for inclusion in the bibliography, *THE LESBIAN IN LITERATURE*. Mr. Saklatvala's book belongs with these others in every Lesbian literature collection.

From out of the dim past, or really only the 1920's, comes one of the early "daring" Lesbian novels, *THE WILD PARTY*, by Joseph Moncure March. It has a most interesting history in view of its relative lack of shock possibility today. The Bond Wheelwright Co. of Rockport, Maine, published this in 1968, for the first time since an undated appearance in the 1930's. *THE WILD PARTY* is a novel in verse, and it is bound with another novel in verse, *THE SET UP*. Simon and Schuster attempted to publish it in the middle 1920's, but was afraid of censorship trouble and finally decided against putting it out. Then the young publishing firm, Covici, brought it out in 1931. Later there was an undated edition by Blue Ribbon Books. The original

Covici edition was limited to 750 copies and very attractively illustrated (as is the 1968 edition). No longer an underground novel (it has been very very rare) *THE WILD PARTY* achieved the epitome in dull respectability when a long article on its history appeared in the February 2, 1969 *NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW SECTION*. As the title implies, the novel treats of the lives and loves of the denizens of a "wild" party, 1920's style, and Mr. March included both men and female homosexuals in his "wicked" tale, quite explicitly for the times. Mostly for fun . . .

THE GODS ARE NOT MOCKED, by Anna Taylor, N. Y., Morrow, 1968, is an excellent novel for the historical novel fan, but is also so substantially and believably Lesbian in part that those of you who normally avoid these like plague will definitely want this. In 55 B.C., the Romans first tried to conquer Britain, and it is against this historical background that Mrs. Taylor has located her novel. The first half of the book is devoted to the attempted invasion of Britain, and is not important here. The second half is devoted to the Rome of that day, a wild and exciting and somewhat corrupt city. Lucius Valerius, ambitious, arrogant Roman Tribune, is the pivotal protagonist, but our interest is his sister, Valeria. As would be expected at that time, Valeria is married, for purely political reasons, since she is a Lesbian and has been in love with a friend, Clodia, virtually her entire life. Approximately one third of this very long novel is devoted to Valeria and Clodia. Good handling.

Renato Ghiotto's *CHECK TO THE QUEEN*, N. Y., Putnam, 1969, belongs with the literature of bondage rather than Lesbianism, though enough general reviewers confuse the two that it warrants mentioning this as a warning against it . . . not on literary grounds. This deals with the subjugation of Silvia, a young psychotic driven by horrible fantasies and ill-concealed terrors, by Margaret, a movie star, who becomes Silvia's sadistic mistress. This has been lauded in Europe, and understandably so, for it is not the run of the mill titillation novel. It won't be to many reader's tastes here, but it introduces as mature an approach to this very taboo subject as has been seen to date. In a sense this novel is comparable

to the novels of Ernest Borneman, in that both types are in some way concerned with Lesbianism, but that none of these novels are likely to appeal to Lesbians. Mr. Borneman, of course, writes almost exclusively about men who fancy themselves as "male" Lesbians . . . and his novels are more likely to be read by this audience than Mr. Ghiotto's.

Free lancer Arthur Prager contributed a long article in the *SATURDAY REVIEW*, January 25, 1969, on Nancy Drew, that beloved heroine of almost all recent childhoods. If you are among the fans of the various Carolyn Keene books (I remember my mother being warned that if I read them I would not be a reader when I grew up . . .), this article is must reading. Mr. Prager gingerly hints at the Lesbian characteristics of Nancy Drew's friend, George Payne (a girl). Those faithful among you who remember the old title, *THE SIGN OF THE TWISTED CANDLES*, will even recall that there is a scene that generates a fair amount of warmth—unusual in a book for pre and early teen years. Mr. Prager does not mention this latter fact, but then it is doubtful that he read the series . . .

One of literature's most ersatz Lesbians plays one of the feature rolls in Calder Willingham's abdication as a novelist, *PROVIDENCE ISLAND*, N.Y., Vanguard, 1969. It may be unfair to keep pointing out to this beleaguered man that his first novel, *END AS A MAN*, was his best, but what few critics have mentioned is that he has been getting increasingly bad. His early works (many of them male homosexual to some extent) including his wonderful and little known collection of short stories, *THE GATES OF HELL*, which Vanguard brought out back in 1951—justifiably had most critics believing he would be one of the better writers of his generation. (Incidentally, the cited collection contains the excellent, albeit unpleasant Lesbian short story, "The Sum of Two Angles.")

PROVIDENCE ISLAND is the marooned site of one Jim Kittering, a bored and boring New York executive type who fancies himself as irresistible, and two females, Florence Carr, who is introduced to us as a Lesbian writer, and Melody, wife of a missionary. Most of the book is taken up with the sexual designs and re-designs of Jim with the two women. Florence has no trace of Lesbian or even

variant tendencies that I could discern (though this is discussed at unbelievable length throughout the book) and Melody types haven't been around in recent years. But then, the real Jims of this world cannot write books even as well as this, or we would be overwhelmed with this sort of pseudo-pornography.

After four months practice, the three are quite a well-functioning sex machine and Jim has plans for keeping his wife and both of these newly acquired women when they are rescued and returned home. It doesn't quite work out that way, however . . .

No one objects to the increasing flood of entertainment intended pornographic novels, but what is objectionable is this kind of pretension, for Mr. Willingham has larded this with supposedly important commentary on civilization. It reminds one of the moralistic prologues and epilogues that used to be appended to trash to let the up tight reader know that, indeed, everyone who sinned came to a bad end. Today, when sin isn't the discussion point, we use instead "commentary." It all amounts to the same load, the famous one of the farmer is always having to haul away. As a means of comparison, in 1959, French novelist, Henri Crouzat produced a very similarly plotted novel, brought out by Duell, Sloan & Pearce, called *THE ISLAND AT THE END OF THE WORLD*. This was also a modern Robinson Crusoe on an island, shipwrecked, with (in this case) three women. One of them a Lesbian. It was before the days when too much sympathy could be printed, but it is a far better book than this one. And if you are curious enough to look for it, Berkley reprinted it in paperback in 1960 . . . some copies are still around. As for *PROVIDENCE ISLAND*, save you \$6.95 . . . it really is a no-no.

There is a new biography of Edna St. Vincent Millay, *THE POET AND HER BOOK*, by Jean Gould, N. Y., Dodd, Mead, 1969. It is a pale book, really though the author is enthralled with her subject. Fans of Millay (we aren't all dead are we?) will enjoy this account of "Vincent" as she was known to her friends, even though there is much care to name no names. This is the first book about Millay (except for a plethora of juvenile titles) in years, and sadly, it isn't the right one. Someday, surely, someone

will do a biography on this woman's really fascinating life? After all, someone wrote *DOROTHY AND RED* and it got published.

THE ROSE AND THE SWORD, by Sandra Parette, N. Y., Coward-McCann, 1969, is unintentionally hilarious . . . an historical novel that is bound to be very very popular with those who love the sword and cloak school (this also belongs to the clothes conscious, virtue protected and right will triumph schools). The heroine, Countess Caroline de la Romme Allery, is a fictional figure set down in the time of Napoleon's last fight for power in France. The story opens March 21, 1814, and the text established the situation and the major historical figures. After that reality seldom intrudes as Caroline goes from breathless adventure to breathless adventure, all of them involving much changing of costume and much protecting of her virginity from "evil" cast members and a little swooning with the "good" ones. She is menaced by an evil duke, and several assorted villains, carried off by a pirate, and spends a night in a nunnery. This latter adventure concerns us, since both of the nuns are Lesbians, one a sour older type who simply frightens her, and the other a younger sort who falls in love with her at sight, and tries to prove it. She helps Caroline to escape and may or may not be a villain. If you like the genre, it's a must. Otherwise, skip it.

This is going to be an exciting year in Lesbian fiction, and one of the bright successes and possibly likeliest to be subjectively popular is *CATCHING SARADOVE*, by Bertha Harris, N. Y., Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969. Very few first novels get the attention this one is receiving; but then very few deserve this much attention. Saradove Racepath is trying to do her thing in Greenwich Village, because of her less than loveable home life back in North Carolina. Her thing includes carrying on a running (literally) romance with one of a pair of Lesbians (to the understandable dismay of the partner) and getting pregnant by Johnson, a maddened young caustic. When we first meet Saradove, she is playing with her young daughter in a New York City park, and she tells her past history, from childhood through her immediate past, pregnancy, etc., by means of continuous circular flashbacks. The

writing is excellent, poetic, delightful, and also just as confusing to follow as that description implies. But nevermind, there are moments you won't forget for a long time, and Miss Harris is very young and promises to be around for some time. What is more, she will almost certainly again write pertinent fiction. Better than three quarters of the novel is taken up with Saradove's real and imagined Lesbian encounters, in and around Greenwich Village and through the streets of New York. One long section deals (vastly more poetically) with a chase and capture scene reminiscent of one from Ann Bannon's writings. Don't miss this one.

And, as promised some time back, a look at the latest John O'Hara along with some comments on his recent preoccupation with homosexuality. John O'Hara, American novelist and short story writer has been around since the 1930's, the object of lavish praise and lavish scorn from the critics, but unfailingly very popular with an enormous literate public. It takes better than a page, in very small type, to list his titles. Writers who achieve this kind of fame seldom achieve the critical success he has commanded, and he is being modest in his introduction to his latest collection of short stories when he states that no one else writes better short stories. That is true, no one else does, and more, very few come anywhere near his level of achievement.

If you follow his career, though, you get the impression that until 1958, he never heard of homosexuality. He had, of course, and met a few too, but things as they are, and not necessarily as they should be prevail, and especially in the world of publication.

Cautiously, in 1958, his novel, *FROM THE TERRACE*, concerned some male homosexuals in minor homosexual roles, also male, and not important. The short story collection, *ASSEMBLY*, 1961, contained two fairly important male homosexual titles, and his 1962 novel, *THE BIG LAUGH*, had several important male homosexual characters.

Also in 1962, his first Lesbian short story, the comic "Jurge Dulruple" came out, in the collection, *THE CAPE COD LIGHTER AND OTHER STORIES*, which also contained the major and excellent male homosexual novella, "The Engineer." His collection, *THE HAT ON THE BED*, 1963, contained one

long story, "Yucca Knolls," which featured male and female homosexuals in important roles. This was closely followed by *THE HORSE KNOWS THE WAY*, 1963, 1964, which contained a major Lesbian title, "Clayton Bunter" and two male titles.

The next year, 1965, his novel *THE LOCKWOOD CONCERN*, again featured major male homosexual characters and minor Lesbian or variant involvements. In 1966 he broke some kind of record with his collection, *WAITING FOR WINTER*, by including eight pertinent stories, six male, one both and one female, "James Francis and The Star" and "The Skeletons" being the ones of primary interest here.

Despite all this evidence of interest, nothing in these prepared me for his latest collection, *AND OTHER STORIES*. After all, all he has done in the past is produce five Lesbian short stories, and some minor mention in one novel. Even considering that two of these short stories from the past are very major, one is comic, and only one very serious.

It is easy to see why John O'Hara was not writing about Lesbians and homosexuals in the 1940's. He wanted to get published, and it was not the thing in those days. But now, it is acceptable, and he is, at last, able to talk about things he has obviously known a great deal about despite his silence. His latest collection, *AND OTHER STORIES*, N. Y., Random House, 1968, contains three Lesbian stories, no male stories. There is a minor, very overt and excellently done story, "The Broken Giraffe" about a bored social type engaged in an affair with the local Don Juan, who is accosted and made by a Lesbian who feels the woman is a bit "too much." It is a very good story, and very accurate reportage on a not too uncommon adventure. It is nothing, however, to compare with the novel length, *A FEW TRIPS AND SOME POETRY*, which deserves to be considered a classic Lesbian novel, despite the fact that in saying so, I automatically invite a number of nasty letters.

The heroine of a "few trips" has had too many trips to all the wrong places before we reach the end of her story, but if your patience holds out, the rewards and explanations are all there. This is going to be hard to beat for the all time best this year (intellectually if not popularly).

The use of a male narrator is always difficult, but it is this first person male approach that O'Hara uses best, and his recounting of Isabel Barley Turner from the time she is the teenage sometimes girlfriend of the narrator until his last meeting with her some 30 or more years later manages to be the most believable recounting of a Lesbian by a male writer since Robert Neumann's 1963 novel, *FESTIVAL*.

There is also that third story in the collection, "We'll Have Fun," that is a minor, ironic variant accounting ala O'Henry.

(Note: All of John O'Hara's hardbacks came from Random House, New York.

His paperback publisher is Bantam (with one exception, *THE LOCKWOOD CONCERN*, was reprinted by Signet in 1966). At almost any time much of his work is in print in either hardcover or paperback. You won't have any trouble finding all of these older titles mentioned. But first, run out and buy *AND OTHER STORIES* . . .)

There are more books than space and time permit . . . next issue will cover, among others, an excellent new Sybille Bedford novel, *A COMPASS ERROR*, a surprise from the past, a new title by Hannah Lee (start scratching your memory on that name), the latest Iris Murdoch, etc.

by Jane Ogden

MONO-BI-AND POLYSEXUALITY or What Love is All About

These are exciting times. For centuries our western civilization has stagnated at the primitive level of homo- and heterosexuality, or what I shall call monosexuality. To be sure, there are still to be found pockets of prejudice against the homosexual variety of monosexuality, but we may ignore this as a phenomenon of the ignorant masses that will disappear in time. I am here concerned with the lack of insight still crippling many of our educated citizens. Though these elite have thrown off the numbing morality of monogamy, most are as yet afraid to discard their exclusivity with respect to choice of sex. But times are changing. The sexy sixties mark the beginning of the end of the myth of monosexuality. To exclude either all males or all females as bed partners is a fantastic prejudice. We are beginning to realize how confining, how inhibiting, this sexual prejudice is. I would like, in this short summary of today's most mature thinking, to bring together the various threads of progress so that we may get a glimpse of our future. A look into history will give us our perspective.

In the Middle Ages was born, out of chivalry, the notion of love, of being in love, of falling in love. Knights chose lovely ladies to fight for as that added an extra filipp to the joust. It was the fight, of course, that thrilled the knights for they never bothered those ladies sexually. But

the ladies took it all wrong and fancied they were "loved." The troubadours fell in with their idea, composed and sang "love" songs, and the notion of "love" took root. It reached its nauseating peak in the 19th century Victorian novel. Even men were caught up in this mush. They too wrote of love, of life-long romantic attachments, of hearts broken when the love bond was snapped in any of thousands of ways. Women doted on all this and many still do. This is a particularly striking instance of the inferiority of the female and one that might have done lasting damage to human progress. Not too long ago Momism was threatening to undo the American male.

Now, fortunately, we see the real meaning of the superiority of the male, who, with maturity and courage, has practiced promiscuity in all ages. Younger women today are taking heed and aping men. (I do not mean to imply a similarity with our simian forebears. Theirs is simple promiscuity leading nowhere. Human promiscuity holds the promise of growth.) We Lesbians, I am ashamed to say, are most backward, but what can you expect when you put two women together? We still *pride* ourselves on having longer lasting relationships than *THE MEN*!

American psychology, a field fortunately preempted by men, has come of age and by its discoveries is freeing us all. I am referring in particular to the most

profoundly scientific of the American schools of psychology, Behaviorism. Many of you may not realize what a liberating idea the Behaviorists have introduced: the idea that *BEHAVIOR* is all that counts; one is what one does. In the natural sciences such as physics and chemistry, it has long been known that nothing exists that cannot be measured. Scientific knowledge (and what other knowledge is there?) is ultimately nothing more than pointer readings, measurements manipulated mathematically. If it cannot be measured it does not exist. The Behaviorists have rigorously applied this principle to the study of human nature and are thus able to clarify what we see taking place around us. Who can measure love? But we *can* measure behavior. We can count orgasms and what else is "love" but orgasms? To love simply means to have an orgasm with. (Semanticists will note the interesting expressive "to make love to.") Orgasms is what love or being in love is all about. It has taken us over 700 years to clear up the sticky mess begun by those medieval ladies.

There used to be a saying, it's love that makes the world go round. The scientific statement is: It's orgasms that make the world go round. I think we all agree that more orgasms (i.e., love) are what this world needs. Men have shown an instinctive knowledge of this. Even during the worst of the Victorian era, they kept alive the double standard. They were often forced to practice their healthy promiscuity underground, in itself an unhealthy condition of deceit and hypocrisy, but, thank God, they did it. And now, belatedly, women in growing numbers are finding the true road to emancipation, that road that is paved with orgasms. (Many women had mistakenly thought that acquiring the vote was the way to equality. Time has shown how absurd this was.)

So far so good. But all of this progress has been made within the confining concept of monosexuality. Thanks to the insights of Behaviorism, we now understand human nature as never before. We Americans can take special pride in this achievement. Whereas much of our success in space technology rests upon European discoveries in the realm of pure science, in the far more subtle and difficult field of people it is we who are leading, both in pure science and in its applied aspects.

Kinsey was one of the first to make use of the orgasm to further our understanding of love, i.e., sexual behavior. Earlier students (e.g., Krafft-Ebing) had tried to classify people as homo- or heterosexual according to verbal reports of states of inner feeling. How hopelessly unscientific! Kinsey counted the number of orgasms a person had with members of each sex. This led to the discovery that fully one third of males were bisexual, at least in some degree. Women, as always, did rather poorly. Being for the most part enmeshed in the taboo against promiscuity, they are also trapped in rigid monosexual behavior. Kinsey's discovery backs up scientifically what a few, enlightened souls had begun to sense, namely, that the monosexual ethic has no basis in human nature.

The bisexual today is maligned by most of us, but it is he (and occasionally she) who is showing us the way to more fully human, as opposed to animal, behavior. Only the bisexual truly loves all people. Bisexuality contains within it the virtue of promiscuity for it precludes faithfulness to one person. Now we can see why Lesbians trail the male homosexuals by so wide a margin. Even heterosexual couples are more advanced, what with wife-swapping and bits of homosexual behavior during orgies. We Lesbians are just not with it. We do not make bar pickups with ease. We do not cruise. We have scruples about being homebreakers. Despite or in defiance of the facts of human behavior and the most up-to-date (i.e., best) theorizing, we continue to seek, or to believe we have already found, our one true love. When will we pull our heads from the sand?

The Behaviorists tell us that human beings are born sexual, not any particular sort of sexual. (How they know this is not clear, but they are nothing if not scientific.) For most of us it is a downhill development to ever more restricted sexual expression. You might say we would be better off to have remained babies all our lives. From the moment of birth we are subjected to the myth of monosexuality (more typically the heterosexual version) which cuts each of us off from half the human race. This has far reaching effects. Is it any wonder we are afraid even to *touch* others? Our capacity to love, i.e., to behave orgasmically, is arbitrarily restricted and repressed. Touching, being

either a forerunner of an embryonic form of orgasm, is likewise inhibited. The meaningless term "love" includes that airy concept, "affection." As love is orgasm, so affection is touching. "Love" behavior ranges from a handshake, to hand holding, through hugging and kissing, to the nude embrace and orgasm. To repress orgasms is, in some manner, to repress all degrees of "love" behavior. Our applied psychologists, or people technologists, have developed touch therapy to help us break through the barriers imposed by monosexuality and other negative attitudes towards promiscuity. By touching people indiscriminately we become "affectionate" and "loving." Remember, we are our behavior; we are what we do. It should be clear now that, as long as we remain in the grip of monosexuality, our touching ability is drastically impaired. This is not to say that all touching invariably leads to orgasm, though that would be the ideal. All our present taboos surrounding when and where and with whom one may have an orgasm must first be removed. Then promiscuous bisexuality will be the norm and the amount of "love" in the world will make war, poverty, hate, and prejudice but a memory.

No, not quite. The exalted plane of bisexuality is not the ultimate. Beyond lies polysexuality! As an old, over 29, Lesbian, I feel inadequate to the task of peering into the future. This I will leave to our young bisexuals in whom I have the great-

by Leo Skir

est faith. This much is clear, however: Bisexuality today is practiced in a restricted form. The old taboos against sex with one's parents and children still prevail. Minors are out, though this is more because of antiquated laws than taboo. Encouragingly, sex between siblings seems to be on the increase. Why not sex with animals? A few liberated spirits (mostly shepherders) have risen to this. Why should cat lovers and dog lovers remain so inhibited? Elephant and dolphin lovers too. Size differences may at first seem insurmountable, but we humans, especially of the superior sex, are endlessly inventive. (Cf. Havelock Ellis.) Why not machines? We love them too. How many men love their cars better than their wives? Why stop at washing and polishing one's steel chariot? Why not screw it? ...

I shall leave to the younger generation the carrying forth of the orgasm. I have but one more thought. The Second Coming, the end of the world, will be one great and glorious cosmic orgasm in which all souls, human and nonhuman, of all time will be united for eternity in THE ORGASM.

(Joan Ogden was born in the East and educated in New York City, though she now makes her home on the West Coast. A leader in the fight for our civil rights, she has chosen as pseudonym the name of a romantic heroine from Lesbian literature ...)

THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

If you are Jewish, as I am, Brooklyn, at least the Brooklyn that I grew up in, was as Jewish as Tel Aviv. I lived on Park Place. The public school I went to was almost all-Jewish. How? Negro children (who, I suppose were for the most part Protestant) lived only four blocks away on Berger Street, but went to another school—"their" school. Catholics went to the parochial schools connected to their churches. And there were few white Protestants, at least in MY part of Brooklyn.

It was a strange life, Jewish, and yet, oddly non-Jewish. The Jewish life, seemed to me, connected—at that time—

the time of my growing up—in the 40's, more with Russia and Poland. It was somehow European, somehow, not American. To some extent my parents shared this attitude. They tried not to speak Yiddish in front of me, so that I would not acquire a Yiddish accent.

But—as in those stories where the parents try to avert the circumstances which will bring an evil fate on their child—the knowledge of Jewish separateness could not be held from me.

In Sunday School at the Sherre Zedek we were asked,

"What percentage of America is Jew-

ish?"

And I had quickly raised my hand and answered with great authority, "The world and the United States is half-Jewish, half-Gentile."

And then the teacher told the class—as ignorant as I was—that only THREE percent of America was Jewish.

Three Percent! Unbelievable. My heart shook at the thought.

Three percent!

All those gentiles!

How old was I then? About eight I imagine.

What happened to me after that?

I began to come out of my egg. Crack crack crack. Slowly slowly.

I got older. I went to high school, met gentiles—who were not "gentiles" at all but just people like myself. I read Freud and discovered we were all children. Crack. I read Marx and discovered that we were caught in nets of economic exploitation. Crack. I read history and found that everyone was someone's Jew, that everyone had had to flee at some time, that we were all exiles. Crack.

And still I was not out of my egg.

That world of Brooklyn, so secure, still held me.

I no longer lived in Brooklyn, at least full-time. I was going to Columbia College. I had learned a lot of things in my head, but not in my heart. Inside I was still part of the family. The center of my world was still in Brooklyn, still in that apartment on Park Place, still at the moment on Friday night when I would come home and we would all sit down to supper together.

My years at Columbia followed each other obediently like big elephants in a circus holding each other's tails.

Then in my last year at Columbia I discovered I was in love and with my roommate, another boy.

A gentile. And a heterosexual too.

I felt quite lost. My Jewish background had prepared me for a different type of exile, a different form of disapproval than that which faced me.

Where were my people? Who were my people?

Thoughts like this often went thru my mind.

They buzzed thru my head, crowding out, intruding into my studies. About Shakespeare I now thought, 'Did he ever feel what I feel?' Somehow the reassur-

ances from the professors that the "love" in the sonnets for the Young Man was an Elizabethan convention failed to convince me.

I was in a cloud of unknowing, learning a new geography where I wound up in the fourth circle of Dante's hell (and retaliated by putting Dante in some circle of a hell I fashioned for Church moralists).

A new heaven and a new earth. I would need to fashion it, as the Soviets had needed a new drama.

These were my thoughts thru the week at school, these were my thoughts as I went home by subway on Friday afternoon, the stations on the Newlotts IRT line a familiar rosary in my soul, sacred as my childhood that was leaving me.

That Friday night at supper my mother said, "Do you know the girl next door?"

I stared at her. There were two "next doors." Ours was a six story apartment house on the corner. Two wooden houses, large private homes—how few of these were left in Brooklyn—were on either side, one on Park Place, the other on Brooklyn Avenue.

The one of Park Place was now empty. The other on Brooklyn Avenue was owned by an old lady who lived there with a younger woman, who looked terribly sick and pale. Sometimes they sat on the front porch, even when the weather was growing chilly, the old woman listening to the radio, the younger one knitting.

I knew only that they were gentiles, having for me, even then—I was in college—a special exotic—even unpalatable quality—that gentiles seemed to have. They looked so white, so pale, almost as if they were half-baked. Know the girl next door? A young gentile woman years older than me, sitting on a porch in a private house behind a gate. What could my mother mean?

"You don't mean the younger woman sitting next to the older one on that porch?" I said.

My mother nodded. "That one," she said, "She's supposed to be the daughter of the old woman, but she isn't."

Mother paused to let this intelligence sink in.

Then she said, "You're not supposed to know this. She tells everyone she's the daughter of the woman, but she isn't. She's a—Lesbian."

Mother felt another pause was justified at this point so she had a piece of chicken leg, opening her eyes wider and looking at me in her excitement as she ate.

"Her doctor told me," said Mother, "No one's supposed to know."

I paused, puzzled, wondering what value this was to me, or who I was not to tell it to—my classmates in Contemporary Civilization? My Classics Course instructor? It seemed so inappropriate, as, in my childhood (was it so long ago?) I had been given a shirt on my birthday and had been told a shirt was a birthday gift.

And Mother looked as happy as if she had given me a gift.

She got up and took my plate.

"Wait!" she said, "I've got your favorite cake."

She came back with a layer cake, white cake with layers made of a chocolate pudding-like mixture.

It had been my favorite cake. But that night—and I didn't quite know why then—I had little appetite.

But I did not mention this to my mother since I did not want my appetite or lack of it to come into the conversation. I wanted only to finish the meal quickly and get back to Columbia, to school.

"I have to leave after supper," I told Mother when she came back in with the cake.

"Can't you stay over?" she said.

"No," I said, "I have schoolwork."

"Oh," she said, "I'm sorry. I really feel better at night knowing my little boy is sleeping in the next room in his little p.j.s."

I ate the cake quickly.

"I didn't finish the story," Mother said, sitting down, "The girl's parents found out about her and sent her to live with the old lady. Her physician told me. No one knows about it. Everyone thinks she's the old lady's daughter."

I didn't say anything. It all sounded too strange and impossible. Why if the young girl was a Lesbian didn't she live in New York, find someone—she living alone—to share her life with. Why spend it in Brooklyn, hiding, alone, ashamed?

"Do you remember her?" my mother said, "The girl next door?"

She had brought in my coffee, pouring it half-full of milk as I always drank it. Now I drank it quickly. I wanted to be gone.

"Yes," I said, "I remember. I have to go."

"Can't you stay a while longer?" she said.

"No," I said. "I can't. I have to go . . ." I went.

We are all Jews. We are all exiles. Nighttime will find us in the large cities. Often, very often, we are more at home when we are alone.

("The Girl Next Door" is an excerpt from a novel in progress, *LEO THE ZIONIST*, another section of which has appeared in the *MINNESOTA REVIEW*. Leo Skir was born in Brooklyn in 1932 and educated in the New York City area, where he still resides. His stories have appeared in *TANGENTS*, *ONE MAGAZINE*, *MATTACHINE REVIEW* (under name Leo McAlberty). He has appeared in *THE LADDER* in the past as "Leo Ebreo". Under his own name, he has appeared in *EVERGREEN REVIEW* and *COMMENTARY*, as well as the previously cited *MINNESOTA REVIEW*. He is the author of the section, "A Guide To Gay New York" in *THE NEW YORK SPY*, edited by Alan Rinzler and published by David White Co. A portion of his novel, *BOYCHICK*, entitled "Other Chanukas" was included in the lauded anthology, *HOW WE LIVE*, edited by Penney Chapin Hills and L. Rust Hills, N. Y., Macmillan, 1968.)

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by Ruth M. McGuire, Ph.D.

THE COUNSELLOR'S CORNER

(THE COUNSELLOR'S CORNER column consists of your letters on your problems with answers provided by Dr. McGuire. Letters submitted for use in this column should not be over 1000 words in length and should not be signed except by some "code" name chosen by you. However, all letters should be accompanied by a cover note containing your correct name and address. SEND ALL LETTERS TO GENE DAMON, EDITOR, THE LADDER, and not to Dr. McGuire, since this only delays them and might cause them to be lost. No personal replies can be made by mail. Letters not suitable for use in the column will be destroyed.)

Dear Dr. McGuire: I have frequently witnessed a situation in Lesbian marriages that appears to be unique . . . that is, I do not believe it occurs in male homosexual relationships nor in heterosexual unions, and I am wondering what causes this type of relationship. I am referring to the situation where a couple has been together an indeterminate length of time and one of them becomes interested in a third party. Quite frequently, this results in the forming of a relationship between all three women. NOT, in any sense, a sexual relationship, but a sort of support and sustain operation, wherein the two NEW lovers care for the (possibly) hysterical displaced party for an indeterminate length of time (sometimes as long as a year or two). Not infrequently, when the displaced party finds someone new, the four women involved remain close friends. There are a number of variations on this arrangement, but I have personally witnessed it at least a dozen times, sometimes stretching through a number of subsequent relationships (where, for example, another "divorce" occurs years later between a couple that has already had such a three-way relationship on forming their marriage—and in the course of the divorce they again form a three-way relationship). To my knowledge this never involves any type of sexual activity (except between the newly formed pair). Much of this seems to me to be a basic contradiction of human be-

havior—virtually the only behavior pattern that I have seen among Lesbians that does appear to differ substantially from the marital patterns of heterosexuals and male homosexuals. It is quite possible you have also witnessed this sort of occurrence and I wonder if you would explain it?

"Anti-symbiosis"

To "Anti-symbiosis"

The sole question in your letter, in your final sentence, is what we used to call a real show-stopper. Part of the answer is easy: yes, I have observed human behavior through or with the objective frame of reference of the 'professional' social behaviorist for a considerable number of years. I have also been privileged to observe heterosexual as well as homosexual behavior patterns that seem to repeat themselves with unerring regularity—those patterns we currently tend to call 'fidelity' and 'promiscuity'—where ongoing love relationships between two people are concerned. It has further been my experience that *non-fidelity* rather than promiscuity, perhaps, is by far more common than most people think, or even dare to think about.

When one can dispense with the gossamer lyricism of the poets, the chiaroscuro of the painters, and the man-made laws of the Judeo-Christian era, one has to see that 'love' is a physiological phenomenon wherein an individual's biological and chemical apparatus perceives a stimulus, and, aided and abetted by instinctual psychological drives, responds to that stimulus with specific emotional feelings that are acted upon forthwith . . . if the person dares.

In some cultures still today, the person does dare. But by and large in our Western society, the Judeo-Christian world, the immediate and unrestrained response to the described stimulus is taboo if an individual is 'committed' by whatever societal vows he holds sacred to 'love' or respond only to another specifically designated person. In other words, you, any individual, is supposed to forever after 'love' only one person to

the end of your days. However, no folkways or mores in this world can stop the 'attraction-response,' 'cause and effect,' or 'action-reaction' syndrome any more than a man can fly to the moon! (oops.)

In lower animal forms the attraction stimulus and response pattern is regulated most of the time by cyclical breeding seasons, as when the female is in estrus. (Remember the homosexual behavior in lower animal forms is not proved to be exclusive and life-long; when the appropriate opposite sex is available, the animals may respond to other-sex stimulus.) However, back to *Homo sapiens* and his remarkable ability to be sexually stimulated at any and all times—Man for All Seasons in every sense. Man can respond sexually to an incredible number and variety of stimuli. Almost any object, animate or inanimate can arouse him, especially if he has a sensory and/or psychological 'fix' on it—sounds, sights, odors, the 'feel' of something (tactile stimulus) or, perhaps most often, a thought pattern such as is woven in fantasies and day-dreams. When Man is tumescent, anything can and usually does happen to achieve a releasing response. If he is controlled, constricted, or culturally inhibited, the discharge may be expressed in motor or cerebral activity. If he is free to do so, he will discharge genitally.

It may well be that non-conflicted homosexuals are sufficiently 'free' to express their sexual responses to stimuli without undue regard for what the majority considers propriety, or obedience to promises and moral commitments. It may also well be that heterosexuals would respond as readily as some homosexuals seem to do if they were equally 'free' to ignore their 'rules.' In truth, this is precisely what does happen in many cultures, old and new, from ancient to modern times. Heterosexuals and homosexuals alike form unions for propagation, security, friendship, or whatever, and do not pretend that it will be a 'love' relationship, to the end of their days. Heterosexuals can and do have mistresses and lovers on the side, without disrupting the basic structure of their mutual home base. For the free and uninhibited of any sexual persuasion, this often seems to work out reasonably well—especially for those years of life during which vigor and growth drives are paramount. In the

years after growth 'peaking,' the couple often come together solidly and comfortably and in much better psychological health than they otherwise would have been able to do, without feelings of having missed something, been cheated, or deprived of experiences they wanted to have. Your obvious puzzlement about the splitting, dividing, and re-forming of some Lesbian relationships also suggests your dismay at what you may see as instability in certain individuals, or a cavalier attitude toward trying a little harder to be 'faithful' and keep promises solemnly made. I can assure you that the schism and re-grouping you have observed is not unique in Lesbian relationships but is quite common in many, if not most, human relationships. Again I must stress that the emotional dividing re-uniting with others, in the human, can well be sublimated in many forms of activity, as in business unions, sports comradery, intellectual pursuits, etc. But be very sure it does happen . . . it exists . . . it is there. Finally, you seem to be outraged that the splitting couple manages to accept and even contain the third or fourth member joining the relationship. Why should this astonish and anger you? If the Lesbian couple, or any couple, have been capable of being attracted to one another because of certain traits and characteristics, wouldn't it be consistent for them to be attracted to other individuals who had like admirable traits. I have observed repeatedly that a person with much love to give is able to adore one individual for a particular combination of 'graces' and to equally love another for a different arrangement of attributes. In closing, a comment on your second paragraph; I would tend to agree with your observations that a third and sometimes fourth member joining a close relationship seems to occur more with women than with men. Perhaps women are just naturally more 'mothering' than men and tend to want to 'rescue' hurt or disadvantaged things . . . including people. Or, women may just have more inborn capacity for 'loving' on a sustained and on-going basis. (Why do you refer to these people as 'lovers'? Are they—really?)

* * *

Dear Dr. McGuire: I certainly don't have a problem as interesting as some you have talked about, but I imagine mine might

happen a little more often. I am 22 and my girl just turned 17 a month ago. We live in _____ (midwest city of about 40,000), and we don't know anyone else like us except through the magazine, *THE LADDER*. We have known each other for three years, and we have been together for almost two years. We both know that this is very dangerous for me, because of my age. Her parents like me, and my parents like her. We can't live together, of course, yet. Now her parents are planning to move when she gets out of school. This will be at the mid-term instead of the usual end of school, so she will be out next January (1970) and she won't yet be 18. We could just take off when she finishes school, but there are so many reasons now not to do this. I live away from my family, but we are on very good terms. I did not go to college, though I could have, but I did start my own business and it is doing well now. It was just this last year that I was able to take it over entirely in my own name (when I turned 21 and could also afford to). It would not be a very good idea for me to leave here, and we really don't want to. I am trying to think of some way to make it possible for her to stay here with me. We cannot risk telling her parents the truth, because of her age, though they are very nice and not old-fashioned really for their ages. What would you suggest? We are really both very responsible and she is adult for her age.

"Young Lovers"

To "Young Lovers"

Your problem is most certainly an 'interesting' and a valid one. You may feel it is relatively less serious than some we have discussed, but the prospect of any two people deeply in love having to be separated for, perhaps, a matter of years is acutely distressing. The only things I might suggest are the things you are apparently doing anyway, such as maintaining friendly diplomatic relations with both your families, conducting yourself with dignity, working productively and successfully at your business, and, most important, not planning any kind of hare-ing off together when your friend finished school. It is cold comfort to get nothing but a pat-on-the-back for being such good girls when you face what seems to be an insoluble problem.

Circumstances do change. They are

constantly changing for everyone all the time. One hopes they change for the better, but often they seem to change for the worse. Nothing in our lives remains static; there is no such thing as the 'status quo' for any life situation or an individual's feelings. We either change by growing or change by deteriorating. But we never stand absolutely stock still. Let us conjecture for a moment and regard the problem from the premise of what you may think as the worst possible thing that could happen.

Your friend leaves school, moves away, and you remain with your growing new business. Will she move so far away that visiting her would be impossible? Would you have to resort to phone calls and letters? Or would this be dangerous, too? Would your two families become 'suspicious' of such constant communication? Would you then fear reprisals? If your friend is not going on to college, would her parents permit her to remain and work with you? Are you sure you could never explain to both your parents what the situation really is?

If none of this seems feasible, then you may well have to face one of the most painful of life's experiences—that of losing a treasured love-object. I doubt if many human beings have escaped this wrenching experience, and the sense of loss and grief it creates in the individual cannot be lightly dismissed. You may each have to find the courage and fortitude within yourselves to bear the pain, until such time as circumstances alter and you can resume what is, for each of you, a rewarding relationship.

CROSS CURRENTS and Miscellany

10 WACS were involved in a U.S. Army witch hunt last December, January and February, and the entire homophile community responded to aid them. Originally the 10 women were charged with homosexuality and they faced undesirable discharge from the army. Mr. C. H. Erskine Smith defended the women on a "no fee" basis. The WACS were all members of the U.S. Army Women's Band at Fort McClellan, Alabama, and were charged following a complaint from

Ruth E. Glaspy, Company Commander, 14th Army Band. Army medical and psychiatric reports declared the women non-homosexuals, but this did not stop the persecution. The Army Administrative Board accepted as evidence, not only hearsay and gossip, but affidavits signed by absentee witnesses who have been discharged from the Army or transferred from the base where the "trial" was held.

Mr. Smith, in defending the WACS, contacted various homophile organizations. In turn many of these organizations held benefits to raise money for legal costs, turning this over to the NATIONAL LEGAL DEFENSE FUND which exists for this special purpose—the providing of financial assistance to people involved in cases dealing with the persecution of homosexuals.

At last report the situation had not been completely resolved. One defendant was cleared entirely, two were given undesirable discharges (which were later upgraded to "general discharge under honorable conditions"); and seven women have been left in a limbo situation. They have not been discharged, but they have not been given a "clean" bill either.

DOB was frankly hoping that this would turn into a test case which might have reached the Supreme Court. However, to date the Supreme Court has given a "no ruling" reply to similar cases. The American Bar Association has many recommendations before Congress now which would reform military law.

It is not unreasonable to suspect that the Army's more or less retraction of action in this case was due, at least in part, to the aid that sprang up in behalf of these women. Notice of their plight appeared in many homophile publications. The New York Chapter of DOB held a benefit supper and raised several hundred dollars.

A partial victory, at least, and proof of the power of organization to overcome injustice.

UNITED NATIONS, February 6, 1969. U.S. delegate John E. Means told the U.N. Conference on the Status of Women that praising mothers for having a lot of children is no longer "functionally appropriate" in a world with a population explosion.

STUDENT HOMOPHILE LEAGUE OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY took wise action at their Executive Board meeting in February, 1969. They eliminated the clause from their Statement of Purposes pro-

hibiting social activities and immediately sponsored a dance open to all college students in the New York area. They also voted to schedule a public panel discussion on Lesbianism during the spring term (a report on this will follow in another issue).

ABORTION REFORM: The League for Abortion Reform broke up a meeting of the Joint Legislative Committee on Problems of Public Health in New York City on February 13, 1969, protesting that all the Committee does is talk about Abortion Reform. Surprisingly, many of the members of the Committee loudly shouted approval of the women's action.

LOS ANGELES is richer these days for having lost several whole congregations of Pentecostal churches in their area. A number of these groups have left "wicked and sinful" Los Angeles to settle in the Midwest or South. One group settled in Tennessee just in time for that area's first earthquake in nearly 100 years. All of the groups claim to have had visions of earthquakes and other natural disasters destroying Los Angeles, primarily due to rampant homosexual activity there, and the revenge of God. The LADDER editor lives in the Midwest and since two of these groups have moved to within 100 miles of her home, she is now worried that they may have brought some of their earthshaking with them...

BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA, February, 1969. The most extensive, complete and relevant study of homosexuality ever undertaken will get under way next October, according to Dr. Alan Bell of the Institute for Sex Research (Kinsey Institute). Using a \$280,000 grant from the National Institute for Mental Health, Dr. Bell's group will investigate the lives of 1100 male homosexuals and Lesbians in the San Francisco Area.

Many San Francisco groups will take part including the DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS, the COUNCIL ON RELIGION AND THE HOMOSEXUAL, the MATTACHINE SOCIETY, the SOCIETY FOR INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS (SIR), and THE TAVERN GUILD. Dr. Bell, senior research psychologist, plans to focus the study on the family experience of homosexuals. They plan to test all of the theories about how homosexuality develops and study the types of homosexual commitment and experience. Most studies of homosexuals have been done with people in therapy or in prison.

Dr. Bell said: "Hopefully, ours will be the largest and most unbiased sample ever taken." Under terms of the grant, the San Francisco study must be finished in three years.

MATTACHINE MIDWEST NEWS-LETTER, Chicago, Illinois, February, 1969, announces the founding of a Federally funded agency to help homosexuals with employment. A private organization called SERD (Social, Education, Research and Development, Inc.) has worked, in the past, with the unemployed from many ethnic groups, and now have turned their attention to the homosexual, in the Chicago area. The founder of SERD, sociologist John W. McCollum's proposal to the Federal Government makes it clear that he is on the side of the angels, and one might wish that there was to be such a group in every city. Many of you will want to hear more about this work, and you can reach MATTACHINE MIDWEST by writing to them at P.O. Box 924, Chicago, Illinois, 60690. Incidentally, for those of you who like pleasant surprises, the editor of the MATTACHINE MIDWEST Newsletter is none other than Valerie Taylor, author of several of the best Lesbian novels ever written.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN SCHOLARS: Washington, D.C., February 24, 1969. Nicholas von Hoffman, writing in the WASHINGTON POST, describes the terrible obstacles facing qualified women in University life today. He documents the discrimination against women in teaching positions at Harvard, University of Chicago, Yale, University of Michigan, New York University, Stanford, and University of Wisconsin. In using the life history of beleaguered Marlene Dixon, he shows that even while attending school on the graduate level every possible pressure is put on the female student to quit, to forget it, to concentrate on her rightful place (i.e. marriage and family). Look, we are more than 50% of the population. How long are we going to tolerate this?

MORE MILITANT WOMEN: THE WASHINGTON POST, February 23, 1969. More and more groups are forming, women dedicated to women's freedom and dignity, and all going about it in various and diverse ways. Most of them, including the group discussed by Judith Martin, in an article entitled, "New Breed Of Witches," not yet accomplishing much. This bunch calls itself "The Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell" (WITCH). It seems

the women's groups are following the bad pattern formed by homophile organizations, splintering into small groups. They need to be united, and by the way, so do we. How about one national women's group (DOB) and one national male group (?), with as many councils on religion and the homosexual as we can possibly have...?

SYMPOSIUM FALL OUT, San Francisco, California, January, 1969. Teachers and counsellors from Berkeley High School met with a group from San Francisco Chapter, DOB, including the West Coast Vice President, Rinalda Reagan and the Vice President of the San Francisco Chapter. Purpose of the meeting, helping the teachers involved to better deal with the young homosexuals in their care. This meeting was caused by the new communications established during the CRH SYMPOSIUM held last October in San Francisco. We need more of this sort of thing—organizations and agencies and teaching bodies working together within the community.

MORE TALK: Washington, D.C., February 21, 1969. The Betty Groebli Show, on W.R.C. featured Dr. John Cavanaugh, a psychiatrist, his "in depth study" subject, identified only as "Ann" a Lesbian and a family counsellor. Nothing new, but reiteration of some fairly well known facts that often get overlooked. Approach wholly sympathetic, even on the part of the psychiatrist, and civil rights for homosexuals was one of the topics, as well as some emphasis on the "normalcy" of homosexuality. Good of kind.

JUDICIAL BREAKTHROUGH. We all remember the infamous deportation of a Canadian national from the United States recently, simply on the grounds of homosexuality. Judge George Rosling, a Federal Court Judge in New York City, ruled, on Friday, February 28, 1969, that the petition of one Mario Belle for citizenship could not be denied simply because the man describes himself as a bisexual with homosexual tendencies. Judge Rosling spelled out clearly that as long as the man's sex life was with consenting adults he was still "of good moral character" and could not be denied citizenship on these grounds. The Immigration and Naturalization Service announced it would appeal the decision. Undoubtedly "big brother" will win, in a higher court, but in any case, there are some men in white hats sitting on the court bench... nice to know.

LEGALIZE HOMOSEXUALITY, Sacramento, California, March 4, 1969.

Assemblyman Willie L. Brown, Jr., of San Francisco, California, has introduced a bill in the State Legislature to legalize private sexual conduct between consenting adults. Brown admitted he was not optimistic about the measure passing in the State of California, but indicated he would pursue the matter. Despite the negativity of this approach, there was a day when civil rights bills had little or no chance of passing, but men continued to introduce them at the various legislative levels. Now, of course, it is politically "dangerous" not to vote for civil rights legislation. Someday, homosexuals will also have their civil rights.

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE SUPPORTS LAW REFORM. March 6, 1969, THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, in an editorial entitled "Reviewing Sex Laws" came out strongly in favor of Willie L. Brown, Jr.'s bill (see above). They point out that existing laws are impossible to enforce and simply no longer a part of public concern. They quote the now famous statement by Home Secretary Roy Jenkins used in getting such legislation adopted in England: "The great majority of homosexuals are not exhibitionist freaks but ordinary citizens." Very true and we are very grateful to Roy Jenkins and THE CHRONICLE, but it has been pointed out that heterosexuals are not held accountable for the freaks in their ranks—no minority group should be so held accountable, either, Black, Jew, Gay, what have you . . .

FORSYTHE SAGA. The Arts Section of THE NEW YORK TIMES for February 23, 1969, contained a very silly article by one Ronald Forsythe entitled: "Why Can't We Live Happily Ever After, Too?" With that title, and the avowed intention of showing how absurdly maligned the homosexual is in some fiction, most drama and all movies, one might expect something worth reading. Instead it appears Mr. Forsythe is unhappy, and his suggested cure for his personal misery is that writers should portray him as happy and this might make him happy. Really, I feel our alchemists should make him disappear. Well, maybe someday someone will write an article pointing out that since most homosexuals are ordinary everyday and primarily happy people it is simply silly not to portray them with the same honesty applied to heterosexuals in all except a handful of cases. . . .

PLAYBOY FORUM, FRANKLIN E. KAMENY AND RITA LAPORTE: The March, 1969 PLAYBOY contained the fol-

lowing exchange of comments by Franklin E. Kameny, long time leader in the homosexual movement, and the editorial staff of PLAYBOY. The letter following this has been sent by Rita Laporte to PLAYBOY. At press time we do not know if it is to be run in PLAYBOY, but a future issue of THE LADDER will comment.

GAY IS GOOD

I find the August PLAYBOY FORUM letter from David H. Barlow offensive and illustrative not only of the failures of psychology and psychiatry in their approach to homosexuality but also of the dangers in the form of "human engineering" practiced by behavioral therapists. I write as a homosexual. I am founder and president of the Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C., and chairman of the Eastern Regional Homophile Conference, although I am writing this letter as an individual.

There is no valid scientific evidence to show that homosexuality is a sickness, illness, neurosis or pathology of any kind. It is a preferred orientation or propensity, not different in kind from heterosexuality. Homosexuality is not intrinsically inferior to heterosexuality; it is not a second-best condition. The problems of the homosexual stem from discrimination by the heterosexual majority and are much more likely to be employment problems than emotional problems. There is no valid ethical reason for a person to subject himself to conditioning therapy other than submission to societal prejudice. Such submission is immoral, of course, because the prejudice is immoral.

Has Mr. Barlow ever considered that the fact that heterosexuals rarely (if ever) wish to change to homosexuality, while homosexuals occasionally wish to become heterosexual, may imply the same conclusion that can be drawn from the one-way traffic in Negroes passing as whites? The conclusion is that society has indoctrinated a minority group with a false sense of inferiority. Negro leaders in a wise effort to repair the human damage done them have coined the slogan "Black is beautiful." Barlow and his professional colleagues would be of greater service to the harassed homosexual minority if they ceased to reinforce the negative value judgments of society and, instead, adopted a positive

approach in which therapy for a homosexual would consist of instilling in him a sense of confident self-acceptance so he could say with pride, "Gay is good."

Franklin E. Kameny, Pd.D.
Washington, D.C.

PLAYBOY REPLIED:

We share your distaste for emotionally charged words such as "sickness" to describe what is more aptly called a "deviance" (the neutral term used by Barlow to denote a departure from behavioral norms); nonetheless, avoiding loaded epithets should not blind us to the fact that there are distinctions between heterosexuality and homosexuality. Contrary to your assertion that the latter is a "preferred orientation," the available evidence indicates that the exclusive homosexual is not following a preference at all but, rather, a compulsion based on phobic reactions to heterosexual stimuli.

The tenacity of this compulsion can be measured by the forces with which it is in conflict: In almost any human society, every influence, from parental upbringing to the broadest cultural persuasions, operates to encourage a man to perform as a biological male with females; for reasons as yet not known with scientific certainty, the homosexual reacts negatively to this conditioning and develops at odds with the very ground from which he sprang. This is not a deliberately chosen non-conformity, because exclusive homosexuality is involuntarily and unexpectedly arrived at. Thus, the sexually inverted male finds himself rejecting his biological role and the physical and emotional satisfactions that it offers; he finds himself in conflict with parental expectations and in opposition to society's pervasive encouragement of heterosexuality. In return for the price in tension he must pay for his rejection of these values, he gains no greater good through his relations with males than the heterosexual gains in relations with females. Therefore, it is far from accurate to state that exclusive homosexuality is without intrinsic disadvantages for the individual, disadvantages that would exist even in a tolerant society.

It is just as inaccurate to state that homosexuals share "minority group" status with blacks (or with ethnic and religious minorities). Such minority

groups are bound together by a vast complex of relationships, values and social structures, not least of all the preservation of the group by reproduction. Homosexuals, on the other hand, are an aggregate of individuals who share only a single attribute. The problems of most other minorities are caused primarily by persecution; homosexuality, when compulsive and phobic, is in itself a problem that exists in addition to the problems caused by society's attitude. For this reason, homosexuals should not be discouraged from seeking therapy when they want it; the suggestion by homophile spokesmen like yourself that individuals who do undergo treatment are violating group solidarity merely adds another conflict to the many already besetting homosexuals.

In spite of our disagreement on these issues, we share your belief that the situation of the homosexual in America today would be vastly improved were it not for an intolerant and hostile society that subjects him to enormous stresses. To do away with that kind of social intolerance has been a constant and fundamental purpose of "The Playboy Forum."

March 2, 1969

The Playboy Forum
Playboy Building
919 N. Michigan Ave.,
Chicago, Ill. 60611

Dear Editor:

I wish, as a woman and a Lesbian, to take issue with your reply, in the March Playboy Forum to Dr. Kameny's letter. You assume, without proof or argument, that homosexuals are under a compulsion to engage in sex with their own kind. I, as a woman, have been all too frequently accosted by males afflicted with a compulsion to have sex with me, though the ultimate compulsion, rape, I have been spared. These and many other males are in the grip of phobic reactions to homosexuals. In fact, this is a serious neurotic symptom suffered by heterosexuals. It evidences the sexual immaturity and insecurity of most of them. Too many never progress beyond the pre-pubertal stage of sexual maturity.

Perhaps I misunderstand your learned terminology. Do you mean that

heterosexual males love and marry female heterosexual stimuli (or stimuli)? Are you defining love as a compulsion? One involving phobic reactions to one or the other sex? Or are you confusing love with compulsive sexual attraction, which latter afflicts more men, whether heterosexual or homosexual, than it does women, whether heterosexual or Lesbian?

As for biological role, I presume you mean reproduction. As a conservative guess, 95% of sexual activity has nothing to do with reproduction and half of what does is too much. If Mrs. Stimula is on The Pill, where is the biological role for either her or Mr. Stimulus? As human beings, it is time we got away from your fixation on animality. I will concede that heterosexuals do about as well as the higher mammals, but I am not impressed. We should do so much better. Love can transform mere lustful compulsion and make of sexual intimacy an experience of transcending beauty.

Your espousal of conformity I find surprising. Do you condemn all deviancy? The gifted, for example? I do not care to inhabit the belly of the bell shaped curve where the great dull average lives. It is time we found a delight in diversity: male and female, black and white, old and young, homosexual and Lesbian.

Rita Laporte
National President
Daughters of Bilitis, Inc.

Editor's Note: Rita Laporte's letter to Playboy Forum appeared in the June, 1969 issue.

According to the *Los Angeles Advocate*, Angelo d'Arcangelo's *Homosexual Handbook* (published by Olympia) was yanked off the New York bookstands recently. The *Handbook* contains the author's imaginative list of famous homosexuals, many of whom are still living. Result of the ensuing furor was a more costly edition now on the stands.

FREEDOM TO LOVE

A Report by Del Martin

Filming is under way on a documentary entitled "Freedom to Love" which is being produced by the Drs. Phyllis and Eberhard Kronhausen, authors of the book, "Pornography and the Law."

The Kronhausens are presently residing in Paris but were in this country recently doing research and filming interviews. The documentary will be aimed at the need for revision of our sex laws and allowing people the "freedom to love."

The film crew was especially enthusiastic over an interview with Shirley Maclaine, who played in the movie version of "The Children's Hour," her understanding and sensitivity to the characters of the play.

Rita Laporte, president of the Daughters of Bilitis, was also filmed, along with Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, in an interview on Lesbianism conducted by Dr. Eberhard Kronhausen. Professional actors will be used in a sequence based on a true story involving a student with a crush on a school teacher and the unfortunate consequences that develop.



Dear Miss Damon:

I recently read a very old issue (June, 1968) of the *MOVIE/TV MARKETING* magazine, and feel your readers would be interested in reading about Eva Monley, the only female production manager of major motion pictures. The article, of course, deals with the technical aspects of Miss Monley's career, including her work on such movies as *THE AFRICAN QUEEN* and *ROOTS OF HEAVEN*, *MOGAMBO*, *LAWRENCE OF ARABIA*, *THE CARDINAL* and *HURRY SUNDOWN*. The article is illustrated.

L. V.
Virginia

To The Editor:

How do I go about getting back issues of *THE LADDER*. I have been lending my copies of August, 1968 and December/January, 1968, 1969 to my friends, to read Jane Rule's two stories, "My Coun-

try Wrong" and "Houseguest." I hope to get some new subscribers in this way, but my copies are wearing out.

S. G.
North Carolina

(Editor's Note: Copies of back issues at \$1.00 each or \$7.50 for a whole year are available through the Circulation Department, 1005 Market Street, Room 208, San Francisco, California, 94103. Back issues of the current volume are \$1.25 each.)

Dear Miss Damon:

I have seen no mention recently at all of all of the Olde Garde: Ann Bannon, Paula Christian, Valerie Taylor, et al. What's happened? Have they stopped writing, or have you stopped writing about them? Dreadful as some of the books were, they were still better than most on the subject, and I'll have a soft spot in my heart always for Ann Bannon, who gave me the terms and assurance I needed when I didn't know there was anyone else like me in the world. Picture this: a seventh grader in a drug store picking up *JOURNEY TO A WOMAN* (God knows what prompted me to pick up THAT one) and reading it—utterly delightedly. I hid it under my panties in my top drawer and mother found it and destroyed it (or read it—at least I never saw it again), and never said a word about it to me. I bought another one, and hid it better—still have it.

L. B.
Cleveland, Ohio

(Editor's Note: They have all stopped writing except for Valerie Taylor, and it has been some time since there has been a new Taylor title. Elsewhere in this issue there is an article all about the "Olde Garde," as you put it. Many readers have inquired about the death of good Lesbian paperback fiction. We all regret it, but current publishing trends in the paperback field are to put out as much pornography as possible with as little space wasted on story and character as can be managed.)

Dear Gene Damon:

All the homosexual women I know, who admit to me to being homosexual, know that I go to *DOB*, and have been asked to come and/or to join. Almost none of them want to even investigate it. Almost none of them want to have some-

thing like *THE LADDER* in their home. A friend of mine subscribed to *THE LADDER* for a year (a couple of years ago) and just told me that she dropped her subscription after one year because she felt it was not worth the money, and she did not get much out of it. She will come and see us weekend after next, and I will show her some of the more recent issues, and will talk to her again. Frankly, I don't know what exactly she would be interested in, but I'll find out. Other people are afraid to have the magazine around the house, even though it arrives unmarked. A number of my gay friends don't even admit to me to being gay, so I can hardly invite them to *DOB* or show them *THE LADDER*. You can be sure that any gay friends we have are being told about *DOB*, are being taken there, if they want to go, and are being shown and frequently given copies of *THE LADDER* and encouraged to subscribe. Most of the more stable girls just couldn't care less. Lots of them think it is something that a decent human being would not be connected with. With professional friends of mine, that's the main reason. I hear quite frequently remarks like "Do you go to such a place?" or "How come you dare to go there?" That's the attitude, and I just don't know what to do about it, short of explaining, which usually falls on deaf ears. Somehow, both Mattachine and *DOB* have a faintly objectionable smell to many "respectable" gay people, and nothing I say seems to help. Also, most of these people think *THE LADDER* is some type of salacious "rag," like a nudist magazine or something, and of course, occasional stories in *THE LADDER* in the past have been possibly a bit like that. Most stable couples tend to be a bit stuffy and as easily offended as the average middle-class stuffy straight person. So, if you have any suggestions, let me know.

Elisabeth Freeman
Philadelphia

(Editor's Note: There are a number of possible ways to convince the recalcitrant of their responsibilities. One approach is that of kinship, pointing out that the Lesbian who refuses to take any part in the fight for her own civil rights, if by no larger gesture than supporting this magazine, is comparable to blacks who pass as white, name-changing Jews, and various other forms of Uncle Tomism . . .)

by Vern Niven

SISTER OF SAPPHO: MARIE LAURENCIN

The woman most often compared to Sappho was, oddly enough, not a poet, but a painter. C. J. Bulliet, art critic and dilettante, says that twice in the recorded history of the arts has there appeared a woman who expressed the quintessence of the feminine . . . one, a poet, Sappho, and the other, a painter, Marie Laurencin." And Polly Flinders, London ballet critic, writing about Marie Laurencin in *VOGUE* said, "So feminine, so personal is she that we cannot help thinking of her as a sister of Sappho. That she ever had a father, spiritual or physical, is incredible."

Indeed, Marie did not have much of a father, for she was the illegitimate daughter of an "important personage" whose name is nowhere recorded, and her mother was a woman "who had always had it in her nature to dislike men." These bits of knowledge, along with other relevant comments come to us from that masterpiece of innuendo, *THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ALICE B. TOKLAS*, by Gertrude Stein.

Marie was born in Paris on October 31, 1885, and before she was 18 years old she was beginning to make her mark as a painter. Her meeting with Guillaume Apollinaire, brought about by their mutual friend, Picasso, developed into a grand affair which was to occupy them both for several years. This affair has been the major subject matter for most of Apollinaire's biographers, since Marie inspired a good deal of his better poetry. Margaret Davies, in her psychological analysis of Apollinaire and his work, pronounces the affair "cerebral" and indicates that Marie was frigid—a not surprising surmise in view of Marie's later life.

In his delight over Marie, Apollinaire caused a curious error in her artistic life history by placing her among the Cubists in his book, *CUBIST PAINTERS: AESTHETIC MEDITATIONS OF 1913*. Marie was never a cubist, never wanted to be one. She painted unlike any other artist and belonged to no school, but she is still often considered with the others of that time because of Apollinaire's book.

Marie Laurencin's mother died just after meeting Apollinaire and approving

of him, and Marie (who had not wanted that approval) left him and married a German whom she did not love. She said of him, though, that he was "the only one who can give me a feeling of my mother." Then World War I came, and, technically, a German, Marie was exiled from her beloved France. As soon as the war ended she divorced her husband. Apollinaire, who continued to love her, apparently until his death, died just two days before the armistice.

Free now of her mother, her husband, and her "lover," Marie painted more prolifically than ever, producing during the next sixteen rich years over 700 pictures, almost all of them of women, and many of women without noses, which became a public trademark and a matter of amusement among the less intelligent. Actually Marie painted herself over and over again. Intensely narcissistic, and far too aware of her own beauty, she was her own model as often as not, producing an autobiography on canvas. After Apollinaire, and a very brief interlude with composer Eric Satie, there were no other men in her life. There was, instead, a young woman, Suzanne Morand.

Suzanne joined Marie ostensibly as a maid, but soon became, in the words of Mercedes de Acosta, "a combination of devoted friend, confidante, companion and jack-of-all-trades on every level of her (Marie's) life." Through her devotion, intelligence and extreme discernment concerning any problem relating to her mistress, she became the powerful influence of Marie's life."

Marie became accepted as a good, not great, artist, and possibly the finest feminine French artist of contemporary time. She added to her public fame by designing for the Ballet Russe and the Comedie Francaise and working with Paul Poiret in fashion designing. In contrast with the other artists who worked with her in those early Montemarte years, Marie's style changed very little. Her enigmatic feline women were simply re-created in whatever style was au courant.

In 1955, just a year before her death, Marie adopted Suzanne Morand (which is frequently done in France to circumvent complicated inheritance laws) as her legal daughter, and left her all of her money and paintings and property on her death in 1956. Marie's book, *LE CARNET DES NUITS*, has never been trans-

lated into English, which is unfortunate, since it gives her interpretation of the early years in Paris spent in a circle of geniuses, and also, her feelings for Suzanne. A little of her whimsical spirit was captured in 1952 when, interviewed for *TIME MAGAZINE*, she said, "Why should I paint dead fish, onions, and beer glasses? Girls are so much prettier."

It is very easy to agree with her.

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