

nevertheless offers startling data. Some 85,000 new cases of syphilis occur annually, and an incredible 624,000 new cases of gonorrhea. The number of cases of the two combined exceed the number of cases of strep throat, scarlet fever, measles, mumps, hepatitis, and tuberculosis combined. As infectious diseases, only the common cold exceeds them. Pandemic, rather than epidemic, describes what has happened to the rate of VD since 1955. Homosexuals, apparently, are hardest hit: up to 40 percent of new cases of syphilis occur among male homosexuals. The wages of sin are death, but God offers an advance on people's salary from time to time.

The phenomenon noted by Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, that there is a relationship between sexual continency ("repression") and social progress, was pursued by J.D. Unwin in his now-ignored studies, especially *Sex and Civilization* (Oxford, 1934). In culture after culture, much to his amazement

PERSPECTIVE: David Brudnoy

Queer-Baiting for Faith, Fun, and Profit

This is the second of our PERSPECTIVE essays. As with the first, it does not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or The Alternative staff.

"Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from out of heaven; and He overthrew those cities and all the valley and all the inhabitants of the cities." Thus did God deal with the Sodomites, who had come to Lot's house demanding that he surrender his two visitors, who turned out to be disguised angels. "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them," said the lecherous men of Sodom. But "Lot went out the door to the men, shut the door after him and said, 'I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Behold, I have two daughters who have not known man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.'"

From this story in Genesis 19 it is obvious that homosexuality was a serious offense in Biblical times. And as Women's Liberationists might point out, the Sodom story also makes apparent the abysmal devaluation of women in the ethics of the ancient Hebrews. Lot valued the dignity of his male guests more highly than that of his female children. When the men of Sodom were entrapped by God's plain-clothesmen, the rain of fire commenced. While the episode in Sodom is the earliest account of the entrapment of homosexuals, and the remarks in Genesis the

and discomfort (he was an old liberal humanist), he found that any deviation from monogamy brought with it a lessening of creativity. Cultural leadership would shift to some newer monogamous culture. No amount of data could prove this to our modern cultural relativists and ethical hedonists, but the warning is there irrespective of their dislike of Unwin's findings. Tamper with the integrity of the family, and your culture will pay a heavy price.

The family will survive. Women's lib, gay lib, sado-masochism, trial marriages, co-ed dorms, situational ethics, and cultural relativism will not survive, except in their underground, culturally impotent forms. The family is a viable institution; like all viable structures, it will not persist completely oblivious to changes, both external and internal. But its familiar outline will persist: for this will a man leave his parents and cleave unto his wife. Not his brother's wife, his father's wife, his aunt, daughter, neighbor's wife, neighbor, or his Great Dane, but to his wife. □

first explicit condemnation of homosexuality, that occasion was not the last of either. The town itself, however, gave its name to the generic term used in the West to describe most forms of homosexual activity, and some types of other sex activity: sodomy.

When we reflect on the tolerance granted to sexual heterodoxy in many eastern lands—among the Arabs, the ancient Chinese, the medieval Japanese, and others — we recognize that it is primarily in western societies that homosexuality is considered a major problem.

God in His wisdom added other warnings to the rather plain lesson in Genesis. In Leviticus 18:22-23, for instance, He said: "You shall not lie with a man as with a woman; it is an abomination. If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death, their blood is upon them." Judges 1:22-30 has a similar message. I Kings 22:46 tells how Jehosaphat took the rest of the Sodomites out of the land; II Kings 23:7 again talks of the Sodomites. Romans 1:27 teaches that God punished men who left "the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another." Paul's epistle to the Corinthians (I, 6:9) says: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind. . . ." Paul's epistle to Timothy (1:10) refers to "them that defile themselves with mankind. . . ."

God says nothing about female homosexuality. Woman is thought fit to be offered to Lot's neighbors, but unsuited

to be considered in this regard; so says the Bible by omission and implication. How very much like the God of the Bible was Queen Victoria, who, when shown an anti-homosexuality bill prepared in Parliament containing a provision mentioning lesbians, refused to believe that such people existed. And so, like many other Christian nations, Britain emulated the Bible and proscribed only male homosexuality.

The Roman Catholic Church until the late Middle Ages opposed homosexuality not only (or even primarily) because it was abnormal or unnatural, but also because it satisfied carnal lust and yielded bodily pleasure. The Church fathers condemned sexual pleasure, glorifying the ascetic ideal derived from Platonism, which had crept into Christianity via Saint Paul. They glorified the activities of those mountain and desert hermits such as Saint Simon Stylites, who utterly refused to see any woman, even his pleading, wailing mother. Simon was a hero, not incidentally because he avoided all sex.

"'Tis better to marry than to burn," said Paul, who thought remaining pure was even better. Pursuit of the ascetic ideal, which resulted in misogyny, might conceivably have led to an acceptance of homosexuality as a convenient, if unworthy, alternative — but it did not. By the tenth century, woman's subjection as a chattel-slave was virtually complete; and even when the notions of courtly, chivalric love took their place in western Christianity, it was not a breakthrough for women, who found their pedestals rather cold and not very much fun, or for homosexuals, who were still anathema.

The European Middle Ages were in many ways far less grim than the designation "Dark Ages" would have us believe, but the standard picture of those years as unenlightened derives at least partly from fact. As a symbol of darkness, the concept of witchcraft, and as a phenomenon, the Inquisition, give adequate testimony to that picture. Witches were supposed to have a characteristic passion for carnality, that is, for sex not aiming at procreation but at pleasure. The Devil, with whom witches satisfied their cravings by rather torrid copulation, was thought to have a forked penis for penetration at once vaginally and anally.

During the centuries of witch-hunting, the Church agglutinated the two notions of religious deviance and sexual offense; heresy and homosexuality became one and the same. During the Middle Ages, writes Edward Westermarck in his *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideal*, "heretics were accused of unnatural vice (homosexuality) as a matter of course . . . In medieval laws sodomy was also repeatedly mentioned together with heresy, and the punishment was the same for both." In thirteenth-century Spain, the penalty for homosexuality was castration and execution by stoning. In 1479, Ferdinand and Isabella, those noted humanitarian rulers of Castile and Aragon, the patrons of Columbus and the expellers of the Jews from Spain, changed that to "burning alive and confiscation." Earlier, Pope Nicholas V had empowered the Inquisition to deal with

homosexuality and in 1451 it was made the subject of a special inquest. Twelve homosexuals were burnt in that year alone. Thus, the Spanish Inquisition found the time and energy to burn homosexuals as well as religious heretics.

By 1640, homosexuals in Portugal were by statute treated like heretics: their punishment was "relaxation," (burning) or "scourging" (flogging), and the galleys. As late as 1723, a homosexual in Lisbon was scourged and sentenced to ten years as a galley slave. In Valencia, homosexuals were regularly given up to the flames, although homosexual priests, oddly enough, were treated more leniently than laymen. In Spain from 1780 to 1820, one hundred homosexuals came before the Valencia Tribunal.

English-speaking nations also neatly connected heresy and homosexuality through a single word used for both: buggery. The word is derived from the medieval Latin *Bugarus* and *Bulgarus*, meaning a Bulgarian, because the Bulgarians were considered religiously heretical. To be stigmatized as a heretic or bugger in fourteenth-century England was to be cast out of society. The sin of heresy eclipsed all contradictory, personal characteristics, just as the teachings of God and the Church eclipsed all contradictory empirical observations. To be a heretic meant to worship the devil; to be a witch meant to sleep with the devil; and to be a bugger meant — well, the inference is clear.

The case is often made for active homosexuality among the ancients. But the argument from history is tricky, and no clear-cut conclusions can easily be drawn. Evidently, homosexual feelings were considered acceptable and apparently, the Greeks and Romans did practice homosexuality to some degree. But the laws were often harsh, homosexual acts often specifically proscribed. As we all know, the gap between law and practice is frequently wide. Herodotus (I, 135) tells us that "the Persians, taught by the Greeks, learned to sleep with boys." Atheneus (XIII, 81) says: "Sophocles loved boys, as Euripides loved women." Plutarch writes in the *Life of Lycurgus*: "Their lovers and favorers, too, had a share in the young boy's honor or disgrace. One was fined by the magistrates because the lad he loved cried out effeminately as he was fighting." It still remains, however, a matter of academic controversy as to just how much homosexuality was tolerated in Greece and Rome, although the record is less ambiguous for various times and places in the East.

Make of all this what we will; we cannot accurately determine much about anti-homosexuality by studying the ancients. The Judeo-Christian experiences offer much more in the way of solid evidence. The Bible explicitly condemned homosexuality; the Jews condemned it in practice; the Christians followed the Jews. I am unqualified to make *ex cathedra* pronouncements about the underlying causes for anti-homosexual attitudes. But I would hazard a guess and suggest, with the libertarian Theodore Schroeder (1864-1953), that Judeo-Christian sex-suppression may result from un-

resolved sexual cravings, and that erotic hallucinations which produce fear and shame and modesty are historically most often named by rigorous suppression of eroticism. According to this hypothesis, the results of such sex-suppression have been the Churchmen's celibacy, the traditional prohibitions against birth control (which enables people to enjoy sex without procreating), and the medieval hysteria about sexual unorthodoxy, among others.

The medieval attitude, which, as Thomas Szasz points out in *The Manufacture of Madness*, made homosexuality a twin of witchcraft, lasted up to the twentieth century in western countries. As short a time ago as 1895, Oscar Wilde was ruined. Wilde's *De Profundis*, an extended love letter to his "Bosie," Lord Alfred Douglass, shows how the most civilized western nation, traditionally most tolerant of dissenters, dealt with the unfortunate pederast Wilde. We might also look into the varied career of the late Senator Joseph McCarthy, who, among his unfortunate activities, traded on the public fear of sexual deviation by hinting at links between queerness and Redness. Since the common feeling as late as the 1950s in this country was that homo-

Great American Series

... the President gets a lot of hot potatoes from every direction... and a man who can't handle them has no business in that job. That makes me think of a saying that I used to hear from my old friend and colleague on the Jackson County Court. He said, "Harry, if you can't stand the heat you better get out of the kitchen." I'll say that is absolutely true.

Harry S. Truman

sexuals were totally wicked, the association of sexual and political deviation came easily.

And it works in reverse. If Communists are the modern secular incarnations of the Devil, then they too are without redeeming features; they too must be completely bad; they must be homosexuals. Furthermore, it works from still another side, the Communist side. In Red nations today, the two most heinous crimes, punished with almost equal ferocity, are political deviation and homosexuality.

II

Nothing gets closer to the heart of American society's problem of accommodating tradition to radical innovation, and nothing unnerves Middle America more—or more thoroughly stimulates the imagination of the so-called New Left—than things sexual. Those in the "middle" can grin and bear a Black Power movement, or put up with an Indian seizure of Alcatraz, or even contemplate the consequences of eighteen-year-olds voting. But an assault on traditional, sexual values is intolerable. The championing of Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation

by leftists is but a manifestation of their own judgment that many of the sexual aspects of our culture are in need of re-evaluation, that precisely such an evaluation will be violently resisted by non-leftists, and that therefore there is much political capital to be gained by exploiting such movements.

Most Americans have only so much compassion and only so much ability to understand those perceived to be radically different. Not enough, for instance, to seriously accept the homosexuals' demands for complete equality — not only under law, but in attitudes as well. The Left, alone among Americans as a sociopolitical "type," has shown that an improved attitude toward homosexuals is possible for non-gays. To my knowledge, the Socialist Workers' party is the only American non-homosexual political group to declare its sympathy with the goals of Gay Liberation. Of course, some on the Left are like those mentioned in Merle Miller's famous *New York Times Magazine* article in 1970, those for whom a "faggot is that homosexual gentleman who's just left the room." Nevertheless, the major stumbling-blocks to homosexual liberation come not from the Left, but from conservatives and liberals.

In fact, the rejection of homosexuals is currently expressed through a set of twin attitudes: from the conservatives, hostility; and from the liberals, condescending "tolerance."

Vehement essays in the magazines, pamphlets, and newsletters of the extreme Right, of course, reflect the most uncompromising and relentlessly antagonistic attitudes toward the "morally degenerate" homosexuals. However, these opinions represent a mentality alien to responsible conservatism. Such material is a Left-liberal caricature of the Right and those on the responsible Right disdain it.

More disturbing are the articles or asides which touch on sex matters from this point of view in the better conservative journals. I recollect, as an instance, an article a few years ago by Will Herberg in the most respected popular conservative journal, *National Review*; though *National Review* did publish early in 1972, with its great credit, a quite humane article on a homosexual lounge at Columbia University by the young novelist, D. Keith Mano. Unfortunately, the article by Dr. Herberg speaks, I believe, more for the conservative position today than does Mr. Mano's.

Briefly stated, Dr. Herberg's "Case for Heterosexuality" was this: 1) "Homosexuality (is) a perversion in the individual... and a source of corruption in society." 2) The Bible condemns homosexuality as "aberrant," instructing Dr. Herberg that if a man is "homosexual, he is deviant, he is 'sick,' he is pathological." 3) "Natural Law" proclaims the family to be the "basic cell of society" and heterosexuality the "normative structure of being." 4) History shows that the Greeks did not approve of it. 5) Freud, "the most telling witness," called homosexuality a "perversion." 6) Although the author "does not want to heap abuse upon the homosexual, who is often more to be pitied than blamed, or

to reproach him for his aberrancy," he does just that, lapsing into the *ad personam* mode: "pathological, deviant, sickness, sin, vice, perversion" are words he employs while not heaping abuse. 7) The author wants no criminal sanctions against adult homosexual acts, but he lures us into the shadowy world of homosexual seducers of minors, for whom he craves punishment. 8) Homosexuality must "constitute an impediment to certain kinds of employment," because homosexuals are "undesirable" in certain fields. 9) His scorn is reserved for the "homosexual who flaunts his perversion and even makes it into a badge of distinction." To deserve Dr. Herberg's "sympathy and help," the homosexual must "recognize his own abnormality as a sickness, albeit incurable" (sic).

The other approach, condescending tolerance, differs specifically from Herberg's in stressing the idea of "sickness" almost to the exclusion of other aspects. Once considered the most heinous of crimes, homosexuality, as Dr. Szasz imaginatively points out, is now considered a form of mental illness by American psychiatric opinion, which is the brainchild of the liberal mentality. I exempt from that generalization Sigmund Freud and some of his followers.

Freud referred to the "unhonored title of perversion," not "unhonorable," meaning perhaps that he doubted the value judgment of those who despised homosexuality. In his famous "Letter to an American Mother" (April, 1935), Freud noted that "homosexuality is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as an illness. . . . It is a great injustice to persecute homosexuality and a crime and cruelty too." Freud's most explicit remark on homosexuality is reported in Joseph Wortis' book, *Fragments of an Analysis with Freud*: "No psychoanalyst has ever claimed," Freud is quoted as saying, "that homosexuals cannot be perfectly decent people. Psychoanalysis does not undertake to judge people in any case. I don't understand. . . how you can concern yourself with such purely conventional problems, what is a neurosis and what is not a neurosis, what is pathological or not pathological — all mere words — fights about words."

Freud's view has not predominated in American psychiatric circles, however; here, the dominant view is that homosexuality is a disease to be treated and cured. For instance, among the most knowledgeable and humane of liberal psychologists was Robert Lindner, who wrote in *Must You Conform?*: "Homosexuality is a form of rebellion against society (which Lindner in other areas heartily approved, calling it "creative protest, productive revolt") which can be treated and should be treated and hence eradicated." Dr. Lindner saw the sex-repression of contemporary American society as the fruit of centuries of such repression, and he recognized that "our society's attitude toward sex is a travesty on human nature; inhibiting and repressing all forms of natural sexual appetites." But homosexuality, the late Dr. Lindner told us accurately, is widely detested, not

a happy part of our culture; so it must be considered a disease and eradicated accordingly.

Long ago, Dante's *Divine Comedy* placed inverts in the most scorching part of Hell. And Andre Gide, in *Corydon* (1911), reminded us that homosexuals have often been victims, but few have been martyrs, because most recant under fire. Then Albert Ellis, one of the most fashionable of all psychoanalysts practicing today, takes a leaf from Dante and confirms Gide by writing in his *American Sexual Tragedy* that there is nothing wrong with homosexuality as long as it is not exclusive homosexuality. "It is clear that an exclusive homosexual is neurotically afraid of heterosexuality, or is fearfully fixated on a homosexual level of behavior, or is obsessed with the idea of homosexuality, or is compulsively attached to homosexual activity, or is otherwise neurotically (or perhaps psychotically) homosexual." In other words, one may like it, but to be stuck on it is "abnormal or deviant." He does say the same thing about "exclusive heterosexu-



ality" and reminds us of the inanity of statutory prohibitions against sodomy. And he tells us with considerable feeling that, when solicited by other males, many men will physically beat their homosexual petitioners because "the assailants are...unwilling to face, and so emotionally disturbed by, their own underlying homosexual tendencies." Ellis' insistence on defining "sick" as exclusivity and "healthy" as bi-sexuality might give us pause.

Fundamentally, the modern psychiatric therapist confuses the social role of "disease" and the medical definition of the word. Here again, Dr. Szasz is a most helpful guide to understanding. It is the psychiatrist's purpose in life to practice therapy, to correct, to treat. And so homosexuality becomes a "mental disease," the new twin of witchcraft (in Schroeder's term), and no more real than witchcraft because both exist in the mind of the believer and not in the object of study. The overriding tendency of modern psychiatry, its constant critic Szasz shows, is to brand as sick that which is

merely unconventional. Thus, the question of whether or not homosexuality is an illness is in part a pseudo-problem. Clearly it is not a disease like diabetes—diagnosable, with visible physical symptoms, and treatable. And just as clearly it is not a "mental illness," in the sense in which we should use the term. It is, in relation to what is considered normal, simply a "deviation."

To be stigmatized as a heretic or bugger in the fourteenth century was to be cast out of society. At present, to be so stigmatized is to be thrown out of society and, were it up to those doing the name-calling, into the clutches of the \$50-an-hour headshrinker. Homosexuals are a group of medically stigmatized and socially disparaged individuals; to call them mentally ill is to hide that fact, and to give people an opportunity for smug, condescending tolerance.

As Dr. Szasz writes: "So long as man can denounce each other as mentally sick (homosexual, addicted, insane, and so fourth)—so that the madman can always be considered the Other, never the Self—mental illness will remain an easily exploitable concept, and Coercive Psychiatry a flourishing institution." In legal courts today, instead of sentencing a homosexual to prison, a humane, liberal judge will often let the homosexual go, on condition that he seek psychiatric "help."

One might consult Dr. Karl Menninger's *The Vital Balance* in addition to Szasz's book. Menninger, widely recognized as the most liberal and progressive modern psychiatrist, sees homosexuality as a symptom of illness which *must* be treated. A homosexual who fails to realize that he is "sick," writes Dr. Menninger, is only "rationalizing." In his "Introduction to The Wolfenden Report," Dr. Menninger even writes that "prostitution and homosexuality rank high in the kingdom of evils." Of this, "there is no question."

In sum, psychiatric opinion about homosexuals is not a strictly scientific proposition, but a social prejudice masquerading as medicine. It is as if homosexuality were equivalent to measles, and measles the same as leprosy, and leprosy identical to murder. Certainly there are homosexuals who think they are sick. And it is their right, perhaps their obligation to themselves, to see a psychiatrist if they believe they are sick. But most homosexuals do not think that, though our liberals would have us believe it is so because the homosexuals cannot recognize their own illness. It reminds me of Dr. Benjamin Rush, the father of American psychiatry. Jefferson's friend Rush felt that Negroes were suffering from congenital leprosy, and with time, treatment, and luck, they would get back to their "natural whiteness." How little things change among psychiatrists. And how little things change in the minds of authoritarians: The National Socialists had their final solution to the Jewish Problem—the ovens; the modern totalitarians of psychiatry have their final solution to the homosexual matter:—enforced therapy.

As Szasz insists, the homosexual is the model psychiatric scapegoat. Abby Mann exaggerates, but nevertheless makes a

telling point: "It's easier to be accepted by our society as a murderer than as a homosexual." Our society dreads homosexuality with the same intensity as the theological societies of old dreaded heresy and witchcraft. Homosexuality is considered a crime by many moderns and a disease by most. There is scant chance of escape. The laws of all but five states prohibit homosexual behavior in much the same way as the laws of fifteenth-century Spain prohibited the practice of the Jewish faith. The results are analogous: in Spain, Jews practiced secretly (the Judaizers) and kept their faith; in America, homosexuals "practice" homosexuality, the laws notwithstanding.

Even the Negro is better off. Victimized in the past, and sometimes now, the Negro is today recognized as a fully human being with an unconditional "right" to his brown skin. The homosexual, however, has neither this status nor the right to his sexual proclivities and practices; he is a defective object, a man "afflicted" with a disease to which, as Szasz puts it, he has no more right than the heterosexual has to being cursed with the Black Plague. He, like the Jew in anti-Semitic medieval Europe, is denied recognition as a human being in his authentic identity and selfhood—and for the same reasons: each undermines the beliefs and values of the dominant group.

III

The homosexual is blackmail-prone, hence "unsuitable" for certain positions. Furthermore, he is in hot water if he tries to emigrate to America. By virtue of a 1967 decision of the Warren Supreme Court, a homosexual applicant for citizenship may be excluded by the government because, as the Court reminds us in citing the Chinese Exclusion Case of 1889, the "Congress has plenary power to make rules for the admission of aliens and to exclude those who possess those characteristics which Congress has forbidden." Previously, the Court and Congress expressed their biases against colored peoples, anarchists, and the like. Yesterday's coolie immigrant is today's homosexual seeking entry into this country. In the specific case under discussion, that of Michael Clive Boutilier in 1967, psychiatric evidence was required in court, and the psychiatrist felt no duty to protect his subject's privacy. The state's interest took precedence. So Mr. Boutilier, a Canadian resident in the United States from 1955, who applied for citizenship in 1963, and whose record showed a sodomy arrest in New York in 1959, was banished.

The Boutilier precedent stands at the high court level although various recent lower court rulings are reopening the matter. A person acknowledged as a homosexual, in any case, can at present be denied citizenship. Were Congress to pass a statute barring from immigration persons afflicted with the mental disease called "Witchcraft," we would be vastly amused. But the mental disease called homosexuality, the mental disease created by liberal psychiatry, is today's witchcraft, and the flames have been replaced by compulsory servitude on the couch or in a mental hospital. God tested

the men of Sodom and sent two angels in the form of attractive men. And Uncle Sam tests his people too, in similar ways. God, knowing nothing of modern psychiatry, smote the Sodomites. Uncle Sam is a lay analyst, however, and so his punishment is liberal and humane: compulsory submission to treatment.

When New York's Governor Nelson Rockefeller advocated the enforced mental hospitalization of drug addicts, and both former Justice Abe Fortas and Justice William O. Douglas suggested the same, might we not worry about the day when some zealous liberal will suggest the same for homosexuals? So long as the concept of the "psychopathic personality" is afloat—so long as the 1189 psychiatrists who responded to Ralph Ginzburg's questionnaire in 1964, for his *Fact* magazine, and, without so much as five-minutes' consultation with the Senator from Arizona, branded Barry Goldwater a psychopathic personality, are considered other than unethical quacks—just so long will the liberal mentality have at its disposal a tool to use against their sick homosexual brethren.

To say, as some do, that many homosexuals have risen high in science, government, the arts, live good lives, and so forth, is irrelevant. Spanish Jews were expelled in 1492 though they had risen high in Spain. German Jews were exterminated in the hundreds of thousands, although they were a vital part of the German people. Negroes have lived blameless lives—and been lynched. It is fruitless to observe that the homosexual population is by and large decent, even beneficial to America, so long as the device of the shrill cry "Mental Illness!" is still in working order. Scapegoats do not suffer because they have committed evil acts, but because they are seen as "enemies within." As Sartre put it: "The homosexual must remain an object, a flower, an insect, and inhabitant of ancient Sodom or the planet Uranus, an automaton that hops about in the limelight, anything you like except my fellow-man, except my image, except myself. For a choice must be made: If every man is all of man, this black sheep must be only a pebble or must be me."

Dr. Szasz writes: "It is nothing less than obscene to talk about the homosexual as a sick person whom we are trying to help so long as, by treating him as a defective thing, we demonstrate through our actions that what we want

him to be is useful, rather than annoying, an *object for us*, and that what we will not tolerate is his wanting to be an authentic *person for himself*." The brilliant psychoanalyst-sociologist Ernest van der Haag asserts: "Prohibition of homosexuality is not needed to protect society....I do not believe that homosexuality as such can or need be treated." The pain and sorrow many homosexuals endure is more a reflection of societal sexism, and the double-life that many gay people live out of fear of ostracism or punishment, than a function of "unnaturalness."

When our legislators and judges discriminate against homosexuals in the belief that they are applying the findings of modern liberal psychiatric science to the making of policy for the nation's welfare, they make a monstrous blunder. This is a kind of medical witch-hunting, doctors persecuting patients for their alleged medical heresies. Quotes Szasz: "Thus has the physician replaced the priest, and the patient the witch, in the drama of society's perpetual struggle to destroy precisely those human characteristics that, by differentiating men from their fellows, identify persons as individuals rather than as members of the herd."

IV

To argue as some conservatives do is to be needlessly harsh to a group hounded for millennia, and to "conserve" only the depressing and repressing legacies of our less happy past. To argue in the rhetoric of liberal psychiatry is equally grim, in fact more so, since the liberal argument is the dominant mode of expressing anti-homosexuality.

Even the manifestations of our currently most fashionable cultural form, the film, contribute to this morass. The homosexual is served ill by such travesties as *The Boys in the Band* and *Some of My Best Friends Are...*, which may be a homosexual's nightmare, and, for the liberal pursuer of the "in" and the "kicky," a dream come true; liberals can find so much to sympathize with. A way of ridiculing the homosexual, such condescension is also a way to rake in the bread, to profit indirectly from homosexuality's unpleasant situation in society. In his movie *The Damned*, Visconti equates Nazism with Sexual Decadence, arm-chair Krafft-Ebing, nothing more. Many other films suggest the same thing.



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And we find similar approaches in other media. Examples are many, but one might do. In *Esquire* magazine, Malcolm Muggeridge, that journal's urbane, witty book reviewer, managed some time ago to rub Oscar Wilde's nose again in his mess. Wilde was described by Muggeridge, wholly gratuitously, as "this overweight, overblown, over-articulate sodomite," after which the article went further down-hill.

Those opposed to queer-baiting can take little comfort from the 1971 court ruling in Dallas that said Texas' sodomy statute is an unconstitutional invasion of privacy. The ruling left a loophole, which Dallas and Houston quickly filled, as will other cities, allowing the cities themselves to prohibit sodomy in public places, and to define "public place" so broadly that only the bedroom is out of bounds.

Nor, after looking at copies of the major homosexual journal, the Los Angeles *Advocate*, can one feel very sanguine about the manifestations of the so-called "new homosexuality." Despite its virtues, the *Advocate* confirms much of what anti-homosexual thinkers say, providing its own bludgeon with which queer-baiters can whonk homosexuals on the head. Gay Liberation, as the *Advocate* pictures it, manifests here and there the whining, self-pitying, special-pleading of inferior creatures begging to be thought equal, on the one hand, and, on the other, represents nothing so much as blatant, teasing, titillating cutesyness and sex come-ons, which will repel those who already think homosexuals are evil, and will evoke a chord of condescending sympathy from those who think homosexuals are sick.

Blatancy for blatancy's sake will lead to little but more repression and tension. If the American homosexual revolution succeeds, it must do so without rending the fabric of the dominant heterosexual society. It must get the aid of those conservatives who mean what they preach about liberty and individual freedom, about doing one's own thing. It must get the help of those liberals who talk endlessly about opening society, about bringing about conditions wherein true equality is possible. But it will not gain this support if it ties itself to ludicrous forms of outrageous behavior. Nor will it gain such support if it marries itself to a host of destructive movements such as the residue of the Bomber Left.

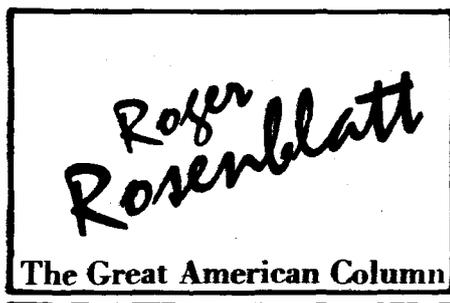
Gide wrote in *Corydon*: "In homosexuality as in heterosexuality, there are all shades and degrees, from Platonic love to lust, from self-denial to sadism, from healthy joy to moroseness, from natural development to all the refinements of vice." And if Gide's words represent special pleading from an acknowledged homosexual, so be it. The conservative must speak and act for himself, the radical for himself, the Chicano and Negro and Indian for himself, the woman for herself; so must the homosexual, aided by those heterosexuals of all persuasions politically, who do not feel threatened by the subject and can see the injustice of what is yet done to gays in our country. Honest, non-aggressive pride in being what one is has usually been considered admirable, in theory at least, by

American conservatives and liberals alike; and it is part of the rhetoric of the radical Left, perhaps the most honest part of that rhetoric.

Many questions remain as to homosexuality's "cause"; these I cannot deal with for lack of special training. And what of the law? Should the laws in a decent society interfere with private, consensual sexual activities in private by mature individuals? Does society gain or lose more when such sex laws as do exist in most of our fifty states are relaxed? Where do the individual's rights and those of society conflict, and how do we resolve those conflicts?

By writing this article in *The Alternative*, with its particular readership of largely younger people—conservatives,

liberals, libertarians—I have hoped to bring some measure of understanding to an abysmal historical and contemporary situation, and to encourage some discussion and perhaps some degree of improvement in the attitudes of my fellows. I offer here no answers to many pertinent questions, having intended primarily to show how harshly homosexuals have been treated in western history and how awkward is their lot today. The question of what to do now is hardly irrelevant to those who are concerned with the enhancement of individual liberties within the context of a viable, cohesive society. That question may perhaps be peripheral just now, given the more pressing plights of our society at present. Peripheral, possibly, but certainly not lacking in importance. □



THE NEWS FROM AMERICA

The grandmother of a friend of mine assures him that "today's newspaper wraps tonight's fish." Her maxim is meant as a kind of consolation, but it also goes to the essential transiency of the news, which is a curious thing. The news, after all, is made up of our very important, complicated, and exciting lives. One would think that the bulletins and extras which are regularly blared at us would be more memorable, that the momentous events which we scan on paper and television would stick in us deeply as we go about our business, would reverberate in our sleep, and shape our conduct. The truth is, however, that only by the dogged repetition of journalists are news items salvaged from instant oblivion. Not only don't we remember what happens in the news from day to day; we don't care.

The structural organization of news, of television news and newspaper news, has a great deal to do with this. That organization has been consistent over the years, and simple, and depends on a collection of items of information which in aggregate are supposed to effect a certain dramatic balance. We are always given the day's Big Story—Red China Bombs Mars — juxtaposed to the day's Little Story, how members of the 4-H Club of Ames, Iowa, made their own cow out of Sardo and linoleum. A student riot in a university is counterbalanced by the discovery of a new enzyme. There is the Great Name in the News, and the story of John Q. Public; the opulent funeral of an eastern prince set against a segment on coupling pandas. If we are shown or told about a kidnapping, we also learn of an act of

bravery. If we see the damage done by an oil slick, we will also be informed of some vast community ecology project. Age versus Youth, City v. Country, Love v. Hate, Beauty v. Ugliness. Finally, when we are made sufficiently unhappy by the bulk of the news, we will be given the Lighthearted or Heart-warming Anecdote of the day, which is supposed to correspond to comic relief. On television lately, the newsmen supply this item themselves by whooping it up in desperate hilarity at the close of each program.

What newspapers and television are imitating in assembling these collections is the general form of modern American literature, particularly the American novel, since the 1930s. By the mid-1930s Eliot, Dos Passos, and others had established fragmentation, that is, the breaking of general experience into dissociated parts, as a respectable method for apprehending reality. In many ways our art and culture have yet to stray from that establishment, and for good reason. There is an impulse in all things American to speak for all things American, and fragmentation, as it allows simultaneously for a depiction of enormous diversity and implicit cohesion, has been grabbed up as an essential means of American expression. So, our newsmen have grabbed it up. Every morning, every evening, they paste the country together in one or another makeshift mosaic, and sing America, in parts.

But there is another and more specific cultural phenomenon on which the news has been modeled as well. It is the phenomenon of the photograph as intellectual or moral statement, an idea