

Operation Gender Blur

Book review

Sunfrog (Andy “Sunfrog” Smith)

1991

a review of

Bisexuality: A Reader and Sourcebook edited by Thomas Geller (available for \$10.95 from Times Change Press c/o Publishers Services, Box 2510, Novato, CA 94948 or the FE Bookstore)

We are sometimes afraid of the risks which must be taken when we integrate discussions of sexuality and gender into the life of our activist community. It's rather dangerous to try to define a “politically correct” sexuality for anti-authoritarians. The gay vs. straight or monogamy vs. non-monogamy discussions (and a huge list of other related discussions) should be most familiar to those of us whose lives, identified with communities of resistance, transcend (or defy) a purely political involvement. Discussions of gender and sexuality do have serious implications for our politics (or anti-politics).

The rampant homophobia and anti-gay violence of American society has a frightening way of spilling over into our communities. The incidents of both sexist and heterosexual harassment that several individuals experienced at the 1989 San Francisco Anarchy-Fest is one sad example. Just as we fight against the ruling class hierarchies of corporations and the state, or the species class hierarchies of polluters and vivisectioners, we must fight the sex class hierarchies of traditional patriarchal gender relations.

As Paul Toupe wrote in a review (published in the November 1990 *Love & Rage*) “If we are truly serious about a revolution, we will join the sissies and the fags in a revolt against the constricting definition of a male sex-class.”

In this context, the anthology *Bisexuality: a Reader and Sourcebook*, compiled by a self-acknowledged bisexual, comes as an exciting breakthrough.

This collection celebrates and affirms the sexuality of thousands of people—a sexuality which seldom receives positive recognition, if any recognition at all. As one of the contributors, Melinda Witt-stock writes: “To many, real bisexuality doesn't even exist. Either bisexuals are seen to be going through a ‘phase’ of experimentation before heading back to straightville, or they're just in the process of coming out as lesbians or gay men. At the same time, bisexuals often experience the same prejudice and discrimination from the straight community as do lesbians and gay men, although many lesbians and gay men are quick to label bisexuals as privileged—they can cling to the legitimacy of a straight relationship while being able to enjoy the benefits of loving members of the same sex. Bisexuals are not fully accepted by either community, nor do they have a community or identity of their own.” This book is about creating that community and identity.

Bisexuality traverses a wide spectrum of writing styles from the creatively playful to the highly academic, examining personal, political and scientific aspects of the issue which is perhaps best described as “trying to live a both/and life in an either/or world.” This book is written for bisexuals rather than about them and leaves the reader with an open-ended understanding rather than a strict definition of what bisexuality is. The diversity amongst bisexuals is emphasized throughout and the notion that bisexuality means sleeping with both sexes equally is dispelled. Sexual styles vary from homosexual to heterosexual, from monogamous to non-monogamous, from celibate to promiscuous, to simply self-sexual.

Bisexuality respects and seeks an alliance with people of a gay or lesbian identity. An excellent article on “biphobia” by Amanda Udis-Kessler deals with the problem of homosexuals viewing bisexuals as “fence-sitters, traitors, cop-outs,” etc. The author points out that bisexuals share fully in the struggle for lesbian and gay liberation and against AIDS, “and not just ‘half the time.’ We don’t get half-gay bashed when we walk down the street with our same sex lovers...”

This book should certainly be read by straight people who have only considered same sex intimacy and by lesbians and gays who have only considered relationships with people of the opposite sex. This sourcebook furnishes seeds of empowerment for what may be today’s deepest dreams and most secret fantasies.

As we work for a planetary community free from all domination and control of the human and earthly body, we must insist on the end to gender codes.

Bisexuality is a significant contribution to a vision which should be linked to our daily acts of desire for anarchy and ecstasy.

NOTE: The following essay was inspired in part by *Bisexuality* and especially by the piece, “The Transgender Dance” written by Andy Plumb.

“I’ve been a bisexual-transvestite, a quadisexual, a male lesbian, an androgyne, a ‘Don’t label me’/post modern sexual being, and though I wonder about the connotations of ‘polymorphous perversity, it may be as apt a description of my sexuality as I’ve ever taken on...ironically, I oftentimes feel more powerful when I am impersonating a woman than when I impersonate a man. I do not believe I am feasting on negative images of women (which some feminists have said of transvestism), but that I am working/playing towards the end of gender fascism. It all really comes down to: who should be the boss—you or your gender?”—Andy Plumb

The desire now absolute, a visceral need for the vasectomy of male (my) vision. A new manner of speaking for the male tongue that de-phallicizes content and form. (Fear of castration?) Fear eliminated. (Fear of the feminine within?) Mother. Woman in me. Biology no longer attached to a strict constructed consciousness inscribed by our fathers. Patri-text placed on the pyre. One by one the faeries come out to dance. Transgender tribe take me. Androgyny in butterfly wings.

Apply semantic spermicide to the speech of the Sacred Father. His-story perpetrates lies. Non-neuter Newspeak. Textual rape steeped in double standards and semiotic strangulation. Invalidate the arbiters of validity.

Re-integrate the child. Recall the first times(s). Adorning frail flesh. Slipping into pantyhose. Sliding into sheer red slip. Smearing purple lipstick. Dress up corner drag queen avoiding trucks, soldiers and sandbox wars. Sharing with other boys both peeing and masturbating. Marveling at my friend not circumcised. Admiring the different shape and size of my playmate’s erect penis. A fascination, not the battle-of-size that would cause us to build battleships later in life.

I am a young boy amongst other children drenched in a collective romp in a massive community swimming pool. It is the end of class, lesson has given way to play. (This is the end of (gender) class, oppression has given way to play.) Repeatedly I leap upon the fully grown (male) swim instructor. Completely developed flesh fascinates and allures me.

I jump upon his back and try to dunk him. His body a continent too large to be submerged. I still climb on him and strain to pull him down. I rub my body against his. I feel an erection. I leap and rub again and again. I am too young to know or care that gaining such pleasure from a man might mean I am a faggot and thus incapable of ever becoming a “real man.”

Burn the script. Refuse to read/write in a straightjacket. Father, if you force me to militarize my sex, make my sex a rifle or a missile, I will destroy it. Destroy the misogynist machine. (Should I tell him I want a surgical sex change to become a lesbian?) They will tease you and ask, “How’s your daughter?” but don’t get your scissors near my hair. I don’t want to look like a boy.

Write against the phallacy. To dephallicize does not mean to de-libidinize. It is flaunted illusion that eroticism must fulfill a phallic destiny.

Enter the axis of a new anti-politics.

WHAT KIND OF TRANSEXUAL BRILLIANCE CAN BE CARVED AFTER THE CORPSE OF CODES?

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