

The Politics of Sexuality



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CDM Prose

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Biographical Footnote

I was always different from others – more sensitive, careful, thoughtful, kind, graceful, persevering, and, above all, truthful. I don't deny that fate marked me out for a unique destiny, the fruit of the tree of my various gifts and inclinations. I have not so much as kissed a girl in over thirteen years, not since 1971, when I briefly 'went out' with a thin brown-haired girl by name of Christine. More accurately, for three weeks, and we didn't 'go out' except in the sense of paying twice-weekly visits to each-other's address. She lived with her parents, I remember, in a large detached suburban house with a grand piano in the front hall. I would play the piano in those days and spent more time sitting in front of hers than with her. Don't get me wrong; she didn't throw me out or give me up because of this. But it inevitably saddened her.

So too, I suspect, did my guitar-playing, when she came to visit my humble bedsitter and discovered that I had more interest in music, my own included, than sex. I had an acoustic guitar in those days, an old classical thing which someone sold me cheaply when I was still at school and which I carried over into my clerking adulthood (youth really, but never mind), despite its manifest decrepitude. Nevertheless, I would knock a classical piece or two out of it, obscure Spanish masters for the most part, and Christine would be obliged to listen to that, together with whatever folk songs I had recently picked-up from a Bob Dylan or a Neil Young album. She listened to records too of course, mainly my own, and watched a little television with me. But the most I ever gave her sexually, apart from a few formal kisses, was a forefinger's worth of tentative vaginal probing. To be honest, I didn't really fancy her all that much, which was why I gave her up after three tepid, though highly musical, weeks. To put it frankly, she was insufficiently attractive to me. I needed someone beautiful, not just facially but bodily so as well, but, as usual, beauty was a rare commodity, particularly in Sutton!

However, there wasn't much to be found when I shortly moved into a friend's house in another part of urban Surrey and then subsequently moved

with him, his two younger brothers, sister, and parents, to a comparatively rural part of it, namely Merstham. I was even more of a loner there than I had been in Sutton, and gradually, encouraged by Christopher's avid collecting of men's magazines, I developed a taste for pornography, if only on the soft-core level. I still had it when I was obliged to move to north London, two years later, and I still have it today, after more than ten years' solitary living. Literature doesn't like the truth, but this isn't literature, nor is it a Milleresque 'gob of spit', etc. It is a kind of poetry. Therefore I can allow myself to speak or, rather, record it, if only for my own benefit. I am not a democrat, but a highly radical theocrat, perhaps the only one of my kind at present. Solitude has its drawbacks, but it also has its advantages, of which pornographic indulgence may be accounted among them. My own preference is still for the soft-core variety, but then a man of my imaginative scope requires suggestion rather than explicit exposure, and likes, besides, to have something interesting, though not necessarily pornographic, to read, like the kinds of articles one finds in the better men's magazines. I avidly read everything, or almost everything, on offer. When I first started buying such magazines I was only interested in the girls. Then, after I had sated my voyeuristic curiosity, I would throw the magazine away, as if it were something dirty and of no further interest, my reading material being confined, at that time, to books, and only to what I considered to be the most choice books too – usually classic novels which I bought in paperback.

Well, if that was my youth, then my adulthood is almost the reverse; for not only do I read virtually the entire contents of such men's magazines, but I retain them as well. So I have quite a collection developing and, needless to say, at the expense of books, which, in any case, I regularly borrow from the local library in the form of hardbacks, some of them rather expensive ones, too! Why, my last round of 'sublimated Vikingism', as I like to think of such periodic visits to the library, resulted in my gathering-in over £64 worth of books, one of the six permissible borrowings amounting to £21 alone! Not bad for a guy who can't afford to buy books any more. With a service like that, you can't be blamed for regarding the purchase of books as a habit for fools. (There I go again, speaking frankly, not liable to serve a publisher's best interests; never have, was always too much of an artist, a law unto myself!) A great advantage too, being required to return the books, not having to burden one's bookcase or whatever with additional weight. Most books are never re-read anyway, just clutter-up the place to

gather dust, mould, and insects. So much superfluous matter! Merely a custom, a bourgeois habit, to retain books, as if to prove one's literacy, show off one's culture, reinforce one's ego, or, worse still, justify one's expenditure! Not easy to dispose of a book which cost £8–10. Easier to get rid of a paperback, irrespective of the increases in price that have more than trebled the cost of classic paperbacks and classics in paperback during the past decade. I got rid of most of mine, at any rate, preferring to retain only my very favourite; though even *they* mean less than nothing to me, now that I have a budding collection of magazines and the freedom of the library.

From being an avid paperback-collector in my youth, I have become a despiser of paperbacks in my early adulthood, my own more mildewed and creased examples not excepted. One of these days I shall probably remove even those few remnants of my literary youth from the bookcase and fill up the space thus created with new magazines, which will surely by then be unable to repose on the one shelf now available to them for want of adequate space. I don't envisage any radical change in my circumstances, you see. Like the prospect of a different type of accommodation with more room for bookcases or whatever. I am used to single-room accommodation, with only limited space for books and things. That doesn't mean to say I like it. But unless I come into a small fortune, one way or another, I am bloody-well stuck with it! Not likely to become the author of a number-one best-seller, you see. Never went in for that kind of thing. Always too independent-minded and self-consciously 'the artist/thinker' to want ...