

Letters to Dean

Paul Rosenfels

Table of Contents

<u>Letters to Dean</u>	1
<u>Paul Rosenfels</u>	1
<u>A LETTER TO DEAN</u>	1
<u>A LETTER TO DEAN (No.2)</u>	12

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- [A LETTER TO DEAN](#)
- [A LETTER TO DEAN \(No.2\)](#)

A LETTER TO DEAN

A discussion of the nature of sex and celebration and an examination of the causes of homophobia in the gay community.

July 25, 1980

Dear Dean,

I prefer to record my insights into sexual and celebrative mechanisms in the form of a letter to you. I do not want to direct this material to a more general audience, aware as I am that it will be received as prohibitionistic and provocative by many gay persons. The understanding of sex and celebration is essential to the defining of what it is to be a homosexual. When homosexuality is seen exclusively in terms of sexual feelings and behavior, the real heart of the homosexual experience remains unrecognized. If homosexuality is defined as the ability to fall in love with someone of the same gender, bringing into focus the mated mechanism with its accompanying polarity, its courtship behavior, and its commitment to shared growth between the partners, the homosexual life style reveals itself to have a potentially powerful impact on the quality of life. Since many homosexuals find that this invitation to deepen and broaden their personalities brings an unwelcome challenge to their psychological resources, they prefer to retreat behind the image of a sexual life operating as a thing in itself, divorced from any serious influence on the rest of their psychic existence. Of all the homophobic influences at work in today's society, the one most difficult to expose is the one found in the gay community itself. It takes a stubborn position when homosexuality is identified as a pathway to genuine psychological independence. When the visible members of the gay community are invited to take responsibility for their own maturity, using their homosexuality to develop psychic assets of potential value to all mankind, they react as if their sexual and celebrative life were in danger, resisting any such approach as if it had inevitable prohibitionistic implications. The fact of the matter is that there is corrupt and perverse homosexual sex as well as healthy sex which promotes psychological maturity. In the same way, there is wild and mindless celebration as well as healthy celebration in gay relationships. In order to identify sex and celebration which is harmonious with psychological growth, the entire dynamics of the growth process must be understood.

2

There is nothing automatic and inevitable about psychological maturity in civilized human beings. The necessity for each individual to choose a course in life which is acceptable to both himself and others stands in vivid contrast to the life story of the lower animals who need only to follow their genetically determined drives to fulfill

their potential as living organisms. Since human beings find a tremendous variety in their style of adjustment to their fellow men, it is clear that their search for a healthy maturity must go through many stages of development. If the individual continues to grow throughout a lifetime, he must accept a permissive position toward the transitional stages in himself and others. Without this right to explore the consequences of his own choice of direction, he could not possibly continue to learn from his experiences. There is no place more important for this kind of permissiveness to operate than in the sexual and celebrative area. A man in process toward a future state of greater self-knowledge and self-control will accept constructive shame and guilt for the fact that he wants to be wiser and stronger than he is in certain situations, but he cannot accept arbitrary regulation of his sexual and celebrative life in the time and place he occupies in the present, even though he understands that there is something lacking in the way he handles these surpluses. Shame and guilt are out of place in this territory.

Permissiveness in sexual and celebrative matters has a genuine but limited validity. The limitation must be imposed by the individual himself, based on his determination not to allow his surplus life to undermine his ability to keep the pathways of psychological growth open. Healthy surpluses cannot be recognized until inner identity is firmly established. As self-knowledge and self-control extend their influence, the individual becomes increasingly independent in the shaping of his sexual and celebrative life. Permissiveness makes room for what is happening in the moment, but it does not alter the overall perception of the developmental goals of the total personality. By this means the individual does not damage the fullness of his participation in his surplus outlets. At the same time he retains the capacity to review and evaluate the consequences of surplus events as he moves forward into the further participation in his esthetic, adaptive, and creative life.

It is very important to a growing person to keep his warmth and pride reactions in a general form. The cohesive and experiential instincts can take many forms and directions. Sex and celebration have no such generality. Although they are surpluses which develop out of warmth and pride, they have a special and instinct guided all or none quality. Once sexual excitement and the celebrative state have been brought into being, there is a biological push behind them which is intolerant of obstructions. When these surpluses have established their presence in any given time and place, the personality has no interest in selecting alternative pathways of expression. If self-criticism is allowed to contaminate the surpluses, once they have been set in motion, a full access to sensuality and euphoria becomes impossible. Much of man's psychic life is subject to the monitoring influence of his perception of truth and right. If monitoring intrudes on sex and celebration it is like a guest at a sumptuous banquet who does nothing but find fault with the food. The way sex and celebration are evaluated is by a backward or forward look, using the mental health of the individual as a guide. One place where monitoring often works its undermining influence is to be found when individuals guide their sexual and celebrative life according to tyrannical social rules. When church and state mingle their functions in order to suppress individuality, the surpluses become a favorite target in their program to wipe out the capacity of the common man to think and act for himself. No matter how faithfully the individual performs according to pre-established patterns, he cannot escape from the loss of intensity and spontaneity which being an automaton in sex and celebration brings.

Man is capable of reversing the linkage of dominance to males, and submission to females, because this ability leads to a substantial and entirely new kind of psychological potential among civilized personalities, enriching their access to psychological growth. It is as if four genders exist instead of two. Submissive males and dominant females are capable of contributions that are unique. As dominant males and submissive females are set free from primitive domain mechanisms, their full potential for the pursuit of truth and right becomes accessible. Strong goal directed motivations make these changes possible. Where sex and celebration are concerned, however, man cannot tinker with nature's mechanisms without paying a price in loss of capacity to keep the surpluses in a harmonious place. A healthy surplus life needs an interaction between the dominant and submissive principles. The fact that dominance is not inevitably tied to the male gender, nor submission to the female gender, does not alter the primacy of the genetically controlled need for a polarized pattern in the sexual and celebrative area. Unfortunately for man's search for a natural, simple, and satisfying access to the surpluses, inner identity has had a precarious and often inadequate status in the long history of civilized man's struggle to reach mental health. As a result men lack the capacity to arrive at a model in the surplus area of their own making. Whenever they envision

the existence of such models, they usually equate them to externally imposed sanctions and prohibitions. Yet without self-knowledge and self-control in the surplus area, there is no way to keep sex and celebration in the pockets where they belong.

3

Since the dawn of civilization polarity has demonstrated its ability to deepen understanding and to extend responsibility. Specializations such as the priest and the warrior were early manifestations. As civilization progressed, philosophers and administrators emerged, and later scientists and engineers. Such specializations were not necessarily seen as rooted in the inner identity of the individual. Men became submissive or dominant when they sought to develop a particular talent or when adaptive pressures provided strong motivation for the pursuit of truth and right for particular ends. The living of a whole life as a submissive or dominant person was not seen as a human need, except perhaps in certain monastic or military situations. As a result, the civilized human personality never became the subject of a serious inquiry into truth and right. If overstimulation developed, bringing oppressive stress to the individual, he could gain at least temporary relief by shifting the polarity with which he faced the human scene. Without unremitting and lifelong submission or dominance, man's greatest area of the unknown and the chaotic, his own psychological nature, could not be brought into the scope of his search for scientific knowledge and objective mastery of an engineering type. Men must love their subject matter to find truth, and must accept the responsibilities of a power commitment to find the right. They can do this in reference to particular undertakings such as astronomy or bridge building without in any way involving the total scope of their human relationships. Men are gradually winning the struggle to eliminate magic and miracles from chosen undertakings which usually take form from their career activities, but their interpersonal relationships are still primitive in their surrender to magical and miraculous mechanisms.

The on again off again structure of interpersonal submission or dominance is well illustrated by the social life of many of the lower animals. The pecking order of birds creates a hierarchy of dominance toward some and submission toward others. The situation changes when mating establishes a fixed interaction between the pair. When men find a fixed submissive or dominant relationship with the life process itself, they are using psychic resources which are structured by the mated mechanism. Man is engaged in a long slow struggle to eliminate the pecking order from that part of his inner psychological life where character identity is to be found.

Without a reliable inner identity nature's architecture for sex and celebration cannot guide man's surplus life. When an interaction between the submissive and dominant principles is lacking, the situation is typically adolescent in its structure. With the onset of puberty, instinctually rooted surplus capacities come full fledged into the human scene. The individual becomes a biological adult without reference to his psychological maturity. Sexual and celebrative resources are just there, having required no invitation from his recognizable psychological needs. They create a further pressure toward self-development without providing any guidance. Adolescent sex and celebration are characterized by a mixing of submissive and dominant capacities in each individual in an alternating way. The adolescent use of the surpluses consigns them to a floating existence. It has a fraternal structure, where anyone who participates is identified in terms of his openness to the expression of these forces and his willingness to allow nothing else to matter for the time being. It is a short cut to sensuality and euphoria. It is sex speaking to sex, and celebration to celebration. The adolescent agreement to cut off surplus expression from the rest of the personality requires strong social support among those who choose to participate in the process. Sexual attractiveness is based on imprints which arise from the ability of individuals to idealize some isolated characteristic of the object, so that their mutual acceptance of sexual excitement carries a quality of inevitability. In celebrative phenomena, the euphoric energy echoes back and forth from one to another, and flourishes best in group situations. This reinforcement relies heavily on the shared release function of alcohol and drugs. Celebrative excesses are often regulated by the calendar, thus reducing their influence on the career life. They come out in the open in the party atmosphere, in Saturday night fever, or in the self-abandonment of various holiday activities, producing carnage on the highways, excessive spending of money, and outbreaks of violence. In the sexual area, cruising, sexually oriented conversation, and suggestive sexual displays give encouragement to

the emergence of promiscuous sexual activity. In such a world, men are intellectually impotent.

4

When polarity is well established, it begins to be possible to observe nature's mechanisms for the regulation of the surpluses. There is submissive sex and dominant sex, as well as submissive celebration and dominant celebration. The seasonal hormonal changes in the lower animals, but especially in the female, guarantees that the surpluses will not operate on a continuous basis. The surpluses are a cement which brings the partners together within a circumscribed domain, but the impregnation of the female would be useless if the surpluses were to continue to operate beyond this point. They must recede in order for a high level of warmth and pride to come into being, thus preparing the partners for the nurture and protection of the young. Civilized man has a continuing sexual and celebrative life, and he must learn to exercise it in such a way that it does not undermine the expansion of his warmth and pride capacities. Sexual and celebrative overflow is destructive of man's ability to build knowledge as a tool of love, and to develop skills as a means of making responsible power effective. The prohibition of the surpluses, on the other hand, results in a withering of man's goal structure, so that submission and dominance lose their self-generated drive to express themselves in the human scene. Without the surpluses, the personality cannot reinforce inner identity in an independent way. When individuals undertake to sustain a great deal of harmonious stress in their pursuit of human truth and right, sexuality becomes a reliable and indispensable ally in conferring inner security, through its ability to bring a guaranteed satisfaction in the form of intense biologically rooted pleasure which has no necessary relationship to the immediate and problem filled human environment. Those sanctimonious and smug individuals who never risk experiencing insecurity have no impelling reason to value the security giving function of sex. Celebration is an ally of equal importance to the individuals who risk entrapment in their search for an expanding world of experience. It confers a guaranteed source of biologically rooted liberation, unrelated to the human world of obstacles. Conventional individuals who are insulated from the unknown and the chaotic and therefore take no such risks, since they have never experienced a significant loss of freedom, not knowing what real freedom is, cannot value the access to the release from entrapment which the celebrative state confers.

Nature's surplus mechanisms can be readily observed in the sub-human species, and although there are variations depending on the inherited characteristics of particular species, the main outlines are not obscure. In the case of human beings, variations are introduced by the presence of man's use of submission and dominance for creative goals, thus nullifying the need for a domain. Nevertheless, the main outlines of nature's surplus mechanisms can be observed in the human scene as well. They not only exist, they are indispensable elements in his search for independence and mental health.

The ability to carry sexual feeling in a harmonious way is a characteristic of the submissive personality. This occurs in nature when the female goes into heat. Her submissive potential is increased by the open ended carrying of the stress generated by sexual feeling. She becomes ready for a sexual experience without any clearly defined goal until it happens. She cannot bring a sexual experience into being by herself. As the male begins to define a domain through his celebrative development, her intensifying submission meets his expanding dominance and they reinforce each other. Her sexual readiness excites him, and the sex act takes place. His goal in this event is orgasmic and by this means he is spared a continuing level of sexual tension. During the active surplus stage, any rise in sexual tension in the male leads to coitus and orgasm. The female remains continually ready. In this way, the potentially feminizing influence of sexual tension is kept out of the dominant personality.

Dominant sexuality is tied directly to the sexual experience with its orgasmic goal. The phrase "dominant sexuality" means sex in dominant personalities. The sex itself is not dominant. Dominance is not built through the sex act, a fact which is not welcome news in the conventional macho world. The healthy male comes to the sexual event already dominant. In entering the sex act the male actually accepts submission for the time being, but this submission operates in a transitional way, feeding sexual excitement without undermining the dominant core of the personality. It is easy to misconstrue the psychological nature of coitus in the animal world. Because the male

mounts the female, often gripping her in ways suited to his purposes, the experience has the outward appearance of being a power operation on his part. This is only true where rape is concerned. The male performs in and out movements because he is in the sensual grip of a mounting need for phallic stimulation. The thrust only goes so far. He must partially withdraw to make another thrust. He is not manipulating the female. It is the female who must manipulate him if the act is to proceed. She holds her body in the right position and maintains it faithfully until the male withdraws. She also frequently approaches him in affectionate ways, and in the lower animals sexual scents provide a signal which influences the male arousal. When sexual excitement has brought coitus into being, it is because the submission of the female has reached an active capacity to service the male, and the dominance of the male has reached a state of temporary but total submission to sensuality. Her manipulative position is also temporary and total, bringing a fulfilling sexual intensity. His role is one of sensual self-awareness in which his command of the orgasmic goal goes unchallenged. This dynamic is very important in human beings where sexual intercourse is no longer necessarily tied to nature's coital model.

Where sex is completely attached to the reproductive function as in the lower animals, nature has no interest in the female orgasmic potential. On the contrary, the ability of the female to carry a continuing sexual tension serves the interest of impregnation, since the female is by this means always available to the male. It takes clitoral stimulation to reach a full and tension discharging orgasm in the female. In nature's male-female model, responsiveness to clitoral stimulation gives way to the primacy of the vagina. Although human beings often describe vaginal sensations as orgasmic, such reactions are of a different order from true clitoral orgasm. The clitoris resembles the penis physiologically, having an identical nerve supply. It is an inherent part of submissive sex that fulfillment is reached through the orgasm of the dominant partner. The need of the submissive human being to relieve purely physical tension in the genitals belongs in the category of masturbation. Homosexuals have a great deal of freedom in working out these dynamics. There are special problems where the sexual intercourse of submissive men and dominant women is governed in a rigid way by nature's coital model. Such relationships lack intensity and spontaneity on both sides with a continuing threat of impotency in the male and incomplete satisfaction in the female.

The mechanisms of celebration is a more difficult topic for most people. The existence of celebration as a psychological entity has been generally ignored throughout the ages. Thinkers in this field prefer intuitive data to the insights gained from the world of experience. Sex is an event whereas celebration is a state of mind. The apparent paradox is resolved by the fact that sex is the kind of event which is subject to intuitive recognition, whereas celebration is a state of mind which cannot be isolated as an entity without awareness of its experiential context. Because sex is an act limited in time it is easier to observe than celebration which has no structured time dimension. Instead it is to be understood in spatial terms because it takes place in a chosen space where obstacles are banished through the mental processes of the individual. Although sex and celebration are alike in that they are both surpluses which interact and influence each other, the architecture of their manifestations is quite different, and celebration cannot be entirely understood by constructing analogues with sexual phenomena.

A rising pride level in dominant personalities is open to the development of a celebrative mood, but this is different from a celebrative state in the same way that sexual feeling in submissive personalities is different from sexual excitement. Just as warmth can continue to expand and do its work in the presence of stabilized sexual feeling (the romantic state), so can pride expand and explore responsible commitments in the presence of a celebrative mood (the adventuresome spirit). In the lower animals, the celebrative state is triggered by the power surrender of the female and this beginning of the celebrative state is called the celebrative release. She accomplishes this psychological task by attaching herself exclusively to the male, accepting the boundaries of his domain as the entire dimensions of her world. Once she has done this, her manipulative energy has reached its endpoint, and she can now be relieved of any need to hold an energy accumulation in her personality. She has only to maintain her proximity to the male. In those species where the male does not stay with her, she remains in the territory they have established together. In certain species, bears for example, it can be very dangerous to wander into her territory when she is caring for cubs. There is no warning territorial display, only a sudden attack.

Letters to Dean

Just as the orgasm guarantees that the male will not be required to carry sexual tension in a continuing way, so does the celebrative release guarantee that the female will not be required to carry celebrative energy in a continuing way. Two important differences exist between sex and celebration. First, while the sex act ends in an orgasm, the celebrative state begins in a celebrative release. Secondly, the sex act is an event with an observable endpoint. The celebrative state is a state of mind which may last a few seconds or a long time, depending on the stimuli in the environment. Characteristically it just fades out. Among the lower animals the stimuli are the need to define the boundaries of the domain against competing males or any potential threat from outside. The celebrative state is a posture of invincibility. Obstacles vanish, being neither seen nor dealt with. Reality disappears in favor of a pure biologically rooted spontaneous sense of freedom. If real obstacles must be faced, as with a dangerous intruder in the domain, the celebrative state disappears in favor of pride and its modalities of mastery. If it does not, the individual invites defeat. Sex and celebration are the highest states of intensity and spontaneity, conferring pleasure and enjoyment of a special kind that cannot be reached in any other way. Discussion of the surpluses requires their own vocabulary.

Civilized man needs a reliable and continuing access to sex and celebration. The surpluses bring psychic rest, and in this function there is a partial resemblance to the esthetic life where commonplace and ordinary rewards bring simple warmth and pride. Unlike the esthetic life, which must be monitored, sex and celebration spring directly from genetically determined sources. The surpluses have the unique potential of acting as a catalyst to submission and dominance. The esthetic life is guided by a turning away from the pressures of psychic growth, working best when submissive personalities seek the enjoyment inherent in experience, and dominant personalities find the pleasure inherent in surface sensuality. In contrast, the surpluses act on the individual in such a way as to open the self to greater depth and vigor. They have the pattern of harmonious stress bearing which characterizes the creative life, but this increase in the ability to hold tension and energy is not used to build knowledge and ability, but is entirely devoted to the reaching of sensual intensity and uncompromising spontaneity. The esthetic life thrives on the novelty made possible by recognition and anticipation, where the individual finds pleasure and enjoyment out of his own psychological resources. Esthetic capacities come from a learning process. The surpluses, once set in motion, are choreographed by nature with their own undiluted tension and energy sources. It is a place where the loud music and flashing lights which would otherwise be psychic excesses are allowed to follow their own track. Without this access to the special place the surpluses occupy, an individual must go through life feeling that there is a part of himself he has never used.

The mated state brings sex and celebration into being for the lower animals. Civilized man cannot afford this kind of limitation, since for him submission and dominance need to be lifetime character specializations, and whether a mated relationship exists or not, he reaches toward maintaining a submissive relationship to life itself in the interests of truth seeking, or a dominant relationship to his world in order to extend his access to the right. When men form a mated attachment they must be free to dissolve it, if it does not make its proper contribution to the growth of both partners. This viewpoint stands in strong contrast to conventional pressures toward the permanence of marriage, where the marital attachment is taken to be bigger than the growth needs of individuals, most often in the name of the needs of the offspring. Furthermore, mated relationships have no guarantee of a continuing sexual and celebrative life between the partners. When their attachment leads to an increasing emphasis on mutual growth, the honeymoon–holiday phase may no longer serve the psychological needs of the mated pair. There is a great deal of variation possible in this area. Some very fulfilled and successful mated relationships have little sex and celebration which depends on the mated union, and some have none at all. Once individuals have faced and accepted the challenge of psychological growth, the motivations generated are of the highest priority, and they may not tolerate any dilution by the honeymoon–holiday phase.

When men accept the growth process as the most significant goal they have in life, their independent search for human knowledge and ability brings rising levels of warmth and pride. As they build self–knowledge and self–control, their personalities become increasingly open to interaction and involvement with others who are potentially open to significant psychological change. The higher the levels of warmth and pride, the greater is the need to establish independent sexual and celebrative outlets for the self. It is characteristic of submissive

personalities that their independent access to celebration tends to be unreliable, and this fact opens the self to intimidation. The lack of inner security in dominant personalities which shows itself when independent access to sexuality is uncertain leads to vulnerability to seduction. The surpluses must find the intensity and spontaneity which belong to their nature without overflowing into the love and power attachments characterized by the ability to sustain stress in the open ended search for truth and right. Civilized man lives close to a sexual and celebrative overflow. Whether this is a privilege or a nagging burden depends on his ability to construct a reliable barrier out of his own resources. The capacity to understand and control himself in this area is one of his most impelling reasons to promote his psychological growth. Nothing can enliven his sense of independence as well as knowing that no part of human nature is alien territory in his life.

5

Man's greatest asset in his struggle to keep sex and celebration from undermining the workmanship of love and the commitments of power is his ability to reach the satisfying expression of these drives in an independent way. He is capable of keeping sex and celebration in their own pockets in the form of masturbation and self-induced celebration. Society attempts to either ignore or prohibit these phenomena because it is hostile to genuine independence. Lacking insight into character polarity, there is little comprehension of the fact that masturbation and self-induced celebration can have either an adolescent or a self-contained mature structure. Society wants to impose an artificial architecture on the surpluses, decreeing that mature sex is to be found in the act of coitus between a man and a woman, confined where possible to the marital relationship, without regard to the psychological structure of the act. When vagina meets erect penis, according to the socially imposed system, man is well started toward a mature sex life. Celebration as an entity is either ignored or assumed to follow along in the same pre-established man-woman patterns. As long as the penis-vagina mythology is protected, there is no basis in the conventional world for a further inquiry into the psychological structure of the polarized nature of the surpluses. Adolescent patterns of sex and celebration cannot be metamorphosed into a mature form by emphasis on the surface resemblance of human coital behavior with the sexual life of the lower animals. The error is compounded by society's inability to distinguish between pubescent and self-contained mature forms in masturbation and self-induced celebration. These later patterns develop when inner identity guides the surplus life. It is only then that the individual can find masturbation and self-induced celebration to be harmonious with his whole personality. Without the guidance of inner identity, the individual is bombarded both by social prohibitions and his own perceptions that his use of the surpluses interferes with the flow of his relationship to his world.

The self-contained sexuality which masturbation provides is guided by fantasy. There is a difference between submissive and dominant fantasy. Submissive individuals build sexual excitement by imagining a perfect dominant partner whose orgasmic need is being served by the individual. Since the fantasy can be given any form the individual chooses, there is no obstruction in the way of imagining an ideal mated relationship. When this excitement is combined with phallic stimulation, orgasm can be reached. When sexuality is guided in this way by submissive fantasy, there is no need to separate the sexual event from the rest of the psychic life. There can be a smooth transition into the world of relationships with others. In a similar way, the fantasies of dominant individuals create the perfect submissive partner. When dominant individuals neglect the building of fantasy, often because they are entrapped in conventional images of what is a sexual situation, the sexual excitement fails to reach a level of adequate intensity, and they must rely too heavily on mechanical physical stimulation. It takes a rich access to warmth for dominant individuals to find the necessary sexual excitement in the masturbatory act, just as it takes well developed pride levels for submissive individuals to fantasy service of another's orgasmic needs. When individuals consider masturbation inferior to sexual contact with others, it is because both are structured by adolescent mechanisms, creating a desire for outside reinforcement.

Before considering the difference between submissive and dominant self-induced celebration, a preliminary discussion of celebration will be useful. Since celebration is not an act but a state of mind, and since an outstanding characteristic is that it has a beginning rather than the goal directed endpoint which sex requires, its

psychological structure is both harder to observe objectively and to perceive intuitively. Its dynamics remains a mystery to most people, especially in regard to the difference between a celebrative mood and the celebrative state. Man's difficulty with the celebrative state is one reason why violence is so poorly controlled in the human scene. There is a tendency to pair sex and violence together as sources of excitement. The celebrative state is set in motion by a triggering device called the celebrative release. In the lower animals, it is the power surrender of the female which accomplishes this task. The pair form a domain which becomes their entire world. The untrammelled experiencing of freedom in the male, based on a biologically rooted sense of absolute unobstructed willfulness, is expressed by a variety of techniques through which he patrols his territory. The singing of the male bird and the exhibitionistic displays of many male animals are examples. The open access to the celebrative state is a guarantee that any confrontation which may come will be met by an organism fully equipped with dominant energy.

Celebration does not in itself lead to the control of any obstacles. When a challenge to dominance must be met by a fight response, the nature of the danger must be seen in a clear way so that all resources may be mobilized. In the celebrative state the perception of obstacles disappears in a miraculous way. When obstacles will not go away, the organism needs high levels of pride and manipulative skills which cannot come out of miraculous displays. The female celebrative state is a derived one, based on her attachment to the male. Her celebrative energy emerges as she releases the male's celebrative capacity. In this way the female can enter a celebrative state without dilution of her submissive nature.

The differences between dominant and submissive self-induced celebration in the psychic life of civilized man are not easily fitted into a conceptual system. Those who discover the route to a healthy celebrative pocket which does not overflow in destructive ways most often do so through an experiential route without conceptual guidance, using trial and error in the process. When dominant individuals supply their own celebrative release they do so with a burst of self-admiration which frees them from any need to understand people or circumstances in a rational way. This is a play acting kind of process. They confer on themselves a miraculous stance of pure untrammelled control of their universe. Any influence which tends to produce submissive reactions vanishes into thin air. It is a total embodiment of the position that the king can do no wrong.

Self-induced celebration in a submissive personality has a different structure. The individual rejects any need to act out of his capacities for the development of insight. He takes the position that he understands everything there is to know about the circumstances confronting him. He has a conviction of absolute infallibility, a state of perfect and total vision in which he can see everything to the end of time. He rejects any need to shape his insights to the experiential reality in front of him. He gains the celebrative release by total acceptance of the perfection of his wisdom, which is seen as beyond question. It is a know-it-all psychic state, achieved by a miraculous process. As with the dominant personality, this mechanism has play acting implications.

Self-induced celebration is an essential antidote to the entrapments of seduction and intimidation. It comes sharply into focus when the employment of the creative faculties of understanding and responsibility would inevitably involve the personality in feeling or motor overloads. As long as it remains an internal psychological process, triggered by the need of the individual to protect his sense of independence, it functions as an essential catalyst in building self-confidence and self-control. Once the individual has freed himself from the threat of entrapment, the celebrative state has done its work and is allowed to fade out. The individual returns to the bearing of harmonious stress in his relationships with others and in his monitoring of his own psychic processes.

The self-induced celebrative state cannot function in a healthy fashion if its psychic effects are disruptive of the individual's sense of self. When individuals find that the return to rationality requires a convalescent period, gradually struggling back to what they accept as sanity, they often attempt to prohibit celebrative reactions in themselves, or at the very least, turn to society's rules for guidance, but celebration does not have to be justified. It is just there, a gift from man's genetic resources. Such prohibitionistic efforts bring an aura of guilt to celebration, just as similar prohibitions bring shame to sex. When polarity does not govern the structure of celebration, there is

no way to confine its manifestations to a circumscribed pocket in the personality. Dominant patterns of celebration in submissive personalities are out of synchronization with the inner self and fated to overflow, as are submissive patterns in dominant personalities. The effectiveness of the self-induced celebrative state lies in the fact that it is not bound to any standard of responsibility, and therefore can be used as the individual needs it to guarantee his sense of freedom, secure in the fact that it does not alter his world of ongoing relationships. It is an internal corrective which is not intended to reach others. Both masturbatory sex and self-induced celebration are moments of supreme self-indulgence, validated by their tremendous capacity to protect the personality from undermining influences. Without the mental health they confer, the individual cannot give to others.

6

The sexuality which society recognizes, and the celebration it accepts without naming it, takes its structure from adolescent mechanisms. When the surpluses are patterned in this way, there is a trading back and forth of submissive and dominant functions. Sexuality has the architecture of mutual masturbation, and celebration is reinforced by the readiness of the participants to provide celebrative release for each other. Any moment of relief from stress, especially of the adaptive kind, can be used as an excuse to set the celebrative state in motion. Since the occasion for such outlets is usually insubstantial in psychological terms, it is characteristically reinforced by the use of alcohol and drugs. When any moment of good luck, or any cycle of the calendar, is used for celebrative release, the larger function of celebration in protecting the inner self from entrapment is lost.

To cover up the psychological inadequacy of the surplus mechanisms which society sponsors, there is an attempt to anoint artificial patterns with the consecrated status of normalcy. Women are assigned a submissive position and males a dominant one. The complexities of psychological submission and dominance are ignored. No matter how submissive a male may be in most human situations, when it comes to the expression of the surpluses he suddenly and miraculously becomes dominant, and the same reversal is seen in dominant women who attempt to travel a magically submissive route. When dominant men and submissive women come together, there is a possibility for the surplus life to be genuinely polarized, but for this to work effectively requires more awareness of the submissive and dominant mechanisms than most people have. The possibility disappears entirely when pressure toward psychological growth enters the picture. The pair find themselves living in a domain of their own making, and when they are forced to leave the apparently safe territory of their honeymoon-holiday enchantment, they discover they lack resources to deal with their frustrating hate and anger reactions toward each other. Some conventional marriages start in bliss, and end in the horrified discovery of what the partner is really like. Others begin with the conviction that the partners are true friends, capable of sharing a multitude of common interests. Into this relationship they shoehorn a surplus life, uneasy about its place in their attachment, but determined to make room for the biological functions they regard as normal. These relationships work best when the rearing of children provides the primary meaning of marriage. The burden of making something full and natural about their sexual life disappears when procreation gives meaning to sexuality. Their common interests at an esthetic and adaptive level lose psychic investment as the years go by. They preserve their attachment to please their children and to avoid loneliness and social criticism, realizing they have nowhere else to go.

Adolescent sexuality has a corrupt structure, using the word corrupt in a psychological sense without reference to society's prohibitions. Adolescent celebration has a mindless, impetuous, or wild structure in the same way. Corrupt sexuality is promiscuous in its essence, and results in a triggering of sexual behavior whenever sexual feeling is perceived between individuals who are imprinted with each other. Wild celebration is addictive in structure, using the word addiction in the sense that such mental states are habit forming within the personality, without the ability to take independent responsibility for their manifestations. When celebrative mood meets its mirror image between individuals who see each other as ready to kick off restraints, there is no barrier to the celebrative state. Both promiscuity and addictive celebration undermine the catalytic functions of the surpluses. A well established independent capacity for harmonious masturbation and self-induced celebration is the only barrier to an adolescent search for sexual and celebrative contacts in the world of human relationships. There can be no genuine growth process with its increasing emphasis on high levels of warmth and pride if warmth and

sexual feeling readily overflow into sexual behavior, or if pride and the celebrative mood have little resistance to becoming a shared celebrative state.

Individuals lack a reliable goal structure when they live in a world of on again off again inner identity. Without growth with its expanding self-knowledge and self-control, they find that the wellsprings of enthusiasm and inspiration in the life process are lacking. They have no insight into why they feel cheated, having loyally conformed to society's image of what it is to be normal. In this state of unrecognized lifestyle depression, promiscuous sexuality and mindless celebration lie at hand as royal remedies, without recognition that the treatment may be worse than the disease. The restless search for sexual contact with others substitutes for the enthusiasm otherwise generated by the exploration of human truth, and the numbing but boisterous accessibility to shared celebration states substitutes for the inspiration inherent in the reaching for the right. Individuals cannot find goals through promiscuity and addiction, but certainly this night or this weekend can have a purpose in this way. All the preliminary preparations for the sex hunt and the party atmosphere provide a fraudulent sense of purpose for the time being. The addictive life pursues a posturing charisma, feeding on the aid that drugs and alcohol can give. Each individual accepts the need to provide celebrative release for others, so that the shared celebrative state can be kept going as long as possible. If the individual does not perform in this way, he is considered a spoiler of the party atmosphere. This trading of release functions is the key to the gang spirit.

7

For many individuals, coming out into a homosexual life style is a one stage process in which they transfer adolescent surplus mechanisms from the heterosexual to the homosexual world. These mechanisms are not inherently heterosexual or homosexual. They only seem to be so when they are guided by social supports, either through reinforcement or prohibition. Children who have some measure of psychological independence experience sexual interest and celebrative explorations which can go toward either gender. However, there is a tendency to turn away from society's pressures on boy-girl relationships because of the artificial role playing involved. As a result, early attachments with a surplus coloration more often take a same gender direction. Adult homosexuals who wish to believe that their sexual orientation is determined by mysterious and unrecognizable forces cling to the belief that their sexual orientation is decided very early in life. All that is really manifested that early is an unconventionality in accepting society's dictates on boy-girl behavior. Heterosexuals forget their childhood same gender tendencies, just as homosexuals find recall of these states harmonious with their adult status. It is the same prohibitions accepted by straight individuals against recognition of their latent adult homosexuality which is projected backward to inhibit recall of childhood same gender manifestations.

As long as adolescent sexual and celebrative mechanisms are taken to be inevitable, there can be no secure barrier against homosexuality in the straight world, nor can gay individuals be that sure that they have expelled heterosexuality from their personality. Only firmly established patterns of polarized interaction, freely chosen by the individual for the psychological advantages he gains from the direction he is taking, can commit him to a heterosexual or homosexual life. Since homosexuality confers great advantages in freedom from tyrannical social supports and interdictions, those who need the independence that psychological growth requires have no reason to continue the social game of denying their homosexual resources and capacities.

In a world where sex and celebration are on the loose, undermining any consistent development of inner identity in the human scene, it is impossible to give any clear and reliable definition of homosexuality. In those situations where social pressures toward heterosexuality have not yet manifested themselves, or have temporarily ceased to operate, as in childhood and early pubescent play, in prison life, or on isolated posts in military service, same gender sexual activity comes to the surface. This happens in people who generally regard themselves as heterosexual. As the special circumstances disappear, they usually go on to live heterosexual lives. Such sexual activity is unconnected with man's capacity for mating and the accompanying experience of falling in love. On the other hand, there are a multitude of same gender relationships, often embodying high levels of loyalty and integrity, which have a mated structure but rigidly exclude sexuality. As a consequence, warmth and pride levels

have pre-established limits, setting up barriers to the facing of the unknown and the chaotic in the human scene. Such relationships flourish when shared adaptive stresses provide problems and obstacles to be overcome, as in careers of danger and daring, in athletic team undertakings, in military stress situations, and in frontier life. Here men put the best they have into their attachments, reaching high levels of devotion and nobility, but without the capacity to translate their highly developed assets into the reaching for truth and right at a universal level. Such relationships are highly respected by society provided that they remain in the isolated area that brought them into existence. The entertainment world thrives on the dramatic impact of military and western themes, as well as crime partner relationships, because here same gender attachments become the most important of human experiences. These relationships are homosexual in structure, but are spared being so identified by the exclusion of sexual sensuality. A man will die for someone he will not kiss.

Promiscuous sexuality is only seen as homosexual through the recognition by the participants of the sexual attractiveness of others of the same gender. This state of affairs fails to provide a meaningful insight into the homosexual experience. There is no reason why a mature individual should not be able to recognize the sexual attractiveness of both genders. He can convince himself he lacks this capacity if he chooses examples of the forbidden gender which lie well outside the scope of his imprints. There is also no reason why individuals who are committed to a homosexual life should not be able to recognize the difference between perceiving the goodness and beauty of others and an overflow into sexual activity. Once self-knowledge and self-control have reached the point where the independent personality can establish its own sexual and celebrative patterns, being heterosexual or homosexual becomes a matter of genuine choice, decided by the individual on the basis of selecting which direction best serves his growth needs. In a world where heterosexuality is heavily burdened with conventional marriage images, and where women are often programmed to be second class citizens, the appeal of homosexuality can be very strong among persons who aspire to be psychologically independent.

In rejecting the social supports which are reserved for heterosexual phenomena, gay individuals have invited a more independent position, but this is only the beginning of a long process. It is a meaningful step to turn away from the ignorance and immorality of society in this area, but when individuals in the visible gay community find themselves in need of a greater self-knowledge and self-control than they can muster, and they see that their efforts to achieve independence are failing, they turn to society for a kind of endorsement which the conventional community cannot give without undermining its own artificially forged stability. When this support is not forthcoming, a paranoia develops in which the gay individual sees society as rejecting him, instead of the true and much more psychologically sound situation, namely that he is rejecting society. Under these circumstances, the corrupt and mindless way he uses his surplus life stands exposed, because the umbrella of protection by which society conceals the same distortions in its own heterosexual world is not extended to the gay person. Lacking a meaningful goal structure, the gay individual bows his head and begs for permissive tolerance from society. It is clear that tolerance is better than intolerance, but it is very hard for homosexuals to ignore the fact that what they really want is self-respect. To gain this end, the growth potential of the homosexual life must come into focus on a lifetime basis.

When growth of a serious psychological kind is perceived as a threat to sexual sensuality and celebrative euphoria, the homosexual turns against those individuals in the less visible gay world who seek to expand their grasp of human truth and right. Yet these individuals are the ones who can use homosexuality in such a way as to extend the human assets of all people, leading to eventual radical and healthy changes in established social institutions. They do not accept the unspoken thesis of so many gays that intellectual impotence is the price of sexual freedom. The greatest problem in the gay community is its own homophobia. Without the ability to define the structure and dimensions of the gay experience, becoming homosexual is a kaleidoscopic collection of surface bizarre personality characteristics and unending searchings for reinforcement of floating sexual and celebrative gratifications. In accepting these patterns they mimic the straight world, except that the distorted gender reinforcements of that world are not considered bizarre by its practitioners. The nelly gay and the wolf whistling straight are but two sides of the same coin. The promiscuous and addictive homosexual takes the position that the form of his surplus life is just there, a visitation from forces he neither understands or controls. Since he has no

Letters to Dean

sense of choice, he asks society for tolerance of the inevitable, and thus puts himself in the position of a disabled person who has the right to be on a kind of psychological welfare.

There is a passage in the *Satyricon* which offers a picture of the consequences of sexual promiscuity. The philosopher Eumolpus is explaining to Encolpius his view of how homosexuality emerged in ancient Rome:

"At one time, it was the custom of men to engage sexually only with the women to whom they were legally betrothed. Since, however, they had no difficulty engaging these women. . . . they soon grew bored and took to hungering for other men's wives, who were forbidden them. Before long, it was customary for any man to sleep with whatever woman he desired, no matter what the marital status of each. As the result of the commonness of this, boys came into vogue. Today, since beautiful boys are still difficult to come by, they remain the most coveted possession.

"What would happen, however, if suddenly there were an abundance of boys and every man could have his fill?

"I suspect that men would soon take to lusting after horses; and once they became easily accessible, snakes; then beetles."

"If you are as detached as you claim," I responded, "how is it that you lust after boys just like the rest of us do?"

"Ah, Encolpius," he replied, "just because the physician can make a diagnosis, does that mean he is immune from the disease?"

I am very aware of the fact that there are aspects of the subject matter of this letter that I have not explored fully, especially where the compulsive and obsessive defenses are concerned. The surpluses have an inherent tendency to resist conceptual clarification. Two major difficulties are immediately apparent. Civilized man does not understand celebration and therefore finds it a floating hazard in his effort to live a constructive life. As far as sex is concerned, it is easy to see its procreative function and on this basis he believes it is easier to understand than it really is. As long as the spermatozoa are delivered to the ovary, he takes it for granted that he understands enough and the psychological content of sexuality can be dismissed as of minor importance. The best way to bring order into this material is through the experience of growing individuals. They must decide for themselves how the surpluses will be used, guided by their lifetime goals of self-development. This letter is a record of the insights which have crystallized out of my own experiences over a lifetime, but especially during the last thirty years.

Love

Paul

A LETTER TO DEAN (No.2)

On the formation of inner identity
in the growing child.

April 23, 1981

Letters to Dean

Dear Dean,

Any discussion of the inner identity of the child must start with an examination of the way the civilized world uses secondary gender characteristics. Man looks at the mating mechanisms of the animal world and sees two processes interacting to produce the male–female differentiation. The first, and by far the most important, is the development of the submission–dominance relationship which emerges fully stated at the time of biological maturation. The second is the presence of secondary gender characteristics, which may include color and size differences, the presence or absence of horns, wattles, and developed mammary glands, and many other non–psychological differences.

In the expression of masculinity and femininity in the civilized world, secondary gender characteristics have taken on a socially supported importance far in excess of their real psychological usefulness. The reason for this distortion lies in the fact that submission and dominance can no longer be relied on to define what it is to be a man or a woman. Instead they confer character and the independent search for truth and right which arises from character. Individuals find it difficult to handle the consequences of a consistent inner identity based on submission or dominance. Their ability to deal with inner identity which lies outside gender differences is obstructed by the presence of the psychological overloads it generates. Inner identity leads to a confrontation with the unknown and the chaotic in human affairs. The ability to sustain this position requires an independence and a readiness to grow that few people have. It is much easier to turn toward secondary gender characteristics, finding a false identity in traits of a superficial nature which are enshrined as inevitable and eternal by popular opinion in a particular time and place.

It would be impossible to catalog all the myriad traits which have entered man's efforts to define what it is to be a man or a woman. There are effete or macho mannerisms and affectations in dress, either toward the delicate and ethereal, or toward rough and rugged styles. There are differentiations based on the use of cosmetics and perfumes, manner of walking, voice inflections, hair styles, choice of hobbies, and choice of careers. Behavior in public is taken to be especially important. Society values these contrasting roles because they provide a defense against the latent homosexuality which genuine character differentiation brings close to the surface in the civilized world. When society is sure that men and women are fated to be attracted to each other merely because of the secondary gender characteristics, they can accept the inevitability of heterosexuality, leaving no room for the independent ability to explore the real psychological structure of mating.

The child who attempts to make a full fledged identification with the parent of the same gender is fated to be overwhelmed by a bombardment of secondary gender traits and thus bear a heavy burden of intimidation or seduction. The child needs to perceive what is surplus in the parent's character. The surplus, which arises from an inner core of commitment to a submissive or dominant relationship to the life process itself, is the key to genuine psychological independence. Secondary gender identifications have a facading or posturing quality. Polarized interactions with parents of the same gender clear the air of this contaminating influence identifications with parents of opposite gender, provided they are based on a genuine perception of character, are not threatened in this way.

How does a child find what is surplus in the parent's personality? Surplus phenomena have an inexhaustible quality. They lie beyond the limits of ordinary fatigue and boredom. They hold a kind of intensity and energy which is unique. They confer a sense of importance which resides in the individual personality, safe from the ups and downs of any disharmonious stresses emerging from the life situation. Child and parent both perceive an unbreakable need for each other and a continuing satisfaction in their being together. Identification with the parent of the opposite gender frees the child to respond to those human traits which have the highest human value. It is a world in which they see each other at their best, and at that level there is no competitiveness, ostracism, or punishment. It is a selective identification which rejects all surface phenomena such as secondary gender traits, incidental habits, style of adaptive practices, and even patterns of esthetic preferences. It permits the child to detect that which is most genuine in the parent's human capacities. It lays the groundwork for the child to perceive

Letters to Dean

the parent's highest human aspirations, dealing with the parent's struggle to find and use human truth and right. It deals with such human traits as nobility and idealism. Through the influence of the surplus capacities, the most important part of family life becomes the human interchange which converts its members into heroes and saints. In the polarized relationship between the child and the parent of the same gender, the search for goodness and beauty in each other accepts no arbitrary limits. This attachment engenders enthusiasm and inspiration which comes from independent sources in each, colored by a romantic aura and the spirit of adventure. It is a surplus which goes on without requiring any support except from the fact that each makes a fundamental contribution to the quality of life for both, thus opening the gates of psychological growth. In a healthy family the psychological relationship with the two parents is never the same. Each has his own unique access to the inner life of the child. When one fears the influence of the other, the child becomes the victim.

The identification between sons and mothers, and daughters and fathers, goes astray when the child cannot find what is surplus in the parent's personality, either because the parent rejects his own real nature, or because he is so much under the influence of conventional social pressures that he does not want his child to explore this secret and forbidden garden. Fear of homosexuality is the primary culprit in this obscuring of what is best in human nature. Opposite gender identifications then become contaminated with secondary gender traits, eventually producing effeminacy in men and a butch type of toughness in women.

Family life is an ongoing struggle between the world of heroes and saints on the one hand, and a jarring and discordant world of witches and monsters on the other. The second comes into being through the influence of monolithic social pressures on the personalities of the parents. But whatever its origin, it takes its being in the give and take of family life. It is not the adaptive problems of living in an imperfect world which creates a sense of oppressive evil in the life of the growing child, but the failure of the parents to open themselves to a genuine psychological growth process. The child is biologically weak, but he is better equipped to welcome self-development in a changing world. When his world of heroes and saints is undermined by parental rigidity, he has two choices. He can give in to social pressures, agreeing to call lies truth and wrongs right, or he can retreat into isolation, utilizing fantasy and play to maintain his own harmonious world, hoping to survive till the day when he can find a different world to live in. Those who follow this second course successfully become the leading edge of a revolutionary thrust which has the promise of guiding mankind into a promised land where the mental health of all members of the community is the number one concern. In such a world, everyone accepts responsibility for everything human that happens, intended or unintended, approved or disapproved, good or bad.