

## WHERE HAVE ALL THE RADICALS GONE?

Where have all the radicals gone?  
Longtime passing,  
Where have all the radicals gone?  
Long time ago,  
Where have all the radicals gone?  
Gone to sleep every one.  
When will we ever learn?  
When will we ever learn?

**The vital role of queer radicals using political theater is legendary.**

The **Cockettes** set the standard in the late 1960's.

A former **Cockette** characterized their performances:

“Of course they were political, but no one among us verbalized it. We had no need of rhetoric. We were madcap chefs cooking up a storm and the ingredients were theater, magic and tribal anarchy.” **WORDS, WORDS, WE DIDN'T NEED WORDS, WE HAD POLITICAL IMAGES!**

Their successors, **The Angels Of Light**, carried on with

“**Paris Sights Under The Bourgeois Sea**”, attacking the ruling class,  
the anti-imperialist “**Sci-Clones**”,  
and the Hindu queer spiritual odyssey “**Holy Cow**”.

In 1973 **The Radical Queens** sponsored a “**Kiss A Queer**” booth at Temple University.

**The Cycle Sluts** used gender-fuck as a potent theatrical weapon.

Then came **The Radical Fairies**, **ACT-UP** and **Queer Nation** in the 1980's and currently, since 1979, **The Sisters Of Perpetual Indulgence**.

**We must be the imaginative visionaries supplying originality to a movement that is often reduced to a civil rights agenda.**

Speaking of civil rights:

with our defeat in Maine,

we now have lost marriage rights in 31 states.

What I read in this week's **Bay Times** by **Ann Rostow**

pretty much sums up the state of marriage rights, at this time, in this country:

“I am guessing that we really underestimate the breadth of anti-marriage sentiment.

**Dislike** of gay men and women is not only intense on the right fringe, but it is also **pervasive across the political spectrum**. By contrast, our support in the center and center left is, let's call it **affectionate**, or maybe **principled**. It's not **passionate** enough to counter the opposition."

These **elections** are great for exposing the depth of homophobia in this society, not just from the religious lunatics, but also from our liberal "friends".

But **CIVIL RIGHTS ARE NOT A PANACEA**. Civil rights are a **tool for social change**, not just **electoral change**, but **radical cultural transformation**.

I will work my ass off to reverse Prop 8, signature collecting, phone calling, canvassing and campaigning but an **election victory** is **not** what excites me about this marriage issue.

While visiting my mom 3 summers ago as the marriage issue began to be debated in Iowa, we were watching a news report on the subject. As a lesbian couple appeared on the TV screen my mom blurted out, **"Well, their relationship isn't at all the same as your dad's and mine!"** In that moment I realized how passionately **PERSONAL** Americans feel about marriage. Most people care less about gays in the military, hate crimes, workplace discrimination, domestic partnerships or civil unions. But when it comes to marriage, as my mom so eloquently stated, **"they"** aren't equal. **WE** aren't equal.

Precisely because Americans value marriage so intensely, marriage is a powerful tool for confronting homophobia/gender conformity where it lives. It lives in the minds of all Americans. **But marriage equality is not an end in itself. Marriage equality is a MARKER on the road to cultural transformation.**

On the left, queer radicals perform a **valuable role** for the LGBT community in the current **cultural "Tug-Of-War"**.

The rightwing has their heavyweights at their end of the rope.

**Fundamentalists** are tugging mightily.

At the **left end** we need more radical activists using theatrical social commentary, crystallizing the issues, tugging the debate in a leftward direction, framing the discussion on **our terms** and setting the agenda.

As an example:

Following the passage of Prop 8 we publicly exorcised Archbishop George Nderauer, stripping him bare to his homophobic bones.

George played a pivotal role in Prop 8's enactment.

People are afraid to criticize Christian clergy.

The Sisters exorcised the Archbishop's homophobic demons, calling him to redemption.

**(Jesus Christ. He's a fag!**

The Archbishop can kiss my queer ass on his unrepentant pilgrimage to hell!)

The necessary role of our LGBT liberal allies is to go before the establishment media, make "**apologies**" for our shocking **behaviour** and **negotiate** the dialogue.

As long as "**condemnations**" are not substituted for "**apologies**", this symbiotic system works.

We play the "**Bad Guys**". They play the "**Good Guys**".

When some of our LGBT allies accuse us of "**ruining it for everyone**", I ask, "**ruining**" what?

If "**ruining it**" means "**ruining**" religious oppression and bourgeois conformity then I say,

**"Yes, let's ruin it!"**

**We need a new Queer Community based on values, not based on a sex act.**

The whole idea of a homosexual is only 100 years old. It was created by the dominant culture attempting to identify and control us.

We can not continue to define ourselves on their terms.

**Rightwing Christians are right, it's about values,**  
though **their** values are drenched in homophobia, sexism,  
bigotry and religious intolerance.

I share few common values with LGBT **assimilationists**.

Serving in the military, getting married,  
moving to a suburban home with a white picket fence, a kid, a dog,  
a car in the garage, and working as an upwardly mobile cog in the corporate  
world order

are nothing I aspire to.

What we **do** have in common is

I don't want to be killed or discriminated against because **I suck cock**.

**But, are we to be defined by a sex act or by a spiritual vision?**

To paraphrase Don Kilhefner:

Now, for the first time, the forward-moving force of history compels us to  
MAXIMIZE our differences from the dominant culture

as an act of love to ourselves and to them –

the emergence of a **new radical queer consciousness**.

“Let us pursue relationships of **differentiation**, of **creation**, of **innovation**.  
An identity to our unique selves.”

Let us challenge the **assimilationist** values of our LGBT **compatriots**.

We must be the **vanguard of the truth**,

the **early adopters** on the **cutting edge** of a **new radical queer  
consciousness**.

The world depends on us.

Lead and they will follow.

This is a speech delivered in 2009 by

Grand Mother Vicious Power Hungry Bitch

a Founder of The Sisters Of PerpetuaL Indulgence, San Francisco

At Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco,

4 famous activists were invited to address the issue of “State of the Queer Community”

