

Homomascularity: Framing Keywords of Queer Popular Culture

Written January-March 2005, this essay was published, and an abstract read by the author, at the Queer Keywords Conference, “The(e)ories: Advanced Seminars for Queer Research” Series, University College Dublin, Ireland, April 15, 2005.

- I. Author’s Eyewitness Historical-Context Introduction written October 2, 2007
- II. The complete essay as published at the Queer Keywords Conference, “The(e)ories: Advanced Seminars for Queer Research” Series, University College of Dublin, Ireland, April 2005, which invited “the coiners of various homo-words to reflect on their neologisms, their cultural and societal significance, origins, contexts, political agendas, and so forth.”
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I. Author’s Eyewitness Historical-Context written October 2, 2007

Homo-Linguistics, Queer Identity, and Framing Homosexuality as a Religion

“You keep the language alive, you keep all of this alive.”

—Loretta Kelsey, “the last person on Earth fluent in Elem Pomo, an 8,000-year-old Pomo Tribe language once spoken North of San Francisco”

“Language is not just a monument to knowledge, it’s a monument to identity.” —Leanne Hinton, Professor Emeritus, UC Berkeley, documenting Elem Pomo with Loretta Kelsey

—Kevin Fagan, “Only Living Elem Pomo Speaker Teaches So She Won’t Be the Last,” San Francisco *Chronicle*, SFGate.com, September 30, 2007

Excerpt source: ©Jack Fritscher, [Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer](#), San Francisco: [Palm Drive Publishing](#), 2008

In 2005, because I was an historically documented coiner of “homo-words,” I was invited to present this necessarily autobiographical paper on language, identity, and homosexuality in the series “The(e)ories: Advanced Seminars for Queer Research.”

The “Queer Keywords” event was convened and directed by Michael O’Rourke and Noreen Giffney, Women’s Studies, School of Social Justice, University College Dublin, Ireland, April 14-16, 2006.

Michael O’Rourke and Noreen Giffney are also Research Affiliates in the Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Sexuality and Gender in Europe at the University of Exeter, UK.

In concept and content, this “Homomascularity” essay specifically answered the international invitation which Giffney and O’Rourke made to activist...

...coiners of various *homo-words* to reflect anecdotally on how and why they created their neologisms, their cultural and societal significance, origin, contexts, and agendas vis a vis the impulse to conceptualize, name, and label—particularly in the mass media of gay popular culture...with the idea of publishing a “Homoglossary”...

My essay on the linguistic ecology of *Drummer* posited that in order to write about the newly uncloseted homosexuality of the 1970s—the first decade after Stonewall, our suddenly liberated culture required a new vocabulary for authors reporting on the love that theretofore dare not speak. Breaking the silence of the closet, I coined the word *homomascularity* in 1977 when I was editor in chief virilizing *Drummer* magazine in San Francisco and needed words to conceptualize the new way we were in our self-fashioning identities.

We were suddenly in our own new *La Dolce Vita*.

Necessity was the mother of invention.

In the way that Fellini created the new words *paparazzo* and *paparazzi* for his Roman film, I had to create new and useful words for San Francisco *Drummer*.

In this homo-word essay of transparent history, and in my germinal book, *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer*, I am a protagonist as well as a priestling-scholar playing the part of Eusebius hot-linking the “canon tales” of *Drummer* and sorting, preserving, and quoting the leather history of *Drummer* that might otherwise have been lost.

Out of classical Greek and Latin roots, I grew the syllables of *homomascularity* the way that Walt Whitman grew his linguistics in *Leaves of Grass*. The great “Gray (and Gay) Poet” Walt Whitman, a born homomascularity, was peerless in designing gender-related language and rhetoric. Influenced by Plato’s ideal of love, Whitman wrote, at the heart of *Leaves of Grass*, his Calamus poems singing of man-to-man love, often referred to as “the Calamus emotion.”

Whitman’s disciple, Allen Ginsberg, also a born homomascularity who fetishized frank virility, worshiped his own circle of masculine straightish men including everyone’s favorite endowed hustler, Neal Cassady; the handsome Jack Kerouac (who could be played on screen by look-alike Daniel Craig); and his longtime lover the not-quite-gay Peter Orlovsky. Nevertheless, the poet Ginsberg, whose personal sexuality acknowledged a new assertive kind of radical masculinity in lovers, did not coin for the Beats or for gay America any new word for the homomascularity to which, in concept, he knelt.

Ginsberg’s famous “blues,” which I experienced with him when he landed in my lap in Kalamazoo, Michigan, was the source for the series of many of my *Drummer* articles titled variously, “Cigar Blues,” “Prison Blues,” and “Castro Street Blues,” capped with the novel, *Leather Blues*. At that time of the National Poetry Festival (1973) in nearby Allendale, Michigan, my sex-connection to Ginsberg was our mutual friend the poet, Thom Gunn, but Ginsberg’s grooming (he was an appallingly unkempt Walt Whitman) and his horrible squeeze box got in the way. “Allen! Enough with the noise, already! I understand your masochistic *nostalgia de la boue*, but take a fuckin’ bath!”

When the Beats gave way to the Hippies who gave way to the gays, I was impelled by the push of Stonewall and the rush of *Drummer* to coin several words to write my reportage, and that gonzo journalism—documented in the internationally known *Drummer*—led to an invitation to join the “Queer Keywords” conference.

Other participants in the “Queer Keywords” series included Richard Meyer, Associate Professor, Department of Art History, University of Southern California, author of *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art*; Robert McRuer, Associate Professor, Department of English, George Washington University, author of *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*; and Niall Richardson, Lecturer, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, UK, author of *The Queer Cinema of Derek Jarman*, and, pertinently, “The Queer Activity of Extreme Male Bodybuilding: Gender Dissidence, Auto-Eroticism and Hysteria” in *Social Semiotics*, 14:1, 49-66, plus “Queer

Masculinity: The Representation of John Paul Pitoc's Body in *Trick* in *Paragraph*, 26:1-2, March/July, 232-245.

II. The essay as published at the Queer Keywords Conference, "The(e)ories: Advanced Seminars for Queer Research" Series, University College of Dublin, Ireland, April 2005, which invited "the coiners of various homo-words to reflect on their neologisms, their cultural and societal significance, origins, contexts, political agendas, and so forth."

Homomascularity: Framing Keywords of Queer Popular Culture

Part I. Introduction: *The Mise en Scene* of Pop Culture

Part II. *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (Sort a')

"Good authors who once knew better words
now only use four-letter words writing prose."

—Cole Porter, "Anything Goes" (1934)

Part I. Introduction:

The Mise en Scene of Pop Culture, the 1960s, and
Keystones in the Arch of the Stonewall;

A Survey of One Writer's Linguistic Journey
through the Grotesque Odds of Publishing
up to the Post-Factual Age of Bush

In London, on May 14, 1969, in a very cruisy movie theater in
Piccadilly Circus, I asked a very hot sailor, "Are you 'top' or 'bottom'?"
And he said, "You Americans. You label everything."

In or around Stonewall, June 28, 1969, gay character changed.

"In or around December 1910," Virginia Woolf famously wrote in 1924,
"human character changed." The Bloomsbury Group re-keyed itself. In
1926, Ernest Hemingway's protagonist Jake Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises*
virtually pukes in chapter three while Lady Brett Ashley parties with a
festive group of Parisian gay men that Barnes—rendered speechless with
Hemingway's homophobia—cannot name with a noun but can only refer

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Drummer, San Francisco: Palm Drive Publishing, 2008](#)

to as *they* and *them* more than thirty times. In 1945, Raymond Williams returned from the war to Cambridge and found life had changed. “We no longer spoke the same language,” he wrote in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1983). Even as each 20th-century decade more or less accommodated homosexuality, the 1960s blew in on Stonewall by offering a perfect storm of liberation as elements converged through the media of popular culture wherein everything changed, if one applies Warhol, every fifteen minutes. In 1964, the trifesta of Mario Savio’s Free Speech Movement at Berkeley, Kenneth Marlowe’s best-selling *Mr. Madam*, and Susan Sontag’s “Notes on ‘Camp’” sounded the charge of the gay-keyword stampede out of Polari and into the streets.

In the revolutionary Prague Spring of 1968, after Martin Luther King was assassinated in April and protest riots of resistance broke out in sixty American cities, Robert Kennedy was killed in June, two days after Andy Warhol was shot by genderist Valerie Solanas. Word-slinger Mart Crowley’s *The Boys in the Band* opened April 14 in New York and accurately outed fluent gay badinage into pop culture media. In August, when the Chicago police rioted with clubs beating activists at the Democratic Convention, the victims—surrounded in the streets—resisted and changed the politics of dominance by chanting to invoke the power of the international television cameras: “The whole world is watching.”

In spring 1969, in Paris I listened to Serge Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin anointing 1969 sexually in their shocking duets, “69 Annee Erotique” and “Je T’aime Moi Non Plus.” At the same moment, Gloria Steinem wrote her first feminist article, “After Black Power, Women’s Liberation,” the taboo-breaking *Midnight Cowboy* premiered May 25, and on the very “out” date of June 9, 1969, once-a-century “6/9/69 parties” were celebrated throughout the free world—which inaugurated the 1970s orgy fad. Driven by this tidal surge, eighteen days later, at the Stonewall Inn, as June 28 became June 29, the love that dare not speak its name began to shout underground vocabulary to the media, like some wild burlesque Berlitz teaching gayspeak as a foreign language.

Reporting the Stonewall uprising six hours after the first stone was cast, a reticent *New York Times* in ten short-shrift paragraphs used the word *homosexual* once and “young men” twice. The *New York Post* in five paragraphs used *homosexual* only once but actually dared quote the framing chant of “gay power.” The *New York Daily News* tried to disarm the mutiny with the mocking, nelly, campy “Homo Nest Raided, Queen Bees Stinging Mad.” In its Independence Day issue (July 3, 1969), *The Village Voice* nailed the gay *gravitas* with the headline feature “Gay Power Comes to Sheridan Square.” On November 5, activists successfully picketed the *Los Angeles Times* for refusing to print the word *homosexual* in

advertisements. By June 1970, thousands of gay militants—veterans of civil rights, women’s lib, and peace movements—marched past news-media cameras with signs reading “Gay Pride” and “Gay Power” at the Christopher Street Liberation Day in Central Park. In my journal, I noted: gay character changed. That years-long journal grew into my love-letter book about the first Gay Renaissance, *Some Dance to Remember: A Memoir-Novel of San Francisco 1970-1982*.

“Bliss was it that dawn to be alive,
but to be young was heaven.”

—William Wordsworth, “The Prelude”

These events, outing gay speak, began the teach-in to make straight pop-culture bilingual. Just as in the early 1960s the Peace Movement and Civil Rights Movement debated their differences, then joined together for political strength, the best drag that queers ever did was cloaking gay liberation in the keywords of the civil rights movement. Revolutionary change drove the mood-swings during that “Stonewall summer” of America landing a man on the moon, of Charles Manson, of *Easy Rider*, of the Tet counteroffensive in Vietnam, and of Woodstock.

Five years before Stonewall, at the same instant that Sontag unleashed “Camp,” *Life* magazine (June 26, 1964) framed the lifestyle of masculine-identified gay liberation in the feature article, “Homosexuality in America,” with the lead lines: “A secret world grows open and bolder. Society is forced to look at it—and try to understand it.” It was like sending an engraved invitation to San Francisco and started the migration of the gay nation west to the Left Coast. When Judy Garland, the ventriloquist of gay code whose funeral ignited the passions of Stonewall, sang “San Francisco” for the live concert *Judy at Carnegie Hall*, there can be heard—recorded for the first time, April 23, 1961—the group-cheering of gay men’s voices. Like baby’s first word, there was something so thrilling and uncloseted in that out-shout “finding the gay voice” that the quintessential framing poet of gay synonyms, Walt Whitman, would have recognized the united gay roar as part of his glorious “barbaric yawp.”

“Coming out of the closet” is an act of immigration. First, the person coming out is forced to learn a new language of sex and identity. Second, coming out is fraught with all the framing and keying problems common to every other “immigrant *versus* host society” trying to establish a discourse. Both immigrant and host require path-breaking keywords each can accept. In a way, the acid-inflected morning after Stonewall was like the first visionary dawn in Eden when Adam’s task was to name everything in sight.

Excerpt source: ©Jack Fritscher, *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness*
Drummer, San Francisco: Palm Drive Publishing, 2008

In its whole history, San Francisco had never let “a stranger wait outside its Golden Gate,” and especially not outside its Golden Gate YMCA. In the 1970s, San Francisco was suddenly teeming with thousands of gay refugees fleeing sexual, religious, and legal persecution. Other thousands arrived to carry on the 1960s hippie party of sex, drugs, and rock. Immigration’s linguistic issues are often difficult, but, in the case of homosexuals, how were media to frame “sexual outlaws”? Even as San Francisco became gay Mecca, when the Ritch Street Baths caught fire very late one night in 1972, the morning *Chronicle* tapped code about the safe evacuation of hundreds of “slender young men in towels,” because *gay* and *homosexual* were not fully “out” from the penumbra of libel.

Sex itself made the gay migration different from previous immigrants whose identity was keyed in race, nationality, and language. Sex and law and morality collided around labeling gay immigrants in ways that other immigrants, say, Irish or Jewish, defused alienation with cooking, music, and universal images of burgeoning pregnant family life—a trope now become a latter-day essential in the gay marriage crusade.

Language also relates, if anything can, the Black experience with the gay experience. Queer speak is as essential to gay identity as rap is to Black culture. Aside from all the controversies over “Ebonics” and Polari, the bilingual truth is that Blacks and gays both understand standard American English while speaking their own dialects not reciprocally understood by standard Americans. Actually, straight readers of gay fiction and non-fiction frequently mention that gay speak so eludes them they need a glossary or a gay interpreter named Bruce. Farther afield, fundamentalists see gays not as immigrants, but as colonists, whom they further reframe as terrorists, threatening their “family values” and their revenue source in the tax base for income and inheritance skewed against unmarried people.¹

In the American culture war, eschatological TV preacher Jerry Falwell on September 14, 2001, blamed the events of 9/11 on his key litany of “homosexuals, abortionists, and the ACLU.” (But, of course! Gays had practiced by destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, even as they gentrify all other cities.) The word *homophobia* had only climbed into the dictionary in 1972 with George Weinberg’s book, *Society and the Healthy Homosexual*. In 1977, fundamentalist David A. Noebel wrote the book, *The Homosexual Revolution: End-Time Abomination*, which describes gay speak as “not in most people’s frames of reference.... Who would suspect that the homosexual sub-culture language contains over 12,000 terms used by homosexuals to identify themselves and their needs.” Noebel fails to credit the value of his source, *The Queen’s Vernacular*, even as he spins that jolly glossary against itself as if it were some evil Masonic incantation.

Excerpt source: ©[Jack Fritscher](#), [Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer, San Francisco: Palm Drive Publishing, 2008](#)

Fundamentalists obsessing over Bible words also obsess over gay language and judge, for instance, the triumphant word *pride* in “Gay Pride” as the “signature queer sin” among the seven deadly sins; for pride is vanity, the sin from which all other sins arise. (“Gay Pride/Power” is a riff, of course, on “Black Pride/Power.”)

Ten years after Stonewall, on the night of May 21, 1979, thousands of San Francisco gays rushed on City Hall, attacked two squads of police, and set nine police cars afire. The “White Night Riot” ignited violently because a jury, believing the label “Twinkie Defense,” gave a slap on the wrist to the assassin of Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone. Spinning off the snack food Twinkie, *Drummer* author Fred Halsted in 1975 had coined the terms *twink* and *twinkie* to define his boyish blond lover Joey Yale who typically represented a certain kind of young, hairless, and cream-filled gay youth. (I wrote three stories for the fiction anthology, *Twink: Stories of Gay Young Men*, Alyson Publications, 2001, and the opening definition of *twink* equates *cream* with *cum* which a twinkie is both full of and can be injected with.) The May 22 *San Francisco Chronicle* went beyond “slender young men” with the headline: “Gay Plea for Calm.” These were no longer the amusing “friends of Dorothy.” The 1950s and 1960s codes of self-defense had given way to 1970s rhetoric that the best defense is a good offense. As 1970s “gay liberation” rekeyed itself into 1980s “gay politics,” fag tags turned linguistic helixes around 1) the politicalization represented in the rise of gay-and-lesbian studies and 2) the medicalization of terms around GRID (the specific blood libel of *Gay-Related Immune Deficiency*) and then around HIV which was the iceberg that struck the Titanic 1970s as the festive party was cruising on.

By 1983, AIDS vocabulary, particularly in the popular straight mind, virtually returned homosexuality—after only a decade off for good behavior—to its definition as a “disease” albeit not the “mental disorder” which had been abandoned by the American Psychiatric Association in 1973. The politically correct made a huge mistake in medicalizing 1970s behavior as the cause of AIDS. Their diktat is a *post-hoc-ergo-propter-hoc* fallacy. Truth be told: Some who felt left out of or who missed the 1970s celebration were simply jealous. It may have been cute to blame bell bottoms, disco, and bath houses, but a virus caused AIDS which was passed more by the sharing of needles among the A-List than by A-List sex acts. If HIV had never been invented, and if Marxist keywords had never been injected into the gay bloodstream, the 70s would be fondly remembered as a Gay Renaissance, the Golden Age of the First Decade of Gay Liberation, because the 70s were to sex what the enlightenment was to reason.

“Whoever did not live in the years
 neighboring the revolution
 does not know what the pleasure of living means.”

—Charles Maurice de Talleyrand

The 1990s exploded academically around *queer*, but *queer* differentiation and revolt in pop culture predates even 1978 when a tagger spray-painted the ruined Falstaff Brewery in San Francisco with the armageddon graffiti, “Queers against Gays.”²² The minute that Bruce Rodgers published his 1973 thesaurus, *The Queens’ Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon*, many masculine-identified gays judged his book a rather dangerous little dictionary of oppression because they were, as was Sontag, both drawn to camp and offended by it. In the straightstream media, *Time* magazine dared two very “out” latchkey covers: the gay-soldier shocker “I Am a Homosexual,” September 8, 1975, featuring the sentence, “Like most subcultures, the homosexual world has its own language,” and “How Gay Is Gay?” on April 23, 1979. The June 25, 1979, cover of *New York* magazine declared the headline promise to define “The Meaning of Gay.”

The article “How Gay Is Gay” foreshadowed by twenty years President Clinton’s re-framing oral/anal sex by declaring, “It all depends on what the definition of *is* is.” The Southern Baptist Clinton, perhaps influenced by the Old Testament stricture against saying the name of “G-d,” was also the defining censor of “g-y” and “homo-suality” authoring “Don’t Ask. Don’t Tell.”

Because masculinity in queer men is even more vexing than effeminacy in queer men, the rise of masculine-identified gay men took heteronormative men and women aback, causing mainstream magazines to run cover stories rethinking the nature of masculinity: e.g., “Masculinity: 60 Points of View,” *Harper’s Magazine*, July 1975.

The mantra of power is embedded in the book title of George Lakoff’s *Don’t Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate, The Essential Guide for Progressives*. Hi-jacking language is as easy as reframing *ego* as *self-esteem*. The Religious Right has reframed its off-center puritan fundamentalism by dropping the adjective *religious* for *faith-based*, and by grabbing hold of keywords like *family*, *values*, and *marriage* in coined phrases such as “heterosexuals hold the ‘patent’ on the word *marriage*.”²³ Just so, because the American Psychiatric Association reframed *homosexuality*, and because gay activists reframed *gay lib* into the *gay politics* of civil rights, and because queers have extended—not narrowed—the definition of *family*, so might homosexuality reframe itself as a worldwide, “intuitive religion” predating the revealed religions

of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, in order to gain the protection that the United States Constitution extends to all religions. If Ron Hubbard got away with declaring Scientology a religion, why should homosexuality be any less sacred? Or any more taxed?

Verbally, the Stone Age literature of the Bible, which has an opinion about absolutely everything, was apparently made speechless by homosexuality which like feminism's primary goal separates sex from procreation. *Sodomite* seems geographical, and ignores Gomorrah, and has left law books confused about the definition of *sodomy*. "A man lying with another man as with a woman" is awkward in the way the German *Fernsehapparat*, "the far-seeing-apparatus," means a TV set. The Bible is hardly a dictionary, but its binary thumpers use it like the New Oxford even though Scripture's procreational chauvinism indicates that one half of a gay couple plays the woman which in truth would never enter the minds of two homomale men going at each other celebrating male essence and harvesting "manjuices." When two homomale men are fucking, neither is thinking about women anymore than two homofemale women fucking on the *L Word* are thinking about men. Are there any keywords in Anglo-Saxon orgasm besides, *shit*, *fuck*, and *Oh, God*?

Most evangelicals—some of whom sincerely buy gay porno and gather in groups to study gay sins—have never actually seen gay sex except in DVDs that ape procreational sex insertion for the one reason that straight distributors insist gay producers include the heteronormative act of penetration in each feature. Actually, gay movies—not financed by straight mafias of whatever kind—fairly much reveal that sex for most gay men is less about anal penetration than it is about frottage, cocksucking, priapic worship, and mutual masturbation.

It does not require a degree in linguistics to figure out that the Bible, a misanthropic morass of ambiguity, has four thousand years of on-going translation issues that invalidate every single word in it. (The word *homosexuality* did not appear in the Bible until the Revised Standard Version of 1946.) Too bad the Bible text—which has had more messages than Hugh Hefner—is a "moral identity document" to people who have mostly never read any other book and who believe in private interpretation of the Scripture, but not in university classes teaching Literary Interpretation 101.

Actually, Christianity, in its original form as Catholicism and its pseudo-reformed version as Protestantism, is a "revealed religion" that has really little or no business interpreting the intuitive psychology of homosexuality which—and here is where queer culture can take Lakoff's *Elephant* advice and reframe the debate to gain constitutional freedom—is a "natural religion" more ancient than pagans and Druids. Gays worshiped at Stonehenge eons before Stonewall. Revealed religions

(Judaism, Christianity, Islam) and intuitive religions (nature-based like wicca, or homosexuality wherein erotic dreams conjure and envision true nature) don't speak the same language. Words also can be "natural" or "revealed."

This is key: In the revealed theocracy of Christianity the "word becomes flesh"; in the intuitive religion of homosexuality, "flesh becomes words." Queers squeeze flesh till it screams its new name, its new identity. ("I'm hairy, fat, and bald; I'm a *bear*.") Coined for *Popular Witchcraft*, the word and concept *homochristianity* was also explicitly dramatized in *Some Dance to Remember* where an erotic act of S&M crucifixion soars up the body, up the erections, and up out of the mouth of the protagonist who finds words for the essence of homosexual body worship based on the main image of western art: a heroic, muscular, nearly naked Jesus spreadeagled in bondage on the cross. What boy born gay does not feel the God Eros squeezing the God Christ's priapic body into transubstantiated erotica?

After the Greeks, the Jews, the Christians, Aquinas, and Shakespeare, why did it take till 1869 for the homomasculine (or maybe just anti-effete) Austrian Karoly Kertbeny, championing "the rights of man," to coin *homosexuality* in "love letters" to his unrequited "boyfriend" Karl Ulrichs?

If the sacred Walt Whitman, the best linguist ever at coining gay synonyms in his pansexual "bible" *Leaves of Grass*, had framed a specific word for his "Calamus" emotions, perhaps President Abraham Lincoln in the mid-1800s might have had a word for his "sleeping" in the same bed with the captain of his guards, and other men. Lacking any label, Lincoln's White House homosexuality simply evaporated.

Tennessee Williams often coded homosexuality for Broadway blue-hairs as "something unspoken" — kind of "show-don't-tell"; e.g.: Neither Brick nor Maggie dares say *homosexual* in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. In fact, Williams, America's greatest poetic dramatist, warned of the damaging psychology of keeping homosex unspoken in his perfectly hysterical fag aria, *Suddenly Last Summer*. *The Kinsey Report* (1948) introducing sex to the mainstream media proved that once a secret word becomes public it loses some of its private meaning. Familiarity subtracts fear, for instance, in the way that *Queer as Folk* and the minstrel-show, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, re-coin *queer* into soap opera and consumerism.

George Rousseau has stated the necessity of naming because there is a reality to words and things, and, to elaborate on Rousseau, there is a magical, religious, transformative potency in verbal conjuration from *Hoc est enim corpus meum* to *hocus pocus* to "Who's your daddy?" Keywords such as *homomascularity* are conjured as a kind of queer *abracadabra* that

by coming into being identify the previously unspeakable unspoken. My liberationist idea of *Drummer* was to use words to seduce readers into daring to realize that, by the very trans-magical act of jerking off to the erotic contents of *Drummer*, they became informed and empowered to dare exit their masturbatory solitude and seek interaction with real live men. The greatest act of magic is the power of words to make a reader think, grin, imagine, and cum.

Gay literature is a body-driven genre in which keywords are invented in one palm-driving hand while the other hand types.

Ambidextrous verbal ability at keywording and “hiding in plain sight” is required especially when censorship causes eros to be coded as art and culture: for instance, gay physique magazines of the 1930s-1960s commonly justified their nude photos by declaring they were “intended only for artists who cannot afford live models.” This agreed-upon lie about “artiness” has twisted the style of gay photography off its true north ever since; in the same way, this agreed-upon lie has affected the spelling of erotic keywords words to hide them in plain sight: *fug* and *come* instead of *fuck* and *cum*.

Living under the jail threat of Paragraph 175 in Germany, the proto-masculinist Adolf Brand edited his magazine, *Der Eigene*, whose keyword title he spun out of philosopher Max Stirner who had redefined *eigene* to mean “ownership of oneself.” Lifestylist Brand, differing from gay-gene pioneer Magnus Hirschfeld, was championing the Greek virtue of ideal manhood for all males, and he would have understood the “Kinsey Six” scale. His *Der Eigene*, minus its militancy, was in many ways a direct ancestor of *Drummer*—with the important difference that *Drummer*’s homomascularity offered a democratic and Whitman-like identity to gay men, and was not at all like Brand’s Nietzsche-like class structure of homosexuals dominating one another, and straight men, on the basis of perceived virility. Because *Der Eigene* was keyed on “the self” and on “man-to-man relations” in the manner of Sparta, *Der Eigene* (1896-1933) was hoist on its own petard and was destroyed by group-thinking Nazis insistent on procreation. Even the masculine homosexual Nazis thought the romantic Brand, who stood up against Nazi excesses such as book burning, went way too far claiming his Wandervogel masculine gay males were a Spartan ideal superior even to straight males and to effeminate gay males. Brand, who was an almost-Fascist life form preceding the inevitable evolution of equitable homomascularity, retreated and married a woman and both were killed in an Allied bombing raid on the Tiergarten in Berlin in 1945. As a forebear of non-Fascist homomascularity, he was one of those perhaps necessary genetic mutations who was a victim of his terrible, terrible times when the past was a foreign country where well-

Excerpt source: ©Jack Fritscher, *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer*, San Francisco: Palm Drive Publishing, 2008

intentioned people did things differently, and war did not give them a grace period.

Gay literature has always been as flammable as faggots themselves. Up to the night of Stonewall, gay erotic fiction was often essentially a samizdat genre typed on feathery light onion-skin paper with one or two carbons beneath so that the one-handed typist, who also interpreted and changed the story (the way medieval monks “scratched out” the Bible), might send the copies (two to eight pages posted for three cents) on to friends who would themselves in a heightened sexual state retype, interpolate, and mail this chain of secret literature where gay plot, gay character, and especially primal gay language evolved in the hands and imaginations of its primary users. The “Tijuana Bibles” of these onion-skin samizdat stories are in a sense collective gay journals that are the roots of the public autobiography of gay men which first broke from the demimonde in the hectographed kitchen-table zines of the mid-twentieth century and then in the liberated gay magazines of the 1970s.⁴

The parallel to gay literature is the literature of witchcraft existing *subrosa* from ancient pre-pagan times. Sexual outlaws, like witches, tend not to publish their ideas and identities. In 1978, Mexican-American John Rechy shape-shifted language with his *Sexual Outlaw*; however, thirty years before, when British expatriate Harry Hay was founding the occult-named Mattachine Society with its neologue newsletter in Los Angeles in November 1950, British activist Gerald Gardner, arguing that witchcraft itself was the Old Religion, persuaded Britain to legalize witchcraft on June 22, 1951. Even on the cusp of victory, Gardner, the keeper of the keywords of cult and incantation, advised that *grimoires* stay handwritten and hidden so their pages, words, and spells could be set afire by oneself—if need be—before the neighbors with pitchforks and torches reached one’s house.

Hay, himself the brilliant resurrectionist of what I call the “Old Religion of Gay Faerie,” was less cautious about brandishing words. He dared publish more boldly; so he personally suffered as a gay man in 1954 at the hand of Senator Joseph McCarthy’s House Un-American Activities’ witch hunt run by the United States Senate. Thirty-five years later in a gay panic the same puritan Senate attacked photographer Robert Mapplethorpe as the synonymously deviant “homosexual, sadist, satanist, and child pornographer” whose guilt was proved by his portraits of liberated women like Susan Sarandon.

In 1969, gay pressure brought in a civil court suit from two very masculine-identified publishers, Chuck Renslow of Kris Studio in Chicago with support from Bob Mizer of Athletic Model Guild in Los Angeles, caused the U. S. Post Office to legalize full-frontal nudity. This single

ruling regarding posting photographs through the mail ended censorship and made gay magazines — and thus “full-frontal gay vocabulary” — possible because while one picture was worth a thousand words, a thousand words quickly followed to amplify the photos.

Beginning in 1946, Bob Mizer (1922-1992), a reductive linguist with a fifty-year publishing career, had a very infamous keyword list of codes in his hugely popular magazine *Physique Pictorial*. His secret short hand of chicken-scratch primitive symbols told the sexuality of his models to his subscribers who had to request Mizer’s “translation list” for deciphering the almost Lascaux symbols into words. In short, like the witchcraft grimoires before, the gay grimoires dared come forward from the subterra of underground outlaw culture into the straightstream of American pop culture.

Part II. *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (Sort a’)

Neologisms, Their Need, Genesis,
and Guide to the Past:

Homomascularity, Leather, and Bear
with Attendant Cloned Words

Out of journalistic necessity,
I coined the word *homomascularity*
so I could write about
the geography of men
at the existential ‘XYY-Point’
where our male latitude
crosses our gay longitude

Stonewall was to gay liberation what talking pictures were to Hollywood. Suddenly in the 70s, gay magazines spoke! Gay culture found its voice. Gay mags were the first medium word-smithing uncoded gay popular culture — and, in a huge intellectual mistake, have been largely neglected by scholars. (Gay film was silent cinema until video cameras appeared in 1982; gay book publishers hardly appeared before the mid-to-late 1980s.) Coming out of a text-free tradition heretofore disguised coyly as physique photo booklets for “artists who cannot afford models,” gay magazines such as the pioneer *Drummer* (first issue June 20, 1975) proclaimed something new: frontal nudity plus sexy captions, sex-narrative news articles, gonzo feature articles and interviews, and erotic fiction openly inviting masturbation.

To write is to conceptualize topic words for topic sentences to collapse huge concepts into one syllable for use by the writer and reader of academic and pop culture. In this instance, the uncloseting of butch queers was a striking reveal of homosexuality's most invisible population: the masculine-identified. Driving *Drummer*, I toyed with words on an abacus wire to make neologisms add up to something intelligent and hot—coining words that start in the reader's head and work their way down. I was a writer/editor/photographer into “the scene.”

When the American Popular Culture Association (founded 1968) changed the character of American Studies by introducing diversity, race, sex, and gender, I immediately, as a charter member, penned gay-themed articles for the *Journal of Popular Culture* (“Gay Incest in *The Boys in the Band*”) and wrote *Popular Witchcraft* (began 1969; published 1972 by Citadel Press, and 2005 by University of Wisconsin Press), one of the first books for the Bowling Green University Popular Culture Press. Back then I was stuck with words like *homophile* and *invert* even as the 1968 pop-culture mandate was to examine culture as it happened rather than wait fifty years for historians to comment. Thus stuck as the Titanic 70s began, it was necessary to name, label, and conceptualize words that organized deviant identity, sexuality, and politics.

In terms of how on-the-spot coinages help us rethink the past, the GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco, kindly assessed that my writing “pioneering since the late sixties has helped document the gay world and the changes it has undergone.” In my 1968 novel, *I Am Curious (Leather)*, written while I was a tenured university professor, an experienced biker teaches a young man (and therefore the pre-Stonewall reader, and then, when serialized in 1978, the *Drummer* reader) a list of primer words which clue him into S&M sex and define his innate behavior as a masculine man. (In 1989, Thomas E. Murray and Thomas R. Murrell surveyed S&M personals ads and listed 800 words coined by specific-use necessity in *The Language of Sadoomasochism: A Glossary and Linguistic Analysis*.)

Because the neologisms and sex-narrative news features worked, the *Bay Area Reporter* observed that my 1970s “writing created the leather prose style and its magazines” meaning directly *Man2Man Quarterly*, the *California Action Guide*, and *Drummer* whose “groundbreaking editor,” so mentioned PlanetOut.com, I had the good luck to be. (The “leather prose style” was my introducing, by spinning off Hunter Thompson, an erotic participatory element into journalistic news stories as well as Joycean wordplay and stream of consciousness into erotic fiction to make it “literary.” Michael Bronski wrote that my participatory eyewitness style from the 1970s was about “ideas” and represented the then new wave of “masculine romance” which, I find, was made new again by Annie

Proulx in her 1997 *New Yorker* short story, “Brokeback Mountain,” and turned to box-office gold in the 2005 film, *Brokeback Mountain*, scripted by Diana Ossana and Larry McMurtry.)

As gonzo eyewitness in sex and art, particularly with my lover, Robert Mapplethorpe, all I knew was that our gay history would have no more memory than the remembrance we give it. Opposite the maxim that “Christ is the Word made flesh,” my sex credo is: “Flesh becomes words.” Robert Frost in his poem about building a stone wall says that we learn from our hands to our heads. The conundrum is that homosexuality is a hologram. You see it, but when you reach out to touch it, your physical hand closes empty around what you think is tangibly there. That very disconnect between head and hand invites coinage not only in pop culture but in men’s studies which ought to approach males and masculinities parallel to feminist approaches to women, female identity, and femininities.

Over forty-five years, from Stonewall to the *fin de siecle*, at the ends of my fingers, experimental words appeared early on in the starting-gate books *What They Did to the Kid* (1965), *Love and Death in Tennessee Williams* (1967), the aforementioned *I Am Curious (Leather)* (1968), and *Popular Witchcraft: Straight from the Witch’s Mouth* (1972). Some words were one-off poetic spontaneities: e.g., *cumshine*. Others were carefully crafted for repeated use: *homomascularity*. Perhaps some future student of gay literature or queer theory (or whatever gay studies are called next generation) can sort through my *kama sutra* short stories and novels and biographies and academic essays to separate words that are merely stylistically buoyant from words that actually designed a concept and moved the gay conversation forward to a perspective helpful to rethinking the past.

By 1977 in *Drummer* and in the 1970-1982 journal drafts of *Some Dance to Remember* (memoir-novel completed 1984), the necessity of naming concepts entailed my coining the following:

- *homomascularity*, *homomasculine*, *homomascular*, as well as the reciprocal *homofemininity*, *heteromascularity*, as well as *homochristianity*;
- slam-dunk spinoffs such as *heterophobia* (this unspoken virus infecting gay newspapers and blogs is never mentioned at self-defined “inclusive” queer conferences, is rarely admitted or studied, and deserves its own conference or issue in some academic journal);
- *perversatility* (a positive quality; from *perverse* + *versatility*);

- the prefix *man* (eg. *mansex*) —for which I rather apologize because its adaptation by others has made what was once fresh into something of a cliché;
- the suffix *stream* (e.g. *gaystream*, *leatherstream*, *bearstream*);
- *recreational sex*, *man2man*, *straight queens* (e.g., TV's *Frasier*); and
- the first use of the eponymous *bear* which like *leather* no one person invented *per se*;
- a gazillion new synonyms for *penis*, *sperm*, and *orgasm* because all neologisms had to be interactively surprising enough to keep the magazine reader cuming, and coming back;
- a new 1972 definition of S&M as “sensuality and mutual-ity” which led to *mutualist*;
- plus attempts at a gay style guide to standardize, according to the Anglo-Saxon rather than the French-Norman, the slippery erotic spellings of *hardon*, *cum/cuming*, etc.

When the once bright young thing Norman Mailer, who had spelled *fuck* as *fug* in his huge best-seller *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), was being lionized at a New York party, he was introduced to the diva Tallulah Bankhead who hissed, “Oh, darling! You’re the young man who can’t spell *fuck*.”

The act of “Naming the Neologism,” *homomascularity*, an ennobling (rather than enabling) word born out of my re-conception of courtly love as found in Malory’s *Le Morte d’Arthur*, was carefully designed to deflect from the word *sex* in the center of *homosexuality*, because that “neon centrality” reduced gays to sexual acts, so much so that straights (always uncomfortable with the word *sex* buried in any word) rather immediately preferred the alternative *gay* which scared neither the horses nor their children, because *gay* does not imply *sex*. In addition, *gay* is three letters brief—a keyword perfectly sized for headlines. Nevertheless, *homosexuality* as a construct suggested a classic utility worth building on, even if *homo* was often a pop epithet equal to *fag* and *queer*. (It is a gay linguistic theorem that epithets can be unhorsed and co-opted.) *Homo* is a root to cling to. After the fashion of Raymond Williams’ *Key Words*, *homomascularity* might be analyzed in the following genesis.

During my eleven years at the Pontifical College Josephinum where I was a schoolmate of Cardinal Bernard Law who became a media scandal in Boston for covering up molestation of minors by his priests, my eight years of Greek and Latin studies caused my lifting of *homo* as a

prefix from the Greek meaning “the same” and not from the Latin noun meaning “man.” (Priests began teaching me Latin and Greek as a freshman in high school, and what happens to a boy when he is fourteen marks him forever.) *Homomascularity*, therefore, is as Williams mentions of the words he examined, one of those words that forces itself on our attention, because the problems of its meaning seem “inextricably bound up with the problems it was being used to discuss.” This linguistic bondage of *meaning* and *problem* is the “good cholesterol” and the “bad cholesterol” of keywords.

Homomascularity and its sibling words *leather* and *bear* (which are categories more than synonyms) were detached from *macho* and *butch* even before *macho* went straight and *butch* went lesbian. In the pop-culture genesis and use of *homomascularity*, the word is an apolitical identity category of non-hegemonic masculinity that allows men’s bodies to shape esthetic, erotic, and social vocabulary, delving behind the “Number One Keyword” used in gay personals ads to apply to the advertiser and to his quarry: *straight-acting*. Like it or not, the statistical truth—revealed by marketing and personals ads that do not lie—is that *straight-acting* is the main unit of erotic measure for many millions of gay men.

Homomascularity, *leather*, and *bear* (all of which led to the Instamatic flash coinages of *daddy* and *boy* in *Drummer*) actually “flesh out” the masculine-identified diversity behind this enormous gay demand for “straight-acting” and “straight-appearing.” Not to pull back the Wizard’s emerald curtain, but it might be a revelation to point out that most bears are middle-class gay men who travel in packs to conventions and resorts, and that their middle-class “bear lust” romanticizing blue-collar working men is the same as the lust that the upper-crust has always had for working-class sexuality. (See the “T. S. Eliot” drawings of homomasculine artists Domino and Rex who celebrate “restless nights in one-night cheap hotels,” toilets, and filling stations.)

Homomascularity seeks the pure heart of the archetypal best that males do, not the stereotypical worst. *Homomascularity* taken to extremes is *hyper-masculinity*. Once embodied in right-wing Hollywood cowboy John Wayne, that hyper-masculine exaggeration of an actual cowboy is the affected bowlegged walk, sneering southern drawl, and fetish gear of George W. Bush cloned like a “Gay Bill Doll” action figure in cowboy hats and flight suits on the deck of an aircraft carrier with his keywords “Mission Accomplished” painted on a banner three stories tall.

Homomascularity, *leather*, and *bear*, firstly, are apolitical and archetypal expressions of the embodied masculine realities of gay men keyed to how male bodies have emerged within homosexuality—our bodies, our selves, our destiny—to celebrate (that is, *fetishize*) male secondary

sex characteristics of body-hair patterns, moustache, beard, bone mass, weight, musculature, and voice as well as ageing (on into andropause and seniority), in a vocabulary of in-corporated identity markers psychologically antidotal to the ever-young androgyne as well as to effeminate conventions, stereotypes, and fears. Secondly, these words, fixed at the time of their coining, provided the muscular vocabulary gay men needed as they rejected society's subjugation and dismissal that classified them as feminine, because as long as people think gays "want to be women," people will, using that key phrase, bash and abuse gays the way they victimize women, which is why gays' and women's causes are so similar, and can be linked to such mutual benefit.

In 1978, at age thirty-nine, I looked at the futurity of gay men in a feature interview with the thirty-seven-year-old pornstar legend Richard Locke in *Drummer 24* (September 1978), and I wrote, conscious of our future history, "Years from now when you read this and you will read this, remember the way we were in 1978." The need for homomascularity arose because Peter Pan cannot stop growing thicker, hairier, and older. So I thought to make a virtue of necessity—literally, *virtue*, from the Latin, *vir*, meaning *male*. Inspired by the then new Spanish film, *In Praise of Older Women* (1978), I introduced the *nouvelle* but reader-friendly phrase "In Praise of Older Men" into "Upcoming at *Drummer*" which became the special unnumbered issue *Drummer Daddies*, "In Search of Older Men." In that same *Drummer 24*, with its famous Mapplethorpe cover deconstructing the cliché of kweeny male beauty, my editorial, "Let Us Praise Fucking with Authentic Men," amplified the text and photos of grown men doing their dad's act not their mum's.

In 1969, my friend Al Shapiro (the artist A. Jay) had become art director of the self-defining *Queen's Quarterly*; by the mid-70s, he turned 180 degrees of separation from *QQ* and we began creating *Drummer* as a pro-active lifestyle magazine for masculine-identified guys. Thus ignited by my original coinages and high concepts in these early issues, *Drummer* then built—for the next twenty years of its existence—entire issues on homomascularity fetishes and themes of "dads" and "sons/boys" and "bears" and finally on "mountainmen." That word I introduced from my own twelve-years' buck-skinning re-enactment experience as a new fetish category in the huge "Bear Issue" of *Drummer 119* (August 1988). I make a tiny nod to Richard Amory's pastoral *Song of the Loon* (book 1966; film 1970), his Fenimore Cooper leatherman, and his Native-American named "Bear-Who-Dreams." "Dick Amory," however, who spent too much time making a pseudo-sexy pen-name, blew the coming tide because he did bother to fetishize the word *bear*. So *bear* lay ignored, mostly because gay consciousness was too young and too skinny to need *bear's* interpretive

dance titled “The Old Man’s Boy Grows Older.” (Paging Matthew Bourne!)

Linguistic history is *Rashomon*, and editing and writing *Drummer* positioned me in the center flow of the leatherstream of diversified homomascularity. In *Drummer* 20 (January 1978), I immediately widened the magazine with the first “gay sports” feature article, and in *Drummer* 23 (July 1978), added the key line to the masthead: “The American Review of Gay Popular Culture,” and in that landmark *Drummer* 24 (September 1978), wrote a homomasculinist editorial celebrating “male authenticity” cited as important historically by Joseph W. Bean in *Leather Times* #1 (2007), the magazine of the Leather Archives and Museum. For the twenty-five years of *Drummer*’s existence, in 64 of its 214 issues, as *Drummer*’s most continuous contributor, I was dedicated to keeping the magazine both *verite* and “reader reflexive.” For instance, no one person invented the word *bear* which was in common American straight use for “a non-threatening hairy, burly, jovial, blue-collar man’s man” as well as in the name of the football team, the Chicago Bears, who fairly much sum up the heteromasculine blue-collar bear body type. As writer and editor, I helped turn the word *bear* specifically gay—that is, into a fetish item which means into a category of desire—insofar as I wrote the first ever feature article on bears, actually using *bear* as a keyword denoting category, identity, and commodity in the *California Action Guide* (November 1982). Pumping this first feature article about bears, I was also the first editor to put the word *bear* on a magazine cover (the same *CAG*, 11/82), under the banner headline, “Beyond Gay: Homomascularity for the 80s! Why You’re Not Gay Anymore!” with “Bears: Hair-Fetish Ranch” to announce the feature “Hair-Balling: Hair Fetish Confidential.” The text directly connected *bear* and *homomascularity* in the first paragraph.

Five years later, Richard Bulger founded *Bear* magazine (1987), and stated that my ’zine *Man2Man Quarterly* (1979-1982) had been his ’zine’s model even as he wrote about his publishing mission, “There’s another side to gay media: the side which *Drummer*, *RFD*, and the *Leather Journal*...capture. You can feel the homomascularity in these publications, and I like that.” (Bulger, *Bear Magazine*, Volume 2 #6, 1988, page 23.) When the photocopied small-format ’zine *Bear* was one year old, I had publicized its *bearstream* in the glossy large-format pages of *leatherstream Drummer* 119, the aforementioned issue of August 1988, in my essay that was the first bear feature article in *Drummer*: “How to Hunt Buckskin-Leather Mountain Men and Live among the Bears.”

In those five years from my introducing *bear* to the moment Bulger created *Bear* magazine, as the gay look changed with the emaciation of AIDS, *bear* widened its original definition of “hairy body and/or

beard” to include *avoirdupois* because, I think, weight seemed a marker of virus-free health. Again, flesh becomes word. *Time* magazine writer, Andrew Sullivan, declared himself a *bear* August 1, 2003, on Salon.com. In writing about the keyword *bear*, Sullivan rather much repeated Williams’ “inextricable” syndrome: “Every time I try and write a semi-serious sociological assessment of the bear phenomenon, I find myself erasing large amounts of text.” That’s because *bear* is a huge, receptive, inclusive, wonderful, humorous blank. In my “Foreword” to Les Wright’s *Bear Book II* (2001), my definition of the incredible lightness of being bear had been: “The concept of bear is blank enough to absorb countless male identities and fantasies.” In Ron Suresha’s *Bears on Bears: Interviews and Discussions* (2002), I specified: “*Bear* is a concept so receptively blank that as a label it welcomes and absorbs all masculine fantasies, fetishes, identities, and body types. *Bear* is all inclusive.”⁶

When publisher Anthony P. DeBlase, Ph.D., bought *Drummer*, he wrote an editorial in *Drummer* 100 (October 1986) acknowledging that my 1970s *Drummer* focused on *masculinity* and then on the subcategories of *leather*, *western*, and *fetishes*. *Leather* was the keyword for masculine bonding beginning in California with motorcycle-riding ex-soldiers after 1945 up through Marlon Brando’s subversive hetero-seeming masculinity in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951) and homo-seeming masculinity in *The Wild One* (1953) which James Dean queered in his homoerotic coming-out film *Rebel without a Cause* (1955), and occult magus Kenneth Anger made startlingly homomascularity in his Christ-queering religious epic of gay leather ritual, *Scorpio Rising* (1963); this homo Christ worship became central sex act in *Some Dance to Remember*.

Leather defines a masculine way of being homosexual as in Larry Townsend’s pioneering work, *The Leatherman’s Handbook* (1972) for whose Silver Anniversary Edition (1997) I wrote an introduction:

By the time of the rip-roaring counter-culture of the 60s, the specific word *leather*, transcending literal meaning as clothing, surfaced from the underground subculture redefined to mean a specific psycho-drama sex-style. *Leather*, along with 60s peace, love, sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll, arrived to name a way of being and becoming, of ritualizing and actualizing, of creation and recreation, of politicizing and marketing....*Leather*—barbaric, medieval, industrial—is the flesh become word. *Leather* is the conjure amulet....the fetish to which a certain erotic drive attaches itself and through which a certain erotic desire commands its visible incarnation....Foucault twisted S&M *leather*

recreational sex into...endgame....*Leather* liberated masculine love...and helped define masculine-identified homosexuality.⁷

Leather, with its gear and BDSM rituals provided grist and gristle for great copy and hot photos, but still seemed a bit specific and not inclusive of the wide market for *Drummer* which continued adding fetishized words such as *jock*, *muscleman*, *cowboy*, *blue-collar*, *chub*, *bear*, *cop*, and *uniform*. (I added a special column to publish readers' self-pictures titled "Tough Customers" beginning *Drummer* 25 (December 1978); that key phrase finally became its own magazine in the 1990s under editor Joseph W. Bean.) The predilection for these "action-hero key frames" arises partly from the linguistic and erotic fact that most of the 1960s-1970s gay lib generation were all "war babies," impressionable children who learned the gaydar of specific gender-tight language during World War II—while acutely aware of heroic absent daddies hypermasculinized in uniform and of "mannish" women doing "men's jobs" in factories and of "girly, womanly, female, feminine dames" (*South Pacific*) sexing up blue-collar male working gear. (I define *gaydar* as the 69th sense of multi-sensual queers.)

While I was editor, *Drummer's* press run, according to publisher John Embry, was 42,000 monthly, with another 42,000 pass-along. Twelve issues in twelve months times 84,000 equals over one million readers per year which, in pop culture where mass box-office numbers mean something, shows how embedded the need for a widely inclusive homomale identity actually was. (*Drummer's* 214 issues from 1975-1999 reached a virtual infinity of international readers; those 1970s issues sell for \$150-\$450 per collector's copy in New York.) In filling each issue with *homomale* buzzwords to keep the pages fresh, *Drummer* was a lifestyle teaching device. If I introduced *cigar* as a fetish word as I did in *Drummer* 22 (May 1978), thirty days later, men appeared smoking cigars in bars.

So *homomale* first appeared as an attitude in late 70s use in *Drummer*, then as a word in *Man2Man Quarterly* (1979), and then in the *California Action Guide* (1982). Mark Hemry was my partner in founding the 'zine *Man2Man Quarterly* and the tabloid *California Action Guide*—both designed to go deeper than *Drummer* into the then emerging homomale culture of totems and taboos. Fifteen Warhol minutes after *Man2Man* came forward as a keyword title, long before numerals became common in gangsta and punk spelling, the phrase "man-to-man"—so internally defining and reciprocal—suddenly became a very vogue catch-phrase in gay magazines which had never before mentioned the "concept" or tried the "breakthrough concept" of marketing to gay men as men. Both *Drummer* and *Bear* tagged their personals ads as "man-

to-man.” I learned that phrase at my father’s knee, and at school from Robert Burns’ “A Man’s a Man for A’ [All] That.” In 1795, during the Age of Enlightenment and on the eve of the French Revolution which led to our Gay Revolution in the 1970s, Burns wrote this inclusive poem of egalitarian social justice:

Then let us pray that come it may
 (As come it will for a’ that),
 That Sense and Worth o’er a’ the earth,
 Shall bear the gree an a’ that.
 For a’ that, an a’ that,
 It’s coming yet for a’ that,
 That man to man, the world, o’er
 Shall brithers be for a’ that.

Gays spin everything for camp. I’ll be the first to say the world is full of male impersonators of every kind. If satire of a concept is proof of its existence, I gladly point out homomascularity’s confirmation in the comic camp of the disco group “The Village People” who staged a commercial stereotype of the archetype singing “Macho Man,” “In the Navy,” and “YMCA.” “The Village People” leatherman, Glenn Hughes, oftentimes partied with our *Drummer* salon who were also—late nights at the Slot Hotel and the Barracks bath on Folsom Street—fisting and fucking Foucault.

During the 1980s, I tub-thumped *homomascularity*, importing it with my leatherstream fiction and nonfiction to the original *Bear* magazine as well as to the Mavety Corporation’s younger, blonder magazines (*Uncut*, *Inches*, *Skinflicks*, *Just Men*) and Brush Creek Media magazines such as the new *Bear* magazine, *Powerplay*, and *Leatherman* which acknowledged in issue two that its title was taken from the name of a fictional magazine in *Some Dance to Remember*. After my artificially inseminating their pages with my turkey-baster seed words, the magazines themselves began to use the terms as did the readers in writing their personals ads. The true test of a word becoming key is when the readers start writing it in their personals ads. It also appeared as the specifically mentioned main theme in books such as *Some Dance to Remember* (1990, new edition 2005); *Corporal in Charge of Taking Care of Captain O’Malley* (1978; 1984; republished for its specific gay-speak as the homomasculinist one-act drama in the Lammy winning *Gay Roots*, Winston Leyland, 1991); *Titanic: Forbidden Stories Hollywood Forgot* (1999); *Chasing Danny Boy: Powerful Stories of Celtic Eros*, with Neil Jordan (1999); and *Tales from the Bear Cult: Bearotica for Your Inner Goldilocks* (2001).

Excerpt source: ©[Jack Fritscher](#), [Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer](#), San Francisco: [Palm Drive Publishing](#), 2008

By 1990, *homomascularity* had jumped into gender studies' use within the bear movement in which Ron Suresha coined *ursomascularity*; Les Wright, Ph.D., pioneering men's studies in ways similar to feminist approaches to women, female identities, and femininities furthered "homomascularities" by studying "gay men identifying as men more than as gay" at his Nashoba Institute research site (bearhistory.com) and in his *Bear Book: Readings in the History and Evolution of a Gay Male Subculture* (1997), and *Bear Book II: Further Readings* (2001) with a timeline "Foreword" explaining how the word *bear* became a homomascular construct; *homomascularity* and *gaystream* were both used by documentarian Ron Suresha in his *Bears on Bears* which included his Q&A titled "Bearness's Beautiful Big Blank: Tracing the Genome of Ursomascularity—An Interview with Jack Fritscher"; *homomascularity* appeared in *The Advocate*, the "gay journal of record" in the article "Daring to Be Bears," August 20, 2002; it also debuted in the benchmark *Village Voice* (June 22, 2004) describing the life's work of the legendary international artist Tom of Finland as the "artist whose drawings defined homomascularity and S&M for the century"; Mary Louise Rasmussen and editor Eric Rofes—who was bearish, a professor, and part of San Francisco's historical leather community—introduced *homomascularity* to a new generation in the anthology, *Youth and Sexuality*, 2004.

Homomascularity is a coinage easily illustrated in the manner of dictionaries where "one picture is worth a thousand words." I have written about and published the homomascular photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe whose first ever magazine cover, previously mentioned, I commissioned, designed, and cast for the triumphal homomascular "Biker for Hire" cover, *Drummer* 24 (September 1978). I have also promoted photographers Arthur Tress in *Drummer* 30 (June 1979), Jim French (Colt Studio), Lou Thomas (Target Studio), Chuck Renslow (Kris Studio), Bob Mizer (AMG), and the man-defining films of the Gage Brothers, as well as the drawings of Tom of Finland, Rex, the Hun, and Domino. As a career photographer and videographer, I have shot and printed specific images of my interpretation of *homomascularity* in magazine covers, centerfolds, and photo spreads as well as in my more than 160 feature-length homomascular videos shot for Palm Drive Video since 1982 with box office at 250,000 units sold only in blue states. Doing the math: if four guys watched each unit sold.... Palm Drive Video's tag line is "Masculine Videos for Men Who Like Men Masculine."

Art critic Edward Lucie-Smith discussed the graphics of *homomascularity* in his "Introduction" to the fifty-five photos he chose from my portfolio for the coffee-table book titled *Jack Fritscher's American Men* (Aubrey Walter, Gay Men's Press, London, 1994). Lucie-Smith wrote:

Excerpt source: ©Jack Fritscher, *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer*, San Francisco: Palm Drive Publishing, 2008

In these photographs, Fritscher focuses on what he calls “homomascularity”—less the act of sex, itself, more a complete state of being. [These are] ritualized totems of the potent American Dream, taken from his own dream visions, as well as the dreams of the intense cult following whose tastes he has recorded and reflected for many years on page and screen.... He believes that, just as some women now legitimately investigate their own gender, so too, many men have become increasingly curious about their own gender identification. In his view, true homomascularity, far from cancelling out the female principle, offers the valid gender balance of male animus that the female anima demands and deserves....his images may be...threatening to a certain type of gay Puritan....⁸

Frankly, *homomascularity*, which was coined as a “Platonic blank of self-reliant male archetype,” can be spun by biased misandry against the concept. *American Men*, which makes absolutely no reference to women was judged “misogynistic” by one very binary American gay reviewer. Sexist himself, his reactionary “key” did not fit the “lock” these iconoclastic images had on ur-mascularity. Because masculinity is as valid a unit of identity as femininity, it should not be vilified by anyone confusing the Platonic ideal of homomascularity with the “sins of patriarchy” as defined by those who would be matriarchs: real or drag. This exact cultural fear of masculine-identified gay men led gays and straights alike into censorship of Robert Mapplethorpe’s homomascularity photography; kept Patricia Nell Warren’s homomascularity love story, *The Front Runner* (1974), from so far being filmed; and created “Don’t Ask/Don’t Tell” because gays may, in fact (shades of Adolf Brand), be more masculine than straights.

Homomascularity, especially when made to sound political with an *ism* as in *homomascularity* (a term I have never used), can incite male and female politics as dramatized in *Some Dance to Remember* when the “Masculinist Manifesto,” injected as a plot-pushing device to pinpoint the inflammatory sexual politics of the late 70s, causes curbside magazine racks selling the “Manifesto” to be set afire. One reviewer, who was not bilingual around “male stough” (*stuff + tough*), ranted under his headline, “The Rise and Fall of Butch,” reviewing his own gender issues but not the book. The fictional “Masculinist Manifesto,” with a facetious nod to Valerie Solanas’ *SCUM Manifesto* (Society for Cutting Up Men), is a simple “declaration of masculine independence” that in the course of the narrative becomes politicized by reactionaries the way masculinity was politicized by the anti-patriarchist Arthur Evans, the self-proclaimed “Red Queen,” whose broadside, pasted on Castro Street lampposts, I took

Excerpt source: ©Jack Fritscher, *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer, San Francisco: Palm Drive Publishing, 2008*

up from the street and published as a very camp “editorial” in *Drummer* 25 (December 1978) with his title, “Afraid You’re Not Butch Enough?” In truth, homomascularity is no more patriarchal than the role playing of *daddies* and *boys*.

Building the homo-word-hoard was a clear necessity in the 1970s gay civil war over terminology as “gays” fought “queens” fought “clones” fought “men who happened to be gay.” For historians who want to know how a keyword helps understand the past, there, recorded on the Rosetta Stone of *Some Dance to Remember* is, as written on the first page, the beginning of the 1970s “civil war between women and men and men”—a very uncivil civil war over keywords as *gay lib* morphed into *gay politics*. In a world of sliding gender, *homomascularity* and *bear* actually have grown to include women: e.g., “Lesbears and Transbears: Dykes and FTMs as Bears.” And “Dykes on Bikes” has evolved from slur to trademark.

Psychologically, *homomascularity*—and its attendant words from *leather* to *bear*—was needed as antidote to the self-hatred pushed at masculine-identified gay men whom other-identified gays considered part of straight masculine hegemony—particularly by queens ruling at the top of the hierarchy dominating early gay communities. (In 2005, *sissy* is now transforming as gay sites and publications use it—qualified—as in “self-proclaimed sissy” Bill Porter’s one-man Broadway show.) It is ironic when masculine gay men are blamed for the sins of straight men given that gay men get no “bump” from anyone for “being gay,” and then are bashed by straight men “because they *are* gay” and then—double indemnity—cursed by politically correct abusers because they are “male.” What’s good for the goose is good for the gander: if a woman wants to transgender into the Platonic ideal of a man, why criticize a man who wants the same ideal?

My driving *Drummer*, and my cautionary tale *Some Dance to Remember*, with its fictitiously coded *Drummer* magazine, *Maneuvers*, was about finding the apt projection of that part of one’s self that will control and discipline the self the way only self can. Therefore, only on the literal surface is homomascularity about disciplinarian bikers and coaches; in truth, it is about identifying self discipline. Masculine-identified gay men have had to become positively self-reliant after the fashion of Ralph Waldo Emerson whose self-reliant person in mass media is the Marlboro cowboy who rides wordlessly across a subliminal *Brokeback Mountain*. That can-do erotic American cowboy image—reeking of homoerotic fraternity—I very specifically coopted off TV and billboards as the key subliminal behind every homomascularity face/body/attitude in every page, paragraph, and picture in *Drummer*. This iconic genesis out of the gay-friendly Emerson—by way of Walt Whitman’s blue-collar lust for

working men—is no stretch, really, because the very title of *Drummer* comes from Emerson’s pal Henry David Thoreau who is quoted on the masthead of nearly every issue of *Drummer*: “If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away.”

That non-aggressive Transcendentalist self-reliance is at the very heart of self-disciplined homomascularity. Just as the Marlboro ads never reference women, *homomascularity* is a Whitmanian he-festival, a moment out of time, place, and politics that allows men to consider their essence and identity as males in terms of themselves and other men, before they dare even consider themselves ready or worthy to approach females and family. Philosophically, *homomascularity* is a meditational helix very like Thomas Aquinas’ consideration of *ens qua ens, being as being, masculinity as masculinity, queer as queer*—a defensible intellectual exercise that is also legitimate emotionally, sexually, and politically on the human level. Masculinism and feminism both pale beside humanism which includes them both. That is why the first sentence of the masculine-identified *Some Dance to Remember* is very pointedly the tender homo-humanism of “In the end, he could not deny his human heart.”

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ENDNOTES

1. Breeding and taxes: “Two groups opposed to gay marriage rights...argued that the state has a legitimate interest in restricting marriage to opposite-sex couples as a way of encouraging procreation.” —AP, FoxNews, 14 March 2005; “Connecticut could lose nearly \$1 million a year because of decreased inheritance tax revenue if the state allows civil unions of same-sex couples.” —AP, 13 March 2005, 365Gay.com
2. Jack Fritscher, *Some Dance to Remember: A Memoir-Novel of San Francisco 1970-1982*, Stamford CT: Knights Press, 1990; Binghamton NY: The Haworth Press, 2005.
3. Associated Press, 25 April 2005.
4. For thirty years, I have noted the failure of queer studies in regard to gay magazines’ editorial and advertising contents, and applaud Paul Baker’s latter-day efforts in “No Fats, Femmes or Flamers: Changing Constructions of Identity and the Object of Desire in Gay Men’s Magazines,” B. Benwell and T. Edwards (eds), *Masculinity and Men’s Lifestyle Magazines*, 2004, which, nevertheless, overall, fails to bother to excavate the gay magazine roots of the 60s and 70s, particularly *Drummer*, which quickly grew hugely influential and became *International Drummer*.
5. Michael Bronski, “S&M: The New Romance,” *Gay Community News* (Boston), Volume 2, Number 30, February 16, 1985.
6. Ron Suresha, editor, *Bears on Bears: Interviews and Discussions*, Los Angeles: Alyson Books, 2002, page 22.
7. Jack Fritscher, “Introduction: Leather *Dolce Vita*, Pop Culture, and the Prime of Mr. Larry Townsend,” Larry Townsend, *Leatherman’s*

Handbook Silver Anniversary Edition, Los Angeles: L. T. Publications, 1997, pages 9-22.

8. Edward Lucie-Smith, "Introduction," *Jack Fritscher's American Men*, London: Editions Aubrey Walter, Gay Men's Publishers Ltd., 1995, page 5.
9. Suresha, *op. cit.*, page 24.

III. Eyewitness Illustrations

New Words: *Homomascularity* and *Bears!* "Virtual *Drummer*" was a concept bigger than *Drummer* which in the HIV 1980s shed its core 1970s sexuality and lost its underground edginess to Mr. *Drummer* contest coverage and video reviews. Continuing original-recipe *Drummer* "raw," *Man2Man Quarterly*, the first 'zine of the 1980s, edited by Jack Fritscher and Mark Hemry, was announced in *Drummer* 30 (June 1979). The "Virtual *Drummer*" of the *California Action Guide* (1981-1982), edited by Fritscher, and published by Michael Redman in San Francisco, was a people's tabloid that dared continue where *Drummer* left off. In the November 1982 *California Action Guide*, Fritscher was the first writer and editor to publish the word *Bear* on the cover of any publication. Filmmaker Wakefield Poole's model "Roger" on the cover signified how the salon Fritscher had created around *Drummer* traveled with him to other publications. The second *Drummer* publisher Anthony DeBlase also helmed the "Virtual *Drummer*" of *DungeonMaster* after the manner of the first *Drummer* publisher John Embry who started up the "Virtual *Drummer*" movement in *Mach* and *Manifest Reader*.