

Mental Disorders of the Radical Right

I spent this past Sunday morning listening to the harsh, irrational rhetoric of Jimmy Swaggart, Jerry Falwell, and David Hume. In one sense, their rantings were a bit humorous because of their outlandishness.

But my mirth quickly turned to alarm as I noticed the 50,000 member audience was taking all this quite seriously. Jimmy was condemning the "homos, communists, and liberal media" for their "growing influence" in Washington. Jerry was furious at a new group called "Fundamentalists Anonymous" which he accused of stirring up disenfranchised nonbelievers. (This was a very small group, he claimed, but they were a threat because the "liberal press" would give them favorable coverage and exaggerate their numbers and influence.) Therefore, Jerry said, Christians must unite in opposition by forming a new "Christian Anti-Defamation Committee" which would collect all articles in newspapers, magazines, etc. that presented Christians in a negative light. Meanwhile David Hume was busy justifying Libyan intervention on biblical grounds.

I was forced to ask myself after three hours of torture what all of this had to do with society at large and the so-called "real world." Believe it or not, I reached the conclusion that these three men are very important world actors who will have a major impact on my life and on

those around me, even if I choose to ignore them.

You see, we live in a world of competing ideas, and the truth is what one chooses to believe. What is perceived as truth can be used to galvanize people's actions. The millions of people who listen weekly to television evangelists participate in our electoral process and are capable of changing the tone of political debate. This is why I became alarmed at all of those believing faces, and it is why you should be alarmed too.

If you feel secure in your knowledge that the Falwells of this world will ultimately fizzle and die, consider for a moment the historical significance of such creatures. How many millions of Jews and homosexuals died before Adolf Hitler was considered the most infamous war criminal of all time? How many lives were ruined because of possible homosexual or communist connections before Senator Joe McCarthy was censured and removed from the U.S. Senate? How many homosexuals will be beaten or murdered because of radical right-generated mass hysteria over the AIDS crisis? Will you be one of them?

Before you slip into absolute complacency concerning the radical right, I urge you to be aware of domestic totalitarianism, before it comes knocking at your front door. Safe journeying!

-Sydney Wyatt

My Two Loves

ABC's My Two Loves, a movie about a woman struggling with her sexual orientation, could have been a big step forward for lesbians in particular and for gays in general. Instead, the movie refused to make any truly positive statements and continued to substantiate myths and stereotypes.

I realize that the movie had a few bright spots, but I am not willing to compromise my beliefs for a few prime time "warm fuzzies." True, at last a lesbian did appear in a television movie, but the woman was less than admirable and was so far back in the closet that I felt assured she had never heard of gay rights.

No one in this movie could even say the word "lesbian," except for an overtly homophobic mother and only then when she was yelling, "You can't be one of those.": The struggling bisexual woman finally goes to a therapist, and naively I thought maybe the therapist could say a few good words about lesbians and gays; however, all the therapist could utter was that many people have same-sex experiences but no need for concern yet!

This movie also brings up the controversy which I fondly call "the diesel dyke

dilemma." Do we as lesbians and gay men want to sacrifice the issue of homophobia for a few beautiful role models? I hope not. Let's learn from other oppressed groups that positive role models do not end oppression. As one person of color put it on the eve of the Superbowl, "Tonight millions of Americans will turn on their televisions to watch Refrigerator Perry play football, but in a lot of those neighborhoods he would not be able to buy a house."

Sure, I understand the politics surrounding spokespeople, but who wants freedom for only white, middle-class, physically attractive lesbians and gays? Let's make our movement free of racism, classism, sexism, and all the others. Let's demand from the press and entertainment fields responsible, fair, and accurate portrayals of our people and lifestyles.

-Jill Duvall

