

Me, talking about the Gays.

Written by Greg Mills



It's a subject that I've been thinking about recently, thanks to the passage in the musician John Cale's autobiography, "What's Welsh for Zen?", a book I re-read recently.

Cale, of course, made up the nucleus of the Velvet Underground with Lou Reed, and so was part of the Factory scene in the late Sixties. In writing about the Factory, he notes that the gay men that populated Warhol's world took to using "her" or "she" to refer to each other.

And I thought, how quaint! It also struck me that the sanctions against gays (just as it would for any group of people) forced gay men and women of that era into the very marginality that the forces of cultural conservatism accused them of embracing. The Shibboleths take on the fallacies of the prevailing convention wisdom.

The greatest freedom that gays have won is the right to call themselves gay – and have that be just one part of the whole of the individual. It's the right NOT to have a culture, or maybe it's being able to choose the culture you wish to embrace.

So, to round up today's lesson: marginal groups are often made marginal by outside prejudices. This happens partially as a survival technique to identify and connect with one's peers. So, in that way what was Gay culture is a lot like gaming culture, or Hip Hop culture, or Amish culture. It's a response to outside pressures.

Fucking a. I think I solved everything... through the application of the bleedin' obvious.