

letters

Church of Man

TO THE EDITOR:

On May 24 I attended Jack Malebranche's *Androphilia* reading at Powell's on Hawthorne. He certainly comes off more likable in person, and by the end of the talk, I felt a sense of relief that came from the defused tension of expecting a showdown of sorts between injured sissies and Mr. Drill Sergeant. And to some extent that did happen, but it was relatively civilized and peaceful.

Although it wasn't discussed during the Q & A, Malebranche has made no secret of the fact that he's an ordained priest in the Church of Satan. He speaks in *Androphilia* of manhood as a religion, and I've seen posts of his promoting essays with titles like "Satanism and Fascism." This is the one lingering doubt I have about the possibly dark underlying motives of his masculine-purist philosophy. There seem to be covert gleams of admiration for the accomplishments of fascist regimes in the book.

Toward the beginning of the reading, he responded to a question about whether he was really out to get effeminates, "I don't have the guns or the manpower to take them out." It was said in a jestful spirit, but after mulling it over, I can't help wondering, "What if you did have the guns and manpower to take them out?" But he clearly states in the book, "I don't advocate poor treatment of effeminates." Since he seems an honorable man, I'll take him at his word.

Malebranche spends a lot of time in *Androphilia* building up a straw man argument against "gay liberal feminists," but I don't think he understands what a feminist really is. Undoubtedly there have been some shrill quasi-separatist feminists in the past who have entirely vilified men and masculinity, but respected writers like bell hooks have

promoted feminism that is neither incompatible with, nor opposed to, masculinity and men.

I also see Malebranche as a hypocrite when he derides the way "gays tend to portray straight men as a one-dimensional bunch," then turns around and does the same thing to gays, painting them all as rainbow-flag-waving, diva-worshipping, "sad, damaged clowns." What Malebranche doesn't take into account is that many semi-effeminate homo guys, myself included, are also fed up with the more annoying aspects of gay culture, and have been for some time.

What it boils down to for me is the age-old mantra "live and let live." If you're really into masculinity and want it to define your life, have at it. Regardless, much of what Malebranche says in *Androphilia* about the desirability of masculine traits such as honor and dignity is refreshingly true, and his critique of the excesses of gay culture is in many ways incisive and insightful. Even if I'm not ready to subscribe wholeheartedly to his masculine religion—or any religion—I think he does deserve the applause he received for being the one to start a dialogue on this very touchy, and very timely, topic.

TONY LETIGRE
Portland

Incredible Masculinity

TO THE EDITOR:

Jack Malebranche's book, *Androphilia: Rejecting the Gay Identity, Reclaiming Masculinity*, was recently written up in *Just Out* ["Being a Man," May 18].

As a gender scholar, I would like to offer some ideas on Malebranche's work. This self-proclaimed manifesto is based on the constructs of gender and,

Katy Eaton, 1954-2007

Portland resident Kathryn Elizabeth Eaton died May 26 at Providence Portland Medical Center after a brief illness. She was 53.

Eaton was born Jan. 20, 1954, to Elizabeth B. Eaton and the late Walter G. Eaton of Schoharie, N.Y. She graduated summa cum laude from State University of New York at Oneonta in 1976 with a bachelor's in psychology and earned a master's in psychology at Clark University in Worcester, Mass., in 1978.

After embarking on a banking career and moving to Portland, Eaton attended Willamette University College of Law and earned her juris doctor degree in 2003. She specialized in tax law and volunteered professional services for elderly and legal groups. Her last position was with M. Caroline Cantrell & Associates.

Eaton enjoyed reading, music, knitting, travel, debate, yoga, swimming, cycling and socializing. She volunteered on legal committees and was co-chairwoman of the Oregon Gay and Lesbian Law Association. She loved babies and animals; her dog, Mindy, and cat, Pookie, were her constant companions and brought her much joy.

Eaton is survived by her mother; brothers, Walter Jr. of Schoharie, N.Y., and Richard of Warrensburg, N.Y.; and sisters, Margaret Eaton Yara of Woodside, Calif., Patricia Lewis of Hartwick, N.Y., Frances Gilday of Rockville, Va., Marianne Eaton Murphy of Bristol, Vt., and Virginia Paton of Piedmont, Calif.

A private family memorial service is planned for June 2 in Schoharie. A community memorial service will be held 5:30 p.m. June 8 at The Old Church, 1422 S.W. 11th Ave.

Remembrances may be made to The Nature Conservancy.

specifically, masculinity. However, Malebranche seems to possess one masculinity: his own. Without accounting for the boundaries of culture, race or class, he prescribes a new kind of internalized homophobia to a community already struggling with its own diversity.

This interpretation of masculinity is to some degree anchored in the text by a reference to historical representations of male-male relationships. Had Malebranche bothered to actually do his own historical work, he might have realized how inaccurate and carefully selected his literary portrait is.

Malebranche himself also does a poor job of defending his work. Regarding "queer theory, women's studies, gender studies, cultural studies, etc.," he said, "You are more often than not propagandists posing as intellectuals who are given a veneer of


authority by the fact that your indoctrination programs are accredited." The last time I checked, a personal attack was not a valid logical argument.

Malebranche is local, and spouting off without much basis. His arguments are weak, and drawn to favor himself above all others. Read his book, to be sure. It is almost as amusing as Fred Phelps' rabid insanity, and about as credible.

CAMERON LEE VOGT
Portland

CORRECTION

The May 18 article "Center Celebrates 18 Years" incorrectly reported the number of clients who annually visit the HIV Day Center. The facility saw 250 unduplicated clients and 7,340 total visits in 2006.

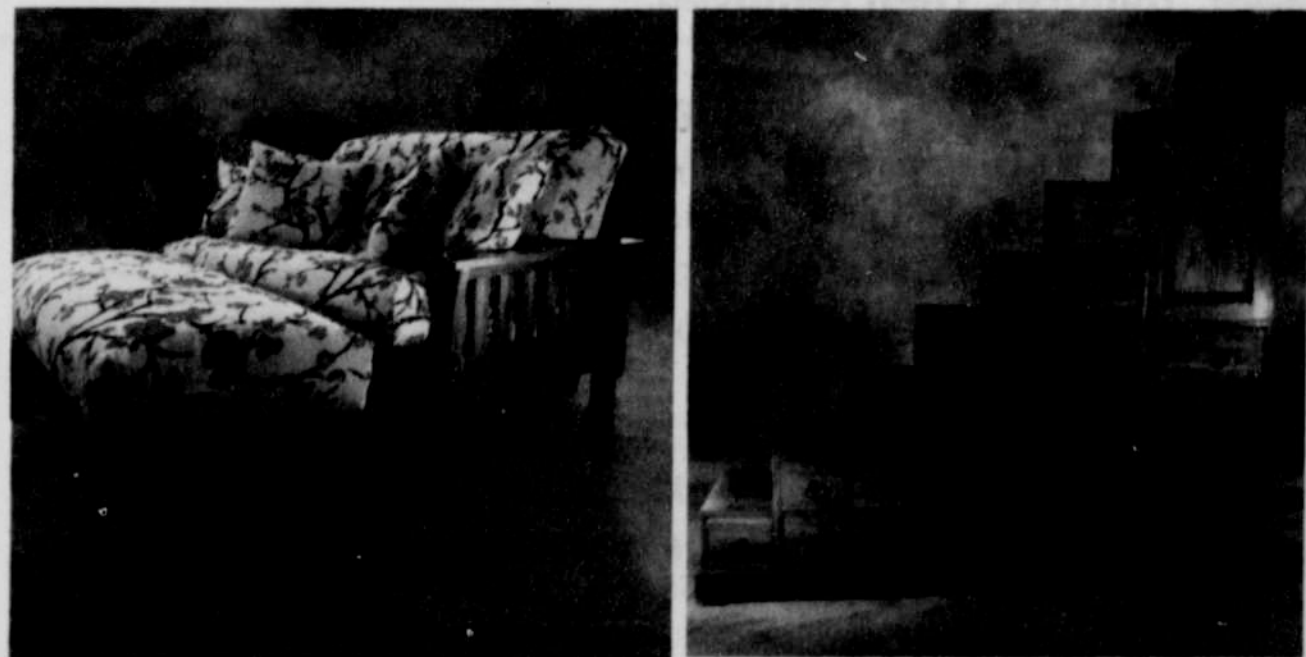


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