

THE GAY ARCHETYPES

Put forth by activist Harry Hay, founder of the Mattachine Society and the Radical Fairies, is the idea that gay men "constitute a third gender and, by extension, lesbians a fourth." Thompson and several of his interviewees in *Gay Soul* put forth the notion that gays and lesbians "represent significantly different ways of being...that implies a purposeful social function."

In this case, gender is about what we do, what purpose we serve, rather than merely our function as lovers of the same sex. We are two-spirited people, expressing both the masculine and the feminine. "To be both/and instead of either/or is one of our purposes," says Thompson.

This third gender has multiple embodiments through several archetypes. Within this cast of characters, you will find yourself and others, an ancient affirmation that we have been around since the dawn of man.

Once you know the positive, active sides of



Mark Thompson (left, with partner Malcolm Boyd) discusses his traveling exhibition of photographs, *Fellow Travelers*, during a reception March 1 at Q Center.

experiences means he's always learning. Many scholars say the element of childlike wonder is key to becoming a true mystic.

Without the adult responsibilities of tending house, making a living, etc., the Divine Child can devote his time to faraway notions and ideals. He can constantly seek. He's able to embody both the masculine and feminine traits in all their innocent goodness. This archetype calls on us to see the world with love and kindness, to dream of the impossible as a possible reality. The Divine Child acts as a source for much joy in the world.

- **The Double:** How many times have you seen a gay couple who quickly transform to look more and more alike? It's the archetype of the same, of someone outside ourselves sparked by Eros, which drives us to partnership. According to Thompson in *Gay Body*: "The Double is one of the most important and ascendant elements in the gay male psyche. We feel its presence erotically and project it—in ways both direct and subliminal—on the men we encounter and the work we do in the world. It is the wellspring of our creativity and endurance; it is the very root, in fact, of our modern gay identity."

The Double can represent a gay male's individuation, his reconciling of the inner masculine and feminine aspects. What heterosexual couples do when they marry—by joining dissimilar, but complementary, opposites—we gay men must do inside ourselves. "Readjusting our relationship with the feminine, especially the dark feminine who punishes, is very important. We must repair and restore a healthy relationship with the masculine double," Thompson says.

- **The Trickster:** The Trickster, or Fool, stands as the character whose purpose is to reflect back to people their own folly, cruelty or stupidity through humor. They stand immune to the normal retribution held for others because by creating laughter; they entertain the audience.

Gay men are masters of this humor. Thompson says: "Our humor is one of our muscles. It can be a weapon. A self-lacerating irony." As masters of projection ourselves, the embodiment of Narcis-

sus among us, we have a sharp eye for others' projections of themselves and are apt to point them out. This helps restore balance to the situation at hand, removing haughtiness from its pedestal, elevating truth to its righteous place. In the Trickster and Fool, we gay men find our freedom. Through this freedom, we help society transform itself.

- **The Berdache or Androgyne:** Gay children in Native American tribes were considered to be "two-spirited," neither masculine nor feminine, but possessors of both. These individuals were considered gifts from the great spirit, ones who were able to focus their time on duties besides raising children. They filled honored social roles as mediators, cultural workers, priests and artists. They wore dresses, and their history has been suppressed. Their name? *Berdache*. They were known as *hirijas* in India, the *mahu* in Polynesia and the *galli* in the ancient world.

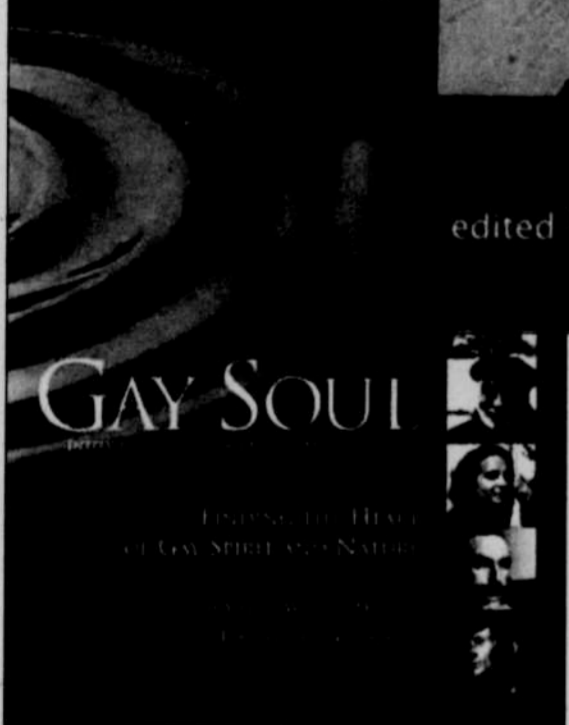
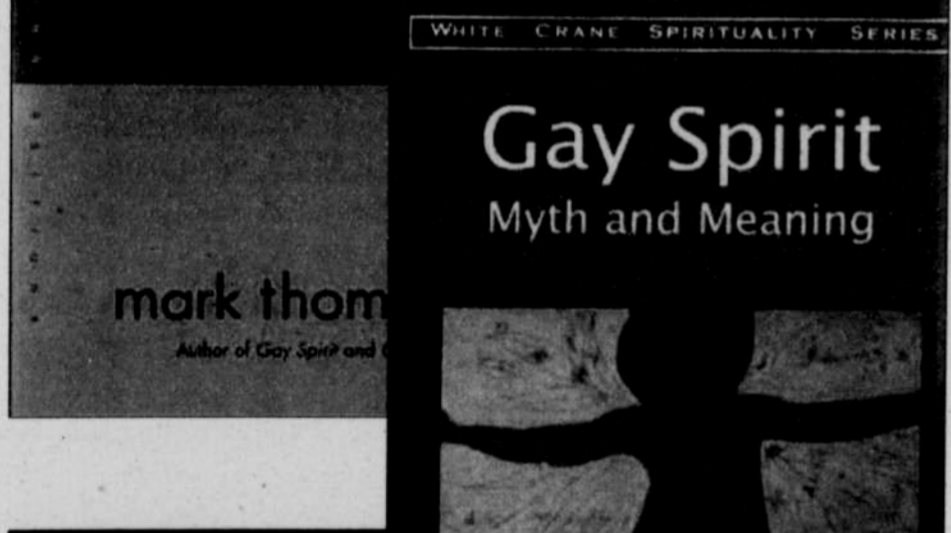
When combined with the Trickster, these folks serve the social purpose of bringing to light the differences among people through mischief and laughter. They saw underlying motives and helped lead warring parties to compromise by pointing out both sides' shortcomings. They underscored and bolstered unity within their communities.

THE NEXT FRONTIER

We're living in an exciting time in the history of mankind, and especially of gaykind. We're beginning to reconnect to the ancient systems of thought and slowly reforming society to include gay people as full and legal individuals. Yet there is a further reclamation that must occur.

For peace to become more and more apparent, Thompson says, gay folk must seek, reclaim and embody our place as the intersector between the divine masculine and divine feminine. "Claiming all of this, saying: 'That is who we are, this is the set of tools we've been given, that's how our psyches have been arranged. That is our meaning, our purpose, our fulfillment. That is our work.' It's an essential component to being fully human to know that we can make meaning out of lives." ☐

Fellow Travelers, a stunning collection of photographs of gay liberation pioneers by MARK THOMPSON, is on display through March 30 at Q Center, 69 S.E. Taylor St. The exhibit was sponsored, in part, by White Crane Institute, an organization "dedicated to researching, exploring and documenting the variety of manifestations of the spiritual search—both mainstream and individual—among contemporary GLBT men and women." For more information visit www.gaywisdom.org.



Mark Thompson has written or edited three books on gay spirituality: *Gay Spirit*, *Gay Soul* and *Gay Body*.

these as well as their passive, shadowy aspects, you will have the wisdom to act within your archetype(s) as well as see others enacting theirs.

- **The Divine Child:** Forever a boy, Peter Pan holds onto the imagination and whimsy of a little boy but is never able to accept the responsibility of growing up. His curiosity and openness to new