



Chateau Marmont

HOTEL and BUNGALOWS



8221 West Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90046¹

Friday, September 30, 1983

Dear Daniel,²

I bought a Walkman³ earlier today, and in a fit of melodramatic histrionics I went to Tower Records on the Sunset Strip and purchased

¹ The Chateau Marmont was built in 1927 and modeled after the Chateau d'Amboise in the Loire Valley. The Chateau has maintained its status as a world (in)famous hotel. According to the *Chateau Marmont Hollywood Handbook*, edited by Andre Balazs, 1996, the Chateau was in a state of decline having just emerged from the Sunset Strip wild ride of the '60s and '70s and culminating with the death of actor John Belushi in 1982.

² "In that same year [1959], Foucault met Daniel Defert, a philosophy student ten years his junior. Defert's political activism exercised a major influence on Foucault's development. About their relationship, Foucault said in a 1981 interview: "I have lived for 18 years in a state of passion toward someone. At some moments, this passion has taken the form of love. But in truth, it is a matter of a state of passion between the two of us." Foucault and Defert were to have an intimate relationship for 25 years." www.foucaultsociety.org, Foucault Society © 2005.

³The Sony Walkman was introduced in 1982. The Walkman was the first personal electronic device (after the calculator) that allowed for mobility and an opening of personal portable electronics in modernity. Pal Du Gay writes about the Walkman in *Doing Cultural Studies* (page 56), "In the first Japanese television campaign, a commercial was produced that depicted a 'very tall American woman and an old Japanese gentleman' who were both sharing the music (Ueyama, 1982). It was only after the Walkman was launched and being used that it was observed that 'buyers began to see their little portable stereo sets as very personal.' As a result, the Walkman Mk2 was introduced as a machine with just one headphone jack." Du Gay goes on to say, "Foucault has argued, 'power' can only be exercised where there is freedom and hence a degree of uncertainty in any relationship. The fact that producers do not completely dominate or 'control' consumers, but must ceaselessly attempt to exercise power over them, is attested to by the use they make of design, marketing and advertising in trying to create meanings for products with which consumers will identify."

Barraque's⁴ The Death of Virgil.⁵ I decided not to buy the Sonata⁶ cassette tape because it still holds too much power for me as a memory, as an absence and as a love object (object petit a-HA!). And then I sat down and listened to the cycle, all of it. And to fill up the memory frame as completely as possible, I decided to remain seated and write you a letter.

How are you, Daniel? How is Paris this fall? How has your work been? I have been thinking about how nice it will be to spend the fall here in California and then return to you in Paris. It isn't that there is so much to do here in California; in many ways it is the exact opposite, there is so much not to do. So many ways to watch a whole weekend or a whole week disappear into absence-making feeling slightly insane. "All of this is so much day-dreaming;

⁴ Barraque is reported to have been one of Foucault's lovers. Miller, James, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, 2000, p.80.

⁵ Hermann Broch's novel *The Death of Virgil* is a book that Foucault recommended to Barraqué. He envisaged his Virgil cycle, along with other pieces deriving from it or acting as commentaries upon it, as his principal lifelong creative project. Following the scheme of the novel, it was to be divided into four sub-cycles: "Water (The Arrival)," "Fire (The Descent)," "Earth (The Expectancy)" and "Air (The Return)." Most of Barraqué's creative efforts went into the works which were to take their place in 'Fire (The Descent)', which—to give an idea of the projected scope of the whole design—was to have consisted of thirteen works. Before his death he completed two of the projected parts: *Chant après chant* (1966), and *Le temps restitué* (1957/68). Fragments of some of the other parts exist.

⁶ Foucault wrote that Barraque's Sonata was a masterwork of the 20th century. This was roundly considered an exaggeration. And this was unusual for Foucault who was the longtime friend of Pierre Boulez, who has been one of the 20th century's greatest composers/conductors, and did not share that opinion. Ibid. *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, p.82.

the dream of a festive city, inhabited by an open-air mankind, in which youth would be naked and age know no winter.”⁷

I saw Edmund White in San Francisco last week. He was overly dramatic about AIDS. I told him of course I was aware and of course he was too much. But you know I owe him my life or at least my sex life,⁸ for how could I show my face again at St. Marks⁹ if I had OD'd in one of their stalls.¹⁰ He was the hero; I suppose I am now forever in his debt. All that activity I generated in an attempt to isolate and introduce myself to new pleasures and Edmund White was the one to come and save me. It adds up.

⁷Foucault, Michel. *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (Vintage). (A. M. Sheridan Smith, trans.) New York: Vintage Books, 1975, p. 34.

⁸“Did Foucault Invent Fisting?” Foucault Blog, posted by Jeremy, 2007:

“According to Edmund White, Foucault ‘turned into an S&M slave’ for other S&M leather men to gang-fist him while trashing Folsom Street’s more derelict bathhouses and backrooms. According to White, Foucault did not contract AIDS by being fisted or wasted (he sure could have, Edmund). While ‘intellectually’ a historian by profession, Foucault ventured into some provocative areas with his corpus, indicting penology, psychology, and criminalization of aberrant behavior. While few read his most promising work of 1971, many became enmeshed with his *relational ontology* of binary differences, male/female, straight/queer, sadist/masochist, gay/lesbian, etc. And since many gays and lesbians major in English language and literature, this Postmodern *bullshit* from France is the elite nonsense *du jour*. Ironically, Foucault is not a Postmodernist, but a structuralist, from which springs his Relational Ontology in a schizo-affective, S/M binary sort of way.”

⁹New York City’s largest and best-known gay bathhouse in the 1970s and 1980s.

¹⁰Interview between John Freeman and Edmund White, “Edmund White: A Boy’s Real Story,” 2005. White describes rescuing Foucault from a bathhouse in New York, where the professor had had a bad LSD trip: “I think it’s really interesting to talk about Foucault in one chapter and smelling poop in the basement in the next. It seems to me that life is just that complicated.”

¹¹White, Edmund. *A Boy’s Own Story*, 1982.

His book¹¹ is brilliant and part of what will no doubt become a growing library of literature about human enjoyment of pleasure and of sexuality. "The literature about desire is incredible: thousands of books have been devoted to the theory of desire, the repression of desire ... but when people have to speak about pleasure they seem to become mute!"¹² I salute his speaking of pleasure. I salute his truth-speaking and pleasure-taking.

I miss you Daniel, the sound of your voice in my ear. It is not the same on the telephone, all those thousands of kilometers away. It is all desire and pleasure repressed. There are sometimes too many versions of myself and of you and too often they are not compatible. It is a relief that I miss you, that I can decipher that from among the other ideas inside my desires, my desire for you.

"Because in the deciphering of the self, the problem is what is my desire? Do I have desire? Which is the orientation of desire? The rise of the hermeneutics of the self and the prevalence of desire as the main feature of human sexuality and not only of human being and existence is something that is really important. For the Greeks of the 4th century the problem was the mastery of oneself and the limitation of pleasure not desire. These are two different kinds of theories of desire,

¹² Foucault, Michel, 1983, Audio Files, "The Culture of the Self: Introduction and Program, Part II and Discussion," UC Berkley.

but also two different kinds of relationships to oneself."¹³ And two different kinds of pleasure-restricting and pleasure-taking.

The homosexual has the best chance of actualizing the importance of this back into the contemporary discourse. "What all these people (I must count myself among them—us) are doing is not aggressive; they are inventing new possibilities of pleasure with strange parts of their body—through the eroticization of the body. I think it's ... a creative enterprise, which has as one of its main features what I call the desexualization of pleasure."¹⁴

By eroticizing the body and body parts in differing ways, and allowing pleasure to stand in for identity and desire, this is the better path forward. Daniel, all those limit experiences, all that pleasure seeking and taking, that is real power. "There is object proof that homosexuality is more interesting than heterosexuality. It's that one knows a considerable number of heterosexuals who would wish to become open homosexuals, whereas one knows very few homosexuals who would really like to become heterosexuals."¹⁵

On the other hand, have you had a chance to read The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk—the story of the San

¹³ Ibid. Audio Files.

¹⁴ Aldrich, Robert and Wotherspoon, Garry, *Who's Who in Contemporary Gay and Lesbian History*, 2001, p. 143.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 143.

Francisco Supervisor? Randy Shilts writes that Milk "came out" at 14. And home was never the same again since.¹⁶ I have to wonder if Shilts knows what he is writing. Nothing is ever the same again if you're paying attention. It doesn't take a confession to change the landscape.

He is another writer that I think will change how homosexuals are understood. I am confident that it will be for the worse. I would be interested in finding out if he has read my work and if he has any sense as I do that "coming out" is more confession than assertion, likely more problematizing than

¹⁶ Shilts, Randy, *The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk*, 1983, p. 259. He went on to write *And the Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic* in 1987, which became a made-for-TV HBO movie in 1993. He died of AIDS in 1994.

¹⁷ In *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, 1976, Foucault makes the case that sexuality is a construct, both from the inside and the outside, both from the idea that there has been an active dialog about sexuality in the west, a fixation, and it is this fixation that has created sexual minorities. Foucault writes that the *scientia sexualis*, the science of sexuality based on a phenomenon of truth-finding and explaining is diametrically opposed to the *Ars Erotica*, where sex is experienced as a pleasurable art, a special experience. The scientific confession has been popularized. He writes, "that in the West, since at least the Middle Ages, we have since become an extraordinarily confessing society. Confession has spread its effects far and wide: in the judicial system, in medicine, in pedagogy, in familial relations, in amorous relationships, in everyday life and in the most solemn rituals; crimes are confessed, sins are confessed, thoughts and desires are confessed, one's past and one's dreams are confessed, one's childhood is confessed; one's diseases and problems are confessed" (59). "Coming out" had not yet been popularized by Harvey Milk and others by the time Foucault wrote *The History of Sexuality*, but this process of confessing homosexuality can surely be interpreted as an expression of this urge to confess. There seems to be a compulsion to reveal one's sexuality to confirm its existence in our society. In *Ars Erotica*, a very different view is held, and people are content to let it remain a secret in the positive sense of the word. The reason sexuality should be confessed is to be found in the Christian view of it. It was not, as it is today, seen as a strong, obvious force, but as something treacherous, something only to be found by careful introspection. Overview of Foucault's ideas, *The History of Sexuality*, author unknown From IPCE, anonymous submission (www.ipce.info/ipceweb/Documentation/Lists/doc_e6_july_99.htm).

regularizing?¹⁷ Perhaps I will invite him to have a conversation about that at Zuni Café¹⁸ over lunch and bring some of my students along.

I decided to stop here in Los Angeles on my way to Berkeley.¹⁹ Although everyone here in Los Angeles, it seems, is still the same—a movie star, or a friend of a movie star, or a director, or involved in pornography. But then everyone knows that about Los Angeles, so maybe the surprise is in not being seduced by it. And the further surprise may be in expecting Hollywood to be the same and then finding out it is. And truthfully someone has to make the pornography. I was thinking that the last time I taught at Berkeley for a whole semester was in 1975. I am much changed. But then everything is much changed—why would I be any different from anything else?²⁰

¹⁸ Zuni Café was started by Billy West in 1979. He died of AIDS in 1995. We were friends. I never thought to ask Billy if he knew Foucault or had the chance to serve him in his restaurant.

¹⁹ In Fall 1983, Michel Foucault gave six seminal lectures at the University of California, Berkeley, Oct.-Nov. 1983. These were on “Discourse and Truth: the Problematization of Parrhesia.”

²⁰ Ibid., Audio files. Q: *Foucault is a historian first and foremost so we are glad to have him here. Regarding the shift in the methodological focus from the earlier archaeological perspective to what you describe since the 1970s, in the essay you wrote on Nietzsche, as a genealogical perspective: Is this a radical break?*
A: This is a good and hard question: I used these two words in very different meanings and in order to indicate two different sets of problems. I would say that when I used the word “archeological research” I want to differentiate what I am doing from both social history, since I don’t want to analyze society but facts of discourses, and I also wanted to disassociate this analysis of discourses from what could be philosophical hermeneutics, which is something like the interpretations of what has been said or for the deciphering of something which wouldn’t have been said. With the term “archaeological research,” what I want to say is that what I am dealing with is a set of discourses, which has to be analyzed as an event or as a set of events. Something has been said, such and such things have been said, and in a way it is in this kind of discursive events that are like any other events, but they have special effects that are not similar

The Chateau Marmont is still the best run-down, mysterious hotel in LA. I booked Room 54 with the balcony and the giant 50' tall cowboy billboard selling sex and cigarettes right out side. My plan is to fuck my brains out while looking out over the city lights with the American cowboy watching me. And Daniel, Los Angeles is as adventurous as ever, thankfully. I have been here for two days and have found myself visiting the bathhouse and a backroom that still remains open. The sex here is fantastic, so different from San Francisco or even Paris.

The Americans continue to worry themselves about AIDS. I cannot understand this rush to cautiousness. What is there to be cautious about? I do not see the purpose in that, there is no science about what AIDS is; there is only moral judgment. Anti-sexual, anti-pleasure American moral judgment, this is not a valid reason for condemnation, shame or abstinence.²¹

to what can be economic events, law or demographical change. That is what I mean by archaeology: it is the methodological framework of my analysis. Genealogy is both the reason and the target of the analysis of discourses as events, and what I try to show is how those discursive events have determined in a certain way what constitutes our present and what constitutes ourselves: our knowledge, our practices, our type of rationality, our relationship to ourselves and to the others. So genealogy is the aim of the analysis and the archaeology is the material and methodological framework.

²¹ "Illuminations: Foucault at Berkeley," March 2005. At the time, HIV/AIDS was little understood. The disease that would soon devastate San Francisco's gay community had only been given a name in August 1982. In July of that same year, the Centers for Disease Control had only 452 cases of AIDS on record. Foucault biographer James Miller has gone so far to suggest that Foucault

In the end, we may never know what causes AIDS, but I am quite confident that we will certainly know it is not the homosexuals. Nor will it be a disease limited to homosexuals.²²

I met Althea Flynt yesterday in the lobby.²³ Larry Flynt is her husband. She invited me for dinner to talk politics and sex. She invited me to join her, Allan Bloom,²⁴ and Isaac Asimov.²⁵ Seems Althea is attempting to inject a bit of the political into their pleasure power

deliberately failed to take the precautions necessary to protect himself from HIV, citing references in Foucault's work to death as the "ultimate work of art." Hans Sluga (Chair of the Philosophy Department) believes the truth may be less dramatic—but no less tragic. When Foucault came to Berkeley to teach that fall, he sublet a French professor's apartment in Haight-Ashbury. Sluga lived nearby on Buena Vista Hill and would often give Foucault, who didn't drive, a lift to Berkeley. "These were great occasions because we would get stuck in the Bay Bridge traffic and we could talk about philosophy, talk about life," Sluga says. They talked about Wittgenstein, with whom Sluga believes Foucault shares an under-recognized affinity. They also talked about AIDS. "I was telling him about AIDS and he wouldn't believe it. He said this was American anti-sexual hysteria," Sluga says. "I think he underestimated the realities, unfortunately."

²² AIDS Project Los Angeles, from www.thebody.com website: "Recognizing that AIDS was not just a gay disease, the founders decided to name the organization AIDS Project Los Angeles. The first Board of Directors was elected on January 14, 1983."

²³ Althea Flynt (1953-1987) née Leisure, was the fourth wife of Larry Flynt and the co-publisher of Flynt's notorious adult magazine, *Hustler*. She died of drowning but was in the end stages of a death from AIDS.

²⁴ Allan David Bloom (1930-1992) was an American philosopher, essayist and academic. Bloom championed the idea of "Great Books" education, as did his mentor Leo Strauss. Bloom became famous for his criticism of contemporary American higher education, with his views being expressed in his bestselling 1987 book, *The Closing of the American Mind*. He died of AIDS.

²⁵ Isaac Asimov (1920-1992) was one of the most prolific writers of all time, having written or edited more than 500 books and an estimated 9,000 letters and postcards. His works have been published in nine of the ten major categories of the Dewey Decimal System (the sole exception being the 100s; philosophy and psychology). He died of AIDS.

structure.²⁶

She is a complex figure. She told me she met Larry at a strip club when she was 17 because they were both fucking the same strippers, and she and Larry have been together ever since. A life I have come to find out is built on pleasure seeking. Hustler and those two have been seminal (!) in fostering the politics of the sexual revolution. Their brand of distraction and political intervention through the world of pornography is admirable. And in many ways cohabitates the same space as the Greeks did in their own pleasure seeking. To me Larry and Althea are fearless, heroic maybe. They know they are on the right side of this idea and one day they'll likely be understood for more than merely starting a porn magazine.

Isaac Asimov is here at my hotel, but Isaac's wife said that he was not feeling well and so he did not come to dinner. It was an interesting dinner at a restaurant called Morton's.²⁷ I am happy I agreed to join. Bloom

²⁶ Stanton, Donna, *Discourses of Sexuality: From Aristotle to AIDS*, 1993, p. 87: "Along with medicine, psychiatry, and prostitution, pornography is presented by Foucault as one of the major means by which pleasure and power overlap and reinforce each other in the modern deployment of sex."

²⁷ Morton's restaurant was the center of Hollywood chic in the early 1980s. A typical night there would include a selection of the famous, the infamous and the up-and-coming. Althea had a special love for Morton's. As the publisher of *Hustler* and the wife of Larry, she could be part of Hollywood's visible invisible, giving the whole environment an additional layer of naughty sophistication. Morton's eventually became the home of the Vanity Fair Magazine Oscar Party through 2006. (This author has one particular memory of Althea Flynt leaning in and speaking a bit too loudly while pointing over to David Byrne and saying, "David is so sexy. I want to fuck him all night long.")

still teaches at the University of Chicago. I reread Bloom's essay just before dinner; he is an accidental neo-liberal of the worst kind, smug, didactic unconscious and homosexual. A neo-liberal homosexual is enigmatic to me, a position for people to exercise their power, but Allan idiosyncraticizes idiosyncrasies; he seems full of so much unmet longing.²⁸

We started the conversation with the topic of Lech Walesa²⁹ and his newly awarded Nobel Prize for Peace. We all agreed that the Peace Prize was a strong signal for the world that the power of the solidarity movement had not yet reached its zenith. Allan began his discussion of Lech with a plea that, if by some miracle the regime in Poland would ever fall, the country revert to a neoliberal model of capitalism and democracy. Completely ignoring the world of increasingly complex interdependencies.

Bloom believes in the natural rights doctrine of Rousseau and Locke—that all humans are born with equal, god-given rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The American Constitution writ large. And he thinks that the preservation of the Constitution, through the exercise of these rights, and the exercise of reason are necessary for the preservation of

²⁸ Allan Bloom's surprise bestseller, *The Closing of the American Mind*, was originally entitled *Souls Without Longing*.

²⁹ Lech Walesa started the Solidarity Labor Movement in Soviet-bloc Poland. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983.

an Almighty God and Western culture, and vice versa. "Since Bloom believes in the political superiority of the natural rights doctrine, he rejects cultural relativity. In fact, he argues against all forms of relativity. He maintains that not all cultures and values are of equal worth."³⁰ But what Bloom was not able to do was to account for the successes that are part of a relativistic world and discount fully for me the impact of the failures of the non-relativistic, neo-liberal point of view.

Bloom's work, it would seem, could become the contemporary social rationale of the neoliberalism ideology emerging from the Chicago School of Economics (direct descendants of the Ordoliberalism from the 1930s). And in some clear way, with his essay, he seems to be positioning himself for that role. And it would seem to me, that neither juridical law nor economic theory, nor the law of the market are capable of reconciling the ideas of a "natural rights doctrine" with modernity, but not to Allan. He sees it quite clearly, the rationales, for a constructed neoliberal society.

First, there is the relation between the state and the economy; instead of the state regulating the market, the market becomes the organizing principle underlying the state; the

³⁰ Spring, Joel, *Wheels in the Head: Educational Philosophies of Authority, Freedom, and Culture from Socrates to Human Rights*, 2006, p. 81.

market becomes regulator AND the organizing principle. Also there is the basis of government itself—neoliberalism starts with recoding the social as the economic and extending the economic ideas of cost-benefit calculations and market criteria into a new spectrum of human practice.

I would argue that "a new domain needs to be constituted, a new field, a new point of reference that is neither the totality of the subjects of rights nor that of economic subjects. The ones and the others can only be governable in so far as a new group can be defined, which will incorporate them by making visible not only their relations and combinations, but also a whole series of other elements and interests."³¹ This leads me to my latest ideas about exchange, force and compromise, power really.

I find that I am returning to the idea of power, to power interactions rather than power alone. The focus should be on the power relationship itself rather than on its terms. I see the "play of infinitesimal, mobile, reversible and unstable power. A modality that expresses the exercise of power at the interior of relationships, amorous, teacher and student relations, husband and a wife, children and

³¹ Lazzarato, Maurizio. "Biopolitics/Bioeconomics: A Politics of Multiplicity," *MULTITUDES*, Vol. 26 (Spring, 2006): 159.

parents, etc., is already found in the concept of 'forces' that was the precursor of the conception of 'strategic relations.' This can be defined as an 'action upon an action,' and spreads through the will to 'control the conduct of others.'" ³²

Althea and I had much to say and agree on regarding power, sexuality and pleasure. All talk you've heard before, but suffice to say, Althea agreed with me that the cultivation of pleasure, "vastly more pleasure - including the intense pleasures procured by means of drugs, sadomasochistic eroticism and anonymous sex. 'By taking the pleasure of sexual relations away from the area of sexual norms and its categories and in doing so making the pleasure the crystallizing point of a new culture,' gay people have taken 'an important and interesting step.'" ³³ It seemed that Allan had a difficult

³²Lazzarato, Maurizio. From "Biopower to Biopolitics." *The Warwick Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 13 (2002): 107. Lazzarato also writes on page 106, "In the eighties, after a long detour through ethics, Foucault finally returned to his concept of 'power.' In his last interviews Foucault criticized himself because he thought that 'like many others, he had not been clear enough and had not used the proper terms to speak of power.'" He saw his work retrospectively as an analysis and a history of the different modalities through which human beings are constituted as subjects in Western culture, rather than as an analysis of the transformations of the dispositifs of power. ["Therefore it is not power, but the subject, that constitutes the general theme of my investigations" (Foucault, "Two Lectures," 1980).] The analysis of power dispositifs should then begin, without any ambiguity, with the dynamic of forces and the 'freedom' of subjects, and not with the dynamics of institutions, even if they are biopolitical institutions, because if one starts to pose the question of power starting from the institution one will inevitably end up with a theory of the 'subject of law.' In this last and definitive theory of 'power' Foucault distinguishes three different concepts which are usually confused within a single category: strategic relations, techniques of government and states of domination."

³³Halperin, David, *Saint Foucault : Towards a Gay Hagiography*, 1997, p.102.

time staying engaged in these parts of the conversation. I wished him all the pleasure he could stomach. And all the power too.

Althea brought with her Gia Carangi,³⁴ though she wasn't interested in our conversation and spent most of her time drinking at the bar with Carrie Fisher.³⁵ I didn't know who she was. Althea said that she is a fashion model—she is sexy for a woman—mannish. In the end, the discussion turned out to be a vibrant and worthwhile use of our time. I suggested to Althea that she contact you for inclusion in a future dinner.

After dinner I headed to a favorite illicit nightspot in Hollywood, the Spike.³⁶ It is the perfect nightcap for a night like the one I had—meaning I moved purposefully from desire to pleasure; I always hope to locate “the ‘limit experience,’ the type that ‘tears the subject out of itself’ in a ‘space of untamed exteriority.’”³⁷ It is the raw flank of the Hollywood sex scene. The men at the Spike are a sexual laboratory. I arranged for John King

³⁴ Gia Carangi died of complications from AIDS in 1986 at the age of 26.

³⁵ Carrie Fisher starred in the *Star Wars* Trilogy and then later went on to write several books about Hollywood, and her own struggle with alcoholism and recovery.

³⁶ Infamous West Hollywood leather bar, lots of drinking, a fire pit of sorts, backroom sex.

³⁷ From Davis, Whitney, “History and the Laboratory of Sexuality,” 2004, in which he quotes Maurice Blanchot, *Michel Foucault tel que je l’imagine* (Paris, 1986).

to be my date for the night.³⁸ I invited Allan to join me but he refused. I expect that he had some trick of his own handcuffed to the headboard at his hotel. John and I did see Rock Hudson³⁹; John knew him from an earlier date and so we were introduced. His Hollywood magic is mercurial. Though for a moment, I imagined the three of us and the Marlboro⁴⁰

³⁸ Deciding that he was “going places and doing things he’d never done before,” John Gaines and his then-lover went to Los Angeles while on summer vacation in 1980, with plans to go back to school in Florida after he had finished having fun. This changed when his lover got a job and the two young men decided to stay. Eventually John picked up a guy cruising who was a model who had an appointment later that day with a photographer. John tagged along to the interview, and was soon on his way as an adult film performer. His start in adult films came with the 1981 film *Brothers Should Do It*, where he was billed as Jon King, the younger brother of J.W. King. Though the two strongly resembled each other, they were not related. He next appeared in *Biker’s Liberty*, with Kristen Bjorn, *Printer’s Devils*, and *These Bases are Loaded*, again with J.W. King. Later, he would complain that the man who helped him get started in the industry was a “psycho” who screwed him over for money. In 1982, just as he was at the seeming peak of his popularity, he stole and wrecked a car, and for this spent eleven months in prison. Jon was later reluctant to discuss his time in prison to interviewers, only saying that “it wasn’t fun,” particularly since his twentieth birthday was spent behind bars. Making a comeback in 1983, Jon King continued to appear in films and videos throughout the 1980s. Among these were *Big Summer Surprise*; *The Biggest One I Ever Saw* (with Lee Ryder and Rick Donovan), *Hot Off The Press*, *Hotel Hell*, *Inevitable Love*, *Perfect Summer*, *Screen Play* (again with Lee Ryder), *Studhunter*, *Trick Time* (with Tim Kramer), *Tyger Tales*, *Wild Country*, and *Wild Oats*. One of his most memorable scenes was in a hot tub with veteran adult star Kip Noll in 1984’s *Kip Noll—Superstar*. Jon King died of AIDS, so did Kip Noll.

³⁹ Rock Hudson (1925-1985). Hollywood movie star. He died of AIDS.

⁴⁰ The Marlboro man image has proven so powerful and seductive that Marlboro’s parent company, Philip Morris, guards it zealously. The models, most of whom are actual cowboys, “are sworn to secrecy” about all aspects of their work, a company spokesman said. But just before he died of lung cancer last July at 51 years old, Wayne McLaren went very public, saying he had worked briefly as a cowboy-model for Marlboro. At the end of a life spent around the edge of celebrity, Mr. McLaren’s anti-smoking advocacy made him a romantic hero of another sort. “I’m dying proof,” he told interviewers before his death, “that smoking will kill you.” (“A Rough Ride,” by John Marchese, *New York Times*, September 13, 1992.)

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cowboy fucking on the balcony at the Chateau. By the end of the evening I had decided that "sex is boring."⁴¹

I do miss you, mon petit chou. Come visit if you like. It would be smart, I think, for us to make better use of who we are in relation to the world and each other. Just a thought. I know that eventually when one of us is gone we can say we were transformed. "The transformation of one's self by one's knowledge, one's practice is, I think, something rather close to the aesthetic experience. Why should a painter work if he is not transformed by his own painting?"⁴² Why should we be us if we do not transform ourselves? And I miss you too, and already.

Passion,

Michel

⁴¹ Rabinow, Paul, and Hubert L. Dreyfus, "How We Behave: Interview with Michel Foucault," *Vanity Fair*, November 1983; p. 62.

⁴² Foucault, Michel. (1997/83). "An interview by Stephen Riggins." In J. Faubion (ed.). Tr. Robert Hurley and others. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth. The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984. Volume One*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, Allen Lane, p. 131.