

1969 as *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. In 1945 Crowley went to live in a shabby room in a boarding house near Hastings, where he died two years later. Scarcely known today outside occult circles, Crowley is an extravagant instance of the concern with heterodox religion that has flourished among some male homosexuals who could find no peace within established Christianity, and more recently among female adherents of "the craft." Through his voluminous writings Crowley foreshadowed the emergence of the "Age of Aquarius."

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Wayne R. Dynes

CRUISING

Cruising is the deliberate, active, and usually mobile search for sexual partner(s) in a social setting. One may cruise on foot, by bike, car, even by boat. The searcher watches for potential partners, and for signs of interest from others, while displaying a choice of signs (body language, gesture, clothing, even systematic color and key codes that may be regarded as social semiotics) to indicate that the search is on. Cruising is a way of avoiding the social inhibition that requires "proper introduction" or other mediation by third parties when seeking intimate encounter with a stranger.

Searching for sexual partners in social settings is not original with modern gay men; earliest published advice on cruising came from the poet of ancient Rome, Publius Ovid (*Art of Love*, ca. A.D. 1). His favorite cruising places were the market, temple, and race track. No sexist, he cruised both genders, and his poem includes advice for women seeking male partners. English gay men refer to cruising as "trolling." A quasi-equivalent among heterosexuals is "picking up."

Gay male cruising was traditionally a more systematic activity than heterosexual "flirting" because the gay searcher was taking serious risks—assault by a heterosexual who resented sexual approach, entrapment by undercover police, "queer bashing" by teenagers looking for "thrills," and the like. Gay cruisers who survive take precautions and master cruising skills. These include well-informed choice of locale, safety of entry and exit, subtle use of glances, and well-informed use of signs and code words to establish sexual understanding. Most urban centers have "cruisy" gay places—favored streets, parks, beaches, and the like—where the searcher is most likely to find a partner. Those not wanting to take an active searching role, but willing to be "cruised" or "picked up," could hang around these places.

Traditional gay male skill in covert cruising led to a myth that total strangers who were homosexual had some sixth sense to recognize each other. In recent years, as public knowledge and tolerance have increased, gay cruising has become less covert, and many cruising techniques are now used by heterosexual men and women. However, the threat of AIDS has increasingly inhibited cruising for casual sex partners by both sexes and sexual orientations. Potential partners are now more likely to want a "proper introduction" and background information.

Cruising today ranges from the most blatant—staring, openly following a desired partner for blocks, making comments ostensibly to a third party but intended to be overheard by a desired stranger—to the most covert, where third parties present do not even suspect a sexual liaison is being negotiated. Overt cruising uses imagination to find any excuse for introducing oneself to a stranger, and many of its techniques are similar to those of the male or female prostitute seeking clients. In covert cruising, skilled use of the eyes is critical. Eye contact must be less than a stare, but more than a casual glance, and is

especially effective when each simultaneously "catches the other offguard" (e.g., turning around after passing), and exchanges a knowing smile.

If the time is opportune (both partners are searching, the situation does not compromise other commitments, and so forth), cruising can lead promptly to **impersonal sex**. If not, skilled searchers will find a means, even without alerting others present, to exchange information for future contact. Cruising is most often a brief search for a one-time, unpaid sex partner (**trick**), but it may also be a lengthy search for a candidate long-term lover.

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John A. Lee

CUBA

The largest island of the Antilles chain, home to ten million Spanish-speaking people, Cuba separates the Gulf of Mexico from the Caribbean Sea. At its closest point, it is 90 miles south of Florida.

The Colonial Period. Cuba was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492 and colonized by Spain beginning in 1511. Overwork and disease brought from the Old World caused the death of most of the native Caribs, who were replaced by Africans imported as slaves beginning in 1518. The Spanish *peninsulares* normally intended to return to Europe and rarely brought women with them.

During the seventeenth century **pirates** and privateers roamed boldly throughout the Caribbean. The British, French, and Dutch seized islands from the Spanish or colonized vacant ones as naval bases or sugar plantations; like the pirates they seldom brought women along. All three European powers were involved in the notorious triangular trade, shipping

molasses or rum to Europe, guns and trinkets from there to Africa, and slaves back to the West Indies. Many maintain that the common economies and social systems thus evolved rendered Caribbean islands and indeed parts of the adjoining mainland, including New Orleans, Vera Cruz, and Caracas, and their hinterlands more alike than different. **Slavery** and exploitation promoted a low regard for life and labor and set up situations for institutional and situational homosexuality, with males outnumbering females by a great margin. The varieties of language, politics, topography, size, and history, however, created differences, some islands having received great numbers of East Indian (Trinidad, for example) or Chinese immigrants (Cuba).

Cuba began to excel in sugar production after 1762. Havana became a glittering metropolis, rivaling New York and Rio de Janeiro, by 1800. The slave population, including huge numbers of males imported for work in the cane fields or molasses manufacturing, grew from fewer than 40,000 in 1770 to over 430,000 seventy years later. The census of 1841 reported that more than half the population was non-white (black and mixed blood) and that 43 percent were slaves. Males outnumbered females by 2 to 1 in the center and west and were just equal in the east. Other islands in the Caribbean had even greater sexual imbalances. Documentation for the homosexuality that must have abounded is scarce but the earlier prevalence can be assumed from attitudes and customs that still survive.

When most of Spain's colonies in the Americas gained independence in the early nineteenth century, Cuba remained Spanish. By the 1840s, however, the slave trade became more difficult as the British energetically pursued smugglers and after 1850 the Spanish authorities cooperated more earnestly. With Spain's adoption of the Napoleonic Code in 1889, homosexuality was decriminalized three years after the abolition of slavery.