



Debating Normalcy

Virtually Normal

Andrew Sullivan
Vintage Books

The debate on homosexuality has been raging for years. There have been a whirlwind of arguments about its "normalcy", and the rights that homosexuals deserve in our society. From the military to marriage, anti-sodomy laws to adoption, nothing divides the public more easily or bitterly than the issues concerning the rights of gay people. Andrew Sullivan's book, *Virtually Normal: An argument about homosexuality*, attempts to address the issue: first by looking at the four major politics and their weaknesses, and

then by suggesting a new ideology for the topic.

If you care at all about the homosexuality issue, whether straight or gay, then you might want to pick up this book. It honestly looks at many viewpoints, and even if you disagree with the author's conclusion, it will make you think.

Be warned though. This is not a general information book about homosexuality. It is a discussion on the public's views as to what rights homosexuals deserve. Also, it isn't for the faint of heart. It could have been because I read it during midterm season, but there were a few arguments I just couldn't understand. The argu-

ments are complex, and while they are stated eloquently and with an eye for detail, I will have to read this book again to get a firm grasp.

Another warning is in order. Whether you are liberal or conservative; your views will most likely be challenged. While Sullivan is good at sympathizing with others' ideas, he is also merciless in tearing them down. My advice is to just keep reading. What he is saying does make sense, and although you may come to a different conclusion, the book will make you see your own point of view from a different perspective.

MARC GODIN



AN ARGUMENT

ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY

ANDREW SULLIVAN

"Virtually Normal is a brilliant and revolutionary book that will transform gay studies."
—CAMILLE PAGLIA, *Washington Post Book World*

Hot Wings and Hot Rock

Burnt Black and Mitch Montana at the Oasis

BY NEIL FRASER

Thursday night is wing night at the Oasis, so my friends and I decide to hit the bar early for a snack. The first thing we notice is a lack of cover charge at the door. Once inside, we see that all the lights are on and everyone is eating. Strange to think that in an hour's time this will be transformed to a rock bar.

I asked a bewildered Brian (vocalist/guitarist for Burnt Black) what was going on.

"I don't know," he said, "but I'm going to find out."

Soon afterwards the hat is passed around and cover is collected; apparently there was some miscommunication with the staff. This hurdle crossed, the lights soon went down and the opening band went on.

Mitch Montana were up first and provided a display of some of the most original music I have seen in the city. If forced to describe them I would have to categorize them as funky surf metal. They reminded me of a lo-fi Mr. Bungle, with crazy time changes ranging from insane intensity to melodic rhythms. It was hard to get into at the start, but once I got used to it, it was very catchy. This six-piece was very energetic and entertaining.

Burnt Black are currently promoting their new CD, *Nervous Wreck*, and also have a video which, I am told, can be seen on cable 10. These Yarmouth lads recently played a home town show to a couple hundred moshing teenagers. The Oasis crowd that night was composed mostly of friends and fans and was a little more restrained, but still made a lot of noise. It was a comfortable atmosphere and made for a more intimate show.

The band persevered through many technical problems to put on another rocking show. The only detraction was the constant pausing between songs to adjust knobs and apologize for their sound. Their style is heavy but not aggressive. Their heavy riffs made me want to get up and mosh, and I regretted the lack of a pit.

Burnt Black opened with "Purpose Served" and finished with "Ground Level", my favorite songs from the CD. The rest of the set list was comprised mostly of other songs from *Nervous Wreck* with a few new ones thrown in.

With ones diverse acts such as Elevator to Hell and The Rome Plows gaining popularity in the local music scene, maybe there will be a place for bands like Mitch Montana and Burnt Black.

Check out our review of Burnt Black's *Nervous Wreck* in our CD review section



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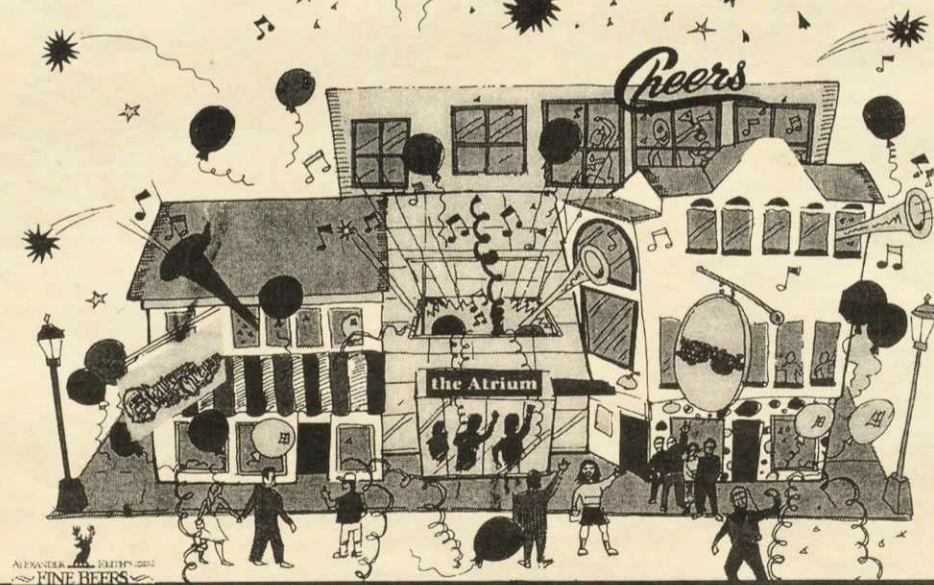
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