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It is demoralizing to behold characters who accept their persecuted status — the hell on earth that psychiatrists, vice-squads, priests, capitalists, and heterosexuals can create for the subculture when they are not restrained. It is appalling to behold characters who internalize rather than externalize hatred. It is painful to behold a drama which emphasizes the ravages of guilt without suggesting its resolution in rage.

Candid

Let me be candid. *The Boys In The Band* may be an authentic representation, but it is only an authentic representation of a subculture within a subculture: sophisticated, established, and urbanized homosexuals constitute only a segment of the whole homosexual population. Furthermore, while this portrayal of a particular segment may once have been exact, it is now a distortion. The nothing less than revolutionary intervention of Gay Liberation between the life-styles of the 60's and the 70's has made the portrayal passe.

Gender Identity

What is ridiculous is that the gender identity of the characters does not correspond to the gender identity of the actors themselves. The director has cast some of the more

“masculine” roles and vice versa. The actor playing Hank, the butch, certainly has a more “feminine” carriage and address than the actor playing Emory, the fem. Not type-casting stereotyped characters seriously strains the characterization.

What more can I say about the authenticity of a production that presents as a hustler a young man who crosses his legs and fluffs his hair on stage, who looks more like he was from Phillips Exeter than Times Square? The production suggests that what was once a coterie play — a production by Village gays for Village gays, can not now become a popular play for a Virginia audience.

Not only does the Virginia Player's production of *The Boys In The Band* distort the current lifestyle of the gay subculture, it manages to distort the past life-style, too.