Ravish the Republic: The Archives of The Iron Garters

Crime/Art Collective

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Welcome, Mature Pleasure Seeker!
The Iron Garters is a radical street gang that accepts everybody provided they show mettle and leg. We spice our utterances with a vocabulary fermented in the gutters and the libraries, as well as the fields and alleys that rise and fall sloppily between. Most of what we’ve learned about terminology happened in a euphoric tour through the corner drugstore. There is wildness we want to possess us but also new domesticities we want to warm our grimy toes. We pan our hungers between forests and hearths, knowing that wastelands outnumber us, but that they are treasure-seeded for the cunning.

Yes, we are verbose, yes, we are clumsy, yes, we are no-brow; are we also Methodical? Elegant? Versatile? Cryptic? Given that we are those other things, then yes we are these things too, so much so that the strengths of Negation we wield are many-pronged, dizzying and incarnational. Our “No” infiltrates the manufactured skins of things, and implants a “YES,” wildly ambiguous in its tentacle reso-
nances, rising to the surface to alchemize the cracks and flecks into far more radiant flecks and cracks. This is the alchemy by which we fuck the given, no matter how it terminally chastises us.

Why Iron Garters, the Name?

We are ostranenie but also unheimlich. The Garter is snake and leash; fang and lash; a bind and a vow; a double-edged tongue of attack and retreat; submission and domination; the play of oppositions in all their entangling, energizing contradictions. Garter is a Sign of the thigh’s upward plunge into rapturous intimacy; as well as the toe’s downward reach into primal loam; it is the insignia of an Event that is potentially climactic or catastrophic but which cannot be limited in its expressiveness or open-endedness. Many of us have seen how the sensorial, polyglot play of metal and fabric, glass and bone can make us feel more empowered; fashion is always about forces more violently archaic than what is just fashionable. We are celebrators and instigators of every erotic and insurrectionary outburst but we pull it all off with hypnotic style, conspiratorial complicity and inclusive nonchalance. Iron is a recognizable term for resilience that can be eroticized. Subtlety is an ironclad force that seduces with painstaking vigor. Even though the world is over-determined by forces we have no control over, Garters secrete territory for delight and play wherever they throng, from the most denuded office space to the most unencumbered prairie. They don’t need “special” spaces to pull off special deeds, although a clubhouse, especially if its flimsy, scary-looking and hard to access is a good place to congregate and roughhouse. When you think of the gentle sting of a garter belt you don’t think of iron chains or serpent’s fangs. For the Garters, what isn’t necessarily thought at first is what we compel at first. Since all living is relating,
and all relating is performing, we will perform and smuggle the most ingenious relations.

We are not interested in new members unless they can reconcile the most gregarious and generous topologies inside themselves. They have to exercise on a constant basis a radical imagination that is, above all participatory and versatile. The spaces within determine the spaces without; and vice versa. For instance, if our interior psychic spaces feel beset by an always-reverberating Command to Justify, Resemble, Defend, Legitimize then we must let the Wild Outside flood us for purification and readjustment. Your leg is both your leg, and something more scintillating and cryptic, that collides with and divides up space into qualitative moments. Mettle is many things too, all of which may be seductive, depending on how far you want to take it, and how generous you are in the taking. There is sovereignty in vulnerability, just as there is sex in trash. The stars render us defenseless in our representations, so always defer to the Outside.

**How and why does one become a Garter?**

Becoming a Garter means becoming who you already want to be. It means entering into your own oceanic reverberations and being swept away by them. We are not presuming to know what you want to be, only that you, indeed, want to be. And at every moment too, this kernel of need and crisis cries out to you to be honored and embodied and deployed in different ways. Thus, Garter is a placeholder name for the oft-secretive, always-dynamic, habitually-suppressed flux of fantasies, hunches, excitations, riddles, lusts, fixations, errors, minutiae, inklings, reveries, cartographies, red herrings, personae, obsessions and absurdities inside of you (yet always in inextricable overlap with the world’s chorus) that make life more wonderful and empowering when they
can be accessed, exercised, played with, worked with and released.

The Earth likes your dreams, especially when they involve Her. Fictions are real, insofar as they inject truth-potentials into your living. Sometimes it takes conspiratorial and clandestine energies to release them, however: the tribal braggadocio of a secret society, an outlaw gang, a governmental agency, or a Masonic lodge. All who use exclusion and opacity to consolidate isolating and hierarchical power will be likewise used and manipulated by us to disseminate and release other kinds of power. It is not our privilege to tell you what this other means.

The process of Gartering is rigorous, intricate, bewildering, alter-sensical and requiring several hair-raising initiations. A first tenet for potential initiates: American society, or whatever that has come to mean, has dissolved any interest in the initiatory, replacing it instead, with the deformational. So instead of seizing the immediacy of experiences, we immediately suffer the seizing away of our experiences. Nothing we experience matters unless it has cash value in someone else’s eyes. But take away the cash, you still have matter being itself, becoming it/other selves, mattering, vibrating in heat and energy inside a similarly resonating cosmos. That’s an open secret we can share right now.

Thus, prospective Garter, your initiations will be many, depending upon the energies and excitements you bring to bear upon them. The prospective member should consider the following alliances the Garters have made: Spiritually, Garters are aligned with Sophia (Wisdom/Knowledge) and her holy consort, the Cosmic Hermaphrodite and their plethora of metamorphoses and passages. This is intricate theopolitical and theopoetic territory that will piecemeal, tantalizingly be conveyed to initiates through word, ges-
ture, embrace, encounter and fire. But Garters are radical pluralists and encourage you to weave together your own cosmologies and theogonies based, at least, on the idea that the Cosmos is a living playground of daemonic and erotic and relational potentials. Moreover, there are many among us who know that the divisions between philosophy and religion, poetry and mysticism, pragmatism and sorcery, theory and poetry—or however the muck you want to distinguish these things—need to be dissolved. This will be explored in a more in-depth communiqué at some indefinite juncture.

Socially, Garters are reviving the weapons that Dada and Punk and the Situationists and all those ’60s street gangs harnessed. But even so, we will reference other groups, some quite forgotten, like the Suicide Club and the International Necronautical Society, while making strikingly tangential cross-hatchings. We will also show how most of these groups fell quite short of their own desires and visions. For instance, the Situationists lacked class consciousness, intersectionality, economics and feminism, among other elephants in the room. Dada was meant to implode and not endure; even its implosion was a betrayal of Dada. Many ’60s gangs reasserted tediously oppressive gender roles that kept women under boot and heel. “Anarchist thinkers”—whose vocabularies can be as enchanting as the Rhineland Mystics—Hakim Bey, Jack Black, and CrimethInc. all too often espouse a shopping mall, juvenile individualism that overlooks This Fact that for many of us:

Our labors and our games are not in opposition, they are in harmonic syzygy. Secondly, we are not afraid to toil for the sake of more euphoric energy. Thirdly, often the most supreme idleness or exquisite languor is unified within our most complex and arduous projects.
Finally, contemporary “adventure groups,” while they love to intellectualize their own trespassions, often recoil before theories, voices, testaments, and daily barbarities that don’t reinforce their own Übermensch impressiveness. We offer these all-too-brief critiques as kindling for active thought, and as fodder for vitriolic critique of us. For without critique, we cannot create, and vice versa. We are sensitive, yes, but sensitivity works only if it is flush with change, which is the blood of creativity.

Speaking of Kulchur—the Garters know that the Eye & Value, when wedded, defangs and tames almost any cultural explosion/expression turning it into once-and-future trash. But in place of an ironic acquiescence to market forces, we suggest the playground tactics of the saboteur and the smuggler: using evasion, disguise, cryptologies, misleading mythologies, we will “hide” what is most sacred to us, while giving away, to be re-appropriated, the mere baubles of our ecstasies. Every Garter shall learn how to build their own Sanctuaries that are always being smuggled through enemy lines. This is one of the secrets of secrecy: we all need it to perpetuate the healing fictions of our lives.

Style-wise, Garters play with, mutate, exploit and subvert the iconographies and idolatries of biker gangs, corsairs, street hustlers, punk rockers, sailors, fetishists, witches, runaways, autodidacts, sadomasochists, anarchists, pill-poppers, junkyard preachers and pansexuals.

Politically, we adore and strive for Kropotkin’s Mutual Aid, in its many paradoxical flowerings, as well as the potentials of igniting catalytic play among care-giving individuals distributed in large or small or unquantifiable groups.
These are four formulae that Garters employ in their daily encounters with entities and things and which form the synthesis of their Political Vision(s). When one term can so easily be seen to live in and be charged by the other, than a moment reconfigures into more generous, labyrinthine appearances. Whatever dreams we suppress for decorum’s sake are worn loud yet bafflingly on our vests, dresses, capes, negligees, corsages. We all want to be part of a secret tribe, especially if it encourages us to get primordial with Others. There is a secret to secrecy that more obtuse thinkers like Lacan and Derrida were quite aware of, but couldn’t quite make sexy; however, it takes a real gang, such as ours, and who often assume a confusingly religious mantle, to put that secrecy into action. The affective results of using secrecy for empowerment, excitations, and mobilization? A wildness is released through implications, emitted, secreted and that is strangely coherent and organizational the more it touches and plays with things. Garters will make you wilder (you will have no choice) and thus: more joyous, more capable, more generous. Illusion is a Revolutionary Weapon! to quote our friends, the INS.

We use political terms how radical Spinozists would: joy as the capacity for more constructive, euphoric activity, complex relations and creative entanglements. Capability as a more nuanced and accommodating perception that eases into chaos like heated lingerie. Generosity as a way of communicating with and among Others, while also enlivening their modes of being, especially when the possibilities of
communication and enlivening seem most direly impossible. Garters are instinctual gift-givers, stemming from the fact that their very existence is a gift to a fear-poisoned, uninspired society.

Explain again what it means to show mettle and leg? Answer: Potentials for endless *synecdoche*. As Garters we look to the endless arsenal of Greek Rhetoric for terms that can beneficially contort our actions and ideas. “Leg” can mean anything you choose to reveal and “mettle” can mean anything you choose to flex. For Garters, revelation requires well-plotted, exquisite subtlety and methodical seductions. As much as sex sells, insinuation and intrigue last longer and are more durable, more mobile. Garters engage in a complicated and showy mating dance with life, involving displays of erotic heraldry, artistic tributes and hermetic ready-mades. All Garters are erotic, even if they are asexual, for desire is a mobile homeland animated by Primordial Love and Visceral Devotion. The Garters embrace a polymorphous, pansexual, ever-shifting, biocentric, ever-queering conception of Eros, sexuality and desire. That should set your imagination reeling, so surrender, with cunning to the maelstrom of your own passions.

In militantly organizing like a masonic-type secret society, and mobilizing like an outlaw biker gang, we will unleash our group desires in ways that are radically different from the exhausted routines and protocols of restaurant, bar, car, private residence, text message, tweet, Facebook, bedroom, sex, sleep, anxiety dreams. Becoming socialized means we’ve been coerced to reveal things we didn’t want to and flex other things that hurt us. Becoming socialized to the entrenched hierarchies means we must now engage in healing acts that come from orchestrated mayhem and estranging choreographies. The Iron Garters never forget that “man” is the “rationalizing animal”; the Garters, true
to form, are also animals, rationalizing alienated forms of reason and forgotten acts of healing.

The Garter doesn’t want to be buried with the phrase, “S/he played it safe” indelibly written on their tomb. Nor do Garters deliberately and destructively seek danger. Self-destruction is the status quo. What Garters court are the oblique byways of Uncertainty and the Unknown; and the ingenuity of their courtship rites creates a durable craft upon which to navigate. Ritual and devotion, play and collaboration are the planks and nails that keep the craft afloat. Garters never forget that what is at stake is what is Ventured.

Our bodies and minds have ossified into positions and attitudes we never desired. The most dominant and thus most ossified Social Organizations that rely on profit, repetition, subservience, and inner and outer warmongering conveniently forget that they are destroying us. The Iron Garters will rectify this forgetfulness by forcing other ways of organizing space and the organisms that play in it. Gangs can do this with ease because wherever they move they bring transformative ravishment, lively confusion, contagious mystery and genuine Panic. In assuming the scuzzy raiments of what tactful, prestige-driven society fears most, we are guaranteeing that the passersby who deplore us the most shall have the most memorable night.

In truth, the Iron Garters are smugglers of a magical ecosystem that can manifest and be secreted anywhere, given the correct correspondences. This is the counter-world fiction that supplements our day-light, real-world ventures. We have a tendency to suggest that these correspondences, when emitted in the “real world” conspire to create feelings, affects, occasions, and events that we call Sacred—a force that tends to undo the artificial restrictions that humans, in their ideologically-driven fears, have imposed upon reality. Rites of theater, ritual, picnic, pilgrimage, rides, raids, expe-
ditions, dog-piles, mud fights, mystical declarations: these are ways of creating new physical, geographical, erotic, spiritual and emotional territories. By masquerading as archetypal “criminals” we are living reminders of the porousness of categories and the desperate need for societies to reinvent themselves thru the radical imagination.

END BULLETIN