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from *Chroma: A Book of Colour* (1995)

Rose red city.
Half as old as time.

Pink, mauve and violet jostle each other from red
to black.

Roses are red.
Violets are blue.

Poor violet violated for a rhyme.

There is no natural pink pigment, though you can
buy something called 'flesh tint' which in no way
resembles the pasty faces of the north or the tanned
one's of the south.

Mauve is a chimera. It barely exists except as a
description of the 1890s, the Mauve Decade.

Purple marches and violet shrinks.

Pink begat mauve begat
purple begat violet ...

... with the exception of violet they are allies. Violet is respectable.

The rarest and most beautiful eyes are violet. I'm told that is the secret of Elizabeth Taylor.

Pink is always shocking. Naked. All those acres of flesh that cover the ceilings of the Renaissance. Pontormo is the pinkest painter.

Purple is passionate,
maybe violet becomes a
little bolder and FUCKS
pink into purple. Sweet
lavender blushes and
watches.

THINK PINK!

Pink was the passion of the Mauve Decade—the Ballets Roses that Baron Fersen staged with young children for rich matrons at tea. Were those naked children innocent? The baron caused a scandal with other youthful indiscretions and support was withdrawn from him by the wealthy ladies, who sat admiring the children, posed as Venus and Adonis, Hercules and any number of Graces. Fersen left Paris in a hurry for the south, where he built a villa in Capri. Mauve had found its home. Fersen's taste was not for children, so there was no pedophilia in the pink. He was after young navvies, and picked one up—a surprisingly handsome straight boy who lived with him faithfully to the end, polishing and filling the baron's jade opium pipes.

Opium is the mauve drug. It brings to mind this time with its mysterious acrid smell.

You will find that Christ's robe in many medieval paintings, Piero della Francesca's Resurrection, for instance, is bright pink.

In the 1950s the song 'Think Pink' restored the colour to popularity, The Fifties were a pink decade. The is pink in the make-up of sex-goddesses. Marilyn Monroe was certainly pink. Those Venuses who wore nothing but corral beads—peek-a-boo pink.

The pink nubile ladies of the music hall in flesh-coloured tights.

'In the Pink'. My dictionary says: 'in the most perfect health', though Venus gave her name to shady diseases and haunted the clap clinic.

Pink eyed.

She was dressed by Schiaparelli in shocking pink. Lipstick pink. Pink icing. Soap and the packaging of cosmetics was pink. Pink flattered. In that world big girls as well as little girls wore pink.

Against this earthly pink, Rudolf Steiner proposed peach blossom, representing the living image of the soul as revealed in the colour of the human skin. Colour becomes a nonsense—I wonder if Steiner had been black he would have swapped the colours? Only when the soul withdraws, he says, does a person turn green. This again has nothing

to do with the soul, the muddle that Ludwig Wittgenstein perceived in the use of that word, the soul as concrete, is clear here. The green is just a physiological state brought in by the withdrawal of blood from the epidermis. Souls do not have colour.

At twenty I painted pictures in pink. Pink interiors with pink girls. Was this the burgeoning of my sexuality?

Twenty years later. The pink triangle was reclaimed from history. The Nazis used pink to send those in same-sex relationships to the gas chamber.

When Queen Mark visited my father's RAF station at Kidlington early in the Fifties, a pink lavatory was built for her visit. The entire station trooped past it, no one had ever seen anything like it. In the event she never used it. Later pink bathrooms became the rage. You'll grow a little lovelier each day with a pink Camay.

This afternoon I walked down to Rowneys and bought a tube of Flesh Tint.

*Pink is the navy blue of
India.
(Diana Vreeland)*