

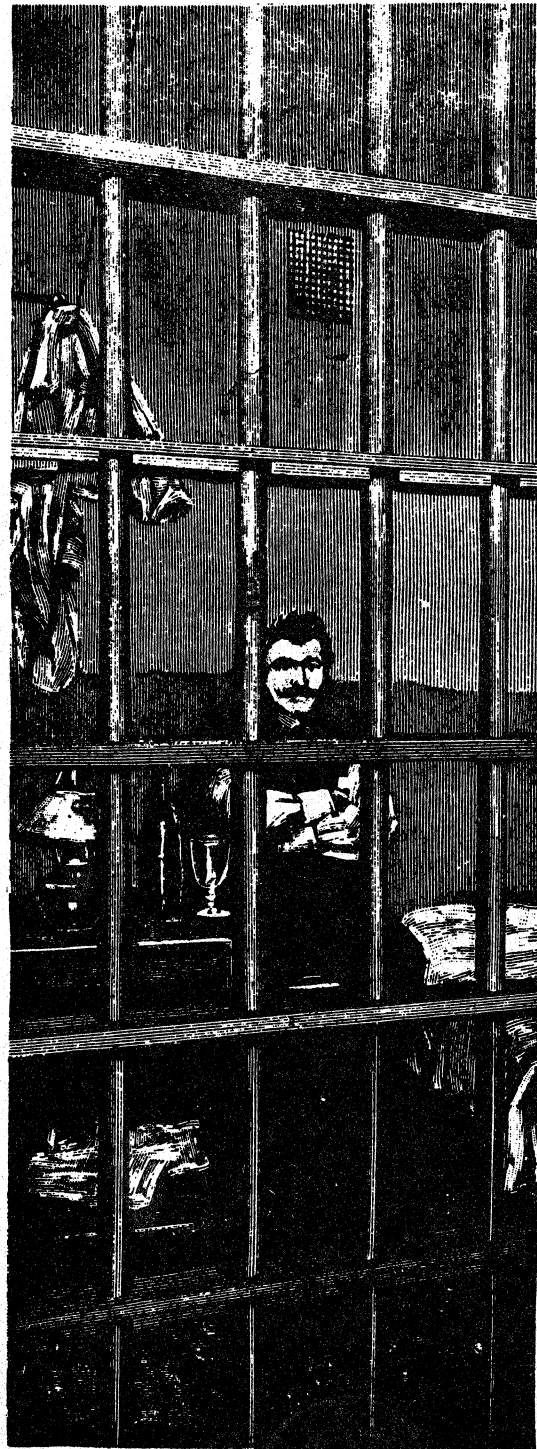
brother:

a forum for men against sexism

an anthology of
personal and
political
writings

- Men and Women •
- Gayness •
- The Men's
Movement •
- Our Bodies •
- Men and the
Family •
- Oppressive Institutions
~ Work, Prisons ~
~ School, the Military ~

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graphic by n.c. anvil

BROTHER'S GREATEST Hits!

This brother anthology includes articles and poems and graphics from the first ten issues of brother. It includes both personal accounts and political writings of men struggling with sexism both in ourselves and in society.

In choosing articles, we attempted to give an overview of the topics that were covered over the last four years. We chose pieces which we still felt good about, or which still seemed worth reading now.

Many of the articles were edited for length by the present collective (hoping to keep intact the author's original intentions) so as to be able to present a wider array of articles.

It's our hope that those already familiar with brother will find this anthology helpful in creating a clearer overall picture of what we have been about. At the same time we hope it will serve as an introduction to brother and to these issues for those not already acquainted with the paper.



brother #1
as it appeared in
Time magazine.
(The sub-title
changed with
issue #3).

brother was first started back in 1971 by mostly straight men in men's groups trying to figure out how to respond to the women's movement. It has been in a process of continuous evolution, changing from pretty undefined politics and feelings of "men are oppressed, too" to a strongly pro-feminist and anti-male supremacist politics.

Originally there was a no-editing policy (whatever was submitted was put in the paper) whereas now all articles are considered by the collective, and much of the material is written by collective members.

The membership of the collective has also fluctuated wildly, ranging from two to twelve or more, and now hovering around four. One major result of this process is that the collective is now all gay. We have all been members for a while, having each worked on several issues. We still don't see brother as an exclusively gay paper, but as one for all men interested in ending sexism.

-continued inside back cover-

In the course of...

In the course of the first intense struggling I ever went through about male chauvinism, in the context of a working-class organizing collective, almost all of us men expressed the same image/position/feelings about ourselves. "I guess what people are saying about men oppressing women is true, but it's just a stereotype. It doesn't apply to me, because I'm really weak, helpless, defenseless. The woman I live with is so much stronger and more together than I am."

And as unplugged passion and sisterhood and anger and resentment and - yes - hatred erupted from the depths of the women's souls, we cowered, stunned, overwhelmed, shattered, lost, unsupported. "I guess it's true after all, but what am I supposed to do now?" Painfully we worked out what to do, and for the first time deeply understood what 'criticism and self criticism' meant. We lived through the process of taking a social analysis and the perspectives and feelings of the women with whom we had lived (but who now seemed incredibly alien) and examining ourselves tried to understand and explain our patterns of behavior and our feelings so we could change them. We began to understand how we were oppressive from a position of 'weakness.'

This went on for hundreds of years, until they had tried everything except helping each other out...



so they helped each other out

What came spilling out was fearful, fear - some isolation; anguished admission of our strength, beauty, and sensitivity which we had daily, systematically possessed and leached in order to assuage our scarred, vulnerable insides, in the name of love; repressed tenderness and tears shuttered and buried beneath the awesome fear of being unmanned; panic at losing our tenuous hold on the frayed/shattered/ragged tatters of our psyches/sanity/self-images. We were haunted/taunted men, bombarded by images of what were not: studs, athletes, intellectuals, leaders, fighters, dancers. Inside our skulls, under our foreheads, our pineal third eye was blinded by a scarlet letter "F".

Men And Women

Part One:

And now for the first time we were puking and gagging out the sweet torture of being men trapped in the unfulfillable role that carried, along with its appetite for support, approval, understanding, pleasure, and submission; along with its enforced inaccessibility; that carried the rights and prerogatives of being on top in the 'natural order of things.' With chains composed of need and fear of dependency, of the burden of the responsibility we placed on the one person to whom we made our humbling admissions of weakness and self-hatred, we had enslaved the women whose life energies could fill the gaping void of our inadequacies.

And so our 'weakness' dovetailed neatly with the super-masculine society 'outside', whose economic, social, emotional, sexual, physical, psychological, and racial threats crippled our capacity to be human, but also forced into line the one person - the one woman - whose servitude was meager compensation for all the rest, and whose threat to our crumbling sense of selfhood we had been able to more or less effectively defuse by clinging to an enforcing the prerogatives of our socially ordained manhood and our 'god-given' superiority. And we had often moved, sometimes brutally, sometimes subtly, to undermine 'our' women's sense of autonomy when that threatened our primacy in the relationship.

And yet under all that shit was the kernel of real love-intimacy, shared joy, and growth - that magnified the pain of the struggle we were going through a thousand times.

We cried rivers of tears. And by our head-long immersion in that process of collective criticism and self-criticism of the deepest, most fragile aspects of our souls, we began to break out of the roles, to end the isolation, to struggle with the enforcer within. We defied our fears of admitting our failures as men. Choking and gagging on the very word, we named the secret, shameful desire/fear: brother-love; homosexuality.

Thirteen long and heavy months ago, the first steps on the winding road into the uncharted future, strewn with corpses and questions. We have met the enemy and He is us. By intimately learning the man inside, we will learn how to destroy the Man outside who is murdering, maiming, mindfucking our sisters and brothers around the world. And we will learn how not to create our future in his monstrous image

NON- CHAUVINIST; NON- PASSIVE.

The women's liberation movement has changed my life. It has affected my social and sexual relationships with both women and men for the better. This change has come about through criticism of me, lots of criticism of me, mostly justified. I am criticized for what is commonly called 'male chauvinism'. For me this means: the mistaken belief that men are naturally superior to women, and all the subsequent attitudes and behaviors that follow from such a belief.

Some of these ideas made me act in oppressive ways to women, some to men, many to myself. I didn't think that women had the ability to lead political organizations, that their insights into the world were as important as men's. Similarly I judged other men by their ability to articulate themselves as I did: clear, concise, and rational in a mechanical way that ran rough-shod over other people's feelings and needs. And I kept myself unaware of my desire to love other men.

This is all in preface. So, for a few years now I have been criticized a lot by women and men who have been demanding that I change some of the basic parts of my personality. I have been changing positively in response to their demands, and what are now my demands of myself.

My problem is that one of the ways I have changed is to have become more passive. 'Passive' is probably the wrong word. I don't feel passive; I don't withdraw in my mind from a situation. I just keep myself from saying the things I feel. Actually, I'm terrified of becoming really passive.

The criticisms I have gotten have left me so unsure of myself at times that I don't feel I can express myself. Too often my thinking and even feelings are values I have taken unknowingly from the larger society, values I no longer respect. I can't be sure that what I'm going to say is not going to be a chauvinist remark and just reflect those outside society values.

This all leads me to the fear that people will reject me for saying the 'wrong things'. Also I fear people who know me from years before will be reminded of all the oppressive male supremacist parts of me they used to know.

I don't believe that the way to not be chauvinist is to be quiet or passive. The idea of women's liberation as I understand it is freedom for everyone: not just for women, not just for men, but for everyone.

I want to be able to express myself - my ideas, my feelings, conscious of the effect they will have on other people and be open to the charge that I have hurt someone else by my actions

Lately I will sit in a discussion and not express my feelings as I said above out of fear. Even though I am not dominating the discussion, as I once might have, or responding more favor-

ably to what men say than to what women say, as I once might have, I am not being non-chauvinist. I am being passive, more exactly, quiet. I am usually torn apart inside trying to figure out a good way to join the discussion. I want to become an active member of such discussions in a new way that doesn't hinder anyone else from also being an active member.

It's difficult to find these new ways to be. 'Active' can no longer mean what it did before: self assertive, dominating etc. I must now be receptive and open to what other people have to say. I expect to be listening a lot more often now, but I want to be listening out of this openness to other's ideas, not out of fear that what I'm going to say will be wrong, or will intimidate someone else from speaking.

It's very confusing. I feel guilty for all those years of domination. But to become passive, I feel, is to respond solely to the guilt and not to my positive feelings of the potential of truly open and equal relationships with friends. It is more the latter that I want to motivate me. I think the end result will be better.

Today, as I write this article, my problem came to life. I have been trying to be more honest and open with my feelings with the woman I live with and love. I became very angry at something she did, or rather didn't do.

I wanted her to ask a dentist she had just seen not to charge her so much as we couldn't afford it. I felt it was important 1) to ask him then and not later on the phone as she suggested and 2) to not be intimidated (as she was) by him, or in some way overcome it and confront him directly for the reduced fee.

My first response was to withdraw saying, "do whatever you think" or just remain silent, while getting angrier and angrier inside. Having made a recent resolution to break from my passivity, I tried to say what I felt. Disasterous! The anger came through, but little else. I was heavily moralistic and completely unsympathetic (verbally) to her difficulty in confronting professionals (esp. men). It was obvious she was uneasy by her suggestion to do it later by phone.

I didn't support her feelings of wanting to ask for the lower fee (which she certainly had). I trashed her fears and offered no suggestion for overcoming them. Simply, do it! I feel very critical of the way I acted.

It is precisely reinforcement of these bad experiences that make me tend to hold my feelings inside. I know it's not right. Sometimes it seems easier, but I have shown pre-ulcer symptoms at times; so even if I thought it might be better to hold it in, my body clearly has told me, it's wrong. I can only keep trying, while being as conscious as I can of how I affect others. **DAN-**

LEFT OUT

Su came back from the women's Pennsylvania weekend meeting high on the togetherness, strength and beauty she and many of the other women felt there. They had rapped together, played ball together, danced together, walked together, argued together, FELT together. At home afterwards watching and listening to her and two friends of ours who were at the meeting, I could see how connected the women got, how strong and good the feelings were. And I could also know that I never had, and maybe never would, experience such beautiful human feelings.

My weekend, in contrast, was spent in unacknowledged fearful anticipation of what changes the weekend might put Su thru, and degenerated into a real self-pity trip, a genuine blue funk bummer.

You see there's no doubt in my mind at all that women are more in touch with their humanity and, therefore, better people than men. After all, women's qualities - responsiveness to others, sensitivity, compassion, patience, subtlety, intuitive conceptualizing, etc. - are exactly the ones our future revolutionary society will foster and flourish on; while the male qualities - self-interest, competitiveness, aggressiveness, force, rigid thinking, etc. - are precisely our enemies and are what we are struggling to eliminate. The depressing question is whether we men can ever in our lifetime regain our humanity. Also, I think today's women are crazy to continue messing around with men, and in fact, it seems they are becoming more and more unwilling to do so. It must be a terrific drain on their energy - always having to be responsible for someone else, always mothering someone along, and just getting ignored, used and shit on as a result.

HISTORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP

I had really been a bastard. The real male pig. And I don't mean blatantly male chauvinist. I mean coolly, middle-class, self-sufficient, movement-successful, Don Juan, nice-guy, male chauvinist! I was everything I and society (including movement society) wanted me to be. But of course I had no heart, no guts, no feelings. And a part of me must have known that and been lonely, and that's partly what attracted me to Su, although I hated (and tried to destroy) her feelings, needs, and aspirations and the other related women-human traits.

So, over that first year I battled Su - her wanting responsiveness, commitment and love and I wanting to keep my precious (and promiscuous) independence. I wasn't about to 'tie myself down' to commit myself to her - monogamous relationships were 'bourgeois' and 'counter-revolutionary.' But what I was

really objecting to was opening myself up to feelings. (I must have really feared and hated feelings. What had happened back 15 or 20 years ago to mine?) And in the battles Su, as well as the other women I fucked around with, got hurt too, too much. My unbelievable emotional cruelty to her far outdid any possible physical cruelty, which I proudly placed myself above. But in spite of myself my resistance had been weakening. I must have somewhere down deep recognized that feelings and Su were really where life was at, and that I was nowhere. An encounter group around this time helped bring the point home. So too did the contradiction, which Su kept pointing out, between my communist, humanist aspirations and my actual insensitivity to people. Some communist I would make!



Fuck it; the world, the revolution was moving on and I realized that I was nothing of what I wanted to be. So finally a year ago I threw in the towel and decided to try to quit fighting it. I would submit myself (or so I considered it at the time) to a monogamous relationship with Su and would try to humanly relate to her, acknowledge, be responsive to and take some responsibility for her kids, and get more in touch with myself.

Over this last year I managed to shed quite a bit of male-role bullshit, to soften up some, and to regain a little of my lost humanity. I even cried a few times and occasionally felt real good. But I've also recurringly and particularly of late, grown complacent. I guess I expect the feelings to sort of just come to me, instead of expecting myself to actively struggle to get there, as I know Su and many other women constantly have to do in their struggle.

And as for other men, whom I've almost completely cut myself off from, yet with whom I know I must eventually work out solutions to our male oppressor mentality, I don't know what to do! I'd rather just continue to parasite off Su (and her women friends) and pick their guts. But since the women's weekend meeting I know the days left for that option are numbered.

...continued...

SHADOW PLAY FOR GUILT

A man can lie to himself
A man can lie with his tongue
and his brain and his gesture:
a man can lie with his life:
but the body is simple as a turtle
and straight as a dog:
a body cannot lie.
You want to take your good body off
like a glove
You want to stretch it and to
shrink it
as you change your abstractions.
You stand in it with shame.
You smell your fingers and lick
your disgust
and are satisfied.
But the beaten dog of a body
remembers.
You speak of the collective.
You speak of open communication
but you are secret.
You form your decisions
and visit them on others
like an axe.
In all of the movements there is
nothing to fear
like a man whose rhetoric is good
and whose ambition for himself is
fierce:
a man who says we, moving us,
and means I and mine.

Many people have a thing they want to
they want to protect
Sometimes the property is wheat, oil
fields, slum housing
plains on which brown men pick
green tomatoes,
stocks in safety deposit boxes,
computer patents,
maybe 30 dollars in a shoebox under
a mattress.
Maybe its a woman they own and her
soft invisible labor.
Maybe its prejudices or fermented
hatred,
or images from childhood of how things
should be
The revolutionary says, we can let go.
We both used to say that a good deal.
If what we change does not change us
we are playing with blocks,

Always you were dancing before
veiled eyes,
before the altar of guilt.
A frowning man with clenched fists
you lean heavy as cast iron
and sucked my breasts and grappled
and fed
gritting your teeth for fear
a good word would slip out:
a man who came back again and again
and again

continued...

LEFT OUT

Su's demands of me have increased as she increasingly experiences the confines of heterosexual monogamy and her growing fulfillment with women. Unless I can relate as a positively meaningful person in her life our relationship will be irrelevant. What can I do?

The first step, taken over the last year, was good - recognizing women's superior humanity, trying not to fuck over people (especially women anymore) and shedding my bullshit male identity crutches

Right now I see I must PUSH myself more and more to expose and risk my feelings before other people and also probably get into another encounter/consciousness raising group. Perhaps ideally that would be with other men similarly aware of their sexism and committed to struggling against it. However, a 3 or 4 month stint about a year ago in a male anti-sexist group did little for any of us, and we occasionally even used it to support some of our oppressive tendencies.

In any case, new forms of struggle are desperately needed, and it is the responsibility of men men conscious of their male chauvinism to develop these and to seriously put them into effect for more and more men. The women's movement will probably be of much help to us thru our observing it and to some extent, when possible, experiencing their revolutionary struggle, letting it be an indication to us of the direction in which to go.

--Tom (Thanks to Su, her gay sisters, and the women's movement in general for a large part of this paper's inspiration and ideas.)

yet made sure that his coming
was attended by pain
and marked by a careful coldness,
as if gentleness were an inventory
that could run low,
as if loving were an account that
could be overdrawn,
as if tenderness saved drew interest:
you are a capitalist of yourself.
You hoard for fantasies and deceptions
and the slow seep of energy out of
the loins.
You fondle your fears and coddle
them
while you urge others on.
They are the only reason you ever need.

I am not in your world but with my
sisters.
In your world is only you
and your fantasies and your fears
and your abstractions
ranged like the favorite battered toys
and hoarded
and the relationships you created
from what was open and alive and
curious
turning it to guilts altar
private and tight as a bankvault
or a tomb.

Marge Piercy

NOTES ²_N MALE HETEROSEXUALITY AND POWER

It seems like everywhere we turn today there are sex clinics, radio call-in shows, inquiring photographers, and hip doctors offering treatments for men's sexual ailments.

In fact, as masculine power is being challenged by women on a collective basis, men's ability to enact the old patterns of heterosexual behavior is collapsing.

We cannot allow this to mean increased pain for women and men, or a frustrated reactionary attack on women by men.

If men's bodies aren't doing what we think they're supposed to do sexually, we must listen to our bodies. We need to question our sexual, cultural, and political assumptions, and learn for ourselves what women have already discovered about the oppressiveness of male-dominated heterosexuality.

The relationship between men as men and women as women is a class relationship, in which men are the dominant class. In many personal, every-day interactions between men and women, men are motivated by a desire to assert, maintain, or enhance their class power as individuals, while women seek to break out of, or at least soften the effects of, their subordinate class position as individuals.

Sexual behavior, fantasies, and needs are socialized, and reflect this class relationship. Men's sexual practice with women is governed by and distorted by the fact that one material basis for male dominance is the outright sexual exploitation of women by men.

In our culture, sexual pleasure is defined as another alienated commodity, and men attempt to get the greatest amount of pleasure for themselves (as well as other services from women) for the smallest payment.

Men are sexually sick, not because they are having potency problems, but because sexual feelings between men and women are supposed to be expressions of dominance and submission, and because one weapon of men against women in a general social struggle is to define them as exclusively sexual, and therefore subordinate beings.

We must stop defining our sexuality at the expense of women. To believe that 'fucking good' is the grooviest sex there is for men, while claiming to understand that sex as a male dominant institution is oppressive to women, not only generates guilt and resentment, it is the next step from rape. Men have to pay attention to our own bodies and sensuality and discover the real physical needs that do not spring from a socialized desire to dominate.

I want to clarify this with some examples from specifically sexual aspects of my relationships with women, where my feelings and behavior were often determined by my desire to express my power in the relationship, to live up the masculine role model. I'm not attempting to speak for the women. I'm not pretending that this is the whole story of what went on; but it is unfortunately true that this aspect of masculine oppressiveness and exploitation was a primary one.

I had a double standard within a double standard: I was 'enlightened' enough to not get upset, initially, when the woman I lived with began to relate sexually to other women, so long as she would continue to be with me - that didn't threaten my 'masculinity.' Yet that first man she slept with, I began to ejaculate 'prematurely' in effect to spite her. It was in facing my reactions to those changes in a crucially important relationship, and the sexist bias made evident by those reactions and their differences, that I began to recognize the extent to which my mind and body were not my own, but were controlled by deeply internalized standards of masculinity.

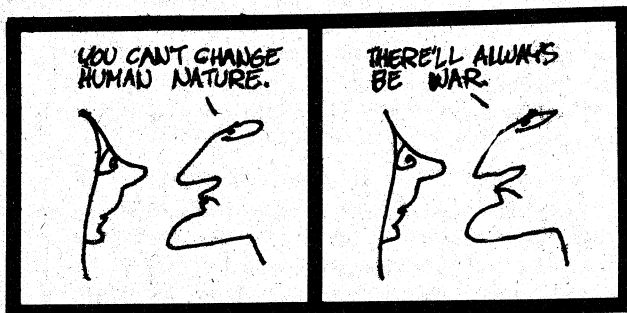
The whole thing about 'coming too soon', for instance, is a typically masculine connection of male genital potency with power, from beginning to end. I was defining the woman's pleasure and my own in terms of my ability to conform to the 'ideal' of alienated masculine performance. The obvious question to be asked is, 'too soon' for whom? My pain, and in turn my guilt about

Male Heterosexuality & Power, continued...

the pain become further tools for a man to hold a woman down with, by laying the blame on her.

I needed to be held, touched, squeezed, in love-making, to have my body worked on. Yet I wasn't able to relax when I was touched. I was afraid of becoming too vulnerable, unable to face the role-reversal of having a woman break thru my sexual resistances and skittishness. Instead I tried to impose my definitions on women's consciousness and sexuality so I'd continue to get hat I wanted out of the relationships. And I was no better at exploring or expressing my own true needs, sexual or otherwise.

I could talk a good line on non-genital sexuality, but part of my motivation in lovemaking was yet to prove my masculinity. The more I became intellectually conscious of the connection between fucking and male dominance and the whole stud image, the more hung - up I got.



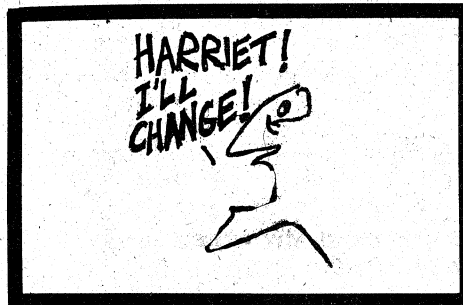
I'd like to avoid the alienated category of a 'sex life'; the tendency to categorize things that way is an aspect of the problem I'm talking about: for a long time I wanted to treat sexual problems as a question of technique, not power. "If only she had the commitment to deal with my hang-ups, to devote the time and energy to Masters & Johnson's squeeze technique so I could perform better," etc.

I think of all the 'little' mundane things that made me little more'n an agent of phallic imperialism. For instance, how long it took me to learn that the pattern of me touching & petting the woman I was sleeping with, trying to arouse her to genital intent as we snuggled in the morning, was oppressive; that a morning erection probably meant I needed to piss. Yet of such a web of daily interactions is a heterosexual love life composed. That's why I think straight men, tho' they presumably value women for their sexual use, actu-

ally off women they're involved with day-to-day and in the very act of love-making more than gay men who supposedly don't relate to women sexually because they 'hate' them.



Don't take this as a guilt trip. Speaking frankly about how our present attitudes and activities are governed by male supremacy is a 1st positive step. Honest, self-critical, sharing of these experiences, not in oppressive guilt, is a way to demystify love and sex, give up the masculine power in relationships with women that is based on dishonesty, hidden feelings, and immunity from criticism. I am aware of the risks and pain involved in sharing this, especially in talking about so many negative things in a sketchy way; I'd sure like to see some other men



take the risks of opening the bag of worms hidden by 'emotional repression' as part of the male role.

The chickens are coming home to roost for many men right now. We've tied ourselves in knots trying to perform sexually, & sacrificed women on the altar of masculinity. No we're paying the price. The contradictions of trying to be sexually 'potent' & powerful in the face of increasing political and cultural powerlessness (in the mill between the challenge of women from below and the centralization of power in the rulers of the empire above us) are becoming more intense. These are now wreaking havoc up front with men's psyches and sexuality as we have done to women. Hip doctors with the palliatives of sexual liberation don't have the answer. Revolution is the only solution.

- Michael N.

About a year ago I got a vasectomy. I am not married and, to my knowledge, have never fathered a child. I have grown to love several children. I'm not into stopping the "population explosion." I don't dig "fucking around." So why did I get sterilized?

Because women demanded it. Because women in my life have forced me to take responsibility for children and for pregnancy. Because women have made me realize that unwanted pregnancy can be an 18-year or lifetime nightmare. And because sterilization is the only really safe, secure method of birth control available.

women that I respected pushed me to take part in a female responsibility-raising children. I've lived with kids in several different families over the past three years. At first, I was overjoyed: discovering little people and their straightforward, unrepressed feelings. The dirty diapers, whining, broken dishes, and incessant demands didn't get me down. But after times of being stuck at home with housework and kids all day, no big people to talk to and no place to go, I could feel my mind turn to mush and to screaming, violent claustrophobia.

Vasectomy

I began to understand why women will beat children, or yell irrationally at them or become exhausted "just" being a mother. I began to understand how important it is to have support in raising children; how important to get away from little people sometimes, how important to have living-together experiences with kids, to know what it's like having a child "of your own." And how important to prevent unwanted children.

Women began to clue me in on preventing unwanted children-- how the pill and IUD mess up bodies, the danger of cancer, the unreliability of the diaphragm and foam, the unavailability of abortions due to cost and red tape.

Out of these growing understandings of women's experience and understanding how close I had come to fathering children, I began to think about getting sterilized.

I thought of Karen, who at 19 was using no birth control, and said she wanted my child. I fucked her for four months and then never saw her. I don't know if she had a child. I thought of Anne and her miscarriage of our child. And just before my vasectomy (after years of realizations about women's oppression) Mary and I were careless, carried away with passion, and she had to abort the child.

I went looking for a vasectomy. Doctors wouldn't do it to a single man, a man without children (although there's no law against it). The operation cost \$100 cash-- I couldn't afford it. I borrowed a friend's welfare medical card, had a woman friend sign as my wife, and the operation took fifteen minutes.

I want to make clear that I don't identify with the population control movement. I feel that 3/4 of the world is starving due to inadequate distribution of the food and wealth we have, and not because there are too many people.

I've eliminated the possibility of a biological link between me and a child. My experience says that children adopt the life styles and mannerisms of big people who they care for, whether they're biologically linked or not. I could adopt, and not have to go through the trauma of losing my little people friends every time I broke up with the big people they "belong to." And though I accept that I'll break up and come together and have varied intensities of closeness with different people at different times, I have a fantasy about spending 18 years with a child--a person who will love me unconditionally, not hold grudges, be my constant companion and source of joy, and who will grow up to be my image of the "good person."

Of course it's just a fantasy.

Adopting a child would put me in the same desperate position of being alone that so many single women are in. And I don't want that nightmare. I think we always have to be on close, trusting terms with several big people in order to survive with a little person. Otherwise we go crazy. We've gotta have help with children. So I figure that being close with "other people's" children is what's right for me now.

- JAMIE

SUPERMEN IN G - STRINGS

In "Brother" and in my men's group, I sometimes come up against expressions like "dealing honestly with our homosexual feelings" or "coming to terms with our homosexuality." What these expressions mean I don't know. There's a strain in women's liberation, of course, that adulates Lesbianism. Women who know themselves as basically heterosexual sometimes announce, after a certain amount of a certain type of consciousness raising, that they are "ready for a Lesbian experience." It reminds me of people who close their eyes, hold their noses, and take a dose of castor oil because it's supposed to be good for them.

Maybe homosexuality is good for some people. But I'm pretty sure it's destructive, really damaging for me.

When I was about 13 I discovered physical culture magazines with pictures of weight lifters in G - strings. In some obscure way, they seemed to be THE ANSWER. I used to secretly study the supermen and masturbate. It was very humiliating. I never told anyone about it. The next step was to recruit an eighth grade classmate — a hairy, uncircumcised guy (like my father) — and try to masturbate him. He couldn't get it up. I somehow sensed that handling his dick wasn't quite IT.

So I went back to studying pictures. I had this humiliating habit, to a lessening degree, for years (now I'm 33, married, the father of two). It periodically numbed me. In college I once tried to "deal honestly with my homosexual feelings" by making it with a gay man. That is, he blew me. My attitude was, "Why not, if he wants it so much?" After, I think I said, "There now, I hope you feel better," as if I'd given him a dose of Pepto-Bismol or something. As for me, I felt like used shit, really mangled. That's as depressed as I've ever been. It lasted about a week.

Anyway, why do I keep saying that this trip was 'humiliating?' I don't think it's because I was so unliberated that anything deviant was an automatic bummer for me.

I think the humiliation of my supermen-in-G-strings scene was that it fitted in perfectly with the kind of crippling my family had to offer. It seemed a sort of self-mutilation, a knuckling-under, in obedience to certain strictures.

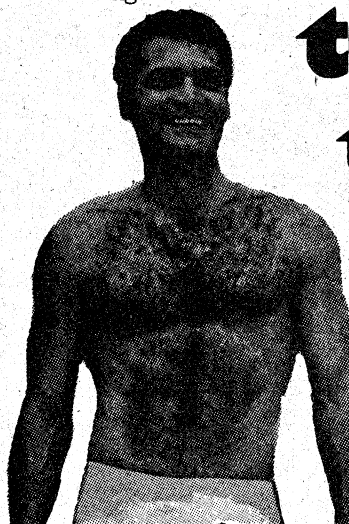
My mother, for example, very early on forbade penis touching. When I was three, I remember, I was told, "When you were little, we had some skin cut off your penis; so you mustn't touch it or you might open up the cut." My mother used to give me dolls and women's clothes to dress up in.

My father wasn't around much. He was a hard worker and a "good provider." He was much praised by my mother. He and I had two personal conversations that I remember. Once he told me not to "play with" myself because my penis "has to produce a seed" (age 11). Another time he told me not to masturbate because it would cause dizzy spells (age 14).

Now, looking back, it seems as if supermen-in-G-strings were THE ANSWER because I was no kind of man at all in my own opinion. So I'd moon over heroes who were clearly qualified for sex. Somehow I got my unworthy rocks off while concentrating on them.

Even now, if I have a homosexual fantasy, it's something like this: "I fuck the super handsome, super built, super hung guy in the ass. I somehow merge with him. Then he/I balls some for-bidding, demanding chick." Or I simply eat, that is literally gobble up bones and all, some hyper-macho specimen, — sort of like indigenous people who eat lions' hearts or warriors' livers to acquire the enemy's coveted characteristics. The important thing is that either I already have these characteristics or they don't matter. And balling guys certainly won't get them for me.

Being homosexual for me, would mean accepting put-downs. Not that I don't unconsciously accept these masculinity put downs anyway, to a degree, even if I don't make them the basis for my life style. After getting married I started doing calisthenics and things. Now I swim 40 laps several times a week. If I see a guy at the place where I swim who is better looking, better built, or better hung than I, I sometimes get that old, fascinated, adoring, humiliated feeling.



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A guy in my group was talking a few weeks ago about how he and this man he grew up with were really intimate. They shared a lot by talking and doing things together. And they'd both gotten to feel like some kind of physical intimacy would be good too. Maybe so, for them. Their experience is quite different from the homosexuality I feel in myself. Only remote, idealized slightly contemptuous idols turn me on. When I get to know a guy, no matter what physical fections he may be endowed with, I stop being aroused by him. A human being with smells, or quirks, hopes and fears, has nothing to do with my homosexual trip. I seek out gods, vessels for untrammelled fantasy. I lay my maleness on their altars. I get back a headful of nonsense about incomparable prowess and similar shit.

So men's liberation and my men's group, has been an anti-homosexualizing experience for me.

- Anonymous

GESTALT DIALOGUE:

Men with no name searching
for

THE ANSWER.

You wonder, what is
THE QUESTION???

Daddy, why is the sky blue?

Daddy, why is sex dirty?

Why do I chase after power

like a dog after a fire truck?

And if I caught it what would I do with it?

Daddy, what happened to my life enrgy?

Daddy, why can't you hear me screaming?

Why aren't you SCREAMING?

Mommy, who turned me against you?

who turned you against yourself,

us against ourselves?

Who turned our selves inside out?

Everybody says that I'm supposed to have power
that I must have power ...

I must have some power here someplace

Someplace ...

Oh shit, where did I misplace it?

Now, just a minute, come on, gimme a minute,

I'm sure I had some power .

Hey, give a guy a break, won't you?

Just give me a minute to calm down and I'll
find it.

I promise, daddy.

What do you mean you lost all the power
Daddy gave you?

—But I can't find it

I can't feel it

I can't feel myself.

If you don't have power of your own,

you're just a little girl.

"You're a sissy!"

"You're a faggot punk"

—No!

No I'm not!

I'm just a queer,

just like the rest of us,

Sucking a little cock-power

shoving a little cock-power

Trying not to fall out of the saddle.

What is the ANSWER?

What is

IT?

Why do I hate my Mommy?

They took her away from me.

They took her voice away from her.

They mede her a slave to her parents

to her brothers and sisters

to her God

to her boss

to her husband

to her children.

They wouldn't let her scream; they tied
her throat in

nots.

And when she got cancer in her throat

They took away her throat.

And when she finally screamed:

"Damn you, damn you — give me back my
throat, my voice, my soul,

Damn you! I hate you all, daddy, doctors,
diety"

They gave her electric
shock

treatments.

Then they gave her back to me.

But she didn't sound like Mommy anymore.

Who told me mommies were forbidding and
demanding?

What is forbidden?

Who is forbidding

IT?

Give it to me, give IT to me it's mine,

give it to me, let me have it ...

Let me have that indescribable IT

Let me be

indescribably

IT.

Let ME BEEEE!!

Stick it in the wall and just

let me be.

Let me see ...

Daddy.

Daddy was the one whc gave me the power in
the first place

even if I can't feel it,

couldn't ever feel it.

But if he gave it to me, and knows

I'm supposed to have it,

the he must have had

IT.

Then if I can just be like

Daddy, be just like Daddy,

I'll have IT, too.

I'll be a daddy,

and have a mommy and kiddies;

I'll be a daddy

and have an old lady

a staedy lay,

and have a reputation, respect

money, immortality

movement credentials.

People will read what I write and admire
my cock

look at my children and admire my cock.

I'll be a daddy.

I am a daddy

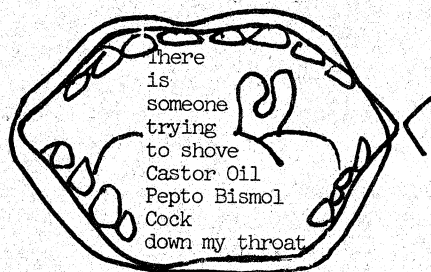
But I still don't seem to quite yet have

IT.

Reflecting on G-Strings and Power

Gestalt Dialog, continued

Why isn't swimming 40 laps IT?
isn't doing 20 chin-ups it?
What more are they demanding from me?



Puke.
Puke it all up.
Puke, brother;
it will feel good.
puke up
the put downs
the hang ups
the need for cock, but also
the need for a cock of your own.

Dig it:
faggots
are simply the queers
they picked out for burning
in the fire they use to roast the rest of us with.

Out of the closets and into the streets.
Out of the frying pan and into the fire.
Marching out of the kitchens
and bedrooms into herstory
alongside and behind our sisters and mothers
into the boardrooms and battlefields
Where we will tear those pigs' corkscrew cocks off
and shove them down their throats.

- Michael

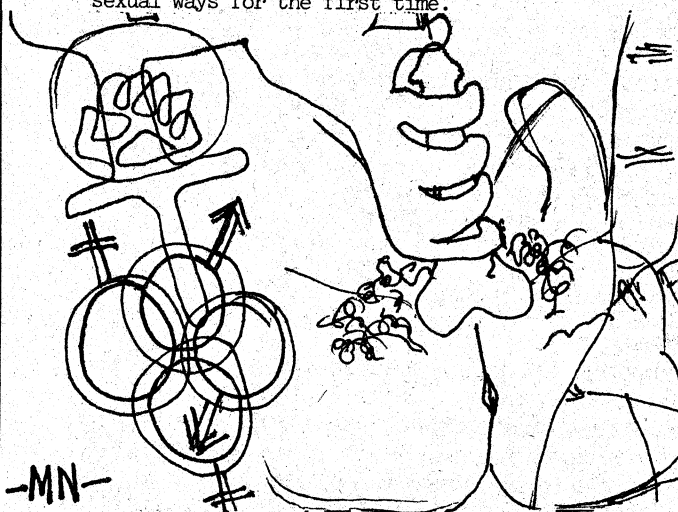
MAKING LOVE WITH - MYSELF -

Over the last two years I have had an extended struggle to try to stop having oppressive, sexist fantasies when I masturbate. Masturbating had never been physically or mentally satisfying due to the frustration I would have from not being able to touch the women I would conjure up in my mind. About two years ago, things changed somewhat and I began to look at these images as not only frustrating but mostly symbols of how I have oppressed and objectified women all my life. Off of this, I began to feel quite guilty when I'd masturbate and have such sexist fantasies.

Because of these new feelings I decided to try to masturbate without thinking of women. At first I had no success because I had no idea in my mind of what I could do instead of thinking about women when I masturbated. I am not sure how, but slowly I began to think of masturbating as making love with myself, as something I could enjoy. Slowly I began to really dig it and had some pretty nice experiences making love with myself. It felt real; good to not link up masturbating to women, but to link it up to my own body and mind.

After a couple of months of good experiences I realized that what I really wanted to do was to be able to lick my own penis—but I couldn't do it. After awhile I realized that if I couldn't lick my own penis, I still wanted to lick a penis—therefore someone else's. And I also wanted someone to lick my penis. So I think there is some kind of a link between homosexuality and masturbation. I believe that these are good feelings to be having and that they help to open up a whole to realm for me in relating to men. I guess a lot of this is still in my head. Even though I feel positive about these new ideas, I haven't yet acted on my feelings.

I have had a few fantasies about men while masturbating, but I do not feel it was a good thing. (Even though it was probably better than my previous fantasies about women.) First of all, they usually left me unsatisfied. Second, I began to feel somehow that I could be doing a similar objectifying thing to men as I had done to women when having fantasies about them. Even though I don't feel good about fantasies of men, I still feel good about thinking consciously of men in sexual ways for the first time.



So I eventually stopped fantasizing and now I relate to masturbation as basically a unisexual experience (body and mind) [I probably will have some type of fantasy in the future -- I don't think I'm "beyond fantasy."] Not fantasizing cleared my head and opened up the new area for me of men loving men. This change helped me become aware of a few of my real feelings.

I feel like mostly any fantasy men have (I do not know how it is for women) about either sex is not a good thing. There may be some kinds of fantasy that aren't oppressive, but I've never experienced them and I can't conceive of any. I believe my fantasies are oppressive because they always use and manipulate the person being fantasized.

They never take into account the person's mind or feelings - only the body. My fantasies give me complete control over sex -- I don't fantasize give and take sexual relations. As a man, I've been taught to take control of sex, and fantasizing plays right in to this shitty pattern. The fantasized lover is distorted and is used to satisfy men's sick hyper-sex-drive, which has been created and embedded in our minds. I feel good about beginning to break this process down.

Robert

ON MALE HOMOSEXUALITY

For months I've tried to write a Brother article about gay sexuality, specifically about what gay men do when they make love. The article was to be addressed mainly to those men who feel open to loving other men but are nervous or scared about actual sexual contact with each other.

As men we are distant from each other. Our growing up process and our training to be workers makes us see others as competitors. Although we often feel our loneliness acutely, most of our relationships with the world are based on one factor that makes it impossible to end our loneliness. That factor is power. As part of our training to use power, we learn how to dominate others: employees, all the people who do services for us, our dependents, anyone who seems to need us more than we need them. Expressing need is the same as surrendering power.

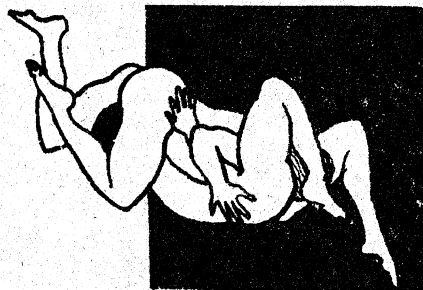
I see coming out as a way men can surrender some of their power and gain something more fulfilling. The emotional support and connectedness we can develop will also make us less likely to demand of women all their support and energy. I don't mean I want men to leave the women they are with, and I don't mean I want more hip bisexuals in the world either. Gayness is neither an escape from responsibility or a groovy new experience to explore. It is a way to change from the unhappy man on the top into a brother who can share with others.

But how can I help this process without writing an instruction manual for sexual initiation? All my previous attempts at this article have neglected responsiveness and affection and just talked about sex. I think this is because, like most men, I have an easier time with the mechanics of sex than with the closeness sex is supposed to be an expression of. Being affectionate and responsive is difficult. Instead of waiting around for sexual feelings to arise spontaneously with a friend, sometimes they have to be forced. I have been a faggot for a long time. My biggest problem is trying to be close enough to my close friends that I can make love with them..

The sexual thing I like best is just lying in bed naked with another man, stroking and touching each other's bodies. This is easy; since I understand in my own body what feels good, I can explore and enjoy feeling chest and back, shoulders, neck, crotch, ass, arms, legs. When I was first coming out, this was my main fantasy about coming out, just holding and being held. Arms around me, warm, protective.

Holding and touching leads to kissing for me. That's usually a really enjoyable part. From kissing mouths it's easy to move to kissing other parts of the body

The whole crotch area is good. Lots of textures and smells. There is hair and soft skin, and penises are amazing in ways far beyond the symbolical associations. Everything is incredibly sensitive in these areas, penis, balls, the seam-like perineum between the base of the scrotum and the asshole, the asshole itself.



Coming is often a problem with another man. Of course it is not necessary to come every time you make love. Often just being sensual is more than enough. But orgasms are just an extension of sensuality, aren't they? You can make someone come by sucking or manipulating his penis with your hand.

Some men come very quickly. Because we are all so well indoctrinated in heterosexual love-making traditions, we often think climax is the same as conclusion. It certainly doesn't need to be. If you come after being sucked for just a minute, so what. You can still make love and feel good for as long as you want.

Other men take a long time to come. Often my jaw gets sore sucking for a long time. Nowadays I am trying to learn I'm not obligated to be sore that way. If my friend wants to come and I can't suck him long enough, I use my hand.

NOTES ON MALE HOMOSEXUALITY

continued...

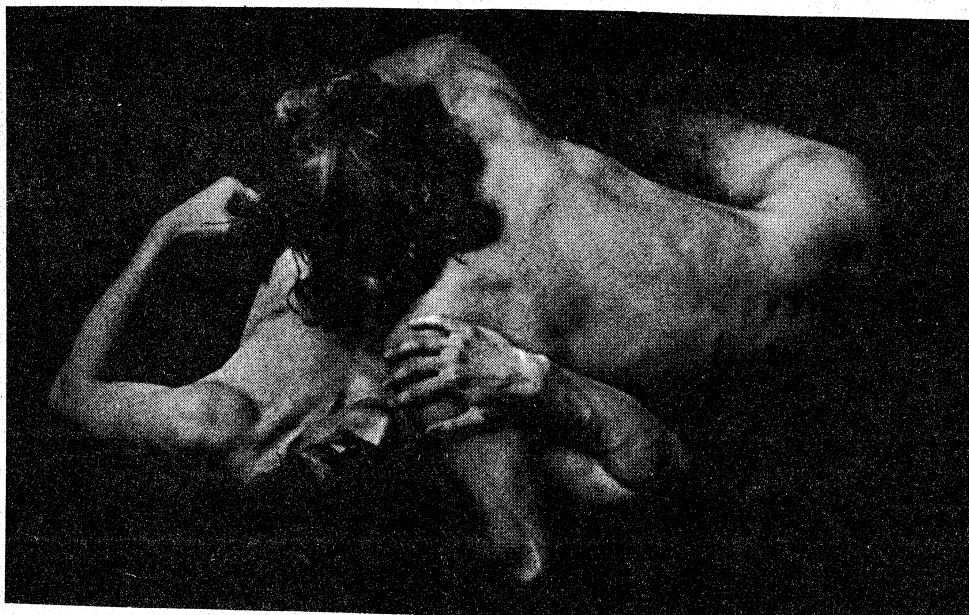


Photo: Alejandro Stuart

Now there's one more major mystery in gay sex, fucking. If you & your friend feel like fucking, talk about it. It takes a little preparation to fuck. Assholes are mainly a tubular membrane, surrounded by rings of muscles to help in shitting. Now these muscles aren't accustomed to expand and contract at your command. The person who wants to be fucked should relax them. Licking, carressing, playing around the thighs, ass and asshole will help.

It's possible to hurt someone as you fuck him, so lubrication of some kind is pretty essential. Spit works fine but vaseline, K-Y, or lotion is more slippery. Even then, care must be taken not to ram the walls of the anus. Usually it's best to insert the penis slowly and then wait awhile til the muscles relax.

The prostate gland is what this fucking is all about. To find out why try masturbating sometime and sticking a finger up your ass. About 3 - 4 in. inside behind the muscle wall near the penis, is a lump which when stimulated makes your orgasm about 100 times better.

One easy way to fuck is for the fucker to lie on his back and let the fuckee sit on his cock. This guarantees that the one getting fucked has more control of the situation. He can

stop if he's hurting himself. Also that way they can look at each other and touch each other. The fucker can masturbate the fuckee, too.

I wish the sexual pleasures I've described here were usual events in my relationship with my body; unfortunately, they aren't. My sexual life now is divided between sexless friendships and trips to the baths. I find myself very inhibited about touching or kissing the people closest to me. I think to myself I'm not attracted to them. Aside from all the other bad things involved with attractiveness, it isn't even true that my friends aren't attractive to me. I'm afraid to touch them because physical gestures like hugging or kissing seem so closely connected to making love. I fear that expressing any affection'll be like promising more intense relationships and I'll get too involved. This seems to be a latter-day version of the fear of coming out. It's an avoidance of having to develop my real feelings about real people. Though this avoidance comes from the kind of secrecy imposed on gay people by the society I think we have to take some responsibility to deal with it among ourselves. We have to work on our sexual relationships as part of giving up the privileges of being men.

BISEXUAL

I am a white, lower class man, twenty seven years old. I've graduated from college. I am a carpenter, house-painter, occasional poet, and have lived successively with two women for about four-and-a-half years. I also lived with a man for about a month when I was 23. Up until last year I had intermittent and usually unsatisfactory homosexual experiences.

I met John in the fall of last year after I separated from Beth, a woman with whom I had lived for three years. He and I became lovers and have been lovers ever since. John is married to a woman and defines himself as bisexual. At first we were able to become lovers because we felt protected from our gayness by the fact we both related to women.

Since I met John I have not been relating sexually or intimately to women except for a month when I visited with Beth. I am calling myself bisexual because I want to leave space within me to relate to women if we can be together in non-sexist ways.

Looking back, I see that my 'coming out' was a response to the failure of my relationship with Beth; and to my sexual feelings for other men. I had expressed my gay feelings before I met Beth and had a few secret gay experiences while I was with her. My coming out with John was a very personal event tied to him. I didn't think of myself as gay and was embarrassed to talk about 'my gayness.' I didn't know whether I could love a man intimately and sexually and feel good about it I have learned I can. Before John my attraction to men was based on fantasies and ideas about my gayness which were oppressive to me and to other men. John, himself, was not my 'typical male fantasy'. But when our relationship began to grow, I was able to talk about 'my gayness' -- to begin to respect myself for it and want other people to respect it as well. I feel that in loving John I am shaking loose some of my sexist fantasies around men. (On the other hand I'm still attracted to men who may not respect me and who may be sexist. And I still get off on oppressive male sexual fantasies.)

Another of the early insights I had when I became lovers with John was how I was intimate and sexual with people. By being lovers with a man, I could see my own cultural bias as a male lover -- how, as a man, I am supposed to be loving. I remembered how Beth had objected to my 'male' expression of intimacy which she often experienced as aggressive and insensitive. I know I made her feel inadequate when she was not responding to me. She was oppressed and angry, because I made her feel like it was 'her problem.' When later she had another lover, she proved to herself and to me what she had known; that it wasn't her problem. It was my lack of

sensitivity as a man to her needs as a woman. Now, because John is a man too, I have sometimes experienced myself in him. I know better how I and other men act out intimacy and love based on culturally defined roles of what is masculine. And that kind of intimacy can be very insensitive, even between men.

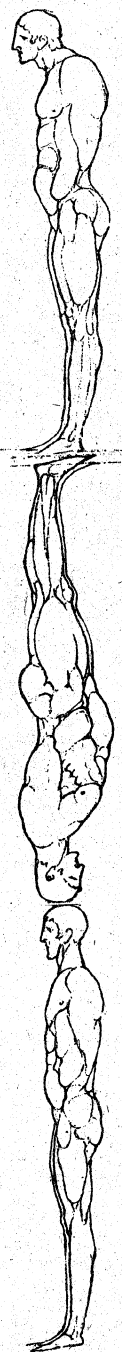
I grew up modeling myself after a very macho Italian father. I grew up as a Catholic with the Church's idea of women as expressed in St Paul and the Blessed Virgin Mary; I grew up with other boys and men in a sexist society.

I am not surprised that it's difficult for me to relate to women. Right now relating to John is teaching me a lot about myself and about men and my own sexism. In the future I hope that I'll be able to have non-sexist, good relationships with women, relationships that feel as good and honest as John and mine.

Since I'm not relating intimately or sexually to a woman partner right now, I can't talk about how I function in that kind of relationship now. I would like to talk about my previous relationship with Beth and my present intimate relationship with John's partner since both women are important in my life.

Beth lives in another country now where she is going to school. We've agreed that we'd like to be partners again in a couple of years. This is a long time away and we're not certain if it will happen. We lived together for three years in a monogamous, straight relationship. I was typically sexist in my relationship with her. I gave her little support for the things she liked and who she wanted to be. I always kept myself uncertain about whether she was quite the woman I needed intellectually, esthetically or sexually. Beth experienced me as unfeeling, as very critical of her, as unloving, and often as just plain mean. At the beginning of last year she became involved with another man for whom I also expressed a sexual interest. Beth was upset both by my homosexuality and by my desire to participate with her in a three way relationship. I found, however, that after I had given my permission for this affair that I was very threatened by her closeness with this other man. I used all my power over her to keep her.

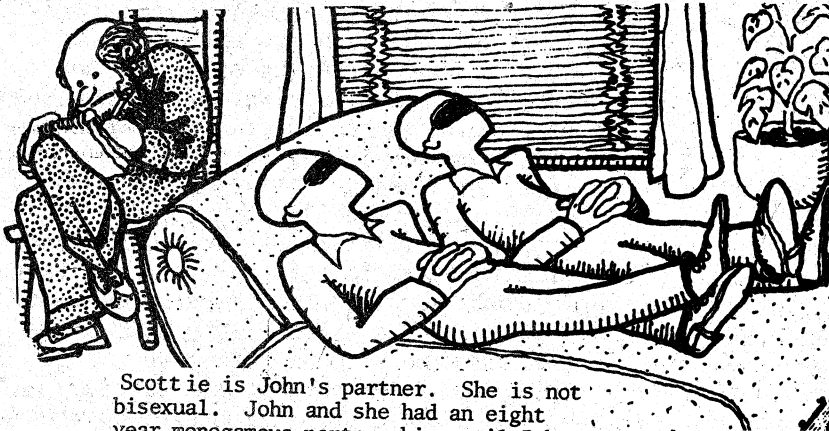
When I felt that our partnership was ending I got in touch with feelings inside me that really cared for her. I tried to express that caring. Before when Beth had wanted to talk about our not very loving love I'd say, "so talk." I began to realize that I had held back my feelings to be in a position of power over her. She would never be sure of my loving her while I demanded she love me, which she did freely. Beth left for school not long after her relationship with this other man ended. I think their relationship ended because like me this other man was not prepared to make a simple loving statement to Beth. If he had, they might be partners now. Beth said later



BISEXUAL, continued...

she felt like she'd been made a fool by both me and him. She had given herself in love to two men who had apparently wanted her love but who were unable to give the same love back.

Beth is not a bisexual woman. I visited her earlier this year and we discussed my coming out. She is threatened by my gayness and I realize it could be an oppressive aspect of our future partnership. Beth has asked, "How can I compete with your male lover?" I don't feel she'd have that fear if she were bisexual. Gay sex to a straight man or woman is mystified. Straight people don't often see how biased the world is toward heterosexuality and are threatened by "too much gayness" especially in the ones they love. I have felt the need to edit some information I have given to Beth about my gayness (and to Scottie, John's partner). Beth has said she does not want to be involved with my male lovers in anyway and once has expressed revulsion for gay sexuality. Yet she has said she'd like to be a partner with me. I fear the strain that my gayness would place on her as a straight woman and the strain I'd feel about editing my gayness around her. I feel that if Beth were bisexual we would have a better basis on which to try to be with each other.



Scottie is John's partner. She is not bisexual. John and she had an eight year monogamous partnership until I became John's lover. After that Scottie became lovers with another man. I feel that to some extent Scottie felt pressured to agree to what John wanted to do this past year--open up their marriage to other lovers and specifically male lovers for himself. In the beginning of my relationship with John, Scottie insisted that she and I have a close relationship independently of John. In that way we have been able to share our feelings and our fears with each other most of the time. I have tried to be open and honest with her

about my feelings for John. I have asked her to share her feelings around my relationship with her partner. I've tried to give her all the room and support I could for her struggles with John. I have mediated their struggles and have supported her in criticizing my own and John's sexism.

Yet, Scottie has felt through this year less loved by John than ever before. She saw John's love for me and other men was more emotional, more feeling--there seemed to be more loving strokes for these men than for herself. Scottie was hurt and oppressed by this inequity. She shared her pain with me directly. I felt that John needed to get in touch with his purely loving feelings for his female partner--not just his clear sense of responsibility to her and his family.

I respect Scottie for being a very strong, reasonable woman with the demands for more freedom which John and I have made. But because she has felt less loved and because she is not bisexual, I have found myself editing my gayness for her so it would be less threatening. John has also done some editing of his gayness though less than I. I feel deceitful both to myself and to Scottie and feel this as an oppressive element for each of us in the relationship.

John, Scottie and their two children are planning to leave this area. It has been projected by John and by myself that I would join them after the summer. I have talked to Scottie about this a number of times. She is being put in a very difficult position. If she says she doesn't want me to join them, she risks that John will be unhappy and resentful. If she gives her approval, she continues for herself an uncomfortable experiment from which she'd like some distance. I feel that as a man and as her partner's lover I am unavoidably oppressive to her in this situation. I continue to be lovers with John because that is what I want and he wants and what Scottie has agreed to. I am not at all sure I can continue to be part of their lives unless the situation changes. I can only give a hypothetical new situation which might allow us to live together in ways that would be good for all of us. If Scottie and John had worked out a non-monogamous partnership together and believed in it theoretically and practically; if John were in touch with his loving feelings for Scottie as he is with me and other men; if Scottie were a bisexual woman who understood gayness experientially; if they were committed to a collective living situation; if we all had the same relative commitment to the struggle against sexism and gay oppression; if there were other men and women in the collective for both support, criticism, and decision-making; then I feel we could have a basis for living together as bisexual men and women committed to changing our own lives and a sexist society.

...Bill

Sink-or-Swim

As a gay man, one of the greater differences I feel with the bisexual men in brother is that I live collectively with four other gay men.

About one year ago, I made a decision to live with gay men. I had already been out of the closet for a year during which I was living and working with eight heterosexual women and men and one other gay man who was also just coming out.



I decided to stop living and working with that group of people because I made a decision to be gay. I wanted to relate to men emotionally and sexually and that made me very different from most of the people I lived with, most of whom were in monogamous heterosexual relationships. My needs to have men respond to me emotionally and physically were just not being met. Living there I felt that it was okay for me to be gay as long as I didn't make sexual or emotional demands of the men I lived with because they were heterosexual and not at all attracted to men.

During that time, I had the feeling that, though I was saying "I am gay" alot, I was not really being gay because I spent most of my time with heterosexual people. Increasingly, I felt that being gay was an important way for men to consider being and take seriously for its political content. I don't think that I received much support for thinking that way from the straight men I lived with. So, I decided to move into a house with three other gay men to find out what it meant and how it felt to be gay and to get support-and feedback for being a different kind of man.

Since I've moved I spend most of my personal time with gay men. To survive as a household we've had to figure out ways to accomodate each others physical, emotional, and economic needs. For me now, my house is my single most important committment, mostly because I need the place I live at to be a good place for me.

On a physical level, we're five men being responsible for the upkeep of our house. The question of who will do what kinds of house work is decided amongst ourselves at house meetings. So, I feel like we're learning a balance of roles amongst ourselves without asking women to challenge our sexism around that particular issue. When the house looks pretty, it means that the five of us, five men, have made it so.

When the house gets dirty and run down, it means that we as men collectively and individually need to be doing a better job of keeping house. The house will only look better if we're critical of ourselves and of each other.

Emotionally, the survival of our household is dependent on our ability to be supportive and nurturing of each other. Traditionally the survival of a monogamous heterosexual household or a heterosexual communal household has been based on the ability and "desire" of women to be emotionally and physically supportive of the men they are relating to. We as men are trying to learn to take care of ourselves and each other in an emotionally supportive way. It has taken a long time and a lot of hard work to be sensitive to our varying needs for support and privacy, and those needs have been heightened by the fact that we are relatively poor and exclusively gay. I've been living with the same people for over a year now. Sometimes I feel as though we could be doing a lot better job of taking care of each other. But most of the time I feel that the people I live with care about each other and are sensitive to each others needs. If this were not the case, I don't believe our house could have survived this long.

Sexually; we've only occasionally slept with each other. Maybe, it would be nice if we could do that more often, and we've talked about it some. Sexual relationships call forth a whole different set of feelings than do good friendships. I think that we still operate under the pressure of searching for fantasy, idyllic

SINK OR SWIM, continued

lover relationships that we picked up from the story books and television romances we grew up with. However, understanding the source hasn't helped us get past the dilemma. But, I do feel as though I get hugged, kissed, and touched a lot. I've never before received so much physical attention from men and it feels wonderful.

When I first came out, I mostly wanted to have relationships with men to feel good about myself. I've since learned that it's not easy to be gay and feel good about yourself. Men are not supposed to love men or be effeminate or be emotional. It's not good for men to have "feminine" qualities; which means to say that in this society men are seen as better than women.



In my own life, I feel as though I am in a sink or swim position. I am not asking women to fill in the gaps or take up the slack when I can't get taken care of or when I can't take care of myself. There are only the other faggots I live with and the other people I relate closely to, most of whom are gay men.

I feel as though politically aware bisexual men are struggling with life preservers. That is, when they can't take care of themselves or get taken care of by the men they relate to emotionally and sexually there are the women in their lives to take care of them. It is potentially easy to unconsciously slip back into the socialized male/female roles.

I feel supportive of men deciding to relate fully to other men as a way of combatting sexism. However, I don't feel supportive of men who believe that the only way to combat male supremacy is to struggle within heterosexual relationships or that bisexuality is the goal of the feminist revolution. In both cases women are being oppressed, and their energy is getting ripped off. In such relationships women have to put forth more than they get back, because it takes a lot of energy to criticize and raise the reluctant consciousness of men who have long felt the comforts and privileges derived from controlling women's lives.

I do think that men who consider themselves conscious of male supremacy but exclusively heterosexual or bisexual need to think seriously about how just being in a close emotional/sexual relationship with a woman is oppressive to her because men are socialized to oppress women. The job market is controlled and dominated by men. So men have economic and material control over women's lives.

I don't think that every man in a heterosexual relationship should leave the woman he is relating to in order to relate exclusively to men. That would be very male supremacist and irresponsible, especially in the case of men economically supporting women and children. I think that men in this situation should think about how to give up as much power as possible over the women they are relating to. To me, that means giving up money or economic power without making inkind demands for physical, emotional, or sexual support. It means responding supportively to a woman's demands for autonomy and taking a large responsibility for child care.

And, of course, I think all men need to learn to be more effeminate, nurturing, and vulnerable. The only way I can think to do that right now without oppressing women is for men to learn to love other men intimately and sexually.

Living with gay men is teaching me a lot about the way men act and the kinds of things men need to do to be less male supremacist. It alone, like being gay alone, is not going to end the oppression of women. But it is a way for gay men to help each other survive in this heterosexual society.

-JOEL

BISEXUAL STEREOTYPING

Who Is Bisexual?

This article is written with the assumption that most or all bisexuals are primarily either gay or straight. It isn't meant to be either complete or entirely agreed to by 'the gay side'. Young children may be the only naturally bisexual people in white America.



Straight Bisexuals:

"Groovy sexual liberation" guys who've figured out they can have fun with each other;

Men who "fool around" with each other in school and the army but never become gay;

Men freaking out about sex roles who try to escape the problem by relating to men or possibly to try to learn how to deal with it;

Men trying to "improve" themselves in order to gain approval of some feminist women.

Gay Bisexuals:

"Groovy sexual liberation" guys who've figured out they can have fun with women; Homofascists who want to use women for their own sexual pleasure;

Very repressed faggots trying to become straight;

Very repressed faggots who feel they need a cover for the straight world; Gays freaking out about men and trying to escape them by going to women.

What Do They Have?

The bisexuals in brother seem to be primarily straight bisexuals. They primarily are into changing themselves in order to stay acceptable to the women they relate to and other feminist women. They are attempting to help other men and themselves to change just enough in order to keep their power over women.

Straight bisexuals keep the power of a straight man over women with the added threat that maybe he doesn't need her. Straight bisexuals cannot have an equal relationship with gay men because he still hasn't given up the power he gets from being primarily straight and the threat would be very real to the gay man that he is not needed since the bi-man is primarily straight. I would guess that straight bisexuals generally have sex with each other and not with gays.

Straight men are finding new power over women and faggots by being bisexual and claiming to be part of the same struggle and thus gaining some control in the direction of the movement.

Lazarus



oh, brother

(from "The Effeminist")

A misleading and potentially dangerous "reading list" recently appeared in Berkeley in the guise of assisting a fledgling radical movement among males. BROTHER, a "male liberation" newspaper originating from among men in men's small groups here in Berkeley, published a short bibliography prepared by Jack Sawyer of the Dept. of Social Relations of Harvard University. Sawyer's suggestions (what I've read) are remarkable doublethink, and their origin (men at Harvard) reminds me that Johns Hopkins and Stanford have been leading research centers for another straight man's dream of "male liberation", the elusive "transsexualism", that has so hung up a radical movement among gay males.

Sawyer's men's liberation would confound sexism at its most superficial manifestation. Sawyer would have the male pick up the very mannerisms, the tactics of survival under severe stress, that the female has developed under a male supremacist system and is now abandoning.

Sawyer would develop a soft underbelly to male supremacy that could effectively deflect a revolutionary feminist challenge. The fact men (at Harvard, or Berkeley) can afford to be weak and sentimental (Sawyer and his authorities call these traits "emotion" and "feelings") is simply good evidence of an unshaken male power structure in these places. The female culture now maturing is based on the strengths women developed in subjugation, not on tactics designed to placate overbearing men.

We men did not know we were "not-women" until the female insurgency of these last several years. Bourgeois society successfully resisted feminist pressure for 150 years, and only now do conditions seem to be ripening for the caste structure (male/female) to break out into class struggle (powerful/powerless) as imperialism overtakes capitalism as the primary contradiction in the world.

Just as worker rebellions of the 1830-48 period "created" the bourgeois consciousness, so is the female challenge to men, individually and collectively, "creating" men's consciousness. Ruling class hegemony exists only thru the systematic suppression of the ruled people's self-consciousness. Only the ruled, in rising up against the false consciousness of the ruling ideology, can force self-consciousness on the part of the ruling class.

urge the radical male movement in Berkeley. We Gay men back up the radical male in resisting this reformist overture from Harvard and encourage him to break caste privilege every turn and join, with the autonomous women's movement, the class struggle against male supremacy. The battle is not only with men's minds ("attitudes", "male chauvinism"); it is about men's power.



Part 3: the men's movement

The ruling class can then deny its power, or promise to do better, or, as a last resort, use its latent powers of repression. Harvard men, and Berkeley radical men, not having attained yet to the instruments of power, only its ideology, can always promise to do better. So Sawyer would

Insurgent women, and the implicit threat of female solidarity, have forced some men to begin thinking from their personal experiences as a self among others; i.e. as a male among men and women.

- continued ...

Oh Brother! CONTINUED...

Most such men haven't been happy with what they've discovered. Jack Sawyer, for one, abstracted this new 'knowledge' of what it is to be a man in North America & began to think about how to change, i.e. theory, in order to practice. He recorded this in an article in Liberation (Aug-Oct '70), listed in his bibliography. His pt. in the article and in the reading list brother published, put bluntly and in a more familiar context, is that capitalism's just as hard on the capitalist, who gets ulcers and a narrowly circumscribed 'life,' as it is on the workers, who get all the "good things" like, say, Solidarity, Revolution, the Right Side of History. No, it does not hurt to be a man; it hurts to be a woman....it may hurt to be Jack, of course, it's called the white man's burden. Sorry.

Okeh, so Jack admits men (we) are horrid because they (we) are born to be powerful. Jack doesn't like to be a horrid person. It hurts inside. And he digs women, apparently. Then, why's he at Harvard? And why does he, so soon, (world-historically) 'know' he has to get into men's groups? Because Jack's queer, frankly speaking, just as queer as the 9 Old Men of the Supreme Court, the incestuous Bd. of Directors of Harvard, Chase Manhattan and other major corporations, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, etc. ad infinitum. The fact is Jack digs men & the power of men and HATES DETESTS FEARS women, who, he feels I am sure, force him to put them down, over and over again, his right-on girl friends who won't go gay, the miniskirted secretaries at Harvard, the unenlightened go-getting mobile "girls" at Radcliffe who just won't understand how important Jack's ideas on Women's Liberation are.

So he, Jack, will create a movement to force women to be women, no Women's Liberationists; namely, emotional, nice, re-

ceptive, that is FEMININE AS MEN EXPERIENCE FEMININITY, with him, and each other of course, but not with the Real Enemy ... But being conscious of himself as male now he knows he can't organize women, so he 'organizes men', me too, around his (our) ideal of femininity. He can then promise women we men will be nice NOW if only they will stay nice.

Dare the autonomous women's movement think it's a bunch of crap, at best, he can always (?) find a woman, or some women, to agree some men can become nicer than they've been.

We gay men don't like any of it. It sounds like a very old story. One story we've had enough of. You hate women, Jack, they bring you down. You're queer & you won't admit it. You'd even become 'gay' i suppose, before you'll admit you're queer. You'll suck cock and take dick if it means you don't have to be queer.

TO BE QUEER IS TO KNOW MALE SUPREMACY IS YOUR LAST REFUGE, THE ONLY thing between you and your MOTHER, Jack. Male supremacy is the only thing that keeps you from joining your mother and all her sisters and fighting your own, your very own BIRTHRIGHT, to suppress her humanity and make her serve your (namely, our) interests. ... It's easier to fight Daddy than to resist one's own birthright. It takes a son to create a father, not vice versa; it might have been a girl, and girls don't get into Harvard ...

The reading list (we) should be disseminating is long and simple: any book by any woman, for it is everywoman who will as she pushes thru the bullshit we call 'language' be creating 'our' men's consciousness. Women's Liberation will not liberate men, it will liberate women. We are feeling for the first time. That feeling is coming from women's angers and pain, not some artificial 'men's liberation movement.' -- SMEDLEY

SOME Women's Publications:

AMAZON QUARTERLY
Box 434
W. Somerville, Mass.
02144
\$4/4 issues

Off Our Backs
1724 20th St NW
Washington D.C.
20009
\$6/12 issues

Women's Press
P.O.B. 562
Eugene OR
97401
\$3/6 issues

Quest: a feminist quarterly
1909 "Q" St. NW
Washington, D.C.
20009 \$7/4 issues

Women: a journal of liberation
3028 Greenmount Ave
Baltimore Md.
21218
\$5/4 issues

MY MOTHER'S SON

I sent a collection of articles on men's liberation to my mother a while back; she read them and wrote me back what she thought about it. At first, she said, she thought it was some kind of put-on, but after a while she realized that we were for real. Here are her reactions:

- 1) Male chauvinism re-asserted in fashionable guise—egad! If women are going to have lib groups, men can do it better. Only, instead of opposing women, we'll surpass them by admitting our weaknesses, touching each other, share confessions, etc.
- 2) Women's lib propaganda has done a good job, convincing at least some men that they are obsessed with women as sex objects, that their only real release came from being fucked and mothered by their (note the possessive pronoun) women.
- 3) Bull sessions will never go out of style, though subjects and methods change.
- 4) Emotion is all; reason nothing. Therefore feel. Under no circumstances think.
- 5) Messing around within your psyche, alone or in groups is the answer to all problems. Groups have the voyeuristic thrill—and power thrill too—of messing around with other people's psyches. Besides, it's a marvelous way to kill time and much in fashion.
- 6) Current society requires a male to be cool. It forbids him to be warm, kind, gentle, and humane; he must define his ego at the expense of women or black people or Vietnamese. Capitalism is the root cause.

On first reading, I thought my mother was herself joking—she does not always take my thoughts on politics very seriously. But then I re-read them, and realized that my mother had, in her first exposure to the subject, hit upon one of my deepest misgivings about the men's movement.

First of all, it is a little disturbing to talk about Men's Liberation. Most of us in the men's movement are white, middle-class males, the oppressor class in everybody else's book. Everybody needs liberation, but it would be foolish for us to think that going to men's rap groups somehow means that we thought that the oppression of men was more important than the oppression of women, for example. We've tried other names, like Male Liberation, but that is not quite satisfactory. Many groups just avoid all names.

There are hints of me-too-ism among men's groups. Women's groups got started by holding small rap groups to talk about sex role oppression, so we will too. There are dangers in imitating another movement too easily. Women's groups usually pass out leaflets only to other women; this was to counteract the usual pattern, where a couple was leafleted by giving the man a copy of the flyer, as was common in older leftist groups. An important political point was made whenever a leafletter refused to give a man a copy of the flyer she had just given

to a woman. If a men's group follows the corresponding policy, giving their flyers only to men, they reinforce the old system, rather than attacking it. Further, they lose contact with the men who might have been told about their leaflet by a woman who received it. Of course, women lose this secondary contact with other women when they refuse to give their leaflets to men, but this loss is more than made up for by the political point that is being made, namely that women are entitled to organize strictly among themselves if they so choose. There is no corresponding compensation for a men's group. Thus flyers for a men's group should be distributed to both men and women.

Bull sessions, unfortunately, do go out of style. As a teenager you may talk seriously about the "big questions"—does God exist, what is morality, etc. But when you get older, that sort of conversation isn't cool. We can't admit that these questions might concern us.

Women's liberation is teaching us, women and men, that the old stereotypes of women being pure emotion and men cold calculation are dehumanizing. The answer to this conflict for men cannot be to throw away all reason in favor of emotion. Many men who come to a men's movement through involvement in new left politics are suspicious of the endless theories of leftist politics, none of which correspond to our gut feelings. Some rap groups spend endless amounts of time listening to the various members recount their love lives in detail. A lot of time is spent listening and giving support, but almost no time is spent on analysis. Thus a man may talk for hours about actions which we would condemn as sexist from a stranger, and yet receive unqualified support. We cannot use men's rap groups to change sex role stereotypes unless we are conscious of our actions, and develop some analysis to lead us.

On the other hand, there is always the danger of facile theory. There is a connection between capitalism and sexism, but the nature of that connection is not obvious. For one thing, the oppression of women predates capitalism. It is tempting for some leftists to say that sexism comes from capitalism and will be defeated when capitalism is overthrown. That way they can go back to doing what they were doing before with no personal change or confrontation, only now we call it sex role liberation.

A balance is needed between feeling and analysis. We need not half analysis and half feeling, but feeling and thought united. Our analysis must arise from our feelings; when something makes me angry or unhappy, I look for a social explanation. I test my theories on the basis of how I feel and what happens to me. But sometimes my analysis takes the lead, and shows me that I want something which I cannot have without ripping someone else off. Feeling and thought must be balanced. We are just beginning to build a men's movement for sex role liberation, so we must build carefully a firm foundation.

Magic Bob

Male Dominated Left

Tonight, two of us from Brother went to a San Francisco meeting of the April 22nd Coalition. The meeting was to plan for the April 22nd Anti-War, Anti-Imperialist activity and Brother was asked to send people since we were to have a booth at the people's exhibition to be held that day. The room was crowded with 50-75 people, mostly straight white men. The atmosphere before the meeting was very business-like and I felt right away a lack of warmth and friendliness. I felt outside it all, uptight and personally guarded, but I thought part of it might be that I'm new to S.F. The first few people, who spoke to the group at length, were white men and after an hour or so of hearing them give information and answer questions, I began to wonder if only white men had anything to say about April 22nd.

During this whole time, I was feeling more and more uptight, uncomfortable and alienated. Something seemed lacking but I wasn't sure what and still thought it might be my own personal paranoia and closedness that was preventing me from being part of the meeting. I was afraid to speak and wanted to leave, but my friend wanted to stick it out. So I started wondering what was the matter with me? What was I so uptight about? Aren't these people doing revolutionary work, supporting the Vietnamese? What was I doing to help the Vietnamese, I was hung up on sexual politics and Brother. Wasn't I a man enough to be part of a real struggle? They're doing it and I'm still worrying about how to do it. My head started spinning.

It was decided that we would analyze the politics and tactics of the demonstration which had taken place that day in S.F. One man after another spoke, including some of the Third World men present, giving long wordy, sometimes perceptive, sometimes unintelligible speeches. Each man spoke as if he were a Lenin. They



CREDIT GRANMA

each seemed to have a finished analysis of the days events. There were no doubts or confusions expressed. I flashed on the tone and mannerisms of the speakers

and started thinking that each speech was to prove the manhood of the speaker, to validate his straight male identity. Everyone seemed so argumentative. There was no sharing of ideas, only competition of ego's, each man wanting his analysis to be accepted by the group as the final truth.

I would like to have discussed what I felt about the demonstration, but I wasn't exactly sure how I felt or what the strengths and weaknesses of the demonstration were. I couldn't really imagine saying at this meeting: "I wasn't sure but I thought maybe..." I got really nervous just thinking about talking, like I would have to prove myself to be listened to. The longer the discussion went on, the less I wanted to be a part of it.

Only one or two women got a word in. None of the men who spoke seemed to be aware that women were being excluded from the meeting. On a number of occasions women who raised their hands were ignored by the chairman.

Finally, the meeting got so bad that we both agreed to leave. I felt I had learned very little about the demonstrations but that I had cleared up some things about men and "revolutionary politics". Often during the 'discussions' men spoke about 'unity against imperialism'. But in the face of such individualism the phrase seemed so rhetorical. Each man presented himself as an island which could stand alone, a spokesman of hard cold analysis. It seems to me that unity must be felt.

I felt that the men who spoke wanted the power to define things for other people, unity on their terms and under their direction. But I don't think they had any more answers than any of the other people in the room. They imagined themselves as political leaders and so were incapable of admitting doubt, confusion or vulnerability. Men and women who didn't feel like that, were unable to speak. It seems to me that the speakers were the ones who prevented unity at this meeting.

Just before leaving I thought of saying something about the meeting. But I was reluctant to add another male voice and scared of being verbally attacked by the other men. But it also didn't seem that it should be solely the responsibility of the women present to confront these men about their male chauvinism.

After leaving the meeting I told my friend from Brother what I had wanted to say and he thought it would have been really good to say. It was a mistake that I didn't mention it to him during the meeting and that there wasn't better communication between us. I'm still not sure whether I want to go to these type of meetings in the future, but if I do I want to work more closely with the people I go with so that we can speak to what we feel is going on and hopefully bring the discussion a little closer to home.

Deane

Identifying

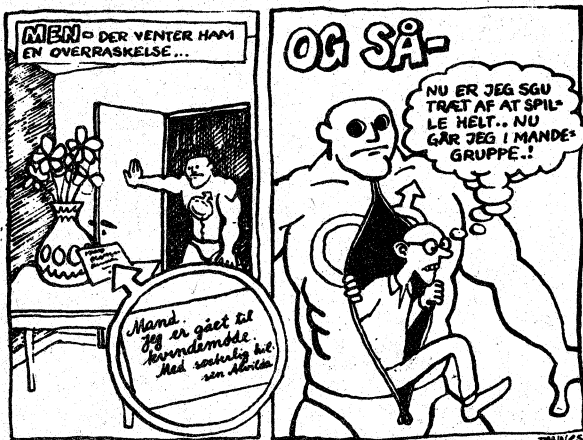
A while ago, I was feeling real down; many of the relationships I was in seemed to have dead-ended, and I felt rejected and good-for-nothing. I had just stopped working on BROTHER, having decided that I was too guarded and competitive with the other men because of what I saw as my inadequacies.

I toyed briefly with the idea of going off and developing a "thing." Most people, especially men, seemed to have things: auto mechanics, playing the guitar, karate. I felt naked and inadequate without one.

But I caught myself up. I had been that route before, when reading the newspaper or cooking had been things with me, and they ended up by hiding me from people, or intimidating them. So why was I forgetting what I had learned, and going to look for some shiny new piece of armor like playing the flute?

I realized that I had seen the same pattern in my life before. For close to 3 years, since I first recognized my love and sexual feelings for another man, I've gone thru cycles of pain and frustration. I'd reach points where I knew I had to come out of the closet, and yet each time I'd hide from it in some new way. I would direct my energies towards some other "goal," to some other way to feel better about myself.

I didn't want to face what I continued to think of as my individual defeat as a man; I already looked at my 'identity' as an obstacle or bur-



- From a Danish men's group

den; being Jewish, fat, always the outsider, the wallflower. I had accepted and internalized the values of my oppressors so deeply that I would try anything to avoid facing my own real needs.

Like most men, my sense of myself, who I ought to be, my 'masculine ego,' grew out of that identification with the oppressor. We mimic his values and judgments, and by trying to gain power over women and other men, we identify ourselves as oppressors, different only in scale from the men on top. My training to be an oppressor started in subservience and self-denial when I began to deaden my soul in order to be a 'good boy.' I wanted to be 'okay', and that meant trying to become a powerful male.

With The Oppressors

—Michael, with a lot of help from my friends.

Because we seek and experience power individually, in our personal lives, it's unspeakable hard to face our collective and mutual powerlessness: our separation from our feelings, and our lack of real control over the conditions of our life and work. So we develop our personalities instead, our individual ways of hiding from and absorbing the pain and oppression. We develop our 'things,' endless exercises in "macho" (show strength) and emotional repression.

Looking at things as an isolated individual, I couldn't get past my hidden acceptance, swallowed whole, of the idea that powerlessness meant personal failure: sexual impotence, or emotional obliteration, or being labelled a faggot.

So for two or 3 years, up until recently, while living on and off with a woman whom I've known since '66, I agonized about whether I was gay. "Gayness" became something outside myself, even tho' I had been aware of my feelings for other men since college, and later my closest man friend and I had slept together a few times.

I longed for a (straight) men's community that would 'legitimize' my feelings towards other men, so that I would not have to put myself outside of the pale of 'manhood' once and for all. Because of this, and because I wanted to work with other men on the changes I was going thru in struggles about sexism (with the woman I was living with and another woman I had been relating to) I got involved in men's groups.

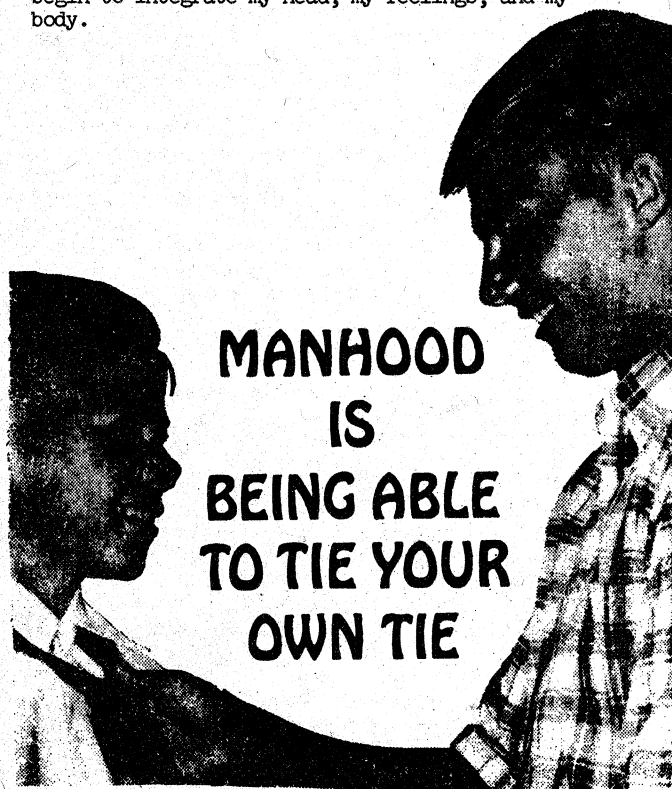
But I felt trapped by the contradiction between the power I was trying to give up in my relationships with women, and the powerlessness I felt around men. I did notice that I was less uptight with men who were more willing to talk about their 'gay feelings' or their vulnerability but my deepest emotional reactions were to the men who intimidated me the most; the straightest 'sexiest,' manipulative ones brought out my anger, desire, frustration, competitiveness, and confusion. I couldn't separate myself from male supremacists, because I felt drawn to them by their 'supremacy.'

This was paralleled in my attempts to make the changes being demanded in my relationships with women. The basis of the two deepest of these relationships had been, for me, a 'love' that was closely connected to a need to prove myself, sexually for instance. I got emotional support from the women, and I tried to attach what I considered their personalities and emotional energies onto my own, to fill the gap I felt between myself and my image of a complete, powerful person. I tried to define their 'needs' or 'failings' so as to tie them to me, and yet I wanted to enhance my own freedom of movement. A key dynamic was my secretiveness about my feelings, leaving them uncertain and concerned about "drawing me out."

So when the women I was involved with began to make clear they were autonomous humans, not objects of my power trips or sexual fantasies, it shook my deepest assumptions about myself. As they confronted me, I began to face my own hidden values. I could no longer defuse my feelings by projecting them onto my 'inferiors.' I started to be self-critical, to see that my subjective and often self-pitying sense of myself as 'weak' didn't affect my destructive power over other people.

I began to see that my fear of being less of a man if I came out, really grew from already feeling, in and of myself, like less than a man. Because it seemed like the only degree of power I had was in personal relationships with women, I was afraid to step outside that. I didn't want to give up my privileges or my attempts to be a dominant male, and thereby face my political and economic powerlessness, because inside, I was taking it personally: "If I don't have power, I'm no good."

I tried losing weight, working out, splitting and travelling with the man I felt closest to hitchhiking alone, living communally; I even joined the YMCA. I spent a year being basically celibate, still "struggling with gayness" and trying to transform my relationships with women from lovers, real or fantasied, to friends. But I was still tied to many of the same values. For instance, when I was no longer in a 'couple,' I tried to fill the void in my self esteem left from not having a woman tied to me, by trying to think of myself as 'single;' meaning, "I'm not tied to any woman." I would get defensive about my feelings, and retreat behind a wall of words. I would act out 'look at me' in 1000 overwrought ways around my house, creating an oppressive male presence, instead of simply saying, 'let's be friends.' But I had started doing yoga and Gestalt therapy, which helped me begin to integrate my head, my feelings, and my body.



-Berkeley Gazette church ad.

And things did finally begin to come together a little politically as well, in the men's group I was in most recently. We agreed when we started to be critically supportive of each other, with an emphasis on the criticism as a means of deepening our understanding of what it means to be a man, and how we had to change.

At one meeting we discussed an argument one of

us had with the woman he lived with over how to deal with a doctor about not paying his high fee. We realized that he'd been competing with the doctor, wanting in a way to prove himself the better man. We could all recall having acted similarly ourselves. Because he couldn't face his 'unmanly' intimidation by the doctor (who held the only real power: 'legal rights' to be paid for his privatized skills), the man in our group had to cut himself off from any empathy or identification with the woman.

Instead, he became an agent of her oppression, putting her down for her feelings, (which he characterized, without really listening to, as fears) as a 'defense' against his own. Stead of facing his own fears as a political reaction to the situation, and acting on a strategy (say, paying less when the bill came) he saw them as something to be overcome or suppressed, by the woman immediately informing the doctor that they couldn't and wouldn't pay. When we did things like that in 'political' situations, we called it macho - doing potentially self-defeating actions to prove ourselves and gain a feeling of power.

By refusing to identify with women, whom we see as inferior, we accept the superiority of our own masters. We oppress women and are accomplices in our own oppression. The privileges we get from our power over against women blinds us to the generally impotent, exploited condition of our lives in society. We would rather seek personal slaves, than take the risks of long-term political and cultural struggle against our own enslavement.

Before it broke up, my men's group also helped me see the reactionary meaning of the isolated way I somehow continued to define myself, as not-straight, but also not-gay, just struggling. So I was finally able to come out, first emotionally, in terms of recognizing my own needs, (and understanding that one thing I did not need was personal power); and then interpersonally and sexually.

But I still see many men defining themselves as 'fuzzies,' and as they become aware that gay men are after all, just men, I've seen developing that community of straight men who are embracing and 'validating' gayness, without giving up their fix on power. A men's weekend I was at recently seemed to become a self-congratulatory exercise in how liberated men thought they could be without the 'inhibiting' presence of women, with little room for struggle about some of the messed-up ways we feel about being men.

The way to 'feel better' about ourselves is to confront the oppressor's ideology and values that we hold. There are no personal solutions. If we try to hold onto our power, we will only oppress others and ourselves, until our power is finally smashed.

The keystone of the oppressive pyramid is the idea that men are better are women. Recognizing the illegitimacy of our power over women, supporting their struggle for liberation, we can begin to face and defy the illegitimate power of the ruling men over us all, and to organize ourselves against all forms of exploitation.

- Michael N.

Dear Brother People—

As a women's liberationist, I have been extremely skeptical of male 'consciousness' groups and activities. When I saw the first issues of brother, I remained skeptical. I preferred the more radical, woman based politics of the Effeminist. But with each issue, and each discussion of yourselves, you have moved towards a (seemingly) real understanding of male roles in a society based on male supremacy.

Generally I feel the paper is really growing, reflecting a deeper male awareness than ever before.

BUT, there are some practices of the paper and attitudes expressed by the writers/staff that really set me on edge. First, while I appreciate that you can't really choose what letters to print (considering space limitations and what comes in) still, if you feel you have to print letters that are sexist in whole or part, why do they have to be in front of the paper where they aren't balanced by the more politically aware writers? ...and why shouldn't you try to raise consciousness with an appropriate editorial note?

Certainly this and several other trends or questions raise my mistrust of men's liberationists. Intimacy among men is necessary, yes, but it is necessary because the system of male supremacy/sexism has separated mind from emotion in the ideals of manhood. If American (white or dark-skinned) men cannot relate to each other emotionally, that does not mean that other men from other cultures are separated in the same manner. Yet these other men are or can be male supremacists. Other cultures are or can become sexist. Thus, the growth of intimacy must be seen as a method, not a goal, a way of producing among both sexes consciousness capable of revolting against male supremacy, and capable of creating a less-distorted, more genderless society.

Is separatism a necessary strategy for men? I don't know. Without doubt, I mistrust any group of men who meet alone, without women, and then try to relate to women's struggles.

For it is all too easy for men to meet, discover each other as equals (something men can't discover with women, generally) and then either forget about women or ini-

tiate projects directly opposed to the best interests of women (as determined by women). For example, as ((social)) homo sexuality is a state of affairs already existing at the top of society, with all-male business boards and government councils, 'gayness' as a part of men's break-away from sexism is highly suspect.

As the Effeminist has noted, men who are threatened by women's liberation can easily drop barriers between themselves long enough to forge sexual as well as political alliances. That is not revolution, nor is it liberation. Real revolution for men, it seems to me, starts with the rejection of all outside-imposed standards of 'manhood,' with the rejection of the concept 'man,' and with the acceptance of the 'feminine' in men as well as women.

Secondly, men's liberation whatever it is has got to be more than sexual -- or else the major result will be males fighting for access to more bodies, female & male. I resent men getting away with saying that they are learning to be free by losing their virginity (Joey's letter p. 3) or by learning to express homosexual desires (Jeff Keith's article, p. 10 - tho' I wish he had elaborated on his last statement 'we off the pig state by smashing manhood') or by paying what appears to be mere lip service to the idea that women's oppression exists because men want it to (Michael's article p. 11 - tho' he said many valid, difficult things, too). I resent all that.



Thanks for your conscientious work on the paper. It really is getting much better, more human, more real.

in hopes of change

Ann Forfreedom
Venice, Ca.

section four: our bodies

ugly man

It came as a big surprise to me when I was voted Ugly Man by the 12th grade sorority at San Diego H. S. in '64. At the time, I thought it was a prank, because I wasn't a jock on any of the school teams and I was kind of short, chubby, without funds or a car, and I didn't date anyone in the sorority (I had gone out with a coed in the Honor Society instead).

I felt good though that I might be a winner at something simply because I was my own weird self and people should dig me that way.

But unfortunately, Phil Warren entered the Ugly Man contest as candidate for the 12th grade fraternity men a few days later.

Then I felt bad because Phil Warren (Bailey to his friends) was the starting pitcher on the winning baseball team (and his father was a counselor and Asst. Principal of the school, to make matters worse). "Bailey" was 2 inches taller than me at 5'7", had red hair and freckles on his face like you see in the Norman Rockwell paintings on the Kellogg's CornFlakes cereal box. He had a little green sports car and lots of money for parties.

Needless to say, when the run-off was staged between me and Bailey at an 'open' election to determine the Ugliest Man at our high school of 300 students, I lost. Bailey was able to buy himself 1,000 votes at a penny a vote with the \$10 he gave to the vote counter --- I was only able to buy 5 votes for myself at a penny a vote with the change I gave the vote counter.

So Bailey (who continually showed up for class with a hangover drunk from the party the night before) won the Ugly Man contest and got to have his picture in the yearbook as the Ugliest ... And I got turned off, I felt worse than ugly, because I had lost the only chance to have my picture in the yearbook for doing something I felt proud of --- being myself.

And I wanted to be the Ugliest, just so there was some reason for graduating. Of course I couldn't feel good about having my ugly picture next to my name in the Class Yearbook of '64; if I knew I couldn't win a popularity contest for being naturally ugly.

So I fixed it so my picture got left out of the annual entirely.

Since 1964, i've gone to college in Berkely, found it to be a rat race run by rich jocks and sorority sallies, and thus dropped out.

I've become a C.O. to avoid the violent military obligation that awaits the college drop-out man -- but no one wants me for a CO job, I'm so ugly.

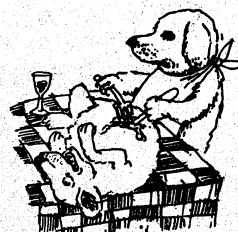
And no woman wants to go out or live with me because I'm not tall, dark, handsome, strong

or silent. Or else because I'm not a jock athlete, a big dope dealer, rich enough to afford a car, or even mean enough to use violence and beat up women.

I deeply resent the fascist/racist discrimination of employers and normally intelligent, feeling women which prevents them from accepting me as a dumb, frail, clumsy, slow-walking, fast-talking soul of good intentions but bad looks.

And if I knew for sure that the coeds in my high school had voted me Ugly Man to put me down or make me feel bad, I would kill myself. I don't enjoy being the victim of some pig stereotype that I must be tall or strong or rich in order to hold a job or a woman on a steady basis.

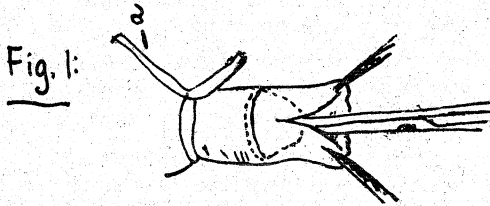
"IT'S A DOG-EAT-DOG WORLD"



Circumcision

I think most of my friends in college knew i was gay all along; even before i would admit it to myself. They were mostly into sports, and dating girls, neither of which i participated in. So i guess they liked me for my gentleness and shyness, and my awkwardness which they all thought was so cute--though i didn't like to define myself in those terms, because it wasn't masculine enough, or 'cool'.

Part of the reason i never got into sports was my being weak and sickly when i was young, which first led to being less physically active, and then to being fat. And after the age of twelve, my body fat was no longer considered 'cute'. I began to think that my body was distorted and horrible, and i became ashamed of everything about it. A big part of that self-hatred was focused on my penis, which seemed to be cut differently than my best friends'--and since his was the only other boys body i was familiar with, i somehow decided that i was cut (circumcised) wrong.



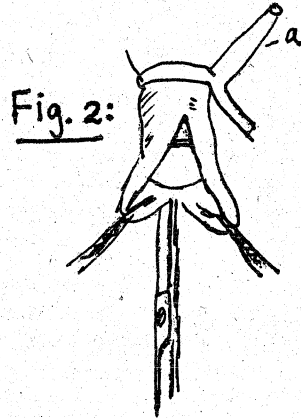
FANTASY

I had originally thought that at birth, the slit (opening) at the tip of the penis was covered over by skin, and that they had to slice a little off the top so that you could urinate. But as i grew to be more sophisticated, i realized that this wasn't true. Looking for some explanation for circumcision, i then noticed that where the tip of the penis joined the stalk, it looked like a raw, cut edge. That was it! And as i grew to be more ashamed of my body, and spent hours in front of the mirror and in the bathroom examining it, i began to think that the tip of my penis was smaller than it should be in relation to the stalk, that it was 'cut' wrong. I was naturally quite angry and upset that some rabbi had ruined my life with the slip of his finger! So i went through most of my life thinking that because i had been circumcised wrong, my penis was less attractive and less useful than other mens'.

I think i went through such 'heavy' changes about my penis because of its relation to manhood.

Only as a result of being gay, and coming in close genital contact with other men, am i beginning to learn more about the male body and clear up some of the misconceptions about myself that have troubled me most of my life.

FACT



Looking at an uncircumcised penis, the foreskin or prepuce is that loose skin that covers almost to the tip of the penis. The whole penis only appears out of the foreskin when it is erect, or when the foreskin is pulled back manually. So the penis slides in and out of this sheath of skin, somewhat like a ball point pen. Had i understood the similarity of animal and human anatomy, i would have realized that what seemed different about dog's penises was merely the foreskin, which slid back when they got an erection. Circumcision is merely the cutting back of this loose skin so that the extra flesh no longer covers the penis.

When an infant is circumcised after birth, usually from age 3-8 days, circumcision is considered to be a relatively simple and harmless operation (tell that to the infant when he sees a doctor in a white mask, or a black-robed rabbi coming at his organ with a knife!). The foreskin is pulled up over the penis with two hemostat forceps (figure 1); an incision is made down the middle of the foreskin (figure 2), then from this point an incision is made halfway round in each direction, the two incisions meeting just below the frenum (figure 3). In some methods, a clamp (a) is used to make the circular incision easier. There is little bleeding, and in the newborn infant stitches aren't us-

CIRCUMCISION, continued...

usually required, though the penis does remain swollen and sore for 3-4 days. However, there have been a few cases of documented deaths due to complications arising from this operation, and adult circumcision is a more painful, dangerous operation. The circumcision operation in an infant leaves no visible scars or marks in later life.

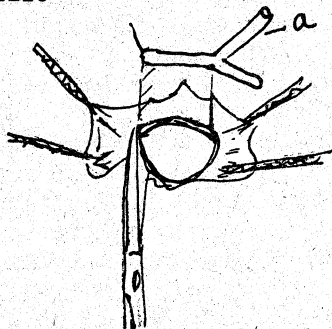


FIG. 3:

In the Hebrew ceremony, the operator (Moail), after the foreskin has been cut away and buried in soil, takes a mouthful of wine, places the glans (tip) in his mouth and sucks the blood out of it. This is repeated three times. Though this probably serves an anti-septic function, I could find no explanation for this ritual, other than that it makes the child (and the operator!) feel good. Interestingly enough, in uptight America this part of the ritual has been eliminated, except in the most orthodox circles.

Many medical people feel that the circumcision operation that is routinely performed in most American hospitals today has no valid medical basis and is a carry over from the ancient Hebrew ritual. Others defend circumcision on the grounds that it is a deterrent against venereal disease, cervical and penile cancer. And then there are the less tangible benefits... Goodwin has stated that circumcision is a beautification comparable to rhinoplasty, and a circumcised penis appears, in its flaccid state as an erect uncircumcised organ--a beautiful instrument of precise intent."

Listed below are some of the most important pros and cons for circumcision.

WHY?

One of the reasons advanced for routine circumcision is to prevent phimosis, a condition where the foreskin is not completely retractable.

It is really not until the age

of three that 90% of boys have completely retractable foreskins. After the age of three this condition is so rare that some doctors think that it would be reasonable to wait until this condition can be diagnosed before performing circumcision.

Another argument is that circumcision is of value in preventing venereal disease. There have been studies that have proven that V/D is indeed higher in cultures where circumcision is not performed. However, they have neglected the fact that these cultures are also in the lower socioeconomic groups, in which there is less possibility for adequate personal hygiene and education about the prevention of venereal disease.

Another reason put forward for routine circumcision is that there is a higher incidence of cervical cancer in women with uncircumcised partners, and penile cancer in men who are uncircumcised. Lack of circumcision supposedly leads to the accumulation of smegma beneath the foreskin, and smegma has been thought to be carcinogenic (cancer causing). Again, while circumcision probably improves the hygienic status of the penis, this is no reason for the foreskin's removal. If men were more concerned about their women partners, especially sexually, they would naturally be practicing better hygiene. It is incredible to think that many men think that women who don't douche are unclean, but never consider cleaning their penis before sex. The medical profession would rather circumcise themselves (they are mostly male) than adopt a more feminist outlook and actually consider what effect their bodies have on women. Nowhere in my research did I hear any argument for or against circumcision that in any real way considered its relation to women.

On the other hand, it has been proven that in the circumcised penis the incidence of meatal (the meatus is the slit at the tip of the glans) ulcers is significantly increased precisely because the glans is deprived of the protection of the foreskin.

But it is clear to me that in this society, circumcision is another superficial way of dealing with the fact that most people know very little about their bodies. The medical profession chooses to eliminate the foreskin, in the same way that they are willing to prescribe drugs to cure certain symptoms, while ignoring the underlying causes.

goey

The Male Hormone

I spent a day in a local medical school library checking on what research had been done on the 'male hormone' testosterone. I used an index called "Biological Abstracts" to find articles in journals.

The key article I found was 'Plasma Testosterone and Semen Analysis in Male Homosexuals' by R. C. Kolodny, W. H. Masters, and others, in the New England Journal of Medicine, 11/18/71. p. 1170. At the end of this article are specific references to all the major types of research being done with testosterone.

Because testosterone is linked to sex characteristics, and because as a hormone in the blood it is easy to measure, some experiments have been done searching for a simplistic relationship between testosterone levels and homosexuality.

Two types of experiments have been done, one type with lower animals, the other with humans.

The experiments with humans were begun by Loraine and followed up by Kolodny. Kolodny studied eighty volunteers, thirty homosexual males and fifty heterosexual males.

The major finding in the study by Kolodny and Masters is the lower testosterone levels in predominantly and exclusively homosexual men. The experimenters point out

that there is not a significant relationship between testosterone levels and impotence, nor with problems with erections nor with desire to have sex. Finally, the experimenters make it clear that it is just as likely if not more so, that a homosexual life style causes the brain to lower testosterone levels (via the hypothalamus), as it is that a biological lack of testosterone causes a homosexual way of life.

Though the limits are obvious in such research (the small group studied, the researcher's admission that it is impossible to say anything about cause and effect) we should still be very wary of such 'science'. It is not 'objective.' It is a potential tool in the service of heterosexual male dominance and if there are chemical links discovered, they may be used eventually as shock treatment and aversion therapy are now to destroy and dehumanize gay people.

Paul

At the Beach

Sunday I went to the beach pretty odd thing to do very rare with also lots of ways people/hippies/kids are supposed to do in the country very odd my body being very heavy - more attention being paid to the coverings than the insides but that's all supposed to disappear when you come in contact with all this nature all over the place. I mean it was neat to run around in the sand and feel the ocean all around but it also felt like that's what was expected of me - having to do this stuff and having fun but being expected to have that fun in that 8 hrs. out of 3 months. Becoming cynical about taking care of my body - not taking care as much as paying attention to it. a reaction to what makes me scared - not being open being able to touch somebody without it being incredibly heavy and awkward - but feeling like you're supposed to be able to do that cause we're not all that fucked up. I feel afraid of not caring about the other person in some real way (long lasting closeness =?=) feeling guilty that I'd be ripping them off, because I'm real conscious about only going so far and then getting totally freaked about what might go on. I think I look pretty good with clothes on- feel real wierd without them. a lot easier to be open and safe with them than without them. I love to eat. Sometimes I see being fat (not really) as a way of being funny and people not taking you too seriously ... (clothes and image) see look, I don't care that much -- I think about how I look a lot of the time (I don't know how much that it, but a bunch) I wish I was sk nny and I didn't have fat thighs -- I used to have huge thighs and a huge double chin. Eating became just about my only fun. I got so fat I couldn't even imagine how fat I was. I think people thought I was fatter than I realized.

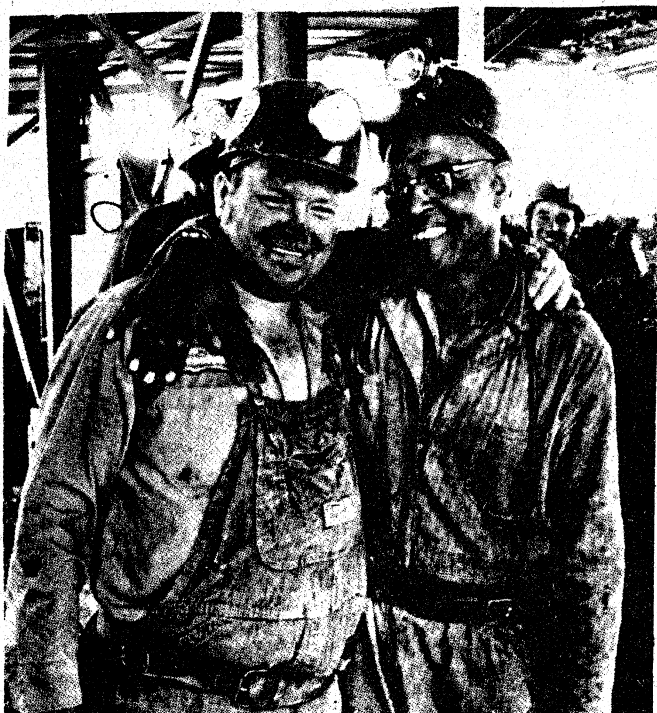
Making love with men - god what an incredible freakout unbelievable horror the first time I bet I try to be cool nonchalant? but scared witless. Trying to be close without falling into stereotyped ways to be. A horrible big pig unbelievable, maybe not, but relax which is what I'm not being now but ... Saturday night we went dancing at the White Horse (gay bar) I got into it eventually I had fun except I couldn't help feeling it was all real competitive or something but it was fun anyway.

— George

RACISM AND MASCULINITY

About 3 years ago, I was in a political and living collective (composed of white men and women) that set as one of its goals giving up white skin privilege. Since we were also involved in that other movement activity then in vogue - smashing monogamy - a corollary was developed of 'de-honkifying' our sexual relationships with each other.

The effort and the thinking behind it were racist and sexist. However, it was a first effort to personalize my politics and it made me aware of my body as specifically white, with all that implied culturally and politically. I began to think about and try to deal with my emotional sterility and physical stiffness, my lack of warmth or spontaneity, the way I over-intellectualized.



The experience also clarified for me the roots of some of my racism in sexism and sexual attitudes.

I remember once, a woman in the collective told one of the men that although he could really fuck good, he would never be as good as so-and-so, her black former lover. He shouldn't take that personally, she said; it was just that so-and-so was after all black, and culturally he just knew how to do it, whereas the white man was still a 'honkie'.

The women in the collective had precious few defenses, let alone weapons, against their exploitation and oppression by the 'revolutionary' male supremacists of the collective. Since she had been limited to a role of arbiter of his sexual performance, she made full use of it to cut him to the quick with her remark. The comment, which the man had in fact invited with his pseudo-'black' strutting indicated, though, a shared acceptance of the myth of the cool black stud.

His response might have seemed pathetic, as his fragile ego shriveled, except that it indicated that at the root of his 'anti-racist' politics was a racist vision of a way to enhance his power as a man by ripping off black culture. (Also, of course, his pathos was a device to hold the woman in line).

It seems to me that whatever the differences in material exploitation, all women and black men are oppressed in common by being defined as exclusively sexual beings, and therefore 'inferior' to white men.

My saying that a black man is 'more of a man than me' in fact objectifies him in sexual terms, and really serves to maintain my sense of supremacy. When I shudder or cringe at a black man passing me on the street because I read his body language as expressing an assertion of his masculinity that I cannot match, I'm expressing my fear of losing my white supremacy, and my own internalized acceptance of masculine hierarchies.

A similar thing used to happen when I saw a black man and a white woman together, I immediately assumed a sexual connection. A gay friend of mine has the same feeling whenever he sees a black man and a white man together.

In this way I reflect the strategy of richer, more powerful white men than I, who maintain their position atop society by defining the cultural and political challenge of black men and women in purely sexual terms (that is, pushing the myth of the black matriarchy and the 'superfly' image of black manhood).

'Manhood' is in fact an ideology and a weapon of the oppressor.

Michael N.

PART 5

THE FAMILY

there is an image of a supposedly ideal family which is typified by the old TV show Father Knows Best. Many families are oppressed by this middle class stereotype, such as poor families and those of 3rd World and different ethnic groups. In the real world, people die, parents are separated or divorced, women work, fathers are unemployed, children are forced to run away from home. Some couples are childless, and of course there are dykes and faggots. We who don't measure up to the ideal often 'lust' after this imagined paradise, and blame ourselves or our families for not finding that fulfillment.

The family is not a place of happy and ordered growth, not a private refuge from society. It is one of the main institutions of social control. We can see this because people who are outside the family are often in situations of more direct, undisguised social control; such as juvenile halls, orphanages, or old age homes. In the case of 'welfare mothers', their entire survival is in the hands of the state. Gay people and communal living situations are suppressed.

The aim of this social control thru the family is to maintain male supremacy. Male supremacy is the control of women's personal, political, and economic lives by men for men's benefit. There are important links between sexism (male supremacy) and the exploitive divisions among people on the basis of race, economic class, age, & sexual identity. We're not prepared now as a collective to isolate one of these as a first cause of exploitation and oppression. The patriarchal (father-dominated) family is a unit created to enforce this system.

The essence of the 'nuclear' family (a man, 'his' wife, and 'their' children) is to isolate women from one another, in individual homes, and prevent any unity among them. In isolation, each woman is psychologically, physically, and materially exploited by her husband in the name of natural family life.

collective statement

The family occupies a central position in the US economic system. The modern variation of the family seems to have been developed by adapting the older extended family forms to the needs of industrial capitalism. Since the production of goods changed (from farming and family-based small handicrafts into mass manufacturing based on armies of workers) extended families could no longer get by.

The family functions as an economic unit with a life of its own. It's the main place where most goods produced in our society are consumed, a role stressed by advertisements and the media. Families are trained to compete in consuming goods. Credit is readily available for hard goods like autos; almost no-one ever gets credit for groceries.

The woman (wife/mother) is usually placed in charge of consumption for the family. She does not decide on policy, she just carries the responsibility. In fact, "women's work" of all kinds is one of the main benefits society at large derives from the family. Converting raw materials into food and clothing, maintaining the family in whatever way is necessary or possible; these are enormous industries when seen on their true scale.

These services, maintaining the entire class of male workers, are what enable society to run at all. In addition, many women work outside the home, supporting their families with two types of labor.

The family is a place that absorbs and harbors oppression, where pain and anger, love and the wealth of feelings and actions that people experience are confined, so as not to disrupt the system and the ruling class.

Workers who can't express their anger to their superiors or bosses, who can't act on that anger to change their working conditions by taking control of the means of production, frequently bring that anger home. Within the family, it is expressed perhaps covertly towards other members of the family. It is the woman's role to nurture the man so that he is willing to return to alienated work.

Internally, the family mechanism allows each member to pass the oppression it receives on down to the next lowest member. Father dumps on the mother and children; mother takes it out on the children, and each child on the next youngest. The children are allowed one 'escape' mechanism. They can get back at their parents, especially their mother, by accumulating petty little irritations. Mothers are expected to take it, so most of the abuse of the family is heaped on them in the end.

The family as it is currently set up in fact serves many interests men might have in not doing shit work, in not sharing responsibility for child-raising, in retaining the emotional services of a wife.

But tho' a man's word may be law within the family, many men are exploited by the state and by their employers, oppressed for their race, religion, national origins, or class position. The value of the family in accumulating and inheriting wealth are quite meaningless for masses of men. And the burdens of family men under the present social order can be enormous; a man may have to care for an ill wife or aging parents. Certainly the creation of socialized responsibility for housework, child-rearing and health care, and of liberating alternatives for old and young people, would relieve many men of great burdens, well worth giving up the mastery of his privatized domain.



-from "Wisconsin Death Trip", Wisc. Patriot

Yet the same man may have a son, brother, or cousin in an entirely different class position, who had maid service while growing up, takes no responsibility for housework or childcare, for whom no external circumstances change his ex-

ploitive superiority over his wife and family at home. (In the fluid American economy, family ties often link and mystify people of contradictory class positions.) So there is no general answer to the question, are men oppressed in the family; it varies according to specific economic and social situations.

Yet many men believe quite strongly that they are oppressed by women. We think this is a false consciousness -- that is, actions taken on the basis of that belief won't change things for the better. In fact, such thinking keeps women and men in their place.

There is a common belief that men are somehow trapped in the family, that marriage means giving up the freedom of bachelorhood, and being tied down. Despite the benefits we receive from having wives, we often resent the women we live with, and their demands on us.

The material basis for this idea lies in the realities of the battle of the sexes. The weapons women have, to make a life for themselves (when they are in a subordinate positions and restricted to the narrow confines of family life) are very intimate and personal ones. They are forced to conduct a kind of guerrilla warfare against an individual male that can make a family torture for a man despite his supremacy within it.

This antagonism based on social and economic realities will go on despite the love a man and a woman may have for each other. It won't be solved by resentment on a man's part or an attempt to reassert his authority. We must stop seeing women's needs as unjust demands; instead men who live with women can begin to share fully in household responsibilities and to equalize roles and authority in the house.

Men have an interest in transforming the family because family life under male supremacy does limit and dehumanize men as well. The family perverts and stifles men's real emotional lives because relationships within it are not free and equal, but always aimed at preserving the dominance of the male (or sometimes on the woman's part towards subverting it). In the family, most men are as alienated from love by their power as they are, in the market, alienated from work by their powerlessness.

continued inside back cover...

GUIDELINES FOR

Fathers

The following guidelines will be of help in the struggle with male chauvinism, particularly as it relates to the birth of a baby. Some prefacing is necessary:

First, one's entire world changes with the birth of a baby. There is no real way to prepare for this change, and there's no turning back. The responsibility is greater than you will ever imagine, until it happens to you.

Second, given this complete change in your mundane world, given this increased responsibility, someone is going to have to act on it. The baby is the reality. It is unable to do anything for itself. So, if the baby can't do anything and one parent won't do anything, the other parent will have to do everything.

Now, because it is "traditional" for the woman to take complete care of the baby, if the man doesn't pick up on his share, she probably will do it all. But in these days of greater awareness of oppression, the relationship won't last through the anger that the chauvinism will create. If you prize your relationship, study these guidelines carefully



1) Fathers should do everything, repeat. everything, around the house for the first six weeks. This means keeping the house as neat as it is when the woman is sharing the work. This means washing (very often now, because of diapers), cooking (make casseroles on Sunday if you work during the week—women have done this for years), cleaning and dishes—you name it, whatever is necessary—without being asked, told or wheedled into it.

2) Get up at night for at least one feeding for a breastfed baby (and for one-half of all the feedings of a bottle fed baby). You can't breastfeed, but you can get something to drink for the mother. breastfeeding makes one incredibly thirsty, and you can keep her company, quietly, at that lonely hour. Besides if you get up often and get tired, too, you will understand how precious baby's nap time is to its mother, and will cooperate in keeping the house quiet, etc.

3) Take the baby for walks in some kind of baby carrier, so the new mother can take a nap, wash her hair in peace, or read a book. Take these walks at 6:30 am, when baby is awake and mother is exhausted. At first young mothers often don't get to sleep for longer than 1 1/2 hours at a time, so all naps are appreciated.

4) Don't pass the baby back to mother everytime it cries. Learn to comfort it as well as its mother does. She may have the goods when the baby

can be comforted only by the breast, but there are lots of times that baby needs comforting when it's not the breast that does the trick. Learn the tricks that do. Jostle the baby, walk around with it, take it for a walk, burp it.

5) Learn to take care of the baby tenderly. You should be able to change it, pick it up and carry it while it sleeps. If you don't learn these tricks, you'll be providing yourself with an excuse for handing it back to mother each time.

6) You can suggest, but don't criticize your wife's handling of the baby especially if you do not care for the baby 1/2 of the time. For example, your wife thinks the baby is tired but it won't go to sleep. Realize that she could be right or wrong—it's a lot of guesswork, especially with the first baby. Coupled with this, fathers must learn to take leadership from mothers when the mother is making the suggestions and is right.

7) Don't have sex, or even request to have sex until your wife asks you. She knows best how her vagina feels, how tired she is etc.

8) Before you go out, think to get together a diaper bag for the baby. Don't leave these things

to your wife every time.

9) When the baby gets older, don't assume that your wife is in charge of it; take the initiative in getting babysitters 1/2 of the time. At parties or on the beach, you keep an eye on the baby, too.

10) Think! Are you able to read while the baby is AWAKE? Is your wife? If she isn't, then do something about it.

II) Men should attempt to bring milk into their bodies. Studies have shown that women who have not had babies, and some "native" men have milk in their breasts, just as a result of the baby sucking. Putting a new-born to the breast is the very best way to deal with the mystery of "what to do with the baby". It is usually what they want; and they don't always want milk when they want to suck, so here is the man's opportunity. Not only that, but if the man put the baby to his breast first and only put it on the mother's breast when it positively did want something to eat, before long the man might have milk, and then the couple would REALLY be sharing what a very young baby means. Closeness would result, and so would understanding, when the man got sore nipples engorgement etc. So often babies are handed back to mother because she "has the goods" let's see if we can put an end to yet another good excuse for maintaining roles as they are. **Michael Ostrange**

What I Learned from My Family



My family, father, mother, two younger brothers and me, is a typical WASP family. We lived in a middle-middle class house in a midwestern small town. Power in our family originates from my father, who I have always thought of as very angry and insistent, yet cold to me. Once recently when we talked he told me he thought he was the more emotional of my parents, an idea that shocked me. Here was a man whom I knew for so many years, and yet my perception of him was so different from his own. I think he's half right, he is very emotional, but since I am so like him, I never understood what he was doing. Like me, he can't express his feelings very well: they come out in our anger and resentment, but seldom can we tell others we like them without feeling embarrassed. Neither of us knows, I think, about working out problems. I yell, I demand, but I am so insecure about myself that criticism reduces me to cringing shame. In order to feel good, I have to be right. Very Protestant, and just like my father, too. Those emotional barricades have allowed us lots of power to make others fulfill our needs, but neither of us has been very happy about cutting ourselves off from other options.

My mother, on the other hand, is not allowed to be emotional or angry. She can only describe her anger, she cannot express it directly. If she did let it out, I think my father would be furious. Though she almost always seems calm and cheerful, I wonder what she thinks about during her afternoon rest as she sits and looks out the living room window. She could be angry with us children, but even then she could be shouted down by one of us. A woman in a house with one adult man and three apprentice men is not given very much room to get her needs fulfilled.

My relationship with my mother was based mainly on what I saw in my father's relationship with her. I participated in the cruel jokes directed at her. I came home from school expecting her to pay attention to me as I told about how unhappy I was all day. I was afraid to tell her that the real reason I was unhappy was because I was queer. I got mad when she suggested remedies because I didn't want her to think I might be wrong. She provided my only emotional relationship in the family and the only outlet for much of my pain, but I had to have it on my terms.

I got married three years ago on the basis of many expectations about what should be. First I wanted love, that is, someone who loved me as a special person. I was not capable, I thought, of being "in love." I was willing to settle for loving someone by liking her and developing a caring that came from longtime association. I felt that since Jane was in love with me, my feeling for her must have been love too. I had been afraid of sex with women for a long time, so the fact that Jane enjoyed our lovemaking made me feel very competent and more sexual than ever before. I had been trying to go straight for a long time, usually feeling like a failure in bed with a woman. The chance of finally becoming a man, married and maybe with children, seemed like the opportunity for self-respect I had wanted. I also desperately needed the stability a marriage would bring so that I could put together my life, which had fallen apart so completely. Jane believed in me and approved of me in a way that no one ever had. I needed that; in fact, I became dependent on her immediately. The prospect of a woman who cared about me and was available to talk to me 24 hours a day was very pleasing.

What I learned from my family, continued...

Now the question for me to ask myself is where did I get these expectations of how men and women should be together. Much of the idea of romantic attachment, which I thought was a necessary response that I lacked, came from the bombardment of TV, radio, books, and friends. My image of how a married couple really acted came from watching my parents. Most of all, I needed to be married in order to be like what I romanticized my family to be. I remembered them, 6 years after I left home, as a happy group full of feeling for each other. I had forgotten about my pain because of my need for stability. One of the most important things I wanted was a wife like my mother, a woman who would comfort me, listen to me, enjoy my every action, in short, fill all my emotional needs.

Of course, a marriage based on such expectations was bound to fail. I couldn't maintain my part of the relationship. Making love soon became a burden or an obligation, so I never wanted it. Also Jane had her own needs in relationships which I hadn't planned for. I didn't expect that I would have to be affectionate and physical so much or so continuously. I made an imaginary line down the middle of our bed, daring her to cross it. Also, I discovered that I resented Jane's abilities and skills. I tried to make her give up her career until we both finished school. If I had to work, so did she. When she refused to accede to my expectations of how women pursue their careers, I became critical of how she did things. In general, I became very sullen and withdrawn. I would refuse to talk to her except when I wanted to criticize.

How is all this male power and inadequacy created? The pressure of society at large is funnelled through each individual family, reproducing little men and little women in its image. I learned to be and act like my father. The fact that I was gay seemed to be only an encumbrance that prevented me from being a real person. I believe I wasn't aware of wanting to be like my father (in fact, I tried not to be), but his ways became mine. The advantages were obvious: I could be successful and could have power over people.

I want to talk now about some of the things that come up in my gay relationships where the main patterns come directly from my family. The most familiar pattern is based on my relationship with my brother Andy, two years younger than me. We bickered and fought all the time. I was always afraid that he would get some special privileges and I would lose out. Because I was always resentful of his exceptional athletic skills and his ease in making friends, I would criticize him constantly as an attempt to belittle those skills.



A typical relationship pattern: a close friendship with another faggot develops. As we get to know each other pretty well I begin to be very critical and nasty much of the time. I am insecure about my friend deciding to stop being close to me and I resent him because I think he might just do that, decide to leave me alone. I am just barely beginning to believe people actually like me. The insecurity is beginning to fade a little as we all develop more communal-collective faggot ways of relating.

But while the insecurity is still here, let me tell more about it. Part of the worry becomes jealousy, but much of it becomes the brother rivalry pattern. I try to belittle my friend and criticize him all the time. I draw him into bickering over seemingly trivial events. It is a way of easing tension I learned in my family. Like my father, I can express resentment very well. I can't express my real fears or even my positive love and caring for others. Love is represented in my mind mainly as fear of losing out, almost never as liking.

What I Learned From My Family, continued...

There are many other things I could describe as carry-overs from family patterns, sexual fears and worries about responsibility are two of them. Instead I want to mention two things I am just learning about, ways in which my family trained me to be a contributing American citizen. In 1949, my father, who worked for the State of Michigan, was given a choice of moving to a Detroit

office or moving to an office in Alpena, about 200 miles north of Detroit. He picked Alpena, a city of 15,000 people, surrounded by farming towns and dominated by one huge factory that made cement. The reason he, with my mother's agreement, wanted to move to Alpena was first that they had two kids and didn't want to raise a family in Detroit. Second, my father wanted to live someplace where he could feel rooted in a community, where he could contribute to that community. I grew up there.

Alpena has grown little since 1950, because it is so sheltered and so far north. It has always been a completely white town. Although there are many Indians living in farm communities around the county, few Indians are ever seen in town. The farms around Alpena grow mostly fruit; to pick the fruit migrant laborers, mostly Chicanos, are hired every year for the season. They are rarely seen and probably unwelcome in town. No blacks moved into Alpena until about two years ago.



the family

My father's wish to be in a community came true. It was a very uniform American society I grew up in: I thought Dick and Jane books were very realistic then. My family is now important and useful in both church and school affairs and they have many friends. They are pretty happy, I think. But their happiness was bought at such a price. I know some of the price because I pay it, too. I know only middle-class white people. I have a hard time examining and sharing privileges I gained from such a situation. In fact, it is only in the past few years that I have realized any need to eliminate privileges and change society. -ferd

-Su Negrin,
A Graphic Notebook
on Feminism
LNS/AIAW

Staccato

I guess I'm glad my father didn't kill anyone but just fed the killers and the captain. Home on leave for a few days enough time for a "quickie", (me) then back to the north Atlantic to make scrambled eggs for the ashcan throwers throwin' at sinister underwater Germans for the sake of democracy the second time around. A star-spangled cumwad +9 months and I joined my family, the only child for a long time in birthtown New York and later in dad's Chicago.

fragments

In back-of-the-yards Chicago I meet my Bohemian old-world grandmother, hear strange languages spoken and see other people living around the house in an allmost communal, industrial peasant style. Uncles, aunt, cousin and dying-in-bed grandfather all in the same apartment and what seems to be thousands of read-headed Irish kids next-door downstairs. We move someplace down the street and I remain the only child for years till sometime in the fifties suddenly a sister (I can recall staring into the crib in disbelief 'who is THIS?'). A few years later later Bam! A second sister. Suddenly I am not the only one but am torn from a second womb. On my own.

of
a

Slap! 'Write with your right hand you lefthanded freak!' They teach with steel-edged rulers. History of the world says that the protestants fucked-up Europe and the Moslems were animal-like infidels while the next lesson is al-jabr or rather Algebra. Sister Ivan (of course called the terrible), principal and head nun keeps you after school for punishment and says to polish the

classroom baseboard till it 'shines like a nigger's heel'. Dad and Mom scrimp along to pay tuitions and other donations which increase with each year saying that a catholic education is better in quality than those public schools. You start to think of public schools as evil worse than Sodom and wonder what goes on inside them.

family

After all day being molded by messianic penguins occurs an allotted play-time world. Comics are read, warplay rat-a-tat-tat in railroad bushes running amuck wondering about each other. Innocent investigation reveals startling differences between yourself and male younger cousin, briefly feeling good but left with a circumcision puzzle in your head.

life



The Virginia Weekly

Women of the Paris Commune 1871.

STACCATO FRAGMENTS

continued ...

Lifting up her dirty dress, the landlord's daughter shows you and friend a seven year old 'snatch'. After looking with nine year old eyes you think 'so what' and refuse to pay the promised quarter-a-peek, she running upstairs to tell mama. Father finds out. You think the whole world now knows. You never forget being beat with dad's leather jacket. Guilt, punishment, reward, going round in circles dizzy with pain.

Questions arising are never asked, let alone answered except in school where you learn that two 'our fathers' and three 'hail marys' will work as a remedy for horniness (the devil).

About fifty medical students surround the chair in which I sit, babbling medically with objective scientific curiosity. I, the naked leprous center of interest shivering on a cold metal stool. Professor of Dermatology speaks; here we have a perfect example. Eighty percent total skin

involvement. Notice the typical circular lesions coalescing to form large patches. Notice, notice, NOTICE. They all file out of the room. The professor remains to tell me I should get a haircut. 'You look like a sissy with that hair' He says.

A fellow hospital patient who has the same disfiguring, largely psychosomatic skin disease that I do (a fellow chronic Psoriatic) tells me 'it's a Jewish disease' (he being Jewish). I contend that I am living, scaling, itching goy proof that his conclusion is too simplistic. We both agree that our minds were trampled upon by armies of religious zeal; mine by pitiless crusades and inquisitions and his by Diaspora and rigorous survival ethic.

Somehow you don't react the way you thought you would if sentenced by an ominous, fearsome judge to do time. Instead you just shuffle through the big metal doorway feeling nothing. No panic, no despair, no tears; just nothing.

-Ed



STRUGGLING AGAINST MALE CHAUVINISM IN PRISON

I want to describe some effects the prison experience had on my sexual orientation. Several people have told me how strange it seemed that I spent so much energy resisting sexual involvements in prison while after I was released I began to get involved in homosexual sex.

Before going to prison, I had waged a long inner struggle against my homosexual impulses, and had constantly felt very confused about my sexual orientation. I had always had felt most emotionally (and sexually) drawn to people, male or female, who seemed to be a lot like myself. I had suppressed the homosexual potentialities and saved myself sexually for those rare women that I identified closely with.

One girl I was close with, Marya, told me she thought of me more as a brother than as a potential lover. Many other women seemed to share that feeling. I was gentle and patient, and not aggressive in pursuing sex, since I felt aggressiveness was repulsive and ugly.

It was a big relief to me when, just a couple of weeks before I was due to go to prison, I began having a heavily sexual relationship with a woman named Janie. This quieted my growing fears that I might be interested in having a homosexual relationship with one of my two close male friends. I felt I was enough of a freak and an outcast without being "queer" besides. These two relationships went right on as before, with much unspoken and suppressed, side by side with my new sexual relationship. I felt I had equal love for all three of these people. I also felt more

masculine and "cool" because I was doing this courageous thing of going to prison for my beliefs. In 1964-65, I didn't know anyone else who was doing that - so I felt morally superior too.

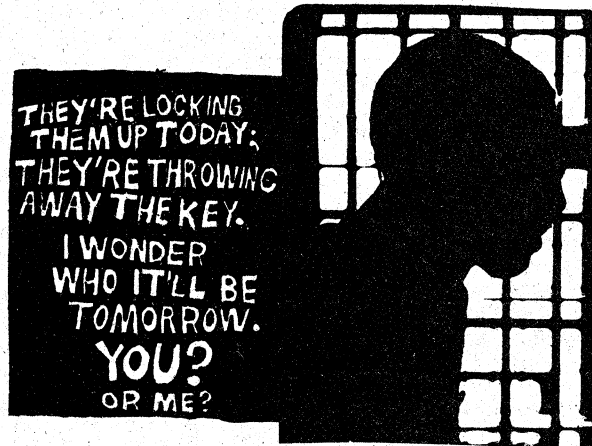
After I went to prison, Janie and I carried on a very heavy and intimate correspondence. She came to visit me as often as she could, and was a tremendous moral support to me. I felt good about playing a masculine (strong, courageous, sure-of-myself) role towards her, and I think she was kind of infatuated with the idea of being in love with an imprisoned draft resister. I was relieved to have the feeling that for once in my life I was "equal" to other men in having a sexual relationship with a woman.

I still believed in being warm and kind towards other men, although many of the other inmates in prison warned me that this was a "dog eat dog" kind of place and such trusting, open behavior could only get me into trouble. It seemed that for many of them, warmth and kindness were qualities they associated with women and femininity, and right away people began to tell me they were sexually aroused by me.

I first ran into trouble at Allenwood, when I had been in prison barely a week. A guy named Bostic made some passes at me and I was somewhat ambiguous in my response. He seemed like a very nice and sensitive person (but very, very confused). I refused him sexually but didn't put him down. I was very honest with him and said a homosexual involvement for me wasn't

totally out of the question although I knew I wouldn't want one for a very long time. Unfortunately, this gave him great hopes, and he kept pressing me in the days that followed. Apparently he betrayed my confidence and told some of his friends how I had responded. A week later one guy attacked me without success, and the next day another one outwitted me and succeeded in raping me.

Then I was transferred to Petersburg Reformatory in Virginia, and I felt that for my own safety I shouldn't tell anyone about my secret homosexual potential. In that southern prison, there were a lot of inmates who had exaggerated and rigid ideas about how men and women should act differently from each other. There was generally a very strong stereotyped opinion that any sexual involvement must involve rigid sex roles of he-man and weak women. Strangely enough I accepted that idea --- even though I had never played any such roles when dealing with women.



Other inmates who were interested in playing the role of masculine lover to a "queen" were very persistent in trying to erode my sense of my own "masculinity". This was a constant threat to my self-esteem. I grew to hate aggressive, macho people much more as a result of those experiences than I ever had before. I rebelled inwardly by making sure I never acted aggressive or boastful. I was proud of what I felt was my quiet courage.

Since I was rejecting things that seemed so basic to the masculine stereotype, I unconsciously grew to feel that I belonged more on the feminine side of the fence, if I had to choose a side---the side of the peaceful, gentle and persecuted underdog. It seemed that masculinity stood for divisiveness, tenseness between people, and aggressive ugliness while femininity stood for gentleness and cooperating with other people in a friendly way. Being exposed to such an overwhelmingly ugly type of maleness naturally did strange things to my self-image. After months of this "barrage of sexist propaganda", I found I no longer cared whether people considered me to be masculine or not.

Speaking in terms completely removed from gender, I felt very repulsed by people who were either quite aggressive and loud or else overly passive and weak. (The trouble with the passive "feminine" type was they seemed to expect me to be strong and dominant and protective --- which I couldn't do.) At Petersburg, some of these

Part 6: OPPRESSIVE INSTITUTIONS

STRUGGLE IN PRISON, continued..

repulsive, loud guys were making passes at me almost the first day I got there. They freely admitted that they hoped to pressure me into being a passive woman-substitute.

My problems were intensified because the word got around that I was a religious pacifist and would not fight back if attacked. The idea of becoming a "queen" terrified me, since I felt it would distort my whole personality alarmingly. I got very paranoid and didn't trust any other inmates. (At the time I was the only draft resister at Petersburg.)

Not fitting easily into any category of sexual behavior, I must have been threatening to some other inmates. I was at first ostracized for not being "macho" and boastful, and soon also because I openly practiced racial integration. Since I broke the accepted patterns of behavior, and obviously did not play the sex games of male hunters chasing female "prey", most of my fellow inmates had trouble believing that I had a girl friend "on the street". A couple of homosexuals that I met at different times just could not believe that I didn't consider myself one of them.

I was very cautious in my relationships with other inmates, not wanting to tempt myself into homosexuality. (I was not alone in this tenseness towards fellow prisoners. Others expressed the same fears sometimes. People said that prison was not "the real world" and that we mustn't forget what the world of two sexes was like. It was important to feel constantly frustrated at having no women around in order to still have desires for contact with women after we were released). So all fall and winter, I was quite cold towards other inmates, and passed up getting close to some of the really sensitive, beautiful guys I met.

Finally in the spring I had enough of that and began to let down my guard. I got into a clique of intellectual freaks that included some drug offenders and one homosexual guy named Gee whom I had felt tense about for months. He was very puzzling to me because he openly said he was gay but he was certainly not a queen at all. He was quite self-assured, but sensitive; and he acted fairly bitter. The idea of someone being homosexual but not into "sex roles" was very interesting to me, and I found I had a lot in common with him. Since I was still very tense about masculinity and homosexuality, I didn't get really close to him in the few weeks before we both went home on parole. But his personality haunted and fascinated me, and I thought about him for months.

I had to defend myself psychologically so much in prison that when I got out I felt so much stronger and able to deal with almost any kind of ostracism. So I began expressing myself more openly more and more: cautiously and patiently at first, then gathering courage. Eventually I found that I was ready to try to satisfy my long-suppressed drives towards homosexual sex. I was very secretive at first but as time went on I became more and more open. My rebellion against cool, cruel masculinity meant that I must be open in my nonconformity. "Machismo must go!" "We off the pig state by smashing manhood..."

- JEFF KEITH

ATTICA Brothers

The creation and destruction of the Attica Commune were very significant events in my life, though I have never spent much time in prison. As the black, brown, and white men inside Attica united to confront the institution that demeaned and exploited them, I was roused, by their exemplary brotherhood, from the deep depression I was feeling at the time. They were demonstrating that we could defy the limits of our existence; that I could break out of my sterile isolation.

I felt, as I did the first time I broke thru my defenses with a small group of men to a state of collective vulnerability, that brotherhood was powerful, possible, and good. They were reaching out with their solidarity to people outside the prison; and I responded to the assertion of their humanity, and to their demands for basic survival and dignity.

In confronting the prison, the prisoners transformed themselves. For four days, they democratically rationed their scant water, food, and blankets, sharing them with the guards they held hostage, with whom they dealt with far greater humanity than they had been treated.

They were exercising incredible restraint, and that they did not feel a need to use vengeful macho violence to prove their masculinity. Compare this to the State Troopers who later gloried in their killings..

The groundwork was laid for the bloody invasion by the lies that the prisoners were murdering and sexually mutilating the guards. Rockefeller was playing on the sexual fears and animosities that lie at the root of racism. Yet inside the prison, the inmates, organized around their common oppression, were able to transcend those deep-rooted racial divisions.

Because of that, the state moved to crush them. They were murdered and tortured, and reviled in the pig media. But we shouldn't forget the lessons they taught.

I feel like I owe the men in Attica something because of the energy and the enlarged capacity for freedom they imparted to me through their struggle. I feel like I must make the pigs answer for their brutality, or be brutalized by my passive acceptance of it. And I feel that I cannot abandon my brothers to a slow death at the hands of their captors, with their prison anonymity restored. That's why this headline still says Attica: because for them, Attica continues.

When they fought for freedom, I began to recognize more fully the many ways I am unfree. The racism which prevents me from seeing the humanity of black men and women must be dealt with as surely as the sexism and sex-role stereotyping that I struggle with more comfortably in my everyday life. It became impossible to ignore the armed, repressive power of the state. Attica taught me how much I have to deal with that stands between me and "brotherhood."

- MICHAEL NOVICK



THE ATTICA BROTHERS ARE STILL FACING LEGAL PERSECUTION BY THE STATE OF NEW YORK BECAUSE OF THE REBELLION. FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SEND CONTRIBUTIONS, CONTACT:
ATTICA BROS LEGAL OFFENSE/DEFENSE
147 FRANKLIN ST. BUFFALO 14202

How HIGH SCHOOL TAUGHT ME TO REPRESS MYSELF

I recall now how much I hated grammar school. The principal bawled me out once at length for pissing on the front lawn of the school in front of 500 kids waiting for buses home when I was 8. I told him I couldn't hold it in & if I ran to the bathroom I might miss my bus. I should've run to the bathroom & later asked a teacher for a ride home, he yelled. I said are you kidding? He gave me a detention saying next time I should show more respect for the RULES.

I guess after I lost this battle it was easier later on for me to be repressed to a pt. where my sexual 'rules' became unknown amidst all the rules of jr. h. s. The 1st thing jr. high does is deny us any opportunity to explore our sexuality openly - as indicated especially by the rampant misinformation about sex that passed for secret knowledge among the boys.

The conditioning of h.s. insures that no matter where we make our entrance to the social system - at a Juvenile home or a Jr. h.s. - all knowledge of our total sexuality will be collectively repressed. The process of repression means to men an impairing of our true sexual identities, means for the young female a much more excruciating experience of complete denial of her real sexual and self identity.

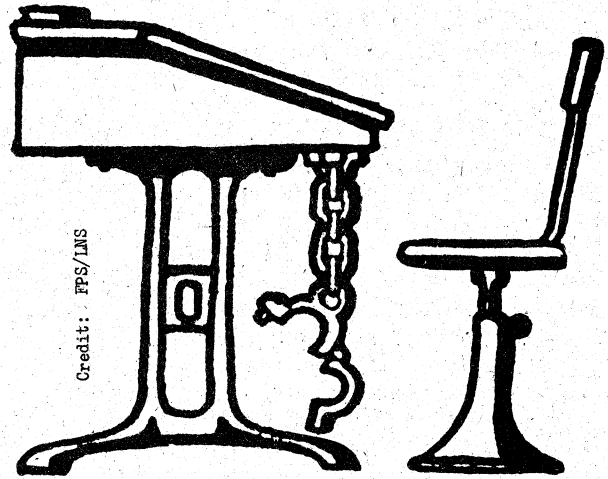
Sex role conditioning in the h.s. and the private prep school I went to were heavy. Here's what I mean about a male's true identity get's impaired. I recall walking to class once in 7th grade, my hair not even especially long, and hearing some 'tough kid' whose hair was elaborately styled to a pompadour say to me: "Is it true blondes have more fun?" Just because the sides of my lips weren't curled in a sneer, because I'd refuse to fight when challenged. Later after I thought I'd escaped such heavy role conditioning by going to a co-ed private school that enrolled plenty of freaks and artsie-fartsies I recall being shocked when this freak I was friends with asked me "Is it true you're afaggot?" I denied it vigorously. I now wish I'd told him yes just to see him expose to me why he felt that. But I was 16 at the time & just wanted to avoid any contact with my sexuality in my relations with men or women.

I liked one woman who was in my class & used to give her rides home. I tried on several occasions to make out with her, but I was afraid I might go 'too far' - tho' I wished like hell I could find out what too far was all about. The reason it was so important I was taking her home was not so much that I could

get to be close with her as that I could make her an asset for me in conversations with my friend.

It made me into an 'expert' on one woman. My friend asked once 'was so-and-so a good fuck or not?' I could answer knowledgeably "Oh her, she's a bitch ..." thinking to myself "now he must know I'm an O.K. guy."

In public h.s. 'money' was not a common thing that males had, many of them coming from work-

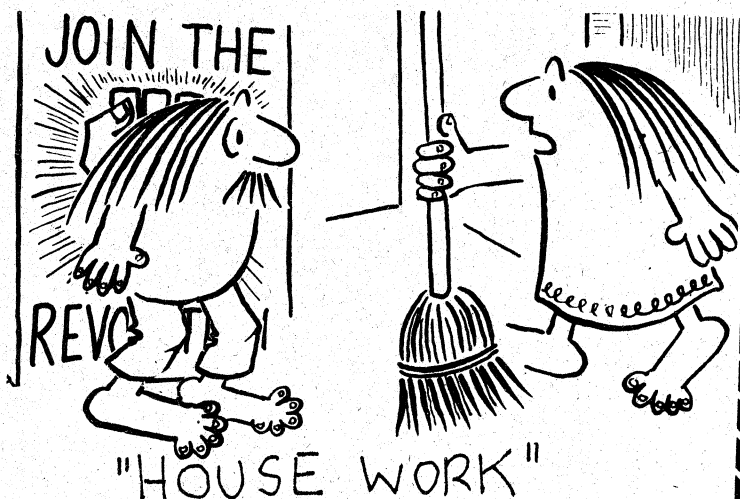


ing class backgrounds. If you had any it was because you were working extra after school to buy a '63 T-bird. Therefore you had to compete more aggressively for your 'queen' by being tough, a jock, or a car-owner.

In the rich kids private school the males usually had money. That's what enabled them to drop out of the high key male competition for the lower key game of who had more dope, to sell, who gets laid most, who has the best hi-fi, etc. The 'rebellion' against our parents coldness brought a flowering of our hair, but it also helped to widen the gap between us and the straight working class guys with whom we still had much in common, as far as both being forced to repress our real sexualities to achieve the jive superstud identity. What started out as an escape from the institutionalized male role in public h.s. was for me only a retreat into class privilege - money - with which I could fit right in, coming from an upper class family.

What's more I didn't escape the role-playing. It's a measure of how much high school repressed me that to this day I still cannot feel safe about masturbating. I still can't or won't most of the time bring myself to kiss or hug, even, another man or express affection if I really dig him. And I treat women friends still as assets of my ego.

-Willy



HERE BERT, BRING THE REVOLUTION HOME.

It's one thing to wash the dishes, another to clean the kitchen (wipe clean the table stove, sink; straighten the top of the refrigerator, put away clean dishes, sweep the floor, water the plants, put out the garbage); another yet to be the first to notice that the kitchen needs cleaning.

To people who don't care,

don't care if the kitchen's a mess
don't care if people crash here for a few days

don't care if you leave me
don't feel one way or the other about loud music at night

don't care if Nixon's elected
don't care if crazy Al moves in or not
don't care if the drapes are olive or yellow

I thought I didn't care
but really I do.
it just takes me a little longer to see it.

Maybe I lack imagination, visual foresight.

I don't care til the thing hits me in the face -- but then I do care.

And I'm glad I do.

I think it would be fairer to those who care sooner, if I learned their talent (curse?); cause then it wouldn't be that they got the blame for creating hassles, while I got the benefit of the concrete changes that hassles produce.

- PAUL

IN the FOUNDRY

There are 120 workers there and we work with a metal that is a high temperature alloy, used for heat resistant parts in machinery and furnaces.

....In the foundry, there is no air filtration system and the ventilation is just about right if you were welding in your garage. Most of the time you can't see the ceiling because of the smoke and when the metal fumes are particularly bad, it feels like you have a weight on your chest. The longer you work there, the more you cough and spit up phlem. In the two years I have worked there, three people have died of lung diseases, and two men have had a lung collapsed and returned to work. There were no respirators, but one of the improvements that we won is that respirators are now available. Also an air filtration system is to be put in by January 1st.

The equipment we work with is as bad as the air. It's constantly breaking down and parts are hard to find. Yet, we are expected to produce the same amount, whether the machine is whole or not. This old and unsafe equipment is capable of biting you at any time. Because of the way the place is set up, you have to do a lot of hard physical labor. Almost all the people who have been there a few years have backs so bad that they can hardly bend over.

Last year, a furnace with 1,000 pounds of metal tipped over and 600 pounds of metal came pouring out. The metal hit me and my shirt caught on fire. I had a bad burn on my shoulder, but the owner said it was alright. I went back to her, for the next 3 days in a row, to show her the burn was very bad, but she kept saying it was healing. Finally, I convinced her it was bad and I received treatment for 3rd degree burns. This happened to other people too. A couple of months ago, my shirt on fire from spontaneous combustion while pouring metal. You can bake to death from the heat near the pot. (A thermometer strapped to a person's thigh, while pouring metal, reads between 200 and 300). We have been working under these conditions all along and it wasn't until we won our grievance committee that we have made a gain in this area; as of August 1972, we have asbestos aprons and armsleeves.

*Rising Up Angry

LIFE IN THE MILITARY:

Many people have written about how the military turns men into savage murderers & rapists & having been through the military I'd like to get away from such vague terms and ideas. There are enormous pressures applied to a human being to bring about such transformations and its important to myself and my brothers who've been put through these things and served as the lackeys in Vietnam and the streets of USA to understand ourselves & actions instead of trying to forget them as just an undesirable memory.

I went into the army like alot of people do - a young scared kid of 17 told he should join the army to get off probation for minor crimes. At the time the army sounded real fine: 3 meals, rent-free home, adventure & you would come out a real man. (As many parents put this trip on their kids its amazing).

In basic training I met the dregs of the army (who else would be given such an unimportant job as training "dumb shit kids") who were constantly making jokes such as "don't bend over in the shower", encouraging the supermasculine image of "so horny he'll fuck anything." People talk about fucking sheep & cows not just women with about the same respect for them all.

Not many 17 yr. olds could conform to such hard core experience. You're told the cooks were gay (pieces of ass for your benefit). The "hard core" seargents with all these young "feminine" bodies (everyone appears very meek & helpless (i.e. feminine) when constantly humiliated by having your head shaved and harrassed with no legitimate way of fighting back) were always hunghole talking (you're ass is grass and Jim the lawnmower).

These "leaders" are the MEN; that pretty much makes you the "pussy's" at the very most "boys". You have to conform to a hard core, tough image or you're a punk, And I began to believe it because of my insecure state of mind which was so encouraged in training. I was real insecure so I wanted to be a superman and went Airborne,

which unlike most of the army is more intense and worse than basic training. The pressures of assuming manhood are very heavy.

Not only are you hard, you're airborne hard, sharp, mean, ruthless. You have to be having an impressive sexual life or a quick tongue to talk one up. You've got to be ready to fight a lot because you're tough & don't take shit from anyone. All these fronts were very hard for me to keep up because they contradicted everything I felt. I didn't feel tougher than anyone. I was very insecure about my dick size and ability to satisfy women.

All I had was my male birthright ego. I stayed drunk to be able to struggle through the bar room tests of strength and the bedroom obstacle courses. The pressures became heavier and stronger requiring more of a facade to cover up the greater insecurity. To prove I was tougher I went looking for fights & people to fuck over. To prove I was "cock strong" I fucked over more women and talked more about it. I began to do all the things I was most insecure about doing hoping that doing them would make me that "real man".

After having survived the initial shock to such a culture I became very capable in such required role playing as tuffest, meanest, & most virile. The latter meaning a cold unrepachable lover, irresistible to women & unapproachable by other men.

I first spent time in the southern US where only WAC's were available to fuck over and abuse, but being new to it all I felt I was too good to be dealing with such women that were notorious as being either too ugly to make it on the outside or dykes. In Europe it was very different. There were numerous bars and many women quite willing to sell themselves or suffer manual manipulation just to get a GI to take them to America (land of opportunity).



LIFE IN THE MILITARY, continued

Most of these women seemed to be bored talking to, being with, or fucking you. In defense against this role reversal of callousness I became even "harder". There was still remnants of "proper respect for women" (meaning you had to at least bullshit enough to get a woman alone somewhere before you could molest her).

Finally in Vietnam there was almost total freedom to abuse women and even other people. The pressures were such that you couldn't possibly feel anything for a "gook here", women so desperate to survive they would beg you and try to pull you into their beds for the money to live. Scenes like waiting in a whorehouse & seeing a woman come squat over and douche in a bucket then wink at you a supposed sexy grin did something to bring reality but it usually made me conceive of the Vietnamese as even less human & so less intilted to human respect.

The brutality that has to be daily suppressed in a combat situation is enormous. That, with all the fears multiplied by the pressures to deny those fears made me ready to desperately take out my frustration on the most susceptible target, the Vietnamese people. The same macho bullshit was heavier here than in other assignments because it revolved around life or death situations and even the "MEN" (officers & NCO's) began to crack under the strain and became even more oppressive to cover up the increased fear.

There was virtually no one or no way to talk about my feelings of guilt and ~~doubts~~ doubts. Some of us began to confront the officers & NCO's flagrant missuse of our lives and bodies and we were attacked as cowards. It became a constant struggle even till my last week in Nam wether I should still try to prove myself a man (I still felt unable to satisfy the role) or accept myself as a punk & leave. I hadn't grown the chest hairs I was so sure I would get in combat.

It's been years of real painful hassles with



For a straight man feeling a failure in the required he-man role, it seemed a fantasy come true. Housegirls wait on you hand and foot and if you beat her or rape her and she complains she gets fired for making trouble and many of these women are so in need of money that they are at your mercy. Whores were brought into field environments along with a mobile PX unit, (if not by the army itself there were enough interested civilians.) When I began to get close to a few women (talking to them I began to realize they were real people) all the fantasy was shattered and the contradictions began to get heavier.

Once to compensate for a dope burn I slapped around a young boy in order to show my buddies that no punk kid could fuck over such a tuff man as myself. I spent the rest of the day repressing my fears and uptightness about inhumanly treating a "gook". The only good "gook" is a dead one" was my logical defense.

others that could have been avoided had I been able to talk with other men who had been through the same pressures & shit & tried to understand & overcome them. Even now I don't feel I delt with that part of my life.

Coming back from Vietnam I was desperate for love & understanding and followed the "proper" way of getting it by entering a relationship with a white, sexy woman. With that comfort and no others that had been through the army, my memories were unchallenged and I didn't have to accept a struggle with that part of my life.

I no longer feel secure about that past. Help me brothers, Help us to understand what happened to us. I wanted to write about 3 years of experiences to understand them more clearly but what I need is response from others to be more honest than what I now accept is the story of my involvement in the army & in America now.

SOME RESOURCES

GAY COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER

1614 Wilshire Blvd.
L. A. CA 90017
(213) 482 - 3062

LAVENDAR & RED UNION

6618 Sunset Blvd.
L. A. CA 90028
465 - 9285

JOIN HANDS

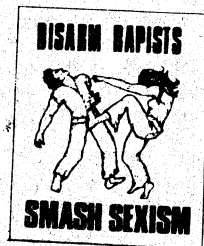
Northeast Mental Health Room 402
121 Leavenworth St.
San Francisco, CA. 94102
a gay prisoner support group

GREATER LIBERATED CHICANOS

POB 38216
L. A. CA 90038
24 hr Gay Chicano Hotline:
(213) 463 - 8083

FAGGOTS AGAINST RAPE

529 Castro St.
San Francisco, CA. 94114
863-2049



REVOLUTIONARY GAY MEN'S UNION

526 32nd street
Oakland, CA. 94609



MEN'S CENTER

2700 Bancroft Way
Berkeley CA 94704

(415) 845 - 4823

MEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

NE Branch YMCA
50th & 12th NE
Seattle WA 98105

HARTFORD MEN'S CENTER

95 Canterburg St.
Hartford CT
06112

MEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

3520 SE Yamhill
Portland ORE 97214
235 - 3433

MEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

2211 East Kenwood
Milwaukee Wisconsin
53211

LA. 4 - 1400

PROJECT RE-DIRECTIONS - DETROIT
691 Seward E-1
Detroit, Michigan 48202

brother's Greatest Hits! continued...

We want brother to continue to evolve politically. We are increasingly aware of the need to unite the issues of sexism and gay liberation with other struggles against imperialism (the overall system of private property and economic and cultural exploitation under which we live). Our next issue, one we have wanted to do for a long time, will be a look at the relationship between economic class and male sexuality and power.

The necessities of the American monopoly capitalist system have dictated the forms of oppression and exploitation suffered by Third World people here and around the world, by workers and by the unemployed. They have also defined the forms of oppression and exploitation felt by women, and those experienced by gay people in this society.

As the hard times of 1975 grow harder and many of us feel the economic pinch, all forms of oppression will become intensified. The next issue of brother (Spring 1975) will be one attempt to explore the links between sexist oppression and these capitalist contradictions.

We are limited in our understanding by our race age and class backgrounds (we are all between 21 and 28, white, and from middle or working class backgrounds). We need contributions from our readers. We don't want men's thinking around these issues to reflect only the privileges of relatively well-to-do white males.

We hope you enjoy this anthology and are encouraged to contribute, to subscribe if you haven't done so, and to discuss and act on these issues in your own lives and with your friends and co-workers. We welcome your comments, criticisms, and suggestions.

In solidarity, the brother collective: Carson, Ferd, Michael and Michael.

A COLLECTIVE COMMENT ON THE FAMILY, continued...

It's not enough to assert that the family is an oppressive institution. Most people are living in families now and have no other options. We ~~do not~~ recommend

that individuals, particularly our male readers, abandon their families. Changes in our families and living situations will have to be part of the revolutionary struggle that is being fought on many levels today. We want the transformation of society, not any of the individual options presently offered. Single men not living in families must help to care for children. Women up until now have been forced to bear the major concern for raising children; they do the shitwork -- cleaning up, changing diapers, etc. -- and most of the emotional nurturing. Men in families have not generally concerned themselves with such

day-to-day chores; rather their role has been to maintain control and authoritarianism. Fathers should break out of this role and begin helping to take all-around care of children.



brother: a forum for men against sexism, needs your continuing support if it is to continue to publish.

If you liked the material in this special anthology issue, you can order back issues of brother, or subscribe or order copies of this and future issues in bulk.

Subscriptions to brother are \$3.00 for ten issues (on a roughly quarterly schedule); or \$5.00 for a supporting subscription. Institutional subs are \$10.00. We are aiming at at least 2 tabloid and two newsletter issues a year.

Single sample copies of this special double anthology issue of brother are \$1.00 postpaid, or \$.50 apiece for bulk issues of five or more copies.

If you can help with distribution, or know of a bookstore, library, or men's or gay group that would like to carry brother, please let us know. We would like to broaden and deepen the contact brother has with interested people around the country.

I would like to subscribe to brother

Name _____
address _____

CITY/State _____

ZIP Code _____

Also send the following back issues:

Make checks payable to: brother

Next issues are: Men and Class
Book reviews of

"men's" literature.

Please send in relevant material.
Thanks.

The following back issues are available for 50¢ each:

() general issues....#5

() Men & Our Bodies...#6

() Men & the Family...#7

() Bisexuality#9

Bulk orders, on consignment or pre-paid are 25¢ per copy, for five or more copies of the same issue.

Subs will start with the newsletter #10 issue on the state of the movement, featuring annotated lists of men's and gay activities around the country.

address correction requested

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