

Sex experience or from mother?

all of the children in the male and female roles. The images we saw in society (male bank presidents, female tellers; male superintendents, female cashiers; male government leaders, female secretaries; male heroes with female wives waiting home doing the laundry and cooking dinner) contributed to our socialization of the "male" psychological traits of previously. Movies and television showed the male heroes being sensitive, emotional nurturant, doing the type of activity that females are socialized to perform. They were all cool, super hip, always in control, always successful, always leading exciting lives. And who can forget the room scenes in high school, and the phony fronts we always had to put on. Our whole lives have been made up of experiences that reinforce and reinforce similar themes — the male sex role personality traits.

We can all look at medical evidence and psychological research and see how

chological help, and highest rates of "unhappiness." The reason for this is quite simple. As children, when we were feeling down, we went to our mother, a woman, for nurturance and help. We learned an important lesson: we need women to hold us together emotionally. We are socialized to seek out and be emotionally dependent upon women. We use women to hold us together, to make us whole, as our ego is very fragile. So that males who do not have women to hold them together, i.e. single men, cannot *make is psychologically* in our society. It is true — behind every successful man is a woman. As human beings we can only go a certain length of time being aware of and holding in our feelings. There are three possibilities.

The first possibility is that those emotions and feelings held inside ourselves will develop into physical and mental diseases. The repression of this emotional energy "eats us" away inside resulting in psychosomatic and stress-related diseases: ulceration in various parts of the digestive tract (including cancer), high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney disease, and rheumatism. In Canada, for example, females live twelve years longer than males, and do not statistically experience these disorders to any similar degree. Personality correlations of many physical diseases show personality traits that are closely connected to the male sex role stereotypes. Our unemotional role does not allow appropriate discharge of tension and stress. Alcoholism is seen by many as the inappropriate releasing of these bottled up feelings. Males who seek psychological help often are suffering from (a) being unable to fit into the male role with its consequent lack of self-concept and anxiety, or (b) fitting so well into the role that they are emotionally sterile — dead inside like robots, like machines.

The second possibility is that our emotions will be let out in the only approved male way: the consciousness of violence and war. The type of consciousness required for violation and war is detachment, objectification, competition, possession, pride, hardness, domination, desire for power, etc. If males were socialized to be sensitive, to *care for life*, to really "feel" pain, could we continue the violence, rape, and war for which our society uses us in order to perpetuate itself?

The third possibility (usually a probability for heterosexual males) is the emotional draining of females to hold us together so we can survive and "make it." We fill hospitals, physicians' offices, psychiatric facilities, and we support the pharmaceutical industry with its sales of psychotropic mood-modifying drugs, with the casualties of our sexual politics. The result is documented in many studies of married women (especially see *Women and Madness, The Dialectics of Sex, and The Future of Marriage*.)

The second way that our sex roles oppress us is that they turn us into success objects. Our society wants women to be sex objects and men to be success objects. Women are conditioned to find their identity through their ability to sexually attract males, and males are trained to find their identity through their success in the material world — either in money, profession, or status. We see our value in success terms rather than in personal growth, autonomy, or ability to love. This conditioning puts a great deal of pressure on us to do alienating work rather than creative, fulfilling tasks. We are always channelled into the breadwinner role whether that role fits our individual temperament or not.

It is a cliché to say that most men hate their work. How many of us would continue to spend so much time wasting our time if we did not "have" to; especially if we could be more human and could not detach ourselves into machines so easily? Our capitalistic society is supported by a large number of male workers, who turn the wheels of industry so that a few males of the ruling elite can profit. Could that small elite

continue its domination if males demanded satisfying work and no longer identified themselves solely with their work? Since our society establishes its priorities on economic status, and there are fewer openings the higher we climb the success ladder, not all of us can succeed. This encourages competition among males. So then it becomes difficult to relate in human terms, cooperative terms, and open terms with other males, as we are constantly competing with each other. It is very rare to have a situation with males together without some either conscious or unconscious competition going on (especially if there are women around to impress and to "win"). It is therefore very difficult for males to have open, vulnerable, or emotional relationships with each other, for these are seen as signs of weakness, or homosexuality and the rules of the game are to compete, to win, to be successful, to be strong.

The third consequence and oppression of our sex role is that we are out of touch with our body and sexuality. First, we are conditioned to see and use our body as an object — a performance machine to do well in athletics, fighting and sex. We see a separation between our mind and our body rather than a yin/yang unity. Second, we are socialized not to listen to our body's messages and as a result do not develop our intuition; we also therefore abuse our bodies manifesting in physical diseases discussed earlier. Third, we learn to separate sex and love so completely that making love becomes screwing, fucking, balling, getting laid, etc. Making love is not a relationship of two vulnerable and intimate individuals sharing a warmth and a closeness, as much as it is a conquest for the male — "What is the best way to score, to get into her panties, to get into her and get as much ass/pussy as possible." Love-making becomes goal oriented. Women are seen as sex objects, not as people. We are socialized about sexuality and women through *Playboy, Penthouse* and other "girlie" material. And this mass media manipulates and changes the "desireable" beauty standards from blond to big breasts to shaven legs or whatever will make them more money and degrade and keep women (who are socialized to see their own self image through their physical attractiveness to males) insecure. That is what puberty and the locker room "games" are all about in our society.

We tend to identify our ego in relationship to women entirely through our penis. We are supposed to know everything about sex, to be the sexually aggressive and dominating sexual partner, and to believe in the double standard of women (virgin/whore). As children we learn not to pay attention to the sexuality of our whole body, but to channel all our sexuality into a genital sexuality. Think about how we masturbate — manipulate our penis to quickly have an orgasm. We separate and detach our penis from an emotional loving wholeness. That is why males are such poor lovers in our culture. We do not pay real attention to our lover (the excitement and resolution phase of human sexual response) as we are only interested in reaching the goal of orgasm. All our energy gets directed into that conquest rather than into opening up emotionally, and caring and communicating toward mutual satisfaction, respect, and happiness. Our separation of sex and love causes us to forfeit experience of really loving, really experiencing our full body/sexual sensuality.

The fourth way that males are oppressed is that we are socialized to see women as inferior human beings, and to hate women. As children we have to find some way to rationalize the world around us, especially the condition of our mothers whom we love and are dependent upon for emotional nurturance. Wanting to find order and rationality in the world, we assume that woman's inferior condition is due to the fact that she is, in fact, inferior. (Rather than seeing that she is forced into a

position of powerlessness by patriarchal power and consciousness.) As our consciousness develops its picture of women as inferior, we then have to objectify them as people in order to continue to justify our dominant power and their inferiority. For if women were full human beings like us what justice would there be in our continual domination over them? And psychologically, we hate people we consider our inferiors (as in racism for example).

We are also jealous of women's powers of creation. Fromm and Jung in excellent studies have shown through patriarchal myths, symbols, folklore, and religion, that there is one universal theme — man's jealousy of women's power to procreate. Zilboorg in *Psychoanalysis and Women* demonstrates that "it is not penis envy on the part of women, but women envy on the part of men, that is psychogenetically older and therefore more powerful." And psychologically, we know that jealousy turns into envy which turns into hatred.

The next situation which feeds on, deepens, and solidifies our hatred of women develops a little later in time. We begin to realize our privileged dominant position can only be maintained if women are kept "in their place." So we must live in a constant state of fear as the threat to our power is everywhere, even and especially in our bedroom. This fear of being threatened explains our paranoid hatred towards the "uppity woman," and psychologically, we hate those we fear; we hate those who threaten our position (ego, economic and cultural).

Rape must be analyzed and understood in terms of being the logical concrete expression of our misogyny. A classic study of rapists by Amin in *Patterns in Forcible Rape* shows: "Studies indicate that sex offenders do not constitute a unique or psychopathological type; nor are they as a group invariably more disturbed than the control groups to which they are compared." Other criminologists have said that rapists are the "most normal of men having normal sexual personalities." The fullest and deepest expression of men's misogyny through rape is in war. All armies (in a patriarchy) regardless of race, nationality, class, religion, or culture engage in rape and wide scale torture and mutilation of women. Rape is used by men (and is culturally condoned) in order to terrorize women and keep them in a state of constant fear so that they will know where the real power in our society lies.

As a result of our consciousness and treatment of women, we forfeit the real potential of over half the people of the world. We also miss out on the possibility of strong relationships with women. We lose out on really learning important knowledge from women. We could gain and give so much more in our relationships with women if we were not misogynists. The more we learn to appreciate and respect women's skills, knowledge and experience, the more we will grow as full human beings. Our role as oppressors of women should not continue any longer!

The fifth oppression is the prevention of our spending meaningful time growing with and caring for children. We are socialized to see child care as "women's work." As a result we miss out on getting back in touch with our natural spontaneity, creativity, exploration, honesty, joy of living, discovery of the world, and the real process of growth. Instead we stay hardened and entrenched in our business-like, mechanical and deadening "reality." Instead of spending those important early years learning how to relate to children as people, learning about that child inside ourself, learning how to really care for life, developing nurturance, sensitivity and responsibility, we spend our time and energy in more "productive," business. Children are seen by men as a hassle until they are old enough to play football and hockey; and then, once again, seen as a hassle when

continued to p. 12



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photo Grant Wurm

dy and socialization works and say, "yes, it is that how I am as a male is not the me I have had a personal choice about was born with, but what is wrong with male sex role?" This sex role conditioning oppresses us in five fundamental ways. I think that after we look complete picture of possibilities free arbitrary sex-role division, we can fully understand the fruitfulness of liberation."

The first way that sex roles oppress that they prevent us from becoming able, autonomous, emotional loving man beings. We are only "allowed" to half of what is human. Every human being is born with a full range of emotions and feelings. But as males we are not permitted access to half our potential. All our energy is put into developing our brain (rational, intellectual, thinking), and none is put into developing our heart. A person cannot fully autonomous when he is half

And statistics show this: single men the highest alcoholic rates, highest of needing psychiatric and psy-