

Issues in

Radical Therapy

\$1

Therapy & Lesbians

POWER

FAT POLITICS

Transvestite

STROKE LIBERATION

ORGANIZING DROP-INS

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WORKERS & AUTHORS

JOSETTE ESCAMILLA-MONDANARO is celebrating, with her lover Edna, the birth of their beautiful son, Eden, born on July 17. All the members of Edna's women's band were present at the birth and became aunts of their new child. She feels that this is an important new way of parenting and that women are finding courage to do this. She works at Marin Open House.

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GUY is relaxing after having dropped out of school. He is a member of a radical therapy problem-solving group.

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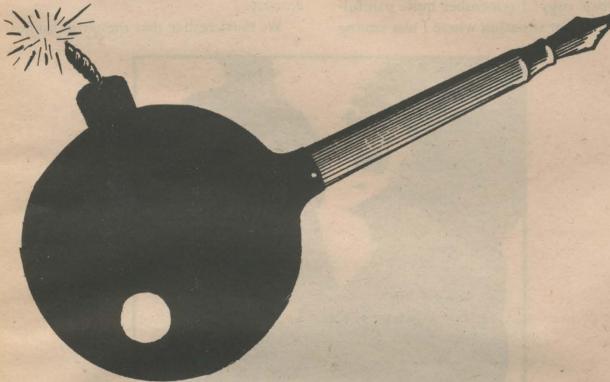


editorial

In May of 1976 there will be in Berkeley a festival called The Inkslinger's Fair. Coincidental with the bicentennial of the American Revolution, the purpose of this fair will be the demystification of printing, so as to make printing alternatives open to all. It will feature all manner of underground, revolutionary printing.

The printed word has always played an important role in revolutions. We at I.R.T., as members of the underground press, would like to think that we are playing a part in the movement for liberation of all people. We belong to an old tradition of pamphleteers with printing presses in their basements who have long been the enemies of oppressive governments.

Our task has been to lay bare the abuses of the psychiatric profession, a task we have shared with the *Radical Therapist/Hard Times*, *Madness Network News* and many unknown others; after two years of publishing, we feel good about our accomplishments. We also see as our task the facilitation and nurturing of writing. We encourage established writers to write for us in a style perhaps less academic and more understandable to all people. We encourage people who have never written to try their hand and we have published many pieces by people who never published before. We nurse along handwritten, difficult to read manuscripts which would never be considered elsewhere, when we perceive something important in them.



We are aware of how important it is that everyone feel capable of writing their thoughts and feelings in readable form. The pen is indeed mightier than the sword and we aim to arm as many people as we can with that power.

We also realize how difficult writing has been made for people. Ironically, the very process which is supposed to free our powers of communication — education — is in fact instrumental in preventing people from being able to express themselves through the written word. Education not only doesn't help; it hinders. We are taught from the beginning to write for competitive reasons (grades), about topics that don't interest us, in a style that no one will read to a non-audience of teachers who aren't interested in our product. This is the case from grammar school to Ph.D. thesis. Most theses don't interest their writers, are written in a completely illegible style and are never read by more than a handful of people. And yet they are held up as the highest accomplishment of education. We are given as examples of successful publishing activity the garbage that is produced by the publish-or-perish policy of academia.

No wonder so many of us come out of school paralyzed in our capacities to communicate. If we try to write on a topic of our interest in a readable style we are likely to flunk; we are alienated from our capacities to write and read. If you are paranoid enough you might come to suspect that one purpose of education is to assure that educated persons will not have any unusual thoughts, and that if they do those thoughts will remain firmly locked in their minds for all time to come.

We want people to write for I.R.T. The Transvestite article in this issue is an excellent example. It arrived as a tightly handwritten letter. It is short, which we like, and intensely personal and political, which we *really* like. It arrived far past our deadline, but we made room for it. We also like to take incoherent papers which contain truth within their sheets and polish them up and we like to help dense, turgid, academic writers find their light-hearted, personal side and add it to their writing talents. We like to provide people with the wonderful feeling of power which comes with seeing one's thought in print, reproduced thousands of times and passed hand-to-hand across the world. And when these thoughts speak of sisterhood, brotherhood and our revolution, we shout with joy. Write on!

Claude Steiner



therapy and lesbians

Josette Mondanaro

"... People fear most and understand least those human phenomena in which they have little experience and no reliable knowledge to aid comprehension" (Weltge, p. vii.)

The validity of this statement is perhaps evidenced nowhere more clearly than in the issue of lesbianism. What scarce investigatory work one might find regarding homosexuality can usually be discounted on any one of several bases. First, research questions, summaries and conclusions have, in the past, been based on this society's understanding and expectations of how people are supposed to function and adjust. Culturally prescribed sex role traits such as aggressiveness and independence for men, and passivity, dependence for women have been viewed as innate, natural behavior. Heterosexuality has also been considered a natural absolute as opposed to a societal norm which individuals in this society are trained and groomed for. To this end, researchers have asked such biased questions as what goes wrong to cause homosexuality and what can be done to either prevent it or cure it.

Secondly, the questions have been directed to a small visible segment of the homosexual population. Often, information is gathered through therapists' files and/or interviews with individuals in a bar setting. These particular

people may also represent a group of individuals who have little to lose by disclosure of their homosexual identity. Thirdly, the main portion of written material regarding homosexuality actually deals with homosexual men and either entirely disregards lesbians, or erroneously extrapolates from the male data to include lesbians. The dearth of information regarding lesbians reflects, in part, this society's attitude of deeming women and their activities less valuable (and interesting?) and thereby less worthy of investigation than men.

While there is a lack of unbiased information regarding lesbianism, there is no scarcity of ugly myths and cruel folklore. Even without reading the literature, people quickly assimilate this society's "line" on lesbians. Everyone believes that she or he knows what a lesbian is, and what detrimental home environment goes into the creation of a lesbian. In the fall of 1973, I taught a course entitled "Lesbianism" at San Francisco State University. Of the thirty women taking this course, by self-definition, approximately one-third considered themselves lesbians, one-third believed that they were bisexual or uncommitted, and one-third stated they were straight (heterosexuals). In a very tedious and painful process, the women who identified themselves as heterosexual shared their "fantasies" concerning lesbianism. Lesbians were women

who were masculinized by some hormonal or anatomical deficiency, were ugly and therefore couldn't get a man, had been raped or brutalized by men and then rejected all men, were raised as boys by parents who really preferred boys. Lesbians role-played, some (the majority) are "butch" and dress up in men's clothing, and have very short hair cuts. These women are attracted to feminine women who fit the stereotype of "woman" in this society. The "mascu-

line" woman is not a real woman, but the feminine woman who falls in love with the butch is a *real* woman.

The fallacious basis of these fantasies were slowly disclosed and dispelled through a continuous dialogue between the heterosexually identified women and the lesbians. What is really alarming is that the women who believed these fantasies were young women in their twenties living in San Francisco in 1973. This serves as a horrifying indication of





the level of lesbian folklore permeating this society even at this date.

Liberalism is Not the Answer

Historically the church has considered homosexuals sinners, the law has termed particular homosexual activity as criminal and the mental hygienists have viewed this behavior as deviant and pathological. We should find little comfort in the current liberal approach to homosexuality. The church has adopted a view that God loves all his children,



even the homosexuals. The legal-liberal view sees society as sick and homosexuality as a symptom of this diseased political state. The understanding here is that if this society cleaned up its act, people would not have to resort to homosexuality. This attitude ignores and discounts an individual's capacity to exercise personal preference. It also blatantly misses the political meaning behind women not supporting their oppressors, men, in this sexist society.

Mental hygienists appear to fall into two camps, one which states that if you can't cure them, the least you can do is make them comfortable in their weird neurosis or sick behavior. The second group of therapists state and restate *ad nauseum*, "I don't care what you do in bed, that's your business." This last stance is particularly naive and potentially quite deleterious to the well-being of a client because it totally discounts her existence and her daily struggle in a society which constantly assumes she is heterosexual. This approach negates the price the individual must pay when she is either open and subjecting herself to everyone's fantasy of what it must mean to be a lesbian, or when she remains in the closet and "acts as if" she were heterosexual. One therapist at the Center for Special Problems in San Francisco held this popular, "modern" thera-

peutic view—that it did not make any difference what her clients did in bed. During a staff meeting where we were discussing the need to hire more lesbian therapists, she proceeded to expose her true sentiments by stating that she did not "want any bull dagger stomping around here." She said this knowing that I am a lesbian, and at a center which proposes to be liberal and accepting of individual choices of sexual lifestyle. It is rather apparent that the issues become more complex and subtle as "liberals" approach the topic of homosexuality from textbook absurdity and life-style ignorance. We should not be overjoyed that any group of psychiatrists, social workers and psychologists have decided by *vote* that homosexuality is not necessarily pathological behavior. The absurdity of having to lobby your local psychiatrist for a vote of sanity is quite apparent, not to mention appalling. Lesbians, as well as other oppressed minorities, have earned the right to distrust the keepers of mental health.

Lesbian Therapists

Any therapist raised and trained in this society, who is not a lesbian herself, is not equipped to work with lesbian clients in a therapeutic setting. Even if a lesbian enters therapy for reasons other than her sexual preference, she will be faced with the therapist's fears and fantasies of lesbianism. Until "Professionals" recognize that there is nothing in

their training which facilitates their working with lesbians, and as long as this society discriminates against lesbians, lesbians should and will continue to distrust "straight" mental health workers. Admitting ignorance, and replacing defensiveness with a willingness to explore the entire issue of sexuality, are the first steps a potential therapist must take if she wants to work with lesbians.

But We Learned About Lesbians in School

At this time, many schools and clinics are including discussions of sexuality in training programs. Unfortunately, most of these panel discussions turn the students or staff members into voyeurs observing the freakish accounts of "other" individuals' sexuality. At Stanford Medical School I was invited to speak about being a lesbian. I was on a panel with one homosexual man, one prostitute and two couples who engaged in swapping and swinging. A real voyeuristic orgy! I remember quite painfully a similar situation where I was among

expression of warmth and closeness, as an intimate encounter, and *copulating* for reproduction. Indeed, it is the "natural order" of the human species for eggs and sperm to unite for reproduction. But one makes a rather long leap to say that the manner in which humans express warmth and closeness is also part of the "natural order." As humans, we are obviously physiologically pansexual, capable of experiencing an entire spectrum of sexual feelings through masturbation, homosexuality and heterosexuality. We are also capable of engaging in no sexual activity through celibacy. An individual may find any one or combination of these experiences *appropriate* for herself at any given time. As Kinsey wrote in 1953, "It is not so difficult to explain why a human animal does a particular thing sexually. It is more difficult to explain why each and every individual is not involved in every type of sexual activity."

We must realize that the terms homo-



the spectator audience in a medical school sex education program. I prayed that someone would validate the existence of homosexuals and lesbians in our class instead of having us take notes with the implicit assumption that we were all heterosexuals. Now when I speak I demand that a heterosexual be included on the panel (and a celibate and bisexual, too!), and I attempt to include the audience in an exploration of their own sexuality.

Basic to discussions of sexuality are the issues of androgyny and sexism. A distinction must be made between *sexuality* as an extension of one's self, as an

sexuality and heterosexuality could only exist in a sexist society which judges the value and identity of a woman by what she does in bed. The difference between lesbians and *real* women is that *real* women get fucked by men. Once again we are faced with women being defined by how they fit into the male view of the world.

Lesbianism is not a "bedroom issue." Recently magazines and television talk shows have attempted to titillate their audiences with glittery tales of jet set Hollywood bisexuality. Having a *physiological* capacity for ambisexuality and having sex with both men and women should not be confused with the political statement women are making when we consider ourselves lesbians. Jill Johnston has stated, "The lesbian/feminist is the woman who defines herself independently of the man." To consider women worthy of our total emotional sexual commitments is to see ourselves as complete, whole individuals.

What Do Lesbians Do in Bed Anyway?

"I paint myself green and hang from the rafters." (- Rita Mae Brown)

Equipped with a basic understanding of feminism, sexism, sex role stereotyping and an exploration of one's own sexuality, a therapist must then test her fantasies regarding lesbianism against reality. In one of the finer research works published at this time, Jack Hedblom studied the careers and lifestyles of sixty-five lesbians in Philadelphia between 1964 and 1970. According to this study, lesbians demonstrate a high achievement pattern. Sixty-four of the 65 respondents preferred stable relationships. Seventy percent maintain a heterosexual front. Ninety-one percent never sought therapy to be cured of their homosexuality, and 26 percent did seek out therapeutic assistance which did not pertain to their homosexuality.

Smashing still another myth regarding lesbians, Hedblom found that 47 percent of these women played a passive



but willing role and 53 percent played a dominant role during their first experience with another woman. The myth states that younger unsuspecting women are lured to the Isle of Lesbos by older, more experienced women. This study demonstrates that "initial contacts are the result of a mutual willingness to explore homosexuality." As for role playing (butch vs. femme), 18 percent of the respondents considered themselves "femme," while the majority played both roles interchangeably.

These responses appear to be dated, as women are finding it less meaningful to "role play." Lesbians have, in the past, aped heterosexual society by divid-

ing, grow further into them! Teenagers are told that they will outgrow these feelings because they are expected to outgrow them to fit more easily into this society. Fear of society's punishment, fear of the stigmatized identity of "lesbian," and fear of parental and peer rejection torture many adolescents.

Can you understand that the pain this woman experiences is not inherent in her lesbian relationship; that the relationship itself is seen as beautiful and supportive? The sham, having to lie, the constant fear of disclosure followed by rejection, the alienation and feeling that no one understands comprise the source of pain. The teenager is truly alienated.

cured of their homosexuality. It is obvious that therapists are quite willing to undertake the responsibility for this ludicrous task.

The director of an adolescent clinic in San Francisco was asked about his approach to adolescent homosexuality. His answer loud and clear was "set them straight." At another center which supposedly specialized in troubled adolescents, a young woman spoke about her love for another woman. The staff psychiatrist and psychologists (all male) decided that this relationship was only fantasy and that the staff members should ignore her discussions and questions about homosexuality. Months later when they were informed by a woman on the staff that this teenager did have a relationship with another woman, the psychiatrist then said that she should be encouraged to be heterosexual since she would incur much hostility and disapproval as a lesbian. These situations occurred in 1974.

Some therapists have explained to their teenage clients that homosexuality isn't "bad," that they should continue therapy to appease their parents. (This collusion between the therapist and client not only brings a financial reward to the therapist, but continues to burden the already confused teenager with double messages.)

Being aware of these traps, validating the individual's experience and creating a safe place for teenagers to discuss their feelings will all help alleviate much anxiety. If you believe that people should not be lesbians because they would then have to incur society's wrath—you can begin by changing your own attitudes and not the teenager's. Gay and women's liberation have set up teen rap groups throughout the country. This type of consciousness raising for young women is valuable therapy. Therapists should be prepared to refer teenagers to such groups, and to suggest reading some of the newer books written by and for lesbians.

Lesbian Mothers

Lesbian mothers represent still another oppressed group. A common misconception concerning lesbians is that they are women who do not care to have children. Actually, one-third of the

members of the Daughters of Bilitis do have children. Debate is now waging in the courts as to the fitness of a lesbian to be a parent. In Seattle, Sandy and Madeline won custody of their children, but were forced to establish separate residences. In Santa Cruz, a lesbian maintained custody of her children, only under the condition that her lover did not live there. Obviously, the courts have taken it upon themselves to decide, without evidence, that homosexuality is deleterious to children. One can't help but wonder when the atrocities against lesbians in this society will stop. Sandy and Madeline wrote a pamphlet, "Love is for All," and produced a movie, "Sandy and Madeline's Family," in an attempt to educate people. They are presently involved in yet another custody hearing for "flaunting" their relationship. The catch continues—out of ignorance and with a complete lack of information, the courts decide that a lesbian family is detrimental to the child's well-being, and then the courts make sure that they and no one else will hear the true story by silencing the mothers. As the homosexual minister in Sandy and Maddy's movie said, "If a homosexual family is harmful to heterosexual children, then a heterosexual family must be harmful to homosexual children. I was raised in a heterosexual family, and a heterosexual society, and it never rubbed off on me."

Many lesbians who want to have children and do not want to marry are artificially inseminating themselves or engage in intercourse with willing donors. Since most custody fights revolve around the husband, women who bear and raise children without husbands are not faced with the same harassment.

Lesbian mothers' unions are being established throughout the country to assist women in court battles and to support one another. These lesbians believe that the open, nonjudgmental, nonsexist environment of their homes, their political understanding and the equal nonoppressive nature of their relationships all help to create a nurturing warm atmosphere for children. It is obvious that there are an increasing number of one-parent families, especially with an ever



ing into polar opposites to justify attraction. With the support of feminism, we as women can see "role playing" as a hindrance to the expression and exploration of our total personalities.

David Rosen's recently published study found that:

"The majority of female homosexuals are mentally healthy and do not desire to be heterosexual. Female homosexuals have the same or lower incidence of psychiatric disturbances when compared to matched heterosexual controls. No significant difference in the prevalence of neurotic disorders exists between female homosexuals and heterosexuals. . . . In a recent study by Asimos and Rosen, it was found that lesbians do not have a higher incidence of depression, attempted suicide, or suicide such as was previously reported. . . . The results of the Adjective Check List tests in the study of lesbians . . . revealed an overall normal pattern. [Another study] also utilized the Adjective Check List and found the only difference between female homosexuals and their respective controls was that the lesbian group was 'more self-confident.' "

Adolescent Lesbians

A therapist should also acquaint herself with the attitudes and oppression of special groups such as the adolescent lesbian, the lesbian mother, and lesbian couples and families.

Hedblom's study revealed that 14 percent of the respondents had their first homosexual physical experience before the age of ten, and 79 percent before the age of twenty. Twenty percent of the respondents had their first experience when they were between twenty and twenty-five years old. Adolescents who engaged in exploration of homosexual feelings are oppressed on many levels. They are told that teenage homosexual fantasies and feelings are normal for their age, and that they will grow out of them. What an outrageous belief system to perpetuate when thousands upon thousands of adolescents do not grow out of these feelings, and, in-

She is torn between the myths society has taught her about lesbianism, and the reality of her own feelings and experiences. Older women have the "gay community," dances and bars where they can begin to meet more women and discard societal myths. In her isolation and with the fragility of her adolescent self-identity, the younger women experience much anxiety. If therapists are not capable of working with lesbians, they are even less prepared to work with teenage lesbians.

Many teenagers are forced into involuntary therapy by their parents to be



increasing divorce rate. It is ludicrous to assume that a woman working and raising a child alone could offer a better environment than a woman who is able to share her responsibilities with another woman. If therapists were interested in working with lesbian mothers, they could begin by using whatever power they may have to stop the courts from making custody decisions which are based entirely on a woman's sexual preference. As long as workers in mental health remain silent, the courts will continue to legislate in this area of human behavior.

Lesbians tend to favor stable long-term relationships, and to this end couple therapy should be provided. The lesbians' commitment must be seen as

equal to a heterosexual marriage-type relationship. When heterosexual couples are having sexual difficulties, a therapist would not suggest that the partners try out homosexual relationships. Conversely, when homosexual couples experience difficulties, they do not wish to be told that they should change their sexual orientation. More and more lesbians are finding it possible to have long-term commitments to women, to create the family atmosphere they desire and to carry on their vocational and political work. The strength of the lesbian commitment and the fulfillment women experience in these relationships should not be underestimated.

Summary
Lesbians bear the battle scars of their

violent encounters with the keepers of mental health. Clearly the lesbian has no proof that a therapist does not believe the sordid folklore surrounding the issue of homosexuality.

If therapists who are lesbians do not feel that they can be open about their sexual life style at work, then we should

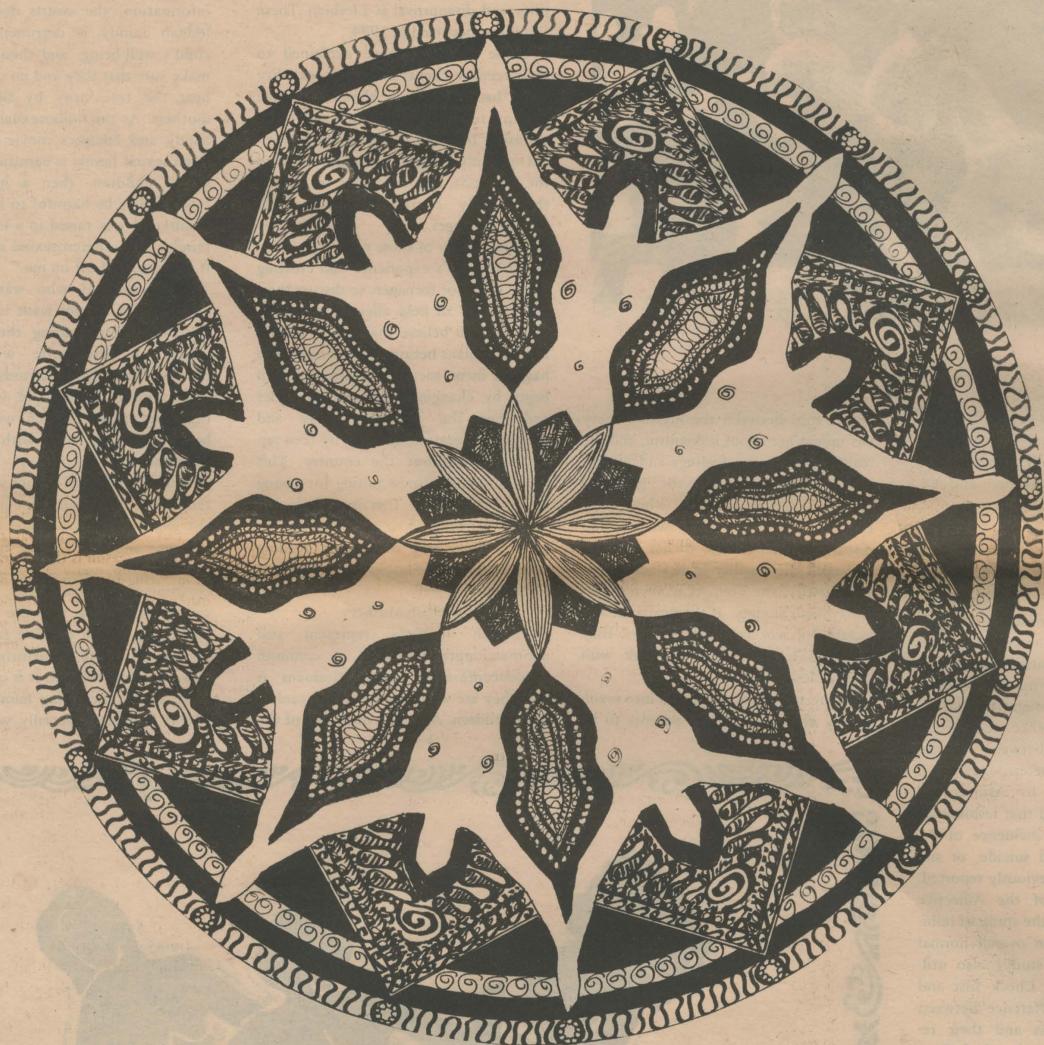
conclude that this particular clinic is not suitable for lesbian clients. If lesbians who are students believe that disclosure of their sexual identity would jeopardize their chances for advancement, then this school is obviously not graduating therapists who would be capable of working with lesbians. If women who have power, i.e. therapists, are oppressed, what hope is there for the less

powerful individuals, the patients?

There is only one way for mental health centers and schools to demonstrate their "good faith" to the lesbian community, and that is to hire lesbian therapists, faculty and students.

Lesbian therapists must come out!
"Every time you keep your mouth shut you make life that much harder for every lesbian in this country. Our freedom is worth you losing your jobs and your friends." (-Rita Mae Brown)

Lesbians can facilitate the hiring of lesbian therapists by sitting on the advisory boards to community mental health centers. The lesbian community must evaluate all services offered to lesbians, and advise women as to the sincerity and efficacy of these programs.



We, as lesbians, have already wasted much precious time hiding in our closets. Our anger must be turned outward to the society which taught us our first lesson—it is all right to hate and fight in the daylight, but we must love in the darkness. As Judy Grahn wrote in her poem "A Woman is Talking to Death":

Have you committed any indecent acts with women?

Yes, many. I am guilty of allowing suicidal women to die before my eyes or in my ears or under my hands because I thought I could do nothing. I am guilty of leaving a prostitute who held a knife to my friend's throat to keep us from leaving, because we would not sleep with her, we thought she was old and fat and

ugly; I am guilty of not loving her who needed me; I regret all the women I have not slept with or comforted, who pulled themselves away from me for lack of something I had not the courage to fight for, for us, our life, our planet, our city, our meat and potatoes, our love. These are indecent acts, lacking courage, lacking a certain fire behind the eyes, which is the symbol, the raised fist, the sharing of resources, the resistance that tells death he will starve for lack of the fat of us, our extra. Yes, I have committed acts of indecency with women and most of them were acts of omission. I regret them bitterly.

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POWER

Claude Steiner

Power and its effects, like the air we breathe, are all around us. Like air, power is essential to life. And just like the air we breathe power is subtly or grossly contaminated in ways which we are barely aware of and which we tolerate every day of our lives. We know that people power trip us and we know that we abuse our own power. Power is spoken and written about everywhere: horsepower, the power of the people, power plays, black power, power hunger, the power of love. We unleash power with a kick of our accelerator foot, we feel the power of people's eyes. We hear and read about power constantly and yet we do not really understand what it is, how it works, what it does, when it's good and when it's bad, where it begins and ends, how to get it, how to get rid of it, or how to fight it.

Power and Radical Psychiatry

Power is at the core of the concepts of radical psychiatry. Alienation, we believe, is the essence of all psychiatric "conditions." Alienation is the feeling within a person that she is unable to think, love or feel joy, that he cannot control his own body and behavior, that she does not deserve to live or that someone wishes him to die, that he is dead or that everyone is dead, or that she is not part of the human species. According to Radical Psychiatry principles all psychiatric "conditions," except for those that are clearly organic in origin, such as brain damage, or toxic conditions, are a form of alienation. Alienation is the result of oppression about which the oppressed has been mystified or deceived. Thus stated in a simple formula:

Alienation = Oppression + Mystification

Oppression can only be perpetrated through the use of power. We cannot oppress others if we have no power over them. As a consequence, because power is an essential ingredient of alienation we consider all psychiatric activity to be political in nature. This is because in every instance psychiatric intervention affects the structure of the power relationships between people. Psychiatrists deal constantly with situations in which people are the victims of abuses of power. Psychiatric intervention invariably affects those situations, either by changing them or by leaving them alone in which case psychiatric intervention, by default, supports the oppressive *status quo*, and becomes, once again, political.

On the other hand, liberation from alienation can only be achieved through power. We believe that:

Contact + Awareness → Action = Liberation

Awareness, Contact and Action are forms of power. Awareness is the power of knowledge, Contact is the power of people when they band together, and Action is the power of aggressive behavior.

• Thus, power can be good or bad depending on whether it is abused to oppress or mystify, or whether it is used to liberate. Part I of this two-part paper will deal mostly with power abuses; bad power. Part II will deal with good power, the power that we need to live in harmony with ourselves, each other and the earth. Adequate psychiatric help requires the establishment of a very important distinction: the extent to which people are victims of power abuses needs to be reacted to and distinguished from the extent to which people are personally responsible for what happens to them. Yet, the facts of oppression and power abuse are assiduously avoided by establishment trained psychiatrists. No power related concepts occupy any status in current psychotherapeutic ideologies. Alfred Adler, a disciple of Freud, saw power as an

essential fact in the lives of people, but even he, only explored how people seek power rather than how they use it or abuse it or are victims of its abuse by others. In any case, Adler's theories or the theories of other power conscious therapists, such as Jay Haley, are not considered central in the field. Most professional psychotherapists are trained to ignore the relative power of the persons with whom they work. Generally speaking, power or political considerations are deemed irrelevant to the practice of psychiatry and the people who indulge in power considerations are seen as "politically biased." As a consequence, psychotherapists tend to ignore what occurs in their consulting rooms when it has anything to do with the arrangements of power, especially the manner in which certain people, who have power over others, misuse it to their own advantage.

For instance, one of the most common forms of power abuse occurs in sexual relationships. Most therapists relate to the sexual difficulties between men and women as if they were caused by bad habits, unfavorable sexual conditioning, or a mismatch. Carmen Kerr (Feminist Sexual Therapy, IRT, Winter 1974) points out that sexist power behavior is at the root of much sexual dysfunction. "Frigidity" for instance is often the result of the fact that the male dominates the sexual act in such a manner that a woman (who may be quite able to come through masturbation) simply can't create the necessary conditions for orgasm. Not many therapists would see this for what it is: the result of sexist power abuse by the man and sexist submission to male power by the woman.

Why is power, its uses and abuses, ignored by psychotherapists? Mostly, I believe, because they are not taught about it. But I also believe that a very important other reason is that therapists profit from being blind to power issues. Like other people who have power, therapists would prefer their own power and its abuses to be mystified, because the mystification of power is an essential aspect of its effective and guilt-free abuse.

Also, awareness of the facts of power and its abuses between human beings would quickly lead psychiatrists to the conclusion that as soul healers, they must become advocates of the oppressed rather than "objective" observers and commentators of the human condition. Being an advocate of the oppressed is neither lucrative nor safe; for many it would represent a drastic cut in income and living conditions.

Male Supremacy in Psychiatry

No class of human beings is better trained from childhood to maintain the mystification of power than the "civilized white man." My own understanding of power comes from being raised as such. As a white male I learned, early in my life, to accept with obedience the uses and abuses of power upon me and then later easily learned and accepted the use and abuse of power training of adolescence, academic training, and professional "discipline." As is typically the case with white professional males I had become a master of the subtle and gross abuses of power; I was one-up and largely tuned out to the dimensions and effect of my power. The misuse of my power was part and parcel of the everyday competitive, academic and professional rat race. I was a "dynamic," "aggressive," "creative professional." These positive labels for the expression of my power helped to blind me to its negative effects. Interpersonal conflicts, loss of friendships, unhappiness, antagonisms, and the incapacity for cooperation and intimate relationships with men and

women alike, were the consequences of my power training and behavior but I never clearly understood the connection. I was well trained as a mental health professional whose main function was to preserve and defend the oppressive power arrangements of the *status quo* by being an emotionally detached, "objective" advisor to people manifesting psychiatric disturbance. Because I was unaware of and blind to racism, ageism, sexism, coupleism, and in general all of the ways that people are oppressed, I tolerated and therefore supported them, as I searched for other more "psychological" deeper causes for people's unhappiness.

The Women's Movement and the Male Psychiatrist

My own awakening to the realities of power and its abuses, still in process, came to me in the confrontation with the women's movement. I was fortunate to run headlong into powerful, determined, and compassionate women who were willing to struggle with me by refusing to submit to or go along with my mystification and abuses of power, while patiently explaining over and over what they consisted of. At first I was blind to them but eventually I began to see the crude and subtle ways in which men oppress women and how I, as a therapist had colluded with and contributed to them. I also saw more and more how I, as a man, was continually engaged in the oppression of women. Power and its abuses began to be clearer to me. In the last five years I have been observing and analyzing power, not only in my own personal life and in the lives of the people that I work for and with, but in general wherever I observe the oppressive behavior of individuals upon individuals and of social classes upon social classes. As a consequence, my approach to therapy has been radically altered as I incorporated a developing feminist awareness into it. This feminist awareness expanded into a broader understanding of how young and old people, gay people, single people, fat people, and other minorities are oppressed. As a therapist I can no longer speak to people without seeing and reacting to the power abuses in their lives.

Class Analysis and Power

Those who have power and know that they do and are most adept at its use and its abuse are also those who pretend to have none or pretend not to use it, (speak softly and carry a big stick). True, there are still some who have power and make no bones about it and do not attempt to mystify the fact that they will use their power to crush anyone who opposes them. But this crude application of power is not nearly as effective as the more "civilized," liberal, mystified abuse of power. It is when people are oppressed by power that is mystified, that their alienation is most severe. Those who are oppressed in a crude way do not tend to become alienated since the result of obvious oppression is anger. For instance we are likely to be self-righteously angry at a purse snatcher who steals ten dollars from us. But when the government uses ten of our tax dollars to massacre Vietnamese we suffer in confused, abject, guilty silence.

In this country we are the classic victims of "liberal," mystified oppression. We are persecuted and oppressed by smiling people who hold power the dimensions of which we are either dimly or completely unaware.

The habitual victims of power abuses are the members of large classes of disadvantaged people, the poor, the workers, third world, women, children, single people, gays, and the elderly, as opposed to the rich, bosses, whites, couples, men and the middle aged. On the average, the members of the oppressed

groups will experience a far larger number of injurious transactions than other people. And yet, it is essential to point out that members of every class, including oppressors, are oppressed and oppress each other (working class men push women and children around) and that some members of oppressed classes manage to significantly disrupt members of the oppressing classes (black men oppress white women, children oppress their parents).

Thus, the class struggle is not really taking place along one large front (working class vs. bourgeoisie), but along several large fronts and many other minor fronts (many struggles, many fronts). On every one of these fronts a minority of people struggle to stop the abuses of power which are imposed on them. At any one time, even in the same room, an ex-mental patient may be struggling against a gay man who power plays her by talking fast, while a gay man is struggling against women who discount him, while women struggle against men (some of them gay couples) who dominate them, while some are struggling against bosses who exploit them and all are struggling against a system which oppresses all, and the people within it (some ex-mental patients, some gays, some women and many of them men) who support it.

The abuse of power can be seen as a transactional event observable in everyone's life many times over in the period of a day. Everyone is oppressed to a larger or lesser degree and everyone is an oppressor, to a larger and a lesser degree; this fact is, to me, the source of great hope that the abuse of power can be successfully struggled with, because it is to a certain extent everyone's struggle from the ruling class white male to the most oppressed.

The ebb and flow of power between people is as constant as the waves that batter the shore. The shore's power lies in its stability as it towers over the waters. The waves' power is their constant movement, their fluidity, as they steadily erode even the hardest rock. The class struggle between powerful and powerless has a similar quality; it goes on endlessly and can have only one outcome. We can speed that outcome by a careful transactional analysis of power.

Competition: Power's Workshop

We are largely unaware of how power operates, how we abuse it and are abused by it, because we are immersed in and forced to accept its uses and abuses from the earliest moment in our lives. After spending our young lives as the victims of oppression, we quite naturally adopt oppressive roles when we grow up. The acceptance of power imbalances and power abuses is drilled into us through hierarchies and competition, both of which are as American as apple pie. We are told that "all people are born equal" which is another way of saying "I'm OK and you're OK," and that no one is better than anyone else. We are told this by judges, the Christian ethic, our constitution, and by our teachers and politicians. Yet, we don't really believe this at all because the real message is quite different. We are compelled by our training to see ourselves as better than others and to see others as our betters. To think and believe that we are actually equals, that no one is better than anyone else, that we are all complex, interesting, worthwhile and in the long run, equally important or unimportant is a difficult conviction to achieve and to maintain.

The difficulty which we have in feeling equality with all other human beings is the result of our training and competitiveness, individualism and acceptance of hierarchies. We white north Americans are told that if pursued assiduously, competitiveness will lead us to happiness.



On his own power
Aus eigener Kraft

George Grosz (1893-1959),

ness and success in life, and that if we don't succeed in life it is because we are not competitive enough or compliant enough to play by the rules of the game. (The game is good, the rules are fair, if you lose it is because you are not OK).

We seem to live on a ladder with people stepping on our heads while we step on the heads of others, with at most two or three people on our rung with whom we feel equals. Once in a while some of us get on top of the ladder and look down triumphantly, and sometimes we are thrown to the bottom, powerless. But we usually are somewhere in the gray middle, struggling to get up, preventing others from getting ahead of us and hoping to hold our own. The experience of hierarchies or one-up/one-down is so common to us that we think it as a natural experience to be expected and one that we should react to by trying as hard as we can to "get ahead." Indeed, we don't really struggle to get ahead but simply in order to not fall behind as everyone climbs over our heads.

This constant engagement in competitive behavior with its attendant mystification makes us power hungry and causes our behavior to be impregnated in power behavior.

When we begin to demystify power and we begin to see how it affects us in our everyday lives, it becomes an elaborately choreographed dance expressed in every moment in every movement, in every utterance with every person, wherever we go.

Power and Competition in the Movement

The description of competitiveness given above exemplifies what most of us, in the U.S., are exposed to in our early childhood. Some of us eventually became part of what is called the "Movement," where it is an accepted premise that competitiveness, hierarchies and the abuse of power are undesirable. Those of us who consider ourselves earnest workers within the movement are eager to stop behaving in these destructive ways, and we have all had notorious successes as well as failures in this struggle.

In the early sixties as the Black Power movement developed, the theme was to take power away from the oppressors. Malcolm X's cry was: "Give us power; The ballot or the gun." The Black Power movement pursued the acquisition of power through competitive means. Powerlessness was undesirable and competitiveness and hierarchies were not considered part of the problem; male supremacy was not challenged. The Black Power movement was extremely successful in bringing about its aim: to increase the power of the oppressed class of black people in this country.

Probably inspired by the separatist example in the Black Power movement, the Women's Movement started their own separatist drive. Initially, the emphasis of the Women's Movement was not to grab power away from men, but to remove women from men's power and its abuses. Women did not want to become men or be like men, and insisted on being removed from the oppressive influence of male power abuse. Some women came to feel that power, in fact, all power, was an undesirable attribute for a human being to have and should be stamped out of the Women's Movement along with the corollary of power, which is hierarchies. This wholesale rejection of power was probably the result of the fact that power was defined in male, competitive terms.

Attempts were made to create collectives and organizations in which all hierarchies were leveled and in which anyone who manifested any sort of individual powers was criticized and cowed into withdrawing such expressions. This

approach had a certain amount of appeal throughout the movement in the late sixties.

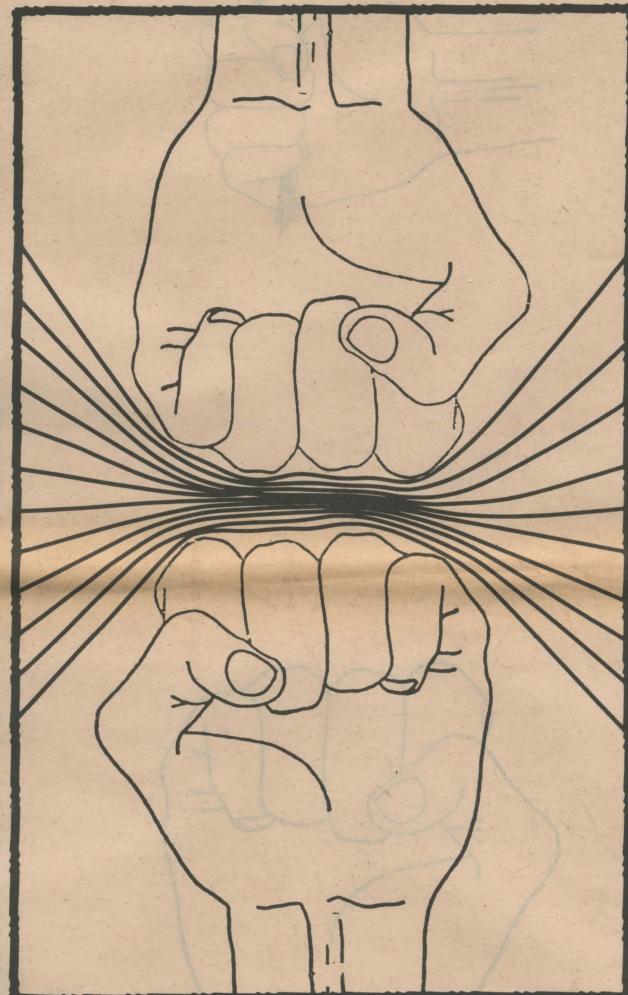
I strongly believe that the leveling of hierarchies and expressions of personal power within a group is a serious error. True, by reducing everyone's power to the lowest common denominator, we get rid of the bad aspects of power but we also prevent ourselves from being powerful and effective. Jo Freeman presents a good argument against leveling in "The Tyranny of Structurelessness."

The men in the movement were forced to cooperate with the demands and expectations of the Women's movement and realizing the extent to which competitiveness and abuse of power was part and parcel of their male role, many men endeavored to control their power, curb their competitiveness, reject their tendencies to create hierarchies and hold in check their tendencies to dominate women and their relationships. This had the effect of freeing the path for women within the movement, but it also had the effect of effectively strait-jacketing men so that to a large extent they became paralyzed with their powers imploded, sucked in, so that as women became powerful, strong and creative, men became lusterless, dull, passive, guilty and sulking, and scared.

Presently, in the struggle against the abuses of power and oppression, though we have come a long way, we are only beginning to deal with the problem. While it is true that we may be making some progress in the overt and gross abuses of power and hierarchies within the Movement, it is by no means true that we have them under control in our more subtle, personal relationships. I see us as having a great deal of trouble with power; some of us are out of control with rampant competitiveness, others are walking around holding our breath, practically paralyzed in an attempt to be "good."

Even though we may no longer accept the crude, blatant competitiveness and power abuses that are part and parcel of the American way of life, I believe most of us still within our hearts, carry the seeds of competitiveness, hierarchies, and power abuse. We are still deeply ingrained in hierarchies. Most of us, as we walk into a room, feel immediately one-up to certain people and one-down to others. We express the tendency to judge ourselves, and judge others in relationships to ourselves, to decide who is right and who is wrong, who is "in" and who is "out." When people disagree with us we discount their positions and try to demonstrate the error of their ways, instead of listening and entering into a dialogue. This form of behavior is as true of women as it is of men. I venture to say that if there was ever a myth that was exploded in the last years, it is the myth that women are less competitive, less into power hierarchies than men. The fact seems to be that as women are acquiring power, their behavior tends to closely parallel the behavior of powerful men who they have studied for examples on how to wield and understand power. It looks as if we are all equally unable to deal with and understand power and its abuses. At the same time, it also seems that women, in particular, are interested in defining a new kind of power, different from the abusive power that has been characteristic of men.

My opinion is that power is, per se, good. We need power, we want power, we deserve power. But power also corrupts and in order to have power without abusing it and oppressing others, we need to understand it for what it is, how it operates, how it is accumulated, how it is shared and how it is given up. We need to understand which expressions



of power are harmful to ourselves and others and which are beneficial. To that end let me attempt to define power and its abuses.

Power: Definitions and Forms

I would like to define power in the same manner in which it is defined in the science of physics: as the capacity to overcome and move against the resistance of an opposing force. There are two main forms that this capacity can take: physical power and psychological power. As an example, if I need to get my car over the hill I may be able to do so by pushing it. In this case, my physical power is overcoming the resistance of gravity. But I also have another form of power—psychological power—which relies on technique or manipulation rather than physical power. With a minimal application of my own physical power, I can still get my car over the hill if I master the technique of driving the car. If I can harness the energy or power within the object which I want to move, I do not have to exercise any extensive physical power of my own, I simply have to know the technique that is required. So I can overcome the resistance that prevents my car from going over the hill by getting into the car, turning the ignition and when the engine starts, by manipulating gears and clutch with the adequate technique, get the car over the hill. The same is true when we speak of the power that we have over people.

Let me give another example of oppressive power in which you or I want something that rightfully belongs to another person. On one hand, we may have the power to overcome that person's resistance through direct application of physical force, or we may be able to overcome his resistance through a technique which makes use of his own power. Let us imagine as an example, that you are sitting on a park bench on a spot that I want to occupy. If I can take the place away from you I will have manifested my power, that is, the capacity to move you against resistance, the resistance in this case being the fact that you do not want to move. If I am sufficiently strong, I may be able to push you or lift you out of your seat and this is an example of physical power. On the other hand, I may have the psychological power to get you out of your seat without using physical force.

Psychological power depends on my capacity to harness your energy to cause you to do what you don't want to do. As in the case of the truck, it relies on a technique designed to get you to move yourself out of the bench. All psychological power techniques depend on the property in people called obedience. I can intimidate you out of the seat, or I can cajole you. I can cause you to leave the seat to me by creating guilt feelings in you, I can intimidate you with threats, or with the sheer volume of my voice. I can seduce you with a smile, or with a promise, or I can convince you that giving up your seat to me is in the national interest, or necessary for national security. I can trick you, con you, or sell you a lie. In any case, if I overcome your resistance to giving up your place without using physical force, I have used psychological power which relies entirely on obedience on your part.

The Abuses of Psychological Power

Most of the oppression or abuse of power that people experience is psychological in nature. People, even in the most violent environments, do not primarily experience direct physical oppression. But physical violence is all around, reminding us that disobedience is punishable, and backing up every case of psychological power abuse.

The most extreme example of

psychological oppression is manifested in the "slave mentality." The slave mentality is a frame of mind in which a person cheerfully accepts the oppressive circumstances of his life, defends his oppressors against anyone who criticizes them, and will actually fight and give up his life to bolster the oppression of which he is the victim. For instance, John, the son of a career military man, was raised under severe disciplinary conditions. All of his schooling was at military schools. He was a model student, disciplined and patriotic. After he graduated from the military academy he was sent to Vietnam where he was soon wounded. Now, a paraplegic, he is a hero in his home town and he is proud to have been able to defend his country and regrets only that his combat experience was so short. He hates the anti-war movement and is bitter about their contribution to American defeat at the hands of the communists.

Alienation, a more common and less perfect case of psychological oppression, is a situation in which people come to feel responsible for the effect that oppression has upon their own emotional integrity. As an example, hard working people in this country will feel guilty and responsible for the fact that they cannot make ends meet with the money that they earn or for the fact that they cannot afford decent clothes and shoes for their children, or because they cannot obtain employment, or for being hungry. Even though others are taking away the fruits of their labor, many people submit to those oppressive circumstances and blame themselves for the failure of being able to earn a decent living.

The oppression of workers, women, blacks, children, gays, old folks in this country is maintained with a minimal amount of physical power. Most of it is accomplished because each individual is alienated to the extent that they are willing to oppress and persecute themselves and be obedient in the service of the ruling class.

In Radical Psychiatry we conceptualize the way in which we collude with and internalize our oppression as the "Pig Parent." The "Pig Parent" is a colloquial term that represents all of the thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and prohibitions which people carry within their heads and which aid our oppressors.

For instance John, above, quietly suffered endless indignities as a cadet. He accepted these because his Pig would constantly remind him, literally whispering in his ear, that they were tests of his manhood. Today any hints of self-pity are countered by his Pig that says: "Don't be a complainer, it's unpatriotic." It is because of this willing, internalized oppression that a fairly small number of people can oppress millions without more than occasionally raising a finger to enforce it. Clearly, a large portion of our task is to get rid of the Pig Parent, our internalized oppression, so that we don't obediently go along with the abuses of power around us.

Power Plays

A power play is a maneuver designed to get something away from an unwilling person.

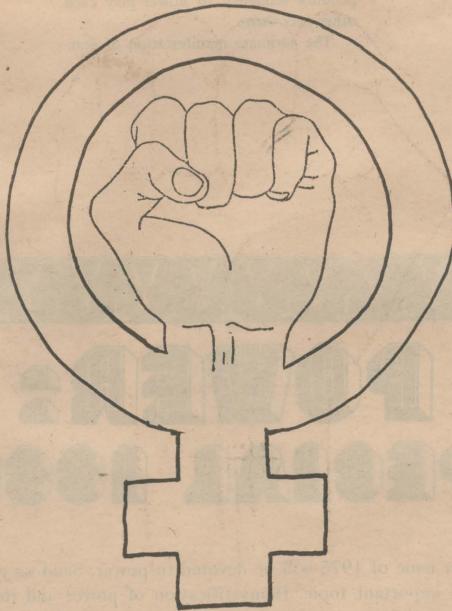
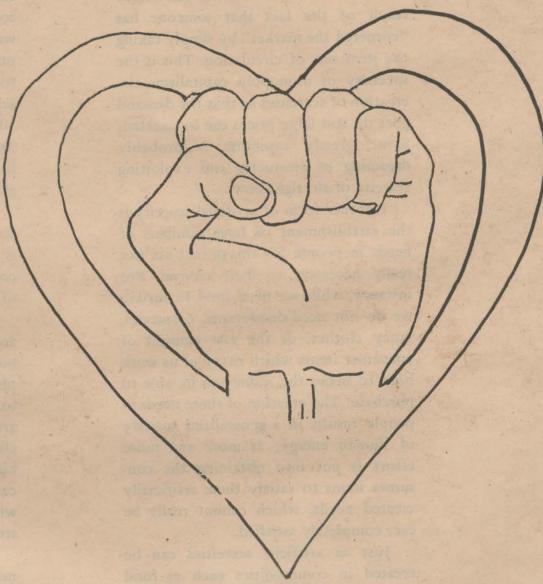
I have described the manner in which a person can use psychological power to take something away from somebody else. That situation (the Rip-off power play) is one of the two major situations where power plays are used. The other situation is one in which a person who already has taken something away from someone uses subtle power plays to keep it. "Hold-the-line" power plays are the most common in our world because they are the ones used to preserve the oppressive *status quo*. The



ruling class is not as actively engaged in expanding its oppressive hold on us (though it is actively engaged in ripping off the third world), as it is in maintaining and defending the oppression that exists. The situation that we live in is one of already established oppressive institutions, which are extraordinarily complex, interlocked, mutually supportive and affect every facet of our lives. For instance, sexism supports the exploitation of labor which supports racism, which in turn supports the exploitation of labor which is supported by the wholesale addiction to drugs, which supports the drug companies, which supports the medical establishment, which supports the exploitation of labor, and so on and so forth. All of these separate oppressive links combine into a structure, like girders combine into a bridge, which is able to support enormous loads. This intricate, monolithic structure of oppression is intensely committed to preserving its power, and every time we make a move to free ourselves, to take back what is ours, we are confronted with a power play that is designed to preserve the *status quo* and to hold-the-line. The only way in which we can bring to bear power equivalent to the powers that oppress us is to band together in an organized way. No individual or small group of individuals, no idea or single political line can possibly overcome the structures that oppress us. We need all the people with all the approaches we can enlist in our struggle for liberation.

However, oppression is not a mystical process occurring where we cannot fight or understand it. Oppression is made up of all of the separate oppressive transactions, each one of which can be confronted separately; let me analyze the case of a psychiatrist nurse, Alice, who decides that she no longer wants to wear a white starched uniform to work, because it is an extra expense which she can hardly afford and because it is uncomfortable, difficult to keep clean, and ugly.

Her first move might be to go to her supervisor and simply ask whether she can start wearing street clothes to work every day. The first hold-the-line power play will be "It says in the Bible." It says in the Bible" is basically a reference to some canon or tradition, written or unwritten, which prohibits her from getting what she wants. The supervisor might say, "There is a rule that says that you cannot wear street clothes." Or, she might get a rule book and open it up to the page where uniforms are described. Let us assume that there is no such rule book and that Alice presses the supervisor further for justification of the rule. At this point the supervisor might go to the next power play, which would be perhaps to say, "Well, I'll bring this up at the next supervisor's meeting, why don't you talk to me next week?" This power play is called "Stalling." Any excuse to put some time between a person's request and a response is clearly going to weaken the person's resolve. Let us say that after a week the supervisor does not return with an answer and a week after that, Alice, undaunted, returns to the supervisor to ask about her uniform. The supervisor might now resort to further stalling techniques, such as "I was not able to bring the subject up at the meeting, there were far more important things to talk about than whether you should wear a uniform or not." And Alice will be put off for another two weeks. Alice comes back and insists again; the supervisor might now use a *status quo* power play called "Love it or leave it." She might say something like "Perhaps you are not satisfied working here, we have found



that there are simply those people who do not enjoy this type of work, perhaps you should look for a job somewhere else, we will be happy to recommend you." This power play is a veiled threat to the security of the person and can take other forms, for instance: "I see that your review period is almost over, I think we should set up a conference to evaluate your job performance, how about next Monday?" or pulling out Alice's personal folder and saying, "I see that you had trouble at your previous job, it seems you have difficulties adjusting to working conditions." This type of a power play is usually sufficient to intimidate people into submission, but let's assume that Alice is not easily intimidated. She continues to insist. At this point, the supervisor may bring a person in the "chain of command," a man, to bear on the situation. This person might be paternal and nurturing and might attempt to mollify Alice, or he might be a stern authoritarian individual who might attempt to scare her. In any case, the subtle power plays to hold-the-line will continue until either Alice gives up or some effective method of silencing her is found. Clearly, Alice as an individual has very little chance of overcoming the barrage of cascading power plays which will be applied to her. It is not very likely that she can get what she wants without organizing and enlisting the power of a number of other nurses to bring about the desired end result, and when she does that, she can count on an even more intense application of power plays at increasing intensity.

Alice was able to stop wearing uniforms only after she organized eight of the 12 nurses on her service. What she wasn't able to accomplish in six months of individual struggle happened almost overnight when she moved together and decisively with her co-workers.

Obedience

For simplicity's sake, Alice was given a personality free of the internalized collusion with her oppressive circumstances. That is, she was presented as an insistent, aggressive, brave person, without a Pig Parent. But she and most other people are not that fortunate. Every time someone power plays us, a host of supportive reactions spring up from within us: we feel guilty, we feel we are being obnoxious, we are ashamed of our need, we question its validity, we hear voices that tell us to give up, we are afraid. Consequently, we stop struggling or we don't even start. All of these reactions can be summarized under the label of obedience. Obedience is an important "virtue" which parents seek to educate into their children; just another example of how child rearing is often an unwitting proving ground for the oppression which we are expected to endure throughout life.

Obedience does not operate only in obvious hierarchies such as hospitals, factories, or the armed services. It operates also in one to one situations where there are no apparent hierarchies or where hierarchies are mystified. For instance, consider the following:

Salesman: You ought to buy this encyclopedia.

Parent: We can't afford it.

Salesman: How much is your child's education worth?

Parent: Well, let me see, maybe we can afford it.

or

Client: What is your position on Women's Liberation?

Therapist: Why do you want to know?

Client: I guess I really don't need to know . . .

Both of these are examples of obedience in response to power plays. The first power play is designed to create guilt ("Aren't you ashamed?"), and a disobedient reaction would be: "None of your business," or sarcastically "No, I am not," or "Yes, but your books would certainly not help," or "I resent your attempts to sell your books by creating guilt in me!"

The second power play is designed to stop a request by demanding a rational explanation for it ("If you can't prove it you can't do it"). A disobedient response would be: "Answer my question, please" or "Don't answer a question, with a question," or "Because if I don't like your position I'll quit therapy!"

Disobedience is an important human quality which I as a parent encourage in my children because it renders psychological power plays practically useless. Disobedience is an essential skill in their preparation for the adult, competitive marketplace.

Scarcity

In the competitive marketplace the value of an item is determined by the need for it and by its scarcity at any given time, rather than by any inherent or intrinsic value. Thus breathable air, even though indispensable for life and therefore extremely valuable, has no market value, because for the time being it is in abundance.

Scarcity of an item is a necessary condition for the appearance of power plays in a situation. Scarcity of food, space, of commodities, of the things that we need or believe that we need, increases their value to us. When things become valuable because they are scarce they become the object of power plays. Conversely, anything that is freely available and which is not in scarcity will not be seen as valuable and will not be the subject of power plays.

Scarcity can be real or it can be artificial. There are certain things that

we absolutely need to survive, such as food, water, air. These can be in actual short supply in which case the scarcity is real. If there is a famine in the land and there isn't enough food to go around, this is a real scarcity. However, a lot of scarcities that we experience are artificial. Artificial scarcities can be the result of the fact that someone has "cornered the market" by simply taking the item out of circulation. This is the specialty of monopoly capitalism: the creation of scarcities so that the demand goes up and large prices can be exacted. Some greedy capitalist is probably dreaming of producing and exploiting scarcity of air, right now.

Another form of artificial scarcity is the establishment of large numbers of needs in people for things that are not really necessary to their survival. For instance, while we need food to survive we do not need deodorants, cosmetics, fancy clothes, or the vast amount of consumer items which many of us work hard to make the money to be able to purchase. The creation of these needs in people results in a generalized scarcity of human energy, as more and more effort is put into obtaining the consumer items to satisfy these artificially created needs, which cannot really be ever completely satisfied.

Just as artificial scarcities can be created in commodities such as food and shelter which are essential to survival, artificial scarcities can also be created in human resources. Love, recognition and affection between people has been made scarce, through people's adherence to the rules of the stroke economy, which limits how and when people can give each other strokes. Consequently, people will power play each other over strokes, monopolize them, barter, sell, cheat and lie over them. Defeating the rules of the stroke economy (See Trashing the Stroke Economy, this issue), produces an abundance of strokes which reduces people's tendency to power play each other over them.

The ultimate manifestation of scar-

city over human resources is the scarcity over power itself. People's personal feelings of power over themselves, over all aspects of their lives, and over their destinies, have been curtailed and become scarce so that power too, has become a competed-over human resource. Because we feel powerless, we seek power, for power's sake. Thus, we want to take power away from each other and we compete over nothing, just to establish or seize that false feeling of self-determination and competency which comes from dominating others. Meanwhile we let the power monopolists, our leaders and rulers, accumulate more and more power.

I believe that just as in the case of strokes, the scarcity of feelings of power is artificial, the result of a carefully controlled economy of power the rules of which we faithfully obey.

All of the artificial scarcities that we are prey to; of commodities, of love, of power, keep us off balance, obedient, pliable, too concerned with the moment to struggle against their causes. Thus artificial scarcities benefit the ruling class in two ways: Because they result in higher profits for commodities and because they keep us constantly in the red with our heads barely above water, struggling to just survive.

To defeat the scarcity of power we need to free up our personal powers. Not our powers to dominate, or be strong at the expense of others, but our powers to be strong from within ourselves and with others. In Part II of this paper I will speak about the powers of survival, sex, energy, love, communication, knowledge, and unity with nature, which all of us have and need to reclaim so that we may give up our acceptance of hierarchies, competition and power plays in our lives.

Many good ideas were suggested by people who reviewed this paper; I thank Anthony, Carmen Kerr, Bob Schwabel, Sara Winter and Hogie Wyckoff for their valuable help.

POWER: SPECIAL ISSUE

The winter issue of 1975 will be devoted to power. Send us your thoughts about this important topic. Demystification of power and its abuses, Personal accounts from people one up or one down, Bad power and good power, Elitism and Cooperation, Power in the Movement, How to divest oneself of Power and how to acquire it, Child Power, Gay Power, Black Power, Gray Power, Women's Power. Deadline for contributions, December 1. Send Contributions to IRT or directly to Editor, Power Issue, Claude Steiner, 2901 Piedmont, Berkeley 94705, CA.

TRASHING

the STROKE ECONOMY

by Bob Schwebel

In this article I want to explain how people can do a permission exercise called "Trash the Stroke Economy."¹ This is a very important exercise that can be applied in widely varying situations, ranging from groups of people with ongoing work relationships to groups of strangers who have come together at a drop-in center. (See Anne Ziebur's article on drop-ins in this issue.) It is extremely important because it is an exercise in developing the ability to freely nurture and love one another, and as such, works against our basic training in lovelessness.

Lovelessness is one of the basic scripts described by Claude Steiner in *Scripts People Live*. (He says people are also trained in joylessness, mindlessness, and powerlessness.) There are a number of obstacles which obstruct the development of our abilities to form strong loving relationships with one another. Not the least among them are romantic notions of love, sex roles, and competitiveness. Another very important obstacle is the stroke economy.

Eric Berne introduced the idea of strokes. He defined them as the basic unit of human recognition. He pointed out that we all need strokes for survival, that they are as essential as food and shelter, and that without them people would wither away and die. He also recognized that people have such great difficulty getting strokes that they play games in order to get them. (If you can't get any positive recognition, you can spill some coffee on the rug and at least get some negative recognition.)

Claude Steiner emphasized the importance of differentiating between positive strokes and negative strokes. He noticed the tremendous scarcity of positive strokes in this culture, and because of his simultaneous recognition of the extraordinary human capacity to love, he realized that the stroke scarcity must be artificial and unnecessary. He found that four basic injunctions (or prohibitions) existed about strokes, and that they maintain the stroke scarcity. People are not allowed to: ask for strokes they want, offer the strokes they have, reject the strokes they don't want, and give strokes to themselves (or brag). These rules which limit the free expression of human affection constitute the stroke economy. Learning to break all these rules against stroking, learning to "trash the stroke economy," is an important part of improving the quality of life. All people, particularly those most deprived of strokes, benefit greatly from forming free stroking communities in which the traditional rules of the stroke economy no longer prevail. Trashing the stroke economy is also important in a broader social sense. Members of movement groups and organizations are beginning to learn the importance of stroking ourselves and each other for our hard work (as well as being critical which we are already doing and which seems to come easier). I think that all "hard work" deserves positive public recognition.

In the next part of this article I will give "How to do it" instructions for "Trashing the Stroke Economy." I'll

give some verbatim instructions, not to show how it "must" be done, but rather to present a feel for the exercise and an idea about how it "can" be done. (Verbatim instructions are in italics.) In this exercise, people usually sit closely together in a circle with a small space kept clear in the center.

This is a permission exercise called "Trash the Stroke Economy." Permission means that this is a chance to do things that you aren't usually allowed to do. All of us have been trained with certain key rules which hold us back and keep us from feeling good. A permission exercise provides a nurturing, safe setting for people to learn to go against these rules, to try new and radical things.

The particular rules I want to talk about relate to strokes. Strokes are any positive, good things that people can give to each other. They may be anything nice they want to say to each other, or do with each other, a compliment, a hug, or whatever. Strokes can be physical or verbal. We are all filled with these good things, we have an unlimited supply of strokes we could be sharing with each other. Everybody needs strokes every day. They are a basic human need, as important as the need for food and shelter. There are enough strokes in this room to fully satisfy all of us. The sad thing is that we have all been trained to accept certain rules which keep us from freely sharing our strokes. There are four basic rules that prevent the free exchange of strokes: You can't ask for the strokes you want, you can't offer the strokes you want to give, you can't turn down the strokes you don't want, and you can't give strokes to yourself (or brag).

Now, let me show you more about what I mean. We are kept from ASKING FOR THE STROKES WE WANT by a variety of messages in our head that we were taught. Here are some examples. "If you ask for strokes, they aren't worth as much. If you ask, people will think you are needy. It is weak to ask for strokes. You don't deserve strokes. Strokes shouldn't come easy, etc." And, of course, there are a lot more ways we are kept from asking for what we want. You'll probably become aware of some of them as we do this exercise.

We are kept from GIVING THE STROKES WE HAVE, also, by a variety of messages in our head. We may think: "Other people don't want to hear my strokes, anything that comes from me is meaningless. I don't know the person well enough to say something nice. The





John Conroy

other person will think I am 'coming-on' if I say it. The other person is in an exclusive relationship and I shouldn't be saying nice things to (him or her). I'd be too vulnerable, etc." Once again, the list could go on and on.

Another rule we learn is against REFUSING THE STROKES WE DON'T WANT. Sometimes people don't feel like accepting certain strokes. For example, some people are not interested in receiving specific sex-role-related strokes which may feel bad. Some men are tired of hearing about how responsible and hard working they are, and certain media glamour type women are tired of hearing about how beautiful they are. In its extreme, not being able to turn down strokes can be seen in people who can't say no to sex they don't desire. In any event, some things don't feel good and people need permission to turn them down.

Finally, people are not given permission to GIVE STROKES TO THEMSELVES (or brag). In fact the word brag has a negative connotation. Someone once said to me, "I'll say some nice things about myself, but I wouldn't brag."

In this exercise you have permission to ask for, offer, and turn down strokes as well as to stroke yourself. I know this is scary for people because this is not something you are accustomed to doing, but this is a chance to break some barriers and develop your stroke muscle.

Before we begin, I want to talk a little bit about the political implications of this exercise. Everybody needs strokes and we need them every day. They are as much of a human need as the need for food and shelter. Most of us live in a relative state of stroke starvation, we are not getting enough. We aren't getting enough because we don't have permission to get strokes in the

most straightforward ways: by freely asking and offering them. As a result, our need for strokes gets channelled into other avenues. I think it has a lot to do with the way we end up doing socially prescribed behaviors. For example, women buy make-up and try to look good for their men whom they nurture, while men work hard at oppressive jobs in order to impress their women, etc., because, at least for these activities you get a few strokes. Not enough, but a few. We are kept busy trying to earn a handful of strokes by doing all the things this culture rewards. And some of these things don't feel good. As people learn to get strokes through direct means, as people trash the stroke economy, they may be less willing to fulfill socially prescribed roles. I'm not saying that everything conventional is bad, simply that if we had our stroke needs met, we might tend to do some things differently. The stroke economy is a form of social control.

Now, I know some people are probably thinking, "Uh, oh, what if I don't get any strokes." I want to say at the outset that I know there are plenty of strokes here for everyone. It is the artificial scarcity that conditions us to believe there will be nothing for us, that there aren't enough to go around. All you have to do is break the stroke injunctions and you'll see that you can get strokes. You can just ask for them and you'll get them. You can affirm your faith in human nature. You'll see that, if given an opportunity, people will take care of each other.

When people who are doing the exercise together don't know each other well, I add the following paragraph.

Another thing people are probably thinking is, "Uh, oh, I barely know any of these people, I won't have any strokes to offer or get." But remember,

this is an exercise to work on expanding your stroking ability. We've all been trained in quickly finding the faults with people we meet. This is a chance to quickly find things you do like about people. You can quickly get intuitions about things you like. You can say things that you sense you like in people you have barely met. It's a great thing to be able to recognize the good things about people fast. All that's important is that what you say is genuine. Strokes don't have to be elaborate.

Just one other thing before beginning. If you have strokes to offer, it is important to ask the other person whether he or she wants it. For example: "Pat, I have a stroke for you. Would you like it?" We ask the question so people get a chance to reject a stroke if this is their desire. Okay, let's begin. Now we have a free stroke economy. You can ask for, offer, and reject strokes. And you can stand up in the middle and brag. Now make believe there is a magic wall around us. You won't get pigged no matter what. The worst thing that could happen is that someone may turn down a stroke you have offered. But you won't be put down.

There's a lot more to say, but in order to avoid making the introduction too long, I save some things for later as the exercise progresses. Now, people stay in the circle and spontaneously, one at a time, start exchanging strokes.

There are certain typical mistakes people make when they are learning to trash the stroke economy. One common one is that a person will give a stroke and put themselves down at the same time. "I like how open and friendly you are. I just can't be that way." I will explain that it is important to learn to give strokes without putting yourself down, and that in order to give another person a stroke you don't have to put yourself down. Stroking and self-criticism are two separate things. And, I'll go on to say:

I'll probably be interrupting a lot during the exercise to explain a variety of things about strokes. We're not given much training in strokes and there is a lot to learn. So please, don't be discouraged from offering them by my interruptions. Feel free to offer any strokes and to make mistakes. That's what this is about. It's a chance to experiment and learn about strokes.



J.S.

Here are some further things to watch for:

- People giving strokes without asking permission.
- Strokes which are offered in the third person. Example: "I would like to give Pat a stroke." (To which you might say) "Do you think you could ask Pat herself if she would like it?"
- Comparison (or competitive) strokes. They put one person up and everyone else down. Example: "You are the best looking person here" (Instead of "I really think you are beautiful").
- Strokes with veiled criticisms. They tell a person that there is, or has been, something wrong with them. Example: "You are trying hard" or "You used to be so weepy and now you are looking better." (I usually ask people to turn these into positive statements, like "You look good tonight.")

In the course of this exercise, it is important to watch how people receive strokes. Some people discount strokes that they want to accept while other people accept strokes that they don't really want.

Certain mannerisms tip off that a stroke has been discounted. A quick thank you, or a quick return of another stroke, or a half smile and turning away, or letting it slide like down the back of a duck, all may mean a stroke has been



discounted. If it looks like a stroke has been discounted you can ask, "Was that one hard for you to take in?" If the person says yes, you can ask, "Do you want to work on absorbing strokes?" And if the answer is yes again, you can ask the person who offered the stroke, "Would you mind repeating it?" Sometimes the person receiving the stroke has to realize that they may not believe the nice thing about themselves, but they at least need to see that the person who offered the stroke believes it.

If someone has accepted a stroke that didn't feel good you can usually intuit it. When this occurs, I usually ask, "Did that stroke feel good to you?" If the answer is no, then I remind people that it is important to reject strokes that don't feel good. With more experience people become increasingly clear about what feels bad and you hear more "I don't want to accept that stroke. It doesn't feel good."

During the course of the exercise it is helpful to continue to offer encouragement. One important statement is: "If you are on the verge of saying something but can't get it out, then try to become aware of the message in your head that is holding you back. Then, go ahead and break the rule." This reminds people that this is a permission exercise and a chance to break through all the

internalized oppression which prevents the expression of affection between people. It gets people thinking about the "pig messages" in their head.

To encourage offering:

- Try pushing your limits. Give a juicy stroke.
- (People tend to be slower to get into physical strokes.) You know you can offer and ask for physical strokes, too. You can get hugs and you can get your back rubbed, or whatever.
- You can give a stroke someone else already gave, strokes feel good more than once.

To encourage asking:

- (People tend to offer strokes before they ask) I noticed people are offering a lot of strokes. It's good to ask for strokes too. Does anyone want to ask?

- If anyone is thinking, "Gee, I haven't gotten enough strokes," remember, you can ask. There are plenty of strokes in here for everyone.

- I know some people are thinking about asking. Go ahead. This is your chance to try something new.

- (After someone asks) See, you get a lot of strokes if you ask for them.

- (After people have been doing some asking) Remember you can ask for the exact stroke that you want. Do you want strokes for the way you look, the way you are with people or what? Ask for what you want.

- Also, you can ask specific people for strokes and you can ask members of different categories of people (strokes from men, strokes from women, strokes from older people, strokes from specific ethnic groups, etc.).

To encourage bragging:

- Does anyone want to brag? Remember, here it is good to brag. Does anyone want to get up in the middle of the room and brag?

- (after someone has done a little bragging) Do you want to expand on it? You can brag about all kinds of things, the type of person you are, your body, how you look, what you do, etc. (and suggest categories so person can expand).

- (When a person starts bragging and goes blank) If we give you strokes, will you repeat them? It may seem artificial, but it's a chance to begin to hear some good things in your head instead of all the garbage.

- (Sometimes people tone down or qualify their brags). [Example: I'm pretty good looking, or I'm usually pretty good to my friends.] They can



be encouraged to go all the way.) What do you mean, pretty good looking. Don't qualify it. Remember, this is bragging, you can go all the way!!

• (Sometimes people have difficulty letting their bodies assume a powerful position. When someone says that they want to brag, I encourage their power.) Stand up in the middle in a proud posture. We're ready to listen.

Finally, as the time to end draws near you can say, "It's getting near the end. This is the last chance. Be sure you leave feeling good. You can get the strokes you want. Ask for the things you want. Give the strokes you've been meaning to give."

Strokes seem to have two distinct qualities. They can have a parental type of approval (Example: You are a good thinker) or a child type of excitement (Example: I dig the way you think) behind them. The ones with the child flair seem to really take hold. As people repeat this exercise they get to see the different reactions that the different types of strokes elicit and it gives them a chance to experiment with getting in touch with the excitement that they hold for other people.

When Trashing the Stroke Economy is done on a regular basis, say at a drop-in center, it is important to remind people that the exercise is not to serve as a temporary filling station. People who do the exercise regularly, in order to fully benefit, need to always try new and harder things each time. Also, they need to begin to work on taking it outside the group to the real world. This means figuring out where, in real life, they can give and get strokes.

References

1. First developed by Claude Steiner. See *Scripts People Live*, Grove Press, 1974.



Organizing a Drop-In Center

Anne Ziebur

What sounds like a casual invitation from one friend to another has become for us, the Tuesday Night Radical Therapy Training Collective, a standing invitation extended to the surrounding community. People can join the ten of us to work on problems, share feelings, meet people and get strokes, every Tuesday in the Mission district of San Francisco.

The Drop-In, now fully activated and regularly shared by many people, started out as a training requirement for us. Each member of our newly formed collective had been involved with groups in one way or another, and many of us had been in Radical Therapy problem-solving groups for varying lengths of time. These experiences had given us some practical tools. The beginning stages of our collective training provided us with additional material and theory, and we were now ready to put together the different aspects of our learning. We needed to practice and share our skills.

The decision to do a Drop-In was both exciting and scary. It was exciting to think we would soon be applying what we knew; it was scary to realize that there were many unknowns. Seen in action today, the mechanics of a Drop-In seem fairly simple. The step-by-step organizing presented a number of problems which took much discussion and planning to iron out.

The first question was "Where?" Because we wanted the Drop-In to be a community service as well as a training ground we needed a location which could be reached easily and could accommodate a large group of people. Of course we didn't know how many people would come, but we knew without question that a space large enough for only twelve or fifteen people would not be sufficient. We considered churches, garages, people's houses. As it turned out, we were lucky and our search was easy. Two of our members knew of a storefront in the Mission, used as a child-care center during the day and available for rent by groups in the evenings, on a regular basis. The space was large, a long room with a window at sidewalk level and a glass door. Assorted overstuffed chairs and couches provided ample seating and could be moved around as we wished. There was some business to be done: meetings to attend, agreements to be made, but we did get the storefront for one night a week and considered ourselves fortunate.

The next question was "When?" Tuesday was the evening we had agreed upon. We were planning to do all our work in one time block: two hours for Drop-In, followed by a half-hour dinner break and a two-and-a-half hour training meeting. We knew that 5:30 was not an ideal time for Drop-In but we also knew people could come on their way home from work. Having the Drop-In first gave us a chance to discuss it in our training session right after it happened.

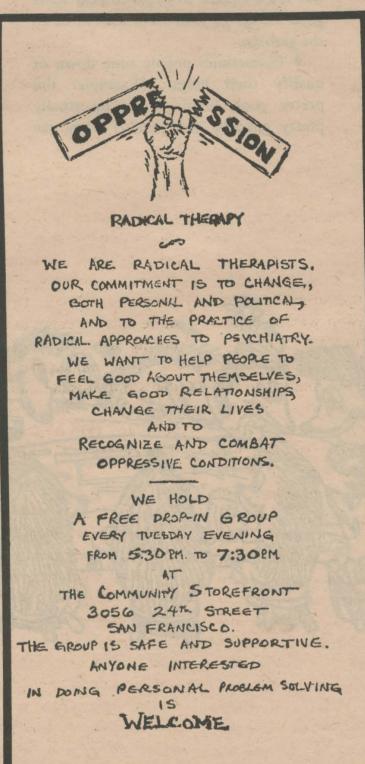


Publicity was essential. If we were going to be known we had to spread information about us. We considered ads in small local papers, announcements on the radio, switchboards. Every meeting one of us went to was a chance to announce the Drop-In. We wrote it up in I.R.T. Some of these methods gave results, some did not. Word of mouth worked well: someone tells a friend who tells a friend, and so on. We were careful to do our publicity gradually, so as to start small and build up from week to week, to keep quality constant. Probably the most effective single source of referrals was the leaflet we wrote, designed and had printed. This leaflet appears as one of the graphics accompanying this article, and people are welcome to copy it. We made 500 copies and spread them every place we could think of: public and private bulletin boards, coffee houses, bookstores, friends, gatherings, and wherever we noticed other pamphlets.

The next step to work out was how to start off the first evening. When people have been in a problem-solving group for a while they know what to expect and they understand the group mechanics. But when people have not, a lot of initial information is required and we realized we needed an introduction. Bob Schwebel put together a skeleton sketch of identity and purpose:

This is the Radical Therapy problem-solving Drop-In. I'm... and this is... and this is... We work here and our job is to help you get what you want. Some of the things people come here for are to work on solving personal problems, to watch and listen and check out this type of therapy to see if it's for you, or to have fun and meet people. You can do these things, or there may be other things you want to do. We need to know what it is you want in order for us to help you get it, so I'd like to suggest that we go around the room and people can introduce themselves and say briefly what it is you came here for before we get going. (Then, everyone says why they came.)

We have an hour and fifteen minutes till we stop this part of the Drop-In and lead what we call a Permission exercise for people who want it. We'll explain about Permission later. In any event, let's keep in mind how many people want to work and let's share our time. I would encourage people who are problem-solving to go right to what's bothering you and to how you would like things to be different.



The statement worked very well as a guideline. We also stress the importance of problem-solving work being done by contract, to ensure that people's work relates clearly to what they want and not to what someone else imagines they ought to want. For those interested in additional information on the theory and practice of Radical Therapy we recommend *Readings in Radical Psychiatry*, a collection of papers edited by Claude Steiner (Grove Press, 1975).



• USHER •

With all these preparations behind us, the time had come for our first Drop-In. We arranged the storefront furniture in two circles accommodating about ten people each. We worked in teams of three. We planned these teams ahead of time each week (and rotated them so each of us would have a chance to work with every other collective member). The first team greeted people at the front of the room. The rest of us stayed at the rear, a back-up team in case of need.

Not many people came the first time, which gave us a chance to get our feet wet without too much trauma. All went very well and we sighed great sighs of relief. We were feeling really good about our first experience and very optimistic about the weeks to come.

We had opened the group process with one of the facilitators saying the prepared statement. At the outset, newcomers were puzzled about the concept of "working" on problems. What did it mean? We suggested that someone start talking about a situation which was problematic in their life. When the questions, feedback and suggestions came, it began to be clear what working meant and we could continue. The process was then easier for each following person.

For the first two or three weeks we did only one group with a different team of three facilitators each time. Our teacher was present during the full length of the group. Later, when we were doing two or three groups simul-

Several more procedures were added to the usher's job. We wanted to make copies of I.R.T. available at the Drop-In, and someone had to supervise their sale. Also, while we had made it clear that there was no charge for the work we did with people, we asked for donations to cover the minimal cost of our nightly rent. The usher placed a small bucket by the door, where people would notice it when they left. Sometimes we made the rent, sometimes we didn't, and after a while the participants themselves suggested the bucket be passed around. Donations increased. This was a supportive lesson in not being shy about asking that our costs be met.

We recognize that people need to be able to check out a new situation before deciding if it offers them what they want. We have made it clear that they can observe and be relatively uninvolved at first, as long as they say that this is what they want to do. Now, it appears that permission to observe is not a clear enough contract, and we have begun to ask people why they only want to watch. Of course it makes sense for people to first see if a situation is safe, but some have used the contract to avoid working on problems, or to avoid saying that they came to meet people.

taneously with two facilitators in each group, he would circulate from group to group, listening in or working with people. He would give us feedback during the training meeting about the situations he had observed.

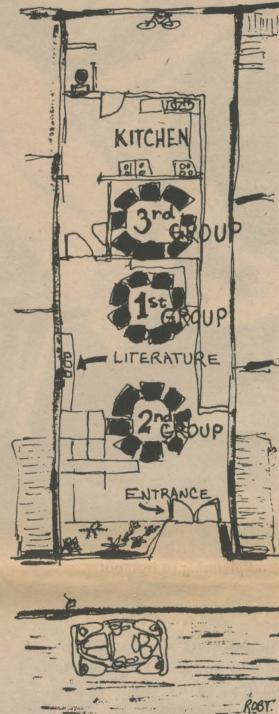
More people came each time than the time before, till now when the average is between thirty and forty people each week, and we sometimes have one single facilitator per group. Probably the most complicated logistic problem was the transition from doing one group to doing two. As people came into the storefront, they automatically sat down in the first group. Not everyone came right at five-thirty, so there was a continuous flow of arrivals and it was difficult to keep it from disturbing the work already in process. The group size also increased till it was too large for productive work to be done.

We decided that the cut-off point for starting a second group was when the first group had reached a total of eight people. At first we let people who were waiting for the second group sit in the first until it was time to switch, but this proved to be a mistake as the change-over was distracting. Our solution was to have an usher, an idea which appealed to us as both practical and amusing. The usher's job was also rotated from week to week and this person's responsibility was to greet newcomers at the door and channel them toward the next groups. In this way it was possible to spot if someone coming in was particularly distressed, and arrange for a one-to-one if such was the need. Another function of the usher is to take a quick check of how many people want to work (rather than observe) in each group, so a better balance can be established by shifting people around when necessary.

The group work ran from five-thirty to six forty-five or seven at which time we called into each group, with the necessary voice boom, to assemble everyone in a circle and begin a Permission exercise, usually "Trash the Stroke Economy" (described in Bob Schwebel's article in this issue). Additional Permissions exercises are described in Hogie Wyckoff's chapter in *Readings in Radical Psychiatry*. During the group as well as during the Permission exercise, we try to interject fun and laughter. We encourage people to meet other people, to come back and bring friends. We encourage them to exchange telephone numbers, the only rule being that if someone doesn't want to they must say no. By the time seven-thirty comes and everyone begins to leave, either grinning or feeling good, often to have dinner together, we ourselves feel high over work well done. High feelings and successes don't mean that there aren't difficulties and frustrations. There are. We have taken care of some, and others are still being worked out. Most have to do with the group process itself and are a function of the lack of continuity implicit in Drop-In. The greatest frustration has been to always be working with new people who are unfamiliar with our style. This has meant frequent explanations of the nature of contractual problem-solving.

Another problem has been work people agree to do during the week. Someone may agree to write a Nurturing Parent list for themselves, or to pay particular attention to what the Pig Parent messages are in a given situation they find difficult to handle; or they may have to confront a roommate over long-neglected house issues and report on this at the next group meeting. It's very difficult to follow up on work when we don't work with the same people each week. To do so would require more communication between facilitators than is feasible, or that everyone remember everything and that's not possible. Sometimes someone takes homework and doesn't come back, and then it's frustrating for us not to know the results of our work.

Another problem is Rescues. They are particularly hard to avoid in a Drop-In. (For a description of Rescues, see *Scripts People Live* by Claude Steiner.) In an ongoing group composed of the same people, there is a gradual education process so that Rescues occur much less frequently than they do in an untrained group. Each time there are more than one or two new persons in a group at the Drop-In, it becomes difficult to separate Rescues from requested feedback.



One basis of the Drop-In was to serve as a place where people could familiarize themselves with Radical Therapy before entering ongoing groups of their own. There are, however, not enough Radical Therapy groups at the moment to meet the need. We are developing a waiting list and as more groups get started this summer and next fall, we will be able to channel people into them. The rewards for us of doing a Drop-In were very clear in the beginning: we were getting outstanding training. Now that this phase of our training is completed, we need new rewards for our work and we're not sure the Drop-In can provide them. We want to continue feeling involved, enthusiastic, curious, energetic, and sometimes really high. New solutions will have to be created to keep our exciting project from becoming a Rescue. We believe that it is important that those who want to start a Drop-In center think carefully about what the rewards will be. We are, however, a growing group with growing ideas. We learn from each change we make. There is much work to be done, well worth doing. We welcome suggestions from readers and participants.



YOU GAVE ME GI

I feel your death, Laura,
the way I feel the autumn.
I didn't get enough
summer this year;
I've had to work
hard to prepare. And now
I am ready. It's good.
It's just. It is time.
But I confess
there's a part of me
that would give (or steal).
one last kiss.

(Like today when I was a thief
to pluck two brilliant leaves
from some turning trees
'cause their wild fire
reminds me of my autumn birth,
my rich, earthy life; and that,
gentle grandmother, is no
separate matter
from your own birth.)

You gave me a lot of gifts, Laura.
You gave me my mother
who gave me my life-life I treasure
beyond words. You gave me
my mother's sister, a second mother.
Two mothers you gave me, Laura-two!—
and your son who is less an uncle,
more the big brother I wanted
for protection when I was little.

Oh! In my heart, in my bones,
I've been crying: Not fair!
Not fair! Not fair that
your dying was degrading.
Denigrating work, your dying was.
And yet, I wonder:
Wasn't the way of your dying
something like the way of your living?
Before your body was stricken
by that inextricable cancer
did not you live, in some ways
riddled, too, by the cancer of lies—
lies cultured deep,
deep in the tissues
of all women—lies which've
eaten out the hearts and guts
of many sisters? Were you not
in some ways
paralyzed in your life.
by the violent psychic blows
of this male-dominated culture,
as you were by the stroke
that sent you down for the count
to your final paralysis?

Still, despite the ways you were crushed,
woman, you had power. You had power
beyond the power of your weary womb.
Yours was the power of gypsies and graceful charmers;
(I know, sister; I carry that power in me.)
And gardeners, Mama.
You had the power of gardeners.
You knew the secrets of the earth herself.
You could birth more beautiful plants
than anyone I've ever known.
Energy. Your energy was good, high.
The powerful way you'd throw
strudel dough; I was very respectful
watching your ritual
of autumn apples, cinnamon and nuts—
up and down in rows
on our big dining table.
And there was power, too,
in how you understood
the simple gift
of fresh-baked bread.

You missed
(Thus, I gu
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when I kn
seeing seed
come to fl
you're the
and you k
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YOU GAVE ME GIFTS

I feel your death, Laura,
the way I feel the autumn.
I didn't get enough
summer this year;
I've had to work
hard to prepare. And now
I am ready. It's good.
It's just. It is time.
But I confess
there's a part of me
that would give (or steal).
one last kiss.
(Like today when I was a thief
to pluck two brilliant leaves
from some turning trees
'cause their wild fire
reminds me of my autumn birth,
my rich, earthy life; and that,
gentle grandmother, is no
separate matter
from your own birth.)

You gave me a lot of gifts, Laura.
You gave me my mother
who gave me my life-life I treasure
beyond words. You gave me
my mother's sister, a second mother.
Two mothers you gave me, Laura—two!—
and your son who is less an uncle,
more the big brother I wanted
for protection when I was little.

Oh! In my heart, in my bones,
I've been crying: Not fair!
Not fair! Not fair that
your dying was degrading.
Denigrating work, your dying was.
And yet, I wonder:
Wasn't the way of your dying
something like the way of your living?
Before your body was stricken
by that inextricable cancer
did not you live, in some ways
riddled, too, by the cancer of lies—
lies cultured deep,
deep in the tissues
of all women—lies which've
eaten out the hearts and guts
of many sisters? Were you not
in some ways
paralyzed in your life.
by the violent psychic blows
of this male-dominated culture,
as you were by the stroke
that sent you down for the count
to your final paralysis?

Still, despite the ways you were crushed,
woman, you had power. You had power
beyond the power of your weary womb.
Yours was the power of gypsies and graceful charmers;
laughing joyous witches.
(I know, sister; I carry that power in me.)
And gardeners, Mama.
You had the power of gardeners.
You knew the secrets of the earth herself.
You could birth more beautiful plants
than anyone I've ever known.
Energy. Your energy was good, high.
The powerful way you'd throw
strudel dough; I was very respectful
watching your ritual
of autumn apples, cinnamon and nuts—
up and down in rows
on our big dining table.
And there was power, too,
in how you understood
the simple gift
of fresh-baked bread.

You missed a lot, Grandmother.
(Thus, I guess I have, too.)
I often wished I could be with you
times in my life
when I knew you'd feel pleasure
seeing seeds you'd planted in the child
come to flower in the woman. But then,
you're the one who called me "gypsy"
and you know how it is with us gypsies—
we need to travel; we need space—rivers,
deserts, meadows, more. Peaceful, secret
hiding places.
If we're trapped we die.

Perhaps in this past hard year
the "long-distance psychiatry,"
you called our intense telephone
talks, gave you a sense
of your self. I like to think
when you perceived the beauty
of my blossoming
you saw also some of your own
goodness and beauty: I loved you very much
when I was a child—simply because you were good to me
and beautiful. Also, your delicate Viennese accent
made you seem just a little magical.

The last few times we were together
(I never told you those jaunts I made
were mainly for us—to say good-bye)
I hope I gave you at least
a glimmering of what I'm trying here to say:

earth/green/good bread/warm grins
hearty laughs/blue, blue/sky blue
lavender blue/Navajo turquoise blue
ancient blue eyes/sunshine, yes,
the warm warm sun/sun you loved
and hungered for (as now I do)
sun that gave you peace and comfort
sun like your big hugs and kisses

How I wish you could share
this good joyous life of mine:
all the love, the sheer wonder of my growing!
Laura, even as I feel sorrow and rage
about your dying—that cruel, tortuous journey
you were forced to take to your death—
I, abundantly happy and healthy,
humbly celebrate my birth. Thank you.

Rest well, Laura
gentle grandmother peasant princess ancient sister
rest well, rest well.

—Joy Marcus



in
system

The fear of becoming old
determined by the fear of not
an environment in which you
and keep.

Age puzzles me. I thought it was a quiet time. Now
were interesting, and fairly serene, but my eighties
ate. I grow more intense as I age. To my own surprise
out with hot conviction.

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GIFTS

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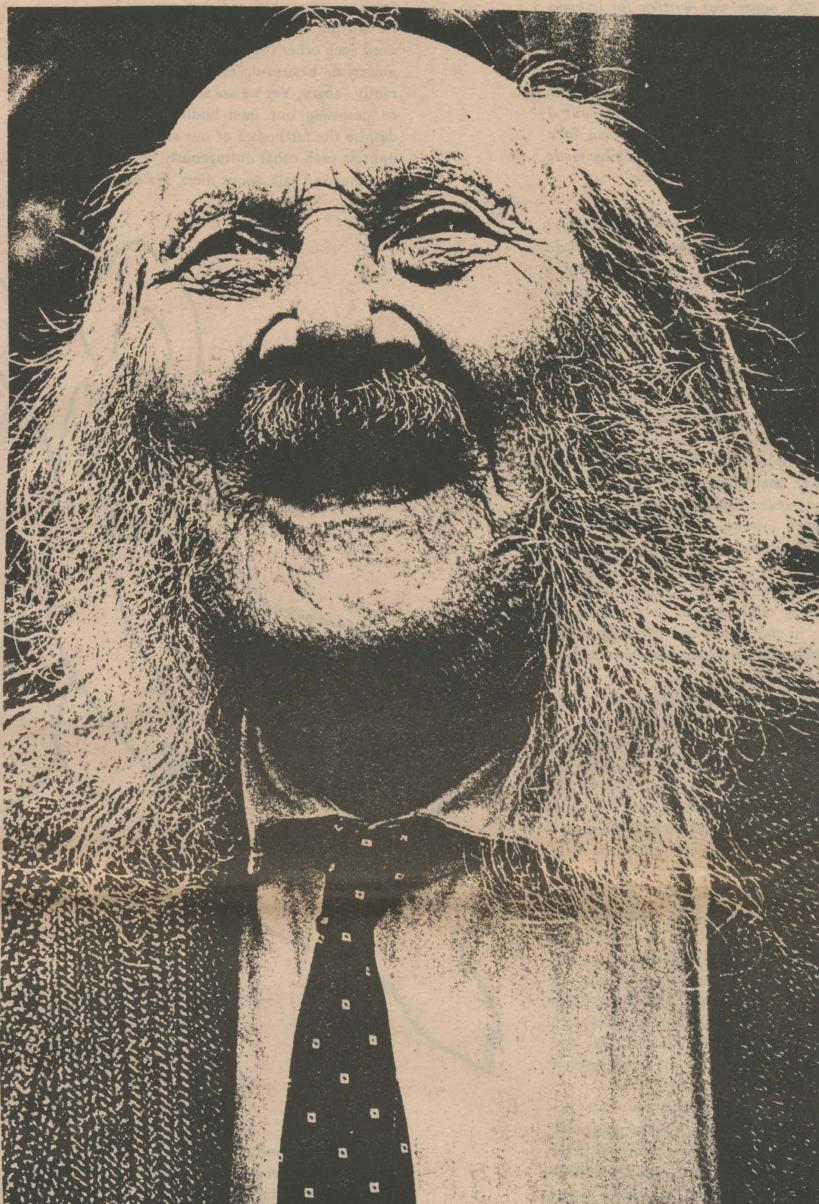
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umbly celebrate my birth. Thank you.

est well, Laura
gentle grandmother peasant princess ancient sister
est well, rest well.

-Joy Marcus



In a society where the basic interest is in profit, old age in general cannot be honored because real honor would undermine the system of priorities that keep this society running.

The fear of becoming old in our Western world is, for the most part, determined by the fear of not being able to live up to the expectations of an environment in which you are what you can produce, achieve, have, and keep.

It is said that once upon a time the people of a remote mountain village used to sacrifice and eat their old men. A day came when there was not a single old man left, and the traditions were lost. They wanted to build a great house for the meetings of the assembly, but when they came to look at the tree-trunks that had been cut for that purpose no one could tell the top from the bottom: if the timber were placed the wrong way up, it would set off a series of disasters. A young man said that if they promised never to eat the old men any more, he would be able to find a solution. They promised. He brought his grandfather, whom he had hidden; and the old man taught the community to tell top from bottom.

In our deepest self we keep living with the illusion that we will always be the same. We not only tend to deny the real existence of old men and women living in their closed rooms and nursing homes, but also the old man or woman who is slowly awakening in our own center. They are strangers, and strangers are fearful. They are intruders threatening to rob us of what we consider our own.

FAT

Laurie Ann Lepoff

This paper was written for lesbians and if straight people read it, I have a concern that it not be taken as a put-down of the lesbian community. I wrote it with the belief and trust that it will be heard, for if I had never come out, I doubt that I would have grown to a place in myself where I could have made such a statement.

In my first two years of high school I was smart and I was petite. I kept a safe distance from my peers by being a "brain." No one knew quite what to make of me, but they left me alone. Their response was one of respect and even fear. When I got fat the difference was unbelievable. It was as if everything I had to say was invalidated by my fat. Nobody took me seriously anymore. I was ridiculed and scorned. Nobody is more aware than I of the privilege and power that comes with an acceptable appearance, because the power I lost when I lost access to that appearance was enormous. And I was kept powerless by a system which is insidious. Everywhere I looked I saw media impressing upon me the power of being thin in the world—and the degradation of being fat. The message is internalized by everyone.

Even those closest to me, who loved me and thought they were doing so for my own good, tried to shame me into losing weight. It is as if fat women are under an obligation to be ashamed and disgusted with ourselves, to be constantly at war with food, to be always on a diet or promising to start one next week. We are made to feel that we don't have the right to nurture ourselves, we are embarrassed to be caught eating! Who does she think she is anyway, eating? She's fat. She should be eating cottage cheese and celery. It is not our right to eat? Who the hell are you to be even thinking that you know what I should be doing for my own body and mind's health, that self-deprivation is for my own good?

A friend once told me that her mother, who was fat, stopped going outside after a while and my friend never understood why. My friend was neither blind nor stupid, yet she really meant it—she never understood why. We are made to feel that we don't have the right to walk around on the streets, so repulsive are we. There have been times in my life when I refused to go outside for months except when absolutely necessary because I could not take the jeers and public ridicule that I endure today nearly every time I have the audacity to walk around in broad daylight.

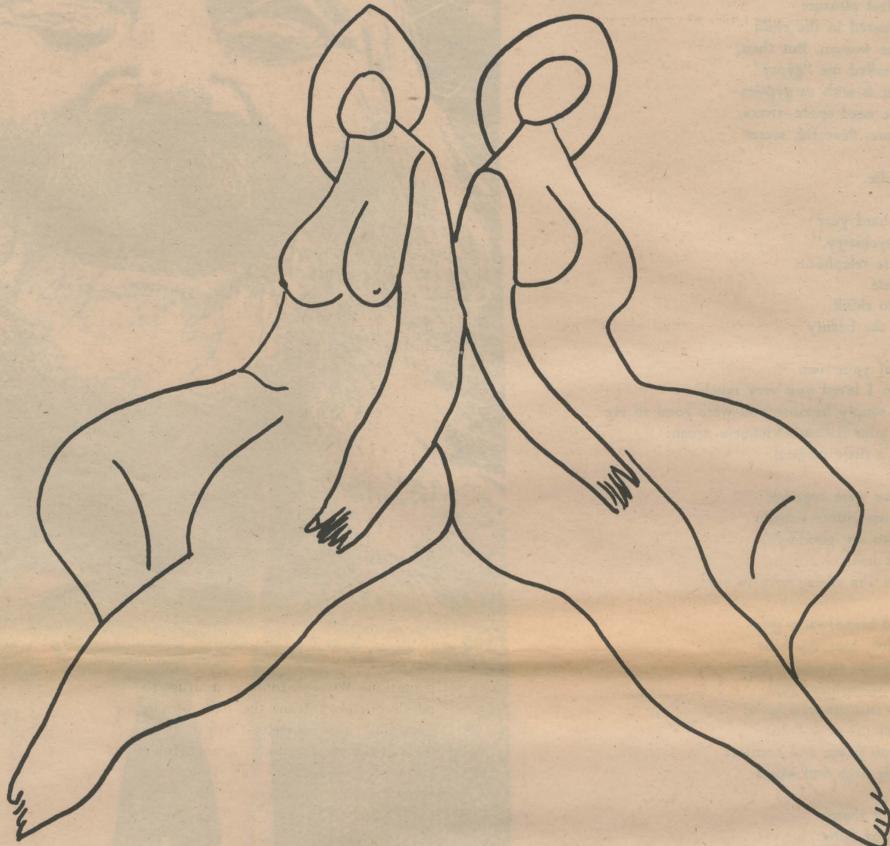
A few years ago I spent three months going out every day to look for a job and it was easily the most degrading and humiliating experience of my life. There is no prejudice quite so blatant as that which exists on the job market against fat women. I couldn't get a job as a dishwasher and no secret was made as to why. The only employers who hire people like me are those few who are smart enough to know that once they get me, I'll most likely be so grateful that I'll never complain, never quit, and never ask for a raise because we both know what my chances are for ever getting hired anywhere else.

There is little validation anywhere for our struggle. We are rarely encouraged to love ourselves (even by our "liberated" feminist sisters), to consider ourselves beautiful, to nurture ourselves. We are expected to hate ourselves, deprive ourselves, and consider ourselves

ugly. We maintain a shred of dignity by convincing ourselves that we are working on getting thin and that eventually we will be O.K. (thin). We desperately need each other's support to feel strong, powerful, beautiful, and most importantly—angry. Yet we are so accustomed to despising our own bodies that we despise the fat bodies of our sisters. We oppress each other outrageously. We get together and talk about diets. We don't

before I would admit to a thin person that I felt oppressed around being fat, for fear she would say (or think) "Well, why don't you just go on a diet?"

When, in fact, I mustered up the courage to speak of my oppression to a friend, someone I love very much, she responded just so: "But isn't there some choice?" she said. "Choice" is not the issue. The "problem" is not my being fat. The problem is how I am treated



take our pain seriously. We don't validate each other's experience in this bigoted world. We skim over the agony of our lives under the assumption that everything that happens to us is really our own fault and we deserve it for being fat. We don't stand up against outrageous bigotry because we accept that it is somehow justified. I feel more solidarity with a fat suburban housewife than I do with my slender lesbian sisters, although I can expect as much support from her as I could from a closet dyke who believes herself to be sick and perverted. I don't need to hear from women who are not fat and who "just happen" to be in relationships with other women who are not fat that I need to learn to accept and think of myself as beautiful. My negative self-image does not exist in a political vacuum.

When I lost a lot of weight and was thin, I could talk to anyone about the terror of getting fat again because I knew that as an attractive woman, I would be listened to. When I got fat again, I didn't dare speak to the oppression of actually being fat, because who would take me seriously? Fat people, particularly women, are not respected. It is assumed that our problem would be solved if we would just lose weight. When I was seeing a shrink who was (of course) not fat, I would talk circles around what was really bothering me

because of it. You don't solve racism by bleaching everyone's skin the same color (white, of course). Remove the offending characteristic and everything will be peachy. Make us all the same and we'll stop oppressing each other.

I responded to my friend's question with considerable antagonism. "Why don't you just go straight if you feel so fucking oppressed as a lesbian?" I spat into the phone. "I'm sure you could pass if you really tried. All it would take is a little will power."

More than anything I wanted, I want to be understood, but I resent like hell having to explain myself, as if to excuse myself for being fat. If I tell a sad enough story, maybe she'll understand and give me a little support. Just how bad do things have to be before I get to just go ahead and be fat? Why the fuck do I have to explain myself to you, you slender, privileged bitch? You live in this world, you have eyes, you see what abuse I have to take! How much pain must I suffer before you accept my oppression as valid? Who the hell are you to sit in judgment on me?

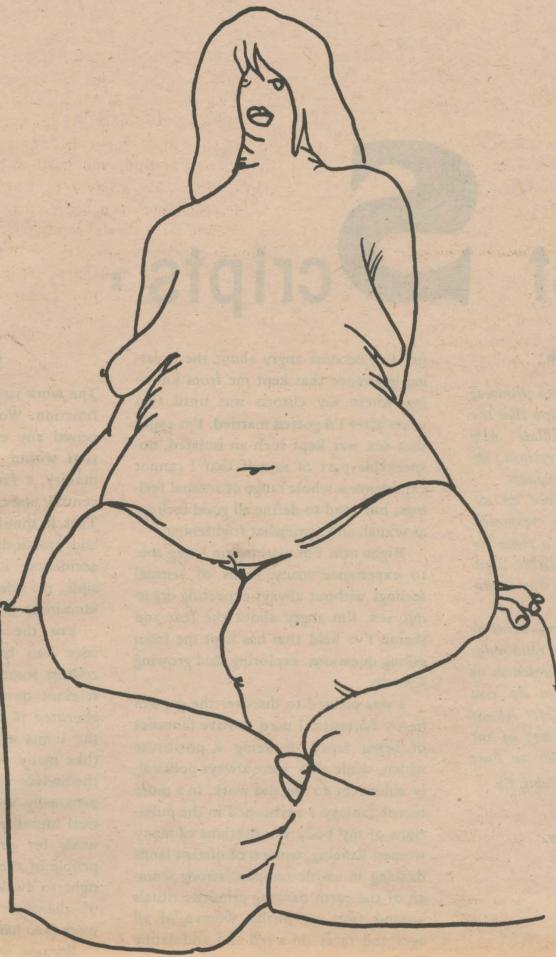
I cried for an hour after that confrontation, feeling incredibly alienated and alone. I had jeopardized that feeling in our relationship, our basic shared struggle as lesbians facing a straight world; by exposing another oppression which we don't share, and which is so great that by comparison I hardly feel

POLITICS

my oppression as a lesbian. And she seemed to respond with total lack of understanding. She didn't know what I was talking about. I thought, hell, if this is how it feels to expose myself to someone who loves me, how can I confront someone who doesn't even like me? I thought maybe I should sit on these angry feelings and accept the support I can get for what I can get it for. If I lose my lesbian support, I'll have nothing.

But as it happened my friend really took in the words I spat at her in my rage and now I have her support where I really need it. It is clear to me that I will never get the support I need unless I stand up for myself and *demand* to be taken seriously.

In the straight world, the excuse for oppressing fat women is simply that fat is considered ugly and women are expected to be attractive for men. In the lesbian culture, the excuse is health. You're fat because you don't take care of yourself—it's unhealthy. Besides which it doesn't fit the popular image of your healthy athletic dyke. What utter crap. People do all kinds of horrible things to their bodies for a variety of reasons and are not expected to be asexual because of it. Smokers not only screw up their own health but everyone else's who has to breathe the same air and they are not degraded by their peers and each other for "letting themselves go" and ruining their health. Is it because they are less offensive or could it be that they are encouraged and promoted by the media and we are not? "Health" is used as an excuse to degrade us, just as the medical establishment would have it that everything that ails



pectation. We use food as a drug—to numb ourselves from the pain of our lives—and hate ourselves for it afterwards when the numbness wears off. We go on strict diets and when we slip up a little we stuff ourselves the rest of the day because that day is ruined anyway. We become immersed in hopeless despair—we can't stand to be consumed by the struggle with food every second of the day—we give in—we hate ourselves. We eat until we are so sick we can't move. We feel so much shame we refuse to leave our rooms or the house we live in. I have done all of these things for long periods in my life and I am not unusual; all fat women know them, they are the result of our oppression.

When I lost sixty pounds, very fast, once in my life, I had to get my head into a mind set of self-hatred, non-nurturance, complete self-denial to do it. When I tried to get out of that head-set, I felt like I would have to spend every second of my life fighting the urge to eat. I felt I had no control. I tried to fill up my life with so much activity that I wouldn't have time to eat. I knew I could never relax. I felt like the effort would drive me crazy. The thought of getting fat again and everybody seeing it and losing respect for me, the thought of losing the power I had gained by acquiring a "normal" appearance, was so terrifying I was in a state of panic. No one who knew me then had any idea how close I came to killing myself at the time. They all equated my new attractive shape with a state of physical and mental health. My mother still carries pictures around of me when I was on the verge of suicide to show people how beautiful and healthy I once was.

My point, in case anyone has missed it, is that I am infinitely more healthy now than I have ever been. I rarely eat compulsively, numb myself with food, I

never feel obligated to eat 10 candy bars if I "blow it" by eating one. I made a decision never to diet again. I don't spend any of my precious energy on self-destructive battles with food. And for this decision, I lose the power to command respect in the straight world, to find employment, to engage in physical exercise in public without incurring public ridicule, and many other basic human rights. Do I have to fucking beg to be respected in my own community, to get validation for my struggle to love and respect myself in the face of enormous pressure to feel ashamed instead? I think I deserve a pat on the back for just having survived my life. Fuck you all for your damned righteousness and your insensitivity and your screwed up male values of acceptable standards of sexual attractiveness. You don't just "happen" to not be attracted to fat women (as lovers that is, I'm sure such a thing would never prejudice you against your friends) like straight women just "happen" to prefer men to fulfill their sexual and emotional needs. Did you ever come out to a straight friend and learn that the thought of making love with a woman is so repulsive she thinks she would vomit on the spot? Where do you think she learned that response? A facilitator at a drop-in rap group once told me that the reality of the situation which I just had to deal with was that fat simply is not attractive. I didn't question it at the time, but now I ask, who says so? The media? The men? Could it be that you all just swallowed the package that's been crammed down our throats since infancy and you never thought to look beyond it to consider something else?



us from influenza to clap is due in its entirety to our "unhealthy" condition—our fat. I know a woman who has scars in her throat from sticking a toothbrush in it to force herself to throw up every day along with eating two boxes of Ex-Lax in order to lose weight, and I wonder how many of you would consider her actions healthier than mine? Is it really my health that worries you, or is it that somewhere in your mind you still think I'm obligated to be beautiful in some male-defined way?

Everyone who has been on the diet cycle is familiar with a range of food fuck that goes with the dieting ex-

Post Scripts : Work and Sex

A horizontal row of ten black dots, evenly spaced, used as a decorative element at the bottom of the page.

One objective of IRT is to promote and support dialogue. We hope that the articles we publish stimulate new thoughts, provoke new questions, inspire new writings from our readers.

We would like to propose an expanded forum for reader response. Called the Post Script, it is a place for additional information, criticisms, arguments, questions which grow out of previous issues.

We want your contributions: short or long, intricately reasoned or randomly-jotted thoughts, personal experiences or the fruits of research. What do you think about Sex and the Left? About Work? About the topics of any of our articles. Send your responses to Post Script, P.O. Box 23544, Oakland, Ca.

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MAKING BETTER LOVE

Using the article "Making Better Love" in the winter issue of IRT as a springboard, Molly Johnson and Joe Tittland's problem-solving groups in Seattle each chose to set aside one meeting for the purpose of talking about our sexual histories. We each took 30 minutes to discuss the history and growth of our sexuality from earliest memories of sexual feeling, the experiences, the fears, the fantasies, the ecstasies. Other group members provided a supportive environment which we could call on for validation, permission, and sometimes new Adult information to begin to erase the internalized oppressive messages we had received as children. We used the session to free ourselves to the vocabulary and face the paranoias about our sexuality so that we would have that material more readily available for enlarging our understanding of our scripts. Since that initial session some people have used their work time in later groups to continue to tell their stories and to work on problems that have come up concerning their sexuality.

For me it was an exciting, liberating experience. Using the words that describe my body and its sexual processes with fondness and concern was like releasing my breath after holding it for 29 years. I felt I wanted to talk much longer, exposing deeper and deeper levels of my fears, being affirmed again and again that I am indeed normal, healthy and whole. The work also released a lot of anger in me about the repression that eight children I now love and support have suffered, thoroughly conditioned to believe their bodies were ugly, their play and fantasies disgusting, their desires and preferences crazy and shame-

ful. I've become angry about the isolating ignorance that kept me from knowing where my clitoris was until two years after I'd gotten married. I'm angry that sex was kept such an isolated, unspeakable part of myself that I cannot experience a whole range of sensual feelings, but tend to define all good feelings as sexual, and somewhat frightening.

Right now I'm working on being able to experience many kinds of sensual feelings without always expecting orgasmic sex. I'm angry about the fear and shame I've held that has kept me from asking questions, exploring, and growing sexually.

I was pleased to discover the growth in my fantasies. I used to have fantasies of being raped or being a prostitute which, while they were always political-ly abhorrent to me, did work. In a more recent fantasy I envisioned in the pulsations of my body the rhythms of many women dancing, women of distant lands dancing in exotic temples, strong women of the earth dancing primitive rituals around fires, at births, women of all ages and races on a red and undulating landscape, pulsing with my rhythms—in me all these women. I feel like I am no longer giving myself away.

Talking freely about my sexuality has also initiated a process in me that I hope to see being repeated and continued. By talking about what I feel and what I fantasize I am getting in touch with what I want. Being in touch with what I want and having the support of the group for who I am right now has given me more courage in asking lovers for specific things that feel good to me. And by asking for what I want I am getting it.

Discussing our sexuality was a very liberating experience and, for me, I know, only the beginning of a longer and deeper exploration.

Bette Lamont
(with thanks to Rebecca Robinson for
valuable insights)

MORE WORK

The work issue of IRT served a valuable function. Work had not previously received any extensive theoretical attention within the radical therapy community, a fact in sharp contrast to the central place it occupies in actual life. That it should be theoretically ignored and practically of prime interest is not accidental: it is a thorny issue, impossible to side-step in life, difficult to illuminate with theoretical constructs.

For the same reason, IRT's work issue can be criticized for failing to address some of the most difficult and relevant questions. Given that work is alienated in capitalist society, what are the limits within which privileged folk (like many of us) can find or make for themselves work situations which are personally satisfying? What is the political morality of seeking non-alienating work for oneself while most of the people of the world cannot do so? Is it right to awaken people to the miseries of alienated work when nonalienated work is so hard to come by?

Because we are engaged in the process of reclaiming our human joy, not after some future revolution but right now, and because we view that task as political, our perspective needs to be somewhat different from that of our Marxist forerunners. We cannot be content with a description of the evils of alienated work, nor with an analysis of its causes. We must go further, to explore in detail the personal dilemmas which are the flesh and blood of the abstract concept, alienated work.

Beth Roy

All right for Tracy to talk, all right, he didn't have a wife and kids hanging round his neck like an anchor. All right for him to talk, all right with nothing



and Sex

more important to worry about than gettin canned up and stepping out a floosie.

And Tracy was young, just twenty, still wet behind the ears, and the old blinders were on him so he couldn't really see what was around and he believed the bull about freedom of opportunity and a chance to rise and if you're really want to work you can always find a job and rugged individualism and something about a pursuit of happiness.

He didn't know, so the big sap threw it up, he threw up his job, thinking he was flinging his challenge into the teeth of life, proclaiming I'm a man, and I'm not taking crap offn anybody. I'm goin to live like a man. There's more to life than workin everything you got to live with outa you in order to keep a job, taking things no man should stand for to keep a job. So he threw it up, the big sap, not yet knowing a job was a straw and every man (having nothing to sell but his labor power) was the drowning man who had no choice but to hang onto it for notsodear life. . . .

So he threw it up, the big sap (not knowing), he renounced God, he became an atheist and suffered the tortures of the damned, and God Job (being full up that generation) never took him back into the fold only a few days at a time, and be learned all right . . . , the tortures of the damned:

*feet slapping the pavement, digging
humbly into carpets, squatting wide
apart in front of chairs and the no-
jobnojobnothingdointoday buzzing
in his ears; bugging the coffee—and,
shuffling along, buddy (they made a
song out of it) can you spare a dime,
and the freights north east south
west, getting vagged, keep movin,
keep movin (the bulls dont need to
tell ya, your own belly yells it out,
your own idle hands), sing a song of
hunger the weather four below holes
in your pockets and nowhere to go,
the flophouses, the slophouses, a
bowl of misery and a last month's
cruller and the crabs having a good
time spreading and spreading (you
didnt know hell would be this bad,
did you?). . . .*

And there's nothing to say, Jim Tracy, I'm sorry Jim Tracy, sorry as hell we weren't stronger and could get to you in time and show you that kind of individual revolt was no good, kid, 'no good at all, you had to bide your time and take it till there were enough of you to fight it all together on the job, and bide your time, and take it, till the day millions of fists clamped in yours, and you could wipe out the whole thing, the whole goddam thing, and a human could be a human for the first time on earth.

Tillie Olsen in *Yonnondio*, written in the '30s (see book review in this issue).

LABOR ORGANIZING

Personal liberation is only possible along with social revolution. Simply to change your own work situation or drop out doesn't end work oppression. Personal awareness per se does not aid an individual in overcoming oppression. Individuals are important, but, in a larger sense, of secondary importance to the collective or organization. The dialectic involved here is in order for the larger grouping to be effective each individual in the group must be sure of themselves, able to cope and efficient—in short, powerful.

Just as a cook cannot seize a hot pan in a naked hand, so the working class cannot directly seize power; it has to have organizations for this task. The labor union is a body in which class consciousness in a capitalist society is catalyzed and solidified. It should also be recognized that the organized labor movement represents the most important organized mass of people in the country.

It follows, therefore, that reform should be approached at the work site. This is an age of organizations, and the only way the organized might of capital can be fought is by the conscious, organized might of the people—employed and unemployed. With the following principles, the hope is to develop a framework for the attainment of our vision.

Principle #1: Reform has to be conceived in view of what should be in terms of human needs (not what is possible within this given system). The psychological needs of creative self-expression, autonomy, self respect; the economic needs of decent housing, good nutritious food, excellent free health care, must be demanded. Action must proceed upon the principle of the offensive; workers must not only defend their meager rights, but push on for equality. Such a reform assumes a modification of the relationship of power. The possibility of obtaining such an objective implies fundamental political and economic changes.

Principle #2: The modification of the relationship of power must be directed to autonomous power. Subordinate power allows the sharing of responsibilities in alternative selection, but forbids the involvement in basic criteria from which policy evolves. This type of power does have limited value as a training ground for leadership and to some extent it allows for mechanisms to restrict or dislocate the dictatorship of profit. Autonomous labor power, on the other hand, challenges the very premises of management policy. The attainment of autonomous power in enterprise, cities and communities prepares the way for a dialectical progression of the struggle to a higher and higher level.

Autonomous power is crucial to demonstrate socialism as not something in the great beyond but a visible goal at work. Larger issues must be raised and struggled around concerning jobs, discrimination and democracy.

Principle #3: Feminist Socialism must be presented and developed as a living reality at work. The struggle to meet peoples within a capitalist structure can be nothing but fruitless if it does not call into question the entire system. But more than that, tangible power must demonstrate to workers their positive strength through the achievement of partial objectives. As long as we are unable to disperse authoritarian capitalist enterprises or any other type of reactionary institution, we must work inside them and heighten the contradictions.

Principle #4: Labor organizing must strive to achieve community. This implies that we change the ways we are conditioned to live and deal with other people. We must attempt to reach levels of intimacy and directness, unencumbered by the conventional barriers of race, status, sex, etc. Together we strive at every occasion to enhance the ability of people to affect their environment, to be centers of power, to be self-expressive, be free. It is clear that organizing apart from personal considerations (yours and others' involved) becomes increasingly manipulative, power-abusive, sacrificial of human lives—in short, corrupt.

Our task as Radical Therapists seems to be in line with Malcolm X's work. He once said, "The greatest mistake of the movement has been trying to organize sleeping people around specific goals. You have to wake people up first, then you'll get action." "Wake them up to their exploitation?" the interviewer asked. "No, to their humanity, to their own worth and to their heritage," he answered. In our work helping people develop awareness of their own worth, humanity and power, we are fulfilling the first part of our goal, but we also need to get organized. In short, we've reached people, but we need to organize with them and build with them a solid movement of struggle.

Jerry Fillingim

SANITY, MADNESS AND THE FACTORY

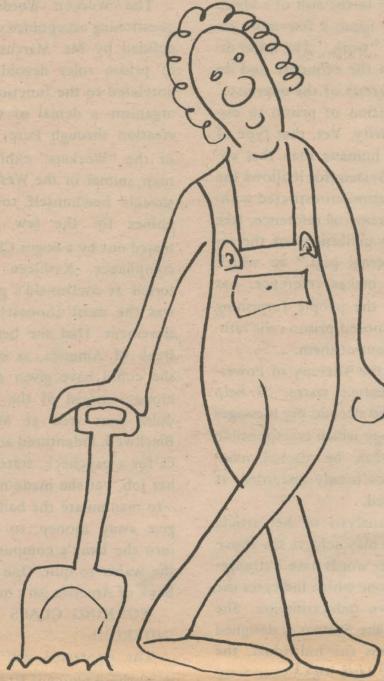
I define alienated labor as that work which people do only for money with no interest in the work itself, no control of working conditions, no control of what is done with the products of their labor and no sense of solidarity with fellow workers. As one person recently said to me, "... alienated labor is like waiting for Godot."

Just as many therapists discount women's feeling that they are being oppressed as pure fantasy or "all in your head," so they often view workers who have trouble relating to their jobs as maladjusted or suffering from some purely internal conflict. This situation closely parallels that of families containing members who "exhibit symptoms of schizophrenia." What is usually found in such families is that the disturbance is not taking place all in one person's head; rather, the "unusual" behavior of the family member being singled out as "crazy" is a symptom of a disturbed pattern of relationships among all the family members. For example, the "crazy" family member may be responding to being put in an impossible double-bind by other family members, a situation where he is offered a limited number of actions to choose from and is somehow considered wrong, bad or crazy no matter which one he chooses. His disorientation may be the result of trying to respond simultaneously to both verbal and non-verbal cues from other family members which flatly contradict each other. Others may make demands on him, and then deny ever having made them and condemn him for acting in accordance with their verbally expressed wishes. If the victim in these transactions can't see clearly what is happening to him, he will become confused, withdrawn, or "irrationally" angry. This process requires that the victim be trained from early life to be nonaggressive, uncritical of others,

and self-doubting. Lowen describes people diagnosed as "schizophrenic" or "schizoid" as having a spaced-out or unfocused expression in the eyes and a very weak feeling of contact with the ground through their legs and feet. In other words, they can't see straight, and they can't stand on their own feet. They are confused and dependent. These processes can and do happen in the factory just as easily as in the family. Reich and others have described the male chauvinist, authoritarian, sexually repressive, nuclear family unit as the training ground which prepares children for all manner of political, social and economic oppression which they will be expected to adjust to in later life.

The dependence of workers may be more economic than emotional, but their confusion and disorientation are no less painful for them. Whenever we find management getting away with giving workers little or no recognition for their efforts, discounting their feelings, scapegoating workers to hide their own inconsistencies and weaknesses, playing them off against each other, and manipulating them with veiled threats, we will find workers who are apathetic, confused, self-doubting and uncooperative. They will engage in irrational and self-destructive behavior both on the job and during their own "free" time. These are the two, mutually reinforcing aspects of the alienated labor syndrome.

Scott Wright



WORK ISSUE

Dear People:

Thank you for your thoughtfulness and consideration in mailing me a gratuitous copy of *Issues in Radical Therapy* (Vol. 3, No. 2) which dealt with WORK.

It appears that IRT is proceeding on the premise that therapy can help people solve the problem of their dehumanization caused by the greedy, money-grubbing minions of the Corporate State. To alleviate the problems brought on by slavery is not to eliminate the institution of slavery. Nor is therapy the solution to what prompts the members of the social order to accept the demands exacted of them by those wielding the economic and political clout in the United States. Therapy is but an elixir which salves the wounds but does not halt organized assault upon the human psyche. The attitude that therapy can help is straight out of the handbook compiled by the establishment.

I am particularly concerned with your concept of "work," especially as related in the context of your latest issue. To begin with, I could not find a common definition in any of the articles you published. . . . "Work" can be the expending of physical or mental energies to further and enlarge the economic interests of the economic and political elite of the Corporate State at the expense of dehumanizing the persons so employed. Or, it can mean stealing, ripping off the Bank of America, a prosti-

P. S.

tute turning a trick, shoplifting, dispensing narcotics without a license, stealthily opening a safe in the still of a night, a land fraud, to name a few more rewarding types of "work." The latter divert money from the economy and do not serve the interests of the oppressor, hence the institution of prison to discourage such activity. Yet, that type of "work" is more humane than that encouraged by the System for it allows the individual to function unrestricted within his/her own frame of reference, free of the restricting inhibitions of the social order. "Internal pigs," to which Hamish Sinclair makes reference, has the majority of the people furnishing their own self-imposed prison cells rather than breaking out of them....

In "Notes on the Therapy of Powerlessness," Joy Marcus states: "I help people expose and decode pig messages so that the ideology which is responsible for oppression can be named, confronted and, if not totally discarded, at least disempowered...."

A thorough analysis of her article does indicate she may achieve the above objective. Yet, her words have a strangely familiar ring—one which indicates the depth of her own indoctrination. She holds that while the System is designed to further oppress the individual, the oppressed should band together to seize the political power. However, history reveals that the oppressed who have had the opportunity to seize the reins of power, and operating within the System they deposed, in turn become the oppressors....

In response to Anthony Eschback and Joan Hertzberg who wrote in "New Work" about creating alternate life and work styles outside the system, I wish to point out that all of us are part of the "system." If it doesn't meet our needs as humans it is because each of us, en-

meshed in our own diverted goals, have allowed ourselves to be ripped off....

The "Workers' Words" reflect an unquestioning acceptance of oppression, as defined by Ms. Marcus—an acceptance of prison roles devoid of joy totally unrelated to the function of the human organism—a denial of the origin of all creation through Pure Joy. The words of the "Workers" exhibit that the human animal in the Western culture will shackle her/himself to desks and machines for the few petty privileges tossed out by a bogus Christian ethic for compliance. Kathleen P. Lancto, interred at McDonald's ptomaine parlor, was the most [honest] about her enslavement. Had she been employed at Bank of America, as is Ms. Blackwell, she could have given away the bank's money instead of the hamburgers she doled out free at McDonald's. Ms. Blackwell, indentured at Bank of America for a paycheck, stated that she hated her job, yet she made no effort to fight—to manipulate the bank's accounts, to give away money, to cram false data into the bank's computer, but instead, she wants to quit. One thing is certain, Bank of America isn't quitting!

WORKING CLASS REVOLUTION, INDEED!!!

The oppressed will find that their strongest weapon is to ignore and disregard the ideologies, the morals, the ethics, the politics of the Western culture which sever the masses from their humanity....

In struggle,
Charles Larsen
California Men's Colony
San Luis Obispo, Ca.

Dear Charles—

Thank you for your feedback; sorry we did not have room to print all of your very long letter.

—IRT Collective



EXPANDING SHRINK

Claude Steiner

Anthony has pointed out to me that in my book *Games Alcoholics Play* especially, but also in *Scripts People Live* it appears that I believe that homosexuality is a mental illness and that I have a strong bias against it.

I must agree with this criticism in regard to *Games Alcoholics Play*. I wrote that book between 1967 and 1969 and at that time my position about homosexuality was that it was an unfortunate choice of life styles. Unfortunate, I felt, because gay people were so mercilessly persecuted, and unfortunate also, because men in particular seemed at a great disadvantage in meeting male companions with whom to have intimate, long-lasting relationships. While I did not think of homosexuality as an illness or a perversion, I was willing to work with men and women who wanted to make a contract to "go straight." I was also capable of allowing into print the following sentence:

"The script is a consciously understood life plan decided upon before the age of fourteen and psychopathologies such as alcoholism, depression, schizophrenia, homosexuality, etc., often represent a script...."

This sentence is a segment of a larger paper reprinted in its entirety in the book. The paper itself was written even earlier with a professional audience in mind; I did not really think of homosexuality as a psychopathology, but I called it that as a concession to and in order to communicate with those who I considered my colleagues and who I now see as our opposition. My true feelings at the time would have been more accurately expressed by putting psychopathologies between quotes.

My views on homosexuality, as are the views of so many psychotherapists, were liberal. This implies that my views were theoretically positive and emotionally negative. I believed that people had a right to choose their sexual preferences. I would never claim that homosexuality was wrong or immoral, and I felt that the laws against homosexuality were wrong. But I also did not believe that homosexuals had as good a chance to be as happy as heterosexuals, I believed that they were more prone to alcoholism, physical violence, loneliness and severe emotional disturbance because I only knew homosexuals in therapy. Most importantly, I was afraid of gay men physically and found discussions of their sexual activities repugnant and therefore avoided them. I believed that a gay man who wanted to go straight was making a wise choice. I also quickly noticed that I had absolutely no success in helping gays change their sexual orientation. Above all, I felt, in some subtle way, that homosexuals were separate and different from me. I wished them well but had no feeling for their lives except that it was in some way tragic, not at all "gay."

It is also dismaying to recall that many of the people who I worked with were referred to me by a gay psychiatrist who must have felt, though he never said so openly, that it would be harmful for him to work with a homosexual. That is a commentary on how things were in those days and probably still are in most of the country even

now. I was also publicly attacked for suggesting elsewhere in *Games* that alcoholism and homosexuality were not diseases.

Yes, the book does reflect heterosexist bias. I regret this because I realize that most readers do not check publication dates on books and I realize how gay men and women who read this book will react to some of my statements about homosexuality.

It may seem here that I am backpedalling; trying to defend what I did in terms of my background and the context in which I worked at the time. I guess that I am confused by the facts of the situation; on the one hand I was in the vanguard of tolerance working in a place which was considered friendly to the gay community (Center for Special Problems in San Francisco). And yet, well meaning as I was, I contributed to the subtle but very real oppression of gays. It is a fact of life for me and I am sure for many other white men, that we don't really know what we can do about our membership in a class which has been so oppressive other than feeling guilty or trying to explain away our acts.

Scripts People Live reflects my current views more accurately, though I am sure it still reflects my inevitable heterosexual bias. By the time I wrote *Scripts* I had been a member of the radical therapy movement for some years and I had come to see that the most important fact about gay people is that they are an extremely oppressed minority. Therapists must take responsibility for their biases and their subtle contribution to the oppression suffered by gays. I want to solicit and I appreciate all criticisms which point out these biases to me.

Professionally trained therapists are prone to have extremely distorted views about homosexuality because we have been taught that it lurks at the core of emotional disturbances such as schizophrenia and alcoholism. For instance, any time that a person exhibits paranoid symptoms I was taught to look for "latent homosexual impulses" so that in my mind homosexuality became associated with the ominous, eerie, bizarre qualities of extreme paranoia. Because homosexuality is believed to be an important factor in psychiatric disturbance, most trained therapists feel compelled to comment on it regardless of how ignorant they may be on the subject and that is something I did in *Games* and even, to a certain extent, in *Scripts*.

I want to say that I support gay liberation and that I support the development of a strong, aggressive gay liberation movement. I am opposed to all laws, employment policies or social trends which treat gay people differently from other people or to procedures designed to change sexual orientation, even by contract. With respect to therapy I also believe that the pervasive nature of heterosexist bias requires that a therapy group that has gays in it should have at least three gay members and that if at all possible one of the therapists should be gay as well, since I don't believe that most heterosexual therapists, including myself, can claim to be sufficiently free of heterosexist bias not to oppress or collude with the oppression of gays in their groups. ■■■



TRANSVESTITE

Guy

Most of my childhood was spent in a small town of about six hundred people in south Georgia. My strongest memories are of an acute sense of loneliness and alienation from the people around me. The discontent I felt stemmed directly from the existence of a rigidly defined sexual class system. During my early childhood the system was not yet so rigid and it was still possible for the neighborhood boys and girls to play together with relatively little conflict. High school changed all that. Suddenly male and female relations were largely restricted to the process of dating. If a boy and a girl became particularly good friends, they were identified as "sweethearts," thus distorting their relationship. I was unable to cope with the system of dating, and so was deprived of contact with girls except through a mystified distance. My relationship with boys was distorted in another way. To gain status among boys, it was necessary to participate in groups such as athletic teams. To me, the social requirements of these groups were harsh and insensitive, and I withdrew from them as much as I did from the process of dating.

The isolation resulting from my inability to fit into the sexual class system caused a great deal of pain, and increasingly I sought some means of escape. I concluded that the source of my pain

was the restrictions and demands placed on me as a boy, and I began to be drawn to the absence of violence and hardness that I noticed among girls. I longed to be able to play as they did without the constant necessity to be tough and emotionally undemonstrative. Denied any chance to directly express that longing, I very early discovered an indirect way to gain a sense of contact with those feelings—I began to put on my older sister's clothing. I am told that this is a common practice among small boys, but for me the practice intensified as I grew older and came into increasingly painful contact with the sexual class system. Of course I could never wear girl's clothes in public, since in patriarchal society it is considered degrading for a male to openly associate himself with femininity. Without being told, I understood that this was a serious social taboo, the violation of which would have the most serious consequences, and so I kept this part of myself carefully hidden from family and friends alike. Increasingly my world became split into two parts: one was a public world which, as the years passed, grew flatter and flatter. The other was private fantasy world into which I poured all my passions and desperate longings for warmth and contact.

It was sometime during my teenage years that I made my first contact with the mental health establishment. From some unknown book I discovered a name for myself—I was a transvestite. What a strange exotic name! How impersonal! And yet it was the first reference I had ever seen to my experience. At least it gave me an identity. It also marked the beginning of a psychiatric distortion of the validity and content of my personal experience that was to dominate my life for years to come. The very label itself completely distorts and obscures the real nature of what has happened to me. It ignores entirely the social fabric from which my pain and conflict arose. It makes no mention of a sexual class system, implicitly assuming that the system is as inevitable as day and night. It treats me as a bizarre isolated phenomenon unrelated to normal society. It focuses exclusively on the superficial issue of what kind of clothing I choose to wear. Ultimately it com-

pletely discounts me with the assertion that as a transvestite I am a sick and defective person.

I almost bought it all. Due to the social isolation already imposed on me by my inability to function within the sexual class system, I had no access to opposing views. I remained ignorant of the social and political content of my experience. I became obsessed with the idea that I was a sick and defective person, and this was particularly destructive because I already had the feeling of being one-down to people generally. In this way, psychiatry greatly intensified my difficulties. There was one thing, however, which I did not buy. It seemed clear to me that the issue of what kind of clothing I wore was superficial. I was sure that there was something more important going on, and since I could see nothing wrong or harmful about the simple act of a man wearing a dress, I obstinately refused to try to suppress the impulse. The many therapists I saw were equally convinced that for a man to wear a dress was clearly wrong and harmful, and my therapy sessions often would become nothing more than a heated argument. An extreme example was one psychiatrist who devoted his main energy to the attempt to get me to submit to aversion therapy with electric shocks. I declined. It is clear that the main interest of these therapists was the suppression of "abnormal behavior" no matter at what cost to the patient involved.

By this time in my life I was living in Berkeley, and I began to be exposed to the exciting ideas of gay and women's liberation. Quickly I realized that my experiences were connected in an organic way, and I soon began to see myself coming out as a transvestite. What I still failed to see was that the very term itself was loaded and contained the seeds of my own defeat as long as I persisted in using it. By identifying myself as a transvestite, I was simply reacting to all those who were arbitrarily trying to suppress my experience. In so doing, I was getting myself more and more attached to the superficial issue of clothing. Although I was slowly developing an awareness of the political content of my experience, I was prevented from making any real

contact with other people because I was so obsessed with a feeling of sickness that I was too frightened to open myself up. This fear of being exposed as the sick, defective being psychiatry had taught me to believe that I was, combined with the resulting social isolation, eventually produced a complete emotional breakdown and an end to my attempt at coming out. In short, the psychiatric distortion and discount of my experience inherent in the very use of that word continued to dominate my life.

At this point I am trying once again to resolve these conflicts. I now have the advantage that I have finally seen through the psychiatric distortion of my reality and can begin to deal with the real issue. The real issue is the sexual class system with its inevitable oppression. My cry of pain has not been a sickness; it has been a reaction to oppression. My pain will not completely disappear until the abolition of the sexual class system. Meanwhile it is serving as a force driving me to greater social and political awareness. My greatest need is to establish contact with other people around these issues, for it is only through contact that real change is made. I would welcome any response either concerning the specific issue of transvestism or the broader issue of the sexual class system. If anyone has comments, please write to me in care of this paper.



Photos by David Greene

THE DEMYSTIFICATION OF THE



Miranda D. Bunque

The penis has been taken too seriously for too long. No organ has been more mystified, from the ancients to the present, than this male sexual organ, commonly known as penis erectus or penis limpans, depending on the state of the affair. I've noticed a hesitation on the part of sexual writers, particularly those on the Left, to embrace the issue of the flesh itself, so that sex has become a head trip. This article attempts to come to grips in a humorous vein with this avoidance by coming to grips with the penis—the object which has caused more confusion, happiness, tears, hatred, dismay than any other human organ.

Because the penis of the homo erectus represents man, the male, the favored sex, and because the penis itself deals directly with sex; the cock, the prick, the schlong, and the schwanzbanger, as it is referred to in the vulgar, has been the butt of both adoration and ridicule throughout the centuries. What men have called a "tool," a "rod," a "gun," a "trouser trout" and a "tube steak," women have referred to with less descriptive praise. Recently, a drop in penis popularity has been indicated by increasingly undignified, irreverent attitudes by women to, as they call it, "It" and "his Thing." Before the situation gets any more out of hand, let us examine what is going on. We will examine the gland, traditionally prized for size and bulk, both historically and psychologically. We will attempt to prove that despite opinions to the contrary, it is still politically correct to possess a penis of which the owner can be proud—no matter what its size or bulk.

Women especially have been affronted, confronted, and defronted by this particular, and to some, peculiar, piece of flesh. Consequently, they respond to it in numerous ways which express how confident and friendly they feel towards it. A not uncommon response when confronted with one is, "Yucko." Another, not quite so hostile, is confessed by Suzie Rabinowitz with her tireless sense of humor: "I can't stop giggling every time one of them pops out!" Marsha Fenster confides, "My lover Harold's makes me positively swoon, but the rest of them look like turkeys . . ." Linda Clitgarde, no amateur voyeur she, followed her "Yucko" with a confident, "I just think I'm prettier, genetically speaking." Ilene Hood, inspired by such frankness, blurted she suffers from (may the fates save us all) "penis envy." Fortunately, someone was on the ball, and asked her what she meant. "I don't come, and he does. I'm jealous—his equipment works and mine doesn't. And another thing I noticed—he can piss anywhere and I keep getting poison oak in the bushes . . ."

Each of these women agreed on one thing: it's time for total exposure of the Penis so it can be dealt with realistically.

The penis has become the universal symbol in literature, poetry, and psychology of potency, power, and masculine prowess. Writers like Lawrence, Joyce, Mailer, Hemingway sang praises of the mighty, forceful, magnificent, turgid, swordlike, ripping, tearing, stabbing, driving, thrusting, powerful penis. Freud said, in summary, "If you don't have one, you're fucked up." Even Eric Berne, in his innovative ideas about people, hyperbolically glorified the penis. In his book *Sex and Human Loving*, he devotes four pages to penis power and one page to female power. "The sexual power of the male has three elements: potency, force and drive. Potency is shown by the firmness of his erection, force by the ardor of his thrust, and drive by the muzzle velocity of his ejaculation." (This is your basic penis = gun metaphor.) He plunges on, enraptured: "The man is like a charging unicorn, not only stiff and ready, but so turgid and eager that he feels he must start his thrust or burst with the fullness of his potency. It is in this state that the cap sometimes turns upward, as though pleading to the heavens for immediate fulfillment." Eric Berne was not alone in his beliefs.

The necessary contrast for glorification of the penis was degradation of the vulva. Where penises received homage, vulvas were scorned; where penises were signs of strength and power and aggressiveness, vulvas meant passivity or danger. For some, vulvas were symbols of receptivity, nurturance, passivity, acceptance. For others, they represented the terrors of the dark, unknown—caves, lairs, scary, dark, smelly, dirty, and dangerous, as exemplified in the image of the toothsome, vampire cunt: the vagina dentata. As the penis became more mystified by public adoration it became more god-like than human. Women feared to touch it. "What if it breaks?" Others resented the easy access it supplied to the world. "If you have a penis you can get anything."

The women's liberation movement recognized this and struck first at this level. A below-the-belt attack, women felt it justifiable considering the years they'd put up with the Phallus of Oz, enduring yeast, pills, pregnancy and no orgasms. So it's rough times now for the former headliner. No longer is it worshipped. Sometimes it's not even liked. But mostly, like the unearthing of Stonehenge or any ancient magical site, it's viewed with delighted curiosity, a few romantic notions, relief at its friendliness and surprise at its ingenuity. The penis has become human.

In truth, according to Masters and Johnson, the penis is an enlarged clitoris. Women can have more orgasms than men. And in proper perspective, the penis fails as often as does the vulva. However, in reaction to the years of sexual competition between men and women, with the emergence of "clit power" came the corresponding shrinking of "cock power." After all, social and political changes couldn't help but drastically alter sex roles. The penis reacted to these changes as did the man behind the penis. "The glans is the man" goes the old saying; it serves as a social dipstick to measure the varied responses to the new social orders. The modern penis reacted in five basic ways.

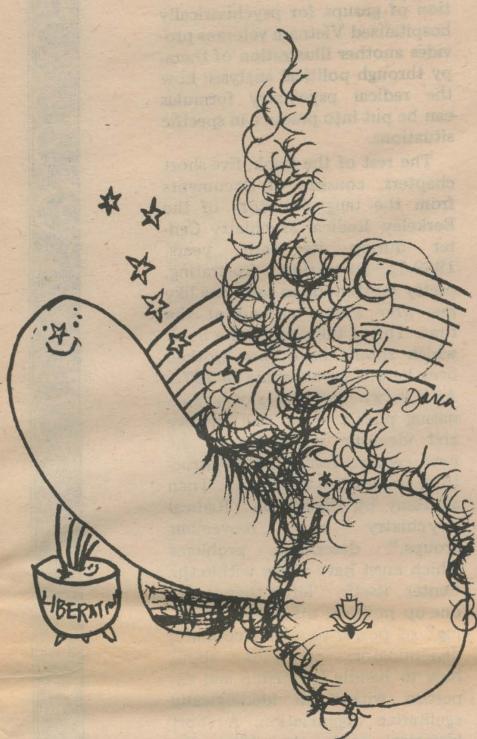


Penis Paralyticus

Marsha Fenster noted this reaction first. "All I did was tell Harry I wanted to be on top, not the bottom, and poop—there it went. What's up?"

Marsha's case, overblown though it appears, is not unusual. Harry is suffering from Penis Paralyticus. Like millions of others, Harry's penis had grown accustomed to snuggling into any cozy cavern, anyplace, anytime, anyhow, with never a thought he might not be welcome. He was confident of his abilities as a lover because his love-making routine never failed to work and "keeping it up" never got Harry down with worries. So when his penetrating routine required a change of pace for Marsha, Harry felt crushed. His trusty friend drooped with lack of confidence, and the droop got drooper the more Harry worried about his "impotency." (In some esoteric therapy circles this would be phrased, "His penis was in its scared child." In even more esoteric circles this might be phrased, "His penis is going with its pig.") Which leads us to the natural conclusion that, therefore, for Marsha to have intercourse with Harry means she is internalizing the oppression.) Marsha took his limpness as a slap

in the face for being assertive. After bickering, exchanging paranoias, and having 20 mediations they actually got around to talking with one another. Later Marsha summarized: "We both realized that sex, like our lives, has its ups and downs; but I never knew Harry had downs, and he never knew I had ups."



Phallus in Wonderland

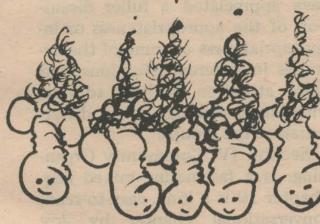
Playboy penises frequently rose to a state of perpetual excitement with the advent of "free sex." "I LOVE liberated women," a damp and sweaty lawyer panted. "They've taught me everything I know about sex. Best thing since law school...." Running wildly from vulva to vulva in a hypertrophied state, Leo plunged into women's liberation, becoming the first on his block to get into the movement. He lost his mind and followed his head. "I'm turned on to your working-class origins," he reassured the various ladies, defending his prurient interests as being purely non-sexist. Ah, it was Phallus in Wonderland until the women happened to meet, compare lines and notes, and pull the plug on Leo's delights in a barrage of political criticism for his sexism and "Intimacy pig."

So Leo switched to group sex—or collective sex, as he learned to term it—and the last I heard he and his penis had gone "bi" in Phoenix. He opened the Erogenous Movement Center right across the street from the Center for Personal and Sexual Struggle and Dialectics and the two groups entered into dialogue about the real meaning of sex. Leo espoused, "Come for NOW" and the Center, hardline Marxists, countered, "Come for Mao." Contradictions and counter-contradictions raged, but Leo stood firm. "I absolutely disagree that sex is the opiate of the masses," bravely exposing himself to charges of being a liberal. Which goes to show what happens if you have too much fun and try to be a man about it.



Penis Leftus

The most bizarre penile reaction to the social situation was retraction. In these extreme, and hopefully rare, cases, subconscious guilt about being a male colluded perfectly with Movement guilt about being a male oppressor. Fully conscious of their role in worldwide sexual oppression, some white middle-class males went to great lengths to support womanhood. "I wish I'd been born a woman," wailed Charlie, who conscientiously referred to himself as "herself" to prove his point. Guiltier friends cried, "Penis? What penis?" when confronted with the fact of their sex. Charlie, however, justified the use of his male instrument by assuring critics he used it only under the most politically correct circumstances and had orgasms only when fantasizing about the Revolution or Ho Chi Minh poster. The politically correct penis, the People's Penis, hung left, rather than right, even. Penis Leftus withered at last in a rash of self-criticism when heterosexuality and something called "trashing monogamy" proved to be revisionist. Recently, some men have risen in protest. Male genital pride swells again and rumor has it that some old lefty down on the Ave. sells "Penis Pride" bumper stickers to make his subsistence living.



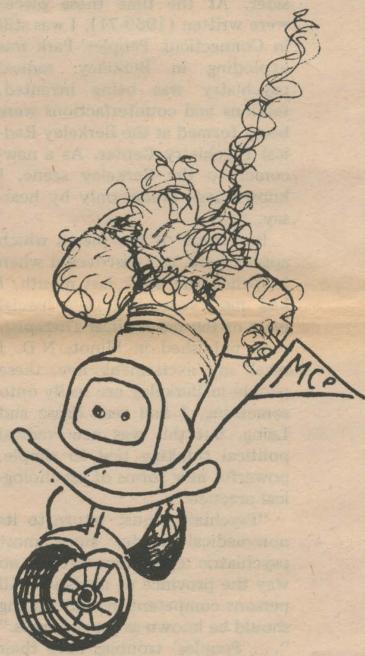
Penis Fraternus

My knowledge of Penis Fraternus is limited, being, as it is, third hand. This penis rates equal in importance as the others so I include it in the survey. With the sexual pressure off, penises and vulvas could become "just friends" and so did their owners, much to the relief of many vulvas who didn't want to deal with "those things" anyway. Many penises came to love each other in a spirit of true brotherhood and open affection. However, all was not rosy. Some Penis Leftus masqueraded as Penis Fraternus and "prick tease" meant something new. Charlie, for example, striving to be the complete brother, blew hot and cold in his sexual devotion. As a brokenhearted gay put it, "In his heart he may be gay, yet in his cock he's not."

Penis Tyrannicus Rex

The most odious, vile response to changing times was that of classic MCPs who felt both intellect and personality in the few inches comprising the Levi bulge. Dedicated machos, they viewed any change in sexual privilege as death itself. The first penises to quit "getting any"—as it didn't take much consciousness on the vulva's part to figure Rex was more machine than man—Rex declared war. "So my motorcycle, biceps and beer stories aren't good enough for you chicks, huh?" he raged. In defense, he bought a T-shirt advertising his philosophy: "Cut down on rape—Say yes!" Rex's reign was cut short.

In some parts of the country roaming bands of Amazons armed with spiked dildos took up his T-shirt challenge, leaving Rex raw and overcome in the bushes. Other Rexes prompted rape-law reform. A few hardened cases realized "You can't fight history" and decided to come clean. They joined M'hatma Rayzinz Chakra and Bliss Center where they learned to channel some of that penile energy to the heart and brain. They quit growling and slobbering and developed senses of humor. Some even found "a girl"; others found gurus.



Continuing with the demystification of the penis, here are *Five Phallic Fallacies* most commonly believed by the masses:

1. The penis has a bone in it.

No, no, no! The penis is made of spongy tissue which, when dried, resembles a lufa sponge. (I know because a friend of mine dries them in her basement with her herbs.)

2. Blue Balls cause excruciating pain.

No more pain than that abdominal congestion sometimes noted as indigestion which a woman feels when she gets turned on and doesn't have an orgasm, or enough orgasms.

3. The penis causes orgasms in women.

No. Women make their own orgasms, and anyway, more and more of them now agree the tongue is mightier than the penis.

4. Re semen: "If you love me, you'll swallow it."

Semen is not Holy Water. Be ecological; use it for massage oil.

5. Nothing is more useless than a limp penis.

Believe it or not, an increasing number of women say, "Post-come cocks are fun to wiggle around on." Try it.

BOOK REVIEWS



Readings in Radical Psychiatry, an anthology by Claude Steiner, Hogie Wyckoff, Joy Marcus, Daniel Goldstine, Peter LaRiviere, Robert Schwobel, and members of the Radical Psychiatry Center; Grove Press Evergreen Paperback, New York, 1975.

I'll declare my bias at the beginning: I'm a friendly reviewer of these authors' work. I have worked with many of them for a year, and have read and respected their other writings. But I approach this anthology as an outsider. At the time these pieces were written (1969-71), I was still in Connecticut. Peoples' Park was exploding in Berkeley, radical psychiatry was being invented, factions and counteractions were being formed at the Berkeley Radical Psychiatry Center. As a newcomer to the Berkeley scene, I know these events only by hearsay.

But some of the pieces which appear here, as I discovered when I opened the book last month, I had read years ago in a special issue of the old *Radical Therapist*, then published in Minot, N.D. I recall my excitement—hey, these people in Berkeley are really onto something. I had read Szasz and Laing, but this was new—radical political thinking tied to simple, powerful new forms of psychological practice.

"Psychiatry must return to its non-medical origins since most psychiatric conditions are in no way the province of medicine. All persons competent in soul healing should be known as psychiatrists." "... Peoples' troubles have their source not within them but in their alienated relationships, in their exploitation, in polluted environments, in war, and in the profit motive." "... All psychiatric help should be by contract; that is, people should choose when, what, and with whom they want to change ..." (from the Manifesto by Claude Steiner). Strange to encounter these essays again; the ideas have become so basic to me that I had forgotten where they came from. Rereading, it's clear these statements changed my working life in basic ways.

The book is organized into four sections. Part I is the Radical Psychiatry Manifesto by Claude Steiner—a basic statement, more reactive against old-line psychiatry than the pieces he's writing now. A document of great eloquence and power.

Section II, Theory, includes articles by Claude and by Hogie Wyckoff. Again my bias shows: I like their thinking, like most everything they write. "On alienation" and "Teaching radical psychiatry," "The stroke economy," and "Women's scripts" present basic theory. Some of the material in these three articles reappears in revised form in Claude's book *Scripts People Live*.

Section III, Therapy, has articles by Claude and Hogie, again presenting material not available elsewhere. Readers who discovered radical psychiatry through reading IRT or *Scripts People Live* will appreciate these earlier writings because they fill in the

tion of groups for psychiatrically hospitalized Vietnam veterans provides another illustration of therapy through political analysis: how the radical psychiatry formulas can be put into practice in specific situations.

The rest of the book, five short chapters, consists of documents from the tangled history of the Berkeley Radical Psychiatry Center during its early years, 1969-71—interesting, frustrating, pretty mysterious to someone like me who wasn't around at the time. This is the part of the book which should have been worked over before republishing in 1975. At it is, we have pieces of a fascinating puzzle. First, the creative and idealistic manifestos of the new center, describing its structure, procedures and values. Then an essay by Claude on "Radical psychiatry and movement groups," describing problems which must have arisen within the Center itself: "lefter-than-thou" one-up political infighting, "leveling" of power to a least common denominator; confusion about how to handle leadership and expertise within an ideologically egalitarian organization. A short historical chapter, describing splits in the radical psychiatry group; disappointing because so little is said about underlying issues, feelings, reasons. An appendix written by the group which split off from the center, contributing to the reader's mystification since the criticisms and self-criticisms sound important but do not connect squarely with what's been presented in the documents of the mainstream group. Claude's rueful postscript on his own and others' inability to work well with his personal power within the organization. I wish these last three documents had laid the conflicts on the line, named names, made the issues clear. We could have had an invaluable case study of the interplay of the personal and the political in messing up an organization over time. I hope such a case study will someday be written; the problems hinted at here have wrecked so many radical groups, and retrospective, psychologically acute wisdom about what happened is sorely needed.

The book is overpriced (\$4.95 in paperback). Still, I recommend it—the theoretical chapters, in particular, are basic documents from a movement I value, mindbending when they first appeared, useful still today.

—Sara Winter



groundwork and show how Claude and Hogie organize and run their problem solving groups. I would have appreciated a fuller discussion of the appropriateness or inappropriateness of some of the exercises in different situations; and more attention to how to deal with leader-member power differentials in the groups.

Section IV, Community Organizing, is a fascinating mixed bag. Chapter 10 is a long, easy-to-read, conversational chapter by Joy Marcus with Danny Goldstine and Peter LaRiviere, describing their work on the locked ward at Contra Costa County Hospital in Martinez, California. As radical therapists they brought human warmth and a pointed political analysis of the nature of "mental illness" and of staff/patient power structures in the ward. This is a useful, thought-provoking presentation of what they did, how they felt, and what they learned about organizing inside conventional institutions of psychological "treatment." Bob Schwobel's descrip-

Hold Me Until Morning, a one-act play by Daniel Rudman, 1975. Published by, and available from Fred Cody Books, Telegraph and Haste Sts., Berkeley, CA 94704, \$1.00.

Daniel Rudman's one-act play is a truly remarkable statement about male sexuality. Daniel sent me a review copy of the play after reading my article on "Men's sexual oppression" in last winter's IRT. My article described men's oppressive sexual programming in an abstract way and from the outside; his play opens down into the experience itself. It's vivid, funny and very, very deep.

There are two characters: "Self, a male, twenty-five years old, living in Berkeley" and "Penis, a male, twenty-five years old, living in Berkeley." The play consists of a tragic-comic dialogue between the two. Rather than describe Rudman's style and tone, I would like to quote extended sections from early in the play:

PENIS (Still half asleep) Whaa... what's the matter... hey... hey quit shaking me so hard.

SELF Finally you're up.

PENIS Nooooh... I'm not.

SELF Come on Prick.

PENIS What time is it?

SELF About 1:30.

PENIS Oh God.

SELF No-no, Prick... Don't go back to sleep.

PENIS Leave me alone.

SELF Don't go back to sleep again. I need you.

PENIS What for?

SELF You know Prick... I still can't



PENIS You promise.

SELF Yes. (Trying to control impatience)

PENIS But who says I can help you now when the other two times I couldn't?

SELF Sometimes it takes three times... You know that Prick... you know that... Now help me this last time... All right?... All right?... Are you ready?

PENIS (Resignedly) I guess so.

SELF Good. (Self grabs Penis in his right hand and begins to run fingers along Penis's body.)

PENIS Uh-wait... wait... don't yank me so hard... I told you I'm sore.

SELF (Mechanically) Sorry.

PENIS It's too sensitive there... start a little lower down.

SELF Like that?

PENIS Better

SELF Good. (Eyes closed, faraway tone of voice)... Good.

PENIS Yes... Yes... Much better... Your fingers feel so warm and strong.

SELF Good.

PENIS I'm starting to feel excited already, Self... Self?

SELF (Faraway) Good... but please... please don't talk about it.

PENIS All right Self, but look at me when you're touching me... open your eyes, all right?... so you don't seem so far away.

SELF Please stop talking, I'm trying to concentrate.

PENIS Why can't you open your eyes?

SELF (Angrily) Shut up! Damn it! I just told you I needed to concentrate didn't I?... Didn't I?

PENIS (Stunned) I'm sorry...

SELF Didn't I just tell you that?

PENIS I said I'm sorry.

SELF That doesn't help me get to sleep.

(Still gripping Penis tightly)

continued →

THE DIALECTIC OF SEX, Shulamith Firestone, William Morrow and Co., New York, 1970.

The Dialectic of Sex is a book with which it is a pleasure to disagree.

Shulamith Firestone brings substantial equipment to the task of building a case for feminist revolution. Her book is full of information; it is never dull, always provocative. Her view of life is refreshingly wide-angled, encompassing ecological, economic, historical and other perspectives too often ignored by a feminism intently focused on its righteous rage and self-renewal. At the same time, Shulamith Firestone avoids the pose of dispassionate dialectician and feels no need to filter her own feelings of anger and concern from her argument.

Firestone praises Marx' and Engels' use of dialectical materialism as a method for analyzing history, but criticizes them for viewing economics as the most crucial materialist factor. Not economics, she argues, but sex deserves pride of place: the sexual division predates economic ones; sex-class is more basic than economic class.

There follow skillful and original discussions of: the history of American feminism; Freudianism re-examined in

terms of power relations; a critique of modern-day childhood in the context of the nuclear family; an analysis of racism in terms of psychological power; love, romance, and (male) culture.

Some of what she offers is powerful, some doesn't work. In her discussion of childhood, for instance, although the history she reports is filtered through the needs of her argument, her passion about the oppression of children is great enough to carry her argument into the arena of credibility. Her critical comments on Freud are persuasive, but she ignores them and continues to use Freudian concepts, with all their limitations, in the rest of the book, particularly when she talks of love relationships. She tries to describe racism using a metaphor of the family, and it doesn't work; it feels to me contrived and naive, as if

she were not terrifically interested in the subject.

The most important disagreement I have with Shulamith Firestone is around her view of "The Ultimate Revolution": the feminist one. She writes:

The failure of the Russian Revolution is directly traceable to the failure of its attempts to eliminate the family and sexual repression. This failure, in turn, as we have seen, was caused by the limitations of a male-biased revolutionary analysis based on economic class alone, one that failed to take the family fully into account even in its function as an economic unit. By the same token, all socialist revolutions to date have been or will be failures for precisely these reasons. . . . Thus it is no sur-



continued →

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PENIS Ow, that hurts.

SELF Stay hard then.

PENIS I said, that hurts. Quit it!

SELF Stay hard then, damn it!

PENIS I can't.

SELF Shit! Look at you . . . curled up like a goddamn worm . . . now you're the same as when I woke you.

PENIS I told you I was tired and sore.

SELF (Sarcastically) That's right, I forgot.

PENIS But why do you get so angry over a few words?

SELF A few words?

PENIS I just wanted you to open your eyes and look at me . . . is that such a terrible thing to ask?

SELF Yes, damn it! Yes! . . . Because I was in the middle of my fantasy and your goddamn words destroyed it . . . I was in the Co-op and that woman who always wears a daisy in her hair—you know, the one with the huge breasts and long silky black hair—she comes up to me smiling and asks me to have lunch at her house and as soon as we walk in the door she whispers in my ear that she wants to fuck me first, and as she's saying this she's pulling off her blouse and then she starts to unzip my fly and the zipper's half way down when your whining voice goes, "Open your eyes, open your eyes, open your eyes!"

PENIS (Controlling his anger, getting in touch with something about himself) I see . . . I see . . .

SELF You see what?

SELF I see.

SELF You see how you ruined everything.

PENIS (Still in himself) I see that my talking got in the way of your fantasy . . . your fantasy . . .

SELF That's right.

PENIS Your fantasy.

★★★

SELF Prick . . .

PENIS Hahahahahahaha—

SELF Prick . . . What's so funny? . . . Come on now, stop this laughing. What's gotten into you? . . . Come on . . . (He grabs hold of Penis again) . . .



Come on . . . let's get it over with, okay? . . . So I can get to sleep . . . okay? . . . Okay? . . . Come on!

PENIS Get your hand off me!

SELF What do you mean?

PENIS (With increasing hostility) I said, take your hand off me! Take it off!

SELF But why?

PENIS Because I want you to!

SELF I . . . I don't understand . . . I thought you . . . Why? Because I yelled at you for talking?

PENIS No.

SELF I told you I was sorry. I told you I shouldn't have gotten so upset . . .

PENIS That's not why . . .

SELF Then what's . . .

PENIS I'm sick and tired of you . . . Just leave me alone!

SELF Wait, Prick—you just can't . . . (Pulling Penis) You just can't . . .

PENIS Stop it! Stop grabbing me . . . Stop pulling me! I'm not going to help you no matter what you do . . . You hear me?

SELF (Alarmed, confused) What's wrong Prick? I . . .

PENIS LET GO, DAMN IT! (Self finally lets go).

SELF What's gotten into you? You've always done it before . . . every time I've ever asked you . . .

PENIS (Almost hysterical) YOU'RE DAMN RIGHT! EVERY FUCKING TIME YOU'VE ASKED!

SELF I never . . .

PENIS And not only when you couldn't get to sleep either . . .

SELF I never said . . .

PENIS Not only when you couldn't get to sleep . . . When you hadn't succeeded in sticking me inside a cum for a long time I HELPED YOU OUT. And when you felt depressed about not being able to write your short stories I HELPED YOU OUT. And when you were lonely on Friday and Saturday nights, after you took your long walk up to Telegraph Avenue, after you went into Moe's Book Store, after you bought your Top Dog and then your double scoop ice-cream cone at Swenson's, after you walked across the campus to Northside and bought another ice-cream cone and then finally walked home feeling so goddamn worthless and sorry for yourself, I HELPED YOU OUT!

SELF I never said you didn't. I never . . .

PENIS And don't you ever forget it, Self. You hear me? . . . You hear me? . . . Don't you ever . . .

SELF I never . . . Take it easy, Prick, take it easy. I never said . . . You've always helped me out . . . always. That's why I can't understand why you suddenly refused me . . .

PENIS (Shrieking) Because I'm sick and tired of being USED!

SELF Used?

PENIS Yes. Used! You self-centered bastard. Used! . . .

PENIS Why can't you think about me when you touch me? Why? Why? Why can't you get turned on by me?

SELF You?

PENIS Yes, me! Me! Me!

SELF I never heard of such a thing.

PENIS Why not? Why!

SELF Because it's crazy, crazy! I'm just not turned on by pricks.

PENIS I'm not talking about any penis. I'm talking about ME!

SELF Okay, you then . . . You . . . I'm not excited by you. I've never been excited by you. All right . . . all right . . . are you satisfied now?



→ →

prise that socialism as it is now constituted in the various parts of the world is not only no improvement on capitalism, but often worse. (p. 240)

For a dialectician, Firestone's view of the world is exceedingly linear. According to the above statement, the Russian Revolution and all other socialist revolutions are discrete happenings, with a definite finale, after which it is possible to assess the "success" of the venture. To do so, a tally is used: how was the performance in the area of collectivizing agriculture? centralizing administration? eliminating the family? Each category stands separate and distinct from all the others.

I disagree. The Russian Revolution, like all revolutions, is in process; nor is it separate and distinct from the industrial revolution in Europe or the sexual revolution in America or any other significant contribution to the growth of humanity, wherever on earth it may occur. It is one phase of a world development which began eons ago and is not

about to terminate tomorrow with any particular revolution. Within that continuum, sexual repression by authoritarian families, including the oppression of children and women, serves a very specific function. So long as people must struggle and work for survival, parts of their human equipment must be distorted. What fully integrated, sexually alive human being, in touch at all moments with feelings, wants, life-force in general, could stand to work forty hours a week in some factory or office, or submit to the good wife-mother syndrome? Why, then, should it be assumed that the social need for the family would suddenly change in the Soviet Union because a revolution occurred in 1917? That transfer of political power, in an atmosphere of Russian poverty and isolation, and worldwide hostility, did the important work of initiating a reorganization of economic relations. But the Soviet Union, like the rest of the world, had no choice but to continue industrializing, creating the tech-

nological basis for freedom from work which, Firestone accurately points out, is the precondition of all other freedoms.

The Russian Revolution didn't fail to eliminate the family because it was male-biased. It failed to eliminate the family because it still needed the family. Americans have the luxury of debating the point because this country is rich enough to fantasize the time when alienated work, and with it alienated sexuality derived from the oppression of women, will vanish. That is why feminism today can be so much more radical, and so much more productive, than feminism in the 1890s. That is why women in America can feel their rage, collect their wits, reorganize their lives. Firestone's book is as much a result of the times as it is a contribution to them. Had she more insight into the roots of her own consciousness, the contribution she makes might have been even more substantial than it is.

—Beth Roy



PENIS No, because it's not true. It's not true. You once were, years ago ... Don't you remember?

SELF Me?

PENIS When you were nine or ten and first realized that I could do more than help you piss ... remember? ... remember?

SELF Nine or ten ... (straining to recall)

PENIS You loved me then.

SELF God, that was long ago.

PENIS But it doesn't change the fact that I turned you on.

SEL F Long long ago ... before I'd ever seen a vagina ... long long ago ...

PENIS But it doesn't change the fact ...

SELF No ... no ... (letting himself be taken back through the years) ... I guess not ...

PENIS Remember the first time?

SELF I was so naive then ... so naive ... I was in that movie in Brooklyn ... I felt you get hard and I was gripping you tightly through my pants pocket



and then you startled the shit out of me by jerking up and down like a bucking bronco. I didn't know what the hell was happening.

PENIS I can still feel exactly how your fingers felt through the dungarees.

SELF And after that, every night after my mother tucked me in and turned off the lights, after I was sure that my younger brother was sleeping, I'd grab hold of you and start playing with you ... I used to look forward to it.

PENIS Me too ... I couldn't wait for night to come ...

SELF God, you were like some fantastic toy ... all my own. A secret magic toy. The more I touched you the bigger and harder and hotter you got ...

PENIS Your fingers were the magic ...

SELF ... Until you got so big and hot and hard that you'd start dancing, dancing wildly, dancing wildly and spitting as though you were having a fit ... a crazy man gone out of control. I felt like laughing and crying at the same time ... I loved it.

PENIS I loved it too ... always ... and loved it when you continued to hold me in your hand ... when you held me the whole night until morning ... until morning ... Remember?

SELF Yes ... yes ... I remember. But those days didn't last very long ... not very long at all (returning to the present) ...

This leads in to the main part of the play, in which Self and Penis consider together all that was going on beneath the surface during an incident when Self masterfully attempted to seduce a sexy woman named Shiela whom he actually didn't like very much or feel very safe with. The anatomy of impotence is laid bare, through a long, searching and painful confrontation of the two as they face the violence of the incident. By the end of the play there is a glimpse of the possibility of love, unity and reconciliation between the two characters.

The play is set in the bedroom; nothing is said explicitly about the oppressive institutions which are ultimately responsible for the all-too-typical problems Self and Penis have with each other. I believe that male-sex-typing serves capitalism, and will change profoundly only as capitalistic institutions change. Yet as an imaginative statement of experience the play is a powerful vehicle for consciousness-raising.

Men to whom I have showed the play, have recognized in it their own experience. Women (like me) have read it with fascination, identifying with Penis in the first part of the dialogue, with Shiela later in the play. I hope many people of both sexes will read this play and use it to deepen their examination of sexism, internalized sexual oppression, and heterosexism in their own lives.

-Sara Winter

MORE book reviews

Meatless Recipes For A Hypoglycemia Diet by Bette Lamont, privately printed in Seattle, \$1.00. (Available through COOKBOOK, 1127 NW Market, Seattle, Wash. 98107; send 25¢ for postage and handling.)

Meatless Recipes For A Hypoglycemia Diet is a political cookbook. It is political in its efforts to deny the high-carbohydrate, "speed food" diets that are pushed by producers of chemically-processed, high sugar foods. The effect of these foods in our diet, for many people, is a whole syndrome of symptoms known as hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar. By eating a standard

American diet of "speed food," and suffering the effects of hypoglycemia, we cooperate in our oppression in two ways: first, by financially supporting companies that offer us almost no nutritional value in return; and second, by accepting the diagnoses of professionals that our bodies' reactions to these foods are physical or mental illness.

The cookbook is meatless for those who are following a hypoglycemia diet and wish to maintain vegetarian eating habits. The recipes range from salads and main dishes to desserts, with the emphases on a high protein ratio and poison-free foods.

-Bette Lamont



In Search of a Therapy, edited by Dennis Jaffe; published by Harper and Row, New York, 1974. \$3.45

As part of a small group of people struggling to redefine psychology, I often forget, and need to be reminded of the vastness of the oppressive traditional world of psychology. I also need to hear about the ways in which we are winning the struggle. I need to hear that people are finding ways to integrate therapy experiences into the continuity of their lives. *In Search of a Therapy* serves these needs for me by presenting the views of nine people working in different non-conventional ways in the therapy field.

In the first three chapters, Gordon, Cottle, and Clark speak of the way traditional views of therapy are oppressive to therapists. Non-professionals are denied respect based on their skills and are made to feel inferior in role, status, power and income to all professionals, our sense of value coming from how well we meet the expectations delivered in professional directives. The corresponding price paid by the professional is the heavy burden of grandiose and unrealistic expectations placed on them by the myth of their doctorates.



The alternatives to these therapies cover a spectrum of healing paths from radical political activity to intensely introspective body awareness. The authors are exploring these possibilities through their personal involvement in political experiences, in schools, hospitals, clinics, halfway houses, rap groups. There are several explorations of the healing potential of supportive communities, including halfway houses, crisis centers and rap groups. There is a hope expressed by several authors, perhaps most concisely stated by Dennis Jaffe, that skills learned in these groups will help us develop "a new type of community in which healing is a part of the entire social environment."

The shortcoming that disturbed me in this book was the lack of discussion of groups that are particularly oppressed by traditional psychiatry. Hopefully fuller pursuit of these issues by the authors would reveal that those who are most oppressed because of their deviations, madnesses, creative criticisms are women, minority races, poor and gay men and women; these people's causes were not specifically examined in this volume.

I finished *In Search of a Therapy* with a sense of optimism. My feelings grow from the suggestions that by living therapeutic lives in which we are more fully and personally integrated with our bodies, our feelings, a supportive community and the larger political community we can become whole and cease altogether seeking for therapies outside of our own experiences.

-Bette Lamont

readers' responses

RETARDATION

Dear Friends,

I would like to get together to talk with people who have worked with or have a special interest in retarded people and are interested in talking about their problems from a radical perspective. I did social work in a state institution in Pennsylvania for two years, and now I would like to explore my own attitudes and the politics of mental retardation in this society. It's difficult to do that alone, and I know of no group that is thinking about or working for radical change in this area. If anyone has any information or would just like to talk, I'd be grateful.

Marcia Hince
2737 McAllister St.
San Francisco, CA 94118

ELECTROSHOCK THERAPY

Dear Folks,

NAPA, Network Against Psychiatric Assault, has made ECT into a cause celebre in the last few months by opposing it at Langley Porter, and apparently were successful in getting the California legislature to pass strict controls on its use. The efforts backfired, though, because the legislation provided for a panel of total strangers to review the "patient's" own secrets to determine when ECT is appropriate. This does, in my view, invade a person's right to keep his secrets secret. The courts enjoined against the implementation of the act. I don't know the final outcome.

The issue here ultimately comes down to the same one as in abortion laws and drug control laws, and laws against suicide. In the case of abortion and heroin use I imagine you'll agree with me that a person has a right to decide what he/she will put into or take out of his/her body. In saying "No one should receive ECT, ever" (p. 11 of Vol. II, no. 3), you are taking the same position as the Catholic Church on abortion or Harry Anslinger on marijuana. What if someone wants ECT? Who are you or I to say that he must not have it? This is what Thomas Szasz said when he spoke at Glide Memorial Church at the beginning of this month. If someone wants ECT, he has the same right to it as someone who wants to take heroin (which I believe should be available at cost) or someone who wants to chop off his own right index finger. NAPA and you seem to have fallen into the same error as the pigs in *Animal Farm* in fighting oppression, there is the danger of becoming oppressive oneself. Let's live and let live—take away the civil authority of psychiatrists, but let's not, in doing so, take the freedom we set out to protect. Let's let the individual decide on the electric currents to be introduced into or withheld from his own brain.

Love,
Steve Tobias

P.S. I love IRT and appreciate a clear and honest rap about our lives. Keep it coming!

We said "We believe no one should receive ECT, ever" and that we do believe. We didn't say that there should be a law against it. Anyway, we don't know any one who wants to chop off a finger. Do you?

readers' responses re

REICH ISSUE

IRT Collective Dear People,

I am writing to subscribe to IRT. I am in the Community-Clinical Psych. Program at San Jose State & have been since September when the program was started. I used the two issues about Wilhelm Reich in writing a paper for one of my classes about Reich's differences with Freud. The instructor got a little uptight about it. Most of the people down here have never heard of Reich or IRT for that matter.

SJS is still locked into a lot of traditional bullshit. Many of my co-students have all these ideas about how in five years they'll have an office in someplace like Saratoga and be collecting \$35.00/hour from their clients. Some of the instructors are in even worse places. Sometimes it is frustrating.

I am really stimulated by what I have read of the radical therapy movement writings. They contain a lot of things that I have tried for years (without success) to make clear to some of my more dogmatic Marxist friends and to some of my more naive "touchy-feely" friends (and to myself!). I devoured the two Reich issues and finished them with warm feelings toward your (all's) efforts. I meant to subscribe sooner.

Keep on,
Richard Ferry
San Jose, California



TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

Dear IRT,

I'm not resubscribing because I do not agree with the T.A. orientation. T.A. is not radical therapy. It is superficial gameplaying appropriate for middle-class cocktail parties—glib, smart and suburban.

Sorry,
Amy L. Rosebury
Psychologist
Conway, Mass.

LETTERS

Dear IRT Collective:

I have been receiving IRT now for a year, and have enjoyed it greatly. Working in a state-funded mental health center, it has been one of the few stimulating journals that I have seen—your issues on Reich, Sex and the Left, and now Work have been the most outstanding.

Although I have doubts about T.A. as shrink approach (possibly from the misuse I have seen people make of it), I am particularly interested (to say I like it) in Joy Marcus' article on "Notes on the Therapy of Powerlessness." I have given myself the permissions she stated.

In struggle,
Jim Fuller
Lincoln, Neb.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Dear People:

I have recently started receiving IRT—the subscription was a gift from a friend. The first issue arrived shortly after I had given termination notice at work, where I was a psychiatric nurse. Reading IRT was refreshing and supportive and reinforce my well-thought-out ideas about how destructive traditional psychiatry can be and, even more important, that there are viable alternatives. It was invalidating to myself to work in a situation where staff members were not safe enough to share their feelings and show that they cared about each other. There was a rigid hierarchy of administration and little relevant communication going on between them and the rest of the staff. We also got caught up in the use of drugs for patients as an expedient solution to "behavior management problems" and somewhere slacked off on helping patients feel their own strength in dealing with "anxiety"....

Since I am now looking for employment and willing to look hard and long to find some area of psychology worth committing my time to, could you suggest any ways in which I might find people to contact in centers where there is minimal fear of being rational and innovative? I'd like to work in a treatment unit or some kind of community setting where medications are not used at all. I want to live in the Rocky Mountains but am willing to make some concessions.

I feel like we're friends.
Love & warmth,
Mary A. Szrepanski
56 Cornell St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14607

Dear IRT People:

Many thanks for your continued support, re your articles and analyses, etc. At times, it sure gets lonely working within the therapeutic zoo! In my institution, personal success, praise, etc. are based on how long you keep the FOLKS in therapy! Individual Head Shrinking of "sick" people is the usual mode. Ugh!

Warm Regards,
Jerry Frain

Dear IRT,

You're great!! I'm learning and experiencing through your publication a lot that has been until now out of my world.

Thanks so much,
Sharon Pierce
Mesquites, Texas

Dear Friends:

Keep up the great work—your newspaper has opened many new worlds to me. Have you ever thought of using different paper? The paper you use presently fades quickly and IRT is worth keeping.

Sincerely,
Vincent Tucker
St. Louis, MO

P.S. We are working hard at making IRT better known in the St. Louis area.

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COOPERATION ISSUE

To the people at the IRT Collective,

I just want to express my appreciation for Sara Winter's article on Intimate Co-operation. It caught me while I was in the midst of coming out of one of my own movies, and besides making me feel less fucked up and alone, it really told me what I needed to hear about me taking responsibility for getting out of my own movies and not looking to others to do that for me; and in general making it clear that I cannot lay my movies on other people. At a really painful time, Sara's article gave me just what I needed.

I thought the article so good that I plan to give a copy of the paper to my analyst. Keep up the good work and start me on a subscription to IRT.

Thanks,
Bruce Berman

Dear People:

There's been so much enthusiasm in this community for the issue on Cooperation, and for your publication in general. The article on *Intimate Cooperation* by Sara Winter was especially important to me, and I am very pleased to find another fine article by Sara in the Sex issue.

Sincerely,
Marisha Chamberlain
St. Paul, Minn.

Greetings:

I am really getting a lot from IRT—I only wish I could contribute myself. Specially appreciated health care collectives as discussed in "Team Health Care" in the Cooperation issue—in fact the whole Cooperation issue turned me on a whole lot. There is quite an extensive member-run food co-op movement in this province. Our practice is OK, but the theory needs some good boosts, like your last issue.

Many thanks,
A. Berland
Slocan Park, B.C.

COMMUNICATION FROM PRISON

Dear IRT Collective,

I have really enjoyed you issues immensely. Every article seems pertinent to my state of mind and thoughts at the moment. It was thanks to IRT that I severed my connections with psychotherapy forever. It is worth more to read your issues! Especially since they have a radical premise and point of view that are invaluable. Nowhere else can one get this sort of indispensable analysis.

I would like to send IRT to two prisoners here. I realize you send them to prisoners free, but I would like to pay anyway to help defray other expenses. Could you please start these two subscriptions with the January issue? I would like an extra one for myself...

In our prisoner solidarity group we have been researching information about psychotropic drugs and their use in prisons. I referred to your issue Volume II Number 3, Summer 1974, a great deal in doing this research. I would like you to send me this issue for distribution (one copy) and I would also like to know if you have other sources of more recent studies done in this area. Specifically, I would like to know if I could get information on the exact nature of the harmfulness of such drugs as Prolixin, Thorazine, etc. which are in such common use now in prisons. Also important would be more articles of research for articles giving information about specific prisons where such programs as 3-T-6 and drug programs are in extensive use.

Thank you,
Joan E. Renne
Indianapolis, Ind.

Dear Joan,

We plan an article on drugs in a future issue.

IRT Collective

Dear Friends,

I trust this brief message will find the sisters and brothers of the collective enjoying good health and much success in your work of trying to raise the level of consciousness of other brothers and sisters to the intrinsic value of their own being.

I'm presently confined in one of California's state prisons, and have been for quite a few years. Being inside, isolated and kept in the dark about a great deal of what's really happening in the semi-free world outside, I feel that it's imperative for one to read every type of relevant literature at every available opportunity to try to keep abreast of the tremendously changing mores outside during these times. Personally, I read everything worthwhile I can get my mitts on.

Fortunately for me, recently I ran across an issue of IRT and it was a totally different reading experience for me. I read every article (and wished for more) and felt each one contributed immensely toward the understanding of effective methods that can be applied in the struggle for self-awareness. I mentioned above that I'm presently confined, but I would like to add that I feel optimistic at this point of receiving favorable parole-release consideration the latter part of this year. If my optimism proves correct, you can bet I will be among your paying subscribers. However, at the present my funds are limited to a few dollars I receive for basic necessities,

sites, thus, no funds to be a paying subscriber for IRT at this time...

Sincerely,
Theo James

Dear Theo,

If you'll send us your address, we'll send you a free subscription.

IRT Collective



Dear IRT people,

I wish to bring a serious problem of myself to light for feedback, ideals, law, etc. . . . I list: (1) Long period of confinement, (2) Long period of segregation, (3) Lack of support by family, friends, staff, (4) Lack of loving and adequate medical (psych) care, (6) Suicides.

1, 2, and 3 are points which can be remedied. But one of the biggest things is they are not going to be. The prevention effort will not be there only when the person reaches a certain point is he able to get any staff support. By this I mean that he has to cut, hang, stab someone and then stress the cause to it to get medical attention. They just added 14 rooms to the Psych unit. When you go there you are placed in a room with a mattress on the floor, toilet, no books, no existence, etc. A TV, if you are within range of it, then you must squat or kneel behind your door and look through your tray slot.

You are not allowed anything in your cell to hurt yourself, but you can break a window, or a light bulb, borrow a razor blade or buy it. Your treatment is medication, medical (change bandages, etc.). You see a psych who asks you Why? How are you now? Want medication? Stay in the hospital longer? Then he writes a chrono on you which you might get a copy or review your jacket before you go to board and find out what he said. If you are persistent and continue hurting yourself until you get to the point of not being able to stop you will go to Vacaville. Here at San Quentin also a common ground is the majority are gay who are cutting themselves up.

Looking into myself to first try to find why! I can list quite a few serious reasons, justifications of my actions, but not one justification for the lack of "crisis intervention" of what I haven't seen. I made a fair recovery of my gains from weekly and daily cutting to monthly. I have had 8 months till the latest. I pick up and continue to try to harden myself and cut my emotions off as I cannot act out or verbalize them. That cost me a job, and my good time, plus the bad conduct report.

Silence. Refusal to see or talk to.

Our gayness is an accepted part of this unit. Hell, in this unit there are six or seven regulars, the procedures of it

are enough and deep enough, and lose enough blood, hospital. If not, but deep enough removed to clinic, sew up, return to cell, blood, stain walls, clothes, bedding and thorazine or other drugs. Usually it's a special drug wanted which we have developed a long term liking for, which has been allowed over a long period then cut off cause of the number of people who demand them and the hospital staff fear of suit and charges. So they mix it up. The feedback that I ask is ideals and possible solutions, program I could suggest in an institutional approach for action to change these problems or better methods of dealing, cause I am in this.

Also I have a suggestion. Could you add to the end of the article if authors are open to a more personal level of communication like corresponding through IRT or by leaving their address if willing?

As Always
Me, T.L.
San Quentin Prison
In Struggle, Love and
respect to all of ya

P.S. IRT, I hope that it's clear enough, I'm enjoying your paper, it's very stimulating and rewarding to know there are so many people who feel, love, exist out there. As above all else I enjoy and relate to all people on any level or cause, color, sex, etc. and love people and regardless of how far down I might be I always get time to listen, talk, write to others who need support as it's the giving that's so worthy of life and keeps me going, in here and out there. I'm sure I'll find the same some day so my Karma demands I give what I want and that's me. For I'm me and you. Got a little money, was thinking of sending it as a subscription for someone else who might gain and next one for ya all. Keep it up your doing. Love and peace.

LETTERS FROM GERMANY

We are working here in West Germany in a therapy group with mental patients. You can imagine what hard and repressed work it is to make alternatives to the traditional psychiatric institutions and how we depend on good ideas how to make and to stand it. Months ago we heard of your publications "Issues in Radical Therapy" and we would like to get it.

Volker Drexel
Grossenohe, West Germany

Hello, beautiful people!

Since I picked up the very first issue of IRT in a Berkeley bookstore on a freaky Telegraph-Ave-afternoon two years ago, I've become a faithful reader of your fantastic paper. You just got the right mixture of what I imagine political work can be: being radical but not dogmatic, being sensitive, close to each other in the collective and coming out in a personal way with feelings, experiences and facts that people can understand as basically important and helpful for their alternate living together.

You have also given to our men's lib group a lot of fine inspirations to come together. BRAVO and good luck for you.

Walter Schörling
Berlin, W. Germany

readers' responses

CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND PSYCHIATRIC OPPRESSION IN SAN FRANCISCO

Bette Lamont

The third annual national conference on Human Rights and Psychiatric Oppression was held under the auspices of NAPA, the Network Against Psychiatric Assault, in San Francisco's Museum of Erotic Art, July 2-6. Attending the conference were nearly 250 people from the United States and Canada. They included a broad spectrum of people involved in the growing movement against psychiatric injustice: former prisoners of psychiatric institutions, professionals, paraprofessionals and concerned citizens.

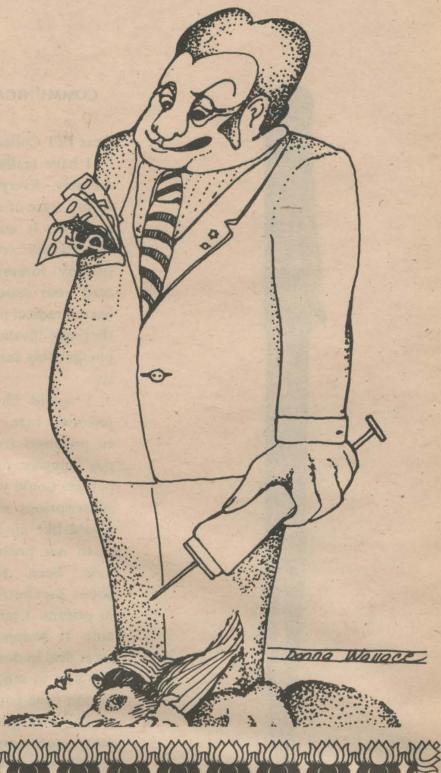
The conference was structured around more than 40 workshops held over four days on a wide variety of issues including: The Experience of Madness, Psychiatry and Prisons, Women and Madness, Psychiatry and Gay People. On July 4, under the slogan Freedom from Psychiatry, a rally was held at Union Square followed by a march to St. Mary's Hospital. This dem-

onstration was held to protest St. Mary's refusal to respond to NAPA's request for a public forum to discuss the psychiatric treatment program at the McAuley Neuropsychiatric Institute, operated by St. Mary's.

Strongly taking issue against the structure and attitudes of the conference were the ex-inmates who formed their own caucus to protest the "mentalism" of the conference. They questioned whether ex-inmates and radical therapists can meet and dialogue at this point in history at all. Anger was also expressed by the women's caucus which supported the ex-inmates and themselves took a stand against sexism in the conference as a whole and in specific workshops. They strongly believed that women's needs could not be met by a conference run by a male-dominated organization such as NAPA.

People agreed on many common grievances against the psychiatric system, such as the use of drugs, shock treatment, restraints, psychosurgery, and other common denials of basic human and civil rights.

For more information about current NAPA projects and events call or write NAPA at 629 Sutter, San Francisco, Ca. 94102, 415-863-4488.



CHOOSING A THERAPIST

One problem that has concerned us is the letters we get from people looking for radical therapists. Since we know of no clearing house for this information and have no way of investigating the therapists who write to us, we have decided to run the names and addresses of all of the people we hear about. We are not recommending any of these people because we really know almost nothing about them.

In order to help people find good therapists we are printing some questions which you can use to find out more about them. We believe that you should be able to meet and interview a therapist for free and then decide if you want to work with her or him.

Here are some questions which might be asked:

POLITICS: What is the goal of therapy—to help you adjust to your life as it is or to change the parts of your life with which you are unhappy? How does the therapist view power in personal relationships and in politics? How does the therapist feel about competition among children, on the job, in adult relationships?

PROFESSIONALISM: What special skills or knowledge has the therapist to offer you? Does she refer to you as "patient," "client," "group member?" Does the therapist pretend neutrality or will he discuss his feelings about you if he feels angry? competitive? afraid? loving? Will she make explicit her personal biases? What is the therapist's workload? Does the therapist prescribe drugs? Consume drugs herself? Is the therapist willing to answer questions about his personal life? If not, why not? If so, is the therapist married? What does the spouse do? Are there children? Who cares for them? What other life experience has the therapist had, aside from therapy?

SEXISM: Does the therapist consider herself/himself to be a feminist? What is her definition of the term? In a group, observe any differences in the therapist's manner toward men and toward women. Does the therapist feel that different types of work are appropriate for

men and for women? If you were in a troubled man-woman relationship, would the therapist define therapeutic success in terms of the preservation of the relationship?

SEXUALITY: What are the therapist's views about your form of sexuality? Does the therapist consider homosexuality or bisexuality to be an aberration? Is the therapist a sexual moralist? Does he think some sex is good, some wrong? Is the therapist informed about and committed to ending the oppression of gay people?

MONEY: Does the therapist charge low fees, adjust fees to your income, accept barter and trade? Does she live at an economic level far above that of the people in her groups?

This is a beginning, incomplete list to which we invite readers to contribute. Reports on personal experiences in choosing a therapist would be most welcome.

In general, we support the right of people seeking therapy to find out who their therapist is and how the therapist's views and personal life will affect the therapeutic process. Any therapist who refuses to answer questions such as those above should be regarded with critical suspicion.

This statement was drafted by Beth Roy and Judy LaBarre for the IRT Collective.

THERAPISTS

Arizona:

John Faust
3915 N. Santa Rita Ave.
Tucson, Arizona 85719

California:

Anthony Eschbach (PSG with gay and non gay identified people)
263 Carl St.
San Francisco 664-4583

Gay Fathers Unlimited (a support group for gay fathers with or without children)
c/o Box 23544
Berkeley, Ca.

Joan Hertzberg (PSG for women and mixed groups)
387 Scott St.
San Francisco 567-7573

Becky Jenkins (PSG)
San Francisco 388-0576

Darca Nicholson (Bw & Ma)
2901 Piedmont Ave.
Berkeley 848-1611

Santa Monica Radical Therapy Collective
6 Seaview Terrace, Apt. F
Santa Monica

Michael Singer (PSG & Mg)
415-981-7053

Drop In
5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday
Community Storefront
3056 24th Street
San Francisco

Iowa:

HERA
Wesley House
120 N. Dubuque
Iowa City, Iowa 338-1179

New York:

Bette Lamont (PSG & Bw)
c/o Dance Notation Bureau
19 Union Sq. West
New York, N.Y. 10003

Code: PSG = Problem Solving Groups; Bw = Bodywork; Ma = massage; Mg = Men's Groups.

sponses readers' responses readers' resp

SEX AND THE LEFT ISSUE

"As a river in the sea,
work finds its fulfillment
in the depth of leisure."
(rabindranath tagore)

People of IRT—

Hello; profound greetings to you for your amazing clarity of reality! I want to express my enthusiasm in response to your "Sex and the Left" issue (the first I've seen). Every one of the articles in the paper confronts our reality with sincerity and integrity (the foundations of love & health & real people power). Your formula: awareness + contact = liberation seems to my mindbody to feel true & yet for me awareness has mainly been reinforced negatively by defensive behavior and obvious misinterpretation by others which has caused me to feel extremely alienated from people. However this alienation has enlarged my consciousness & response to all or more of the life forces around me on this planet. It is here that I am.

I might make one comment about Sister Wolman's speech. The analogy of the children being thrown in the river is very simple to analyze. The "bastard" who's throwing them in is probably extremely hostile to all "legitimate" children because this personchild has always been called a bastard. My point is that the words we use to degrade something (or someone) that is evil or that we use in exasperation & frustration are in themselves fetters of oppression. We are continually using outdated & insane profanities & thereby are continually degrading our bodies, our love, our ideas & realities of life style & our children. How about a new profanity based on the words which express what we (as an evolving culture) disdain or consider evil(?): i.e. boss, intellectual, politician, racist, sexist, carnivore(?), polluter, pollutant, deathseller, deathmaker, etc.

While living in Berkeley for the past two years (up until this past November) I became hip to ATD & then SSA & SSI (social security disability insurance & payments) & have been thereby subsidized by the people of this country. My consciousness towards many things social-economic-political-revolution grew through this experience. I had decided long ago as a privileged(?) white male to reject the program and let others gain the privilege of employment. Also honestly because the experience of employment for me was insulting & degrading & yet I was unable to communicate this to those who hadn't yet experienced it. So with SSA subsidy (a forceful grab at guaranteed income) I find that the time & freedom offered me is very often spent listening to others complain about working for money & in disbelief at their values concerning the categories of work & work ethic. Most of us qualify for being incapable of employment in a context (Amerika) of cultural brutality, alienation, sexism, racism. I have very definitely realized the importance, the fundamental necessity for people (all people) to work in the sense of labor & activity directed toward providing for common & individual needs—yet I am very upset with my inability to provide

this for myself (the lack of collective consciousness & the overwhelming rules governing who does what, where & when) or to communicate any degree of clarity on this experience, phenomena, & reality to others.

I know that in Berkeley many people are aware of the various disability & relief programs available, but the consciousness is not the same in other areas of the country & state so I would hope(?) you would make mention of this at least temporary (maybe not) economic liberation in the sense of the slavery issue.

love & peaceful intensity
to you All,
of the moment,
Koala
Santa Monica, CA



Hello Gentlepeople,

I've been reading the last IRT on Sex and the Left & feel it's a very good issue and one that needed doing. I especially liked the artwork. A picture can get to the heart of it, all right.

Sometimes it has felt like we're in competition with each other. Although differences can be healthy and growth producing, in these times it seems like we could be strengthening what we've got in common.

We're going to use your ad in the next RT. Do you have our new one?

Love & Struggle,
Michael Galen
RT: Journal of Radical Therapy
P.O. Box 89
West Somerville, Mass. 02144

Dear Folks:

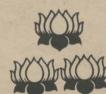
Sara Winter is great and I'm glad to hear from Carmen again.

Molly Johnson
Seattle, Wash.

Dear Friends:

The new issue just came and I have read the lead article, "Therapy and Capitalism" and am delighted that it says what I have been trying to say—but it says it much better!

Sincerely,
Beatrice Simcox Reiner
St. Petersburg, Fla.



¿Moving?



Be sure to give us your old address as well as the new—and please include both Zip codes.

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