



Towards the Destruction
of Patriarchy

Dismantling the Boy's Club



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Introduction

The reason that I put this zine together was to get resources to (socialized) men that want to or are working against sexism and patriarchy. This zine however, is by no means exclusively for men; the information contained herein is relevant to all those socialized into a system of binary gender in the patriarchal empire. Most of the articles within this zine come from an anti-authoritarian/anarchist perspective and mostly apply to those who identify as such. That is not to say these articles won't apply to anyone not identifying as anti-authoritarian/anarchist, but to truly overcome oppression, we have to look to the roots of where domination originates.

As a male-bodied person, I feel that it is so important that all those socialized as "male" take an active role in the struggle against patriarchy and sexism. This zine is meant to aid in that process of deconstructing all the oppressive tendencies that we are taught and society so willingly accepts. While putting this zine together, I came across so many amazing articles it was difficult to pick only a few to include. That said, the works in here are very limited and it's up to you to take the (un)learning process further. I have included a short resource list at the end of this zine as a place to start.

Patriarchy is but one pillar of civilization, but one that has become so internalized that most don't even notice the oppression. It is reinforced daily by family, friends, co-workers, corporations, and governments. It's up to all of us to change things. In order to build healthier communities, we have to destroy all monsters of the state. Smash patriarchy. Resist capitalism. Go vegan!

-bahlaz

tell me what you liked, hated, questions or criticisms at
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What is Patriarchy?

Patriarchy is a “concept that explains the systematic gendered organization of all areas of social life—economic, political, and ideological—such that more social resources, power, and value accrue to men as a group at the expense of women as a group” (Rosemary Hennessy, “Queer Visibility in Commodity Culture,” p. 744).

-Patriarchy is a form of domination, which extends to and is manifested in all forms of oppression. This includes, but is not limited to, racism, classism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, the destruction and exploitation of the Earth, the murder of indigenous peoples, the commodification of daily life experience, and all forms of personal and societal oppression.

-Patriarchy is a system of entitlement that rewards behavior that is anti-woman, anti-queer, anti-body, anti-nature, and anti-color.

-Patriarchy interacts with other forms of oppression and affects people differently based on their social locations.

-Patriarchal values are embodied in interpersonal relationships and everyday life.

Anyone, whether he/she/co occupies a socially subordinated category or not, can gain degrees of power and privilege by advocating patriarchal values.

There is no one or singular form of patriarchy. It manifests itself differentially in different social and historical contexts.

There are many ways to respond to the problem of patriarchy. While some women have attempted to claim equal access to the dominance, exploitation, and power of men, others have emphasized the feminine as “better” than the masculine, essentially

just flipping the coin. However, neither approach reflects our core beliefs. We understand gender oppression is deeply intertwined with racism, classism, colonialism, ableism, the state, the destruction of the environment, and ultimately civilization itself. As many have discovered, single-issue struggles fail to create radical change.

(from against patriarchy conference '07)

Patriarchy means rule by men.

Patriarchy is a hierarchy. A hierarchy is like a pyramid... A few at the top have the most control, the people in the middle have medium, and the majority on the bottom have very little. The people at the top control/own the media (value systems), armies, money, law, institutions, corporations, land, air, and water. They keep this control by force (and threat of force), fear, and reward systems. They reward behaviors that go along with their plans and values. The rewards differ. They use the philosophies of sexism and racism to give out rewards differently. (Sexism is when men are given more value than women; racism in America is when white people are given more value than people of color). There are more rewards for men, more rewards for white people. White people and men want to keep their privileges. They use their positions of privilege to control others. Men control women. White people control people of color. Straight people control queers. We are all taught to be superior to others and that it is good to do so. But philosophies of sexism and racism keep us against each other so the people at the top can control us all. The few at the top of the pyramid are men and they are sexist, racist, and greedy. They are making all the important decisions about the day to day existence of all of us. They decide when and where to blow up nuclear bombs and what to tell us about it, what chemicals go into the land and our food, how many forests the next generation will have, which dictatorships will remain because it profits them, who gets to be a doctor, who is burned at the stake, who is put away in prison, who is raped, who terrorizes who, and who works for less money than it takes to eat. The controlling few decide these things. The controlling few are

men. And the people at the bottom doing unpaid and low paid labor are mostly women and most with children. There have been many revolutions but the pattern of patriarchal hierarchy remains... How does this make you feel? What are 'ya gonna do?

(from Wemoons Army "Eco-Anarcha Feminist Primer" zine)



Sexism in the Anarchist Movement

This article is an attempt to add to the discourse that is (or should be) occurring around sexism within the very movements that purport to be fighting it. It was a hard process to distinguish between sexism within the anarchist movement and the general sexism within society because so many of the criticisms that can be leveled against the anarchist movement are criticisms of the greater society. There is a void where critical anarchist feminist/anti-sexist critiques should be which has led to a lack of dialogue and concrete action around sexism. This critique will be based upon many of the weaknesses within the Anarchist movement, which are often compounded around issues of sexism (and other forms of oppression). There is a continuum of thought and concrete action which anarchists must address or take up in order to combat our own sexism and sexism in the greater society.

Challenging Ideas and Behaviors

The continuum begins with our personal thoughts and behavior. Growing up in a sexist society imbues within us the idea that women are inferior to men. Unless these ideas are thoroughly challenged, in every aspect of our lives, every waking minute, then these ideas are allowed to flourish in our behavior. Many may feel this is an obvious point, but as Kevin Powell wrote in a recent Ms. article, "Everyday I struggle within myself not to use the language of gender oppression, to see the sexism inherent in every aspect of America, to challenge all injustices, not just those that are convenient for me."

Anti-sexism is not just about fighting overt forms of sexism - violent rape, domestic violence, overtly sexist words - it is also about challenging our relationships, the ideas that create a rape culture, the way people are socialized, etc. These are not convenient issues to struggle around for they involve digging deep within ourselves, traveling back in our development, and dedicating time to the difficult process of self-change. We must challenge the ideas and

behaviors that promote sexism to other men and alienate women- both in personal relationships and in organizations.

Recognizing that anti-sexist work is a deep, hard process is very important but a point many miss. All too often men who are genuinely against sexism fail to acknowledge and challenge the sexism that lies within themselves. "I AM an anti-sexist," they proclaim. But it is said so loudly that they fail to hear the voices of women. It becomes a label to proudly sport instead of a serious and difficult process. Don't get me wrong, if a man is indeed anti-sexist, he needs to display it, but this is accomplished through his actions and in his explanations of our current reality- especially to other men. Men must become examples to challenge the mainstream notions of masculinity and that takes more than a simple label.

Often complexities arise, however, when women challenge "anti-sexist" men. Men get defensive when women critique their oppressive and sexist behaviors. Rather than listening and benefiting from criticism, a defensive stance is taken and women's voices are ignored once again. No one is above being questioned, as there should be no unnecessary hierarchy. The lack of principled criticism and self-criticism within the anarchist movement is the first problem that is then compounded when applied to issues of sexism and other forms of oppression. Women must be genuinely listened to and, if the criticisms are valid, men should seek to change their thoughts and their actions.

Political Study

Understanding sexism is important to all within the anarchist movement. However, as a woman, it is not my duty to always answer questions and educate men on how sexism affects my life. Many anarchist groups already have a program or project in place that could be utilized to gain a better understanding of sexism without burdening women with the task of explaining our lives: the political study group. When was the last time you or your group read something on women, sexism, feminism, or women's liberation?

Many times, and I have been guilty of this, we feel that readings on women's issues are not as important as readings on capitalism or anarchism or anti-colonial struggle, etc. We have to stop considering women's liberation as a side project or issue and view it as an integral part of the liberation struggle. These writings do not have to be specifically Anarchist or even revolutionary to give us good insights. When was the last time you read something by Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Barbara Smith, Angela Davis, Patricia Hill Collins, or Emma Goldman? We must take the initiative to read that which women have placed before us.

Encouraging Women

Since I was a little girl, I was socialized to feel inferior to men. I was socialized to recognize where my "place" was in society and it was not participating in an equal dialogue with men, certainly not in any type of politics, and it was definitely not on any kind of front line of revolutionary struggle. I

often look around at meetings and events (that are not women-centric) and see that I am one of a handful of women in attendance or worse yet, the only woman there.

Alternately, even when there are a lot of women in the room, I find that I am the only woman contributing to the dialogue.

When examining women's involvement in political struggle, we have to examine the root causes. Women are socialized to look at politics as outside of our



realm. When the politics are radical or revolutionary, the level of intimidation increases. Because of this reality, we have to exert a lot of time and energy into creating a more anti-sexist/pro-woman movement. We have to start by involving more women within our organizations and movements. This first involves putting sexism as one of the main points of organization alongside the other issues affecting women (and all humans): racism, heterosexism, ableism, colonialism, and class oppression. While we cannot place all of our energy into all of these problems at once, we must ensure we are dealing holistically with all of these issues within our focus. Second, we must actively recruit women into our organizations. This takes various forms such as tabling at women's events, consistent outreach to women and participating in women-centric struggles.

Once women are in our organizations, we must look at the level of participation of women within the organization. I have been involved with politics for 7+ years. It has only been within the past year and a half that I have fully participated in politics. This is because I have had to learn that I could speak in meetings, that I could contribute in meaningful and positive ways, and that it is my place to contribute and participate. I have had to overcome the intimidation I felt when I was working with men who I looked up to and respected. I had to overcome the mental chains that were holding me back.

A couple factors contributed to this change. A dear comrade helped me realize that I am fully capable of participating and that no one can say different. For him, it was crucial that I participate on an equal level and he put a great deal of time and energy in encouraging me. I would love to see more men take up this task. Then, my level of commitment, seriousness, and sense of responsibility to liberatory politics forced me to put my level of involvement above my sense of comfort. This was not an easy task at all and one that I still struggle with to this day. This is something that we all have to battle within ourselves; men can help women get to this point by treating women equally and respectfully. We also must analyze our organizational behaviors. Are we consistently encouraging women to take up leadership positions? Is it mostly

men or women who are taking up speaking engagements? Who talks at meetings? Who facilitates meetings? Who does the work of the organization, and then, who gets credit for it? We have to be very perceptive of men talking over women, invalidating and/or ignoring a woman's words and contributions.

We all must make an extra effort to look at the gender dynamics of our functions and meetings. Without the direct leadership of women in any movement, our important voices are left out of the dialogue and the fight against sexism.

Anarchist Organizational Structures

One of the biggest challenges to the anarchist movement is creating viable anti-authoritarian structures for our organizations. We are struggling to create new ideas of organization from the examples we have had and through new ideas and innovations. Not only are we trying to organize our movement in an anarchist fashion but it is also a testing ground for a future society.

Anarchism seeks to create a society based on a great sense of personal responsibility and accountability to ourselves and each other. We want a society based on mutual aid and communalism. This cannot happen out of spontaneous activity; it must result out of a highly organized society based on democratic, decentralized structures. I hope the anarchist movement realizes the need to work out new structural ideas for our organizations and a new society. I know many feel creating structure inherently runs counter to the ideas and principles of Anarchism. I would argue that not sitting down and forming democratic structures is counter to the ideas and principles of anarchism.

Jo Freeman wrote in *The Tyranny of Structurelessness* that "The idea of structurelessness does not prevent the formation of informal structures, only formal ones. A 'laissez-faire' ideal for group structure becomes a smoke screen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others. Thus structurelessness becomes a way of masking power. As long as the

structure of the group is informal, the rules of how decisions are made are known only to the few, and awareness of power is limited to those who know the rules."

Structurelessness is often a means to perpetuate sexism, racism and class stratification. If men are socialized to be leaders and women are not, then it is not hard to imagine who would develop into leaders in a non-structured organization. A lack of structure provides no means of balancing those with certain privileges with those who are oppressed. We must create organizational structures that inherently guard against these forms of power imbalance. In forming Anarchist organizational structures, we must also form structures to specifically deal with sexism in our organizations. One very sensitive issue that we have to address is sexual assault (and domestic violence). I have heard of many situations where a politically active male has sexually assaulted a fellow activist. It would be impossible to plan out all of the steps of dealing with this type of situation-especially since the survivor of sexual assault should largely control what happens-but we need a skeleton of steps to help handle this type of situation. Members of any organization should all have political education on both rape and sexual assault and how to deal when you or someone you know has been raped. Organizations should have a framework so that they



are not fumbling around when sexual assault happens. Not having a framework could leave a survivor with little to no support from those whom should be providing as much support as she or he needs.

What can anarchist organizations do in these situations? What do we do if one amongst us is sexually assaulted? What do we do if one amongst us has sexually assaulted someone else? What do we do when both parties are in our organization? I challenge all organizations to consider how to prevent sexual assault from occurring in the first place, how to deal with it if it does, and how to support survivors of sexual assault to the fullest extent possible.

Taking up Women's Struggle

The struggle against sexism is everyone's struggle. It affects everyone: men, women and transgendered peoples. It is especially important that anti-sexist men, who benefit from sexism, take up the struggle for women's liberation. Just as it is especially important for white people to dedicate themselves to anti-racist struggle and straight people to dedicate themselves to anti-homophobia/heterosexism work, men must dedicate an intense amount of time to anti-sexist work.

For anarchist men, the question is, are you involved with struggles spontaneously taken up by women, led and organized by women, and primarily aimed at other women? If not, why? I have heard the claim that many of the struggles are "too reformist." In some cases this is my critique as well but I do not see a revolutionary struggle in the United States that is able to aid women in the ways these movements do. The answer is not to ignore these movements but to build new movements within or without that which already exists. Are anarchists creating alternate structures for survivors of sexual assault? Are we able to aid abused women in a revolutionary fashion at this point in time?

Others brush anti-sexist struggle off as "women's work." Others do not see anti-sexist struggle as central to the struggle for liberation.

Others believe we can wait to challenge sexism when revolutionary change occurs. These analyses must change. If we truly want an egalitarian society then we must begin creating a more equitable movement-along lines of race, class, gender, and sexuality. We must make the anarchist movement a women's movement. If we want an end to sexism, our work should have began yesterday.

Forward Always, Backwards Never

Anarchists often have a good analysis of the way sexism is "a mesh of practices, institutions, and ideas which have an overall effect of giving more power to men than to women." Beginning with an institutional analysis is correct, however, we must also translate this into our own thoughts and actions. Only then can all anarchists work together most effectively (at least along gender lines but we must also deal with homophobia, racism and class issues). To create an egalitarian society, our movement must be egalitarian and presently it is not. Working to create revolutionary change must begin today by challenging our sexist, racist, and heterosexist capitalist society. It means challenging that which is in ourselves, our families, our neighborhoods, our communities and our movements. As Kevin Powell said, "Just as I feel it is whites who need to be more vociferous about racism in their communities, I feel it is men who need to speak long and loud about sexism among each other."

The Anarchist movement needs to be more vocal and active in the struggle against sexism. All our lives depend on it.

By Angela Beallor



The witch hunts of early modern Europe were aimed at exterminating wise-wimmin, wimmin healers, and midwives. These wimmin with knowledge that the church and state could not easily control and regulate were labeled heretics. The witch hunts were well organized plans with a very specific goal. It showed the misogynistic nature of the catholic church and christianity overall. With the rise of patriarchal religions came the down fall of wise-wimmin, who were the people's healers; the invaluable knowledge they held of the nature world and our interconnectness; and autonomous communities.

A Few Tips

-Realize your privilege. Living in our (western) society if you are white, male, heterosexual, or rich, you have privilege. Know that all your experiences come from a position of privilege and your opinions come from a life lived with this privilege. Learn to challenge your privilege; don't abuse it.

-Know that language is powerful. Words that dehumanize and degrade women, frequently in a sexualized way, are common and reflect the reality of a society that has historically placed women in a second-class position. When we joke or describe someone as an object meant to be acted upon, and then discarded, it gets easier to treat them that way. Language that is sexist, racist, homophobic, or oppressive in any other way helps to perpetuate hierarchies and oppression creating a climate where forms of violence and abuse have too long been accepted. Confront and speak out against this abusive language. Don't remain silent.

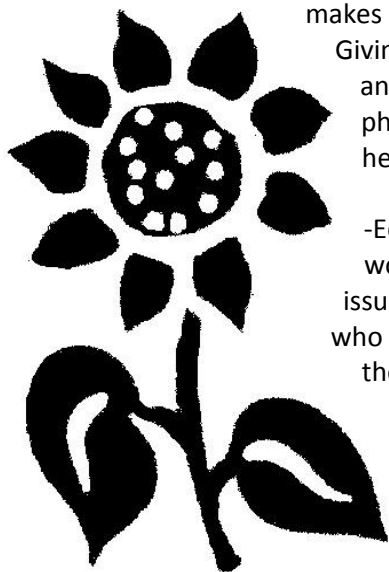
-Don't think of women in sexual/objectifying terms. Women are not a piece of flesh to be desired. It is so ingrained into all of us, from advertising to daily language, to think of women as objects; therefore it's imperative to critically confront what's been internalized.

-Be aware of the inherent patriarchy within capitalism; e.g. male dominated "feminine hygiene" companies that aim to make women think their periods are totally gross; companies that use sexist advertising; companies (cosmetics, clothing, dieting, etc.) that profit from the reinforcement of unrealistic beauty standards. Do your best to refrain from supporting these companies. The best solution is to just consume less altogether.

-Support survivors of sexual assault. In the united states alone, a sexual assault occurs every 2 minutes. 44% of those (women) sexually assaulted are under the age of 18. 1 in 10 of those sexually assaulted is male (www.rain.org/statistics). Chances are you already

have survivors of rape or sexual assault in your life. Learn how to be supportive, and really listen. Know your local rape crisis center where they can get resources and help, and get support yourself.

-Communicate about sex. There is nothing wrong with feeling sexual desire, but all too often we do not communicate our desires, find out our partner's feelings, or have established consent. Many of us grow up with unrealistic beliefs about sex; that we should instinctively know what to do; that we should be ready to achieve an erection instantly and maintain it for hours; and that it is unmasculine to have to talk about what gives us (or our partner[s]) pleasure. These beliefs and others keep us from knowing our own sexuality and from enjoying our sexual relationships. Sex without discussion does not allow consent, or even minimal expectations, to be communicated. Without mutual agreement, sex becomes rape. Communication is the key to knowing what makes our partners comfortable and uncomfortable, and letting them know what



makes us comfortable and uncomfortable. Giving, and receiving, consent, at each and every new level of sexual (or physical) contact can make for a much healthier sexual relationship.

-Educate yourself about women's/feminist, queer, and trans issues. Don't put the burden on those who are oppressed to teach you about their struggles. Being a good ally means educating yourself and asking questions along the way.

-Challenge other men. One of the most difficult things for men who oppose patriarchy and sexism is learning to challenge other men. Work with others to create a new standard of masculinity. Don't be afraid to open up showing emotion and compassion. Challenge yourself and others to really

question your socialized gender standards. You don't have to act so tough and strong all the time.

-Don't act like women always need your help. Chivalrous behavior is patriarchal and paternalistic. Women can be just as strong and independent as any man. Don't be afraid to offer your help, but don't do it because you feel that women are weaker and need your help because you are a man. If a woman asks you how to do something, show her how to do it, rather than just doing it for her, so she can learn how to do it herself. This leads to a healthier, more sustainable community as well.

-Work against all forms of oppression. Patriarchy, racism, heterosexism, homophobia, speciesism, eco-devastation—all forms of oppression are connected. We cannot end one without challenging them all. Push yourself to grow every day, and know that every prejudice we hold injures others and limits our experience.

-Be accountable to your actions. Speaking out against sexism and oppression takes a lot of courage, but just because you might identify as a feminist or as anti-sexist doesn't mean you don't have to work on your own shit. We all have internalized oppression so take an honest look inside yourself and learn to pick up on the subtle sexism we have been taught. Support and trust the women in your life. If you are called out for being sexist, don't get so defensive, even if you think you are right. Women have to face much more oppression than we feel and know when patriarchy is acting out. Apologize and take your experience so you can learn and grow from it, and work to overcome your oppressive behaviors.

-Join/start a group that is fighting to end sexism. The fight against patriarchy (and civilization altogether) is an ongoing one, but we have to take an engaged, proactive role if we want to destroy these systems of domination.

By bahlaz

Getting to Know Yourself: Some Questions for Men

Be patient with yourself in answering these questions. Be as critical and honest as possible. Get support if painful memories surface. Every question holds a story that needs to be told carefully. Add questions or amend these to represent your issues more accurately.

Questions on Socialization

Who taught you more about your gender role? Mother, father, peers or others?

Before puberty, what was your awareness of the male body- both yours and others? What was your awareness of the female body?

Who were your best male friends? Who did you look up to among your elders? Whom did you avoid or fear?

Whom did you have fights with? How often? Who disciplined you? How? How often?

Who would you go to if you were in trouble? Where did you go to be safe? Who cared for you when you were sick?

What did you accomplish in elementary school? Did you excel in games, music, and school subjects? Were you well liked? What kinds of problems did you have?

What were you told about your race/ethnicity/religion? What were you told about other races, ethnic groups or religions?

Who taught you about religion? Did you believe it? What were the hardest parts to believe?

Did you go through a time when you didn't like girls? Did you have friends who were girls? Girlfriends?

Were you ever called a girl or a sissy? By whom? How often?

What toys did you play with? What games did you play?

What were your clothes like? What kinds of haircuts did you have?

What TV shows, movies or stories did you like? What did you like about them?

What did you want to be when you grew up?

Did you have heroes or idols?

Did you have sex play? With whom? How often? Were you ever caught? Punished? By whom? How?

Did you hunt, fish or garden? Who taught you how?

Did you have pets, hobbies, special treasures?

Did you have favorite teachers or relatives? Teachers or relatives you disliked or feared?

What was one of the best things that happened to you as a boy?

What was one of the worst?

What happened to you as a boy when you reached puberty?

Was there anyone who you could talk to about any problem you had? Who? Why were you able to talk to them?

What do you miss about being a boy?

Assuming you have or could have a son or foster son, how would you want his boyhood to be different from yours?

Questions on Sex

Define sex?

How many kinds of sex are there?

What are other possible definitions of sex?

Define rape?

Define sexual assault/ abuse?

Is there a difference? If yes, what?

Do you think your definitions of sex and sexual assault/abuse are learned? If yes, where did you learn them from? If no, how did you come up with these definitions?

Are there ways to violate your partner that aren't included in your definitions of rape and assault/abuse? Name some of these ways.

How do you feel about sex? Are you comfortable talking about it with others? What is it like for you when you see sex on the TV or in movies?

Who initiates most of the sex you have- you or your partner? Why?

What are some of the things you really like, when having sex? I.e. oral sex, etc.

Name at least 3 ways to pay attention to your partner's body language during sex.

Can you think of a time when you had sex but weren't sure if you or your partner wanted to or meant to?

How do you know when you want to have sex?

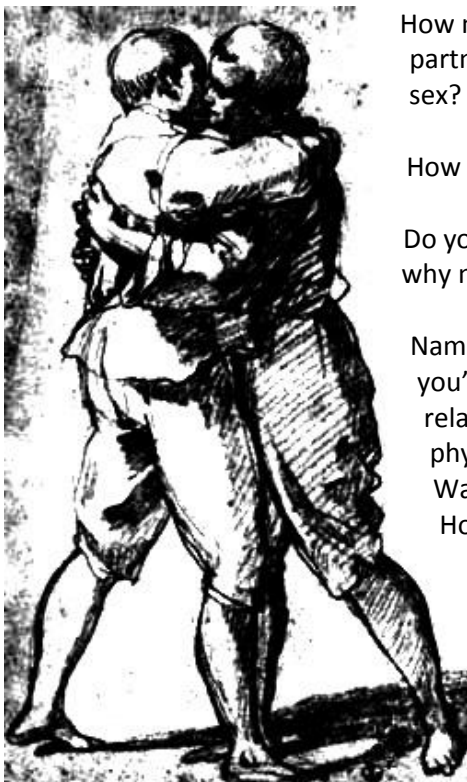
Were you ever forced/coerced to have sex or seduced by someone? How did you feel about it? Was there anyone you could talk to with who would help you?

Do you know someone who has been sexually abused? How did you react when you found out? Do you know any skills in how to be an ally to abuse survivors?

Name 3 things you can do if someone you know was raped.

Have any of your closest friends been accused of rape? How did you feel? Did it change your relationship? If yes, in what ways?

What are 3 things you can do if a friend of yours is accused of rape?



How much do you and your partner communicate during sex?

How does it feel?

Do you practice safer sex? Why or why not?

Name one person, if any, who you've been in an intimate relationship with who was physically stronger than you? Was the difference noticeable? How did you feel?

If you haven't, how does the idea of being in a relationship with someone physically stronger than you feel?

Questions on Sexuality

Are you queer?

If not, how do you feel about people who are queer?

If yes, how do you feel your answers to these questions will differ than those of straight people?

Does the thought of two girls having sex turn you on? Why or why not? How does lesbianism or “women with women” make you feel?

Can you describe the difference between sex and gender?

Questions on Love

Define love? Name 2 people that you love. How do you know you’re in love?

Can you “fall out of love”? How do you know you’re falling out of love?

Do you feel loved by other men? Is this love different then the love you feel from women? If yes, how so?

Questions on Sexism

What is sexism? Who can be sexist? Are you sexist? Why, or why not?

Is sexism the same for queer people? If yes, how? Why or why not?

Questions on Emotions

Do you talk about your emotions?

Do you have trouble expressing your emotions?

What ways do you express your emotions? I.e. talk, do art, etc.

When you get angry, what physical sensations do you feel?
Have you ever taken your anger out on someone else? How?
When? What happened?

What are some skills you can use when you get angry to feel your emotions and not hurt others in the process?

Questions on Power and Violence

Define power? What is one of your earliest memories of feeling power? Who are some powerful people in your life?

Define violence?

How do you feel about violence?

What are some experiences in your life where violence was present? What were they? How did you feel?

Did you watch movies or TV with a lot of violence in them? Which programs? How did it feel to watch them?

How does violence manifest in your present relationships?

Questions on Images of Men

List 5 characteristics portrayed in the media as sexy in men. In women.

List 5 characteristics portrayed in the media as strong in men. In women.

List 5 characteristics that you consider sexy in men. In women.

List 5 characteristics that you consider strong in men. In women.

Which of these characteristics match up?

What are 5 things you look up to in men? In women? Why?

Questions on Intimacy

Define trust? How can you tell somebody is trustworthy? Is there one type of people you generally consider trustworthy?

What are 5 of your ideal characteristics of being in a relationship? Are you able to be intimate with other men? If not, why not? If yes, how does it feel?

Do you feel closer with your male or female friends? Why?

Do you get attracted to the same type of partner over and over again? If yes, what are the similar characteristics? Why do you think this is?

What do you believe that the women in your life understand the least about you? What about the men in your life?

Questions on Manhood

Define manhood? How did you come up with this definition? Are you happy with this definition? If yes, why? If no, what would you like to change about the definition of manhood?

What do you dislike most about men?

What makes you proud to be a man?

Is there anything you would like to change about yourself? If yes, what?

Is there anything you would like to change about how society portrays men? If yes, what?

Credits:

Some of these questions were brainstormed between me, matthew campbell, and matthew mullinnex. Most of the socialization questions came from a book edited by franklin abbott, called boyhood: growing up male. A bunch of the sex questions came from a flyer written by katie dugat. Other random questions were written by sarah kennedy, michelle luellen, shayna swanson, and heather lynn in a flyer titled "some things a few women always wanted to know about men..." which I distributed at a few men's workshops in chicago during the summer of 1995. Compilation of these questions was by me, basil.

After answering the questions go back and ask yourself what made is so that the answers were what they were. How do you think binary gender socialization played a role in the formulation of the answers? Do you think that some of your answers were sexist or homophobic? If so, why, and what do you think you can do to change this oppressive way of thinking or acting?



Dreams of revolution set our hearts on fire
And fill our nights with the most dangerous caresses.
This world's icy and dreamless logic will never touch our minds,
Because our reasons are the reasons of flame.

Gender is a Weapon: Coercion, Domination, and Self-Determination

I was on the bus recently, and a guy about my age got on the bus and sat across from me. He and some others were looking out of the bus windows at some men in red dresses. We didn't know why they were wearing dresses, but the guy across from me said, "That's scary." Another guy said, "Whatever, as long as they don't come on the bus." I wanted to say "what's so scary about men in dresses?" But worrying that I might look enough like a dyke to him to get shit for it, and worrying that the effort and fear involved with confronting someone might make me cry, I didn't say anything. I just wondered. What makes a guy in a dress so scary? And what about homophobia, transphobia, or whatever you want to call it without knowing why that guy was wearing a dress, causes men to bond by shit talking about it? There are many ways in which we are taught what our appropriate gender is, and when someone feels threatened by a gender identity or expression, we can guess that there lies the key to our struggle.

Gender is used against us, but we can also use it to free each other and ourselves. If we start undermining the rules and constraints of gender, we can more successfully fight patriarchy and domination. By writing this, I hope to plant seeds of gender rebellion, solidarity, and gender freedom.

Here's a term you may not have come across: gender self-determination. Self-determination means each person or community being free to determine for oneself the way they want to live and the decisions that affect their lives. In the context of a struggle for gender self-determination, it means, "honoring the rights of each person to make their own choices concerning their body, their identity, their languages and the way in which they present their gender... It is about... being committed to building a world where each and every person is able to express and live their gender and bodies in ways that are liberating, full, and healing... It is

our work to challenge the numerous obstacles that encroach on people's abilities to make those decisions for their own." Michelle O'Brien

So in what ways do we not have gender self-determination? To some people it's laughably obvious, and to others perhaps it's not so obvious. How are you not completely free to determine what you do with or what happens to your body? How are you not free to determine your own identity and gender presentation?

The acceptable genders in this society are man or boy and woman or girl. For most of us a medical professional determines our sex the moment we're born. If our genitals are ambiguous, they might further determine who we are and alter our bodies to fit the male or female box without our permission. Then most of us have to wear pink or blue and of course many of us know how we're treated differently as we're growing up depending on if it's been determined that we're male or female. It's often determined for us what we wear, what we can play, what toys are fit for us, what we should be interested in, what skills we're encouraged to have, etc. Not only are these things pushed on us, but we might be punished in one way or another if we don't fit accurately and acceptably into the male or female box. If it's determined that we're male, but we're not masculine enough, we're called sissies, fags, pussy-whipped, etc. If it's determined that we're female, but we're not feminine enough, we are called bitches, whores, or dykes, or we will never get a boyfriend/married (and therefore have no value). All around us we're coerced into fitting into the male or female box and we're taught how we have to fit; we need to fulfill certain requirements starting with our bodies and including our sexuality, how we act, how we look, and what we value. We are made to think there is such a thing as a real man and a real woman, and that we're supposed to be one or the other. We are virtually imprisoned by gender, though we may have some freedom, if we don't behave appropriately, there are plenty of prison guards to attempt to put us in our place. To what extent do we choose this arrangement or our place in it? What would gender look like if we had gender self-determination?

If we've agreed that we are socialized to fit into one of the gender boxes, even coerced into it, then perhaps we can agree that we are still without choice in many ways.

Is this the natural order of things or does power play a role in the division between genders? Think about why white supremacy/racism exists and how the division between white people and other races is reinforced in different ways. Not to imply that white supremacy and patriarchy affect people or function the same way, but comparing the two can offer us some insights into how they are based on power and how they interconnect.

Gender and Power

I argue that power has a lot to do with why these social divisions exist and are maintained. In the case of gender, men in general benefit from this social division. Men are given more access, more privilege, and more value. A man must be masculine to climb up the hierarchy. A primary masculine trait that upholds patriarchy is domination. Masculinity does not necessarily involve domination, but domination is a highly valued masculine trait. Patriarchy allows and encourages men in general to control things that are deemed weaker or lower in the hierarchy. Some men even use the model of patriarchal masculinity against others by accusing them of being less than a man (i.e. insults implying homosexuality or womanliness), which is another example of how the gender dichotomy is based on power.

Being the breadwinner of the family has been seen as man's proper role, but economic hardship due to racism and capitalism has caused situations in many families of color and poor families where men can't make adequate money. Patriarchy (and white men colluding with it) has compelled many black men and women alike to defend black men's manhood in the context of patriarchal racism, which reinforces the divide between men and women. In *Killing Rage*, bell hooks wrote, "Since most black men (along with women and children) are socialized to equate manhood with justice, the first issue on our agenda has to be individual and collective

acknowledgement that justice and the integrity of the race must be defined by the extent to which black males and females have the freedom to be self-determining... [Justice] can emerge only as black males refuse to play the game—refuse patriarchal definitions of manhood.” Some black female authors have said that due to men’s need to defend their masculinity, fighting for the liberation of their race or class is a priority over the fight for women’s liberation (which, being detrimental to a struggle against racism and upholding patriarchy, benefits white men twofold).

Having to already deal with the patriarchal standards within their own ethnic groups, women of color also experience to different degrees being exoticized, sexualized, and otherwise dehumanized and treated as property by white people as well. It is the experience of many women that we are taught that the ideal womanhood is white economically privileged womanhood. Think about images of women in the media and who is favored and who is not. Think about how having money and time affects a woman’s ability to appropriately perform her femininity.

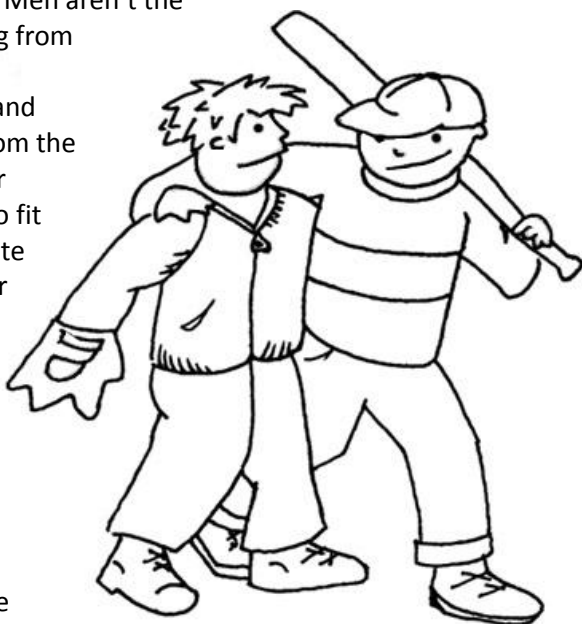
Patriarchy basically means rule by men. This works in abstract and systematic ways as well as tangibly between individuals. It is about discrimination and especially about control and devaluation. It manifests as abuse, violence against women, disrespect, control of sexuality and women’s bodies, objectification and beauty standards, and the devaluation of women’s contributions, views and opinions, etc. Many feminists have argued simply that women are the oppressed and men are the oppressors.

It’s obviously more complex than that. It is certainly (white straight able rich) men that are in control, but some women, queer people, people of color and other minorities are gaining access to some of the privilege in a bigger way than they had before. Do they have to buy into the system to get in? Do they have to dominate others to gain and maintain that position? Certainly, the system that they are privileging from is based on exploitation, greed, competition, imperialism, and hierarchy of social divisions. This system can succeed better by allowing a small number to access some of the

wealth and power of the elite (and more people to lesser degrees). This is because the (often false) promise/possibility of wealth and power, or at least more comfortable living (as well as, on the other side of the coin, the reality of working constantly and struggling just to survive) keeps people from resisting or fighting the systems of power and that which hold them up. In addition, scarcity of wealth and power makes people with any privilege feel threatened, causing them to hold onto any power they can, keeping those social hierarchies in place. Capitalism, white supremacy, and patriarchy, with domination as their base, work in interlocking ways.

Because of the complexity of which patriarchy must be viewed, we must consider patriarchy as not only the rule of men but also the rule of those that are colluding in and practicing what is a value of patriarchal masculinity; domination. Or perhaps we should only use the term patriarchy when we're talking about the rule of men, and we should use the term gender oppression in other cases (when related to gender). Men aren't the only ones benefiting from gender oppression.

Heterosexual men and women privilege from the oppression of queer people. People who fit into their appropriate gender boxes better than others privilege from the oppression of people who cannot fit into those boxes.



I argue that gender divisions are, for the most part, created within the context of power and that the border drawn between men and women is a deception. I'm not arguing that there is no difference

between men and women, but that gender is more of a spectrum than a dichotomy.

Perhaps the metaphor of a border is quite useful. In thinking about the U.S./Mexico border, from which I live about 200 miles, we see that this, like many other national borders, is manmade, only to preserve a conceptual difference between places and peoples. There are geographical differences, different people and cultures, but the borders suggest that there is some absolute difference between that which is on either side. This also makes invisible those native and other peoples who live along the border. In the interest of those in power, borders create an "us vs. them" mentality, while the reality of our differences outside of power relationships is trivial.

Even if you believe that there is some biological or essential difference between men and women that is the cause for how different the ideas of "real woman" and "real man" are, it must be acknowledged that there is a wide variety of ways of being a woman or a man, and that there are people who identify as neither.

The idea that there is some essential aspect of a woman that makes her different from a man can be argued against to some extent by the huge variety of experience of being a woman. Womanhood varies by race, class, age, sexuality, ability, size, and more. Can you name one thing that all women (and no one else) share in common? If so, does that erase the experience of anyone (anyone who is intersexed or transgender for example)? Essentialism, the idea that there are essential differences between two groups, is a problematic concept. It has been used against some non-white races for the purposes of eugenicist ideas- that people of color had criminal tendencies or less intelligence and so they deserved to be forcibly sterilized. And of course it was the women and not the men who tended to be sterilized. Different people have critiqued gender essentialism and models of womanhood as based on race or class privilege, like in the case of white feminism. "...the hierarchical pattern of race and sex relationships already established in American society merely took a different form under "feminism":

...the form of white women writing books that purport to be about the experience of American women when in fact they concentrate solely on the experience of white women..." wrote bell hooks in *Ain't I a Woman*.

I do not wish to argue over human nature, but rather to put ideas of difference into the context of power, and to bring to the forefront the realities of lives that are marginalized or made invisible.

Generalizing is easy and it is also easier to think in terms of simple categories. It's easier to justify social divisions and oppression with simplicity, but humans are far too complex. Why is it that those who transcend gender categories are such a threat (and therefore a target of violence and harassment)? Is it because the act of not conforming enough to patriarchal standards of gender throws a monkey wrench into the systems of control and domination? Gender is socially constructed based on the idea that gender can be split simply into two categories and to expose it as otherwise is to undermine what gender oppression is based on.

A good example of how gender is a social construct is the case of body hair. Think about people's reaction to a woman with armpit hair (or a little mustache). Somehow she is a threat, or she's just "unhygienic"- even though hair naturally grows there. Isn't it interesting that our concept of the female body is a body that is shaven? We can conclude that this idea of gender is not based on any real, natural, biological concept of a gender difference, but rather on patriarchal and capitalist domination. (Yes, women tend to have less body hair than men, but some women are hairier than some men.)

We must consider how gender divisions have historically been shaped within power relationships. An interesting dimension to the concept of gender is Butch Lee and Red Rover's theory on the connections between capitalism, race, and gender from *Night Vision*:

Understanding that race was politically constructed by capitalism to carry out class roles, then it's just another step to see that the same goes for gender. Capitalism's ingrained mindset that these things are somehow naturally determined, biologically fixed, is hard to break... these minor physical differences are only a reference point for the vast superstructure of race that world capitalism created... When European capitalism reshaped gender under its rule, they did so around class and race. White women were to be unnaturally "feminine"-- which meant weaker, delicate, dependent, "lily-white", housebound, caretakers to men, "alluringly" satisfying to male domination. Only upper-class women and women from the middle classes, the Lady & the Housewife, could truly become these artificial women, of course. By definition, colonial and lower-class women were excluded, had failure to gender, we might say. Race became gender. For the making of the white race involved the politicized un-making of women to fit into "white." Euro-capitalism artificially remade its women physically weaker, domestic & dependent.

Butch Lee and Red Rover also argue in the same book that capitalism started with the witch trials- the genocide of women and the state's accumulation of their property. Activists, organizers, theorists, and the like can go round and round trying to determine what oppression came first, what formed what, what's more important to fight, etc. Those who focus on class and/or race often leave the discussion of gender oppression in the dust, if not simply reference it. It is necessary to see the interconnections no matter what oppression we're focusing on.

Freedom for All Genders

In this context of these power relationships it makes sense for any liberation movement to address the complex system of hierarchies. Narrowing our focus down to gender, how can we strive for freedom for all genders?

All genders?

We are a movement of masculine females and feminine males, cross-dressers, transsexual men and women, intersexuals born on the anatomical sweep between female and male, gender-blenders, many other sex and gender-variant people, and our significant others. All told, we expand the understanding of how many ways there are to be a human being. Our lives are proof that sex and gender are much more complex than a delivery room doctor's glance at genitals can determine, more variegated than pink or blue birth caps. We are oppressed for not fitting those narrow social norms. We are fighting back. -Leslie Feinburg, *TransLiberation*

Those of us who act and talk like there are only male and female should examine our assumptions and widen our view. There is a variety of ways to identify, perform, and express gender. Based on the actual experiences of people, rather than scientific classification or patriarchal thinking, gender is more of fluid-like than binary.

To deny the fluidity of gender is to deny many peoples' experiences. It is also common among communities where gender non-conformity and gender-variance is marginalized or invisible, to assume that these things come out of race or class privilege, which is also to deny many people's experiences and further marginalize them.

Gender is also intimately connected with sexuality. Whether one acceptably looks or acts an appropriate gender by our society's standards or not, freedom to do what we want or to not do what we don't want with our bodies and our love is restricted in many ways. Therefore, gender self-determination must also include the freedom of consensual sexuality between and among all genders.



Think about the oppression one must face as someone who does not identify with or perform the gender they are expected to. (Why are they expected to?) Consider the safety of a person who is transsexual, transgender, genderqueer or any other gender-variant identity. If a person desires or needs to live as the “opposite gender” from what he/she was born, their ability to pass as that gender may affect their survival (either in terms of possible violence or lack of a good job, etc. or both). Emi Koyama wrote in “Transfeminist Manifesto”, “Because our identities are constructed within the social environment into which we are born, one could argue that the discontinuity between one’s gender identity and physical sex is problematic only because society is actively maintaining a dichotomous gender system. If one’s gender were an insignificant factor in society, the need for trans people to modify their bodies to fit into the dichotomy of genders may very well decrease, although probably not completely.” Transsexual and transgender people often require the services of the medical community in order to pass (passing describes a transgender person’s ability to be accepted as their preferred gender. The term refers primarily to acceptance by people the individual does not know, or who do not know that the individual is transgender-wikipedia). However, similarly to how being homosexual was/is

considered having a condition, often gender-variant people are said to have “gender dysphoria” or “gender identity disorder” based on concepts of “normal” and “abnormal”. The medical establishment is also that which first determines our gender.

Institutionalized Gender Oppression

It is important to consider how the medical establishment is an institution of gender oppression. There is a history of patriarchal heteronormative development of western medicine. The lack of respect for women and their choices, lack of non-sexist research on women’s health, denial of female experiences such as PMS, lack of respect for queer people (even considering them crazy or diseased), lack of adequate AIDS research and affordable drug costs, lack of respect for intersex people, non-consensual mutilation of most/some intersex people, circumcision of most boys without consent, strict rules on how mothers should birth their babies, high cost abortions, risky unhealthy contraceptives, lack of appropriate education about and screening for HPV which can cause cervical cancer, lack of respect for transsexual and other gender-variant people (and on and on)... not to mention that being poor or brown compounds the disrespect and lack of proper care and access. This is an example of institutionalized gender oppression.

Institutionalized gender oppression can even be as simple as going to the bathroom. Many of us don’t have to think about it. Or perhaps we’re reminded of the story about how the equal rights act was argued against because it was said that eventually men and women would have to share public bathrooms. What if you avoid going to a public restroom because you don’t know if you are safe doing so? Many transsexual, transgender and other gender-variant people may not be able to pass as an appropriate gender to “belong” in one gendered restroom or the other. The reaction of other people is one situation which can be a matter of physical safety or harassment or a weird expression on someone’s face, but one can get fired, or even arrested for entering the “wrong” bathroom. A report on bathrooms on the Transgender Law Center website stated: “Bathrooms reinforce the current gender system.

Bathrooms are a daily structural reminder that we must know at each moment whether or not we identify as female or male. Male and female, these are our only choices. Why must we artificially divide the huge gender diversity into two groups? Why is it so important that we relieve ourselves with only those who are lumped into the same group as ourselves?"

What if you are gender-variant and you have to go to jail or prison? Think strip-searches, harassment, improper medical care, verbal and physical abuse... What about employment...?

Nearly every social institution is founded on the assumption that people can and will fit properly into their gender boxes. This is not freedom.

Gender Self-Determination

"The continued oppression of women proves only that in any binary there's going to be one up and one down. The struggle for equal rights must include the struggle to dismantle the binary". Gender Outlaw

"When we say we are fighting the patriarchy, it isn't always clear to all of us that that means fighting all hierarchy, all leadership, all government, and the very idea of authority itself." Peggy Kornegger, Anarchism: the Feminist Connection

We may be imprisoned by gender, but we can also use gender to set ourselves and each other free. We should address strict, rigid divisions of mutually exclusive genders as false and consider how they're used against people. This social division of genders, the gender dichotomy, is what patriarchy, homophobia, and transphobia are based on.

Should we smash the gender dichotomy, get rid of gender? In an essay called "Politicizing Gender: Moving toward revolutionary gender politics" the author, Carolyn wrote,

For many anti-authoritarians there may be the temptation to "smash gender" or "destroy gender roles." This may seem logical to some. However, I believe this too leads to an alternate form of authoritarianism... a gender revolution will only be meaningful if it substantively empowers everyone... Gender must be liberated, but we all must have a voice in what that means, not from an abstract pre-determined theory, but a synthesis of real people's experiences. From this I believe we will see that many people find gendered roles liberating, while others experience serious oppression through these roles. Any strategy toward liberation must maintain the integrity of all our experiences and be willing to question how different communities can accept divergent and antagonistic needs without creating an atmosphere of punishing silences and real violence.

The struggle for gender self-determination should include the dismantling of the gender dichotomy- but not to the extent that gender identities are replaced by androgyny or genderlessness, that any gender identities are prohibited, nor that people who conform to accepted ways of being male or female are looked down upon. The dismantling of the gender dichotomy is a process of looking at the social division of gender as based on power relationships, to fight that power, to accept a variety of ways of expressing, and performing gender, to destabilize ideas of a "real man" and a "real woman," to respect people's decisions about how they identify and what language they use regarding their identity (pronouns, labels, etc.). What each of us can do depends on our position in the gender hierarchy. Addressing our privilege where we have it, listening to others, overcoming assumptions, confronting domination, addressing the limits that have been forced on us, being disloyal to patriarchy, and seeking out our own identities with a vision of a world without the coercion of the gender dichotomy and patriarchy. Those of us who are subjugated by gender oppression need to have solidarity with each other. Those who privilege from gender oppression need to see where they are also repressed by patriarchal expectations and lack of choices for expression. We need to look for those things that threaten the

patriarchal power structure and use those things against it. We need to come together against patriarchal masculinity. It is necessary to undermine men's assumed access to privilege and control.

We must see the interconnections of oppressions and make our goal the liberation of all. Michelle O'Brien wrote in an article called "Gender Skirmishes on the Edges; Notes on gender identity, self-determination and anticolonial struggle,"

A revolutionary politics of self-determination must also be about recognizing and challenging systems of white supremacist capitalism and neocolonialism. Self-determination isn't just about making individual decisions – it's about communities, classes and nations seizing control of one's own destiny from the grips of the domination of capital, state violence and colonization. A substantive radical gender politics must challenge all structures of domination as they are deeply interconnected across the surface of our lives and across this planet.

We need to address and confront institutionalized gender oppression. Some will find it necessary to think in terms of reform, while others will seek justice and solutions through direct action. We must address our own attitudes and actions, those within our community, and gender oppression on a larger scale.

Self-determination is a freedom that would ultimately require that we are no longer ruled by the state nor by anyone else. The state, embodying domination, seeks to control our bodies and our lives. No authority can tell us who we are, and no one can rightfully control our bodies.

We cannot simply say that fighting against patriarchy is a fight for the freedom of more than half the population. We know that it is/has not been all feminists' goals to set all women free; that racism and classism has permeated much of the mainstream feminist movement. However, those of us who are feminists know

that the feminist movement has been criticized as racist more than race and class-based movements have been criticized as sexist. We also know that many feminists (particularly anarcho-feminists) have struggled and are struggling for freedom from all oppressions.

My vision of anarcho-feminism is a feminism that is anarchist, not only in the sense that the objective isn't "equality" with men within a domination-based system, but also in the sense that we question the basis on which gender divisions and roles are shaped by power.

It makes no sense why gender self-determination and freedom from patriarchy can so easily be left out of discussions about power and absent from liberation movements. As long as patriarchy is not addressed, domination will be a central value in our society, people will be oppressed based on their gender or sexuality, and freedom is not possible.

Gender oppression is an incredibly old oppression. It's likely that people's unwillingness to address it on a larger scale is because it is so daunting. How can we change ingrained attitudes, how we've been taught to think and act? Another difficult dimension to this problem is that for so many of us, gender oppression is a very personal experience. How do we empower ourselves and everyone to fight against gender oppression? These are issues around which we need to think and talk about and create strategies.

By sallydarity

Deep Inside the Mind of a Manarchist Part One

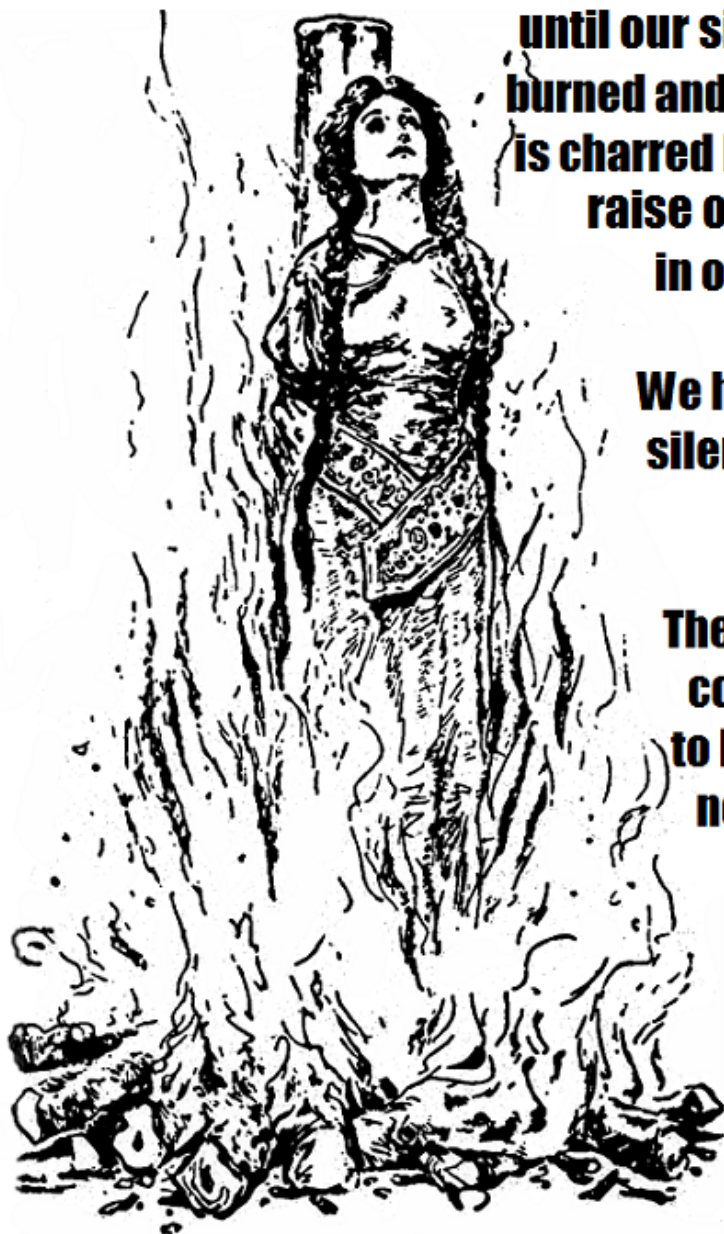
Sexism has proven itself to be quite a controversial and divisive issue within the anarchist community. Wimmin in increasing numbers over the years, have risen up, in defiance of the male "leadership" that dominates anarchist circles, to demand, among other things, the inclusion of the struggle against sexist oppression into the anarchist agenda. In theory, anarchy opposes all forms of oppression, so it seems ironic to me that wimmin should have to spend so much of their time attempting to convince anarchist men of what should seem obvious.

For wimmin, sexist oppression is the reality that they must deal with on a daily basis; being objectified, ridiculed, and silenced by men in their lives and reduced to second class status by a male hierarchy that views wimmin as objects to be possessed, and raped and murdered by men. For men, the luxury to ignore these atrocities and avoid active participation in anti-sexist struggle is a reflection of our own privilege. It is nearly impossible for men to avoid the sexist indoctrination of male supremacist culture and sexism does not just disappear from men because they call themselves "anarchists" and proclaim themselves "liberated". What is more likely to actualize the demise of sexist oppression, would be for significant numbers of men to break ranks with the dominant supremacist culture, identify and work to transcend their own sexist behaviors and attitudes, support wimmin in their daily lives and speak out against sexism to other men. In mainstream society, very few men are willing to break the silence that maintains the culture of violence that manhood has imposed on upon wimmin. Patriarchal culture has trained men to either "mind their own business" and ignore the epidemic of violence that men unleash on wimmin or to accept it as commonplace and blame wimmin for what men do to them. The silence of men, along with the silencing of wimmin, by men, has allowed for us to remain in denial, sweeping the problems under the rug, pretending they do not exist.

**We shall not wait
until our sisters are
burned and our earth
is charred before we
raise our voices
in opposition**

**We have been
silenced long
enough**

**The time has
come for us
to be victors
not victims**



Many men assume that because they do not actively participate directly in physical violence against wimmin, that they should be resolved from complicity. Yet, rape, murder, and battering of wimmin only represent one end of the continuum of sexist oppression that includes on the other end, the degrading sexist slurs, controlling and abusive behaviors, condescending attitudes, and male silence that maintain an environment that encourages men to physically violate wimmin.

I am reminded of an incident last year, in Central Park, New York City. Amongst a public gathering of thousands of people, a smaller group of men, many of whom did not even know each other, took opportunity of the crowd and began groping, molesting, and basically raping random wimmin. Not only did other men not interfere, but rather, many men, when they realized that it was possible, and that they could get away with it, joined in on the frenzy themselves. Similar incidents have occurred at "Woodstock '99", and a recent LA Lakers game that resulted in a riot afterwards. That abusive men can safely assume to face no significant obstruction from other men that would prevent them from assaulting and raping wimmin in public, in broad daylight, is a clear testament that male silence acts as a green light for men to violate wimmin.

Anarchist men, who posit themselves as enemies of oppression, have even more of a responsibility to pick up the slack left by the broader, mainstream male culture. Unfortunately, many male anarchists, much like their counterparts in mainstream society, are rather selective in choosing their battles; Mostly preferring to focus their energy fighting their own exploitation and avoiding participation in liberation struggles that would require them to transform their own behaviors and attitudes. Many anarchist men tend to view "sexism" as an issue that is secondary to class struggle (their own struggle) and insist that focusing their energy to fight sexism would distract them from "the Revolution", which is often defined as a glorified class struggle against "the state" and "capitalism". That many anarchist men tend to identify "the state" and "capitalism" as the oppressors, suggests a preoccupation with

their own class exploitation. For many male anarchists, many of whom are also white, young, able-bodied, and heterosexual, class exploitation is the only area in which they experience any form of institutionalized domination. Based solely on their own class exploitation, anarchist men often mistakenly conclude that the cops, CEOs, landlords, bosses, and politicians that exercise authority over them to be the sole possessors of authoritarian power. By assuming that capitalist parasites and officially sanctioned agents of state repression hold some sort of monopoly on oppression, anarchists ignorantly disregard an entire spectrum of oppressors to be targeted by anarchist revolt.

This limited, white male definition of what constitutes an "oppressor" does not typically include the broader spectrum of sexist, racist, and homophobic predators that are abundantly scattered throughout all classes of our culture, even within our own movement. What about the rapists and child molesters that have infiltrated our communities, conveniently disguised as fathers, brothers, husbands, uncles, and boyfriends, or the misogynistic bible thumpers who lay claim to the minds and "souls" of our society's men, churning them into homophobes, bashing and murdering queers in dark alleys behind bars and bombing abortion clinics? What of the organized racist groups: The Klansmen and neo-nazis that litter the landscapes with their vile presence and ideologies? Statistically speaking, the majority of these predators tend to be heterosexual white men, the same demographic group that controls both "the state" and "capitalism" and ironically, the "leadership" positions of the anarchist movement.

Should we not be concerned with these predators because they don't have badges indicating positions of state power, or because they are not wealthy property owners, simply because they do not exercise authority over us straight white guys?

It seems to me to be completely ignorant to assume that "smashing the state" and "abolishing capitalism" as sole strategies of anarchist revolution would somehow rid the world of these predators. In fact, to be honest, I shudder to think of the horrors that would be

unleashed upon the actualization of a chaotic war-like scenario, within the contexts of an already violent, racist, sexist, and homophobic society. The conditions imposed during wartime are doorways for organized anti-gay, racist militias as well as those who prey on wimmin, children, the elderly and disabled people. For a bunch of privileged white guys, far removed from the realities of systematic violence, with no intimate understanding of oppression, to assume the authority to impose more violence into communities of people, for whom violence is already a daily reality, is arrogant, and authoritarian.

I will state, for the record, that I am not proposing "pacifism", for I am not a pacifist, and would never begrudge anyone their right to utilize whatever means necessary to defend themselves or in defense of others. I will not, however, succumb to the glorification of violence or romanticization of war, and a disorganized, vanguardist movement of undisciplined white kids, with no significant public support hardly seem capable of toppling the state anyways.

What I am proposing, however, is that we, as privileged men, recognize that we are coming from positions of relative comfort, which has been obtained from the systematic oppression of wimmin and children, communities of color, the queer community, and other marginalized members of society. We must learn to abdicate our positions of power that we have not earned, and begin to support other communities and individuals, based on their own needs, which they will define for themselves. Our struggle against "the state" and "capitalism" simply does not represent the entirety of the anarchist struggle against an entire culture of domination. By dismissing feminist, anti-racist, and queer liberation struggles as "single issue" or "reformist", white, heterosexual, anarchist men reduce anarchist struggle into their own struggle against their own exploiters, which is in itself "reformist" and "single issue" as well as elitist, authoritarian, and everything else that anarchy opposes.

By Kooky, an ex-Eugene anarchist

Some Terms and Demands

Becoming an ally is a process. It takes learning, self-exploration, and experience. The following terms and definitions vary across communities and change with different people's perceptions and experiences.

Gender - A. In its most accepted definition, gender refers to the social roles (e.g., men, women) and characteristics that develop through cultural interpretations of biological or anatomical sex. In this definition, sex is seen as natural, and gender as the social construction that stems from readings of sex. **B.** A societal construct referring to roles, characteristics, behaviors, appearances, and identities that develop through cultural interpretations of genetic sex. One's sense of being a woman, man, girl, boy, androgynous, or something else entirely; or of being perceived as woman, man, etc.

Gender Identity - The gender with which a person identifies, or is identified. This can be different from a person's assigned gender, which is determined as birth to be male or female or manipulated to resemble one or the other. It is important to note that gender identity, biological sex, and sexuality are not necessarily linked.

Gender Expression - The external presentation or appearance of a person's gender. (Ex. Dress, mannerisms, hair style, speech, etc.). A person's gender expression may differ from their gender identity.

Perceived Gender - What another person assumes one's gender is in a given interaction. Some people's gender expression is commonly misinterpreted or confused and is different from their identity/expression.

Transgender - This term has many definitions. It is frequently used as an umbrella term to refer to all people who deviate from their assigned gender or the binary gender system, including intersex people, transsexuals, cross-dressers, transvestites, gender queers, drag kings, drag queens, two-spirit people, and others. Some transgendered people feel they exist not within one of the two

standard gender categories, but rather somewhere between, beyond, or outside of those two genders. The term can also be applied exclusively to people who live primarily as the gender "opposite" to that which they were assigned at birth. These people may sometimes prefer the term "transsexual".

Transsexual - Used to describe people who identify with a gender different than what they were assigned at birth. For example, a person who understands themselves as a woman, but was identified as a male at birth, might identify as a transsexual woman.

Transsexual people might choose to alter their appearance, the ways they are referred to and their bodies. A transsexual person might engage in hormone therapy, have surgeries or other procedures to become more comfortable with their bodies. In some circles, particularly conventional medical discourse, transsexual is used exclusively to refer to people who have had or intend to have Genital Reassignment Surgery (GRS). Today, however, many understand that transsexual people might choose to not have any form of surgery.

Trans Women - Trans people who identify and understand themselves as women. Respectful labels usually refer to where someone is heading, to their future, and not to their past. A trans woman might identify as 'MtF' or 'male-to-female', referring to their assigned gender (male) and self-identified gender (female).

Trans Men - Trans people who identify as male. A trans man might call themselves 'FtM' or 'female-to-male', again referring to assigned gender (female) and self-identified gender (male).

Intersex - People born with bodies that don't easily fit into categories of male or female. An anatomical variation from typical understandings of male and female genetics. The physical manifestation, at birth, of genetic or endocrinological differences from the cultural norm. Also a group of medical conditions that challenge standard sex designations, proving that sex, like gender, is a social construct. Intersex and transgender folks share some overlapping experiences and perspectives, but the terms are not

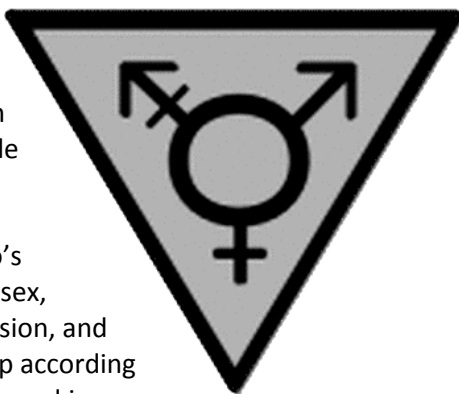
synonymous, and the issues are not the same. "Intersex" or "intersexual" is used today in favor of the term "hermaphrodite".

Queer - An umbrella identity term encompassing lesbians, questioning people, gay men, bisexuals, non-labeling people, transgendered folks, and anyone else who does not strictly identify as heterosexual. "Queer" originated as a derogatory word. Currently, it is being reclaimed by some people and used as a statement of empowerment. Some people identify as queer to distance themselves from the rigid categorizations of "straight" and "gay". Some transgendered, lesbian, gay, questioning, non-labeling, and bisexual people, however, reject the use of this term due its connotations of deviance and its tendency to gloss over and sometimes deny the differences between these groups.

Transition - The process of changing one's presentation and/or expression to align with one's gender identity. Some of these changes include name change, pronoun change, hormonal modifications, or surgery. Transition varies greatly across the transgender community, both in what people choose to change and when certain changes feel most comfortable.

Genderqueer - Someone whose gender expression is consciously not consistent with conventional standards for male and female behavior.

Gendervariant - Someone who's combination of legal sex, birth sex, gender identity, gender expression, and perceived gender do not line up according to societal expectations. Often used in replacement of genderqueer, but is more comfortable with those not comfortable reclaiming the word queer.



Fluid Identity - The concept that identity is not rigid, but can and does change. This idea is often used in terms of gender, sexuality,

and race, as well as other factors of identity. This concept is fundamentally contrary to binary systems. A person who feels her/his identity is fluid often believes that rigid categories are oppressive and incapable of accurately describing her/his experience and identities

Birth Sex - The sex an individual is labeled at birth determined by a combination of genetic and physical characteristics. Biological/Birth sex is usually determined at birth by a "best-fit" strategy, dependent on the examiner's bias.

Assigned Gender - Refers to the gender one was identified as at birth. Sometimes people call this one's 'birth gender'. Often this assignment is made on the basis of genitals. Usually this is the gender someone was raised as before transitioning or coming out as trans. Trans people experience some discomfort with their assigned gender and the social expectations people attach to that gender.

Sexuality - This term can be used as a general term to refer to sexual orientation, sexual object choice, or sexual preference. It can also be used to describe the nature of one's desire, e.g., SM, monogamy, polyamory, etc. Trans people can be gay, lesbian, straight, queer, bisexual, or pansexual.

Cross-Dresser - Someone who enjoys wearing clothing typically assigned to a gender that that individual has not been socialized as, or does not identify as. Cross-dressers are of all sexualities and do not necessarily identify as transgendered. "Cross-dresser" is frequently used today in place of the term transvestite.

Drag - The adoption of clothing and roles of another sex for the purpose of play, entertainment, or eroticism. Originally used to refer to "drag queens" (Dressed as A Girl), there are also a number of "drag kings." Drag performers are not cross dressers, who adopt the clothing of another sex outside of the context of entertainment/performance.

Bisexual/Bi - Someone who is or is capable of being attracted to members of both sexes or genders as prescribed by the binary gender system. Many people avoid this term because of its implication that there are only two sexes/genders to be sexually attracted to and thus reinforces the binary gender system.

Gender Binary/Gender Dualism - A system that defines and make room for two and only two distinct, natural, and opposite genders (i.e., male and female). These two genders are defined in opposition to each other, such that masculinity and femininity are seen as mutually exclusive. In this system, there is no room for any ambiguity or intermingling of gender traits.

Transphobia - The fear or hatred of transgendered and transsexual people. Like biphobia, this term was created to call attention to the ways that prejudice against trans people differs from prejudice against other queer people. There is often transphobia in gay, lesbian, and bisexual communities, as well as straight communities.

Homophobia - The fear or hatred of gays, lesbians, or queer-identified people in general. This can be manifested as an intense dislike or rejection of such people, or violent actions against them.

Heterosexism - The concept that heterosexuality and only heterosexuality is natural, normal, superior, and required. This can refer to any institution or belief system that excludes or makes invisible questioning, lesbian, non-labeling, bisexual, transgender, queer, and gay people, as well as any system that constructs queer sexualities as deviant, wrong, or immoral. Heterosexism is deeply rooted in the culture and institutions in our society. Homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia all stem from and are supported by heterosexism. Heterosexism enforces and is enforced by a binary gender system. Binaries similarly enforce racism and other systems of power.

Sexism - The outward manifestation of an inward system of values deliberately designed to structure privilege by means of an objective, differential, and unequal treatment of women, for the

purpose of social advantage over scarce resources. This values system gives rise to an ideology of supremacy which justifies power of position by placing a negative meaning and value on perceived or actual biological/cultural differences.

(adapted from www.soaw.org)

Intersex and Trans Demands

(from <http://www.geocities.com/gainesvilleavengers/index.htm>)

Here are two separate lists that a few of us developed in Atlanta. We initially wrote the lists because we had found other lists in regards to sexism to be good, but incomplete and lacking in our own experiences.

The trans demands are lacking in MtF voices. This list comes out of our community. The list is far from complete, but is good to start discussions around these issues.

(The following lists reflect the views and experiences of the writers; not necessarily any community at large.)

Intersex List of Demands

- Don't assume you know someone's sex based on how you perceive them or their gender.
- Don't assume all women have a vagina, uterus, etc.
- Don't assume all men have a penis, testes, etc.
- Don't fetishize our bodies.
- Don't use the word hermaphrodite to describe us unless we identify that way and give permission.
- Don't feel sorry for us.
- Respect our sex identification.
- Don't exploit our existence to discredit biological determinism or other academic ideologies.
- Know the difference between sex and gender.
- Know the difference between intersexed and transgendered.
- Don't ask us or try to picture what our genitals look like.

- Don't ask us if we have sexual sensations.
- Don't assume you have the right to know intimate details of our bodies. We have the right to privacy and safety like all other people.
- Realize we have historically been mutilated, fetishized, and made into freak shows. Understand how this affects us and our safety.
- Don't say "cool" or "weird" or treat us differently when we tell you we are intersexed.
- Educate yourself!!! Read books on intersex.
- Girl, woman, female; boy, man, male are not always interchangeable.
- Don't assume all intersex people are queer.
- Realize that not all people with intersex condition are out.
- Realize that not all people with intersex conditions even know that they are intersexed.
- Remember that we are 1 in 100, and that is not rare at all!!!
- Don't call our conditions "disorders," "retardations," "abnormalities," etc.
- Realize that bodies come in all different shapes, sizes and with different parts.
- Realize how fucking strong we are to speak up about the medical abuse and victimization we have been through and that we deserve mad props.
- Don't write us off as rare and unimportant. Don't put off educating yourself for other "more important" issues.
- In situations such as gender caucuses, keep in mind that not all the people who identify as women have similar genitalia, etc. Understand that we have been taught that our bodies are "wrong" and "ugly" and that it reinforces this when people say they love being women because of their vagina, uterus, etc., this reinforces those feelings. Woman does not necessarily = female. Man does not necessarily = male.

Trans/Gender List of Demands

- Don't assume someone's gender identity.
- Don't constantly reference someone's gender identity in an attempt to seem OK with it. Likewise, don't think we care if you're OK with us or not. No one asked for your approval.

- Don't trip up on pronouns- if you fuck up, simply correct yourself and go on.
- Don't glamorize someone's gender identity or think it's "cool" or say that you're "into it."
- Read trans/gender theory. Know the difference between: transgender, transsexual, gender fucking, gender blending/bending, gender vs. sex, binary gender, passing, transitioning, binding, tucking, packing/stuffing, third genders, drag queens/kings, androgyny, butch, femme, crossdressing, boi, MtF, FtM, tranny boys, tranny dykes, boydykes, transfags, etc., etc., etc.!!!
- Know the difference between intersex and transgender. Think about how you would really feel if someone you loved transitioned. Think about your fears and why you have them.
- Recognize your own transphobia.
- Know about transitioning and surgery and hormones.
- Don't just name yourself a "trans ally" one day.
- Realize that some of us have struggled with our gender identity for a long time. Don't think that we just woke up one day and decided that we would identify as transgendered. So when we finally find a space that we're comfortable in (even if temporarily), don't co-opt that space or try to make it yours too.
- Even if you think fucking with gender is hot, don't talk about it in an objectifying way.
- Realize that it can be hard existing in in-between spaces and really know that trans oppression and transphobia exist. Know the fear of not being able to determine when you pass, the fear of being arrested/strip searched/thrown in the wrong holding cell, the threat of violence, the annoyance of having to "come out" about your gender identity constantly, etc.
- Understand the privilege of feeling at home in your body, using a public bathroom, knowing which M/F box to check, having people assume your gender identity and them being right, etc.
- Realize that there is a gender community and that the validation we receive from that community can be incomparable to what you could ever offer us and let us seek refuge there.
- Recognize how class and race fit into these equations.
- Recognize and respect someone's gender identity regardless of whether or not they choose to have surgery or take hormones.

Similarly, don't judge someone for transitioning or not wanting to identify as "transgendered."

- Don't think of a transgender identity as "political."
- Don't partner with us out of some weird transitioning or coming out process for you. Don't ask us how we fuck.
- Question your own gender! (But don't then tell me, "You know, I've never felt like a 'real man'/'real woman' either." -What this means is don't assume our experiences are the same.
- Don't ask questions about someone trying to determine their "real gender."
- Don't think that FtM are dealing with some kind of internalized sexism.
- Don't assume our gender identity, render it invisible, or think it doesn't matter because of who we choose to partner with.
- Don't label our gender or sexual identity for us. Recognize the difference between the two!
- Don't think of our experiences and identities as monolithic.
- Don't think we are a "recent emergence" that somehow came out of gender/queer theory and academia.
- Realize that there are a variety of trans/gender expressions. Don't assume that people should express their gender similarly just because they both identify as transgendered. Likewise, don't judge someone because you think that their trans identity and gender expression conflict.
- Think about the language you use to differentiate between trans and non-trans people and if it's even necessary to differentiate.
- Don't assume trans people have a "shared experience" with people assigned the same gender.
- Don't assume FtMs are "better" than other men, or MtFs are not "as good" as other women (especially in terms of sexism).
- When doing introductions at a meeting, say the pronoun you prefer for that space along with your name, etc. (Facilitators should make sure this is done.)
- Be sensitive to pronouns you use for someone when dealing with authority, police. Keep in mind that people's pronouns/gender identity may not always match up with their I.D.
- Don't include us in your process of learning about intersex or trans issues unless we ask you about it.



Starting Your Own Group for Men Against Sexism



Many men have been latching on to feminist politics without taking up our place in the struggle for too long. It's not enough to read bell hooks or Angela Davis, call ourselves feminists, hang out with riot grrrls or rock the emo-boy style anymore. It's time to get out there, look inside and deal with the fact that most of us have been socialized in a society that teaches us to take power away from people around us. The fact that 1 in 3 girls are raped before the age of 17 is our responsibility. The fact that 1 in 5 boys are sexually assaulted before they turn 18 is our responsibility. Dismantling patriarchy is, in part, our responsibility. We have to step up—and here's one place we can begin.

Okay. So, you want to start a group for men against sexism, and have been wondering how to do it. That's great. There aren't many resources out there already, but you're not on your own. This article is a primer—a for-beginners guide to creating this group.

The first step, in my opinion, is to do a little soul searching of your own. Take the time to answer some important questions. Why are you putting this group together? What do you expect to get out of it? What do you want to see accomplished? Are you willing to let control over the group go? How does starting a group like this boost your own ego? This is the time to be honest with yourself and know your intention.

In Chicago, in 1995, I started a group for men against sexism. I received a lot of validation from people around me and this definitely went to my head. Because of this, I was a little more

controlling of the group and a little less critical of my own actions. This is definitely something to watch out for.

When you've answered some basic questions for yourself, it's time to get the group together. Before you put the word out, think about who you want to invite. Are trans people welcome? Is this a group for bio-men only? Is this a group for people of all genders who have been socialized to be men? Think about gender, in all its' complexities, and make sure to address it while starting your group.

Flyers, emails and word-of-mouth will do the trick in gathering together the first meeting. Figure out the time and place, how long the meeting will be, who will facilitate and what preparation you need to do.

During the first meeting, spend some time-sharing the results of your soul-searching. Get group members to answer some questions as well. Why did they join? What are they expecting to get from it? What are they willing to put into it? Challenge yourself and other members to take the risks that are necessary in effectively undoing the sexist socialization we've all received.

Setting up the foundation of the group is very important. Even though people within the group may want to jump into the material, it is important to make agreements about how to deal with critiques and self-reflection, picking topics and challenging group dynamics. Set up some ground rules around welcoming critique and consensual ways of bringing these critiques up. Make agreements about looking at group process and using this as a basis of discussion. Figure out ways to flush out the sexist dynamics that are taking place in the group and within the relationships that group members have and use these lessons as places to work from. Have people learn what their bodies feel like when they're feeling defensive and get support from other group members to recognize and keep their defenses down.

After this process is initially set-up, you can decide on what you want to accomplish. The following sections are topics you can

choose and tasks you can take on. But don't limit your group to my suggestions. Work the creativity in the room and grow as a group!

Reading/Reflecting

There are a lot of great reading materials out there that will feed hours of discussion. Authors like Joanna Kadi, bell hooks, Cherie Moraga, John Stoltenberg and Michael Kimmel; books about feminist politics, abuse, men's issues and all forms of oppression; zines about men against sexism, feminism, disability and many other topics; and countless web sites will provide an abundance of materials for the group to consider. If you choose the 'reading/reflecting' route, make sure to select reading materials from a wide variety of sources and to keep plenty of time for reflection about what you're reading and what it brings up for everyone. Challenge the group to get personal with the readings and not stay in an academic or head-driven space.

Accountability & Amends

I'll bet that at least one person in that group has had nonconsensual sex, non-communicative sex, sexually assaulted or harassed someone, and/or raped someone. I'll bet that everyone in that group has acted out of sexist patterns in one way or another. Because of this, it is really important to talk about accountability and amends. Many anti-sexist men's groups focus on the question: Where do we go from here? I think it's important to address our previous and present actions. With this, it's important to ask ourselves: Who have we hurt? And, how can we make amends to them? What does real accountability look like? How can we actualize this in our group and in our lives—past, present and future?

Men's Intimacy and Homophobia

How many guys, when hugging, look like we're burping each other? How does homophobia play into our fear of intimacy with each other? These are great questions to deal with in the group. And

there are great ways to deal with them. Have groups of two hold hands and walk around the block and then process everything that comes up. Have people look into each other's eyes and take time to talk about it. Challenge each other to take respectful emotional and physical risks.



More, More and More

Don't limit yourselves. Aside from these topics here, you could discuss sex, men's health, talking about sex, power, privilege and so much more. Have brainstorming sessions to verbalize all the possibilities of topics, exercises and ways to interact. One of my favorite groups would meet for one long day per month, have workshops in the morning, cook a big lunch together and have more workshops in the afternoon. We would bring in outside facilitators, bring in our own ideas and challenge each other constantly.

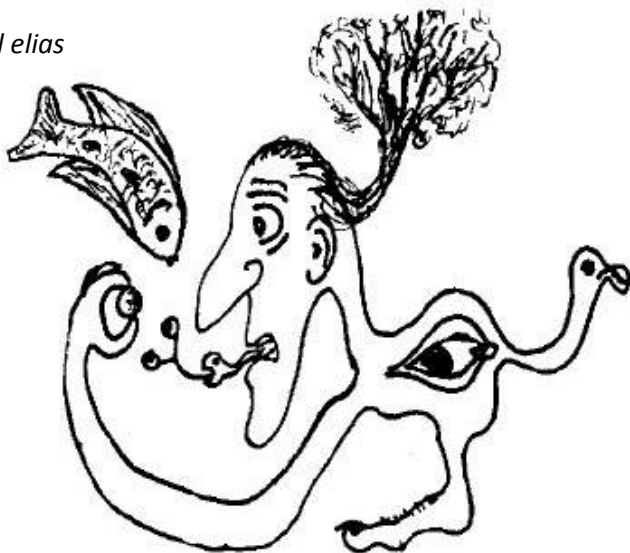
While your group is getting going, there's another thing to consider. In the world of men's groups, there are usually many different types. These include: pro-feminist, mythopoetic, father's rights, and religious groups. Pro-feminist groups have been the most active in confronting sexism and facing oppression head on. While all of these groups have different values regarding men's' roles in society

and different takes on the role of patriarchy, pro-feminist groups traditionally have taken a stand against patriarchy. It is important to consider who your group is aligning itself with and how that reflects on the commitments of the group to help each member work toward the end of sexism in their lives.

And the last thing I want you to consider is evaluations. As the group moves forward through the weeks or months, consider the ways in which you can put thought into action and evaluate the progress you're making. In a group I was part of, we would work on all these issues month after month. In between meetings, the partners of people in the group would call me up to tell me how their partner was being sexist. I would bring up these phone calls in the group and we would work out the issues. This was not ideal, but the idea sparks energy in me. Thinking about who we take our sexism out on in our daily lives can bring us a list of people who may help evaluate the effectiveness of this group and our work in it.

You will definitely make mistakes, come across a bundle of challenges and grow. Keep an open mind and your defenses down. Good luck.

By basil elias



Resources

Online

anarcha.org (huge archive of anarcha-feminist articles)
wemoonsarmy.com (eco-anarcha feminist group)
fruitiondesign.com/dealwithit (journal by anti-sexist anarchist men)
infoshop.org/page/anarcha-feminism (anarcha-feminist info)
socialdetox.wordpress.com (resources for anti-sexist anarchist men)
soaw.org/article.php?id=530 (school of the americas watch anti-oppression resources)
colours.mahost.org (colours of resistance)
xyonline.net (articles on men, masculinity, and gender politics)
anti-politics.net (anarchist info and online zine archive)

Books

Refusing to be a Man by John Stoltenberg
Cunt by Inga Muscio
Gender Trouble by Judith Butler
Quiet Rumours: An Anarcha-Feminist Reader by the Dark Star Collective
The Sexual Politics of Meat by Carol J. Adams
Transforming a Rape Culture by Emilie Buchwald
The Will to Change by bell hooks
Night Vision by Butch Lee and Red Rover
Witchcraze by Anne Barstow

There are so many more wonderful resources out there. Learn as much as you can. Make new friends. The possibilities are endless. Genderfuck this world. Let's create a new one.



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