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PROBLEMS OF MALE SEX ROLE READERS

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This paper examines five of the six male sex role anthologies currently available. They potentially serve an important function by creating an image of what is important in the male sex role literature. Unfortunately, they create a limited view of the literature. A content analysis was carried out along two dimensions: 1) the type of data utilized and 2) the substantive issues addressed. Six types of data categories emerged. The majority of articles utilized an essay format with few readings based on research literature or original data. Substantive issues were grouped into thirteen categories. Gaps in the range of topics and coverage within topics are discussed. The anthologies create an inaccurate image of male sex role literature as largely personal, non-empirical, limited in scope and somewhat dated.

Introduction

A little over ten years ago, reviewing Lopata's *Occupation Housewife*, Stoll wrote, "What of their husbands? Reading about what these women think about, worry about and actually do during the day, I am struck by how little sociology has told me about men. There are studies of men's organizations, their mobility patterns, their frequency of orgasm, but little information about the men I actually see every day" (1972:421). Since Stoll wrote that review there has been a growing interest in studying what it means to be male. Early books by

Fasteau (1974) and Farrell (1974) raised consciousness about the problems associated with traditional ways of being male as well as the possibility of alternative models of masculinity. This interest has continued as evidenced by more recent books such as The Changing Definition of Masculinity (Franklin, 1984) as well as an ever increasing body of journal articles such as Hunt (1980), Skelly and Lundstrum (1981), Mills and Bohannon (1983), Cano et al. (1984) and Henslin (1985).

This paper examines one element of the male sex role literature that emerged over the last decade. It provides an analysis of five of the six male sex role readers that are currently available. These include: David and Brannon (1976), Lewis (1981), Petras (1975), Pleck and Sawyer (1974) and Snodgrass (1977). An anthology by Pleck and Pleck (1980) is not included because it does not attempt to provide an overview of contemporary men's issues. The paper functions as an important historical review encompassing the period from 1930-1965. The five anthologies included in the analysis are discussed in terms of two principal characteristics, the type of data they utilize and the substantive issue addressed in each reading. Tendencies that emerged in both areas are then discussed.

A review of these anthologies is important because of the potential functions they perform within the male sex role literature. First, they help to create a set of boundaries for what are to be considered male sex role issues. The anthologies present selected readings from the available literature thereby providing a focus on what editors assume to be significant areas that need attention. Second, since they are the only available male readers, they are prime candidates to serve as reading material in sex role courses. They can play an important role in shaping students' perceptions of male gender issues. These anthologies serve to both filter the available literature and act as a mirror of it. As such, they are flawed in that they present an unbalanced, limited perspective on the male sex role literature.

Method

The data presented below was generated by doing a content analysis. Categories used to describe the con-

tent were generated by a process similar to the constant comparative method developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The principal concern was to minimize the possibility of "forcing" articles to fit preconceived subdivisions. The analysis did not begin with a priori assumptions about what categories should exist. The initial framework for comparison was a general recognition that there were a variety of types of topics discussed and also different types of data utilized. In the process of comparing articles, similarities did emerge from the material itself yielding distinctive descriptive categories. For example, it became apparent that a number of articles relied on personal anecdotes for their data which set them apart from articles using survey data.

Virtually all of the one hundred fifty-two articles contained in the anthologies can be grouped into one of the five categories based on type of data utilized. These categories are: (1) Essay, (2) Essay/Literature, (3) Literature Review, (4) Original Data and (5) Fiction. The Essay category contains articles that expressed the author's personal point of view with no other supporting data or references cited. Examples of this style include Miller's (1974) discussion of his reactions to changed gender expectations and a general discussion on the topic of why men have trouble expressing emotions (See also Balswick and Collier, 1976). The Essay/Literature category includes articles which mainly present the author's personal point of view but also cite at least some (i.e. four or five) outside sources to provide examples or support. Articles by Balswick and Peek (1975) on male inexpressiveness and by Bevson (1977) on the value of masturbation are typical. The third category, Literature Review, includes articles in which the author surveys a relatively large number of sources, typically twenty or more. Examples in this category include analyses of homophobia by Morin and Nungesser (1981) and by Lehne (1976). The fourth category, Original Data, consists of articles presenting an author's original research. These usually involved survey or interview studies and varied in the degree of detail concerning sample, method and data. Two examples from this category are an interview study of business executives by Bartolome (1974) and an analysis of cultural contradictions in the male sex role by

Komarovsky (1975) which used both interviews and standardized tests. The final stylistic category, Fiction, includes a fable, three short stories and an excerpt from a novel. A residual category, Other, contains a press release, a book review, a movie review, a letter to an editor and two manifestos.

Comparing the articles on the basis of their substantive issues was not as simple given the greater diversity of potential categories. In order to preserve the possibility of presenting the broadest range of topic areas, categories containing as few as two articles are included. This approach yielded the thirteen substantive issue categories presented in Table 2 below.

Type of Data Utilized and Results

As noted above, the articles were subdivided into six categories on the basis of the type of data they utilized. The results of this process are presented in Table 1.

The most obvious aspect of Table 1 is the heavily skewed distribution of articles. Sixty-four percent of the articles are in the category of Essay. These articles focus on one individual's point of view. Approximately one-third are descriptions of a personal anecdote concerning the author. These essays may provide useful insights into how male sex role issues are affecting selected individuals but it is difficult to gain a sense of how the lives of men in general are involved. There are three categories that essentially rely on a personalized view: Essay, Essay/Literature and Fiction. Taken as a group, these three categories account for seventy-nine percent of the articles in the anthologies. I do not wish to suggest that individual insights are invalid or totally inappropriate. Nevertheless, such a pronounced reliance on this type of literature can easily leave the reader with the impression that the male gender literature consists of reports of individuals responding to their own circumstances. There are articles about men's liberation groups but they focus on the interpersonal dynamics within a group or a personal reaction to group membership. One develops little sense of the representativeness of these experiences or how wide-spread these phenomena are among men.

The categories of Literature Review and Original Data move the reader beyond the level of personal experience. However, both suffer from relying on material that is somewhat dated. For example, the most extensive literature review in the area of socialization was written nine years ago (Carter, 1976). Of the six articles that present survey data in the Original Data category, only one was originally published after 1973. Obviously this is due to the fact that only one of the anthologies was printed after 1980, which in itself should give male liberationists pause.

Issues Addressed

The second type of data generated by the content analysis is a distribution of articles categorized according to the substantive issue involved. Table 2 presents this topical distribution. The authors do not provide rationales to justify the number of articles devoted to particular topics. However, taken as a group, their collective decisions have led to an allocation of space that gives the reader the impression that certain topics are more central than others. While there may be no consensus as to what would constitute the best possible distribution, it is clear that readers of these anthologies would come away unexposed to some important issues. It is striking that there are only two articles that directly address the issue of men relating to women. One could possibly argue that articles on family or adolescent socialization could be viewed as dealing with male/female relationships. However, they do so only in a general sense. Very little attention is given to issues involved in adult males engaging in non-sexist interaction with adult females. Women are relegated to the traditional spheres of sexuality and domesticity. The complexities of relating to women as potential friends, fellow workers or in an intimate relationship aside from marriage are not discussed.

Not only do these anthologies leave one with the impression that adult relationships with women are not critical, they do not devote much more attention to male/male friendships. The inference seems to be that if males can overcome their homophobia and also become more emotionally expressive male/male relationships would no

longer be problematic. Perhaps it is a measure of the extent of the problem of homophobia that there are more articles devoted to it than to discussing ways in which heterosexual males can form non-exploitative bonds with other heterosexual males.

When one examines the coverage of topics within general categories it becomes apparent that a number of other issues are neglected. These anthologies create an image of a men's literature that is unconcerned with problems that feminists have consistently seen as critical for men to address. There are six articles dealing with violence. None of them discuss rape or domestic violence. Articles in the work category do not include an examination of the extent of male discrimination against women, the forms it takes or ways of combatting it. Sexual harassment in work settings is not mentioned. Of the selections dealing with the family there is virtually no material regarding issues associated with establishing egalitarian relationships between husbands and wives. The only article that approaches the topic is an anecdotal article originally printed in 1971 entitled "The making of a confused middle class husband" (Miller, 1974). The two articles in these anthologies that approach the issue of domestic labor are an anecdote about a complete role reversal (Roache, 1975) and an excerpt from a novel (Mailer, 1975). There is no discussion of the possibilities and pitfalls of shared responsibility in the home.

There are several other issues that are notable by their absence. The greatest number of articles focus on the personal harm suffered by men in traditional sex roles, yet there is no discussion of who benefits and why. Except for gay/straight relationships and adolescent sports there is little attention paid to analyzing the ways males discriminate against each other. Power and hierarchy issues are not well developed especially in the area of work, where they are likely to be clearly expressed. There are no illustrations or analyses of ways in which males could reorganize work settings to change the circumstances associated with the problems of traditional male sex roles. In the category of Family and Intimate Lifestyles there are no articles dealing with either cohabitation or dual career marriages. This is surprising given widespread male participation in both

activities and the fact that there are important sex role implications for people attempting either lifestyle. There are no articles dealing with the process of divorce and only one article examines the special legal problems faced by men in the area of child custody.

The Socialization category provides the final examples of topics that are slighted in these anthologies. The socialization articles focus almost exclusively on the objects of the socialization process. They offer little insight into the agents and institutions that create and sustain that process. The reader of these anthologies may also conclude that the socialization process ends with adolescence. For example, articles by Fine (1981), Candell (1974), Anonymous (1974) and Coleman (1976) discuss the role of sports in the socialization of boys but there are no articles discussing the role of sports in sustaining adult male sex roles. Readings by Litweka (1977) and Lester (1974) discuss the anxieties and problems of emerging sexuality in adolescence, while there are no articles that deal with sex role changes that occur due to alterations in sexuality over the life cycle. There is no evidence to suggest that work or family roles are affected by changes in adult development.

Discussion

A reader of the five anthologies discussed in this paper would come away with several erroneous impressions of the male sex role literature. First, one would get the impression that the literature relies almost exclusively on individuals expressing their perceptions rather than on empirical studies utilizing specified samples. This leads to two problematic consequences.

By focusing on an individual's own struggle, they tend to avoid organizational and institutional analysis. Some would claim this is unnecessary since sociology through most of its history has consisted of men studying male-dominated organizations and institutions. However, feminist scholarship has shown the benefits to be gained from studying what was assumed to be familiar ground from a new perspective. There is every reason to believe that a male liberationist perspective would yield original and fertile results.

The individual approach cannot give the reader a sense of how representative a point of view may be. It is difficult to know to what extent this literature represents an isolated cohort or the vanguard of a substantial movement. Are these issues that reflect the everyday concerns of men? How many men and which ones? Are younger generations of males less sexist, are they learning to relate to each other in more humane ways? These questions are not addressed in these anthologies. Much in these readers is consistent with Ehrlich's comment about the anthology Men and Masculinity, "few of those represented here look beyond the circumference of an individual man's individual navel" (Ehrlich, 1977:142).

Pleck (1976) has suggested that there are four main catalysts for change in men's lives. These are relationships with children, involvements with work, relationships with other men and responses to changes in women's definitions of their sex roles (1976:162). These anthologies provide some perspective on the first area but very little for the other three. In addition, a reader of these books would get the impression that other topics are relatively unimportant as well. For example, rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, discrimination against women, friendship with women, non-sexist marriage and a political analysis of the forces that sustain male sexism are virtually ignored.

It is not possible to do more than speculate as to why these anthologies are structured as they are. It may be that there was simply not a broad enough base of research from which to cull articles. The study of men's sex roles has never been a high profile area. For example, in 1982, the sex roles and sexuality section of the book review journal of the American Sociological Association presented 22 reviews of sex role related books. Of these, 16 were devoted exclusively to women while only one book dealt exclusively with a male gender issue. It may be that the sheer number of available articles are not as critical as the timing of publication in relation to the particular historical development of a social movement. This first generation of anthologies may fulfill a functional necessity by concentrating on a narrower, more personal range of issues.

Whatever the underlying processes that generated their content, it is clear that these anthologies create an image of men's gender literature that is limited in both the type of data employed as well as the topics discussed. They do not adequately reflect a growing literature that is empirically based and that addresses a broad range of contemporary issues. For example, there are studies that deal with rape proclivity (Malamuth, 1981), sexual harassment (Tangri, Burt and Johnson, 1982), male to male friendship (Bell, 1981), change over the lifecycle (Moreland, 1980), dual careers (Hilder and Philliber, 1982) and father-child relationships after divorce (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980). These articles explicitly explore the linkages between their particular topic and male gender role characteristics.

The five anthologies discussed in this paper provide a first step in revealing the enormous potential for change in men's lives. Unfortunately, they do not reflect the breadth and depth of the efforts to more comprehensively examine the complexities and dimensions of that change.

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Table 1. Type of Data Presentation

Book	Essay		Literature		Review		Essay Data		Literature Fiction		Original Other		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
(1)	47	(14)	23	(7)	27	(9)	3	(1)	0	(0)	0	(0)	100	(31)*
(2)	81	(25)	3	(1)	7	(2)	3	(1)	3	(1)	3	(1)	100	(31)
(3)	60	(21)	10	(4)	13	(4)	7	(2)	10	(4)	0	(0)	100	(35)
(4)	84	(25)	6	(2)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	10	(5)	100	(32)
(5)	52	(12)	9	(2)	13	(3)	22	(5)	4	(1)	0	(0)	100	(23)

*This total does not include poetry.

Books: (1) Men in Difficult Times (Lewis, 1981); (2) Men and Masculinity (Pleck and Sawyer, 1974); (3) The 49% Majority (David and Brannon, 1976); (4) For Men Against Sexism (Snodgrass, 1977); and (5) Sex-Male/Gender-Masculine (Petras, 1975).

Table 2. Distribution of Substantive Issues

Topic	No. of Articles
Personal Aspects of Male Role (competition, emotional tightness)	23
Socialization	17
Family/Intimate Lifestyles	16
Men's Liberation	13
Work	12
Heterosexual Sexuality	11
Homosexuality/Homophobia	9
Minority Men	6
Violence	6
Patriarchy	4
Male/Male Friendships	4
Mid-Life Decline	3
Personal Relationships With Women	2
	2

REVIEW ESSAY

Grounded-Encounter Therapy: A Sociodiagnostic
and Sociotherapeutic Approach

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Grounded-Encounter Therapy (GET) is a sociodiagnostic and sociotherapeutic approach for clinicians applying sociological knowledge to problems that are lodged in a social context. It is a process of Encounter, interpretation, and situation/context analysis which allows for the discovery of essential facts and explanations that are Grounded in the social context of the clients. GET further provides a framework for the development of approaches for situational change and client growth.

GET is a dynamic approach that provides a creative interplay between research, theory, education, and practice that produces knowledge and Grounded explanations for the purpose of application by the sociotherapist, and/or the clients to problems that are social in nature. Encounter establishes the methodological basis of the approach, and Grounding establishes the theoretical and application or intervention basis.

GET improves clients understanding of their problems, and allows for development of a plan of action for enhancement and change of client perceptions, and increased personal control of situations and relationships. GET also assists individuals by establishing a process for examining, determining and