# A Whole New World: Remaking Masculinity in the Context of the Environmental Movement

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ROBERT W. CONNELL
*Macquarie University, Sydney*

*The impact of feminism on men has produced both backlash and attempts to reconstruct masculinity. The Australian environmental movement, strongly influenced by countercultural ideas, is a case in which feminist pressure has produced significant attempts at change among men. These are explored through life-history interviews founded on a practice-based theory of gender. Six life histories are traced through three dialectical moments: engagement with hegemonic masculinity; separation focused on an individualized remaking of the self, involving an attempt to undo oedipal masculinization; and a shift toward collective politics. This last and most important step remains tentative.*

Attempts to reform masculinity have attracted a certain amount of attention in the last 15 years. Some widely read books of the 1970s proclaimed the idea of "men's liberation" (Farrell 1974, Nichols 1975). A small therapeutic industry grew up around problems of renovating masculinity (e.g., Farrell 1986, Goldberg 1987). Certain feminists began to speak of "the quiet movement of the American men" (Friedan 1986, 125-61). The sensitive new man has even become a media joke (Feirstein 1982).

While much of the publicity was inflated — both the extent and the meaning of change among men are debatable (cf. Ehrenreich 1983) — there is no doubt that a significant public questioning of masculinity has occurred

among the middle and upper classes in English-speaking countries (and sometimes elsewhere, see Reynaud 1983). There is also no doubt of its source: men's encounter with the new feminism. This origin is acknowledged in the documents of the men's movement, from its early days (Men's Consciousness Raising Group 1971) to current essays in men's studies (Brod 1987; Kimmel 1987), and in critical analyses of masculinity (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 1985; Kaufman 1987; Kimmel and Messner 1989).

In most of this literature, the encounter is assessed favorably, with many suggestions about how feminism is good for men and optimistic views about the prospects for change. The optimism has had little but mood to support it. The literature on "changing men" is short on specifics about how feminism affects different groups of men, what the mechanisms or dynamics of impact have been, and what its preconditions and limits were. Nor have men who acknowledge the impact of feminism paid much attention to the changing character of the women's movement and its assessment of men. Between the early 1970s and the early 1980s, Anglo-American feminism certainly darkened its view of men, with heavier emphasis on sexual violence and less optimism about men's willingness to change (Eisenstein 1984). With the "popular face of feminism," as Segal (1987) puts it, emphasizing difference and tending toward separatism, it is by no means certain that the impact of feminism among men will follow the lines foreseen in the 1970s.

This article is an attempt to explore feminism's impact on men in greater depth and with more historical specificity than has been usual and to do so in a way that will illuminate the varying historical possibilities opened up by different patterns of change. Its data come from an Australian study of contemporary masculinity that collected life histories from several groups of men among whom contradictions in gender relations, and thus possibilities of historical change, are particularly visible (Connell 1989). One category chosen was men in countercultural milieux; among those interviewed were six engaged in "green" politics, that is, activists in environmental causes. In Australia in the 1980s, there was a vigorous but not separatist feminist presence in environmental politics. These particular life histories thus give us a view of attempts to reconstruct masculinity in a setting where feminism was strong and remained engaged with men.

## MASCULINITY

Masculinity is a term of no great clarity, as Freud (1905, 219) remarked. The approach taken here is that proposed by Carrigan, Connell, and Lee

(1985). Masculinity is socially constructed and has a material existence at several levels: in culture and institutions, in personality, and in the social definition and use of the body. It is constructed within a gender order that defines masculinity in opposition to femininity, and in so doing, sustains a power relation between men and women as groups. Strictly speaking, there is no one thing that is masculinity. Power relations among men, as well as different patterns of personality development, construct different masculinities. Gender politics among men involve struggles to define the hegemonic or socially dominant (which is not necessarily the most common) form of masculinity.

The form of masculinity that is hegemonic at a given time and place involves a particular institutionalization of patriarchy; we might say it embodies a particular strategy for the subordination of women. Within that framework, struggles for hegemony among men have two major sources: (1) the formation of different patterns of motivation or commitment in personal life (e.g., heterosexual versus homosexual, libertarian versus controlled) and (2) the formation of conflicting interests at the social level (e.g., capitalists versus gentry, bureaucrats versus militarists). It follows that any particular form of masculinity can be analyzed as both a personal project and a collective project. Conflicts over a form of masculinity similarly have two levels, in which rather different things are at stake. On one level, alternative transformations of personal life are at stake; on the other, alternative futures of the collective gender order. To judge any attempt at reforming masculinity, it is necessary to understand both. Most discussions of change among men have remained at only the one level, that of personal life. The life histories in this study will, I hope, show the importance of looking beyond this level to the collective gender order and its possibilities for or resistance to change.


## METHOD

The life history as a method in social research has significant problems, including the limitations of conscious memory (Rubin 1986), difficulties of corroboration, laborious data gathering, and a time-consuming process of case-by-case analysis. At the same time, it has well-recognized virtues as a tool of *verstehen*, understanding subjective experience and intention, and it is flexible in design and application (Plummer 1983).

It was chosen as the method for this study because of its further possibilities — less noticed in the methodological literature — as a means of studying

social structures, collectivities, and institutional change at the same time as personal life. In recent arguments, it is the interplay between structural fact and personal experience that is the center of feminist social science (e.g., Smith 1987), and precisely this interplay is illuminated by classic life-history analyses (e.g., Dollard 1937; Sartre 1963). When the research is based on a theory of the social process in question, we may speak of the *theorized life history* as a specific methodological approach.

The interviews for this project were designed on the basis of a theory of gender as a structure of social practice (spelled out in Connell 1987). As the substance of the autobiographical narrative, we sought descriptions of concrete practices (e.g., what a boy and his father actually did in interaction, not just how the respondent felt about his father). We used institutional transitions (e.g., entry to school, entry to the work force) as pegs for memory and asked for accounts of interactions in institutions, particularly families, schools, and workplaces. We sought to understand the construction of gender as a project in time, for example, exploring the sequence of a man's relationships with women in different settings. To gain clues to emotional dynamics, we sought accounts of early memories, family constellations, and relationship crises.

A life-history study concerned with gender is inevitably on the terrain of psychoanalysis. The Freudian tradition is a fertile, and underused, source of ideas about the making of masculinity, but it must be used carefully. I agree with Sartre's (1958) critique of Freud's pan-sexualism, and with Sartre's argument for seeing the life course as a project in time, not an inert effect of sexual causes. Laing's practical application of existential psychoanalysis is an important model for the approach used here (Laing 1960; Laing and Esterson 1964). Yet Sartre and Laing miss the dimension in Freud that has made him useful to contemporary feminism: his sense of the importance of gender in social life and his grasp of the powerful social constraints under which emotional development occurs. The concepts Freud worked out to grasp the drama of development, notably the concepts of an "oedipal" crisis and of a dynamic unconscious, are still essential starting points for the study of masculinity — as they are, in Mitchell's (1975) argument, for the study of femininity.

A life-history study is shaped not only by its initial design but equally by how the narratives obtained are subsequently analyzed. The goal of this study was to trace a historical dynamic that operated at both the personal and the collective level. Accordingly, the interviews have been analyzed both as personal histories and as sources for a collective history. In the first step, individual case studies were prepared. This analysis used social-structural concepts about gender as a grid for assembling the material but also sought

to understand each life history as a gestalt, in terms of the particular unification of materials represented by a personal trajectory (Sartre 1958).

In the second step, the life histories of environmental activists were reanalyzed to explore the similarities and differences of their trajectories and their collective location in the historical dynamic of gender. In this analysis, the focus was on identifying key moments in the dialectic of change. (A dialectical "moment" is not a point of time but a logically distinguishable and necessary step in a process of contradiction and change. A moment may recur in time or coexist with another. The methodological basis of this form of social analysis is stated by Sartre [1976].) The present article mainly reports this second step. It may be read as an attempt to paint a group portrait of men caught up in a particular social process of change.

The interviews were conducted in urban and rural New South Wales in 1985-86. They ranged between one and two hours, were tape-recorded, and subsequently fully transcribed. In analyzing them, I used both the transcriptions and the tapes to get a full picture of personal style and emotion.

## GROUP AND MILIEU

The following six men are the dramatis personae of the study:

*Barry Ryan*, 22, in training as a nurse, single, heterosexual. The child of an immigrant professional family, he went to an "alternative" school by his own choice, dropped out of university, and spent six months at the Franklin Dam blockade, a major environmental action. He then traveled the country with a small affinity group doing demonstrations on environmental issues.

*Danny Taylor*, 23, office worker for an environmental action group, single, heterosexual. From an immigrant working-class family, he did well at school and went to college. He too dropped out, and after an intense but unhappy relationship, began a project of finding a new self. Some voluntary work on environmental projects led to his current job.

*Bill Lindeman*, 28, unemployed apart from free-lance photography, single, heterosexual. From a managerial and professional family, he did well in school and finished a degree. He turned down a career opening to work for an environmental action group for low wages and became involved in the Franklin Dam action.

*Nigel Roberts*, 31, unemployed, part of a heterosexual couple, recently a father for the first time. From a radical working-class family, in school he became deeply involved in the student campaign against the Vietnam War. After several years driving taxis, he joined the rural counterculture, for a period sharing a communal farm. He went to the Franklin Dam blockade and then worked full-time for an environmental action group until he burned out.

*Tim Marnier,* 33, public servant, single, heterosexual. From a family with a managerial background, he did well at school and university but dropped out of his professional course and worked as a taxi driver. After eight years, he went into the public service as a clerk in an agency concerned with environmental management. He then decided to start further training and make a career in this area.

*Peter Geddes,* 50, unemployed apart from free-lance journalism, twice married, father of five children. He came from a family on the fringes of the bourgeoisie who sent him to an elite private school. He hated it and left at 15 to train as a rural technician, later going to work on country newspapers. He graduated into big-city journalism, married, and had a large family. At 30, he dropped out and took the family to live on a farm. After several jobs and moves around the countryside, the family dispersed, and the marriage broke up. Peter wandered between countercultural households and spent more and more time in the bush. He became involved in a rain-forest protection action and other environmental campaigns.

These men shared the milieu of environmental activism and countercultural social life. The character of this milieu is essential to an understanding of their gender politics. An Australian counterculture developed in the 1970s, triggered by the student movement (at its peak about 1967-1975) and other radicalisms. By the later 1970s, a back-to-earth movement had created a network of rural communes and countercultural households scattered across the eastern states, though the bulk of the counterculture remained urban (for accounts of these developments, see Altman 1979; Cock 1974; Smith and Crossley 1975).

With the decline of student radicalism in the mid-1970s, the focus of countercultural life shifted toward introspection and personal healing. An interest in meditation spread and often connected, via vegetarianism and holistic or organic philosophies, to a concern with nature and the protection of the environment. By the early 1980s, an important part of the counterculture was a therapeutic milieu devoted to personal growth and healing. At the same time, a new activism was emerging that was concerned with environmental issues. Groups like the Movement Against Uranium Mining, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, and various ad hoc campaign groups became key vehicles of youth activism, stirring established groups, such as the Australian Conservation Foundation, to more militant action. By the early 1980s, this movement was strong enough to mount a long blockade of a hydroelectric dam being started in Tasmania on the remote Franklin River (Wilderness Society 1983). This highly publicized and very popular wilderness defense action contributed to the electoral defeat of the conservative federal government in 1983.

A radical feminism emerged from the matrix of campus radicalism at the beginning of the 1970s, displacing established women's organizations and rapidly growing in scale and visibility. By International Women's Year in 1975, the new feminism was a major topic of media attention and had begun to consolidate in women's services, the bureaucracy, academic life, student circles, and the counterculture (for this history, see Curthoys 1988). Its impact on the environmental movement was strong. About 1980, eco-feminism was emerging internationally as an important current of feminist thought, resonating with the environmentalist critique of destructive development. Some conflicts with the men running environmental action groups occurred. Many of the men, however, were receptive to feminist ideas. In recent Australian politics, there are few areas in which feminist pressure has been more successful. It follows that gender politics as defined by feminism was an issue that men engaged with environmental politics could not avoid, whatever their personal history.

## ADOPTING MASCULINITY:
## THE MOMENT OF ENGAGEMENT

Early memories and information about family configurations in childhood present a picture that is familiar from classical psychoanalysis and in feminist revisions of psychoanalysis. Freud emphasized, as the key moment in the construction of masculinity, the "oedipal" stage, in which the constellation of desire for the mother and jealous rivalry with the father comes to a point of crisis and is repressed in response to an actual or symbolic threat of castration. In normal masculine development, this crisis is followed by identification with the father, the emotional incorporation of the father's characteristics into the son. Dinnerstein (1976) and Chodorow (1978) in different ways emphasize the importance of the pre-oedipal link with the mother, as primary caregiver in early childhood. This link implies an initial identification with the mother, overlaid in the oedipal period by pressure for separation and differentiation. In this view, masculinity is constructed more through a denial of identity with the feminine than by a positive incorporation of the father.

In all six life histories, primary parenting was by the mother; for five of six, the mother was a full-time homemaker while the boy was young. The conditions for pre-oedipal identification with the mother were present, though our knowledge of this stage of life remains indirect. The pressure for separation from the feminine can, however, be directly traced in the child-

hood memories of most of the men. It was sometimes associated with the father, and here a classic Freudian pattern of identification with the powerful and distant father can be seen. Barry Ryan was the most obviously identified with his father, Tim Marnier next; both fathers were professionals, carrying a recognized social authority and were presented by their sons as somewhat distant. But even here, an oedipal identification was not all that was going on. The Ryans separated when Barry was about 12. Unlike his older siblings, Barry chose to live with his father, not his mother, an episode with interesting implications.

Other histories show the need to go beyond a narrow focus on the "oedipal triangle" of mother-father-son. The father is not the only bearer of masculinity in a small boy's field of view; he may indeed be less present, in some family configurations, than an older brother. Thus, Danny Taylor's brother was the one who took him in hand and taught him about sex, who was "best friend" in Danny's late childhood and early adolescence: "We'd go out together, play together all the time, we used to have the same room, and we shared a lot of things." He was thus a model for developing masculinity and a model of hegemonic masculinity, since he was a football star, egged on by their father who was "football mad." So Danny took up football, too.

Here, on the face of it, are two versions of a straightforward process of social reproduction of hegemonic masculinity: fathers to sons, older brother to younger brother. These events could be read in psychoanalytic terms as identification or in gender-role terms as successful social learning. But there was also an active appropriation of what was offered, a purposeful construction of a way of being in the world.

I will define this appropriation as the *moment of engagement* with hegemonic masculinity — the moment at which the boy takes up the project of hegemonic masculinity as his own. This moment appears in each of the six life histories. None of these men was, so to speak, born a feminist. Each had made some substantial commitment of the developing self toward hegemonic masculinity. Each at some stage appeared on track in terms of the reproduction of patriarchy. The life histories showed such familiar features as competitiveness, career orientation, suppression of emotions, homophobia.

Masculinity is not only a question of attitudes and style of behavior. An important part of the moment of engagement is developing a particular experience of the body and a particular physical sensibility. Barry Ryan, in training for the decidedly unmasculine job of nursing, said he came to value "feminine" traits such as sensitivity, expressiveness, and caring, and to reject "masculine" things he was taught at school, but he said:

I'm still really masculine, and I feel definitely male and I like that, too. I like some aspects of being male, the physical strength I really like, I really like my body, that sort of mental strength that men learn to have whereby they can choose to put aside their feelings for the moment, which I think is great.

This process extends into the organization of perception and sexual arousal, constructing a pattern of interest and response that defines females as "other" and shapes desire as desire for the other. This *heterosexual sensorium* may be present as a contradictory layer of awareness within a social practice constructing femininity, as illustrated by Barry Ryan's sense of himself as a male nurse. More commonly for men, it underlies social practices constructing masculinity. It is the principal reason why they are felt as "natural," seamlessly connected with a body experienced as male.

By adolescence, the construction of heterosexuality is a collective practice usually undertaken in peer groups. Peter Geddes wryly recalls a familiar social technique of Australian men:

As a teenager you went out and got drunk so that you wouldn't feel intimidated or shy or nervous. And you got hold of any, virtually any one, particularly the prettiest one, but if not it really didn't matter as long as she would get laid. . . . My teenage sex life and most of my married life had been on that basis: where I usually was pretty pissed, and I got my end in, and I had an orgasm . . . and I said "thank you, that was lovely, good night," and you went home or fell asleep.

## DISTANCING

Danny Taylor's path into adulthood was not as straightforward as its starting point might suggest. A dialectic developed from his attempts to appropriate masculinity. He took up football to impress his father, and it did not work. The solidarity between his brother and his father proved too close to break into. Danny became acutely jealous of his brother and came to resent the way the brother had "dominated" him. He turned to his mother, who saw what was going on and gave him extra "loving attention." By the time he reached middle adolescence — Danny dated it precisely at age 15 — the emotional linkages had been reconfigured, and the family was factionalized and angry:

Just a couple of months ago I had an argument with my brother, and he said — just out of the blue, it had nothing to do with it — "Oh, Mum thinks the sun shines out of your arse." And it brought back all those feelings. We had this rift, my father and my brother, my mother and me, and there was this huge gap. There was real bitterness between my mother and my brother. . . . And my

father and myself, our relationship was horrible. I used to really groan at him, and if he was aggressive or angry against my mother, then I'd feel it was aimed at me as well. And in turn, if I got picked on for anything by my father – which may have been justified sometimes too – my mother would rush to my defense.

Here the evidence of the life histories pushes us away from the terrain of classical psychoanalysis toward that of existential psychoanalysis (Connell 1987, 211-17; Laing and Esterson 1964; Sartre 1958). It appears that an oedipal separation of boy from mother can be renegotiated, and to some degree reversed, in later practice. And this is not a shallow change. Danny went on from this reworked solidarity with his mother to solidarity, even identification, with women. The shape of Danny's life history strongly suggested that the adolescent reconfiguration of family relationships was the emotional basis of his dissident gender politics in early adulthood.

Such distancing can be found in other lives in the group, if less dramatically. Bill Lindeman, who was quite warm about his father, nevertheless pitied him and spoke of his "tragic" life course, "a whole chunk of his life eaten out by spending 35 years, or whatever, working for money." Nigel Roberts was more bitter about his father, describing him as a pale, defeated person who "never did become a man." Though Nigel's career as a student activist led to physical confrontation with police and arrest, he did not sustain that style of militancy. Indeed, he described himself as unable to relate to girls in late adolescence because he was *not* macho and did not know any other way of presenting himself.

None of these episodes constituted a positive move toward an alternative to hegemonic masculinity. The "moment" here is one of negation, at most a distancing within an accepted social framework. Consider Nigel Roberts's complaint that his father was not man enough.

Yet the social framework itself is contradictory, and practical experience can undermine patriarchal conventions. Five of the six described a close encounter with a woman's strength as part of their personal formation. For instance, Peter Geddes's father, unable to find his feet after the war, seemed to have been pushed along by his wife; Peter resented his mother's snobbishness but acknowledged her as the force in the family. Nigel Roberts, at a loss after leaving school, clung to a relationship with his girlfriend as they drifted around the rural counterculture. These encounters happened before the men tried to formulate issues of their own lives as questions of gender politics, and most were before any explicit encounter with feminism. While there is no question of mechanical determination, it is notable that feminist images of women's strength could resonate with something clear in personal memory.

## THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

The six men came to the environmental movement along different paths. Nigel Roberts's environmental activism was an aspect of youthful radicalism; for Peter Geddes, it was the end point of an odyssey started by the crisis of his career in journalism. For Bill Lindeman, interest in the environment started with his family's liking for the bush and practice of camping on family holidays.

Tim Marnier came into environmental issues from the managerial rather than the movement side, though his family was part of the progressive liberalism of the 1960s and 1970s, and he lived in a communal household with a group of feminist women. He became "fed up with taxi driving, mostly picking up drunk males at night"; a friend offered him a part-time job on an environmental research project, which developed into a full-time job that he said, "changed my life." Danny Taylor came to environmental issues as part of his exploration of the counterculture, in a search for healing after a crisis in his sexual life. For Barry Ryan, like Bill Lindeman, environmentalist sympathies were probably part of a background of progressive social thought in family and school; when the chance for action at the Franklin River came along, in the course of a motorbike tour of Australia with a male friend, it was a simple decision to join in.

In the environmental movement, the men found a distinctive mixture of personal relationships and cultural ideals. This politics engaged their lives at more than one level and met a variety of needs — for solidarity with others, for moral clarity, for a sense of personal worth. This engagement was important in producing a gender politics. The movement had leverage, so to speak, on its participants' emotional life, as can be seen in Barry Ryan's account of his initiation:

> So we traveled around, and I ended up in Tasmania. The Franklin River blockade was on down there. I was just going there for a couple of weeks, and I got there and I discovered all these wonderful people being extremely nice to each other, and having a good time, and doing something valuable, and learning so much. And I thought this is too good an opportunity to be missed, so I just stayed there [to the annoyance of his friend]. . . . I stayed in Tasmania for about six months. Spent a lot of time in the bush, taking photos of dam works, did a bit of blockading [i.e., confronting construction workers and transport for the dam], a bit of work in the office, and it was just great. It was just the best time in my life. . . . Discovered some really good ways of working in groups and having relationships. I had my first, what I thought were valuable, relationships with women there . . . really nice relationships because they were fairly self-aware people I think, and fairly confident in themselves — you had

to be, to be involved in something like that — and mostly they were older than me. . . . And after that six months I'd had some really, really good friendships with women as well as sexual relationships with women. And I started to discover that most of my friendships were actually with women, and I was less interested in friendships with men.

Other forms of political activism engage emotions and meet a range of needs (Davies 1980; Little 1985). In the environmental movement, however, unlike mainstream politics, there was a challenge to conventional masculinity implicit in the movement's ethos and organizational practices. The movement's themes, as presented in the interviews, include these:

**A practice and ideology of equality.** No one is supposed to be boss; workplaces are run democratically; no group has rights over others; decisions are made by consensus; there is a sharp critique of hierarchy and authoritarianism.

**Emphasis on collectivity and solidarity.** This is what Barry Ryan calls "good ways of working in groups." What he encountered was no accident, as Bill Lindeman recalled:

I was working as a trainer on the nonviolence workshops and that meant that I was doing a lot of work with people in small groups. And that was wonderful, it just opened up so much in terms of relating and feeling good about meeting people . . . creating the type of workshops that we wanted and just learning as a group, so fast. There was nothing that we could take it from, we read all the Gandhi books and the Movement for a New Society books from the States, and we used that as a basis. But we had to adapt and develop exercises and ways of working with people, facilitating people to be effective individually and in groups for the situation, for the blockade.

**A practice and ideology of personal growth.** All six men saw their involvement with environmental politics as part of their growth toward being better, wiser people. In two cases, Peter Geddes and Danny Taylor, the search for personal growth was primary, and environmentalism grew out of it. For them, the embedding of environmentalism in a wider counterculture was important, providing a range of techniques of meditation and personal development. Another important technique is what Bill Lindeman called "working on social relationships," which involved mutual critique and attempts to reform existing sexual, friendship, or work relationships. Outside the furnace of environmental politics, this "work" merges into the group therapy, conferences, and workshops that are the mainstay of the therapeutic countercultural milieu.

**An ideology of wholeness and organicism.** Widespread in the counter-culture and linked to its critique of alienating, mechanical Western civilization, this theme for environmentalists centers on the connection with nature. For Peter Geddes and Bill Lindeman especially, time spent by oneself in the bush meant a transcendental experience. As Bill Lindeman stated:

> That experience of being alone, wandering round and doing things and appreciating things and enjoying a beautiful place can really give me a wonderfully clear, pure feeling.

Drugs would only cloud such an experience. Though all these men had used psychoactive drugs, they had for the most part given them up. Diet is an important part of the relationship with nature. Peter Geddes set up a health food shop; Danny Taylor certainly, and others probably, were vegetarian.

Even without feminism, these themes of the environmental movement would provide some challenge to hegemonic masculinity, at least at the level of ideology. An orientation to dominance is contested by the movement's commitment to democratic process; competitive individualism is contested by the movement's emphasis on collectivity. Organic ideologies are not necessarily countersexist, as countercultural women who were defined as earth mother and left with the babies and the washing up can testify. But the emphasis on personal growth tends to undermine the closed and defensive style of hegemonic masculinity and confronts its characteristic (in Anglo-Saxon culture) suppression of emotion. I would argue, then, that the environmental movement is fertile ground for a politics of masculinity. But it does not generate such politics unaided. That requires the impact of feminism.

## ENCOUNTERS WITH FEMINISM

For most of these men, feminism was first directly met in the counterculture or in environmental action groups. Barry Ryan was the exception: He learned about gender politics from a feminist mother and an antisexist course at school. This undermined his participation in the rites of adolescent hyper-masculinity. Even with him, however, it was environmental politics that produced the key encounter with feminist practice.

Their encounters were undoubtedly stressful. These men were, at earlier stages of their lives, set fair for the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity, and close encounters with feminism must have involved a considerable shock. Barry Ryan recalled his reading of feminist books:

After university I was at the stage where I could understand academic literature, and I read some pretty heavy stuff, which made me feel terrible about being male for a long time. And I remember I found it really hard, because there was [sic] these conflicting needs. I needed sex and I needed relationships, and then again I needed to set aside my ideals [i.e., wishes] and my own sexism, and I couldn't reconcile those. And so I went through lots and lots of guilt.

Guilt is a key theme. Barry took feminism aboard as an accusation. The language for gender politics he learned centered on the term *sexism*, by which he understood men's personal attitudes toward women. His task in responding to feminism was therefore to change his head, to adopt more supportive attitudes toward women, and to criticize other men's attitudes.

Barry's account was close to the understanding of feminism held by the other men in the group. Bill Lindeman, for instance, spoke of "women feeling their strength," as feminists, becoming "strong, independent, active." In general, their image of feminism was highly positive. In this regard, the environmental activists stood out from other groups of men in the research, all of whom were aware of feminism but had more negative reactions to it.

Yet the environmentalists' understanding of feminism was significantly limited, as can be seen in Nigel Roberts's account of his experience of feminism. It was not very real, he recalls, until he started living with a feminist woman:

Although I was conscious of it before that, just from doing a bit of reading, and thinking about it. Logically, it just didn't seem reasonable that women who were human beings also had this role that was different and so less validated. It just didn't make sense. And so Kathy and I did things like swapping roles —she went out to work quite a lot of the time while I stayed home . . . and I'd do all the domestic things, which I really like doing. And so I learnt it on a practical level. I just learnt it through talking to people and through just common sense. You know, like I never accepted the normal precepts of this society so I didn't have to fight them away. . . . I learnt feminism through practice, not through reading about it, which probably makes it a lot more real and a lot more relevant. And for me it was a big change to come in contact with it because it made me realize there was another side to life. The female side to life that I hadn't been experiencing, or taking into account. [Which involves] giving to people, looking after people, those sort of things.

This passage is typical of the men's talk about feminism, in making no reference to economic inequality between women and men or to any aspect of institutionalized patriarchy. The men had little sense of the nature and problems of feminism as a political movement (ironically, it was only Tim Marnier, the least countercultural of the group, who showed any awareness

of the conflicting currents within feminism). In short, their outlook focused on roles and attitudes and thus individualized feminism and gender politics.

## REMAKING THE SELF: THE MOMENT OF SEPARATION

A combination of the ethos of environmental radicalism, pressure from feminism, and a variety of personal triggers launched a project of reform. It had a specific character. Given a positive response to feminism and an interpretation of its message to men as a demand for changes in attitudes and behavior, the main initiative taken by these men was to separate themselves from the mainstream masculinity they were familiar with and to attempt to reconstruct personality, to produce a new, nonsexist self.

This process is highly compatible with the conceptions of growth and personal change in the counterculture generally, which often require one to renounce straight society. A particularly dramatic example was Peter Geddes's renunciation of career and life-style at age 30:

> We walked out of the hotel at 9 o'clock in the morning and at 4 o'clock in the afternoon we were standing on a beach watching the plane taxi away. And my wife was wearing high heels and a suit, and we waved. We had a truck, and climbed into that, and drove to our little shack. We didn't have any electricity. And that was the beginning of a whole new world.

Less dramatic but also serious were renunciations of professional training or career openings by Bill Lindeman and Tim Marnier, and of university preparation by Nigel Roberts.

The idea of a "new self" is not simply rhetoric. Three of the six men were possessed by a sense of personal crisis or worthlessness. Nigel, for instance, at the age of 20 had a strong "sense of failure in everything," in education, family relationships, sex, and politics. For many people in countercultural milieux, the core of the new self is religious or, as they prefer to put it, "spiritual." There is often an important relationship with a healer—for instance, a teacher of yoga or an acupuncturist—a large number of whom are women. The tendency of the reform is totalizing; the new self is expected to be expressed in every sphere of life. Everyday life is expected to express an inner reality, as Bill Lindeman explained:

> I've changed in moral codes and ways of doing things and social attitudes and diet and things like that. As much as possible I want those changes to be coming from things that I feel. . . . I think it's important to be in touch with how my body—through diet, and exercises and clean air and that sort of stuff—what my body says to me about that.

What happens when these techniques and ideas are turned to the task of reconstructing masculinity? The theme of renunciation is central. Giving up a career is highly symbolic, as witness Peter Geddes's vivid image of the urban family landing in the wilderness. There are also practical consequences. Renouncing a career separates men from the masculinizing practices of conventional workplaces (cf. Cockburn 1986; Game and Pringle 1983) and results in a lower income on which it is difficult to support a conventional family; survival depends on the income-sharing practices of collective households. Renunciation means giving up masculine privileges and styles, for instance, by consciously trying not to dominate discussions and decisions.

Renunciation has less public but also important consequences at the level of sexuality and emotional expression. Where the core of patriarchy is perceived to be sexist attitudes and behaviors toward women, the main contribution a man can make is to hold back from any action or utterance that could be perceived as sexist. Barry Ryan saw that as the core of his gender politics; the trials it led to, when he found himself unable to establish sexual relationships at all, were unexpected. Within a relationship, such men are likely to feel guilty about taking the initiative sexually, another male demand upon women. Both Nigel Roberts and Barry Ryan were uncomfortable in sexual relationships until they met heterosexual feminist women who took the initiative and effectively controlled the relationship. Nigel moved in with a woman all "fire and energy" who managed to transmit a bit of it to him, giving him two days to decide to be involved in bringing up a baby.

The moment of separation from hegemonic masculinity thus involves choosing passivity. Since all these men were initially engaged with a masculinity defined by dominance and assertiveness, this choice is likely to be difficult. Danny Taylor, remarking about the "long haul" of changing his own sexism, said, "It's hard not to be aggressive sometimes." Indeed, there is something inherently problematic about an active choice to be passive. Peter Geddes's renunciation of his macho career was a highly macho act. Among other things, he did not tell his wife about it until after he had bought the farm. Renunciation can be conducted as an act of individual willpower, and this structuring of the act presupposes the masculine ego that the act is explicitly intended to deny.

However, renunciation and denial are not the crux of the matter; they are intended to provide the space in which new personal qualities can grow. There was much agreement among the six about the qualities they admired and wished to develop. Two were central. One is the capacity to be expres-

sive, to tell the truth, especially about feelings. Danny Taylor told a story to illustrate his openness:

> I'm much more open, and really very very honest. People are always telling me, "you're very open, you're very disarming." . . . [About a new worker, an "extravert"] When she first came in I was a bit taken aback by this, and I kept my distance. Everyone else got really sort of very chummy with her, and I didn't. And then I started to talk to her after she'd settled in a bit. And I was just really honest about how I felt that day, and what troubled me, and my problems and stuff like that — and my joys, too [laugh]. And, Jesus, she just came out with all her things, too. And it was really disarming for her because, like, I just cut through all this superficiality of mannerisms and stuff, and just went straight to the core, the soul. And now we have this relationship, she's closer to me than anybody else there.

The other is the capacity to have feelings worth expressing: to be sensitive, to have some depth in emotion, to care for people and for nature. The experience of solitude is one dimension; caring about partners in political action, in households, in workplaces, or in sex is another. The sharpest criticisms these men made were of people who failed in this caring, who, for example, manipulated the collective processes of a workplace or a household to their own advantage.

The qualities of openness and caring are expected to be put to work in new-model personal relationships. In the case of sexual and domestic relationships with women, it means being "very careful" not to act oppressively, not to dominate the talk or use sexist language. There was a common assumption in the interviews, if somewhat inarticulate, that men should adopt feminist good manners and tread cautiously when among women — which meant, given this milieu, most of the time.

More articulated, and more obviously troubling, was the project of new-model relationships with men. Most of the six expressed a desire for better relationships with men, and most recorded difficulty in getting them. Bill Lindeman described some progress:

> I've always found it much easier to relate to women than to men. I couldn't just say, "O.K. I'll start relating to men," because it just wasn't happening. So it meant a process for me, making choices to spend time, even though the time was initially less satisfactory. That's gone on over six months or a year. That has helped to change quite a lot, and I've got a lot more from my friendships with other men. Now my friendships with men are more important with me than friendships I have with women.
>
> *How have you changed your relationships with men?*
>
> Being able to be more — more open, more close, more trusting, more caring, more physically caring, touching, and cuddling.

The classic barrier to friendships among men is homophobia. All of the six were heterosexual, and a standard part of hegemonic heterosexuality in Australian culture is antagonism to gay men and acute sensitivity to imputations of homosexuality. Three mentioned brief homosexual encounters, none with any enthusiasm and one with some distaste. Their political line was pro-gay, and some described warm friendships with gay men. But there was also a touch of homophobia in several cases that appeared incongruous. The feminism these men have learned directly challenged "sexism," but had no clear line on homosexuality among men. Their practice of change did not place the heterosexual sensorium in question. In short, they had no way of bringing into focus the difficulties involved in new-model relationships among men.

To the extent their project addressed the body, it was along the lines described by Bill Lindeman: allowing messages from the body to be heard, or treating the body better with healthy food and less stress. Though the attempt at reconstructing personal politics could easily be seen as an attempt to take on social femininity, there was no side of the project that addressed the way social masculinity becomes embedded in the body through practice (Connell 1983; Messner 1990). Rather, the body was treated as a naturally constituted object and thought of as ideally harmonious with other parts of nature. The trick of speech that Bill Lindeman used, talking about "my body" and "me" as if two separate people were talking over a telephone line, is very significant. The reformed self is not understood as in itself embodied; masculinity is not perceived as the embodied-social; rather, as in Barry Ryan's bodily sense of masculinity in nursing, the body is interpreted as having natural masculinity.

The themes of openness and honesty involve yet another problem for men who eschew aggression and adopt a principled passivity in relation to women. Honesty requires speaking bitterness at times, and anger is often generated by workplace relationships, sexual relations, and tensions in the movement. No amount of feminist principle or communal feeling can prevent that, as feminists themselves have found (Willis 1984). A classic double bind results, with the men pressed on one principle to express emotions and on another to suppress them.

Finally, I am struck by the frozen time perspective in most of these interviews. Though the men were clear about the personal qualities they wished to develop, there was no comparable clarity about the kind of future their project of reconstruction was leading toward. Renouncing straight careers had cut off the conventional image of a personal future and nothing seemed to have taken its place.

## PSYCHODYNAMICS OF RECONSTRUCTION

The moment of separation sometimes appears to be an act of pure will. The project of remaking the self certainly requires a good deal of willpower, in the face of derision from other men, half-shared homophobia, and ambivalence from feminists. But more is involved, for the new project is embroiled with the whole tissue of relationships and emotions through which initial masculinity was formed. In this interplay, we find both motives that support the new emotional work required and reasons for its specific shape and limits.

In early childhood, all six men seem to have been mothered within a conventional gendered division of labor, and we may infer a primal identification with the mother. All then experienced in different configurations a process of oedipal masculinization under the influence of fathers, brothers, or the symbolic power of the father (Silverman 1986). In several cases, there followed some distancing from hegemonic masculinity, through realliance with the mother or a recognition and admiration of women's strength. But in general, by late adolescence, most of these men seemed well on track for the reproduction of patriarchal masculinities.

Instead, they all went through a project of reforming the self that was directed at undoing the effects of oedipal masculinization. It seems likely that this project was supported by emotional currents from pre-oedipal relationships, centrally, the primal relationship with the mother. Direct evidence of such archaic levels in personality is difficult to obtain, but there were some very interesting indications in our interviews. For example, in the early stages of Peter Geddes's interview, he gave a clear journalistic narrative, responding to questions and setting out a vivid, chronologically arranged story. In the second half of the interview, when he talked about his countercultural life and moved into an account of the reconstruction of the self, he took off into another form of speech: unpunctuated with questions, unstructured by chronology, pursuing themes and associations in no obvious order, with ideas, events, and commentary tumbling out together. If one follows Kristeva's (1984) argument that separation from the mother and the advent of oedipal castration awareness are connected with the thetic phase of signification, that constitutive moment in language where subject and object are separated and propositions or judgments arise, such effects on speech could be expected from an attempt to unpack oedipal masculinity.

More specific to the counterculture and the environmental movement were the holistic or organic philosophies these men tended to embrace. An emphasis on undifferentiated wholeness, especially where it is linked to a passive-receptive attitude toward an embracing Nature, is so strongly reminiscent of primal relationships with the mother that the point is noted in

countercultural literature itself. Bill Lindeman's "wonderfully clear, pure feeling" of communion with nature is more than a little reminiscent of the "oceanic" feeling that Freud (1930, 65-68) suggested was derived from the earliest period of life. Similarly, the goal of openness, total honesty, and emotional vulnerability is precisely about removing barriers, reversing separation and differentiation, reestablishing raw connection—that is, backtracking on those steps by which oedipal masculinity was formed. The urge to resolve the tensions of power and sexuality by forming a relationship with a strong woman who takes the initiative and supplies the energy also has unmistakable overtones of early relations with a mother.

In pointing to these links I am emphatically *not* suggesting that environmental activism, or the project of reconstructing masculinity, means psychological regression. If anything, such connections are a measure of the seriousness of the project. These men are not day-trippers playing at being the "Sensitive New Man"; they are committed to a real and far-reaching politics of personality. What I am suggesting is that the specific form of the project is supported by emotional responses deriving from archaic levels in personality.

I would also suggest that these emotions, in adulthood, involve considerable risk. The project of having an open, nonassertive self risks having no self at all; it courts annihilation. "I felt like I was losing my center," said Nigel Roberts about his relationship with a feminist woman. Danny Taylor constructed a passive-dependent relationship with an admired woman that placed him in a position feminists have long criticized for women:

> I was really amazed that she liked me, and I guess I was like a bit of a lap dog for a while. . . . I sort of identified myself with her, and all her achievements were my achievements, and her successes were all mine. I had none myself. I felt that I would just shrivel up and blow away once the relationship ended.

The relationship did indeed end with a messy separation and a lasting self-disgust on Danny's part.

The annihilation of masculinity was both a goal and a fear for these men. Oedipal masculinization structured the world and the self for them in gendered terms, as it does for most men. To undo masculinity is to court a loss of personality structure that may be quite terrifying: a kind of gender vertigo. There are consequently strong motives to set limits to the loss of structure. Such limits are visible in the paradoxical assertion of masculine narcissism in a supermasculine act of renunciation and in the maintenance of heterosexual object-choice and a heterosexual sensorium.

Alternatively, gender vertigo may impel men to reach for other structuring principles. Here, one of Freud's subtler points about oedipal relationships is

important. He observed that the "complete" Oedipus complex involved a superimposition of two patterns of eroticism and fear, one leading to identification with the father, the other to choice of the father as erotic object and to rivalry and identification with the mother. We need not accept Freud's pan-sexualism to agree that the power relations and emotional dependencies in the patriarchal family create the possibility of oedipal identification with the mother, a pattern distinct from "primal identification" and playing a different role in gender politics. This is a *gendered* relationship, a highly structured one — and hence a possible answer to vertigo. It is likely to involve an experience of shared vulnerability (rather than the sense of the mother's omnipotence, as emphasized in Dinnerstein's account of primal identification). It may mean rivalry with the mother for the father's affections rather than an easy solidarity with her. The point was made earlier that Barry Ryan, in the crisis of family separation, went back to live with his father. In adulthood, Barry still sought his father's affection more than most men in the study.

Where present, such identification provides an emotional basis for handling the loss of structure in demasculinization: One can assert, with some conviction, solidarity with women and distance from men, especially conventionally masculine men. These emotions were common in the interviews. The evidence in these six cases was clear that this solidarity with women need not modulate into a full-scale feminization. We do not have here a track toward transsexuality. Rather, oedipal identification with the mother appears to coexist with oedipal masculinization as a contradiction within unconscious levels of personality.

Adult gender politics activates this contradiction, especially around the theme of guilt. In classical psychoanalysis, guilt in men is closely connected with oedipal masculinization and internalization of the threatening father image as the basis of the "superego." In terms of this model, the material from at least two of our cases was paradoxical, since there was plenty of guilt, but it was attached to *fulfilling* rather than transgressing the law of the father. Barry Ryan felt guilty about "being male," Bill Lindeman about a particular episode of unequal attachment ("I used her," he said, in a phrase that had an unintended double meaning) and also about masculine aggression in general. A major strand in feminist literature, which both Barry and Bill had been carefully reading in the early 1980s, presented an extremely negative image of men in its focus on sexual violence, pornography, and war. I suggest that the wave of guilt each felt had to do with the contradiction between oedipal masculinization and oedipal identification with the mother, freshly activated by this political context.

Not all of the group reported an overpowering experience of guilt. Nigel Roberts, exposed to the same literature, responded more coolly, and indeed criticized the "effeminist" reaction triggered by guilt:

> I think a lot of pro-feminist men are still into judging other men, the things they say and the way they behave, just like feminists do. When you find out about feminism, you tend to go through a period of not wanting to be a man and not liking other men, and just listening to women and wanting to be around them. And in a sense you still feel threatened by other men, and you sort of don't want them to be, as good at being a feminist as you are, kind of thing.

With Nigel the emotional response to feminism was not one of paralyzing guilt, and there is perhaps a specific reason. His family life and sex life in adolescence muted the theme of gender difference, so any contradiction of identifications was weaker.

Rather than guilty, Nigel seemed disconcerted by feminism, as if he were somehow at a serious disadvantage. He acknowledged the facts of gender inequality and accepted the principle of gender equality. He went beyond to the revalorization of "the female side to life." But he could not turn his response into a livable project. He fell out of control ("losing my center"), or was in danger of it, so he avoided risk with feminist women. The destructuring involved in the feminist project for men (in which he had been involved longer than any other man in this group) seemed to have left him adrift or out of focus, without a way of refocusing through identification either with women or with feminist men.

In sum, the project of reconstruction can be emotionally configured in a number of ways. None of them appears well resolved or particularly stable. I suggest that these emotional dilemmas have no resolution at the level of personality dynamics alone. To pursue a reconstruction of gender any further requires a qualitatively new element or — to change the metaphor — requires a shift to a new terrain, where the social-structural sources of emotional contradiction can be addressed directly. As radical feminism found, it requires a shift to the level of collective practice.

## COLLECTIVE GENDER POLITICS:
## THE MOMENT OF CONTESTATION

There is a fundamental disjunction between the collective, social character of problems of gender and the individualized practices with which countercultural milieux generally handle them. Their typical methods of reforming personality treat the individual as the unit to be reformed and

generally emphasize *more* individuality as the way forward, in the search for a "true self" or a "real me." The strength of this individualizing push can be appreciated when we recall that the six men were all in touch with a political movement, environmentalism, which by contrast emphasizes collective action and which has a clear sense of a social power structure as its target.

From this point of view, the project of remaking the self may represent *containment*, not revolution, in relation to the patriarchal gender order. Danny Taylor, for instance, was not ignorant of the facts of social and economic structure; he could even be vivid about them, talking of women as "the slaves of the slaves." But it was change inside the head that he was working on, and there is nothing in that project that must lead to a slave revolt. Danny could succeed in finding his new self and could create a form of heterosexuality distinguished by the considerateness for women, emotional openness, and sexual passivity he sought. This form would slot into a reconstituted masculine order, admittedly not the hegemonic form, but a version of masculinity having a well-recognized and secure subaltern position.

The political risk run by an individualizing project of reforming masculinity, such as Danny's, is that it will ultimately help modernize patriarchy rather than abolish it. It is a sense of this possibility that has made many feminist women somewhat skeptical of the "men's movement" and of feminist men.

Another stance seems to align men most closely with feminism: guilt, antagonism to men, and complete subordination to the women's movement (classically set forth in the "effeminist manifesto" by Dansky, Knoebel, and Pitchford, [1973] 1977). This response accepts the individualizing logic that locates the source of oppression in men's personal "sexism" and offers a moral stance rather than a practical program. Nigel Roberts's critique of effeminist men, quoted above, made this point about the response of blaming men. He repeated the now-conventional joke about how macho it is to be the "best feminist." More profoundly, his comment points to the emotional antagonism that undermines any cooperative response, where men's relationship to feminism is built on a moralized individualism.

Two of the six men in this group had a practice that went beyond remaking the self and blaming men. Barry Ryan was training as a nurse, and in the hospital he met, as might be expected in an institution so emphatic about gender (Game and Pringle 1983), a good deal of patriarchal ideology and practice. He took some pleasure in subverting them, just by being there. More important, he went on to some deliberate workplace consciousness raising:

My role very much at the moment, as a mature-age student, is that I'm organizing students and doing some teaching stuff there as well as you know,

informal teaching. And I do things like point out to people the fact that men
are talking more in the groups, and wonder why this is happening.

Barry suggested that this collective work required him to call a halt to the
project of radical personal reconstruction. He was therefore willing to settle
for what he saw as a more moderate, livable feminism.

Bill Lindeman did not have a comparable workplace, but he also put
energy into reshaping his relationships with men, in a way that moved past
working on one-to-one relationships. He described his practice:

> Feeling a really strong energy to become involved with other men who were
> trying to change in the same way, so becoming involved in men's CR [con-
> scious-raising] groups and that sort of thing. Reading. There are a small number
> of books written by men for men, men with "changing" issues. Reading a lot
> of feminist literature. I see feminism — and how I've encountered it with my
> relationships — as being a really powerful catalyst for me to change. [Pause]
> I've read lots and gained lots.

Bill was trying to combine a role in men's countersexist groups with
environmental activism. He was trying to mobilize other men with a similar
combination of concerns to work with him on projects that would use
photography and other art forms in the cause of change. But this was not
easy:

> To get men from that sort of sentiment [i.e., wishing to change masculinity]
> who are also involved in Green issues . . . it's a really small pool of people that
> I feel really good about working with. So it feels a lot slower, there's a lot more
> blocks.

These two projects were limited. At the time of the interview, Barry Ryan
was still in training for his job. Trying to influence a training program from
the position of an individual student, even a mature-age student, does not
have great prospects. Bill Lindeman was trying something that might have
larger scope, but he defined the people he could work with as those who were
already members of two political movements at the same time; in conse-
quence, his immediate field of action was narrow indeed.

But although these two projects were tentative and small-scale, they
represented, in terms of their *logic,* a new moment in the political dialectic
of masculinity. In this moment, individualizing protests, in which the person
tries to separate himself from the project of masculinization, are transcended
in the direction of political mobilization, in which a patriarchal social order
is *contested.*

These collective projects of transformation operate at the level of the
social, address the institutional order of society as well as the social organi-
zation of personality, and involve the constitution of collectivities (from

face-to-face work group to social movement). In these respects, the moment of contestation is very different from the project of reconstructing the self.

But since very little social power has yet been mobilized or generated around this collective project, its capacity to change social institutions at this historical moment is very slight. Both experience and theory show the impossibility of liberating a dominant group and the difficulty of constructing a movement based not on the shared interest of a group but on the attempt to dismantle that interest (Connell 1987, 276-77; Tolson 1977). That many heterosexual men experience some degree of discomfort with conventional masculinities is attested by the other interviews in this study, as well as by the burgeoning North American literature about "what men feel" and a minor industry of masculinity therapy (Farrell 1986). Few heterosexual men, so far, turn this discomfort into antipatriarchal politics.

The environmental movement may be midwife in terms of gender politics. In this milieu, substantial numbers of men commit themselves to collective processes that, partly because of the feminist presence in environmental action, provide social leverage on conventional masculinities and offer highly relevant models of political practice. Yet the specific cultural history of the environmental movement limits this development even as it makes it possible. For the most part, the environmental movement, like the counter-culture generally, tries to work on a nongendered basis. It even tries to be degendering, to undo gender differentiation. Its commonest ideal is a fusion of feminine and masculine principles; each of the six men in this study saw some kind of androgyny as the goal.

The problem is that a degendering practice in a still-patriarchal society can be demobilizing as well as progressive, can lead to evasion of issues as well as solutions to them. Both feminism and gay liberation had to face this contradiction in the second half of the 1970s, and some extremely divisive questions were thrown up: the depth and intractability of sexual and gender "difference," the compatibility of heterosexuality and feminism (Coote and Campbell 1982; Segal 1987), the remasculinization of gay men (Humphries 1985). The dilemma also applies to heterosexual men. A response that simply negates mainstream masculinity, which remains in the moment of rejection, does not necessarily move toward social transformation.

To move beyond requires a *gendered* countersexist politics for men who reject hegemonic masculinity. Such a politics implies interpersonal and collective practices that give full attention and full force to the gender oppositions already socially constructed — hetero and homo, masculine and feminine. Rather than denying them, such practice would work in and through the contradictions these oppositions produce. It would seek, for

instance, to build progressive sexual politics on the solidarities — always partial but nevertheless real — that exist between particular men and particular women as kin or as workers or as targets of racial oppression. Its ultimate goal would be a recomposition (Connell 1987, 289-91) rather than an obliteration of the social elements of gender. Such a strategy would seek to diversify, rather than homogenize, its social base. It may find important psychodynamic bases in the oedipal identification of men with mothers and in the resulting gendered contradiction contained within much adult hegemonic masculinity. And it would need to operate in settings such as workplaces, unions, and the state, which the countersexist men's movement so far has scarcely begun to enter.

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*Robert W. Connell is Professor of Sociology at Macquarie University in Sydney, and immediate Past President of the Australian Sociological Association. He is currently doing research on masculinity, poverty and education, and the prevention of AIDS. An activist in the student movement of the 1960s and in the Australian labor movement since the 1960s, he has been working for about eight years to persuade labor organizations and academic men to address questions of gender politics. He has written or co-written ten books, the most recent being* Gender and Power *(Stanford University Press, 1987) and* Staking a Claim: Feminism, Bureaucracy and the State *(Unwin Hyman, 1989).*