

LOVE AND MEN





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If we don't try figuring ourselves out , what chance do we have of trying to change our attitudes about ourselves and women ? How can we get beyond the socially restrictive ideas of how we behave ? Our society is geared to sexist role playing . No love for or between men whether a personal thing , a part of our sexuality or our simple feelings and actions on the one side . On the other side the love , support and friendship offered to women by us adds up to little more than a token favour . Taboos that deeply affect our lives when beneath the surface of these narrow views it is all of us that suffer in one way or another .

SHARING OUR LOVE AND RESPONSIBILITY

We want our next pamphlet to be semi-regular depending on how good the response is ? We also want it to be open , hopeful and positive ? It may be called 'MEN SPEAKING OUT ON MEN AND SEXISM ' ? Please write and please get involved .

Love and Men ,
c/o M.A.S.S.,
BOX 25 ,
L.O.P.,
52 CALL LANE ,
LEEDS LS1 6DT .

LOVE

This city feels so very cold tonight ,
even when the sun is shining ,
It just feels so dark .
It seems colder than ever ,
in a barrel of self -pity .

Life should be grabbed and lived .
Instead of all those dreams ,
of darkness and despair .

If i want to , i'll damn this weather
for it's never , ever being right .
But i can't wait forever ,
for you to change the way ,
that you feel .

I could end up waiting forever ,
so i'll go out into the rain .
Get caught in it and get drenched .

Just like you ,
the wind swept away my heart ,
and the dumb words were stopped .
In my mouth while they
were only forming .

I don't want to live my life
in a dream ,
while there's precious time to kill .

I love you .
But i won't sleep each night ,
on a bed of nails ,
while waiting for the dawn to arrive .
I want to live and i want time for everything .





RECIPE FOR DISASTER

Take one young man, twenty or so.
Twenty years of conditioning.
A lot of fear.
A sprinkle of confusion.
A pinch of insecurity.
A handful of daft ideas.

Add:

One woman he likes and who likes him.
And you have a friend and lover,
Then a crutch and a mother.

MAN MADE THE BARRICADES

No tears, just cheers as we pat each
other on the back.
A revolution for men that we cling to
never wanting to share.
Freedom for brothers,
no sisters wanted here.
No feelings for people,
only feelings of power.
No hurt that we talk of,
just strength that we boast.
Too many barricades between ourselves
and too many bricks in our own walls
to throw.
Break them down,
without being big men,
by being more.
By just being ourselves.

The "Brotherhood" performance was about sharing with another man. It became a very quiet thing between us. We were sharing this cigar. We smoked it and then we laid it between our arms and let it burn our skin for a while. When it hurt too much, we took another puff. When it became too painful, we agreed between each other, that this was enough, we were through. It was a shared thing, like a tattoo, a little sacrifice.

WHAT SEXISM HAS DONE TO US

It often feels as if I have been hit by some heavy blow during my life that has left me dazzled and confused. I keep trying to get up but I keep falling down. I don't know who hit me but I can still feel the danger of the next blow. Then when I do find someone to cling to, I become too heavy for them and they have to let go, to avoid falling down with me. This is all on the inside of me.

Men have violent lives that ignore and destroy any growth of gentler feelings that we could have. The mess we are left in makes me feel broken in pieces that I am left to sort out alone. With all this going on in the name of men, is it any surprise that individual men end up screwed up, and churned up in the social machinery of it all.

We can punch or be punched by a man who is a total stranger, but to touch a male friend with kindness, love, or just a little caring can be the hardest thing in this hard world. Yet some of the broken pieces inside me feel it can also be the most wonderful.

NEVER YOURSELF

Labels restrict, conform and deny you.

Part of me is straight,

Part of me is gay,

Part of me is both.

Part of me is fat.

Labels restrict, conform and deny you.

A lot of me is emotional,

A lot of me is sexual,

A lot of me is oppressed.

Part of me longs to be free to express myself.

Part of me hates my oppression.

Most of me hates the power of oppression.

More of me loves the power of freedom.

Labels have restricted me, made me

Conform and denied me who I am.



L.O.V.E.

As someone's said before " I WANT LOVE " . I know that what i want and need is love . At the same time , the things that i look for are both fantasy and reality .

The fantasy is the "being in love with the idea of love " . This carrot and stick game is one which tricks us through life and keeps the species going .

The reality can be the moment when you know something is special or when you come together with someone regardless of where it may go from there . That moment , or the one that you realise is about to be , is beyond words . Whether its a few hours of lust or a longer experience . The moment can be one of pure love , whatever that is . A love of life itself ! ?

So , what is this saying , if anything ? No solitions here but my own conclusions . We handle things differently . I don't like feeling like i'm drooling and love-lorn over someone , but at the same time i do want to feel . I don't want to be an insensitive robot without either showing my feeling or having the ability to let go when i want or need to .

Whatever love means - whether it ends in tears or goes on forever . I always want to be involved in someway . Maybe this is too obvious ? Stating the obvious ? Love is like other aspects of life , where if you're going to go for it always , then would'nt it be good to keep your head a bit better . I don't want to become numb and immune .

There's a war going on and our relationships have to come under scrutiny if we're going to try to change things .

FEAR OF LOVE

- 1 I am a heterosexual male living in a heterosexual society .
- 2 Which means i want and should want to form a relationship with a woman .
- 3 It has to be a woman and practically any woman will do as long as shes a woman .
- 4 Every woman i meet has the potencial to become my partner in a relationship
- 5 Having a relationship leads to me falling in love , leads to the possibility of my love being rejected leads to the possibility of me feeling depressed for a long period (and i can't stand that) .
- 6 Therefore i'm scared of being friends with women .
- 7 I am a heterosexual male living in a heterosexual society .
- 8 Which means i don't want and shouldnt want to form a relationship with a man .
- 9 Which means i can never fall in love with a man - meaning i will never have the possibility of my love being rejected by a man - meaning a man will not cause me to feeling depressed for a long period .
- 10 Therefore i can be friends with as many men as i like .
- 11 As long as i don't get too close .
- 12 Cos i'm a heterosexual male living in a heterosexual society .

FEAR OF LOVE

I'm scared of love , i'm scared of the responsibility and commitment that a steady relationship needs and deserves . I don't wanna be trapped by that so instead i have little flings , sometimes its good sometimes not so good but i feel more secure that way .

No i don't , i feel fucking lonely , i'm scared of love . Its dangerous , its giving all you got to a friend . Can i trust anyone that much ? One thing i do know is that instead of giving you can just cling on and suck a person dry till they can't take anymore and have to chuck you , and when that happens you fall flat on your face and can't get up for months . thats whats happened to me anyway . I don't wanna go through that again so thats why i try not to get too close , try not to give too much of myself away cos even if i can trust someone that much i'm still not sure if i can trust myself to love someone without going all jelly at the knee's and falling helplessly out of control .

But i want so much to give - you out there - my next lover . I want you so much but i don't even know your name . You might be the girl at the bakers or at the nightclub , maybe your the one who was laughing to herself in the street the other day . You see it dosn't really matter who you are , you could be anyone but i can't bear the thought that you'd reject me if i put my faith in you . I'm almost too scared to even look for you .

FEAR OF FREEDOM ?

Fear, fear, always fear, it rules our lives . We continue to tread wearily round in the smallest circles hanging on to what little we got without daring to drop it for even a moment and reach out for something more . Something unseen and uncertain but possibly something great and wonderful . I've had enough fear . Too much . I think its about time i dropped my defences and opened myself up . Its risky but sod the risk . I want more , I want love .

D . S . Jan 90.

BEING IN LOVE

I have loved maybe three or so people in my life, loved them as a lover; someone more than a friend.

A lover is someone who makes doubt disappear, someone who's smile cancels all my fear, and someone who makes me feel alive.

I've slept with people that I haven't loved, and although the experience has been nice, it has never seemed to improve our relationship. Sleeping with someone I've loved in a really big way has added to the friendship, like the icing on the cake. A point or a conclusion that I've arrived at in my life is that it doesn't get me anywhere if I don't love the person. I'm no moralist, so I'm into people doing whatever feels good for them.

Many times I have tried to love people I've liked but not loved. I've only loved with my heart once or twice. It's no good half liking someone you sleep with as it always seems to widen the emptiness instead of filling it. Things always seem to degenerate that way.

I don't believe in any moral code. I believe that if it feels good, then go for it. I don't need or want marriage, be it blessed by some scummy vicar, or a marriage to another that's recognised as a "partnership" by people too scared to voice their honesty. I know that I need something better than half-love.

I sometimes want you not to pay me attention, although there's nothing more I want than to be closer to you.

I seem to want to be at arms length these days. I somehow don't think I've got the patience to put up with the pains of falling in love. I don't think I can handle the clashes of emotion over such simple things.

I don't want the awful shiver of possessiveness back, even though I love you.

It's funny to be so young, not even twenty three, yet I've had a year free of romance in which I was kept alive on nothing but friends and acquaintances. It's a year that I've enjoyed, how good it feels to be independent. I suppose though as we may all do, to expect the person we've been dying to meet to be only around the corner?

Perhaps this is what has made the year so good, the thought that soon I will meet that special person.

When we enter a relationship and we are in a mess (average conditioned person) it causes pain.

My goal is to be in control of my ideas and not to use one person for my emotional needs. Not to need sex as a reassurance of love. Not to be a lapdog who idolises the person who's shadow he lives in. Not to stop living outside of the relationship.

My goal is peace in my head.

My goal is not to cause harm.

My goal is not to smother again someone I love.

My goal is to stand on my own feet and to enjoy the love of others. I want to support and learn to love other people.

When I think of you , part of me censors the memories. Part of me still lies awake waiting for your return. Three quarters of me says "forget it" it's all over. One quarter of me contains optimism and hope that it will be your letter at the door sealed with love.

UNTITLED LOVE POEM

You have fallen
like moss
on the palm of my hand.
Touched the well
that was dry
and made it bleed again.
And painted the dawn
so it smiles
at both of us.
Thank you.

Anon.



It's been a trying year
But I'm feeling good today
I know the darkness ain't fully passed
But it's getting more clear
I still ain't too strong with other people
But a friend's always at hand when I slip
"At the time you don't feel you can cope or come through it,
but you can" he says.
It's been a trying year
But I'm feeling good today.

N. Murphy

REACHING OUT

A woman friend of mine once told me how sad it was to see how cold even 'nice' men could behave with each other. That got me thinking about how little we touch when we do express our feelings. How at most meetings with male friends it was always so easy to bypass love and friendship and get down to the serious talking we always seem to do. It is sad, a very grey way of living. Reaching out is difficult, but what it rewards (for want of a better word) is a lot less inner pain and sadness. Are men always to feel as if they are alone in the unseen, but very real part of themselves?



I get tired of being a "ghost of a person", like when I didn't tackle my fears, insecurities, and hang-ups. Getting a better life for myself came about because of the pain. We can all change inspite of the way that we have been. We can pick ourselves up, brush off the rubbishy ideas, and live good lives, but not as sterile 'right on' people. As people we have the right to some dignity, so why not grab some for yourself? I'm getting mine through fighting back, and taking back my life. I'm doing this by recognising that I have a problem and wanting to overcome it.



TRUST!...WHO DO YOU?

We've had a fair bit of stick for producing 'Sex and Men', and generally for saying that sexism is not just going to disappear if we don't change as men. If you think, however, that the idea of men's groups is something that is valid then this might be of some help. The image of anti-sexism as the privilege of middle class jerks is something that is convenient for a lot of men to use as a weapon and an excuse. This will inevitably receive a slagging off, but we don't give a toss if it's empty words. This is what we are doing, and think there's a point to it. Communication and change has to be genuine. You can say what you like. You can even say you're right on. Why do we have to pretend that we're non sexist?

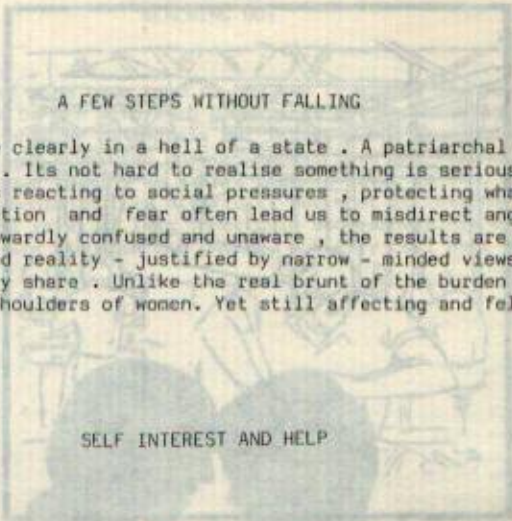
As a consequence of men accepting a bad image of 'anti sexism', any ideas that challenge sexism and isolation are laughable. Trust games can be a start for those of us (most of us) who've probably never touched another male except for in an aggressive way. Again, it has to be genuine to work. While group hugs might make you physically sick because you don't feel anything for a complete stranger, you could try these;

TRUST CIRCLE

The group stands in a circle close together. One person stands in the centre. The person in the centre needs to keep hands by their sides and knees straight so their body is fairly stiff and their eyes closed. The people in the circle then gently push the other person from one to another catching and pushing. The point is to give support. Try speeding it up or slowing it depending on the person.

WHOSE FACE?

Choose a partner and sit facing each other. Spend a few minutes gently exploring each others faces with finger tips and visually. Then one of you is blindfolded and has to find the other amongst the main group. The other partner then does the same.



A FEW STEPS WITHOUT FALLING

Society is quite clearly in a hell of a state . A patriarchal (male dominated) state . Its not hard to realise something is seriously wrong . We live our lives reacting to social pressures , protecting what little we have . Frustration and fear often lead us to misdirect anger we rightly feel . Inwardly confused and unaware , the results are devastating . A deeply disturbed reality - justified by narrow - minded views . Views we often unwittingly share . Unlike the real brunt of the burden - falling squarely on the shoulders of women . Yet still affecting and felt by us all .

SELF INTEREST AND HELP

We wanted ' SEX AND MEN ' and this pamphlet ' LOVE AND MEN ' to have some real aims . A good start was a personal one . A personal rediscovery of some of our lives . We have all been buried under the shit of patriarchy . The trouble is , just as we have all been covered with different shit , we have all experienced different backgrounds . Different growing pains to toughen us up and get us used to the idea . We have all been taught the ' male role ' route to becoming a man .

(NOT JUST NEW SHIT) EXPERIENCING A MENS GROUP

Letting our male masks slip for a while felt good . Being a little more gentle and open than usual was uplifting and healing . We could learn a lot from each other , understand our behaviour and even breath some free space .

Its a myth that any man can neatly fit the male role . We just get more screwed up the more we try .

We could do a lot more . Find our real feet and stand on some solid ground . Learn to cooperate freely without feeling our restrictions . Challenge the taboos without becoming competitive and challenging each other . Support wimmin and their liberation and stop oppressing them ourselves .

LADS IN A STATE

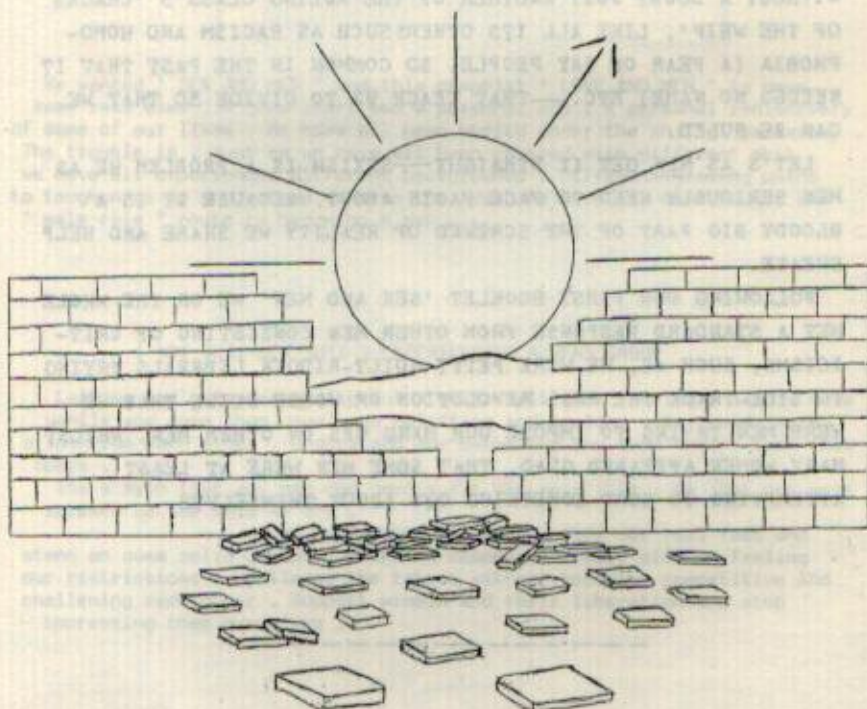
NEITHER CLEVERDICKS NOR DICKHEADS

IT MAY BE TRENDY TO THINK IN TERMS OF A MIDDLE CLASS 'IN THING' THAT ONLY PEOPLE WITH CLEVER MINDS CAN FATHOM OUT OR WHAT'S ALLOWED IN THE RIGHT ON, RIGHT OFF WORLD OF THE ALTERNATIVE SCENE BUT WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT SEXISM IS WITHOUT A DOUBT JUST ANOTHER OF THE RULING CLASS'S 'CRACKS OF THE WHIP', LIKE ALL ITS OTHERS SUCH AS RACISM AND HOMOPHOBIA (A FEAR OF GAY PEOPLE, SO COMMON IN THE PAST THAT IT NEEDED NO NAME) ETC.—THAT TEACH US TO DIVIDE SO THAT WE CAN BE RULED.

LET'S AS MEN GET IT STRAIGHT—SEXISM IS A PROBLEM WE AS MEN SERIOUSLY NEED TO FACE FACTS ABOUT, BECAUSE IT IS A BLOODY BIG PART OF THE SCREWED UP REALITY WE SHARE AND HELP CREATE.

FOLLOWING OUR FIRST BOOKLET 'SEX AND MEN' WE ON THE WHOLE MET A STANDARD RESPONSE FROM OTHER MEN CONSISTING OF CRITICISMS, SUCH AS, WE WERE PETTY GUILT-RIDDEN LIBERALS TRYING TO SIDE-TRACK THE REAL REVOLUTION OR WORSE STILL THAT WE WERE MEN TRYING TO IMPOSE OUR HANG UPS ON OTHER MEN. WHILST MANY WOMEN APPEARED GLAD, THAT SOME MEN WERE AT LEAST ATTEMPTING TO SORT SOMETHING OUT ABOUT THEMSELVES.

EVERY MAN INVOLVED WITH THESE BOOKLETS WROTE FOR HIM-
SELF AND HIMSELF ONLY. THE ONLY IDEA BEING THAT SEXISM
WAS SUCH SHIT THAT WE AS MEN TOGETHER, NEEDED TO OPPOSE
IT AS OFTEN AND AS MUCH AS WE COULD. TAKE IT FROM THERE....



LADS IN A STATE



HARD HELMETS AND
STIFF TRUNCHEONS

MALE



DOMINATION

