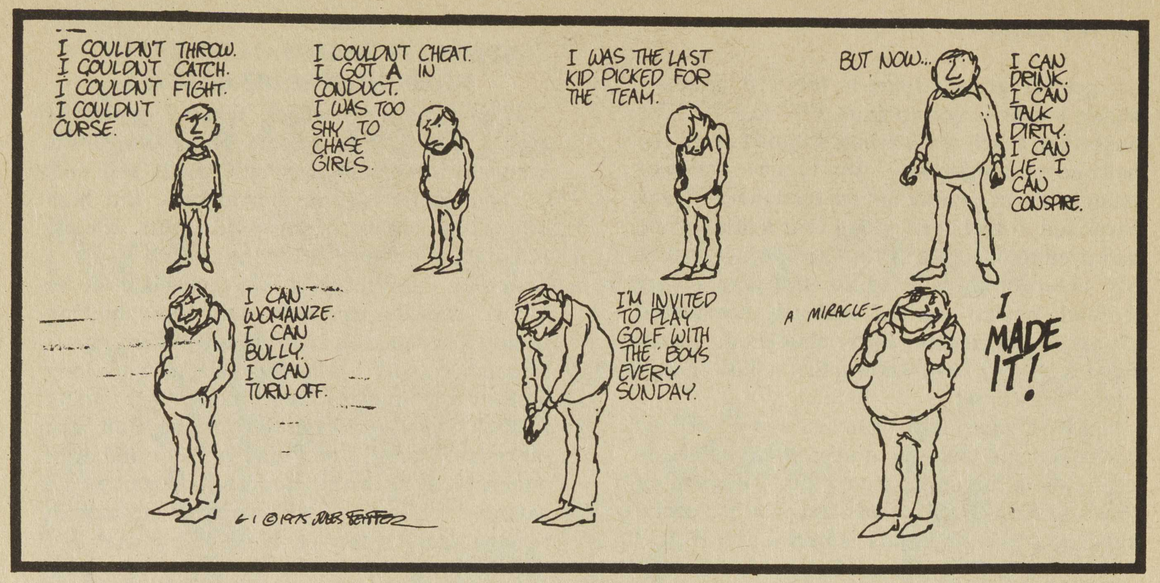

My high school confidence enticed me into having theories—opinions on political issues, morality, and culture—the sort of glossy plastic theories that form through inexperience. One of my theories was about men. Men just couldn't talk about themselves. Men couldn't be personal. Of course I knew men who did talk about themselves and could be personal—I was one of them, but we were freaks, artists maybe, but definite genetic contradictions. Most men were trapped on the lonely side of the feminine/masculine wall; barricaded against strong emotions or intimate friendships except with women. The legacy of my penis, left to itself, was a world of rectangular forms populated by handshaking and Robert's Rules of Order.

RE-EDUCATION

Leaving high school shattered my myth of gender-dominated character. My feminine/masculine stereotypes didn't work as well at college. I found a few men who were tender, responsive, and loving. My theory of masculinity was tarnished as I began to see that men didn't have to be as "masculine" as the male culture was. I began to realize that femininity was also a stereotype that didn't always fit.

My re-education on sex roles came from friendships with non-conditioned women and men and also from the women's movement that was going on around me. The women's movement supported my questioning of traditional male and female roles. Unforunately, there was no comparable men's movement to pull me in.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST MALE DOMINATION

Sexually, our culture is dominated by men and sexist concepts of masculinity which oppress men as well as women. The masculine culture is not necessarily a culture of or by men; it is a social culture which punishes and rewards us all. Women and men, gay and straight, must work together to cut the noose of sexism for everyone's sake. Men need liberating and need help with their liberation. Men who suffered being a sissy because they were lousy at baseball; men who believe there can be no intimacy in male to male friendships; men who sometimes don't feel up to being Kojak; all of these men are being victimized by sex roles.

Women have initiated the struggle against sexism and have made great progress. Some men are now beginning to follow. But sometimes men act like they are changing out of courtesy to women. Men must fight against sexism, not as a courtesy to women, but as an assertion of our own humanness. Men should struggle because they honestly reject traditional sex roles—because they believe that being a person can encompass hundreds of different human qualities.

An Annotated List of Books on Youth Liberation

compiled by Keith Hefner

I. GENERAL INTEREST

The Children's Rights Movement: Overcoming the Oppression of Young People, ed. by Beatrice and Ronald Gross; Anchor/Doubleday, April, 1977 — This is a large collection containing many of the best articles that have been written on children's liberation. Among the contributors are Paul Goodman, Margaret Mead, John Holt, Richard Farson, Nat Hentoff, Ted Clark, the Children's Defense Fund, Youth Liberation and many, many other individuals and organizations. It has an annotated bibliography and a list of organizations working around children's rights. The book presents a broad spectrum of issues and opinion on young people's liberation, and is therefore an excellent introduction to the movement.

Escape From Childhood, by John Holt; E.P. dutton, 1974 — The attitudes, customs and laws of society have excluded young people from any meaningful participation in society, and locked them into "18 years of subservience and dependency," according to Holt. He gives a brief history of childhood based on Philippe Aries' **Centuries of Childhood**, and shows that some of our concepts of childhood are outmoded. He strongly criticizes the nuclear family for sheltering and isolating young people and thereby insuring their lack of worldly experience and incompetence. Holt suggests that generally, young people should have the right to do what any adult may legally do.

Holt is at his best when he criticizes society's "attitudes and customs." He explains that children are seen as objects, upon which adults are free to bestow love and affection as they please — whether the child likes it or not. Adults have created stereotypes and myths about children which allow them to ignore children's real needs. Holt wants that to change so that adults treat children as human beings, not as objects.

The major drawback of this important book is its lack of political perspective. Holt's discussion of **why** children are socialized to be incompetent and servile is muddled or nonexistent. His ideas about children's liberation need to be integrated into an overall analysis of oppression in our society.

Birthrights: A Bill of Rights for Children, by Richard Farson; MacMillan, 1974 — Farson's book is remarkably similar to Holt's, except that he concentrates more on the tangible, usually legal, aspects of ageism, rather than its social and psychological aspects. He would like to see society protect young people by expanding their rights rather than by enforcing their inferiority and dependence.

Farson tries to show logically why giving equal rights to young people will be beneficial both to them and to society at large. Among the rights he suggests are: the right to work; the right to vote; the right to "justice," by eliminating status offenses, etc.; the right to sexual freedom; and the right to responsive design (safe places to play, etc.).

Unlike Holt, Farson touches on the relationship between the children's and other liberation movements. Farson says we need a "new kind of revolution" to fundamentally change our