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NOMAD VANS AND LADY VANNERS: A CRITICAL FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF A VAN CLUB

The Ohio State University

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NOMAD VANS AND LADY VANNERS:
A CRITICAL FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF A VAN CLUB

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Judith Ann Dilorio, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1982

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the four years it has taken me to complete this dissertation, numerous people have assisted me in numerous ways. Of these people, there are a special few without whose help I can sincerely say this particular product would not have been possible. Its strengths I share with them. Its weaknesses are mine alone.

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VITA

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CHAPTER I

TOWARD A CRITICAL FEMINISM

Introduction

My first contact with Nomad Vans was in July, 1978 when Wizard, the club's organizer and future president, invited me to attend its first meeting. Wizard called himself a vanner—an epithet which at the time was meaningless to me—and he was anxious to educate anyone who would listen to the world of vanners and the joys of vanning. Since I not only listened but was curious to know more, he suggested that I attend this meeting and "party" with the club.

The meeting was scheduled for Friday night at a huge shopping center parking lot referred to as "the Castle" after a major store there. When I arrived at the Castle lot, I found myself suddenly immersed in a world of social activity involving local youths and organized around aggregates of similar types of motor vehicles. At one end of the lot toward the back were the racers and their cars. At the other end toward the front were the vanners and their vans; and speeding through from time to time though seldom stopping for very long were the bikers on their bikes. It was an impressive visual display of machines and movement matched in sensory impact only by the level and variety of sounds--the sounds of racing motors, peeling tires and, above all, rock music.
The vans, seven in number, were lined up side by side in an arch facing the highway that ran in front of the Castle lot. Eleven people, six men and five women, including myself, spent the evening "standing around" in front of the vans, drinking and talking. The exact size, composition and form of the group changed continuously as people came and went and moved from one interaction to another.

I stayed and played with the club that night, curious to find out what they did and why, that is, to discover something about the nature of the social reality in which they participated. As I observed their activities and interaction on that and several subsequent occasions, I began to perceive what I considered to be one important fact: the nature of this participation was in many ways distinctly different for the male and female members. The men led the discussions and made the jokes while the women were silent, laughed at the jokes or talked softly to each other. The men got rowdy while the women simply watched. The men decided what to do and the women went along. Even spatially, the women's existence was at variance with, though dependent on, that of the men: standing by their boyfriend's side and under their arms, sitting alone in the vans while their boyfriends talked to the other men, or even occasionally being held by their boyfriends over their heads in the air. It seemed that as is true in so many social contexts, the men were dominant and the women were their submissive subordinates.

Yet, over time, this characterization of the social relations between men and women in the club increasingly came to appear simplistic and inadequate. It neither reflected the women's own interpretations of their behaviors nor accurately described the full range of those behaviors, especially those of the older "lady vanners." In the group
because of their monogamous attachment to a male vanner or because they owned and operated a van themselves, these women did not always sit silently submitting to the will of the men. Indeed, from time to time, in certain situations, it was they who perpetrated jokes, initiated activities, sanctioned misbehavior and so forth.

In short, through my initial observations, I came to realize that a sociological analysis of the social reality of this group necessitated attending to the nature of sex differentiation as a fundamental aspect of that reality, and, moreover, to a consideration of the complexity and variability which such differentiation involves. Such an analysis, moreover, needs to go beyond both traditional sociological studies with their tendency to ignore the relevancy of sex differentiation in social life and the typical gender-role studies with their tendency to reify and objectify what such differentiation entails. Instead, an indepth qualitative case study of Nomad Vans would be based upon a "critical feminist" theoretical framework recognizing the importance of gender processes in social life but seeking to go beyond certain inadequacies of what has come to be called 'gender-role' research.

Theoretical and Methodological Problems in Gender Role Research

No critique of the sociological enterprise has been as scathing in its attack, as generalized in its implications, nor as revolutionary in its goals as that made by feminist scholars. The fundamental thesis of this critique is that sociology (and social science in general) is an androcentric discipline in which empirical and theoretical constructions presented and accepted as objective analyses actually reflect and reinforce a masculine view of the social world. This androcentrism is evident in sociological definitions of relevant and irrelevant
issues for study, in the models of social reality that have been constructed, and in the assumptions underlying the interpretive schemes that have been employed. More specifically, in defining their issues, sociologists have focused on the visible, formal and public spheres of society—spheres of relevance primarily to men—and ignored the less visible, informal and private spheres of relevance primarily to women (Millman and Kantner, 1975:x). In the models of social reality they have produced, sociologists have tended to emphasize the abstract and the rational rather than the concrete and emotional thereby imposing upon their perceptions and analyses of that reality a masculine mode of consciousness (Smith, 1974; Hochschild, 1975). Finally, in their substantive accounts of the nature of social reality, they have made assumptions about the nature of sex-differences and women's position in society which themselves should have been subjected to sociological inquiry (Acker, 1973; Bart, 1971; Kanter, 1975; McCormack, 1975). In essence, sociologists have not only failed to construct valid and comprehensive theory but instead have actually constructed ideological reinforcement of sex-based inequality. By reducing women and women's issues to the realm of the peculiar, irrelevant or trivial, they have denied their existence as social actors. By assuming rather than addressing sex-divisions and sex-based inequality, they have legitimated them.

The goal of feminist inquiry is to transform sociology into a critical science which in turn can be used to transform society, through the adoption of a feminist perspective to replace traditional ones. In contrast to conventional perspectives, the feminist perspective takes as its fundamental premises the universal importance of sex/gender differentiation in the organization of social life, the universal
existence of male-dominance as a consequence of such differentiation, and the need for social science to aid in eliminating both. Hence, from a feminist perspective, a valid theory of society and social reality must consider the importance of gender-issues both empirically and critically. Sex and gender become such omni-relevant factors that, in the words of Gould and Kern-Daniels (1977:186), "the sociology of gender is nothing less than sociology itself."

It is my contention that in their ardent and just desire to demonstrate the legitimacy of their assertions and the consequent importance of the sociology of gender as an area of inquiry, researchers in this area have tended to adopt certain conceptual and methodological orientations which not only limit the development of a theory of gender but which may actually reinforce the very cultural ideologies and social processes they (we) seek to transform. Briefly, these problems stem from approaches to the study of gender which (1) emphasize ideal rather than real conceptions of the nature of gender roles, (2) reduce gender differences to psychologistic properties of persons thereby ignoring the situational determinants of behavior, (3) study gender roles as non-relational entities more relevant to women than to men and to familial than to non-familial contexts and (4) employ a mechanistic structural determinism in explaining the relationship between gender-differences at the level of the individual and the macro-structure of sex-based inequality.

In the following sections I will discuss each of these four major problems, arguing that they are generated by a positivistic model of social science which, in failing to take the feminist critique of the dominant sociological paradigm far enough, frequently has assumed what should be questioned and which, as a result, produces both theoretical
and ideological inadequacies. I will conclude, then, with a proposal for the development of a phenomenological feminism which will help solve the above problems by grounding the study of gender in the ongoing realities and relationships created and shared by women and men in a variety of contexts.²

Defining and Describing Gender Roles: Ideas and Ideals Versus Behaviors and Realities

One of the first tasks undertaken by feminist researchers in attempting to legitimate their intellectual and political concerns was to dissociate the study of sex-differentiation in society from the study of biological differences. In doing so, we came to adopt the sociological concept of 'role' to define our subject matter. Social 'roles' are socially constructed ways of organizing and patterning the behaviors, activities and relationships of group members. In viewing sex differences as a type of social role, a 'gender-role' or 'sex-role,' these too become seen as socially constructed and individually learned patterns of behaviors, activities and relationships differentiating male and female members of society. These roles may derive from the social fact of sex-differentiation but they are not determined by the biological facts of sex-differences.

Nonetheless, while the concept of 'role' may affirm the social and cultural underpinnings of sex-based differences, its use has infused the area of gender research with certain conceptual difficulties.³ As Deutsch and Krauss (1965:175) have indicated, the term 'role' has at least three different usages within sociology. It can refer to the abstract sets of normative expectations regarding what the incumbents of certain social positions are supposed to do; it can refer to what the incumbents of social positions think others expect them to do; and/
or it can refer to what persons actually do do as incumbents of certain social positions—normative expectations, subjective perceptions, and behavioral enactments respectively.

Now, insofar as all three formulations may be understood as interrelated components of a single phenomenon rather than as mutually exclusive definitions of that phenomenon, they all represent important issues for study. A 'role theory' to include a 'gender-role theory' would entail an analysis of each, of their interrelationships, and of the conditions under which they vary (Turner, 1974). Within gender-role research, however, there has been a tendency to define gender roles almost exclusively in terms of abstract normative prescriptions and to ignore the extent to which these expectations are or are not reflected in the actual behaviors of women and men in social life. In addition, there is a tendency to define the content of these beliefs and norms abstracted from the social context of their use. The result is a conceptualization of the nature of gender-roles which equates them not with the empirical reality of either beliefs or behaviors, but with abstract ideal-typifications.

This conceptual orientation is evident primarily in the methodological tools and techniques conventionally used to reveal the content of gender-roles through the analysis of stereotypes. While the specific instruments of measurement do vary, the typical design is one in which a sample of respondents are asked to record their beliefs about being male versus being female. In some cases they are given adjective checklists and asked to check which traits are masculine and which are feminine (Gough and Heilbrun, 1965; Jenkin and Vroegh, 1969; Williams and Bennett, 1975). In other cases, they are given bipolar rating scales and asked to judge the extent to which given traits are
characteristic of males versus females (Rosenkrantz, et al., 1968; Spence, et al., 1974). In most cases, respondents are asked to describe some typical male or female; and in most cases they are asked to respond in terms of personality traits, characteristics and abilities.

Regardless of the precise instruments that are used, the result is to operationalize gender roles so as to emphasize what-people-think-about-what-men-and-women-are rather than by observing what men and women actually do. Gender roles thus become defined as and equated with highly abstract, ideal-typifications of what being female or being male entails. Hence we learn that, according to our gender-role stereotypes, to be masculine is to be dominant, aggressive, non-emotional, competitive and so forth while to be feminine is to be passive, submissive, emotional, cooperative and so forth. While such research is certainly relevant to the explication of dominant cultural ideologies about gender, that is, to analyzing the abstract, widely-shared systems of belief about the differences between women and men, insofar as it is taken to describe the differences themselves rather than the ideologies about the differences, it poses certain theoretical and political problems.

Theoretically, there are two major issues raised by this approach to explicating gender-roles. First, what male and females say about the nature of gender-roles, or the nature of masculinity and femininity, tells us little about how women and men actually enact their genders. Taken by themselves, such studies tell us nothing about how men do (or do not) accomplish masculinity, how women do (or do not) accomplish femininity, and the context and conditions under which these accomplishments may vary.

Secondly, even as studies of our cultural ideas about the nature of males and females, such research is of limited value insofar as it
assumes that there are two and only two sets of cultural typifications regarding masculininity and femininity. The very instruments of measurement are based on the presumption that since there are only two sexes, male and female, there are only two genders, or modes of being masculine and feminine. Hence, regardless of the format of the scale, researchers still present their respondents with two categories or analyze their responses in terms of two categories, thereby imposing or positing the existence of gender dualism.

Now, while it may be an incorrigible assumption of our culture that there are two and only two sexes, male and female, and an individual has to be one or the other (Walum, 1977:5; Kessler and McKenna, 1978), it cannot be assumed that there are two and only two genders or modes of being masculine or feminine. In fact, in a recent study (Clifton et al., 1976) which asked respondents to describe the characteristics of certain types of women (housewives, bunnies, and career women) rather than 'femininity' itself, the respondents described types of female persons who not only differed from one another in significant ways, but also differed from the more general stereotype. For example, while 'femininity' may be associated with passivity, a majority of women in their sample (if not a majority of men) considered the housewife to be active, hardworking, alert and confident and attributed to only the housewife, and not the bunny or career woman, other typically feminine traits such as gentleness, kindness, and emotionality. Similarly, Plect (1976) in discussing the male sex-role argued that there are two distinct versions of this role, a 'traditional' one and a 'modern' one, which may have similar themes such as stress on achievement and suppression of affect but which differ greatly in
specific prescriptions about how each theme should be enacted or realized.

Such research raises important questions about being male and female members of society and about cultural conceptions of masculinity and femininity which were written-out of past gender-role stereotype research. Rather than assuming that there are two sets of 'normative expectations' applicable to being male or female respectively, we should begin to look at the variability in gender-typifications historically, structurally and situationally, and at the relationship between such conceptual models and the behaviors of women and men.

Ideologically, the major problem stemming from gender-role-as-stereotype research, and the reason why an alternative approach considering the variability in behavioral reality of gender-roles is so important, is the reification of the stereotypes in such a way as to actually create abstract, ideal-typical versions of what reality consists of, thereby hindering any attempt to alter that reality. Hence, in assuming that there are two and only two gender-roles and in equating these gender-roles with abstract stereotypes, this research may actually reinforce cultural ideologies about the nature of sex differences. We expect differences in descriptions of males and females; we expect these differences to be dualistic and opposing; and we find that respondents oblige. In other words, the findings are a function of the methodology and the methodology has been based upon certain assumptions about the nature of gender-roles which themselves are part of common sense models derived from cultural ideologies (Tresemer, 1975).

Again, while such studies are important for the explication of gender-ideologies, what is important for the transformation of such
ideologies is an alternative conceptual and methodological approach which will be based on grounded observational studies of how cultural beliefs about the sexes vary and of how such beliefs relate to what women and men actually do in their social activities. To do otherwise is simply to reaffirm and reify, not to critique, cultural beliefs.

Analyzing Gender Differences: Persons versus Situations

If research aimed at describing gender-roles idealizes, research aimed at analyzing the impact of such roles on sex differences in behavior psychologizes. More specifically, much of the research addressed to an exploration of the behavioral differences between males and females reduces what are in part interactional and situational processes to psychological predispositions and properties.

There are three major ways in which this psychologistic bias is evident in much gender-role research. First, that research previously discussed which is aimed at defining the content of gender-roles is itself grounded in analytic-trait psychology. 'Masculinity' and 'femininity' are defined as sets of personality traits which predispose male and female members of our society to behave in respectively different ways. If one is pre-disposed to act submissively, emotionally, cooperatively, and so forth than one is, by cultural definition, a feminine person. If one is predisposed to act aggressively, unemotionally, competitively, and so forth, than one is a masculine person. Gender-roles are defined substantively in terms of personality traits.

This bias is evident, secondly, in research aimed at exploring gender differences. Research on this issue has utilized one of two approaches. In the first, gender-differences are assessed by correlating the sex of subjects with their responses to a personality scale or their
performance on some behavioral task. The other approach, recognizing that gender-roles are social products and hence that gender and sex are not necessarily isomorphic, first measures the 'sex-role orientation' or 'sex-role identity' of a sample of respondents and then correlates this measure to a measure of some ability, preference, attitude or behavior (Stericker and Johnson, 1977; Falbo, 1977; Babladelis, 1978; Currant, et al., 1979). One accordingly measures how 'feminine,' 'masculine,' or even 'androgynous' a person is and then relates this measure to behavioral, attitudinal, and/or personality differences. While the latter approach attempts to eliminate the implicit sex determinism of the former, it still implies that 'gender' belongs to personality regardless of the situation and that gender-differences reside in the cognitive, affectual and behavioral patterns possessed by individuals.

Finally, the psychologistic bias is evident in explanations of the relationship between cultural stereotypes and individual women and men which emphasize processes of identification and socialization. According to this perspective, males and females become masculine or feminine by identifying with their appropriate sex and internalizing, through the process of socialization, the appropriate gender-role traits. Besides involving a structural determinism which will be addressed later, the implication is that the differences between male and female members of our society results from the acquisition of 'masculine' or 'feminine' personality traits respectively.

In essence, there has been a tendency to conceptualize gender differences in acts and attitudes as the products of personality differences. The result is an approach to the study of gender which limits the empirical questions that are asked and conservatizes the political implications that can be drawn.
The major theoretical and empirical inadequacy of this psychologistic and individualistic exploration of sex/gender differences is the neglect of the situational determinants of behavior and the implication, conversely, that sex-differences are situational constants. It simply ignores the extent to which one's identities and behaviors and the meanings which others attribute to these behaviors are the situationally variable products of interaction. The extent to which males and females think and act differently and the relationship between such differences and sex-based inequality can be totally reconceptualized by research which focuses upon the importance of situational variables. Hence, rather than empirically assessing what gender-role stereotypes are, the degree to which they have been 'internalized' by individuals, and their relationship to sex-differences in a laboratory setting, we can begin to ask more specifically social questions about the relationship between the setting of action, the sex of actors, the social roles they are playing, the behaviors they exhibit, and the meaning others attribute to these behaviors.

Two important questions which could then be addressed are the relationship between sex of actors and the types of situations in which they act, on the one hand, and the relationship between sex of actors and the rules of behavior applicable within situations, on the other. The former question pertains to the extent to which the gender differences empirically and ideologically associated with sex differences are a product of structural processes which differentially delimit the types of situations males and females are actors in. For example, sociohistorical processes which are said to have brought about the separation of public and private spheres of social life with distinct principles of social interaction in each, together with the relegation of men to the
former and women to the latter,\textsuperscript{5} may be more important for understanding sex differences in thought and action than acquired personality traits.

The second question addresses the relationship between sex differences within situations and the behavioral and interpretive rules operable within those situations. In particular, sex (being male or female) and gender (being masculine or feminine) may be related sociologically through the attribution and interpretive processes which assign different meanings to acts and actors according to their perceived sex. Hence, so-called gender-related personality traits such as 'aggressive' of 'submissive,' 'competitive' or 'cooperative,' may indeed by utilized to characterize behavior but may have little relationship to any underlying psychological dispositions of those whose behavior is so characterized. Rather, the behavior of actors may be differentially interpreted by others according to both the sex of the actor and the sex of the other. For example, as has often been pointed out but seldom systematically researched, women may be called 'pushy,' 'aggressive,' or 'domineering' for actions that would elicit labels of 'assertive' or 'competitive' if exhibited by men. If such is the case, these attribution processes function as sanctions resulting from sex-differentiated normative systems and may have more to do with sex-differences in behavior than personality traits.

In sum, a theory of gender in social life needs to be grounded in empirical studies which focus upon the relationship between the sex of actors, the types of situation in which they act, the normative rules which guide behavior in various situations, and the interpretive systems which influence the meanings which are attributed to different behaviors. While sex may be conceived of as an invariant feature
of self in social interaction, the nature and extent of its relevance become situationally variable according to other social factors.

Politically, such an approach is important for three reasons. First, to fail to consider the situational determinants of and variations in the behaviors of women and men—to instead view behavioral differences as situational constants stemming from psychological differences—is to re-invent the ideology of gender and sex as inter-linked in the individual and to deflect attention away from the ongoing ever-present realities that women and men may differentially experience. While gender-differences are viewed as learned rather than innate, they are still seen as lodged within the individual thus reinforcing the belief that individuals rather than institutional arrangements and situational processes are the primary perpetuators of gender-differences.

Secondly, the result of the above is to imply that the basic unit of change for the elimination of structural inequality is the individual, particularly the feminine individual, who lacks the necessary skills, abilities and/or motivation to acquire or competently fill male (masculine) positions. While behavioral and dispositional capacities are important to some degree for role acquisition, the relationship between such capacities and the exclusion of women from male-dominated institutional spheres is empirically problematic enough to make any assumptions about 'femininity' blocking access to certain positions take the form of political defusement and reinforcement of sexism.

Finally, the emphasis on gender-differences as stemming from learned sets of psychological traits paradoxically implies that gender is normatively, if not empirically, directly related to sex: In arguing that one's gender orientation is achieved through identification-internalization processes, it is recognized that the acquisition of
masculine or feminine traits is learned, not innate. This position does refute previous ideologies of sex/gender differences which utilized innate or biological factors as explanatory, making sex itself the determinant of gender. Instead, gender and sex are treated as analytically distinct concepts. However, connotations of a 'normal' relationship between the two remain, since typically in measuring masculinity and femininity, individual males and females are pitted against their respective stereotypes. Those that claim to possess the gender traits associated with the other sex become categorized as 'gender-role deviants' or 'cross-sex-typed' individuals with all the non-normality that these words connote. The result is to reinforce the facticity of certain sex/gender differences as normal features of individual personalities and hence of social life, rather than emphasizing the degree to which such distinctions bare little relationship to who and what individual women and men are or are capable of being.

**Women and the Family: Gender Roles versus Gender Relations**

If research on the nature of gender-roles and gender-differences has tended to ignore their relationship to behaviors and situations respectively, there has also been a tendency within the larger body of feminist studies to neglect the relational nature of these roles by focusing on women's roles as separate and distinct from those of men, and to ignore the contextual variability in those relations by equating gender-roles with familial roles. Again, I feel the result is to limit the development of the field theoretically and to conservatize it politically.

The former tendency of studying women to the exclusion of men is an understandable and necessary attempt on the part of feminist
researchers to remedy traditional sociology's neglect and trivialization of women as a category of social actors. In response to this neglect, they have undertaken numerous studies pertaining to 'women's roles,' 'women's issues,' 'women's work,' and 'women's status.' The implication, however, is that 'gender-roles' are 'women's roles' and that only women and not men are gender-imbued actors. In essence, what is basically a relational phenomenon—the patterns of male and female activities in the organization of group life becomes reduced to and understood as relevant to only one part.

Politically, such an approach risks reinforcing notions of the peculiarity, uniqueness and marginality of women's social experiences. To the extent that analyses of women's issues implicitly or explicitly utilize men's experiences, roles and positions as a basis for comparison and to the extent that such comparisons are based upon pre-feminist research which focused upon men as the normative case, the normative connotations of what is true for men and the non-normative connotations of what is true for women remain. In the words of Nicole-Claude Mathieu (1975-6:32):

> Just as in the subject of age we find no studies on the adult as such, so in the sociological topic of the sexes we find no studies on man as such. . . . In other words, the dominated are studied before the dominators and to a greater degree; and with the appearance of the subject they alone are characterized, they alone are specified. . . . as if they alone within the global society possessed a 'subculture.'

In other words, it is as if women's status as women is relevant wherever they are while men's status as men is relevant only in certain heterosocial situations.

While recently there have appeared studies of the male role and male experiences qua men (Pleck and Sawyer, 1974; David and Brannon, 1976;
Pleck and Brannon, 1978), male roles still are studied as if they are empirically as well as analytically distinct from female roles. Again to quote Mathieu (1975-5:30):

[S]ince in our societies it takes the two sex categories to cover the whole of the social field, it would seem logical that any specificity in one would be defined only in its relations to a specificity in the other, and that neither could be studied in isolation, at least without their having previously been fully conceptualized as elements in a single structural system. (Emphasis in original)

If a theory of gender is to be developed, if we are to arrive at some understanding of the nature, causes and consequences of sex/gender differentiation for social organization and for the experiences of women and men within that organization, we must begin to view the social roles of women and those of men as relational—as parts of a holistic system which can take variable forms. Hence, what are needed are studies of the nature of social relations between women in all female settings, between men in all male settings, and between women and men in mixed-sex settings.

Moreover, in studying variations in sex/gender relations, it will be necessary to overcome an additional empirical and conceptual bias of the feminist literature: the equating of gender-roles with familial roles. To date, much of the research which has been aimed at exploring gender-roles as relational has focused primarily upon the family and has utilized a highly normative conception of what these role-relations and the family are (Millman, 1971; Mathieu, 1975-6). This emphasis—indeed the need for this emphasis—can be justified on at least three grounds. First, the organization of the family is fundamentally based upon the biological distinction between the sexes. Sex-differentiation (as well as age-differentiation) is the basis for the assignment of
rights and responsibilities and for the power arrangements that follow therefrom. Since to study the family is to study sex/gender relations, it follows that to study sex/gender relations is to study the family.

Secondly, the familial roles filled by women historically and cross-culturally have been their most salient roles. The family, or domestic sphere of social life, has been the central locus of much of most women's social participation. Hence, to study women is to study the family.

Third, and following from both of the above, feminist theorists have continued to demonstrate that understanding the sex/gender structuring of the family and its relationship to the political-economic structure of society is critical for understanding the oppression of women and the perpetuation of patriarchy (Firestone, 1970; Rosaldo, 1973; Mitchell, 1971; McDonough and Harrison, 1978; Eisenstein, 1979).

Nonetheless, to the extent that feminist researchers confine their analyses of gender relations to the family and to an abstract, idealized model of the family, they risk not only ignoring other important though less obvious sites of gender-processes, but may take as their assumed model of gender-relations in group life that which is most politically extreme. As Bell and Newby (1976) pointed out, for example, it may be in the family where deference rituals characterizing wives relations to husbands are most legitimate as a form of gender relationship. In other social contexts, the pattern of deference and the nature of the gender relationship may be quite different. Without comparative studies of actual and normative gender-relations in a variety of familial and non-familial settings, feminist researchers may all too readily presume that the economic and political subordination of wives to husbands normatively expected in middle-class nuclear families is a
constant of female-male relations in general. Such a presumption again would undermine the development of a critical science by making sex itself the explanatory variable since that would be the only constant factor impinging on these relationships. A theory of sex/gender differentiation which will serve as the basis for practical action must utilize comparative analyses to understand variations in gender relations and the critical, non-sex factors which inform these variations.

Structural Determinism: The Imposition of Female Inferiority

As I mentioned earlier, the sociology of gender has incorporated into its theoretical framework certain conventional sociological categories to include the division between microanalysis (social psychology and macroanalysis (social structure). Research in the former, the body of research which I have been addressing, has been concerned primarily with exploring the nature of gender-stereotypes, the attitudinal and behavioral differences between male and female members of our society, and the socialization processes through which such differences are learned or produced. Macroanalyses, on the other hand, have focused upon the nature, causes and consequences of sex-based inequality at the institutional and societal levels.

In relating these two areas of inquiry, feminist sociologists frequently utilize the deterministic models of the dominant functionalist paradigm. These are models which view individuals as 'products' of a pre-existent structural system which molds them to 'fit' their assigned positions in conformance with the pre-existent cultural expectations applicable to these positions. 'Socialization' is the process by which the normative requirements of roles and the
motivation for filling them are internalized by individuals. What individuals are or come to be is thus seen as determined by the social structure through the mediating process of socialization (Dahrendorf, 1968; Wrong, 1961).

The primary metatheoretical problem of such a deterministic model for the development of a critical science is that it assumes an isomorphic relationship between the abstract structural conditions created by those groups which control their production and the minds and activities of less powerful groups upon which these conditions impact. In consequently viewing these latter groups as puppets and pawns rather than actors, this approach fails to consider or understand the processes by which the lived realities of actors in their everyday lives can reflect or refute, accept or challenge, the structural conditions which inform their lives.

That deterministic models have been incorporated into feminist analyses is evident in those explanations of the perpetuation of sex-based inequality which focuses primarily upon processes of 'gender-role socialization.' While they take a variety of specific substantive forms, the essential argument of these explanatory schemes is that individual females and males internalize their gender-roles through differential experiences and treatment that are themselves directly reflective of gender-role prescriptions. Eventually, they come to act in gender-appropriate ways (or be responded to as a deviant); and, given, the unequal nature of gender-role prescriptions, the net result is a perpetuation of the social structure and cultural ideologies which assign certain positions to men and other, less powerful or subordinate ones to women (Bem and Bem, 1970; Freeman, 1970; Chavetz, 1974).
Insofar as this deterministic emphasis served to underscore the larger structural facticity of women's oppression by demonstrating how women's personalities, ambitions, attitudes, behaviors and role acquisitions are products of patriarchal culture and patriarchal institutions, it was extremely significant. Nonetheless, it is now time to move beyond such models to explore more critically the relationship between macrostructural conditions and the immediate, concrete realities which women and men create and share, albeit differentially. While there is a critical relationship between the macro and the micro, it cannot be assumed to be that of one-way determinism. To reiterate an earlier point, we simply know nothing about the relationship between the abstract, ideal-typical entities labeled gender-role stereotypes and the ongoing interrelationships of women and men in the concrete world of everyday life. In certain contexts, the facticity of female-submissiveness/male-dominance is no doubt reflected in and reinforced through the relationships and realities shared by members of a social setting. It might well be the case, however, that in other contexts the thoughts and actions of women and/or men stand in direct contradiction to cultural beliefs and structural conditions. To ignore these possibilities in our desire to prove that women are categorically unequal and oppressed is again to deny women (who are neither 'deviant' nor 'feminist') existence as active subjects. Instead, since it is men or some class of men who control institutional arrangements and the production of culture, it is they who are the actors and women merely the passive, acted-upon.
An Outline of a Critical Feminist Approach

The previous critiques of certain conceptual and methodological tendencies in gender-role research has been presented in order to begin developing an alternative theoretical paradigm which would be more appropriate for the task of radical transformation and human liberation. Such an approach would draw upon certain basic premises of phenomenological, marxist, and feminist paradigms in order to formulate a single approach which I call 'critical feminism.'

In its most essential aspects, a critical feminism will attempt to overcome the aforementioned inadequacies of gender-role research in two primary ways. Metatheoretically, it will seek to eliminate assumptions of a micro-macro dualism in its analysis of social arrangements and social life by focusing analyses upon the interpenetration of structure and consciousness in the situations and relationships of everyday life. Epistemologically and methodologically, it will replace the positivistic methods of conventional sociology with those of a critical ethnography which attempts to go beyond appearances of assumptions of fact to probe the lived-realities of human actors and the conditions informing both the construction and possible transformation of these realities. I will now elaborate on each of these two major paradigmatic elements by drawing critically from the theoretical and conceptual developments offered by three other paradigms: phenomenological sociology, marxist-feminism and cultural marxism. While each perspective taken separately contains certain weaknesses, each has also offered certain insights into the study of society-with-the-goal-of-transforming-it which will be usefully incorporated in a single critical-feminist paradigm.
Ideology, Consciousness and Structure

As I mentioned earlier, within the dominant paradigms of sociology the question of the relationship between individual actors and social structure has typically been assumed to be that of a deterministic dualism. Structure and consciousness are viewed as distinct entities rather than as different moments in a single totality and the latter has been seen as a product of the former.

To say this is not to ignore great variations in the conceptions of social structure and the nature of human actors which differentiate between models of social order in the analyses and polemics of sociologists. It is however to say that whether one regards human consciousness as reflective of a system of shared cultural values or as reflective of a system of shared cultural values or as reflective of the ideological apparatus controlled and operated by a dominant class, the effect is still to dehumanize actors by denying their capacity for creative struggles and ultimately to contribute to that body of thought which may undermine those struggles.

To date, the major opposition to structural determinism has been offered by phenomenological sociologists. In their debate with and attack against functionalist and positivistic paradigms of social inquiry, these theorists have attempted to demonstrate the empirical and conceptual inadequacies of a discipline which fails to understand the essential nature of its subject matter: the capacity of human actors to imbue their worlds with meaning and to act on the basis of these meanings (Douglas, 1970; Walsh, 1972; Phillipson, 1972). For the phenomenological sociologists, the objective or structural features of social life are the products of human interaction and in particular of
the sense-making practices by which humans create a shared sense of the worlds in which they live and interact.

Unfortunately, within this paradigm, there is a tendency for theorists to slip into another form of dualistic reductionism in which structure is reduced to consciousness. For example, as David Walsh (1972: 19-20) has written in arguing for a phenomenological model of social order:

The social world is a world constituted by the taken-for-granted meanings which its members use as a common scheme of reference . . . . Social structure, therefore, refers to the members' sense of social structure which is the product of the common scheme of reference . . . . Social order is the accomplishment of members' describing and accounting practices and has no existence independent of them.

Taken to this extreme, phenomenological sociologists can slip into an idealism which fails to recognize both the existence of certain materialistic conditions which inform the sense-making practices of human actors (that which they attempt to 'make-sense' of) and the variable relations which may obtain between the two due to intervening historical and political processes. In this case, appearance is still reality.

As a result, neither structural determinism nor phenomenological reductionism can adequately serve as the basis of a critical inquiry which seeks to critique appearance and make possible transformatory action. Indeed, as Barry Smart (1976:172) so eloquently argued:

Sociology as it stands may therefore be unable to contribute consciously to the transformation of the world insofar as it either reduces man to the level of an object whose consciousness is a reflection of reality and who therefore would be unable to transcend the given reality . . . . or alternatively by the reduction of reality to purely a creation of consciousness . . . . the concept of transforming reality is reduced to an imaginative project.
Hence the development of an alternative, critical approach must begin by dissolving either form of dualism and instead will base its analyses upon the positing of a dialectical relationship between 'structure' and 'consciousness' seeing them as determining each other through historical processes. To further explain the meaning of this proposition for a critical feminism, I need to discuss and define the meaning of 'structure' and 'ideology' as core concepts of this approach.

STRUCTURE AS PATRIARCHAL CAPITALISM: For all feminist scholars, the central structural concept for the analysis of gender relations in society has been that of 'patriarchy.' There has been some debate however concerning precisely what this concept refers to and how social structure should be conceptualized. This debate or disagreement has been between those feminist theoreticians known as Radical Feminists and those known as Marxist Feminists. The former tend to see society as patriarchy and patriarchy as the "universal and trans-historical category of male-dominance" (Barrett, 1980:12). The latter, however, see patriarchy as a system of gender-domination but one which is both historically variable and interactive with other systems of domination, particularly that of class (Hartmann, 1976; Eisenstein, 1979).

In addition, while both theoretical approaches attempt to provide a materialistic bases for the existence of patriarchal domination, there is some disparity over the nature of the materialistic conditions posited as determinative. Radical feminists, such as Firestone (1970), have argued that the material basis of men's oppression of women is the biological division of labor heretofore required for human reproduction which gave rise to nuclear familial arrangements wherein women are appropriated as the sexual property of men and human actors are
constructed as gendered-actors suited psychodynamically for the
recreation of masculine-domination and feminine submissiveness in
future relationships. Analyses of patriarchy are to be analyses of the
interpersonal and institutional means by which men-as-class sexually
oppress women-as-class.

Marxist-Feminists object not only to the ahistorical mode of
Radical Feminist analysis but seek moreover to incorporate as a central
dynamic of their analysis those material conditions rooted in the
economic relations of production. For these theorists, contemporary
American society is structured by both patriarchy and capitalism which
are seen as interpenetrating systems of exploitative relations. From
this perspective, the central problematic of feminist inquiry is the
analyses of the nature of this interpenetration in the institutional
spheres of human productive and reproductive activities.

While a critical feminism will basically accept the problematic
of Marxist-Feminism and its conception of social structure, I see this
as inclusive of and as needing to incorporate the analyses offered by
Radical Feminists. In particular, to question how capitalism and
patriarchy interpenetrate, or how class and gender divisions impact
upon the social worlds of human actors, is to be concerned with the
mediating effects which sexuality and the gendering of human actors--
as the primary social division--has for the experiences of and
reactions to their position as classed actors. It is therefore also
to be concerned with research directed toward empirically grasping how
relations of class and relations of gender impact upon the realities
and experiences of women and men in a variety of social contexts.
IDEOLOGY AND SOCIAL REALITY: The concept of ideology has a problematic history of usage in the social sciences, and has been particularly important for those theories employing a Marxian framework (Hamilton, 1974). In its most common usage, 'ideologies' has been conceptualized as ideational phenomenon having three major features. First they are analyzed as the epiphenomenal results of relations of production. Secondly, they are seen as abstract systems of belief reflecting the interests of the dominant or capitalist class in these relations of production; and third, they are seen as functioning to control the subordinated classes by instilling in them a 'false consciousness' of the conditions of their existence. Hence, ideologies tend to be conceived of as abstract bodies of thought which serve to 'distort' the perceptions of subordinate classes.

This conceptualization of ideology has recently been attacked by cultural marxists on both epistemological and ontological grounds. In a famous essay on ideology, Althusser (1971) rejected the above elements of ideological analyses arguing that ideological practices are not abstractions nor distortions but instead represent the "imaginary relations of human subjects to the real conditions of their existence." Ideologies must be seen as grounded in the lived-realities of human actors and as a determining historical force in their own right. Extending the Althusserian conception even further, Hirst (1976) set about equating ideology with the discursive practices of human actors thereby refuting a realist ontology. Reality is ideology and ideology is what actors construct as reality in their linguistic practices.

While I accept the importance of starting ideological analyses with the everyday life-worlds of human actors, I also maintain that a critical feminism must incorporate a realism which would allow for
varying relations between the consciousness of human actors and the material conditions in which they live. More specifically, as Terry Lovell (1980) has argued, although critical feminist research must look for the ideological in the experiential, these should not be seen as isomorphic.

A fundamental premiss [sic] then of any marxist theory of ideology must be that there are key areas of experience and practical activity which are suppressed, denied or distorted within dominant ideology (ibid: 50).

What is important about this conception of ideology and ideological analyses is that while the lament of 'distortion' is seen as an aspect of the relationship between the experiential and the ideological, this can take one of two forms. On the one hand, ideological processes can be seen as those which constitute human subjectivity and consciousness of self and the world in such a way as to 'mis-represent' to the actor his/her relationship to structures of domination. On the other hand, ideological processes are also those shared perceptions and beliefs which ignore or deny the real experiences of dominated actors. The latter is particularly important for critical science and its use of ideological analyses because it acknowledges the possibility that human actors may 'know' or 'experience' that which contradicts the obvious, the commonly-recognized, the taken-for-granted knowledge of dominant cultural practices at all levels of sociation. Hence, the relationship between structural processes and human consciousness can be seen as more dialectical than in previous analyses. The task of critical analysis is to examine this relationship; and to do so necessitates not only probing the ways in which capitalist-patriarchal modes of domination are constituted in the realities and relations of
actors but also naming the experiences of actors which may contradict and/or are only indirectly expressed in these realities and relations.

To do this, critical feminists must seek to understand the experiences and social realities of actors in their everyday life worlds and to go beyond the apparent or obvious so as to analyze how these experiences reflect or contradict, represent or reject dominant ideological practices and structural relations of patriarchal-capitalist domination. As a result, critical feminism must incorporate a methodological stance which gives experience and consciousness back to the actors themselves.

Critical Feminism and Experiential Analysis

Conventional methods of social science research have been predominantly positivistic. These methods are based upon the presumption of a subject-object dualism between the knower and the known and the positing of an objective, law-governed set of social forces which exist independently of human subjects and which can be 'discovered' through the observations of the researcher independently of the minds or consciousness of the subjects of these observations.

Recently, John Johnson (1975) has summarized the three major challenges to this positivistic view of social science that other social scientists have offered. The first major critique maintains that positivism falsely claims as 'objective' what is more accurately seen as ideological since in its ahistorical, technocratic mode of analysis it really serves the interests of those who task it is to govern society. The second line of critique also challenges the objectivism of positivistic methods by asserting that, as with all human perceptions, those of the social scientist are not a mirror for reality but
are influenced by her/his frame of reference. Finally, as I previously mentioned, there are those social researchers who maintain that social phenomena are inherently different from natural phenomena and hence require methods which will remain true to this distinction and, in particular, respect the meaningfulness of actions from the perspective of those who perform them.

To these voices, and by means of extending rather than opposing their critique of positivistic methods, has been added those of feminist scholars who claim that social science and positivistic methods are androcentric and reflect a masculine mode of consciousness. As stated by Shulamit Reinharz (1979:7):

[There appears to be a connection between gender and style of knowing. The 'machismo' style of discovery reflected in science is characterized as hard, rational and controlled. The feminine style is characterized as soft, deep, humanistic and concerned with the inner world.]

Reinharz goes on to reject this stereotyped opposition but in a way which allows for a "contribution to sociological method in an unapologetically female modality (Ibid:13)" if not a 'feminine' one. This method is one which Reinharz labels 'experiential analysis' and it essentially entails a participant observation methodology which incorporates, as a significant and valid part of the research, social processes which for all but few humanist methodologists (e.g., Bruyn, 1966) have tended to be ignored and/or discredited. In particular, experiential analysis is based upon recognizing that the human researcher and the group s/he is participating in are dynamically interactive, that the dynamics of this interaction are significant sources of insight, and that the analysis of these experiences is the foundation for producing a social science grounded in the lived
realities of human actors. As such, this method seems admirably suited for the doing of critical feminist research.

Since critical feminism is ultimately concerned with the dialectical relationship between human experience, social realities, and the existential problems created by patriarchal capitalism, an adequate methodology would be one which recognized two important projects: seeking to speak-as one's subjects and seeking to speak-for one's subjects. Congruent with humanistic discussions of participant observation methodology, 'speaking-as' one's subjects necessitates direct personal involvement with the ongoing social life of a group so as "to understand people from their own frame of reference (Bruyn, 1966:29)." For feminist researchers, however, this task involves special consideration of certain possibilities not typically discussed by phenomenological or humanist researchers: that within any particular social context the experiences of women and men may be essentially different; that the sex of the researcher may critically influence the relationships, experiences and observations made within that social context; and that affective processes may be as critical a part of understanding lived realities as cognitive ones. In other words, to do experiential analyses what is essential is that the researcher not deny nor neglect the above possibilities but instead reflect upon the extent to which gender-processes affect both the social reality one is observing as well as the interdependency between oneself as knower and that which is known. Such a position acknowledges that this is no one, true or objective account or description of a particular social reality. All understanding is to some degree 'bounded' by the social positions of both the researcher and the researched in the relations produced by the larger relations of patriarchal capitalism.
Nonetheless, what one knows as both a member of the group and as researcher is valid and important provided one seeks to reflect on one's total response to the surrounding world. One must seek to fully incorporate rather than to deny one's subjectivity (Dawe, 1973).

Still, to merely describe the lived realities of human actors as they understand them and as the researcher has experienced them is not, hopefully, where critical feminist research will end. In addition to speaking-as men-and-women in particular social contexts, feminist researchers will also seek to speak for them. In line with my previous discussion of structure and ideology, speaking-for-women-and-men involves analyzing how their social realities are informed by structural processes and dominant ideologies while simultaneously seeking to know and give voice to those experiences unacknowledged or distorted in dominant ideologies.

In other words, "experiential analysis" is a mode of analysis which seeks to traverse the micro-macro dualism of conventional sociology by relating experiences to the conditions under which they are had and to which they are a response. It seeks to help people transform the conditions which oppress them by critiquing the conditions which oppress them for them. Ultimately, however, all that the critical feminist researcher can do is to provide her/his subjects with an alternative interpretation of their reality that they may reject but which if accepted can assist them in their struggles within their everyday life worlds under capitalist patriarchy. As stated by Smart (1976:184) in discussing a critical sociology:

The goals of critical sociology is not a blue print for strategic action; on the contrary it should offer the
possibility of reflection and reconstruction such that 'subject come to know themselves and their situation.'

Purpose of the Present Study and the Significance of the Insignificant

The present study pertains to a small group of women and men whose lives I shared for approximately eleven months. I suppose that by any traditional sociological criteria this group (and my reasons for studying them) would be considered rather insignificant. It was quite small, having at its largest only fifteen actual members. It had no endurance, dissolving a mere eleven months after it was formed. It had little if any impact on the historical processes of American society and probably little long-term impact upon the social and personal experiences of its members. It aroused no official concern since its members were overtly involved neither in delinquent nor rebellious acts. It never captured the attention of the media and hence remained largely invisible to the surrounding social world.

Yet this group existed, indeed, was created by its members and for a relatively brief period of time was the social and emotional center of their lives. In fact it may be seen as one of a multitude of small, equally significant groups, marginal to both the institutionalized organizations and deviant groups of sociological emphasis, which mediates between the individual and society. In the essence of its sociality, as an arena of human social activity, it is significant.

For me it was significant for two additional reasons. First, it drew its membership from a particular category of individuals who are so seldom 'spoken-for': working class, non-college, non-delinquent youths who fall between the cracks of major schemes of sociological relevance. Secondly, it was important because it had both women and
men as members and thereby offered me a relatively unique context for a
critical feminist analysis, that is, a noninstitutionalized or
subcultural setting involving both sexes.

There were many different questions that I could have sought to
answer in studying this group and indeed, over time the questions which
I found myself asking did change. Ultimately, however, my observations
and experiences directed my analysis to understanding two central
aspects of the sociocultural processes of this group. First and fore­
most I became increasingly aware of the existence of gender-based
differences as a critical dimension of the subcultural processes,
social relationships, and social problems experienced and expressed by
the members of this group. Secondly, and interrelated with the first,
the subcultural realities of the female and male members were distinct
though interpenetrating social worlds conditioned by different relations
to larger patriarchal-capitalist processes which inevitably informed
the organizational processes of group life. In essence, therefore, I
will be speaking for two groups, although in different ways. I will
speak first for the men, not because they are inherently more important,
but because they were culturally and socially dominant and hence by
their beliefs and actions created an additional condition or problem
to which the women had to respond. I will speak then for the women,
and as one of them, attempt to describe their experiences, their
struggles, and the ideological processes which contained those struggles.
Before doing either, however, I will attempt to set the stage for my
analysis by describing in more detail the group, its members and my
specific relationship as friend and as researcher to them.
Footnotes

1In order to protect the anonymity of the persons involved, their names, the name of their club, and the names of places are being replaced with pseudonyms of their own creation.

2I need to point out that these criticisms are not intended to be totally inclusive of feminist research and writing. In the first place, they are most applicable to that research area which is 'micro-sociological,' that is, which addresses questions pertaining to the relationship between the individual and society and to small group processes. While such research is inherently related to and affects our understanding of structural inequality, there is at present a distinct body of feminist scholarship aimed at analyzing macro-issues of sex-based stratification which will not be considered here. In the second place, not all feminist research pertaining to micro-issues takes the conceptual and methodological approaches that I am critiquing. I am addressing certain tendencies which I maintain have been prevalent thus far, which offered many valuable insights, but which we must not move beyond.

3See Angrist (1969) and Lopata and Thorne (1977) for additional critical discussions of the concept of sex-role and its usages.

4See also Garske (1975) and Gerber and Balkin (1977) for articles studying sex-role stereotypes as varying by the role and status of stimulus persons.

5See Lynda M. Glennon (1979) for a discussion of the dualism theses as it relates to feminist theories.
6. An excellent example of such research is that conducted by Rosabeth Kanter (1976; 1977). In this work, Dr. Kanter has analyzed the variety of gender-relations found within corporate settings, showing how certain sex-differences in attitudes and behavior may result from such factors as women's inferior positions in the organizational hierarchy and their numerical minority in a masculinized cultural system.
CHAPTER II

NOMAD VANS AND ME:
A DESCRIPTION OF THE CLUB AND A METHODOLOGICAL ACCOUNT

Introduction

The van movement that occurred in the United States during the 1970's represented the emergence and spread of "vanning" as a collective form of leisure activity. It began in Southern California in the beginning of the decade and has been characterized as "the offspring of a marriage of the working-class hot rod and the counter-culture, middle-class Volkswagen camper of the 1960's (New York Times, 1975:32)."

The technological underpinning of this movement was a type of motor vehicle called a van. Coming off the assembly line as a large, box-shaped cubicle equipped solely with a driver's and a passenger's seat in the front, the van was originally marketed by the major automakers as a work-related vehicle that could function for the transportation of small cargos and tools. The emergence of the van movement resulted from two major social innovations.

First, the van's use and meaning was transformed by certain groups of consumers--particularly young, working class, males--from a work vehicle to a recreational vehicle (Cook, 1977). In its simplest form the van became a place where its owner could eat and sleep while traveling or camping out. In its most elaborate form, it was converted
into a luxurious and artistic expression of the owners personality, equipped on the inside with colored lights, plush rugs, and expensive furnishings and sporting on the outside elaborate murals of landscapes, voluptuous women, mythological characters or geometrical designs. In either case, the vanner possessed in his van a material resource that provided him with the ability to travel anywhere, anytime equipped with everything he needs to relax and enjoy himself.

The second innovation and the social basis for the emergence of the movement itself, came with the beginnings of "organized vanning," the formation of van-clubs averaging twenty members or less (Wolfe, 1976). The first such club, Vans Limited, was formed in September, 1970 in Ontario, California (Cook, 1977). By 1974, there were approximately fifty clubs representing slightly less than 3,000 vanners. By 1976, the number of van clubs had grown to 400, they existed in every state, and another type of organization, van councils representing regional associations of van clubs, had developed. By this time, there were also several national associations, the primary one being the national Society of Van Associations or NSVA (Wolfe, 1976).

Nomad Vans was one club in this large, loosely organized network of vanners and van clubs, and was located in a city in the midwest. In this study, I seek to explore the subcultural realities of vanning and the youth world as seen through the eyes and activities of this particular club.

**Origin of the Club**

By August of 1978, Wizard was already a veteran vanner. During the previous two years while stationed in North Carolina as a Naval corpsman, he had belonged to a van-club and had participated in vanning
activities. Following his discharge from the Navy, he moved to Central City where he planned to continue his vanning activities by joining a new club. Unfortunately, he was unable to locate any clubs in this city and so, rather than resigning from vanning, decided to form a club of his own. His organizational technique was simple and direct:

I just stopped anybody that owns a van and started talkin' to 'em, you know. I started askin' 'em if they were interested in a van club, if they knew anybody else that had vans and stuff. A lot of it was down in the park (reservoir). And what I did was give everybody. . . . I set up a tentative date for anybody that was interested. I gave everybody a piece of paper with my name and number and I got their name and number and I gave 'em a call or whatever and told 'em where to meet.

Early during these recruitment activities, Wizard met another vanner named Free Bird. Since Free Bird had grown up in Central City, he already knew several other vanners and so he began to assist Wizard in recruiting members for a club. In this manner, by employing a snowball sampling of interpersonal associations, by walking up to vans and talking to their owners and in one case, by simply yelling to a vanner driving by to "bring that sucker in here," Wizard and Free Bird contacted enough local vanners to arrange for a first organizational meeting on August 8, 1978.

Ten vanners attended and under Wizard's direction decided upon an organizational format for the new club. As described by Wizard:

We decided what we were gonna do . . . I had the charter from the Carolina club, which were, you know, our by-laws and we just kind of adopted them, changed a few and it was that hard to start a club.

The organizational format specified by this charter (see Appendix A) called for the election of six officers—a president, vice-president,
secretary, treasurer, master-at-arms and public relations officer—each of which had a specific set of responsibilities. Additional rules and regulations in the charter pertained to entry requirements and the responsibilities required of individual members.

Persons seeking membership were to fill out an application (Appendix B) and attend club meetings and functions for the next two weeks at which time, the rest of the club members were to vote on whether or not to accept him or her as a new member. If accepted, the applicant was to pay a ten dollar membership fee. All members were expected to pay a three dollar monthly dues, and to attend at least two meetings and one club function a month.

At this first meeting, the vanners voted on accepting the charter, elected officers and decided upon a name for the club. Having done so, Nomad Vans was considered begun.

My Entry into the Club

Due to Wizard's invitation I was present at this first meeting but as a non-vanner I was not allowed to participate in it. Nonetheless, as with any other friend or acquaintance of club members, I was encouraged to come to club gatherings and parties and this I did for the next few weeks. During this time I became increasingly intrigued by the sociocultural processes of this club and decided that I wanted to engage in a participant observation study of it. The fact that I was already participating in club activities prior to my actual decision to study them made entry in the form of my admission to the research site non-problematic. Still, I had to decide whether to seek their permission and become an overt researcher or to keep my intentions hidden and become a covert researcher. For both ethical and practical
reasons, I opted for the overt approach—ethically, to avoid the moral
dilemma stemming from the possible invasion of their privacy and
practically, to ease data collection by casting myself into a role
which legitimates certain otherwise deviant behaviors like question-
asking and note-taking.

My entry into the researcher role was carried out in two steps.
First, I approached Wizard, who had been elected the president of the
club, told him of my interests, and asked him for permission to make
my request to all the members at their next business meeting. He
agreed; so at the next meeting, I addressed the rest of the club as
follows:

As some of you know, I teach sociology at the university
and one of the things that sociologists are concerned with is
studying different kinds of groups. Well, we've studied work
groups and families and political groups and all kinds of
groups, but as far as I know, we have never looked at a van
club. What I'm asking for now is your permission to study
this group.

Now this will involve two things. The first part will be
no different from what I've been doing with you all already.
I'll just be hanging around, seeing how you do things, the
kinds of problems you have and how you solve them, and things
like that. Then later on, I would like to conduct personal
interviews with each of you and I'll ask you questions like
how you first became interested in vanning, how you came to
join this particular club and so forth.

Now even if you decide to let me hang around with you,
each of you will have the option of not participating in the
interview if you don't want to. That's up to you.

Do you have any questions?

The only question came from the club's vice-president who asked me
laughingly how much money they would get. I responded, "Absolutely
nothing."
The president then took a vote and the club members unanimously agreed to let me study them. Immediately, following this, the secretary of the club suggested that since I would be hanging around all the time and going places with them, I might as well become a member. I filled out an application and two weeks later was voted in as a member.

I was to remain with the club as researcher and as friend for the next eleven months until the club dissolved. During this time, I learned much about the doing of participant observation which affected the specific observational and analytical techniques that I ultimately employed in studying this club. I will discuss these methodological procedures and problems shortly, but before doing so, I would first like to introduce the other members of the club and the major settings in which club activities occurred since both will figure prominently in subsequent discussions.

The Members of Nomad Vans

Of the ten vanners who attended the initial meeting of Nomad Vans, three dropped out almost immediately. During the next month, however, the club got five new members including myself. In addition to these twelve, a few other persons attended club meetings and functions with such regularity that although they were not themselves vanners they still featured prominently in club activities and in two cases were eventually voted in as members anyway.

Throughout the eleven months of the club's existence, the membership fluctuated between eight and fifteen members with anywhere between two and five additional associates. Of these twenty or so
persons, ten came to be known as "core-members," as persons who joined the club in its early days and who represented its social center at meetings and activities.

Wizard, the club's organizer and first president, was twenty-six years old, of average height but muscular, with a head of bright red hair and a mustache and beard to match. He drove an orange, Dodge van which although fairly complete at the time the club was started, he gradually disassembled during the subsequent year. At the time of his move to Central City, he was married and had a baby daughter but by the time the club started he and his wife were separated and within two months their marriage was legally dissolved. Before moving to Central City, he had spent six years in the Navy where he had been trained as a physical therapy assistant and a cast technician. He had moved in order to go to State University and become a physical therapist but after two semesters he withdrew from school. Despite his training, for the first six months of his residency in Central City, he was unable to get any jobs that paid more than minimum wage. He worked briefly as a stock-boy in the shoe department of a local store, then quit and became a gas station attendant. Eventually, he was hired by a local hospital as a physical therapy aid but this job, as with the others, did little to alleviate his economic difficulties.

Outspoken and gregarious, during the club's existence, Wizard was its leader either formally or informally. Twice he was elected president and twice dissatisfaction on the part of certain club members caused him to resign the position. Nonetheless, whether or not he was president he planned and organized most club activities and exerted great influence over the lives of individual members and the club itself.
Free Bird was twenty-one years old. Tall, slender and with dark hair he was considered by the other club members, both male and female, to be quite a 'ladies-man.' He drove an early-model, burgundy-colored Ford which he had bought used and which was the plushest van in the club. Although still living with his parents, his job as a meter-reader for the gas company made him the club member with the highest income.

As mentioned earlier, Free Bird was a key figure in the club's formation and together with Wizard was formally and informally a club leader. Elected as the club's first vice-president, when Wizard resigned for the first time from the presidency, Free Bird was elected to that position and served as the president from November until the beginning of January. In the beginning of January, the club members asked Free Bird to step down, maintaining that he had not been doing his job. Although he continued to participate in club activities for a while after this, he increasingly displayed disaffection with the club and its members. In February, after a dispute between the club members over the status of outsiders in club activities, he resigned from the club altogether.

Star Baby at thirty-one years of age was the oldest core member of the club. She was divorced, had a nine-year old son named Chris and was the only member of the club to own her own home. Tall, slender and blond, Star Baby had a stunningly attractive appearance. She drove a black Ford van and was initially asked to join the club by Free Bird with whom she had a rather tumultuous relationship from September through January.

At the time she joined the club, Star Baby was working as a beautician at a hair design establishment. However, the low pay,
problems with her boss and a developing allergy to the chemicals with which she worked eventually forced her to quit. She then got a job as a receptionist for a dance-studio.

Witty, out-going, and attractive, Star Baby gradually became a socio-emotional leader in the club, and from January through March she served as the club's treasurer. In March, she spear-headed a major political upheaval in the club in an attempt to oust Wizard as the president. It failed, and she then quit the club.

Spacy was nineteen years old, small, slender and very quiet. Although she was still living at home when the club began, she worked as a key-punch operator and owned a new, red Ford van which she was fixing-up with the help of her father.

As the only uncoupled female in the club, Spacy was 'pursued' at various times by most of the male members, and although on several occasions she was nominated for club offices she refused to hold any. In December she discovered that she was pregnant but she continued to belong to the club and in January moved in with Star Baby with whom she lived until the baby was born in July. She too quit the club in March with Star Baby after the major conflict.

Wild Fire was twenty-five years old, tall and heavy set with long black hair. She was married to Easy Rider—the only married couple in the club—and they owned a new black Ford which they called Black Beauty. Although she and Easy Rider dropped out of the club three months after it started, during that period she served as both its treasurer and its secretary. During this period she worked first as a waitress in a donut shop and then as a cashier for a self-serve gas station until cut-backs in her hours and illness forced her to quit.
Early in March, she and Easy Rider rejoined the club but were in it only for a few weeks when they too quit following the major conflict.

Easy Rider was twenty-two years old, with long wavy brown hair, a long beard, and a cowboy hat which he was never seen without. He had a mellow or 'laid-back' demeanor and a dope-smoking reputation which together with his hair earned him the label 'hippie' from the other club members. During his time in the club, Easy Rider was working as a stockboy in a local warehouse.

Quickdraw was nineteen years old, slender, and quiet-spoken. He too was living at home with his parents while working as a factory hand in a pharmaceutial company. He drove a metallic-rust-colored, new Dodge van. During most of the club's existence, Quickdraw was involved with a young woman named Susan whom he only infrequently brought with him to club functions.

Travelin Man was also nineteen years old, lived with his parents, and worked as a parts-runner for the service department of a car dealership. He owned a blue Chevy van with white flames painted on the hood.

Tall, blond, and slender, he was involved in numerous relationships with women during the club's duration but none lasted any longer than a couple of months. During the club's existence, he served as its public relations officer. Slightly slow of response with a perceptible though mild stutter, he was frequently called 'dumb,' a label which he bore with apparent good humor.

Zookkeeper was nineteen years old, small but strong, with coarse wiry brown hair and drive a rust-colored Dodge van which, in keeping with his name, he filled with a variety of stuffed animals. Although for a brief period, he did move into an apartment with two friends, he
primarily lived with his family while in the club. During this same period, he worked in the body-shop of a car dealership.

**Earthquake** was nineteen years old and the only core-member who did not actually own a van. However, from the club's beginning he involved himself so persistently in club activities and in doing so many tasks for the club that he was voted in as a member anyway. An overbearing tendency made him unpopular with many of the club members but a strong allegiance to Wizard and a long time acquaintance with Free Bird and Travelin Man enabled him to remain in the club despite some hostility towards him. He too lived with his parents and was only sporadically employed in a variety of jobs, typically as a store-clerk or cashier.

These then were the core-members of the club--those who were preeminent in its early weeks and most frequently present at meetings and club functions. There were, however, several other members who either joined the club later and/or were less committed to it who should be briefly mentioned. **Vandura** was nineteen years old, short with black hair, and drove a black Chevy van. He worked for his father as an errand boy and joined the club in October. Vandura eventually brought in his best friend, **Jay Bird** who did not own a van but who, like Earthquake, became so involved in club activities that he too was eventually voted in as a member. **Panama Red** was thirty-one years old and owned a light-blue Dodge van. Although he came regularly to club meetings, his participation in the club activities was otherwise so minimal that he was perhaps its most marginal member. At seventeen, **Cisco Kid** was the youngest member of the club and was still in high school at the time although he did work part-time as a free lance photographer for a local rock-music publication. He too came
infrequently to club functions and meetings. Finally, Yellow Jacket and Gorilla were the last members to join and the two persons least accepted by the other members of the club. Yellow Jacket drove a black and yellow Dodge van, and although he was eighteen at the time he joined the club, was still in high school. He was also the only one with immediate, concrete plans to go to college, having already been accepted by a small college about thirty miles away from Central City. Gorilla was big and boisterous and drive an older orange and black Dodge van perceived as singularly ugly by the other club members. He too was nineteen, living at home, and working at a series of low-paying jobs primarily for local restaurants and fast-food shops.

**Setting and Sites**

The majority of the club's activities took place in the northwestern section of Central City, a medium sized city of about 500,000 people. The northwestern section was characterized by middle and upper-middle income suburban residential developments and extensive strips of merchandizing centers. It was in this sector that most of the club members lived and worked and while the club would travel throughout this territory and occasionally would take small excursions into other regions of the city, five major sites came to serve as their primary meeting, gathering and partying places.

On the far western boundary of the city was the Reservoir, a city-owned park along the side of one of the two major rivers that flowed through Central City. During the spring and summer months, the Reservoir was a major hang-out for local youths in the area and would on weekend afternoons frequently become so congested with kids cruisin' through that it could take a half-hour or more to travel
the mile-and-a-half from one end of the park to the other. Here, during the first few months of the club's existence, while the weather was dry and warm, club members would go to meet each other during week-nights and weekend afternoons, simply to stand around, watch people drive by, talk to people they knew, and "pass the time." Here, too, the club held an occasional Sunday business meeting when the weather permitted.

Less than a mile east of the Reservoir along a small strip of eating places was the Pizza House, a small sandwich and pizza restaurant. Originally, it served as a spot where club members would go to have a beer after Sunday business meetings but eventually when the weather turned colder became a regular hang-out, taking over many of the social functions previously performed at the Reservoir. Before, after, or instead of driving by the Reservoir, a vanner could drive by the Pizza House and with a glance at the vehicles in the parking lot tell if anyone from the club was there. During week-nights and weekend afternoons in the fall and winter months, one could almost always be sure of finding at least two other members of the club there sitting, drinking, and waiting for others to stop in. If no one was there yet, then you could still stop and be nearly sure that someone would eventually drive by, see your van and stop in to see "what's happenin."

Directly across from the Reservoir and slightly south of the Pizza House, was the River Bar. Although relatively small in size, the River Bar had a back room equipped with tables, booths and a football game. Discovered one Sunday afternoon by Wizard at a time when the back room was empty, he decided that it would be an ideal location for Sunday meetings until something better came along.
Despite continued effort to find a better meeting place, the River Bar was used for almost all Sunday afternoon meetings from October until June when the club disbanded.

Approximately five miles north and three miles west of the reservoir was the Castle Lot, a huge parking lot located in front of a shopping center on Maize Road, a major four lane highway running east-west across the northern section of Central City. It was here on Friday and Saturday nights, especially during the warmer months from August through November that club members would congregate. With their vans parked in a row facing Maize Road, the vanners and friends would stand around, drink, joke, and share stories. Occasionally, these activities would be all that the club members would do and the Castle would serve as the sole site of an evening's entertainment. More frequently, however, it served as the starting and finishing place. Its explicit status as the weekend-evening gathering spot enabled any member who had not had any contact during the week with other members to know where and how to meet up with the club when Friday and/or Saturday night came. If worse came to worse, you could simply drive your van there, sit back and listen to music and wait for someone to show up. Sooner or later, someone did.

Less than a half mile from the Castle Lot was the Center, a cluster of eating places. It, like the reservoir, was a hang-out for local youths to cruise, meet up with people they knew, stop and talk, and if desired, grab something to eat. Here too, on the way to or from the Castle Lot, club members would cruise through to see people they knew.
While there were several other places to which the club would occasionally go, these five sites were the major locations of club activity and established the major territorial markers which the group, as an inherently mobile one, would typically traverse. In later periods, the only members with residences of their own that were then with the club--Wizard, Star Baby and Jay Bird--occasionally held meetings, parties or spontaneous gatherings in their homes, but this came about only towards the latter months of the club's existence. For the most part this group represents the suburban counterpart to the street groups studied by Whyte (1955) and Liebow (1967). Without a private place of their own in which they could meet and play, they like other local youths traveled the home territory of their cities, but on wheels instead of on foot.

Doing Research While Being Friends

To conduct participant observation research in an organization or group is to involve oneself directly and personally in the lives and activities, thoughts and feeling of the members of that organization or group. In other words, regardless of the specific purposes of a study, this mode of research is not only a social activity, it is a sociable activity.

As a neophyte researcher launching a participant observation study of this small, informal group, I realized that I had to construct and conduct my relationships with the group members very carefully if my research was going to be successful; that is, if it was going to provide me with the significant insights that I knew were there but hidden beneath the surface of directly observable activity. Turning to the methods literature for normative guidelines on how I should go
about forming these relationships and, generally speaking, conduct myself in the field, I found three norms—one proscriptive, two prescriptive—presented as theoretical, practical and ethical requisites for doing good field research. These were non-reactivity, rapport and reciprocity. To put it as simply as possible, I understood that what I should try very hard to do is: (1) avoid doing anything that will in some way affect, alter or change 'natural' group processes, (2) try to get as many of them to like and trust me as much as I could without becoming overly involved with any of them since that would threaten my objectivity and (3) work out some kind of implicit or explicit exchange agreement with them so that they will let me study them and so that I can avoid exploiting them. What the literature did not (and perhaps could not) tell me was how I was to meet these abstract standards in my concrete, everyday activities in the field. In attempting to do this, I encountered numerous problems theoretically, practically and ethically. While in part the problems I experienced were due to the difficult task of realizing abstract norms of research in the concrete realities of the field setting, in part they also stemmed from the norms themselves.

More specifically, in keeping with the methodology of experiential analysis, I maintain that the standards conventionally proposed as necessary for doing scientifically valid and ethically sound research are based upon certain assumptions about the nature of acquiring valid knowledge, the nature of the social group being studied and the nature of the researcher's presence in that group which are in fact invalid, unethical or both.

Two major methodological problems which I confronted in doing my study of the van club pertained to the nature of the relationships
which I had with the members and the social and personal basis by which insight into the sociocultural processes of this group's life could be gained. The first concerned the differential basis by which homosocial and heterosocial relationships are formed and maintained. The second pertains to the affective basis of knowing and its relationship to analytical processes by which the social realities of groups may be known to the participant observer.

Field Relations and Friendship Relations

The apparently inevitable dilemmas experienced by field researchers faced with the dual, often conflicting, commitments to being both researcher and friend have been addressed in several extremely sensitive accounts written by researchers about their personal experiences in the field (See e.g., Whyte, 1955; Powdermaker, 1966; Liebow, 1967). The essential source of these dilemmas has been elucidated rather elegantly by Clinton Sanders (1980:158):

Field research requires a focused, analytic attention to objects and activities and an overt consciousness of self-presentation and interaction... Focusing systematic attention on one's newfound friends tends to make one feel parasitic. This instrumental interaction with those with whom one ostensibly has primary relationships may force the researcher to confront personal feelings of hypocrisy and treachery.

As Cassell and Wax (1980) have pointed out, the way to resolve or manage these conflicts and to avoid actually being a hypocrite or parasite is to make sure that one's field relations are characterized by parity and reciprocity. The field researcher should strive to establish relationships between her-or himself and those s/he is studying which are structurally equal and which involves mutual benefits.
While I believe the analysis of this issue as a central problem faced by researchers is valid and while I accept the principles of parity and reciprocity as ethically desirable, I also believe the analysis of this issue has remained too general. What has been left more assumed than analyzed is what 'friendship' as a form of social relationships means and how this meaning may be contextually or structurally variable.

If, as some sociologists claim, the nature of friendship varies by age, sex and social class (Brenton, 1974; Allan, 1979), then it may well be that the 'moral tensions' experienced by field researchers stem not just from normative conflicts between being researcher and being friends but also from a personal, ideal conception of friendship different from that of those whose social reality s/he is participating in. Similarly, as the social meaning and expectations of friendship varies between research contexts so might the types of conflicts a researcher experiences and the understanding of what constitutes parity and reciprocity in his/her field relations.

In this section, I would like to discuss some of the personal problems that I experienced in being friends to the members of the van club as relative to the nature of friendship and social relationships within that particular social context. The problems I experienced will not be the same for researchers with different ideals of how friends should behave toward one another or in different social settings where the nature of affective bonding and of primary relationships also varies.

Furthermore, within the van-club, the meaning of 'friendship' and the process by which it was accomplished varied extensively with
the sex composition of the dyad or unit being observed. As a female member, I was only able to directly experience two out of the three possible relationships: female-homosocial ones and heterosocial ones. The problems I faced differed between these two types (and sub-types) and, indeed, sometimes stemmed from conflicts between them.

**Being Girlfriends:** In the van club, the fundamental basis of female-friendships was exchanging personal feelings about oneself and others. Relationships revolved around talking about others, one's experiences with these others, one's feelings about these experiences and one's feelings about these others. To be more colorful, if perhaps not more precise, a girlfriend was another female one could 'bitch' to, 'gossip' with and be supported by.

Contrary to what I had anticipated when I first entered the club, establishing this type of relationship with most of the women was not a problem for me. They literally welcomed me with open arms. Nonetheless, participating in these friendships did create three personal and professional tensions for me.

**RECIPROCITY AS SELF-DISCLOSURE:** In being a good girlfriend, I felt that I should reciprocate in this talk about personal feelings and problems. I felt that I should share who I was and what I felt with them and at the same time did not feel that I could bring myself to do this. Initially at least, while I did talk to the other women about their lives both inside and outside of the club, I disclosed very little to them about who I was, what I did, and how I felt either concerning my experiences as a vanner or my activities in the outside world as a graduate student, a teacher, or a lover.
In part, my reluctance to self-disclose was due to and perhaps could be justified by a realization that my life style, beliefs and values were so different from theirs that revealing much about myself could make me so deviant in their eyes that I would jeopardize my friendships with them. However, while this perception might justify being selective about personal disclosures—a process that is an aspect of all social relationships (Simmel, 1950)—it did not justify nor explain my almost total reluctance to talk about myself. Furthermore, it cast me into a mode of consciousness that I experienced as a constant deception or sham: pretending that I was one of them while all the time feeling different and somehow better than they. Having come to this realization and believing that my behaviors were elitist, non-reciprocal, and therefore morally wrong, I set about rectifying the situation by talking to the women more openly about myself. I started to share complaints about my work and my friends outside of the club.

It was after pursuing this new mode of communication and interaction, that I gradually became aware of a basic flaw in my moral reasoning: I had attributed to the women a view of equality and reciprocity in female friendships similar to my own. I, as a middle-class feminist, entered the field with background assumptions regarding what friendship between women should be. Among other things, I believed that these relationships should be characterized by mutual and complete openness. To hold oneself apart in such a relationship where the other woman was sharing highly personal information about herself was to create an unacceptable power-imbalance and to risk losing the friendship in return.

While I still hold and support this ideal of friendship, it was not one held by the lady-vanners and, short of attempts at
consciousness-raising or some other activist intrusions, I could not alter that. When I began to share more of my feelings and experiences with the other women, they would listen politely enough and would commiserate with me, but they seldom asked questions or pursued the subjects further. In effect, by their standards, a complete mutual openness was not necessary to be a girlfriend. They considered me a friend because I was a supportive and trustworthy listener. Displaying a readiness to share my feelings about their experiences was far more essential than a willingness to share my experiences per se. Nonetheless, while my willingness to disclose more about myself was not as important to the other women as it was to me, the process of doing so did help alleviate my guilt while teaching me something about friendship between women in the club.

GOSSIPING AND TRUST: Since female-bonding was based primarily on bitching and gossiping, it inevitably involved complaints and moral evaluations by some women of the behaviors of other women. Participating in these particular exchanges was especially difficult for me both personally and professionally. On the one hand, as a researcher and feminist, I felt it was important to maintain trust and good will with all the women belonging to or associating with the club, even those to whom I was not really close. Since I knew that if I gossipped or talked badly about any women, this would in all likelihood be made known to them thereby lessening any potential for future interactions, I did not wish to engage in that type of talk. On the other hand, I also felt pressure in being a true girlfriend to the women I was close with to listen to their bitches and gossip and to
support them, take up their side, agree with their sense of offense, validate their feelings of contempt or dislike.

I resolved this dilemma more reflexively than reflectively by validating a friend's sense of offense or supporting her moral reasonings but without speaking derogatorily about any other woman and without ever initiating gossip myself. Upon occasion, I would even offer an alternative interpretation of a perceived offender's behavior, in part to further clarify the moral codes employed by the women. In any case, the results were largely positive for my relations with all the women. In the words of a girlfriend named Star-Baby, I was perceived as "the type of person who wouldn't say bad about anybody."

In effect what I did was to construct an alternative mode of participating in female friendships that was not only accepted by the other women but was evaluated favorably by them. I was also able to avoid violating either my personal or professional ethics with respect to this issue.

PRIVATE LIVES AND PUBLIC DATA: The third and final tension deriving from my friendships with the lady vanners has not been so easily resolved. This ethical dilemma has been mentioned by several other field researchers and basically involves the use of observations made available to me on the basis of friendship as data for professional, public analysis (Daniels, 1967:290; Davis, 1970:271; Hansen, 1976).

The conversations which I had with the women were almost always dyadic and held under conditions of privacy. Sometimes they were emotionally intense. In time, when I would find myself taking mental or written notes either during or after these encounters, I came to be repulsed by my own pragmatic, almost Machievellian approach to these
exchanges. I came to feel I was a disgrace as a friend and began to wonder what my priorities as human being were.

I rationalized my way out of these personal crises by telling myself two things: that my observations were made with their knowledge that I was studying them and that since I did not manipulate these encounters for the sole purposes of getting data, I was not taking advantage of them. They revealed things to me because they wanted to and, as long as I protected their anonymity, this knowledge, freely given, was mine to do with as I wished. However, under the conditions of shallow cover that I used in gaining entree, I cannot be sure that they were aware I would be using this information as data and without this awareness would not know to hesitate in the telling or warn against the usage. Hence, I have to reject these rationalizations as morally inadequate.

Since I have not yet presented my analyses to the members for their responses, I do not know as yet how they will react or whether they will share my perceptions of my behavior as immoral. I can only hope they will not.

Female Researcher and Heterosocial Relations: If my relationships with the women in this club produced certain emotional and ethical difficulties deriving from the type of interpersonal intimacy which characterized female friendships, they also provided me with a wealth of experiential observations on a female sub-society which a male researcher would have found it difficult to gain access to. On the other hand, as a female member of this mixed-sex club, I was also faced with additional dilemmas resulting from the patriarchal proprieties of heterosocial relations as they affected my relationships with men in the club and my access to exclusively male events.
Recognizing from the beginning that I would be bounded by my gender in the range of activities available to me, I felt it essential to have a male member of the club as an informant. This individual was Wizard, my initial contact and the club leader, who became the person with whom I typically rode and the male with whom I discussed club activities. Wizard's accounts of his own experiences and feelings, as well as his reports on the activities and talk of all male interactions in which he participated provided me with valuable comparative information. It also caused me numerous problems.

Inevitably under the patriarchal dimensions of heterosocial activity within the interpersonal arrangements of this small group, the fact of Wizard and my togetherness was interpreted by him and by the other members—both male and female—as signifying a coupling, a form of relationship unique to male-female friendships and guided by a special set of rules and meanings. More will be said about the rules of heterosexual coupling in chapter four. For now, I would like to confine my discussion to methodological issues stemming from my relationship with Wizard in this world of heterosexual patriarchy.

HETEROSEXUAL EXCLUSIVITY AS METHODOLOGICAL BIND: Once "coupled" with a man, that is, identified as emotionally and sexually committed to him, a woman was not supposed to engage in any contact with other men that could be interpreted as intimate. As a result, in order to be perceived as a moral actor, coupled women were seriously confined to only relatively superficial contact with other males and/or to contacts where her "boyfriend" was also present.

In my case, my interests as researcher conflicted with the normative requirements stemming from my relationship with Wizard. I
wanted as intimate a relationship with the other men in the club as I could achieve and yet I could not legitimately pursue these contacts. The results were inevitably to effect the nature of the insights I was to gain into the male world. What I know about it—and about their relationships and perceptions—was confined to that which was public at the level of the club. I was to know their world as women and witnesses would know it. Yet, I would argue that the male world was largely a public world and hence that my observations represent valid and significant insights into the realities of gender-differentiation in the organization of group life.

PATRIARCHAL REALITIES AND PERSONAL PROBLEMS: As a female in a gender-differentiated world, I could not expect to have my role as researcher supersede the effects of my sex status, nor did I want to. I recognized from the beginning that my ability to understand the meaning of patriarchal processes in the sociocultural realities of this group would reflect upon my own experiences as a female member. Nonetheless, the conflicts resulting from these experiences were frequently frustrating and painful in ways I did not anticipate and had difficulty managing. The continuous conflict between my feminist values and the patriarchal realities of the group often seriously undermined my professional commitment to the research as well as my feelings of personal dignity.

Ultimately, I attempted to resolve my dilemma by making occasional, albeit "gentle", assaults on the more misogynistic statements made by men. The effects of these were minimal except insofar as my feelings were understood and I was accepted and respected anyway. Still, I was isolated for the months of this research endeavor from feminist support, if not from female support, and I was to find myself
succumbing to the power of this patriarchal world over my subjective experiences and subjective understanding. It was not until I finally left the club and the field that I was to regain a sense of the feminist perspective to which I was committed.

Nonetheless, my failure to engage in direct political activity, resulting in part from situationally acquired feelings of feminine incompetence, was also due to that set of research standards which I carried into the field with me and which I was over time to critically challenge. These standards are those traditionally mandated for the doing of "valid" and "objective" participant observation research.

Objectivity and Affectivity in Field Research

Probably the major traditional maxim for the doing of "Scientifically sound" research is that of objectivity. When translated into psychological and social terms for the participant observer, this standard has been interpreted as implying two things. First, that in developing relationships with those s/he is observing, the researcher must be careful to maintain a "delicate balance of distance and closeness" called rapport (Shaffir, et al., 1980:185). One can, and to a certain degree should, be affectively involved, but still strive to remain psychologically detached. One can care, but not care too much. To do otherwise is to become overly involved and to risk having some form of perceptual bias or "projective distortion" threaten the validity of one's analysis (Shwartz and Schwartz, 1969:100).

Secondly, and following from the prior implication, the researcher should always strive to be a rational and impartial actor and this means attempting to conceal, control or even suppress personal feelings and opinions about what s/he is observing. To do otherwise is to risk
being both reactive and biased which would again threaten the validity of one's analysis.

When I first entered the field I held both of these standards to be sacred truths and to a certain extent, with respect to certain research problems in certain social contexts, I would acknowledge their importance as directives. Nonetheless, with respect to my own research and with respect to my attempts at enacting these directives in my everyday activities as researcher, I discovered them to be constraining, normatively inadmissible and potentially distorting.

The problems which I experienced had two sources. First, the relationships which I established with the vanners were not just a means to gaining access to data, they were the data and these relationships were based on affective involvement and the expression of these involvements. Under this condition, to attempt to stand apart from these involvements and their expression is to seriously limit one's ability to fully appreciate the nature of the group processes one is participating in. Secondly, despite the numerous references made in the methods literature pertaining to the importance of balancing affective relations and emotional expressivity with detachment and control, these references have systematically glossed important issues concerning the nature of affectivity and emotionality in social life. In particular, the neglect of social research on the affective dimension of social processes (Hochschild, 1975) has meant a neglect of more precise analyses of the impact of these processes on doing qualitative research. Issues relating to the nature of feelings, the social rules which inform their interpretation and expression and their relationship to other aspects of social and cultural processes must be more fully explored before we can determine precisely how and when the researcher
should become affectively involved, emotionally expressive and still have morally and theoretically adequate research.

In my own study of Nomad Vans, I did attempt initially to be as objective, impartial and detached as possible while still seeking to be liked and accepted. To accomplish these objectives, I took on a particular behavioral style and undertook certain psychological work. More specifically, during group meetings, discussions and arguments, I would sit there, doodling notes, but I would never express an opinion. In this way, I sought to be non-reactive. In addition, while I would express certain 'positive' emotions or reactions—laughing at jokes, kissing or hugging another member—I never allowed myself to express any 'negative' emotion or reaction such as anger, offense, or disagreement. In retrospect, I realize that I was not merely preventing myself from expressing certain feelings or opinions, I was also actively undertaking emotional work so as not to feel them. I had convinced myself that the only way I could be objective, impartial, and hence do valid research, was to suppress any feelings that implied a negative opinion of anything or anyone in the research setting. I went along with everything and I attempted to like everyone. I refused to become either a fully effective or affective member of the club.

Several events jettisoned me out of this behavioral and cognitive style, however. These were events which signified that I was not only separating myself from the very social processes that I was seeking to understand but that in the process I was violating certain group norms.

One event occurred a few months after I had begun my research when I realized that despite my repeated attempts to be friendly
towards Spacy (that is, get her to like me) she remained distant from me, would avoid talking to me and would seldom greet me. Troubled and perplexed by this, I asked Wild Fire, to whom I was close, why Spacy disliked me. Wild Fire's explanation was so simple and should have been so obvious that I was embarrassed by my failure to have entertained the possibility earlier: "I don't think she has anything against you really. It's because you're my friend and she knows I don't like her so she probably just assumes you don't like her too. And I don't think anything you'll do will change that as long as we hang around together." I then realized that behaviors which I assumed would show Spacy that I liked her were perhaps not interpreted by her as meaning that at all. The meaning of my actions and indeed of everyone's actions were integrally related to their affective relations with the other members. To understand adequately the interpretive systems employed by group members I had to understand their affective relations and the rules which guide the accomplishment of these relations. By my behaviors, I was really attempting to achieve the impossible, that is, to stand apart from these affective processes and relations, or even to manipulate them in behalf of some perceived interests, before knowing what they were. I was a member of this group. I could not, therefore, avoid being immersed in their affective relations nor as a researcher should I have sought to. Instead, what I needed to do was involve myself in the affective life of the group, realizing that how I was perceived and related to would be dependent on how others felt about me and that through analysis of these experiences I could more fully appreciate the social reality in which I was participating.

A second event illustrated that my attempts at being non-expressive and hence, non-reactive, were interpreted by some of
the members as my not-caring, not caring about the club in general or about them in particular. This event concerned a rather heated debate over the admission of 'outsiders' to club activities. Two of the women managed to push through a bylaw which specified that all outsiders, not accompanied by a van-member were to be prevented from participating in meetings and parties. During the debate I had felt rather strongly that such a decision would seriously threaten the continued success of the club but unlike every other member present, I said nothing. After the decision was made, Wizard, my informant, asked me if I thought the new rule would benefit the club. I replied that I did not think so. He then asked why I hadn't said anything and I told him it was because I wasn't supposed to, that researchers weren't supposed to affect group decisions or make judgements about them. He replied in great anger, "To hell with your research. Sometimes I think that's the only thing you care about and I'm not the only one. Sometimes I think that you wouldn't even care about any of these people if it wasn't for your research. And I just don't think that's right. I think you owe it to these people to say what you feel. I do, Judi."

I told myself at the time that Wizard's reaction was to be expected because he just didn't understand what doing social research required, and that is probably true. Nonetheless, to say this is neither to justify my behavior nor to lessen the validity of his accusation. Had I entered the group when it was already ongoing, had I been known to them as researcher first and member second, had they been more fully aware of my research objectives, perhaps I would have avoided this interpretation and sanctioning. Since none of these conditions were true in my case, I realized that I was not only perceived as violating their norms by refusing to participate as they
did, but that my so-called non-participation was probably just as reactive as participation would be. In this and other debates, my non-expression was interpreted as tacit support, not as the absence of opinion, and as such still carried some influential weight, no matter how slight it may have been.

In any case, because of these and other similar events, I realized that I could not and should not attempt socially or psychologically to detach myself from the affective and instrumental processes of the van club. I, therefore, undertook fuller participation in group activities.

With respect to group arguments, discussion and debates, I attempted to emulate that mode of participation followed by the rank and file members. I would vote on issues and express an opinion when this seemed in order; and the opinion I expressed would reflect how I honestly felt. I would, of course, also carefully record how what I said was responded to. What I discovered was that what I had to say simply was not viewed as very important and hence I still did not have much influence over group processes.

With respect to my affective involvements and emotional expressivity, I followed a slightly different course of action. While emotional displays and affective statements were a central aspect of social life and hence unavoidable for a participant researcher, I still avoided expressing any feelings that were perceived as 'negative' ones--being 'pissed', 'being hurt', or being 'down.' For reasons I am still not fully certain of, I continued to express only those emotional states or interpersonal feelings defined as positive ones. While I would make note of things that were said or done which angered or hurt me, I never publicly expressed these reactions. I would,
however, act pleased or happy when these were my natural responses.

In one sense, this mode of emotional response did violate a certain standard of participant observation research which advises the researcher to follow the norms of the group, and which in this case sometimes meant being angry or upset. Nonetheless, I believe the effects of my behaviors were largely positive for my acceptance in the group. I was able to be someone who was seen as supportive and caring during the bad times as well as the good. For this and other reasons, my presence in the club continued to be welcome and I was able to gain the direct and immediate understanding of their social life that I sought.

A Night with the Club

It is about 7:30 on a Saturday evening when Wizard comes by to pick me up. He had called me earlier to tell me that he had talked to Travelin' Man and Earthquake earlier at the Reservoir and since nothing had been planned for tonight, they had decided to simply meet at the Castle Lot and "take it from there."

Although it's October, the weather is still warm. As we drive down Maize Road past the Center and approaching the Castle Lot, Wizard starts to call for Nomad Vanners over the citizens band radio in his van. He also keeps a visual outlook since each vanner can recognize another member's van at a glance. After several attempts on the c.b., Wizard makes contact with Travelin' Man who calls back saying he is in the Center and will follow us down to the Castle.

As we pull into the Castle, we see that Spacy, Free Bird and Earthquake are already there. The three of them had run into each
other earlier when cruising by the river and had traveled from there up to the Castle Lot together. Wizard asks if any of them had talked to any of the rest. Earthquake says that he had talked to Zookkeeper earlier and that he had said he would be coming up. Travelin' Man and Spacy said they had talked to Quickdraw earlier at the Reservoir but he had told them he had a date with his girlfriend, Susan, so he would not be coming along.

Wizard says that we should probably wait a while before leaving to see if any of the others show up and then maybe go somewhere. Shortly after he says this, Easy Rider pulls in, followed a few minutes later by Zookkeeper.

Easy Rider and Zookkeeper both park and come over to Wizard's van. Wizard asks Easy Rider where Wild Fire is and Easy Rider explains that she is still working and that he is going to go pick her up a little later. Travelin' Man meanwhile is kidding Zookkeeper about his pink tank top which Zookkeeper says he put on just to excite him.

After a few minutes, Wizard asks the others if they would like to go to Beards, a bar down near the campus. He says that he had spent some time thinking about where the club could go that was both cheap enough and which admitted eighteen year olds and said that this place seemed pretty good. Since no one objects, at about 8:45, Wizard suggests that they take-off and convoy down.

Everyone gets back into his/her van and Wizard calls on the c.b. to see whose gonna take back-door (be in the rear). Spacy immediately says that she will. Free Bird, as vice-president, takes the lead while Wizard, as president, rides second. Between Free Bird, Wizard and Spacy, everyone else lines up as they were parked.
While on the convoy, there is continual bantering over the c.b. between Wizard, Free Bird, Zookkeeper and Crazy Horse. As they drive, they periodically ring bells and honk horns at passing motorists and pedestrians. Free Bird leads the vans the five miles down Main Street from Maize Road to Beards, attempting to keep them together through intersections and during lane changes. Occasionally, a red light will split the convoy necessitating a quick negotiation between Free Bird and Wizard as to whether and where they should pull over and wait for the others to catch-up.

The trip to the bar only takes about fifteen minutes but since the bar is located on Main Street, a very busy street, the next issue is where they can park the vans. Luckily, on this particular evening, there is room for the vans on the street in front of the bar. Otherwise, they would have had to split up and park wherever they could find room but since this makes it more difficult to keep a check on the vans it is avoided whenever possible.

As we park, Easy Rider takes off to go pick-up Wild Fire. Wizard tells him that he'd better come right back since they want him around. Easy Rider responds that he'll check with his "better-half" and see what she's "into" and they'll probably be back.

The rest of us go into the bar and get a table in the back. We spend the next couple of hours listening to the band and drinking beer. Wizard and Free Bird tell stories about their past escapades of drunkeness. Earthquake periodically yells things to the band. Although Wizard does talk to me, for the most part Spacy and I sit there as passive observer's of the guys activity.

After we have been there about forty-five minutes, Wild Fire and Easy Rider come in. Wild Fire greets me with a hug and we attempt
to talk as best we can across the table since she had to sit next to Easy Rider and there was no room for both of them on my side of the table.

At about 11:00, Wizard asks if everyone is ready to leave, suggesting that they convoy down through the campus area and then go back up to the Castle Lot to see if anybody else is there. Everyone agrees.

We convoy down through the campus on Main Street and then circle back and return to the Castle Lot. The vans park side-by-side in a line facing Maize Road and the club members stand in front of them, drinking a little beer. During this time, we are joined briefly by other local vanners who know some of the club members. If they had arrived earlier in the evening, they would have been welcomed to join the club convoy since the more vans the better.

After approximately forty-five minutes of standing around while the guys exchange jokes and talk about either their vans or other events that have occurred to mutual acquaintances, Zookkeeper suggests that we go get something to eat. Wizard, Spacy, and Free Bird say they are amenable to that but Travelin' Man says he wants to go cruise the Center because there's a girl there he wants to see. Crazy Horse and Easy Rider decide they really don't have the money so they are going to go home. The rest of us convoy to an all night restaurant where we spend an hour or so and then decide to call it a night. It is 1:45 in the morning.

As we cruise away from the restaurant going in separate directions Wizard gets on his c.b. to tell everyone that he had a great time and he expects to see everyone the next afternoon at the meeting because he has some things he wants to talk about that he thinks they'll be
excited about. Free Bird, Zookkeeper and Spacy each respond that they
will be there so they will all see each other tomorrow.
Footnotes

1 As a type of collective behavior, the vanning phenomenon could be analyzed as either a craze or as a social movement and perhaps most accurately falls somewhere between the two forms in the etiological and organizational specificity of its relationship to the larger society. Still, I feel justified in referring to it as a social movement for three reasons. First, members of the movement frequently labeled it as such. Secondly, it possessed a more structured organization than do crazes and its emergent structure closely resembled that model of social movement organization presented by Gerlach and Hine (1970); that is, it was organized as a number of relatively independent organizations connected by some overlapping friendship networks and without a centralized leadership. Third, ideologically, the van subculture had values and goals resembling those of a participant-oriented movement (Turner and Killian, 1957:329). Hence, as I will discuss in greater detail in subsequent chapters, primary cultural themes of the world of the male-vanners focused upon the need and desirability of providing members with a personal gratification through self-expression that could provide a means of overcoming the alienating and constraining conditions of life in the "straight" world.

2 I am deliberately using the masculine form of the pronoun when referring to vanners to signify that within this subcultural movement, vanners were typically referred to as males and males were definitely in the numerical majority. Although women could and did participate as members in vanning activities and van clubs, their minority and auxiliary status was linguistically conveyed by the terms "lady vanner" and "girl vanner." In order to preserve this distinction and
its sociocultural significance, I too will employ the linguistic practice of using "vanner" as a masculine and generalized term of reference and "lady vanner" when referring specifically to female participants.

3The names of the club members that I am using here are their "c.b. handles." These are names they individually chose for use when talking over citizen's band radios. While c.b. handles reflect a cultural innovation used by truckers and radio enthusiasts to protect their anonymity while talking on the quasi-public device, the vanners frequently referred to each other by their handles on a routine basis. When I asked each of the vanners what I should call them when writing up my analyses, each told me to simply use their c.b. handles.
CHAPTER III

VANS, VANNERS AND VANNING:
SUBCULTURAL REALITIES IN A MALE WORLD

Introduction

Nomad Vans was a small group whose members were immersed in an overlapping, interpenetrating set of social relationships with particular segments of the surrounding society. In the collective expressions of identity signified by their subcultural memberships (Brake, 1980), there emerges a series of alignments and separations—senses of "we" and "they"—symbolically displayed through their material artifacts, social activities and social relationships. First, they were vanners and as such were part of a largely amorphous, virtually subterranean collectivity of groups and individuals periodically and quasi-ritually coming together to celebrate the ways in which they were distinct from "straight" non-vanning society. Secondly, they were "kids" living in an ambivalent relationship with the adult world while participating in a society of youths and adolescents who, through their geographical and social proximity, developed their own network of interpersonal ties, appropriated particular public locations as their own, and engaged in particular types of social activity, that is, partying and cruising. Last, but not least, they thought of themselves as "guys" or "girls"—as persons of a particular sex and thereby imbued with differential motivations and moralities. While the club members
also belonged to a certain social class, this was not explicitly expressed in their sociocultural arrangements and activities. A generational consciousness was far greater than a class consciousness.

In the absence of an explicitly expressed class membership, and in the presence of an age-based homogeneous membership, the only dimension of social differentiation that was internally divisive was that of gender. While being a vanner represented a specific way of expressing a generational consciousness, being a particular gender gave rise to different types of experiences and expectations, imbuing the subcultural realities of this group with patriarchal dynamics.

Hence, in analyzing the subcultural realities of this small group, I will argue and seek to demonstrate that one needs to talk about two, albeit interpenetrating, worlds: a male world and a female world. Moreover, one must also recognize that these worlds stand in an asymmetrical relationship in which that of the males is superordinate to that of the females. The males ultimately controlled the planning and structuring of group activities and hence controlled the avenues by which subcultural meanings and social rules were produced, taught and enforced. The sociocultural world of Nomad Vans, as well as those of the vanning movement and the youth society of which it was a part, was male and masculinist: reflecting the perceptions and interests of males and expressing their predominance over females.

I begin my presentation, therefore, with an analysis of the world of the male vanners in Nomad Vans because they were dominant and because the world of the female vanners must be seen as an adaptation to and struggle against the male world as it impacted upon their experiences as group members. Since I was a female member of the club, my analysis of the sociocultural realities of this world is in part that of an
outside observer. While my understanding of this reality is based on
first-hand contact with its members, in many instances I felt subjectively
distant from appreciating their activities and relationships as they
experienced them. Therefore, in structuring my presentation so as to
analyze subsequent comparison and ideological analyses, I will utilize
the concept of "cultural theme."

As defined by Bruyn (1966:237-8):

The [cultural] theme is an explanatory principle postulated
by the observer as a major motif visibly threading its way
through important dimensions of a culture . . . a cultural
value tacitly approved throughout a culture which controls
and guides the activities of its members.

In analyzing the cultural themes of a group, the participant observer
grounds her/his understandings in the meaning-systems of its members
but in such a way as to make explicit those meanings, rules and
taken-for-granted assumptions that may operate in a non-reflective or
preconscious manner. It is a synthetic assessment in which the
researcher postulates the existence of certain central dimensions of
cultural systems as these are expressed through the artifacts,
activities and accounts of those s/he is observing.

In analyzing the cultural themes of the male world of Nomad Vans,
I will first discuss the cultural meanings of the van itself. Then, I
will proceed to discuss those themes permeating the activities and
relationships through which the male members sought to realize their
primary group goals—"havin' a good time."

The Van as Symbol

The van represented the symbolic core of the club. It was the
"dominant symbol" which provided "a focus for crucial activities and
supplies a metaphorical framework which relates a variety of concerns" (Rosaldo and Atkinson, 1975:44). It was the focus of the group's existence and a central expression of their collective and individual identities. It permeated male talk and at all gatherings of men at which I was present a major topic of discussion concerned what they had done, planned to do, or wished they could do to their vans. Hence, the van may be seen as homologically expressing certain cultural themes and, as such, it possessed multiple meanings or metaphorical associations. In elucidating these meanings, I will consider three specific aspects of vanning and vanners: the process of van-conversion; the relationship between the vanner and his van; and the rules guiding the relationship between a vanner's van and others.

"Doing" a Van: Creativity and Individuality

Owning a van does not a vanner make. Rather, the transition from merely owning a van to becoming a vanner was essentially, if not exclusively, denoted by the intent and ability to remake the van. This process was referred to as "doing" or "converting" the van and represented the process by which the use-value of the van was transformed from that of a mass-produced consumer product to be used for work to an individualized "home-on-wheels" to be used for play.

Technically, the transformation or conversion process involved both interior and exterior alterations. Most essentially, doing a van involved certain interior additions. The vanner would begin by carpeting or otherwise covering the metal walls and floors, installing a bed and mounting a car-stereo and citizen's band radio or "c.b." With these additions, the van was considered livable and enjoyable but still only just begun. From this point on, the vanner made plans for adding
cabinets, sinks, lights and tables as the necessary funds were accumulated.

Exterior alterations and embellishments generally entailed various types of paint-jobs and structural additions. The most elaborate and expensive paint-jobs were those murals that could cover part or all of the van's sides. None of the Nomad Vanners had murals, although Zookkeeper and Travelin' Man occasionally talked about some ideas they had for them. Several of the vanners did have pin-striping put on their vans however. "Pinstriping" is designs of thinly painted lines used to outline doors, door-handles and/or engine hoods. Quickdraw, Travelin' Man, Free Bird and Vandura had pin-striping put on their vans.

Structural alterations included such additions as "spoilers," scoops attached to the underside of the front bumper, "flares," semi-circular wheel coverings attached to and protruding from the sides of the vans, "sun-roofs," windows put in the top of the van between the two front seats, a variety of differently shaped windows that could be put into the doors or in the upper-rear corners on the sides of the vans, window-tinting, elaborately shaped wheels, metallic sun-visors and so forth. All the members of Nomad Vans utilized one or more of these alterations with flares, spoilers, sun-roofs, and windows being the most common.

Being a vanner, however, was not dependent solely upon converting the van. It was also necessary that one have the creativity and skills to "do the van one self" and that the product of this process thereby represent an individualized act of creativity. To be acknowledged as a member of the van movement and van subculture, the ideas and labor involved in doing a van needed to be those of the
the vanner himself, although the latter could also involve a more cooperative process between the vanner and his family and friends. As a transformed entity, the van had to represent the productive power of its owner or its value was tarnished. Hence, to own a "factory van" or one that was converted by a professional van shop, to buy one already completed or which you treated as completed, to be incompetent to come up with your own ideas or to simply copy someone else's was to be a second-class citizen of the vanning world. While certain alterations—particularly murals, pin-stripes, and window etchings—required the skills of professional artists or craftspersons, the ideas were still to be those of the vanner himself.

The symbolic concern with personalized creativity in doing one's van was expressed repeatedly by the male vanners and can be illustrated by two typical exchanges. One night while sitting with Zookkeeper and Travelin' Man in the back of Zookkeeper's van and admiring a mock-brick partition he had recently installed in front of his bed, I asked Zookkeeper where he got his ideas.

Zookkeeper: I've been plannin' a van since I was twelve.

Travelin' Man: That makes two of us.

Zookkeeper: Then when I got one, nuthin' is what I planned it as. I just started over. I went and looked at a lot of vans, saw what everyone else had and tried to do somethin' different.

Travelin' Man: I, I, I did the same thing. Nuthin' is like what I thought I was gonna do and, and I'm never sure exactly what I'll do next.

Zookkeeper: I've got so many ideas. Probably by the time I get this one just about done, I'll be tired of it and want to start all over.

Judi: You mean you'll rip all this out?
Zookkeeper: Or I'll buy myself a new one. (laughs) That's what bein' a vanner's all about.

If to be a vanner meant doing a van one self and taking pride in having creative ideas, then this value also provided a basis for casting disparagement on other vanners, particularly if there was any reason for doubting the authenticity of the workmanship. For example, Free Bird was the only member of the van club besides Wizard to have a fairly well completed van at the time the club began. During a time of some hostility between Free Bird and Wizard pertaining to the leadership of the club, Wizard repeatedly told me, Earthquake, Travelin' Man and Zookkeeper, that he wondered whether or not Free Bird had actually done the work on his van himself.

Wizard: I just don't know, you know. He (Free Bird) bought the van used from somebody else and I'll just bet you it was already the way it is now.

Judi: Well, what does Free Bird say?

Wizard: Oh, he says he did it all himself, that it wasn't anything like what it is now when he bought it but he may just be saying that so we'll all think he did.

Judi: Why would he do that? His van is really nice.

Wizard: Yeah, that's why he would say! You know, to make himself look good.

Regardless of the veracity of Wizard's accusation, the fact that his assertion constituted an accusation and attempted disparagement implicitly attests to the subcultural importance of self-creativity and self-productivity in being seen and accepted as an authentic vanner. Simultaneously, given the competition between Wizard and Free Bird, the ability to construct a unique and nice van constituted a basis for achieving status in the van club. Being a vanner meant doing a van, doing it yourself, and doing it well.
The Vanner and His Van: The Personification of Object

As an extension of the symbolic value placed on doing a van oneself, the vans were imbued with an additional set of metaphorical associations pertaining to both self and other-than-self. Frequently in the vanner's talk, the vans were transformed from a material possession into personifications of self or of self and other. The vans came to symbolize both an expression of one's identity and an expression of an ideal relationship between self and a loved other.

The symbolic power and meanings of this relationship between the vanner and his van were perhaps most poignantly expressed by Wizard, who in a significant term of endearment had named his van "Amy."

Like Amy, or the van, was able to give me pleasure. Ah, in a different way, it gave me freedom. It got me away from things. It was always there when I needed it, when I wanted to get loaded, and, or, you know, it was the only thing you ever can rely on. And it's true: You can fall in love with those things. And I fell in love with my van.

In this brief soliloquy, Wizard expressed several personal and interpersonal ideals. On the one hand, the van allowed him to be free and independent. On the other, it was a reliable, giving other.

In the first case, as an expression of self, the van can be analyzed as representing for the vanners what Shibutani (1961:224) refers to as "ego-involvements"—material objects which are valued as symbolizing some aspect of self and self's past and/or present experiences. To take this analysis one step further, for the vanners the vans symbolized not just self but an ideal-self—a social identity that the vanner wished to possess or wished to be thought of as possessing. The process of personal expression begun in the conversion process was culminated in the end-product and the impressions of
self it was intended to convey. As such, within this male subcultural, the van represented the ego-ideals of youthful masculinity. More specifically, through their vans, the vanners sought to express autonomy, power and toughness, and hyper-heterosexuality.

For the male vanner, autonomy and independence as symbolized by their vans, essentially meant freedom of movement and simultaneously, the escape from home and adult authority which this freedom temporarily provided. Owning a van meant having the ability to "get away from it all" either through the physical mobility it afforded or through the personal, private space it provided. Typically, for this group of vanners, "getting away from it all" by physical movement meant little more than a short camping trip or vanning excursion where, for a few days, one could leave the demands of parents and bosses behind. Having one's own private space was far more significant. Even if one went no further than the nearest hang-out, cruising spot or park, one could always seek solitude in the back of one's van.

You know, if you just wanna be left alone you can climb into your van, drive somewhere and kick back and listen to music. It's really great.

Quickdraw

Man, sometimes I just feel like everybody's on my case and then I really need to get away from everybody and everything. Man, I've just had it. That's why I love my van. It lets me be alone whenever I feel like it.

Vandura

Besides representing a means for attaining autonomy and privacy, the vans were also valued as symbols of power and toughness. Visually, this ideal was expressed through structural additions--particularly flares, spoilers and spoked magnesium wheels or "mags"--which the
vanners said gave the van a "tough" or "mean" appearance. In addition, this theme was expressed by the vanners when recounting the pleasure they experienced from simply driving their vans.

You just feel so high off the road. You're sittin' there higher than everyone and just lookin' down at the world.

Wizard

When I'm in my van and drivin' around I sometimes get a neat feelin' like I could ride right over all those little cars. I guess that's how truckdrivers must feel.

Zookkeeper

This image of the van as powerful and tough was further evidenced by the emblem which they designed for the club tee-shirts—a picture of a van smiling but hunched up with huge wheels as if ready to barrel over anything that got in its way (see Figure 1).

Finally, the vans were seen as representing persons with the ability and opportunity to engage in frequent sexual intercourse whenever and wherever they so chose. The interiors of the van were specifically designed to give an impression of a seductive-environment. Double or even king-sized beds were a must and were frequently covered with soft, furry covers. Yellow or red lighting, the availability of rock music, and a refrigerator equipped with alcoholic beverages were essential aspects of the interior conversion of every vanner's van and were considered essential explicitly because they made for an erotic or romantic impression. Through bumper-stickers which read "Don't laugh, mister, it may be your daughter in here" and "When this van's a rockin', don't come a knockin'" the vanners further expressed and reinforced an image of the van as a place of sexual activity and the vanner as a person committed to frequent sexual intercourse.
Figure 1. Nomad Van Club's Logo
If the van symbolized for the vanners a certain ego-ideal or personal identity, the relationship between the vanner and his van was imbued with meanings relevant to an interpersonal ideal as well. For the vanner, the van became and ideal-other. Like a good friend or lover, one's van was always dependable, reliable and giving, that is, always there to meet one's needs. In turn, it should be loved, cared-for and respected, as one would care-for and about a good friend or lover. While I originally thought the vanners would feminize their vans, this type of personification was not always what I observed. Although occasionally, the vanners did refer to their van as a female, they would also refer to it as a "buddy" or "pal" consonant with labels attached to homosocial friendships. Hence, the genderification of this relationship remained vague. Far more apparent was that some significant relationship symbolizing the ideals of interpersonal commitments remained an important part of the van's meaning for vanners.

"My van never let's me down. It's the one thing I can always count on."

Travelin' Man

"My van's my best friend. It lets me do what I want to do and I couldn't do it without it."

Wizard

The van was, in other words, not only an economic investment, it was also an emotional investment. In their talk about and treatment of their vans, the male vanners symbolically expressed their conception of an ideal relationship and such a relationship is one in which the other (van) is supportive, dependable, and giving and in return is to be protected and cared-for. The meaning of the van as representing
both an ego-ideal and an ideal-other had additional manifestation in the rules regarding how a vanner expected others to treat his van.

The Van and Others: Rules of Respect

One Friday night a few weeks after the club started, the members gathered at the Castle lot waiting to go somewhere to party. I had come with Wizard and while waiting for other members to arrive, we simply sat in Wizard's van. Zookkeeper was one of the first vanners to come and immediately after he had parked his van, he walked over toward Wizard's van carrying a cake he had baked that afternoon. There followed a series of joking interactions between Zookkeeper and Wizard concerning the cake. Wizard would threaten to put his face into the cake and Zookkeeper would act as if he was going to drop the cake on the hood of Wizard's van. Later, after the club had cruised to a bar where we sat around a table drinking, Wizard and Zookkeeper began recounting to the other members the interaction they had had concerning the cake. After the story was told, Zookkeeper said to Wizard, "You know, I seriously thought about smashing that cake on your van."

Wizard: Well, be glad you didn't because we woulda had a fight then. I'm serious. I can take anything, but when you start to mess with my van //

Travelin' Man: Yeah, I, I, Wizard, I feel the same way.

Free Bird (laughing): Yeah, screw my wife and kill my dog but leave my van alone!

Zookkeeper (laughing): Well, I didn't do it. No, I thought that would make you mad so I decided I'd better not. But I did think about how your van would look with a cake smeared all over the front of it.

In listening to this exchange, I became aware of a central moral imperative guiding member's behavior towards each other's vans: never
"mess-around" with another's van because to do so constitutes an assault upon the owner personally to be likened, albeit hyperbolically, to an assault upon his other most loved "possessions"—his wife and his dog. Moreover, those behaviors associated with "messing" with another's van included almost any physical contact made without the owner's approval and was to be excepted only for those persons with whom one was also intimately committed, that is, best friends and lovers. For example, curious and slightly shocked by Wizard's response to Zookkeeper in the previous exchange, I later asked Wizard if he had been serious.

Wizard: Yeah, I was serious. Oh, you know, I don't mean I would have actually hit 'im you know, but I would of probably felt like it. And I would have made him clean it up.

Judi: But he's your friend and he wouldn't really have hurt anything.

Wizard: Well, if he's my friend then he would know better than to do something like that. A friend wouldn't mess with your van.

Judi: Well, what do you mean by 'messin' anyway?

Wizard: Messin? Well, I don't know.... I guess when I think about it, you know, what would make me mad . ... well, I don't think it's right to even touch another person's van unless, you know, he's right there and doesn't appear to mind. Really, I don't. That's theirs, you know, well, like their personal property and just like you wouldn't take or use somebody else's, you know, anything, without their permission, than you shouldn't bother their van.

Judi: Yeah, but you could touch something that belonged to someone else without necessarily having their permission. You just wouldn't take it or use it.

Wizard: Yeah, but, I don't know. I guess I'm not makin' myself clear. The van isn't just anything else. You put a lot of time into takin' care of it, keepin' it clean and so forth and you don't want anybody feelin' like they can just go up and put their hands all over it. It's just not right. If you respect me, you should respect my van.
Judi: Well, you don't get mad at me and I go in and out of your van all the time.

Wizard: Come on. That's different. You're not just anybody and besides I know I can trust you around my van.

In essence, the rules regarding one's relationship to another's van signified how the vanners were expected to relate to each other--the rule of respect--as well as illustrating the symbolic significance of the van itself. In transforming the use value of their vans, the vanners imbued this commodity with deep personal meanings. The van became more than a vehicle; it became an expression and extension of self and a symbolic representation of an ideal other. It signified the creative individuality of its owners, conveyed an impression of its owner as autonomous, powerful and sexual, and was a reliable and dependable friend. As such it was to be cared-for by its owner and treated by others as the owner himself expected to be treated--as something to be admired and respected.

Hence, as the dominant symbol of the vanner's subculture, the van symbolized aspects of their collective identity and their interpersonal ideals. In analyzing other central cultural themes permeating the subcultural realities of the male vanners' world, I will not turn to a discussion of their group activities.

**Pursuing a Good Time**

What I want to know is did everybody have a good time, hnnmmmm? That's all that matters.

Vandura

Hey, we are here to have fun. That's what this club is all about.

Free Bird
No other single theme played as critical a part in the club's structuring of activities and events as that of "having a good time." It was the primary rationale given by members when asked why they joined the club; it was the primary purpose for the planning of events, and it was the dimension of experience most emphasized when members described past events to others who had been absent from them.

If the focal concern of the club members was pursuing a good time or having fun, further consideration of the significance of this concern for group processes and relationships requires an analysis of the essential features of good times, that is, an examination of the types of practices, experiences and artifacts by which club events were categorized or constituted as "good times." To do this, I will first describe the major types of activities in which club members participated for purposes of having a good time. I will then proceed to analyze the central social and experiential processes present in these activities according to which they were said to represent good times.

Those activities associated with having a good time fell into three major types: van-ins, convoys, and parties. The former two types of activities were exclusive to and immersed within the larger vanning movement with which the club members claimed allegiance. The latter and more generalized type of activity were set within the local youth network of friendships and acquaintances to which many of the club members were linked.

Van-ins were the core organizational event of the vanning movement. During the warm months between April and November, numerous van-ins were held by various clubs all over the United States. Since they required access to a large plot of land, publicity, and the hiring of a musical band, it took a club with some resources of money and
personnel to successfully sponsor one. Nonetheless, since each vanner paid a fee of between seven and fifteen dollars to enter one, a well-attended van-in could also become an annual money-making event for the sponsoring club.

The events themselves were organized according to a fairly standardized itinerary. Typically, they would begin on Friday night and last until early Sunday afternoon, although a few van-ins held over holiday weekends might begin on Thursday or last until Monday. On the first day of the van-in, individual vanners (independents) and van-clubs would roll into the van-in campgrounds, find a spot, and begin setting up a campsite. Frequently, but not always, live music would be provided by a band in the evening; but in any case, vanners would be drinking, smoking dope and partying on a club-by-club basis into the early morning hours.

Then on Saturday morning or afternoon the major organized van-in events would begin. If the van-in grounds were exceptionally good, there might be a place to go swimming. Otherwise, or in addition, there were games and inter-club contests in which vanners could enter and compete. Typically, these games included a tug-of-war between members of different clubs, van-pulls (tug-of-wars using vans instead of people) and van races.

At national van-ins (van-ins sponsored by the National Van Club Association), show-vans or vans with exceptionally elaborate conversions would be on display and vanners could go up at any time on Saturday to watch the judging and/or to merely look at the show-vans themselves. In addition, there would be a section of the grounds where merchants and craftspersons would set up booths or temporary shops to sell their crafts, and van-related paraphernalia.
On Saturday evening, the biggest events, that is, the events with the largest participation of those attending the van-in would occur. Beginning with the onset of darkness, the vanners would move chairs, blankets and coolers full of beer down to a large open area in front of a stage or grandstand that had been assembled just for the van-in. With one or more members of the sponsoring van-club acting as Master(s) of Ceremony, entertainment would begin. If there had been show-van judging, the winners of that contest would be announced. Then would begin the most popular parts of van-in entertainment: a wet tee-shirt contest for women, a bikini-contest for women, and a wet tee-shirt contest for men. While the names of the contests and the sex of the contestants varied the contests were otherwise basically the same. They could be entered by any male or female vanner who wished. These people would line up just off stage and would be paraded up on the stage to begin the contest. The Master of Ceremonies would then talk to each asking them their name and club membership. Throughout this introduction there would be hooting and hollering from the audience. After each contestant had been introduced the audience would then vote for their favorite. This process took place by having each male or female contestant step out one at a time from the line-up while the audience registered their relative approval by yelling, whistling, applauding, and hooting. Inevitably, with those contests involving women, they would go through the voting process several times while the women would first flash their breasts, buttocks, or pubic area and then would become progressively nude. Essentially, therefore, while in the wet tee-shirt contest the women would march out with tee-shirts and shorts on, and while in the bikini contest they would have bathing suits on, in both, those contestants who wanted to win would
eventually strip. In the all-male wet tee-shirt contest, some of the contestants would also flash, although I saw only three men at any van-ins actually strip.

After the contests were over, a rock band would take-over providing music until two or three o'clock in the morning. Again, throughout the day and night there would be almost constant drinking and heavy-smoking until the vanners eventually 'crashed' or went to bed. Then, on Sunday morning, clubs would gradually fold-up and move-out, marking the end of the van-in.

During their eleven months together, Nomad Vans went to six van-ins. In all but one, they were van-ins held within a fifty-mile radius of Central City. The exception was a van-in they attended in Virginia shortly before the club broke-up. Following their actual dissolution as a club, however, members did, throughout the following summer, continue to get together to go to local van-ins. They were the major collective celebrations of vanning subculture and for reasons I will discuss further momentarily, they were major occasions of good times.

Doing convoys or "trucking" was the other major type of activity associated both with vaning and with having a good time. In doing a convoy, the intent was simply to line-up as many vans as possible and then drive or cruise around. The convoys would occur whenever the vanners were traveling from one point to another but they would also be organized upon occasion just for the sake of trucking and not to teach a specific destination.

These convoys were organized according to a set of procedures involving both formal and informal rules of van protocol. The formal, official task and right of leading the convoy fell to the club's
vice president, although occasionally, and particularly during longer trips, this task would also be performed by others. The lead position in the convoy was one of some responsibility since it was the leader's job to negotiate traffic lights, turns, and lane changes in such a way as to keep the entire convoy together while avoiding any accidents or encounters with the police. From time to time the leader would also have to engage in a maneuver called "blocking." This was a potentially dangerous act since it required pulling out into the lane of oncoming traffic blocking its movement and thereby allowing the rest of the vans to pull-out, turn, or make a lane change in continuous succession so as to keep the convoy together. Blocking was perceived as an act requiring some skill and courage and hence to be allowed to lead a convoy and to block traffic signified being respected as a group leader and as a competent vanner.

If the vice-president was to lead the convoy, it was the president's right to ride in the second position directly behind the leader. This position was one symbolizing respect and privilege since it was the safest and easiest place to be—a protected position. Driving second in a convoy meant there was little chance of being separated from the leader and hence little chance of having to violate any traffic laws in order to keep up with the convoy.

The rest of the line-up was dependent simply upon the way the vans were parked prior to the formation of the convoy, with the exception of the rear van or "back-door" position. Any vanner could offer or volunteer to ride back-door. This position also carried some responsibility since this vanner had to be on the alert for the presence of police officers and notify the others if any were spotted. In addition, s/he was most likely to have to run traffic lights or
cut-off passing motorists in order to keep up with the rest of the vanners.

In doing convoys, the Nomad Vanners would travel about publicly displaying their existence as a collectivity. In this way they also had good times.

Parties and get-togethers were the more generalized type of activity most regularly and routinely engaged in by the club members. As a category of activities, parties, and get-togethers incorporated a variety of specific occasions of members' associations: attending parties, going to bars, and passing the time in restaurants, parking lots and local hang-outs.

Some of the parties which the club members attended were those given by a friend or acquaintance of one or more of the members to which s/he would invite the rest of the club. These parties were typically held in the home of the party-giver and were a relatively infrequent part of the club's activities although through them the network of non-members who would attend club parties was enlarged. These latter parties were those organized by the club and held in rented rooms--either the party-house of a local apartment complex or the back room of the River Bar. They were open to any friends or acquaintances of the club members who wanted to come. Between October and January, the club organized four such parties to celebrate members' birthdays or to celebrate the Christmas holiday.

A third type of party in which the club members routinely participated were smaller, more exclusive celebrations held in local bars or in Wizard's, Star Baby's or Jay Bird's homes. These tended to be more spontaneous events occurring on Friday, Saturday or Sunday nights when the club had not planned anything else to do. Finally,
there were also those emergent occasions of club get-togethers that occurred whenever two or more of them met to wile away the time together in the Pizza Place, the Castle lot, or at the Reservoir.

Having briefly outlined the major types of activities that the club members associated with having a good time, I would now like to analyze essential features of activities by which they were said to constitute having fun. While the specific behavioral and interactional rituals for having a good time did in certain ways vary between the types of events previously discussed, there were nonetheless three major themes weaving their way through these activities behaviorally and discursively signifying the experience of collective fun: getting rowdy, gettin messed-up, and joking around.

Gettin'Rowdy and Actin' Crazy: Rituals of Disorder

Wizard: Boy, did we have a good time last night.
Zookkeeper, Vandura: Yeah!
Wizard: There was a live band and everybody got rowdy.
Free Bird: Yeah, the rest of you guys should of been there. The entire place went wild.

For the male vanners, probably the single most important feature of having a good time was that of getting rowdy or acting crazy which for the vanners were behaviors representing spontaneous and collective violations of the rules of etiquette and public decorum. In essence, as a primary feature of good times, getting rowdy referred to the ability to engage in what Faris (1973:52) calls "sanctioned deviations"—actions which under most circumstances would be considered improper or immoral are suddenly not only allowed but encouraged by the group involved.
At van-ins, and as an important part of their lore and appeal, such sanctioned deviations involved quasi-ritualized violations of the rules of bodily presentation, interpersonal restraint, and sexual demeanor. Vanners would frequently dress up in strange costumes and/or walk around wearing rubber masks. Displays of nudity on the part of men and from the waist up on the part of women could be expected to occur. Clubs would climb into a single van and with side and rear doors open would drive around yelling at any women spotted to "show some tit," a demand to which the women I observed would rarely comply but which they were not supposed to perceive as insulting. Of course, the contests themselves were structured around the display of female nudity and the ability of the audience to holler and yell for more.

Within the context of the van-in, these types of activities sanctioned and celebrated a subcultural rejection of certain aspects of the "straight" world outside of the spatial and temporal parameters of the van-in itself. To be a participant at a van-in was to accept and encourage, expect and experience, the unexpected, the non-routine and the "crazy" vis-a-vis the puritanical morality of the dominant culture, if only in minor symbolic or discursive ways.

In actuality, Nomad Vanners did not engage in such behaviors while at van-ins. They did not parade around nude, they did not put on costumes; they did not drive around yelling obscenities at other vanners. Nonetheless, they frequently testified to the occurrence and desirability of such activities as moments of hedonistic release from the constraints of the normal world--constraints seen as inhibiting what are in reality natural and normal impulses of human beings. As stated by Wizard:
Van-ins are . . . well, there's nothing like them and I can't wait until they start again. You guys, or those of you who have already gone to them already know, they're wild. I mean it. You'll see all kinds of people just gettin' together to have a good time and be with other people like them and just go crazy. Anything goes, you know, within reason. You can really be yourself. For a couple of days you don't have to walk around worrying, "Oh, if I do that, what will people think of me." You can just do it and you'll find that everybody else is either doing it too or wishing they were doing it. I'm serious. (He giggles) They're really good for the soul.

If at van-ins acting crazy was frequently associated with watching others engage in "obscene" or strange displays, during convoys and parties, getting rowdy for the vanners was associated with acts which would temporarily disrupt the routine order thereby calling attention upon the group by outsiders who, it was believed, would be either shocked or entertained by the club's activities but in either case could not fail to notice.

During convoys, and as an important part of their purpose and appeal, the vanners would attempt to drive through congested parts of Central City audibly, visually, and physically disrupting the ongoing flow of activities otherwise occurring. To be in a convoy was to experience a tremendous sense of collective power due both to the physical presence of a line of vans and to their organized ability to interfere with the normal flow of cars and people. The following exchange occurring over the c.b. while the club was trucking through the campus section of Central City one Friday night when they knew there would be lots of people walking around or waiting to get into bars illustrates this theme of convoys and good times.

Free Bird: Alright you vantruckers, man, when we get by some people lets hear da noise from the bells, man. Let's hear it!
Wizard: Yeah. Why don't you guys make some noise up there with them bells and shit!

(Loud horn honking and bell ringing)

Crazy Horse: Rock and Roll!

Zookkeeper: Rock and Roll!

Quickdraw: Rock and Roll! Party all night and get it on again.

Zookkeeper: Look out for these people in the middle of the road.

Crazy Horse: Hey, we got a stopper (a red light).

Everyone again starts honking their horns and ringing their bells as they pass in front of a bar where people are congregated, waiting to get it.

Zookkeeper: Look at everybody lookin' at us.

Quickdraw: I know, man.

Travelin' Man: I think we had every person looking out there.

Zookkeeper: That's right. I should of hung my you-know-what out the window.

Wizard: Then you would of had everybody laughin' for sure.

Zookkeeper: Ha, ha, ha.

Free Bird: Hey you guys, when we go down Main St. let's double up every other van down Main St. We can just wipe out Main St. on the way down.

Wizard: Yeah, okay.

In essence, to be doing a convoy was to have the ability to simultaneously disrupt the flow of things while "impressing the hell out of" those bystanders present who represented the world outside the boundaries of the club and the vanning movement. It was also to have a good time. It was to experience and enjoy a sense of collective power, albeit a power limited to minor and temporary disruptions of the ongoing order.
During club parties, the male vanners would themselves engage in certain individualized acts interpreted as getting rowdy which would be received with amusement and encouragement by other members present. In public bars and restaurants, getting rowdy involved milder antics designed to entertain or repulse outsiders present by violating certain minor rules that would in turn breach the ongoing social order within those settings. The vanners would throw popcorn at each other or put it up their noses and stare at people who would enter the bar or restaurant; they would yell at musicians to play particular songs and then sing along as loudly as they could; or they might "take the beat off the wall" which meant stomping one's foot on the wall in time with the music.

Two major ritual antics celebrated in action and in fantasy by which the vanners celebrated rowdiness were "shooting-moons" and "getting sick." Moon-shooting is an act or gesture symbolizing disrespect for something or someone and has been a more institutionalized part of male youth culture for some time.\(^3\) Basically, this gesture involves turning one's back on the intended audience or target, unzipping one's pants and bending from the waist at the same instance as one pulls down one's pants thereby giving one's target a view of nothing but a bare buttocks. Of all the vanners, Zookkeeper most frequently engaged in this particular gesture and was known to shoot moons in the bathrooms of bars, at passing traffic while standing in the Castle lot, and in fact at almost every party when someone would mention it to him. However, the other vanners, particularly Wizard, Free Bird and Jay Bird, were also observed shooting a moon from time to time, either together or at each other. In addition, one of the club's fantasies designed by Wizard and applauded by the other male vanners was to organize a
collective moon-shooting, that is, get as many vanners as they could to drive down and park their vans in a circle all around the state Capitol and get out and in one unanimous gesture show their rear-ends. They never did it, nor did they seriously intend to, but they all agreed that it would be great fun and they repeated the idea frequently.

"Getting-sick," a second favorite club antic, was one created by Crazy Horse, Wizard and Zookkeeper. It would be cued whenever anyone began a statement with "I'm sick of. . . ." or ended one with "That makes me sick" at which time every other male present would immediately grab their stomach, bend over from the waist and emit a loud "blach" sound as if vomiting. This gesture became an extremely popular one for a while and in fact, on one evening it was performed twelve times by the male vanners. While its popularity peaked rapidly after its creation, it continued to be a part of the vanners' repertoire of crazy acts and was performed from time to time.

The singing of obscene songs at the tops of their lungs, Wizard's act of putting his face into cakes at club birthday parties, putting one's finger up one's nose and pretending to eat what one pulled out of it, were all additional parts of the male vanners' set of rowdy antics. They were also symbolic of having a good time.

As an essential feature of good times and as a subcultural theme in the male vanners' world, rowdiness can be seen as signifying a sense of disdain towards and separation from the dominant order of their society. Nonetheless, I do not wish to exaggerate the vanner's subcultural alienation from or hostility towards the dominant order as they perceived it.

In a larger sense, the male vanners' relationship with the dominant society and representatives of official authority was one
characterized more by ambivalence than rejection. In critical ways, as I will argue further later, the vanners' acceptance of dominant morality and legality was greater than their rejection of it. Hence, "rowdiness" was confined almost exclusively to sanctioned deviations or infractions of minor norms and temporary disruptions. Whether at van-ins, during convoys, or at parties, they collectively condemned as illegitimate and immoral any activities which according to the dominant morality would violate the rights of persons and their property and/or which would involve them in confrontations with the police. For example, one evening when the vanners were partying at a local pizza place, two other vanners not in the club joined them. These vanners then began hurling insults at two strangers, also male, who came in to order a pizza. Under Wizard's direction, the rest of the club got up and left. Wizard later explained this act as necessary whenever people partying with them are "asking for trouble" by unnecessarily insulting others.

You know, those two guys who came in, they weren't doin' nothin' but orderin' something to eat. I don't think Bulldog and Squirrel (the other vanners) had any right to say what they said. They only said it because they thought we would back them up. I know I wouldn't of. If those guys had started a fight I wasn't gonna lift a hand to help 'em.

Similarly, the vanners never stole anything, harmed any other property, nor engaged in any fights or acts of physical violence. In their relationships as a club with the surrounding social environment, they struggled between seeking legitimacy and acceptance and seeking to be seen as crazy and different. They always sought to be harm-less.
Getting 'Messed-Up': Good Times and the Meaning of Drugs

In order to have a good time and as an impetus to getting rowdy, the male vanners also placed cultural emphasis upon the consumption of drugs, particularly alcohol and marijuana or "dope." The importance of drug-use as a focal concern of the club members in their pursuit of good times was indicated in a number of ways with respect to almost all major events and activities. The lore and glory of the van-in was intimately connected to the constant use of alcohol and dope which characterized the behavior of participants at these sub-cultural events.

Zookkeeper: One van-in and your addicted. I swear, I've been to one and I'm addicted!

Wizard: Junkie!

Zookkeeper: Hey, when I got up in the morning, there was a joint handed to me outside my van and I stayed that way all day long!

Still, even in other times and places, whenever the vanners were seeking fun or talking about good times, drugs and their use permeated their activities and their talk as an essential part of getting rowdy and having fun. For example, when the club members were planning a Halloween Party which would take place at the home of Panama Red, who lived some distance from town, Wizard and Free Bird decided that they should probably plan on spending the night there so that everyone can get 'messed-up' and not have to worry about getting home. In other words, to not be able for some reason to get "messed-up" was perceived as lessening the group's ability to have a good time.

Similarly, the symbolic importance and desirability of drugs and their effects was signified in a type of word game played between the
male members of the club in which the meaning or sound of words was intentionally transformed as in the following exchanges:

Jay Bird: I might have a connection on a barn (to be used as a club house).
Zookkeeper: A bong? Ohhhhhhhhh!
Jay Bird: Yeah, a barn.
Star Baby to Zookkeeper: A barn.
Zookkeeper: A bong. Someone say "bong"? Ohhhhhhh!

Or, during a convoy:

Wizard: Is that a smokie (police officer) back 'er?
Crazy Horse: Smokie? Where's the smokie?
Quickdraw: Hey, I got some smokie.
Crazy Horse: Well, hey, let's stop and do it, man!

Hence, the word "barn" was transformed into "bong" referring to an implement used to smoke dope and "smokie" as referring to a police officer was transformed into a reference for marijuana.

The subcultural concern with getting messed-up on drugs was also symbolically displayed in the design of the club banner. When the club members were attempting to figure out a way of arranging the lettering on the banner they would put on display at van-ins, Quickdraw suggested that they raise the 'h' and 'i' in Ohio to have a banner which would look like the design in Figure 2. Quickdraw explained that that way the "HI" would have two meanings: hello and being high on drugs. His suggestion met with unanimous approval and so the banner eventually read.
Figure 2. Inscription on the Van Club's Banner with the Raised "HI"
In the planning of all group activities, the ability to drink alcohol was a central organizing task so that they planned to go nowhere where there could neither bring nor buy alcohol. Since the smoking of dope was illegal, the vanners had to be more surreptitious about this activity, but they would still do it by simply making a few trips out to a van when in bars or public places where they might have been apprehended.

While drugs and their effects were an important element of group culture, understanding their meaning to the vanners necessitates a fuller discussion of the rules and practices which governed their use. First, as has already been alluded to, for the male vanners the physical effects of getting drunk or 'high' through the consumption of alcohol and marijuana respectively were those associated with lessening one's ability to control one's thoughts and actions. As a result, drinking and smoking were directly related to engaging in rowdy or non-normative behaviors. Getting "messed-up," "wasted," or "fucked-up" through these drugs was seen as legitimate part of having a good time and as legitimate reason for engaging in loud, disruptive behaviors and breaching rules of public decorum. The functions of drugs that were celebrated in other youth subcultures as, for example, a vehicle for experimenting with one's perceptions of social reality in the Freak subculture studied by Zimmerman and Wieder (cited in Mehan and Wood, 1975) were not a part of their use-value for the vanners.

Secondly, and related to the above, the vanners recognized certain restrictions upon both the types of drugs to be used and the occasions of their use. The only substances routinely used by the vanners were alcohol and marijuana. While a few vanners would from time to time take a barbiturate or an amphetamine, these were never a
part of collective activities. Furthermore, addictive substances or "harder" drugs like opiates and cocaine were perceived as "too dangerous" and hence to be avoided.

Similarly, the consumption of either alcohol or marijuana to the point of being messed-up or drunk too frequently and/or outside of van-ins and parties was also interpreted by the vanners as inappropriate and worrisome. While these drugs were seen as lessening one's control and hence as enhancing the frivolity of good times, one should still be able to control how much and how frequently one used them. So that, for example, when Free Bird began getting drunk every afternoon and evening with or without other club members and when Travelin' Man was 'high' every time any club member saw him, both became subjects of concern for the other members.

Wizard: I don't know what's happenin' to Free Bird, but I'm really worried about his drinkin'.

Judi: What do you mean?

Wizard: I don't know. I just think it's gettin' out of hand. He and Earthquake have been gettin' together every afternoon when Free Bird gets off work and they go somewhere and start drinkin' and just keep on drinkin' until Free Bird gets drunk. I just think that's too much. Even Earthquake has said that he thinks Free Bird drinks too much.

Similarly, when Free Bird and Travelin' Man each decided to temporarily stop using their respective drugs, their decisions were supported by the other vanners.

Earthquake to Wizard: Did you hear that Travelin' Man has decided to stop smoking?

Wizard: I'll believe it when I see it.

Earthquake: Well, that's what he said.
Wizard: Man, I hope so. I think it would really do him good if he sticks with it. He has enough trouble makin' sense as it is. You know what I mean. I like to smoke too, you know that. But I know how I feel the next day. I'm lucky if I can think straight and Travelin' Man, he smokes all the time. You know it's got to be affecting him.

This ambivalence toward the use and over-use of alcohol and marijuana expressed by Wizard was more collectively displayed by an additional aspect of their cultural significance, that is, that being drunk or messed-up was emphasized far more in talk than in actual behaviors. In other words, far more emphasis was placed on using drugs in the jokes and bantering of the male vanners than I observed in their activities. Hence, while previous to almost any party, van-in or outing, the vanners would tell each other about how 'wasted' they were going to get, it was far less frequently that any of them actually did so. This is not to say that they did not drink heavily at van-ins and parties and that the consumption of alcohol and dope was not an essential element of these activities, only that at any given event only a few vanners would actually behave as if they were drunk and fewer still did it habitually.

Furthermore, when as sometimes happened, a vanner would decide to abstain from drinking and/or smoking, they typically accounted for this abstention by saying either that they were attempting to recover from the effects of their recent use (referred to as being 'partied-out') or that they needed to remain 'straight' because of other responsibilities stemming from their familial or work roles. Both were accepted as legitimate and signify that conditions existed for the vanners which were seen as appropriately moderating the importance of drug-use.
Being Friendly and Joking Around: Good Times and Male Interactional Forms

A third major feature of "good times" pertained to the mode of interactional styles that characterized the preferred mode of male relationships during these situations: being friendly and joking around. The former mode was the normative standard applicable to relationships between the vanners and non-members or "outsiders" while the latter tended to characterize relationships between the male vanners themselves.

As an appropriate demeanor between male vanners and "outsiders," "being friendly" was viewed as both a part of the vanner code of honor as well as an essential ingredient to pursuing a good time. As stated several times by Wizard to myself and other club members:

I don't think there's any friendlier people in the world. A good vanner doesn't hesitate to go over to someone and say, "how ya doin'" and join in on fun, cause that's what vannin' and havin' fun is all about: gettin' to know people and be friends.

For the vanners, "being friendly" was opposed to two other possible modes of interpersonal behavior: being stuck-up and being hostile. At its most rudimentary form, being friendly referred to a form of male-bonding in which a vanner would approach an outsider male, extend his hand for a handshake, introduce himself while telling the outsider that he is glad to meet him and hopes he will join the vanners and have a good time. It represented a desire to temporarily extend the group boundaries and to incorporate non-members as participants in group activities as a means to enhance the fun of these occasions. Although typically Wizard and Free Bird functioned in their roles as club leaders, as liasons between the club and outsiders, once they sought to
incorporate the outsider into group activities it was expected that all other vanners would be friendly toward them as well.

On several occasions at which the vanners were with a group of non-members, they did in fact segregate their interactions. These occasions tended to be ones in which the non-members were themselves part of a distinct group or network of friends. During the Halloween party given by Panama Red at his home, a number of other persons who were strangers to the vanners but friends of Panama Red were also invited. Throughout the evening none of the vanners with the exception of Wizard and Free Bird interacted with the others, instead preferring to sit together in a separate area. At another time, Nomad Vans joined with another van club in the region to spend an evening together and again, with the exception of Wizard and Earthquake, the Nomad Vanners stood and sat apart from the other vanners.

While these incidences were interesting indicators of the types of conditions under which group boundaries were closed, after each incident the vanners were called to account for their behavior by Wizard or Free Bird. Typically, moreover, they did so by attributing responsibility to the behaviors of the outsiders.

Star Baby: Hey, listen. I tried to talk to the girls in the other club but they were really stuck-up.

Earthquake: Yeah. They did all seem stuck-up except for Bob (the president of the other club).

Star Baby: They were a pretty unsociable group.

Wizard: They are.

Vandura: Very.

Star Baby: I mean, I went over and tried to talk to a few of em and the girls were just like, you know, like whooooo! (she sticks her nose into the air and turns her head to the side).
As opposed to being friendly, being "stuck-up" was viewed by the
vanners as an inappropriate mode of interpersonal demeanor. As such,
it was a label attached to other's behaviors when it was believed these
others sought to remain socially distant and aloof from those with whom
s/he came into contact. Being stuck-up meant one believed they were
better than others. Being friendly meant one believed they were as good
as others. In this respect the code of friendliness can be interpreted
as an attempt at status equalization as well as a process to incorporate
others into vanning events.

The other form of interpersonal behavior which the vanners
recognized as possible between men but which they also viewed as non-
desirable was that of "being hostile." To be hostile, to be looking for
a fight, to be antagonistic toward other males was interpreted by them
as directly opposed to having a good time. A couple of incidents
involving outsider-males brought to or present at club parties illus-
trates the vanners' reaction towards this type of interactional form.

One incident occurred during a party given at the home of a
friend of several of the vanners. Present at the party was a male
named Jim who had a head of red hair. Wizard, who himself was proudly
crowned with red hair, greeted Jim by saying, "How ya doin', Red."
Jim's response to this greeting was to stare back at Wizard saying
nothing. Wizard then said he was glad to meet someone else with red
hair and asked Jim if he would like to play a game of pool. Jim
accepted but the game which followed was one characterized by an air of
tension.

The next afternoon while sitting at the Reservoir, several of the
vanners discussed the events of the previous evening and the interaction
between Wizard and Jim.
Quickdraw: You know, Wizard, Jim was ready to let you have it last night.

Wizard: Hey, I felt that he was a little hostile. That's why I just kept tryin' to kid with him and all. Ya know, I figured he would lighten up.

Jay Bird: I don't know. He's pretty red (that is, red-neck).

Wizard: Well, if he had wanted a fight I would have given him one. But, ya know, there ain't no sense in that. Everyone was there to have a good time. I can't see why anyone has to be like that. I was just tryin' to be friendly and people like that just spoil it for everybody.

Quickdraw: Yeah, I know what you mean.

On several other occasions, Zookkeeper brought a friend with him named Rocky. Rocky, too, had an interpersonal demeanor which the vanners interpreted as strange and hostile. Typically, Rocky would simply sit stone-faced saying nothing to anybody and frequently refusing to respond at all when talked too. Again, in talking about Rocky and his behaviors, the vanners signified their disapproval.

Wizard: That friend of Zookkeeper is really strange.

Travelin' Man: Y-Yeah. He, he, he almost started a fight with me at the Pizza Place one night cause he thought I was starin' at him and I wasn't.

Wizard: I don't know why Zookkeeper brings him along. He certainly doesn't act like he wants to be there.

Free Bird: He can go take a flying-fuck as far as I'm concerned. I'd just as soon not have him around. He gives me the creeps. I don't think he wants to have fun. Either that or his idea of fun is sittin' and actin' hostile towards everybody.

While as far as I know Zookkeeper was never asked to stop bring Rocky with him, the two of them eventually had an argument which ended their friendship. As an unwelcome outsider in club events, Rocky had violated
that type of interpersonal style which the vanners considered appropriate to male interactions and to having a good time. He had refused to act friendly.

If being friendly was the form of interaction expected between club members and outsiders, "joking around" was that form characteristic of their relationships with each other and an additional way of having fun. Through this type of interaction, they participated in a colorful and rich sociality during convoys, parties and get-togethers of all types. More specifically, "joking around" was a phrase used by the vanners to refer to three major sub-types of interaction: nonsense talk, joke-telling and joking insults.

Nonsense talk was a type of exchange which frequently occurred during convoys and was almost exclusive to these events. In part, it was a consequence of the communicational constraints imposed on interaction during these events. Contained within and separated by the vans themselves, the only means of vocal interaction was the citizen's band radios which the vans were equipped with. While these radios made verbal communication possible, they also restricted it in two major ways. On the one hand, only one person could talk at a time. On the other hand, if anyone did talk what they said could be heard by everyone else. Hence any and all talk was inclusive of everyone participating in the convoy as audience if not as speaker.

While a large proportion of the talk during these events pertained to communicating direction and information pertinent to the doing of the convoy, that is, concerning lane-changes, turn, traffic lights and police, the vanners also developed a form of exchange constructed through word play and spontaneous jokes that was meaningless except, of course, as a type of entertainment. For example, the following interaction
occurred spontaneously during one convoy and gave rise to a pattern of word play subsequently incorporated into the vanners' verbal repertoire for the remainder of the trip.

Crazy Horse: Got a stopper (red light) up here. Back 'em down.
Zookkeeper: Back 'em down.
Crazy Horse: Stopper
Zookkeeper: Stopper, stopper.
Wizard: Stopper.
Zookkeeper: Stopper.
Crazy Horse: Stopper-opper . . . Okay. It just turned green.
Wizard: Does that mean it's a go-er?
Zookkeeper: Go-er.
Crazy Horse: Go-er.
Wizard (laughing): You guys are full of shit.

Joke-telling was a more formalized aspect of interpersonal fun and typically occurred during club parties. Free Bird, Wizard and Jay Bird were those vanners who most often engaged in this activity although they did it for the benefit of all other members and outsiders that might be present. It would occur when one of them would announce that he had a joke to tell everybody. At larger gatherings he would stand up to make the announcement but in all cases he would wait until he had everyone's attention and would stop should anyone act as if they were not listening. Occasionally, the same person would proceed to tell a series of jokes but sometimes a type of joke-telling contest would emerge between two or three males, including outsiders, who would take turns telling jokes striving to be funnier than the previous guy.
Finally, the joking relationship or joking insult was a type of interpersonal exchange frequently incorporated into the interaction between the male vanners in seeking to have a good time. In this type of exchange, one vanner would say something disparaging about another and the other would attempt to reciprocate. While the feature and form of joking relationships have been analyzed in a variety of sociocultural settings (e.g., Spradley and Mann, 1975; Lundberg, 1966) and while there are certain specific differences between the nature of the joking relationships that obtain in different settings, the joking relationship generally can be seen as one restricted to certain persons, as performed before some audience, and as involving ritual insults.

Within Nomad Vans, the joking insult as a type of "permitted disrespect" (Radcliffe-Brown, 1965:91) occurred almost exclusively between males who were either in the club or who had a relationship already characterized as "good friends." I only observed one instance of it occurring between the lady vanners and, while on several occasions disparaging remarks were directed by a male vanner toward a female, the meaning of the exchange was not the same since in these cases the female target did take offense. I will be discussing this aspect of heterosocial interaction more fully in the next chapter. For now, as an aspect of male homosociality functioning as a feature of good times, the joking insult constituted a means of both displaying and solidifying male bonds of friendship. It was based upon the mutual understanding that verbal insults really were not serious, that they meant something else. Hence, what was communicated in such interactions was a message about the relationship as something exclusive to the interactants. To insult someone in the joking interaction signified friendship and acceptance. Furthermore, these types of exchanges were viewed as entertaining--as an essential aspect of having fun together.
In addition to these more functional aspects of the joking insult for the male relationships in the van club, a full exploration of the subcultural significance of this type of interaction also necessitates an analysis of the content of these insults. Substantively, almost all of these jokes assaulted the sexual competence of the vanner or his sexual preference. With respect to the former, the primary target of the insult would pertain to the size of target's sexual organ. With respect to the latter, the jokes intent of the insult was to imply that the target engaged in homosexual acts.

An example of the former type of joking insult involves the following exchange occurring during a club outing:

Wizard: Hey, anybody got any rubber tugin?
Zookkeeper: Rubber tubin? Why?
Wizard: To start a fire.
Jay Bird: Let's go rip off a rubber machine in a gas station.
Wizard and Zookkeeper: No
Wizard to Jaybird: Let's just use the thousand up in your room you've never been able to use.

(Laughter)
Zookkeeper: He learned how to use 'em! He put a rubber band around the end so they don't fall off.

(Laughter)
Jay Bird: Hey, Zookkeeper! (Jay Bird stands up and pretends to shoot a moon at Zookkeeper)

In this instance several different disparaging insinuations pertaining to Jay Bird's sexual competence were being made by Wizard and Zookkeeper, all based upon the use of the word "rubber" to refer to condoms. Wizard's remark implied that Jay Bird had purchased a plentitude of these
birth control devices but had never been able to use them implying that either he had been rejected by females or could not have an erection. Zookkeeper then takes over and in his remark directly implies that the problem has been the size of Jay Bird's penis: so small a condom wouldn't stay on.

As an example of the latter type of joking insult, there is the following sequence that occurred while several club members were sitting in the Pizza Place deciding how many vans they should take with them to go on a skiing trip.

Free Bird: Well, there's no sense everybody driving since it's winter and everything. I don't mind takin' my van or traveling with someone else. Anyway, it's somethin' to do and if anyone wants to go, the more the merrier.

Earthquake: It'll be cheaper if all of us go.

Free Bird: You gotta think about it. While one guy's drivin', the other four are back there tryin' to squeeze in the bed and sleep for a while.

Zookkeeper: Try to avoid gettin' next to Free Bird.

Free Bird: Why I thought you told me that's where you wanted to be.

(Laughter)

In this exchange, one that was repeated frequently in the male vanner's discourse, both Zookkeeper and Free Bird insinuated that the other had a homosexual preference. Hence, when one considers the content of these joking interactions together with their social consequences, additional aspects of the cultural realities shared and created by the male vanners also become of issue. In particular, to understand why such remarks were seen as the primary basis of casting disparagement on another male while simultaneously being transformed into a type of
male-bonding and a type of humorous entertainment requires an additional analysis of another central cultural dimension of the vanner's world: the meaning of gender differences and the nature of appropriate sexuality.
Footnotes

1 Within the vanners' social reality, "good times" were opposed not to "bad times" but to "times of business" and to "hard times." "Times of business" were occasions where the behaviors and activities associated with "good times" were considered inappropriate while "hard times" were times where having a good time was made difficult because of economic hardships or personal troubles.

2 Not all of the female contestants would flash or strip. However, their refusal to do so ensured their loss of the contest. At every competition that I observed only those female contestants who stripped would be judged the winner.

3 In saying this, I am not drawing upon any specific sociological analysis of "moon-shooting" as a symbolic gesture with a known subcultural history of usage but merely upon my personal experiences. I have seen and heard young males talk about shooting-moons in many contexts prior to my experiences with the vanners. Hence, the vanners "borrowed" this symbol and incorporated it into their rituals of disorder; they did not create the gesture themselves.
CHAPTER IV

GENDER AND SEXUALITY:
MASCU LINIST DIMENSIONS OF VAN CLUB CULTURE

Introduction

In my preceding analysis of the cultural themes which the male vanners expressed in their artifacts and activities, a highly significant aspect of their social reality was pervasively evident--that of sexuality and sexual activity. The conversion of the van emphasized the presentation of a sexually active self possessing a private and romantic site for the pursuit of sexual encounters; the ritualized activities associated with rowdiness and joking-around were imbued with references to sexual activity and the erotic nature of male-female interaction; and the interpersonal jokes and conversations of the male vanners were riddled with sexual innuendoes.

In this chapter, I will explore the meaning of sexuality within the vanners' subculture by focusing on the social rules which influenced their perceptions of the nature of appropriate sexuality and the relationship between sexuality and the gendered identities available to participants in this social world. In doing so, I will argue that the meaning of sexuality in the van club culture was directly related to the meaning of gender and that as such it reflected a masculinist perspective in which females were categorically defined as sexual-objects for the servicing of sexually-active males. Hence, the dominant social reality of the van club--that reality
symbolically expressed in the ritualized activities of the van-ins and in male discourse—was structured upon opposing definitions of masculinity and femininity which reflected male supremacy over females and which were grounded in the normative restrictions imposed upon female heterosexual conduct.

To elaborate on the meaning of gender and sexuality in this social context, I will begin by looking at the relationship between masculinity and sexuality. Then I will proceed to discuss the relationship between femininity and sexuality as defined from the perspective of the male vanners. Throughout this chapter, my analytical focus will be on the symbolic apparatus and cultural practices by which the male vanners collectively defined themselves, other males and females.

**Modes of Masculinity and the Heterosexist Imperative**

Mediating between individuals and the larger societal structure, small subcultural groups provide their members with a collective identity—a shared sense of being-in-the-world—through which subjective experience and collective or objective realities are mutually and interactively determined (Brake, 1980). This collective identity constitutes a "style" or mode of self-presentation through which the "groups display their boundaries and individuals symbolize what they regard as worthy of deference" (Smith, 1974:725). These styles are in turn presented or expressed through the group's organization of objects with activities and outlooks (Hall and Jefferson, 1975:54).

For the male members of Nomad Vans, the personal style and collective identities expressed and displayed through their vans and activities must also be seen as representing a particular mode of
masculinity. Through their cultural artifacts and social activities, they sought to accomplish a type of self, but this was a gendered-self seen as belonging-to and preferred-for males. As a socially distinct category of others, females were seen as inevitably and appropriately conforming to a different style and possessing a different identity.

As a mode or style of masculinity, the personal and interpersonal codes of conduct used by the male vanners in organizing their activities and relationships had two distinct, gender-differentiated dimensions. One dimension pertained to the preferred form of male-homosociality; the other dimension pertained to the preferred form of male-heterosociality. The former dimension was grounded in a morality of comraderie and solidarity which prohibited erotic involvement or sexual intimacy; the latter dimension was grounded in an amorality of separation and ambivalence which encouraged female sexual objectification and denigration.

Masculinity and Male Solidarity: Being a Nice Guy

Of the males with whom they came in contact in their group activities, the vanners recognized four general types of guys: nice-guys, red-necks, jerks and fags. The mode of masculinity with which they identified was that of the "nice-guy." The other labels were pejorative ones used to refer to males afforded inferior social status and excluded as much as possible from club activities. The distinction between "nice-guy" and the other types of males pertained to appropriate versus inappropriate forms of inter-male demeanor and can best be understood by comparing the former type with each of the latter three types.
First, as contrasted with red-necks, nice-guys are guys who are capable of being tough but who prefer to be friendly in their treatment of other males. Red-necks were a type of male exemplified by Jim and by Randy whom I mentioned in my earlier discussion of good times and friendly interaction. According to the vanners, males like Jim and Randy whom they called "red," were constantly hostile in their demeanor towards all but a few other males. These were guys who saw all other males primarily as adversaries and who as a result were always "looking for a fight," always seeking a violent confrontation at the slightest provocation, always ready to establish their dominance over other males through physical contest.

The primary social distinction which the vanners drew between "nice-guys" and "red-guys" or "red-necks" pertained to the distinction between ability and preference in a guy's treatment of other males. For the vanners, a guy should seek to achieve a balance of toughness and friendliness in his interaction with other guys. On the one hand, they perceived the world in which they acted as containing the frequent threat of violent confrontation with other males and they believed it was important for any guy to be tough enough to handle any such confrontation should any emerge. On the other hand, they saw such violence between males as unnecessary, unpleasant and, if at all possible, something to be avoided. Nice-guys should never instigate any violence but should instead seek to be friendly towards other males. The vanners wanted each other and other males to seek inclusion and comraderie in good times rather than exclusion and hostility in bad scenes.

For the vanners, this delicate balance between toughness and friendliness could best be realized or achieved not individually but
collectively and in particular by a collective display of solidarity or "tightness." They took pride in the belief that as a group they were perceived by strangers as intimidating. While they considered this perception to be wrong and even unfair, they would also use it from time to time in order to avoid any real conflict with other male individuals or groups. They knew that they did not really want to "mess" with anyone, but nor did they want anyone to "mess" with them. Displaying solidarity as a club conveyed an aura of avoiding both although they also repeatedly referred to the necessity of being ready and willing to stand together and "stick-up" for each other should any fights actually occur.

An incident occurring one Sunday afternoon while the club was holding a meeting illustrates the vanners' use of a collective display of toughness to achieve respect from other males and to avoid confrontation. It also illustrates their non-identification with the image they were attempting to portray.

On this Sunday afternoon, the club had gathered for a meeting in an area of the River Park where they knew others seldom came. They had selected this site so that they could hold their meeting in relative privacy with a minimum of disruptions. Fourteen of the club members were there. Star Baby, Wild Fire, Crazy Horse and myself were sitting on the benches of a picnic table. The rest of the guys and Spacy were standing up around the table with Wizard and Free Bird standing together at one end and directing the meeting.

Shortly after the meeting started, a car load of guys pulled into the area, thus representing an intrusion into what the vanners had temporarily claimed as their territory. As the car entered, Wizard said, "Alright, everybody, look tough." With this command,
all the club members turned and stared at the intruding car which proceeded to travel out of that particular area of the park.

Travelin' Man (laughing): Guess we scared them off. They took one look at us and kept right on goin'!

Free Bird: Good thing, too, cause, let's face it, we wouldn't have done anything if they'd stopped.

Wizard: We could of picked our noses.

Later, during that same meeting, we were joined by a vanner traveling through Central City on his way to Texas whom Wizard had run into the previous evening and invited out to the club's meeting. Charles, the strange vanner, accepted Wizard's invitation, came to our meeting, and stayed about thirty minutes before taking his leave. Immediately after he had gone, Wizard speaks his praises of Charles to the other club members:

Now there's a good vanner. He didn't hesitate to come over and that's great. That's the way it should be. Cause somebody said somethin' last night that surprised the hell out of me. Some guy, drives the blue Trans Am, says, 'These are a lot of fun these vans but I always thought vanners were stuck-up.' I don't think there's any friendlier people in the world. But when we were in the convoy, how many people were talkin' to us last night. Everybody pulled up alongside, 'You guys havin' a party?'

If as Wizard told the other vanners, friendliness was a hallmark of vanners everywhere, he also repeatedly reminded them that together they were and should be tough, strong and powerful. For example, when he had difficulty getting them excited about going to some bars that were located in a part of Central City in which a major college campus was located, he sought to simultaneously upbraid them for what he labeled cowardice and to remind them of how little they had to fear.
What are you guys afraid of? You got nothin' to be afraid of. I don't know why you don't want to go to these places. You think those college boys are gonna cause you any trouble. Believe me, they aren't gonna mess with us. And what if they did? We can handle anything as long as we stick together. I'm serious. You guys, don't appreciate how tough lookin' you are. It's like what Dave (the manager of the Pizza Place) told me the other night. He said that he really likes us comin' in there. He said that when the members of Nomad Vans are there he doesn't have to worry about anything. It's like when we show up everybody just kinds of (Wizard gestures to signify a quieting down). And of course Dave knows that we will never start any trouble cause that's not how we operate. He knows that we don't go in for that sort of thing so, you know, we can be proud of that.

In other words, the vanners sought to accomplish a mode of masculinity which incorporated strength and toughness but which avoided physical violence and hostility. As symbolically displayed through the vans, a nice-guy needed to be able to command respect from other males and to present a tough and powerful self made even tougher by bonding together. However, if possible, the more preferable type of inter-male behavior was one based on friendliness. By seeking to incorporate other guys where possible into club activities, they could replace inter-male conflict with comraderie attained by sharing good times. A guy who was willing to include others and/or a guy who was willing to join others was a "nice-guy."

The vanners' preference for a masculine style of presentation based on a form of male homosociality which sought to establish male bonding through the equalizing and inclusionary processes of being friendly was further illustrated in the distinction they drew between "nice-guys" and "jerks" or "assholes." The latter labels were applied to males whom the vanners considered incompetent in their interactions with other males. Contrary to red-necks, jerks were neither hostile nor violent in their behavior toward other guys;
rather, jerks or assholes sought too hard to gain acceptance through an exaggerated performance of masculine behaviors. They were seen as seeking to be one of the boys by being better at displaying masculine bravado than the other guys. They would talk louder, laugh louder, get drunker and/or be rowdier at the wrong times or in appropriate ways. As a result, they were also seen as drawing unearned attention from other males, as seeking undeserved status or respect, while not respecting the rights of others they were with.

The male whom the Nomad vanners most consistently referred to as a jerk and who was a relatively frequent object of disparaging comments was another local vanner whom they nicknamed "Dandy Don" and "Mr. Purple Van." Dandy Don had actually attended the initial organizational meeting of the club, but had never paid his dues nor attended subsequent meetings so his membership had been cancelled. From the beginning, however, several of the vanners had expressed reluctance to let him join the club because he was a jerk. Should Dandy Don merely cruise by the spot where the club happened to be gathered, someone would inevitably make note of it and everybody would laugh. Intrigued by this continuous and unanimous disparagement, I finally decided to ask several of the vanners why they didn't like him.

Quickdraw: Because he's a jerk.
Judi: Yeah, I know that but why is he?
Quickdraw: Guess he was just born that way.
Judi: No, I mean, what does he do that makes you think he's a jerk?
Wizard: He's just an idiot. He can't do anything right. He's always actin' up so he can be the center of
attention. Man, he comes on a convoy and he's always weavin' in and out of traffic. You know, there ain't no sense in that. I'm serious. He could cause an accident and it probably would be someone else that got hurt. I think he's crazy.

Judi: Yeah, but let's face it. You guys sure act crazy sometimes.

Jay Bird: That's cause sometimes we're jerks (laughs).

Wizard: Yeah, but not like that we don't. We don't ever do anything that could really hurt anybody or cause any real trouble. You gotta know when to do things and when not to. Dandy there, you know, he simply can't ever act like everybody else or just lay back and take it easy. He's always gotta be center stage. He's always gotta be crazier than everybody else.

Another male who typified what the vanners referred to as a jerk was Gorilla, one of the club's members. While Gorilla was voted into being a club member by everyone except Free Bird, he was never fully accepted by the other members and his low status in the club was demonstrated in numerous ways by the other club members. He was frequently told to shut-up when he would start to speak; no matter what he said his comments were certain to meet with immediate and hostile disagreement from some of the other members; and he was always referred to and called by his last-name instead of by his first name or his handle. None of the other club members received similar treatment and when I asked the other vanners why they afforded Gorilla such differential and denigrating treatment, again they said it was because he was such a jerk. The reasons which they gave when I asked them to explain this characterization illustrate some of the features of inappropriate versus appropriate masculine demeanor.

Zookkeeper: He's always talkin' like Mr. Tough Guy. Braggin' about what he's done or what he's gonna do and how so-and-so and he got into a fight and what he did and how great he is. It's a bunch of bullshit.
Travelin' Man: He's, he's, he's always on your tail, too. Like, like when we're in convoys. Man, I have to have him in back of me cause he's like this far behind me (gestures to indicate a distance of less than a foot).

Jay Bird: He's just an idiot. He's so loud. He's always got to be the center of attention.

The braggary and bravado of Gorilla, his loud and verbally aggressive behaviors earned him nothing but disrespect from the other vanners whose interactions with him were imbued with conflict and hostility instead of comraderie and solidarity. He was perceived as attempting to outdo everyone else in terms of his masculine achievements and as a result he was seen as someone who sought not to be one of the guys but to be better or appear better than everyone else.

While the vanners preferred a mode of masculinity which emphasized collective toughness, male-solidarity, and mutual respect, they considered sexual contact or intimacy between males to be repulsive and immoral. A "nice-guy" and a good vanner was strictly and avidly heterosexual. He liked, wanted and needed sexual intercourse—but only with females. A guy should want to be friends with, spend time with and joke around with other guys, but he should never seek to have sex with them nor want to be associated with males who did. Only females should be the objects of male sexual activity, never another guy. Only females should be "fucked," "screwed," or "laid," never another guy. Only females should sexually arouse one or turn one on, never another guy. Masculinity was associated with almost exaggerated sexual drives, but these could only be heterosexual ones. While the male vanners continually engaged in joking encounters which suggested homosexuality, these were jokes which validated their opposite. Any guy worthy of acceptance and respect from other guys
was first and foremost one who presented an actively heterosexual self. To be or appear to be otherwise was to be a "fag" or a "queer" and to be denied acceptance or respect by the vanners.

The social significance of this heterosexist imperative—of the presentation of a heterosexual self as a part of masculinity and hence of acceptance—can be partially seen in the vanners' differential responses toward two other guys with whom they occasionally came into contact. One was an object of animosity and derision; the other was an object of respect and admiration.

Jack was an acquaintance of Vandura and Jay Bird and a friend of Gorilla. He did not own a van and never tried to join the club but, following Gorilla's entry into the club, he did participate rather frequently in club activities. However, rather than being responded to with friendliness and warmth as were most of the other male non-members who attended club functions, Jack met with hostility, avoidance and rejection. For example, during one club party in a local bar, Jack accidentally spilled a beer which ran down the table and poured into my lap. Wizard reacted, uncharacteristically, by jumping up and throwing a beer into Jack's face. On another occasion, Jack attempted to join a club convoy traveling from the Pizza Place to Jay Bird's house for a party. After Zookkeeper informed the other club members over the c.b. radio of Jack's attempt, the other vanners—Jay Bird, Star Baby, Travelin Man, Wizard, and Vandura—hastily planned an evasive move in the form of a quick left turn whereby they lost him in traffic. Still another time, Jack came with Gorilla to a club gathering at Star Baby's house and nobody would talk to him.

There are no doubt several reasons for the dislike and hostility which the vanners displayed toward Jack, a type of hostility which I
saw them display toward no other male. He was a friend of Gorilla, who was also disliked. He unknowingly violated certain club rules as, for example, when he attempted to break into a van convoy with his car. Nonetheless, what is of significance are the accounts the vanners gave for their dislike of him, for these accounts primarily alluded to Jack's perceived sexual identity.

Judi: What is it you guys have against Jack? He seems nice enough.

Zookkeeper: I don't know. There's just something funny about him. I'll bet he's a queer or somethin'.

Star Baby: I think he's a faggot and I don't want him in my house.

Quickdraw: Yeah, I think so, too.

As far as I was able to determine, the vanners had no objective basis for attributing homosexual preference or activity to Jack and I was unable to ascertain what criteria they utilized in so doing.\(^4\) Still, that the vanners would utilize the attribution of homosexuality as in and of itself a legitimate basis for rejecting him and subjecting him to discourteous treatment not afforded any other guy indicates the critical importance placed on heterosexuality as a component of masculinity. This becomes even clearer when one compares their treatment and characterizations of Jack with their reactions to another guy named Hass.

Hass was a vanner who belonged to another local van club with which Nomad Vans got together on a couple of occasions. Although their contact with Hass was infrequent at best, the vanners considered him to be "quite a guy," a person worthy of respect and admiration which, as the following conversation indicates, was based upon Hass's
ability to display the appropriate features of masculinity.

Earthquake: I was talkin' to Hass and he's goin' to the van-in, too. Hass is takin' as many girls as he can fit in his van.

Zookkeeper (laughs): How many does he plan on puttin' in his van?

Earthquake: Six or seven.

Zookkeeper: Six or seven.

Jay Bird: Plus a keg of beer.

Zookkeeper: That's just for him.

Jay Bird: As I said, man, he ... Hass said he was gonna be there three hours before everyone else get's there. (Speaking as if imitating Hass) "I'm gonna have a buzz on as soon as I get in my truck, man, and buzz my way down."

Zookkeeper: Man, he's great!

The self which Hass presented to the other vanners, or which they attributed to him, was one which exemplified not only the sub-cultural emphasis upon pursuing a good time by getting messed-up, but which also portrayed an hyper-heterosexuality. To take a girl along to a van-in was for one essential purpose: to have a readily available sex-partner. Hass, however, was not going to take just one female. He was going to take "as many as he could fit into his van" thereby being able to have continuous sex with a variety of partners. While the other vanners knew that Hass was "just kidding," that he would not really be bringing six or seven females along, that was irrelevant to the admiration which they had for him. To be respected and accepted by the other guys as a "nice-guy" or a "great-guy," a male did not have to realize his claims of extraordinary sexual accomplishments. In fact, if Hass had talked as if he had
actually done so or would do so, he would probably have been called a "jerk" for laying claim to being superior to other guys. Instead, what was important was that he display a commitment to the style of masculine heterosexuality preferred by the other guys. Hass was well liked because he incorporated into his demeanor many of the characteristics which the vanners valued including a commitment to having a good time, getting rowdy and getting messed-up, and joking around with other guys. Moreover, as part of this joking around and having a good time, he portrayed a style of masculine sexuality that was part of the vanners' collective masculine identities.

The Nature of Masculine Heterosexuality

As indicated by the vanners' contrary evaluations of Jack and Hass, an essential component of their conceptions of masculine sexuality was that of heterosexism: a belief that the only natural form of sexuality is that of heterosexuality and hence that the only natural types of erotic relationships are those involving males and females. However, to say that the principle of heterosexism was an essential and core component of their beliefs about masculine sexuality is not sufficient for an understanding of masculine heterosexuality as part of the vanner's collective identities nor adequate for exploring the extent to which this set of cultural beliefs and practices informed the gendered-organization of group processes.

Fully explicating the nature of masculine heterosexuality with the vanners' cultural system necessitates consideration of three other cultural processes which not only constituted the vanners' preferred form of masculine demeanor but which also critically influenced their definitions and images of females. First, the male
vanners tended to glorify sexual intercourse as the most pleasurable of all male experiences and hence something to be avidly sought after. Secondly, they distinguished between sex-as-activity and sex-as-commitment thereby affording men two distinct but legitimate modes of being sexually active. Third, they defined occasions of sexual intercourse as major masculine accomplishments to be collectively and publicly celebrated.

The glorification of sexual intercourse was significant for the vanners' activities because it was directly related to the subcultural emphasis which they placed on having a good time. For a group committed to collectively pursuing a good time, "having sex" represented the best time an individual male could have and better than any he could have with the other guys. Whatever else may or may not be happening, if a guy managed to "make it" or "get it on" with "some girl," then everyone else knew he had had a great time. A guy or guys could have fun without it but if he could get it, then he did not need anything else. Hence, the vanners talked about wanting to seek out sexual encounters and the planning of events typically involved considerations of whether and where there might be girls available for the guys to meet and try to "get it on with." So high up in the ranking of good times was that of having sexual intercourse that while club members were expected to want to be with the club, if any one of them had an opportunity to be with a girl for romantic purposes then that was considered a legitimate reason for failing to attend a club function, unless one could bring the girl along. For example, one Friday evening the club had gone to the River Bar. Although, Travelin' Man had told Earthquake that he was going to be there, he never showed up. The next afternoon while the club was hanging around
at the River Park, Travelin' Man arrived and was immediately asked to account for his absence the previous evening.

Wizard: Hey, Travelin' Man, where were you last night? I thought you said you were gonna be there.

Travelin' Man: I... w, w, well, I was. But I had a date with Marie and I picked her up and we got as far as the parking lot but we never went inside. She said she didn't want to go in.

Wizard: Why not?

Travelin' Man: I don't know.

Wizard: So whatcha do?

Travelin' Man: We just stayed in the parking lot, man (laughs)!

Wizard: Well, that's cool. There sure as hell wasn't anything better goin' on inside.

Zookkeeper: Are you kiddin'? There ain't nuthin' better!

Wizard: No argument there, man!

Since according to the vanners, all guys naturally wanted sexual intercourse and since they naturally wanted it only with females, an additional question arises as to under what conditions and with what females sexual intercourse is perceived as legitimate. In general, the vanners did recognize certain constraints on sexual activity and differences in the mode of sexual activity that a guy could exercise. First, they believed that the female involved should be willing to have sexual intercourse. While, as will be discussed later, the vanners' tended to explain rape in misogynistic terms, ultimately blaming the female involved for its real or potential occurrence, they themselves spoke with abhorrence of such incidences believing that although the girl might be asking for it, a 'nice-guy' should be better able to control himself so as not to force a female to
have sex with him. For the vanners, sexual intercourse with a woman had to involve her consent. While her consent may not come easily, that is, he may have to put out some time, energy, and money into showing her that he cared or coaxing her to give in, it should never involve physical violence or coercion. At best, she should be actively interested but, at least, she should passively submit to his overtures.

With the major exception that the female involved be willing to participate, the only other limitation to his pursuit of heterosexual encounters depended upon whether or not he chose to become involved in a coupled-relationship ("fall in love") with a girl. Although I will explore the nature of heterosexual relationships more fully in the next chapter, at present I would simply like to point out the significance of this social relationship (being boyfriend and girlfriend) for the nature of the sexual activity that males believed they could legitimately engage in. In particular, they distinguished between whether or not he engaged in sexual intercourse as a part of a commitment to a particular female or whether he engaged in sexual intercourse for its own sake with any female who was available and willing. If a guy was involved in a coupled relationship with a girl, then it was automatically assumed that they were sexually-involved, that he had a readily available sexual partner and that both of them were, therefore, sexually active. It was also considered right for the guy (and his girlfriend) to be sexually monogamous, to have sexual intercourse only with her and to refrain from having any form of sexual encounter with any other girl. However, if a guy did not have a girlfriend, then he could pursue sexual intercourse for its own sake with any female who was willing. Hence, the guys in the club
recognized two distinct modes of being sexually active each of which had certain costs and certain benefits but each of which was socially approved. Which mode of sexual activity a vanner adopted was considered either a matter of necessity (he simply could not find a girlfriend) or a matter of personal choice.

One evening Quickdraw, Travelin' Man, Wizard, Free Bird, Vandura, Zookkeeper and myself had gathered at the Pizza Place to have a few beers and talk. At one point Wizard asks if everyone would like to go to a lake and camp on the next weekend. Travelin' Man responds that he can't go because he works on Saturday and has a date with his girlfriend for Saturday evening. Free Bird responds by saying that Travelin' Man should not be in love. Free Bird continued:

Love is no good really. It ties you down and I can't afford it 'cause someone always gets hurt. Star Baby and I have a nice understanding since we both know we can see other people. You know, even though we spend most of our free time together, we still know we can see others and that's great.

The "understanding" which Free Bird claimed he and Star Baby had reached was a mutual agreement supposedly to set aside the rules of monogamy associated with being in love. Free Bird claimed to prefer the "freedom" to pursue sexual activity with other females when he so desired and publicly rejected the desirability of either a commitment or sexual monogamy. Several of the other vanners did not agree with his choice, seeing the mode of sexual activity which allowed a guy to pursue a variety of sexual partners as also having personal costs without some of the other pleasures that a love-relationship could provide.
Wizard: I don't agree. Man, there's something really special about being in love. I'm serious. You find yourself a good woman and you've got it made. Sometimes I get so tired of playin' all the little games.

Zookkeeper: Yeah, you just want someone whose right there when you need 'em.

Wizard: And you don't have to worry about what to do and everything. You know what I'm sayin'?

Free Bird: I know what you're sayin' but I don't agree. As soon as you say you're in love it's like you're not supposed to do anything else or even look at anybody else. It drives me crazy.

Wizard: Well, yeah, there's that part of it, too. Course you can always try to get a little piece on the side (Laughs).

In essence, for the male vanners (as well as for the females) the heterosexual relationship based upon love was a relationship which prescribed a morally constrained type of sexual activity: that of monogamy. However, a male was not morally constrained to only being sexually active while in a monogamous love relationship. If he was willing and able to put in the effort required to have sex with any number of women who were also willing and refrained from becoming committed to any of them, then he suffered no loss of esteem or respect in the eyes of other guys.

For the vanners, it was a natural part of being male to want and need sexual activity. Indeed, they referred to a period of time without sexual intercourse as a period of increasing desperation in which a guy became increasingly "hard-up." Being hard-up implied that one was in great enough need for sex that he would go after a female in whom he would not be interested otherwise. So important was sexual intercourse for being males and having a good time, that when a vanner was believed to have "gotten lucky," these were reacted to as major
accomplishments and became occasions made public and collectively celebrated by the other guys in the club.

One way in which these occasions were marked was through a joking interaction in which the successful vanner was kidded about his reputed accomplishment. Such joking interactions were particularly likely to occur when the vanner was with a girl for the first time and thus denoted his initial successful conquest. For example, at the Christmas party which the club had, Vandura brought a date, something which he had never done before and with a girl he had not talked about or dated before as far as the other club members knew. After they arrived, they sat in a chair, she sitting on his lap, for an extended period of time just kissing or "making-out." The other club members talked about him to each other ("Did you see Vandura? God, the two of them are really goin' at it.") But otherwise they left him alone. A few hours after he arrived, while the party was still at its peak, Vandura and his date left and everyone knew it was to go have sexual intercourse. The following afternoon at the Sunday meeting, Wizard asked if everyone had had a good time at the party the previous evening.

Free Bird: Well, we all know Vandura did, right, Vandura?

Wizard: Well, I'm not sure. I'm not sure if he even knew where he was last night.

Vandura then joins in the joking interaction acting as if he had indeed been oblivious to the nature of the event at which he had been present.

Vandura: Party? What party?

Wizard: Why, I'm amazed he can talk after goin' at it like that. I figured his lips would be all worn out. Hell,
I should of poured some beer over 'em to put out the fire.

Jay Bird: That's okay, Vandura. You just go back to wherever you were, man and we won't bother you again.

In this way, the guys in the club not only made public reference to Vandura's accomplishment but glorified its occurrence and its impact as an experience which can make a man forget everything and everyone else.

Similarly, at another club party given to celebrate Crazy Horse's birthday, several outsiders came who were strangers to all the club members except Crazy Horse and Wild Fire. Free Bird spent about an hour talking exclusively to one of these strangers, a girl named Terry. Again, before the party was over, Free Bird and Terry left for a period of time. Again, everyone knew it was to go have sex. Again, at the meeting the next afternoon, Free Bird was kidded about it.

Jay Bird: Hey, Free Bird, where'd ya go last night, man?
Free Bird: Say what?
Jay Bird: Wher'd ya go last night when you left the party?
Free Bird: Oh, Terry wanted to see my van so I showed it to her.
Wizard: Did she like it?
Free Bird: I guess so. She seemed to. Anyway, I sure as hell liked showing it to her.
Zookkeeper: Shit, how come nobody ever wants to see my van?
Wizard: Probably cause it's too small for 'em to get into (giggles).

In this brief interaction, "showing the van" became a metaphor for having sexual intercourse—indeed, as in Wizard's joking disparagement of Zookkeeper, a virtual symbol of the penis. Hence, this
indicates the intricate relationship between the van and the presentation of a sexually-active self. It also represented a rather typical event in which the sexual accomplishment of one of the vanners could be publicly attested to.

Another cultural mechanism by which the male vanners collectively celebrated occasions where one of them was believed to have achieved sexual intercourse was a ritualized practical joke known as "van rocking." A rocking-van—a van moving from side to side on its axle—was a metaphor for sexual intercourse within vanning subculture as was denoted by the oft repeated phrase "when this van's rockin', don't come knockin." A rocking van symbolically represented the rhythmic thrusts of male pelvic motions during sexual intercourse. Furthermore, because the van represented a site of sexual activity owned by guys deeply interested in having sexual intercourse, whenever a vanner was alone with a female in his van it was assumed that he was having, about to have, or trying to have sexual intercourse with her regardless of whether or not his van was actually rocking. In many of these instances, those male vanners not themselves preoccupied with someone or something else would engage in a joke by rocking the target's van ostensibly to interrupt or foil his attempted conquest. Carrying out the joke involved having one or more of the guys get on one side of the van, grab it from underneath the lower edge of the chassis and pull up on it a few times causing it to rock from side to side. The rocking would be continued until the target cursed at them from his window or his door.

While the overt and immediate effects of the act was to disrupt the vanners' sexual activity, its symbolic significance was more complex. The vanner victimized by this practical joke was never really
angry nor was he expected to be. Furthermore, I never witnessed a van-rocking when the vanner was with a female for the first time and where it could have seriously interfered with a tenuous situation. In addition, if a club member was really concerned that the other members might interrupt his sexual activities, it was quite easy for him to drive somewhere away from the rest of the club. Instead, for both the victim and the perpetrators, the van-rocking was experienced as fun, as a means of collectively celebrating the otherwise privatized pleasure associated with having sexual intercourse. The van-rocking constituted a mock-disruption calling attention to the sexual accomplishment of the vanner and was treated as type of public validation of his self and his actions by his audience, regardless of whether sexual activity had actually been taking place. Through it, the male vanners attested to each other's heterosexuality and with it their masculinity.

The collective celebration of occasions of sexual intercourse by the guys in the club indicates the central importance of heterosexuality in their collective masculine identities and their subcultural processes. In addition, the existence of this cultural practice reveals two other features of the vanners' conception of the relationship between sexuality and the differential conception of gender which they held. On the one hand, while heterosexuality was a critical component of the vanners' preferred mode of masculinity, the accomplishment of masculine sexuality was largely symbolic. Being accepted as a male did not mean that a guy actually had sex frequently or demonstrated that he could get either a girlfriend or a variety of female sexual partners. Instead, being accepted and respected by other guys depended more on acting as if one wanted "it," needed "it," and
was seeking "it," not that one necessarily had "it." Indeed, it was
to some extent because sexual intercourse was viewed as a problematic
occurrence that it was celebrated by the guys as a masculine accomplish­
ment. If it was a frequent and/or routine part of their lives, or if
to accomplish masculinity a guy had to act like having sex was a
frequent or routine part of his life, then one wonders whether it
would have been the subject of those types of cultural practices.
Within the van club culture, the doing of masculine heterosexuality
tended to be principally a matter of symbolic display for actors still
seeking to realize it in their lives. These were guys still in the
process of becoming sexual. While all of the core members of the clubs
and their male friends continuously joked about having sex and talked
about wanting sex or needing sex, not all were sexually active during
the time the club members were together. Several were known to be
relatively inactive and yet this was never used to ridicule them or to
even joke about them with. If reference was made to it at all, it
was in the context of a self-mockery as in Zookkeeper's remark that he
could never get anyone interested in looking at his van or in a
situation of friendly concern with helping each other find a girlfriend
or a date.7

On the other hand, if sexuality was viewed as something proble­
matic for these guys to achieve, then the question becomes why it
would be so perceived. The answer to this question resides in the
conception which the male vanners had of females and female sexuality.
To be more specific, for the vanners, females become that category of
other who own or control sex and who do not always want to readily
give it or use it. Hence, for the male vanners, heterosexual
encounters possess an element of competition as males and females seek
to satisfy or protect what are likely to be opposing needs. What these opposing needs are and why they are opposing resides in one of the central contradictions of the van-club culture: its masculinist reduction of women to sexual objects whose value in the world depended upon their value to men and whose value to men depended upon being sexually desirable and yet restricting their sexual activity to monogamous heterosexual relationships. In order to explicate the nature of this contradiction, I will next discuss the vanners' images and standards of femininity evident in their activities and discourse.

Symbolic Masculinism and the Sexual Objectification of Women

Consistent with the cultural themes which structured their activities, the male vanners stressed a mode of masculinity consisting of a tough-but-friendly demeanor towards other males, an inclination to get messed-up and act-rowdy under conditions collectively defined as appropriate for doing so and a presentation of a heterosexually-active self. The standards and images which they had of females, however, were quite different and emphasized a sexist or masculinist frame of reference. In other words, as other feminist scholars have elucidated in their analyses of patriarchal images of females and femininity (Janeway, 1971; Ruth, 1980:28-30), the vanners defined females in such a way as to deny them equal status with men and to thereby limit, relative to men, the types of activities in which women who sought to be afforded value and respect could engage.

To be more specific, the masculinist images of women contained within the symbolic systems of the dominant, male-vanner culture reflected two major conceptual dimensions: their desirability as sexual objects and the nature of their heterosexual conduct. According
to the former dimension, women were defined by males primarily as sexual commodities to be evaluated, wanted and sought after as objects existing to provide men with sexual pleasure. According to the latter dimension, women were defined and evaluated in terms of their sexual demeanor and conduct with men. The former dimension was perceived by the vanners to be a basis of female power over men; the latter dimension essentially sought to curb their ability to exercise it.

In further elaborating on the vanners' images and standards of femininity, I will focus my analysis on certain symbolic practices through which these masculinist representations were constructed. First, I will consider how certain major vanning activities, rituals and celebrations served to sexualize and denigrate female participants. Then, I will consider the female-typifications reflected in the male vanners' talk.

**Good Times, Sex, and Misogyny**

As a basic element of "good times," being rowdy involved certain sanctioned deviations from the rules of public, polite decorum. Frequently, these sanctioned deviations pertained to social rules proscribing talk and gestures which directly or indirectly alluded to sexual intercourse. As previously mentioned, for the vanners "having sex" was the quintessential "good time," and a major masculine accomplishment. In addition, other forms of having fun and getting rowdy almost constantly involved making joking references to sexual intercourse. Saying or doing things which the vanners knew would be perceived as obscene and immoral within the dominant morality of the straight world was celebrated by them as a central means by which to symbolize their rejection of that world and its presumed constraints
However, these rowdy or obscene gestures and jokes also reflected a denigration of females—a symbolic reduction of them to sexual objects existing to be pursued for male pleasure. The symbolic processes by which the male vanners presented and validated their masculinity as hyper-heterosexual actors consumed with the drive to have sex also served to validate masculinism by differentially and derogatorily defining women in terms of their existence as objects of male sexual needs and interests. As a result, an essential component of the vanners' good times was a cultural current of misogyny. While the examples I could use to illustrate this aspect of the vanners' cultural system are many, I will select a few different types of events which were typical of their misogynistic activities.

At club parties and private gatherings, one or more vanners would typically attempt to "get things going" or to encourage rowdiness through some loud, obscene, and misogynistic songs. On several occasions, particularly at club parties to which outsiders were also invited, Free Bird would strum his guitar and at the top of his voice sing:

I don't wanna see your fuckin' face no more  
Cause you ain't nuthin' but a fuckin' whore.

Her name was Betty Jean  
Boy did she make me cream.

Second verse same as the first.

Similarly, Wizard taught Zookkeeper, Vandura and Jay Bird a "poem" beginning with the phrase, "You bitch, you bitch, you slimy slut," which they would occasionally recite in unison at club gatherings.
Whether at meetings, gatherings or parties, allusions to women-as-sex and men-as-consumers-of-women-as-sex permeated male talk about planning or having good times, as the following conversations occurring at two separate club meetings illustrate.

Free Bird: I think we should all go down to the Pumpkin Festival in Littleville next weekend. It's really a good time. They got anything you can think of made out of pumpkin and it's a great time.

Vandura: Hey, Free Bird, they got pumpkin pie?

Free Bird: They got pumpkin hamburgers, pumpkin cake. They even got pumpkin (Free Bird puts his hands together in a gesture which refers to a female vagina and means "eat it.")

Zookkeeper: You can guarantee that, Free Bird? If you can guarantee that, I'll go.

Another time Earthquake suggested that the club attend a van and auto show called the Van-O-Rama being held at a local fairgrounds.

Gorilla: Is that the one with the Dallas Cheerleaders?

Earthquake: Yeah, the Dallas Cheerleaders are gonna be there.

Gorilla: That's worth three-fifty (meaning the three dollar and fifty cents admission price).

Zookkeeper: If all you get to do is look at it, it ain't (laughs).

Gorilla: What do you want for three-fifty?

Zookkeeper: As much as I can get.

Thus it went. Good times, getting rowdy and joking-around were constantly informed with and to a large extent defined by having "it" or sex and the reduction of women to "it" or sex.

These masculinist and misogynistic themes within vanning activities were nowhere more evident or more extreme than at the van-ins. At these events, female participants were habitually subjected
to verbal assaults which reduced them and their purpose at van-ins to sexual objects existing for the erotic pleasure of males. Females or Lady-Vanners sitting at campsites, walking around the van-in grounds, looking over paraphenalia at merchants' booths or buying food at food-stands were certain to be accosted by males with some form of sexual overture ranging from "Hi, there, babe" to "Hey, wanna fuck," unless she was accompanied by and hence, already belonged to, another male vanner. In addition, roving groups of males sitting in and atop vans would periodically drive around yelling at any women they saw to "show some tit," regardless of where she was or whom she was with.

This sexual objectification and denigration of females by males was most formally ritualized in the contests held on Saturday evening: the teeny-bikini contest, the wet-tee-shirt contest for women and the wet-tee-shirt contest for men. The first two contests involved female participants and the last involved male participants.

Although beauty contests are rituals of dominant society, the vanners, in keeping with their cultural focus on rowdiness and their deviation from the sexual norms of straight society, had gradually come to include flashing and stripping as routine parts of the contests. In front of hundreds of male vanners and a sprinkling of females, the women who entered these contests would be paraded on stage competing with each to be judged the most attractive/desirable for which they would receive a small engraved plaque. Inevitably, as the master-of-ceremony would introduce each of the female contestants, the men in the audience would begin to whistle, hoot, and yell at them to "take it off" and most of the females on stage would first expose their breasts, then they would flash their buttocks and finally, they would strip naked. While not all of the female contestants would flash or
strip, I never witnessed a contest where a woman who remained clothed actually won. In order to win, a female contestant had to expose herself to hundreds of hooting males whose hoots, hollers, and applause indicated that they judged her to be sexually desirable purely because of her physical characteristics. She was made into an object of male sexual or erotic desire.

While there was a male version of these contests, the male contests and the female contests were not cultural equivalents. Instead, it was precisely because the sex of the participants radically altered the symbolic meanings the vanners attributed to these contests and their participants, that these contests symbolically express the masculinism permeating these subcultural celebrations. Both the male contests and the female contests were always directed by male masters-of-ceremony and performed before predominantly male audiences. Hence, while the male contestants would sometimes flash or strip, they were essentially exposing themselves to other men. In a heterosexist culture, the male contests were seen as a joke between men, a deviant act done by men for men. The actions of the male contestants carried no sexual connotations nor any moral implications. The female contests also performed before men most definitely had sexual connotations. In other words, the male contests were a form of comedic entertainment while the female contests were a form of erotic entertainment.

Moreover, contrary to the male contestants, the females urged on by the male audience who would expose themselves were seen as less than virtuous for their willingness to comply. These moral interpretations were illustrated in the following conversation I had with Wizard, Zookkeeper, and Travelin' Man concerning these contests.
Wizard: I don't think it's right for those girls to get up there and expose themselves in order to win. It never used to be like that, you know. The girls would go up there with their bathing suit or whatever on and everyone would vote for the one they thought was the prettiest or best-lookin'. Now, they are expected to get naked and if things continue like they are pretty soon we're gonna hear about fights breakin' out over some girl or over what somebody said to somebody else's girlfriend and that'll be too bad.

Zookkeeper: Man, that one girl, the one with the long blond hair and big tits, her boyfriend, man, he is right up there (on stage) with her. Did you notice that?

Travelin' Man: I... man, I would be, too! You know/

Wizard: Yeah, that's exactly what I mean. She goes up there and does her thing and gets a lot of these guys all excited and one of these days, somebody is gonna try something, like try and grab her when she walks down (off of the stage) and than all hell's gonna break loose. You'll have vanners goin' after each other and that'll be too bad. It's gonna get out of hand and that'll be that. I'm serious.

Judi: So you think maybe they should stop having these contests?

Wizard: Not stop having the contests but stop having the girls strip.

Zookkeeper: Hell, they stop havin' the contests nobody would come to these things (laughs). That's half the reason van-ins are so much fun.

Wizard: Well, yeah, I'd be the first to admit I enjoy 'em but the women should think more of themselves than that. I don't have anything against them really but they should think more of themselves than that.

Judi: Well, the guys who get up there expose themselves, too. Do you feel the same way about them?

Wizard: Yeah, I know what you're sayin' but let's face it. That's just not the same thing and you know it. I may not be right, Judi, but that's just the way things are.

Wizards interpretations were of course correct within this social world given its masculinist presuppositions. He spoke about the existence of a double-standard which not only established different
moral standards for male versus female behavior but which, in so doing, could serve to limit the ability of females to participate in the vanning subculture on the same terms as men. On the one hand, being a vanner meant that one should have fun, get rowdy and if at all possible, pursue sexual intercourse, unless one was a female. If you were a female participant at a van-in, then you would be bombarded with a multiplicity of cultural messages reducing you to a sexual being and encouraging you to think of yourself as an erotic object. However, should you act like one, then at best you risked being denigrated for it and, at worst, you risked being violently assaulted by the males you sexually aroused. To be a female vanner at a van-in was to be present in a sociocultural situation of intense contradictions.

The cultural contradictions created by a masculinist culture for female actors in it was evident additionally in the typifications made of females by the males in their talk and jokes. In considering the linguistic distinctions made by the male vanners in talking about women, and in analyzing the basis for distinguishing between types of females, masculinist definitions of females as sexual objects who should not act as sexual beings by the same standards as did men are further elucidated.

Male Typifications of Females

In the generic, the vanners--both male and female--typically referred to females in their social world as "girls" or though less frequently, "women." The term "girls" was, therefore the linguistic counterpart to the term "guys." Occasionally, the male vanners would also refer to a female or females as "chicks." In general, however, terms which symbolically reduced all females to subhuman species were
infrequently used and were primarily confined to certain contexts of verbal interaction or to specific types of females. For example, following the c.b. jargon of truckers, the vanners while in convoys would typically refer to females as "beavers," but they seldom used that term in any other situation.

The vanners did use a far more elaborate vocabulary for making distinctions between types of females, however. This vocabulary and the social distinctions upon which it was based reveal the two primary dimensions informing masculinist images of females within the van-club culture. One set of distinctions pertained to the perceived sexual desirability of the female as determined by her physical appearance. The second set pertains to her moral status as determined by her conduct toward and with men.

Foxes versus Dogs. Consistent with the cultural sexualization of females, any female within the vanners' perceptual space was almost invariably subjected to a collective evaluation by them as to her desirability or value as a sexual commodity. As commodity, as something to be bought or pursued in potential competition with other buyers, they would evaluate not only whether she had the qualities that they valued but how much she would be worth in terms of money, time, and effort and whether she might be more than they could afford. This commodification of females as sexual objects is illustrated in the following exchange which occurred between Travelin' Man, Free Bird, Quickdraw and Vandura one night at the Pizza Place where they had just been served by a new waitress who was subsequently subjected to an assessment by them.
Free Bird: Well, whatdya think?

Vandura: I wouldn't mind takin' her out.

Travelin' Man: I wouldn't, I wouldn't wantta take her out.

Free Bird: I'd take her out. I'd take her out and spend a hundred bucks on her tonight. Damn, I would! I'd buy her a thirty-three dollar bottle of wine and take her out to the (names a very expensive restaurant) and buy her a dress. I'd like to buy her a van (laughs).

Quickdraw: I'd sure take her, too.

Whether driving by one or more females during convoys, watching females enter a bar where they were sitting, or walking around looking at females during van-ins, the male vanners' discourse routinely included discussions about the sexual value or desirability of the females seen. Although they did not always agree as to how attractive or valuable a female was, they did utilize in their discussions certain agreed-upon distinctions about the ranking of females as sexual-commodities. They employed an erotic continuum at one end of which was the "fox," the girl any man would like to have, and at the other end of which was the "dog," the girl so ugly as to be of no value as a sexual object. The following conversation occurring over the c.b. radios while the club was on a convoy travelling down a busy main thoroughfare in Central City illustrates these distinctions in use. We had been joined on the convoy by several other local male vanners, Jackrabbit and Beer Barrel, who were also incorporated into the conversation.

Jackrabbit: If I see some women that want a ride in a van, well, I'm not gonna pass it up.

Beer Barrel: Just point to the brown car two back from you and tell 'em they can ride in this one, but they'd better not be blimps.
Jackrabbit: If I see 'em in a yellow '78 Camaro, I'll send 'em back.

Wizard: You guys referring to the Gruesome Twosome.

Beer Barrel: Uh, that's right. One ain't bad. The other one, the skinny one, she's a dog. We can throw her right out the window.

Free Bird: Yeah, one of 'em ... wow, that fox can ride in my van any time she wants.

Beer Barrel: You know how it be there, uh, Jackrabbit? We can take the skinny one, you know, that blond, we can throw her out the window. Only problem is she's liable to stick right through somebody's chest and then we'd be up on murder charges.

A female either too fat (blimps) or too skinny was of no value and could be thrown out of a moving van the way one might discard an empty beer can. An ugly female was an object to be discarded since an object's only value is their use to their potential owner and who would have any use for an ugly female.

I do not know precisely what criteria the vanners utilized in assessing the sexual attractiveness of women they observed but from listening to them talk about women in a number of different situations it appeared that these assessments were based almost exclusively upon the females physical appearance and frequently included reference to particular anatomical features. For example, one evening while the club was gathered at the Castle Lot, Jay Bird, Vandura, Zookkeeper, Wizard, Spacy and myself spent a few minutes watching Spacy's television while waiting for other club members to arrive. The show that we watched was called "the 98¢ Beauty Pageant" and involved a traditional beauty pageant merged with elements parodying beauty pageants, that is, some of the female contestants were seriously attempting to present an ideal-sexual-object while others were clearly
mocking that ideal or mocking themselves in relation to that ideal. It was, however, the women in the former category who elicited the most reaction from the male club members whose reactions pertained primarily to certain physical features.

Jay Bird: Man, look at the tits on that one. Boy, what I wouldn't give to have my hands on those just once.

Zookkeeper: They're not real. They can't be. They just don't make 'em like that. Least not around here, they don't.

Vandura: They sure don't!

Jaybird: They sure don't!

Vandura: Well, I sure wouldn't mind spendin' a little time gettin' to know one or two of those, uh, women.

Wizard (laughing): A little time is all you'd get, too.

By the vanners' estimation, these women were "foxes" and as Wizard's playful put-down of Vandura suggests were considered too valuable or too costly to be a type of woman they could even hope to interact with much less have any sexual involvement with. In this and other cases, moreover, their evaluations frequently included statements which focused upon and reduced the woman to some part of her anatomy as in "did you see the tits on that one?" or "she's gotta nice ass."

While a "fox" or "truly beautiful girl" was a male's sexual ideal, the "dog" was a female who was perceived to be valueless as a sexual object--a female so ugly that having sex with her would virtually reduce the status of the male in the eyes of other males. An example of the use of this typification and its implications for the symbolic treatment of females so judged was illustrated one evening at Star Baby's home after she, Jay Bird, Zookkeeper and Cisco Kid had returned from the roller skating rink. Although neither Wizard nor myself had
gone skating with them, we had joined them later at Star Baby's house where they told us about their adventures at the rink. One incident had involved Cisco Kid who had evidently spent some time while there talking with a girl and the other vanners began to tease him for this.

Zookkeeper: Hey, Cisco, who was that little blond girl you were talkin' to?

Cisco Kid: Oh, she's just some girl I know from school.

Star Baby: Well, she sure seemed interested in you, you cute little thing.

Zookkeeper: I sure wouldn't have minded if she had talked to me for a while. Some guys have all the luck. Last time I was there I had some girl after me all night. I couldn't get away from her. I finally had to leave so's she would leave me alone.

Wizard: How come? Were you afraid to say "yes"? (laughs)

Zookkeeper: Are you kiddin'? She was ugly, man. A real dog. I may be hard-up but I'm not that hard-up.

Jay Bird: She was so ugly you would of had to put a bag over her face before you could of gotten it up.

Zookkeeper: She was so ugly, they have to put a steak on her face to get the dog to play with her.

To be labeled a "dog," to be perceived to be an "ugly" female was to be perceived to be a female of no sexual value to men. At the same time, because the vanners symbolically reduced women to sexual objects, to be a female seen as of no value as a sexual object was to be characterized in inter-male verbal play as a totally nonsignificant person. A dog was a female to be avoided or "gotten rid of"—some girl that no male, no matter how "hard-up," would choose or even be capable of having sex with and hence would rather not interact or spend time with. The implication of this dialogue was that males chose to interact with females primarily for reasons of sexual interest, not
for the sake of sociability or friendship which they valued in their interaction with each other. To be an ugly or non-sexually-desirable female was to be a nobody in their eyes.

**Nice Girls and Good Women versus Bitches, Teases and Sluts.**

Not only did the male vanners define and rank females in terms of their perceived value as sexual objects, they also defined and evaluated females in terms of their perceived sexual/social demeanor toward males. A woman deemed worthy of male-respect and admiration was the "nice-girl," "lady," or "good woman" who was sexually attractive to men but who was sexually monogamous, limiting her sexual activity to a relationship with one male to whom she was emotionally committed. Contrary to other analyses of male sexual codes in other social contexts (Whyte, 1943), the vanners did not expect girls to be virginal until marriage in order to be respected as "nice-girls." They acknowledged that females, too, have sexual needs and enjoy sexual intercourse, but in order to be considered a "nice-girl," a female should restrict her sexual activity to relationships with men that also involved some emotional involvement. She should be sexually active if in love with a guy, but she should only be sexually active when she's in love with a guy, and then, only with the guy with whom she's in love. No matter how attractive or "good-looking" she might be, no matter how many other males she might be capable of "getting," she should want only one man. Like a vanner's van, a "nice girl" or "good woman" should be loyal, dependable and fulfill the needs of the man she cared about. A conversation which several of the vanner's had concerning Quickdraw's girlfriend, Sharon, illustrates the qualities which associated with being a nice-girl. Quickdraw and Sharon had just broken up for the third time in two months. Although
they had been involved with each other at the time the club was formed, Quickdraw had seldom included her in club activities and hence she had never become a member of the club. The vanners had more or less assumed this was a case of avoidance on Sharon's part, that is, that she simply did not want to be around the club because she did not like the club members. As a result, the other vanners had tended to think of her as something of a "bitch," a feminine characterization which I will talk about shortly. In any case, Wizard was attempting to reinterpret the reasons for Sharon's failure to participate with Quickdraw in club events and in so doing to relabel her as a nice-girl.

Wizard: Sharon is a really nice girl. I mean it. At first, I wasn't really sure about her but I ran into her the other night in the department store and we had a good talk. I guess she puts up with a lot of shit which surprised me.

Zookkeeper: Whatdya mean, "she puts up with a lot of shit?"

Wizard: Well, like, I don't know, I guess he (Quickdraw) doesn't call her and well, like, for example, she said that she really would like to be around the club more but that it's him. That he doesn't want her to be around us or something.

Judi: How come he doesn't want her to be around us?

Wizard: I don't know. Jealous, I guess. She's really good-lookin' and, I don't know. Anyway, she really loves him and I guess she really wants to get back together with him. She said she just wants to make him happy so I think they'll probably get back together.

Zookkeeper: Well, if they don't, he's a fool!

Earthquake: I'll say he is. She sounds pretty damn nice to me.

As distinct from and opposed to the "nice-girl," the vanners referred to three other types of females: bitches, teases and sluts.
Although there were important distinctions made between these three types of females, what set all of them apart from the "nice-girl" or "lady" was their deviation from masculinist standards of appropriate female heterosexual demeanor.

The label which had the broadest, most variable usage was that of "bitch." Judging from the numerous occasions upon which it was used, a "bitch" was a female who had in some way insulted a guy or hurt a guy and thereby failed to act like a good woman should, that is, by acting so as to defer to the needs or interests of a guy before her own. As the description of Sharon indicated, a really good woman or nice girl should be involved in a heterosexual relationship and should be virtually self-sacrificing with in it, placing her boyfriend's needs ahead of her own. Hence, any or all actions which were interpreted as being overly assertive on the part of a female could earn her a reputation as a "bitch." A woman could be labeled a bitch for refusing to act "friendly" towards a male even though if she did act friendly she could also be seen as being romantically interested in him. She could be labeled a bitch for overtly rejecting a relationship with a male known to be interested in her. She could be labeled a bitch for being friendly with too many males and refusing to become sexually and emotionally involved with one. In essence, a bitch was any woman who by virtue of her heterosexual demeanor failed to conform to standards of being a female involved in a monogamous relationship and totally committed to putting the well-being of her man first. She was a woman who acted independently of all men and/or on behalf of her personal, selfish interests.

Heidi was a young female who initially met the members of Nomad Vans when she came to a few club parties with Jay Bird. She and Jay
Bird had been dating each other exclusively for several months and hence were known to be boyfriend and girlfriend. Shortly after her first contacts with the club, Heidi deliberately ended her relationship with Jay Bird (they "broke-up") because she did not like the constraints which the relationship placed on her life and activities. In Heidi's words:

I really liked Jay Bird, but I just began to feel real tied-down. I just felt we were both too young to be seeing only each other. I wanted to go out with other guys and I know I hurt him but I couldn't help it. I told him that I did want us to remain friends, though.

The other club members also knew that Heidi had hurt Jay Bird and that he had made an emotional commitment to her which she did not reciprocate. Furthermore, in keeping with her intentions, Heidi sought to date other members of the club while getting involved with none. As a result of her actions and for reasons which I will discuss in the next chapter, she incurred the wrath of the Lady Vanners; however, she also was disparaged by the male vanners in their public talk. When her name would come up in conversation, she was frequently made the brunt of some joke ("There's ol' hairy Heidi) and characterized as a bitch. In seeking to be friends with a number of the male vanners while committed to none in particular, she rejected the mode of feminine behavior deemed appropriate and respectable by the vanners. She wanted to be friendly and have fun and thereby appeared to want the same personal satisfactions as the males wanted from their relationships with each other; but she was called a "bitch" instead of a nice-guy or nice-girl for doing so.

Another illustration of the meanings associated with the label "bitch" involved a girl who hung-out at several of the same places as
the wanners but who had evidently refused to interact with the guys in the club. One afternoon at the River Park, Quickdraw, Jay Bird, Travelin' Man, Star Baby and myself were sitting around watching people drive by. Travelin' Man was telling us that he had been up at the Center the night before and seen Lisa there.

Vandura: Who's that?

Travelin' Man: You know. That's the girl that drives the blue Camaro with the white interior.

Jay Bird: The one with the long blond hair and the big (He cups his hands to signify large breasts).

Quickdraw: Yeah, she's a bitch.

Judi: Why? What's wrong with her?

Quickdraw: She thinks she's hot shit.

Jay Bird: I'll say.

Judi: Whattya mean?

Quickdraw: Oh, she just thinks she's the best thing walkin'. That every guy who sees her wants to get into her pants//

Jay Bird: Which they do.

Quickdraw: And that she's too good for any of 'em.

Vandura: Well, her old-man (father) gives her anything she wants, man. Somebody told me that she's been seein' this guy that goes to college and drives a Trans Am.

In essence, according to Quickdraw, Lisa was a bitch because she interpreted male initiated interactions with her as sexual overtures and rejected acting with them on that basis. As Jay Bird's comments indicated, it may well be the case that as a beautiful woman, Lisa was seen as a highly desirable sexual object and sexual interest was the primary motivation behind male interactive attempts with her. Nonetheless, in rejecting even the most superficial relationships with
any of them, she was acting to both control the situation and to control it in a way as to convey that she was of greater worth than any of them and could attract a higher status male. Evidently within this cultural context, the male vanners deemed it within their right to refuse to associate with a female perceived as of no value as a sexual object; but they did not feel it was within a woman's right to act the same way towards them. A female who did not act friendly towards them, who did not want to interact or spend time with them, was a bitch. The social implications of this gender-differentiated and masculinist definition of male versus female heterosocial perogatives was to attribute to males the right to control heterosexual interaction and the definition given to it, thereby establishing the cultural means to ultimately hold a female responsible for the failure of their pursuit. In other words, although in many ways they acknowledged that they sought interaction only with females perceived as sexually desirable, should a female interpret male overtures as indicative of sexual interest and reject them on that basis, she risked being labeled a bitch. It was she who was in the wrong, not the male.

If a bitch was a female who was perceived to be sexually-desirable but who acted as if she did not want to be sexually-involved or in a relationship with the males in the vanner's social setting, a "tease" was a female who appeared to reciprocate a guy's interest but who subsequently refused to "put-out," that is, have sexual intercourse with him. Although he was willing to put the time, energy, money, and social pleasantries deemed the price of having access to her, she would not allow him to have her. As stated by Zookkeeper:
You know, I don't care what anyone says, there ain't nuthin' worse than a tease. Really, they're the worse. They take you for all you've got, keep stringin' you along and then zap you in the end. They can really make you feel like shit and there ain't nuthin' you can do about it except leave them high and dry.

I do not know whether the other vanners would agree that teases are the worst kind of females but they did recognize the type. A "tease" was a female who acted interested in them, who accepted a date or two with them, but who would then stop short of having sexual intercourse with them. She was seen as male-manipulator; someone who would utilize her feminine-powers as a sexually desired object to get a male's attention, interest, and concern without giving him anything in return but some affection and some preliminary physical contacts. As such, she was a female to be avoided since she was not to be trusted: she would make you the promise of this great reward, use that to get whatever she could from you, and then keep holding out for more without ever giving you what she promised and ultimately what you wanted.

Wizard: Is Travelin' Man still datin' whatshername, you know, that girl he was with at the party a couple weeks ago?

Earthquake: Hell, no. I guess she turned out to be a real tease. Of course, Travelin' Man was too stupid to figure out what was goin' on. She kept sayin' (in a high-pitched voice), "Oh, Travelin' Man, would you do this for me. Oh, Travelin' Man, would you do that for me." Then after he did whatever it was, she wouldn't want anything to do with him.

Wizard: Well, you know, Travelin' Man's brain's in his peter anyway (laughs). He's such an easy target for girls like that. I'm serious. It takes him forever to see through them. He just knows what he wants and he'll do whatever they ask to get it. One of these days he'll learn.
The final type of female recognized by the vanners was the "slut" or "whore." She was the immoral or "dirty" female unworthy of respect; and she was immoral by virtue of her sexual conduct. She was the female who appropriated a masculine form of sexuality but who was far more successful at it than most men since she could be far more certain of finding sexual partners than could any man. She was the hyper-sexual female who whether single or involved in a heterosexual relationship would have sexual intercourse with males who acted interested in her while becoming emotionally committed to none.

The acknowledgement of this type of female was primarily symbolic, that is, the "slut" was the subject of jokes and obscene songs which the vanners repeated in public setting. However, there were also a few women, all non-club members or outsiders, who were also considered "dirty" or immoral because of their reputed sexual activities. Two women with such reputations were Becky and Marie, disparagingly referred to as "The Tag Team" and "The Gruesome Twosome" by the male vanners. Although both had boyfriends, they were also known to have sex with other males when the opportunity arose.

The masculinist double standard within the vanners' subcultural system was particularly evident in their response towards these women in two major ways. On the one hand, unlike Hass, who had been revered for his alleged desire to have six or seven women who could serve as sexual partners, women like Becky and Marie were condemned for having multiple male sexual partners. On the other hand, while the vanners would speak disparagingly of Becky and Marie when the two women were not present and would symbolically assault the sexually-free woman in their songs and jokes, as soon as such women would appear at a van party or gathering, the single vanners would proceed to compete with
each other for their attention. The implication was that while the reputations served as a basis for inter-male degradation of the women when they were not present, it was a basis for pursuing them when they were. Such behavior on the part of the vanners also signified that despite the fact that they had typified such women as soiled or "dirty" sexual objects, for a male to have sex with them did not impugn his character or masculinity. The males who had sex with a female viewed as a slut were not immoral, they were simply taking advantage of a free but useful commodity that might be available.

To briefly summarize, the dominant reality of the vanners was essentially a masculinist reality. Through their artifacts, talk and activities, the male vanners perpetrated conceptions of what was real and what was right which not only defined women as categorically different from men but as subject to a distinct code of conduct which reflected male interests. These masculinist dimensions of van-club culture were grounded in the vanners' conceptions of gender and sexuality as these were expressed in their symbolic apparatus.

The masculine identity which the vanners sought to accomplish was directly related to the principles of homosocial versus heterosocial behavior through which that identity was established. With respect to the former mode of interpersonal behavior, the vanners preferred a tough-but-friendly demeanor in which they eschewed intermale violence and domination attempts and instead sought comraderie and friendship. However, a critical component of masculinity was that of an imperative heterosexuality according to which a male should have an aversion toward inter-male sexual intimacy and an avid interest in male-female sexual intimacy. The mode of masculinity which the vanners
sought to portray was based upon a glorification of sexual encounters and a celebration of these as a form of masculine achievement.

As the only legitimate objects of males' intense sexual drives, females tended to be symbolically reduced to the sexual objects of males' sexual desires. By the masculinist standards of femininity evident in the rituals, jokes and discourse of the male vanners, females were subjected to evaluative criteria far more restrictive than those which the males created for each other. To judge by the typifications of females employed by the vanners, in order for a female to realize social value in this cultural world, she had to be perceived as sexually desirable; and the more erotic she was to more men the more value she had. Yet, in order for her to receive social respect as a female, she had to confine her sexual activity to a monogamous heterosexual relationship with a male to whom she was emotionally committed. Hence, at the level of the symbolic, females were defined as the objects of men's sexual wants while being morally deprived of the right to control their heterosexual encounters. They were erotic objects who should not seek to control the resource they possess.

Gender and sexuality were, therefore, critical components of the van club culture. Thus far, however, I have focused my analysis on the dominant reality in the club, that is, the reality which was created and perpetuated by the male vanners, showing that their definitions of the social category of females were essentially masculinist. I would now like to consider the responses of the Lady Vanners--the females who were also vanners and members of the club--to the masculinist cultural processes, looking at how these processes affected our perceptions, experiences, relationships and actions.
FOOTNOTES

1 The term "guys" was the word used by both the male and female vanners to refer generically to both persons and male persons. I will use the term guys in one of these ways to refer to male vanners and their male friends.

2 These were not the only types of males which the vanners recognized. Rather, these were the types of males specific to the youth-based social network in which their social activities were immersed. Although they frequently used the term "man" as either an expletive ("Man, I never saw . . .") or as a form of address ("Hey, man"), they considered men as a category of persons to refer to adult-males and they did not include themselves in that category. Hence, they possessed a more elaborate typology of male-persons than that which I will discuss and one which incorporated generational distinctions. I, however, will be focusing strictly on the types of masculinity relevant to their generationally-specific social strata.

3 The vanners frequently bemoaned the fact that vanners suffered from a bad but inaccurate reputation among the general public. They believed that in the eyes of the public or the straight world, vanners were perceived as unwantonly aggressive and disgustingly deviant, without morals or moral restraint. They in turn considered such stereotypes to be largely unfair because they knew that vanners were really basically peace-loving and fun-loving people who might be given to engaging in acts of minor deviation but who wanted to avoid doing harm to anybody or anything unless, of course, they were put on the defensive.
I did ask Wizard, Star Baby, Quickdraw, Zookkeeper and Travelin' Man why they thought Jack was gay or homosexual but they were unable to give me any specific reasons or criteria for making such an attribution. Interestingly, they apparently agreed on something which they were not able to articulate. Star Baby, for example, shrugged and said, "I don't know. It's just a feeling I get when I'm around him." Travelin' Man then chimed in by saying, "Yeah, I know what you mean. Maybe it's the way he looks at you or something." Wizard even went so far as to disagree with them entirely telling me later that he thought the other guys had misjudged Jack and that Jack was not really gay. Obviously, more research is needed pertaining to how attributions of sexuality are made. My concern is the significance of such attributions for the social status and treatment of males by others.

I will be using the term "girl" throughout this chapter as the vanners tended to use it, that is, as the generic term for females in their social world and the female equivalent to the male-generic, "guy."

In the relatively numerous van-rockings which I witnessed, I never observed an occasion where either the vanner or the girl he was with acted upset by the incident. However, although the females involved responded with overt good-humor following these jokes, the vanners never explicitly voiced any concern for the females when planning such van-rockings whether they knew her or not. My belief was that had a female expressed anger or chagrin, she would have been labeled a "bitch" and the vanners would thereby have negated the legitimacy of her feelings. Van-rocking was a joke done by guys for
guys, the feelings of the women were of little or no consequence.

For example, at least during the time that he was with the van club, Earthquake had great difficulty just finding dates let alone actually having sexual intercourse. The response of his closest friends, especially Wizard, was to offer him encouragement to ask particular girls out. In the face of problems in accomplishing heterosexual encounters, the males either sought to bolster each other's self-esteem by devaluing the females involved or to help each other find dates. I never observed an instance where they ridiculed each other for lack of sexual experience or success in having relationships with women.
CHAPTER V

THE WORLD OF THE LADY VANNERS: CONTRADICTION, COLLUSION AND CONFLICT

Introduction

To judge by the preponderance of published studies examining youth subcultures, women are either entirely absent from these social worlds or have such a marginal relationship to them that their activities, experiences, and perceptions need not be considered a relevant part of them. When researchers describing youth subcultures mention girls or women at all, it is frequently in the form of a footnote or contextual aside where they describe the nature of female participation from the frequently sexist or misogynistic perspective of the male members (Brake, 1980:137). Perhaps the majority of youth subcultures are male-created and male-dominated. Perhaps as a result the amount and form of women's participation in them is circumscribed. Nonetheless, seldom are we given any sense of the nature of this participation. Seldom, has any researcher attempted to penetrate the lived realities of women in these settings from their own perspective. Seldom has any researcher viewed women in male-youth subcultures as actors possessing and sharing feelings and beliefs about themselves, the males, and the nature of their worlds which could very well be distinct or different from those of their male counterparts (McRobbie and Garber, 1975).
In the preceding chapters, I explored the social world of Nomad Vans from the perspective of the male vanners. I also argued that this world was a masculinist one based upon the expression of a particular mode of masculinity and perpetrating in rituals, jokes, and discourse a symbolic sexism in which women were generically defined and evaluated according to their sexual attractiveness and sexual conduct by standards the males did not apply to each other.

As a female and a feminist member of the van club, I was in a position to be sensitized to the masculinism expressed in the male vanners' activities not only as observer but also as victim. I cringed at the male jokes about "bitches" and "sluts." I felt flushed and angry at the van-in rituals of female degradation whereby women vanners were reduced to "tits and asses" and verbally assaulted by men who simultaneously encouraged their sexualization and stood ready to define them as immoral for acting as such.

To be free from these verbal assaults, I sought the presence and protection of the Nomad vanners knowing that they respected me and hence would not subject me to those type of actions and knowing that as long as I was with them other males would not either. Yet, I also knew that these same males who were my "protectors" would themselves become part of those wandering hoardes of males who roamed about the van-ins "trollin' for tuna" and reducing women to sexual commodities. Indeed, I knew I was safe from such personal assaults as long as I was with them because when I was with them I was seen by other males as "belonging" to them. Hence, even in seeking to be free of such assaults, I reinforced the very processes of sexual objectification that were responsible for my feelings of mortification.
I wanted to share these feelings and my anger with the Lady Vanners, Wild Fire, Star Baby and Spacy. Unfortunately, while I knew they would attempt to soothe me and to make me feel better, they would not share nor validate these feelings. They would tell me instead that it was only the guys' way of having fun and not to be taken seriously; or they would tell me that I should not take them personally since as long as I knew I was a "good woman" then I should know that the guys' sexual overtures, jokes, and disparaging remarks were not meant for me personally. Star Baby might even have told me that I should relax and enjoy it, that it feels good to know that other guys find you desirable and that's what their looks and remarks mean. I knew that the Lady Vanners would not or were not experiencing the masculinism of the vanning subculture and the van club as I was, so I seldom expressed these feelings to them. Instead, I worked at being accepted as one of them and at seeing things as they did. In so doing, my struggle for acceptance into the van club became a gender-specific struggle for "respect." To become part of the club, I needed to behave in ways that would gain me the respect of the males and the trust of the females and these were highly interdependent achievements. To achieve both, I had to act like a Lady Vanner should.

In this process of socialization, I experienced certain conflicting feelings which, together with the events I observed and participated in, form the foundation for the analysis I am about to present. These feelings were the product of the conflicts I experienced between my feminist ideals and the masculinized realities of the van club, including, although in different ways, not only my relationships with the men, but also my relationships with the women. While the men
ultimately did accept and respect me, they did so because I behaved in ways which they thought I, as a female, should which meant, among other things, that I was not to act like they did. While the women cared for and trusted me, it was because I behaved towards them in ways which they thought I, as a female, should which meant sometimes denying my feminist ideals. In both cases, I felt that I was denied expression of what I would have liked to be and do in this social context: a woman overtly struggling with other women against the masculinism which sought to oppress and control us.

In the process of understanding and resolving these personal conflicts, I was also to understand the social and cultural processes which structured women's identities and relationships so as to limit their control over their own lives. Informing our experiences, perceptions, and activities as female members of this club was a central contradiction between the subcultural themes associated with being a vanner and the masculinist standards associated with being a lady. As vanners, our interests and identities were supposed to stem from a commitment to vans and vanning as a means of pursuing a good time which, in turn, was achieved by getting rowdy, getting messed-up, joking around and having sex. As ladies, the masculinist ideals of vanning subculture frequently and systematically constrained our ability to do so. As club members, we could expect to have all the rights and responsibilities of membership as political equals in social relationships based upon friendship and comraderie. As lady members, we were afforded different rights and responsibilities in relationships with men structured primarily around the rules of heterosociality.
Nonetheless, our story as Lady Vanners is not one of passive submission to male dominance. Our story is not one of internalized inferiority and passivity. Our story is indeed one of strength and of struggle—of seeking to act, eventually together, on behalf of our perceived interests. Insofar as we understood that we had shared problems as women that were divergent from and might even conflict with those of the men, we developed a female homosociality and solidarity. Still, insofar as our perceived interests and problems involved accepting or colluding with the very sociocultural realities which created them and which served to subordinate us to men and separate us from other women, our struggles and conflicts were a partial solution at best.

In describing the social world of the Lady Vanners and in defending the assertions which I have just made, I will structure my discussion around three major, interrelated issues that are relevant both to the experiences of the Lady Vanners and to the social organization of the club. First, I will examine how our status as females under the masculinist standards of van-club culture differentially informed our participation in club activities and events and the identities which we, as Lady Vanners, sought to achieve. Second, I will analyze the ways in which heterosexism and the rules of heterosexuality influenced our relationships with the guys in the club, each other, and other females. Finally, I will describe the formation of female homosocial relationships and female solidarity within the club and the consequences of these social developments for the club's organization.
It is Saturday evening, the sixteenth of December. Nomad Vans is having a Christmas Party in the back room of the Birdie Inn. The club was given the use of the room for the evening by the inn's owner with the provision that they buy their kegs of beer from him and that they leave the room clean.

The party was to be an open-party. Any person in the network of friends and acquaintances to which the van-members belonged could come, although non-members were to be charged a dollar admission fee. In return for this fee, they could drink all the beer they wanted.

Throughout the afternoon, Free Bird and Earthquake had worked at preparing the room for the party. They had brought in a pile of firewood for the fireplace and had decorated the room by hanging red and green crepe paper from the ceiling, joined together in a big bow from which they had hung a sprig of mistletoe. On the far wall from the entrance way was a fireplace with a ledge wide enough to serve as a bench. In front of the fireplace, Free Bird and Earthquake had arranged about ten chairs in a semi-circle facing the fire. On the wall to the left of the doorway and towards the back of the room, Free Bird had assembled his stereo system to provide music for the party. He had also brought his guitar so he could provide additional entertainment should the party require it. On the wall to the right of the doorway, again toward the rear, they had set up a table with the beer kegs. Immediately to the right of the entrance, there was another table with a cash box on top. One of the club members was supposed to sit there throughout the evening to collect the admission
fee from non-members. Finally, in the center of the room, there were three long rows of tables and chairs.

I come to the party with Wizard, arriving a little after eight o'clock. Earthquake, Free-Bird, Travelin' Man, Spacy and her friend, Kim, and Crazy Horse and Wild Fire are already there. Zookkeeper arrives at the same time we do. Shortly after we arrive, Jay Bird comes followed by Vandura and his "date." At about ten o'clock, Quickdraw arrives but without his girlfriend, Sharon. Star Baby, Cisco Kid, Panama Red, Gorilla, and Yellow Jacket do not come at all.

In addition to the vanners, during the evening nineteen non-members show up. Ten of these people were guys who came to many of the club functions and who were friends of Earthquake, Vandura, Jay Bird and Travelin' Man. Three are girls who came as dates or girlfriends of the male non-members. The remaining two persons are Becky and Marie, the young women whom the vanners denigratingly referred to as the "Gruesome Twosome" or the "Tag Team."

At the time Wizard and I arrive, Earthquake is sitting at the table by the door, Free Bird is back by the stereo system; Spacy and Kim are standing by the kegs talking to Travelin' Man; and Crazy Horse and Wild Fire are sitting on the ledge of the fireplace. After greeting Earthquake, Wizard and I walk back towards the fireplace. On the way, we are met by Free Bird who had walked over to say hello. Wizard tells him that the room looks really nice and after a brief exchange we continue to walk towards Crazy Horse and Wild Fire. It had been some time since we had seen either of them and we are anxious to greet them. They both stand up in anticipation of our greeting. I hug Wild Fire while Wizard and Crazy Horse shake hands
and begin a joking interaction. The four of us then sit down with Wild Fire sitting across from me and Wizard sitting across from Crazy Horse but by my side.

While Crazy Horse and Wizard talk, Wild Fire and I hold a separate conversation. I want to find out how she has been and we spend some time talking about her health, which had been bad, and her work problems. She is most anxious, however, to show me the Christmas present that Crazy Horse had already given her—a diamond ring. We spend the next few minutes talking about the ring and its significance as a sign of love and commitment from Crazy Horse. Their relationship is going well and Wild Fire is happy despite everything else. As we sit there talking, Crazy Horse and Wizard move over to talk to Free Bird and to get some beer. When they return, our conversation is ended briefly because Wizard wants me to come over and see Free Bird's stereo system. I oblige and after doing so return to the fireplace and continue to talk to Wild Fire.

Other guys are beginning to arrive and as they enter, Wizard and Crazy Horse go over to greet the ones whom they know. In the meantime, I ask Wild Fire about her job and she tells me that she and Crazy Horse have had money problems which together with her sickness are responsible for their absence from recent meetings and club functions.

Before long, however, our conversation is interrupted by Free Bird, who announced that it is time to get this party going and begins to play his guitar and sing "I don't want to see your fuckin' face no more"—the song by now familiar to all the vanners due to the many previous renditions Free Bird has offered at other club parties. Wild
Fire looks at me and raises her eyebrows in a sign of disgust. I know what she means. She had been attempting for some time to get the vanners to stop saying the word "fuck" as a sign of respect for the ladies. Other curse words did not bother her. In fact, she used them from time to time herself but that particular word she felt should not be used by men around women. She had even had a bylaw added to the club charter which called for a fine of twenty-five cents anytime anyone said that word. Although she had collected some money from the existence of the bylaw for the club by almost single-handedly enforcing this rule, she had not had much success in eliminating the word's usage. Indeed, it had even become something of a joke among the vanners to get each other into trouble for saying it while at the same time seeing if they could get away with it. By this time, Wild Fire had given up trying and the law was not enforced by anyone else. However, she still disliked the word and it was that particular word, rather than the word "whore" or the misogyny of the song, which disgusted her.

As Free Bird sings, several of the guys who had been arriving come over to tell him about some other obscene songs which he can sing. Wizard and I get up to move about for a while and socialize while Crazy Horse and Wild Fire go to get something to eat. After talking with Earthquake, Zookkeeper and several others we move back to the fireplace where I continue to remain for most of the evening. My participation in the party primarily involved talking to several of the club members, drinking beer, and watching the activities and antics of others.
As I watched the behaviors of others, however, I became aware that within this single social event there were actually two distinct modes or levels of sociality and that these modes of sociality were related to the sex and the heterosexual status of the participants. There was a level of highly public discourse comprised of the loudest and largest groupings which involved only guys, both club members and outsiders, engaging in boisterous, rowdy interaction. They were telling loud jokes and singing loudly and their interaction was public insofar as it appeared directed at everyone and yet at none in particular. This male-exclusive form of sociality appeared to occur in two waves occurring first at the beginning of the party and peaking again towards the end as people became increasingly messed-up.

In addition to this type of social activity, there was a quieter, more dyadic and tryadic realm of interaction involving both males and females. While many of the guys at the party were at any single point in time engaging in this mode of sociality, the girls were exclusively involved in this type. Furthermore, while the male-interactions involved club members and non-members the female-interactions were dependent upon club boundaries. The Lady Vanners talked only to each other or to guys in the club but not to males and females who were outsiders. Similarly, while male-outiders were fully incorporated into the partying activities, female-outiders (as well as female-members) were not.

It appeared, in other words, that gender-differentiation was more significant than club membership in the structuring of partying activities. Public discourse, that is, discourse available to everybody and directed to everybody was a male-exclusive form. Private, dyadic discourse was both homosocial and heterosocial but the only form
females engaged in and even this type appeared to be bounded by club membership for them in ways that were not true for the guys. A woman who came with a male-outsider remained unnamed and socially invisible, moving about primarily as the appendage of her date or boyfriend with whom most of her interaction was confined. If a woman came with another woman, as did Spacy and Kim and Becky and Marie, then she was more likely to be involved in talk with several other males who had come without "dates" themselves. However, for Spacy and Kim, these males were primarily other club members. For Becky and Marie, these males were non-members as well as members.

The following day, at five 'clock in the evening, the club gets together again. This time, however, we gather at the River Bar for our regular biweekly Sunday business meeting. I arrive shortly after five. Free Bird, Star Baby, Wizard, Quickdraw, Travelin' Man, Spacy, Earthquake and Cisco Kid are already there. Also present are Quickdraw's girlfriend, Sharon, and Spacy's friend, Kim. Vandura came about a half-hour later "wasted" from a Christmas party he had gone to that afternoon. Crazy Horse and Wild Fire, Zookkeeper, and Panama Red are absent.

Although I am a little late, Free Bird has not yet begun the meeting. Instead, he, Wizard, Earthquake, Travelin' Man and Quickdraw are talking about the approach of winter and the changes they need to make on their vans in order to protect them from any possible damages in the months ahead. Free Bird says that he might just store his van in a garage somewhere for the duration. Wizard says that he can't very well do that but he at least is going to take off his flares and spoilers "cause all ya gotta do is run into a pile of snow and ice and ya gotta crack in one."
As the guys talk, Spacy, Star Baby, Kim, Sharon and I sit there silently, although Kim and Spacy do occasionally talk to each other in voices too soft for me to hear what they are saying. After several minutes have passed, Star Baby looks at me and raises her eyebrows. I immediately understand what she is saying and smile my agreement: yes, I too am bored by the conversation, could care less about what they are going to do to their vans, and would rather we just get on with the meeting. As if encouraged by my gesture of support, Star Baby leans over to Free Bird who is sitting on her left, places her hand on his leg and whispers something in his ear. Evidently, she had suggested that he begin the meeting because he immediately calls everybody to order and asks if anyone has anything they want to say.

Travelin' Man and Spacy simultaneously reply that they have a complaint about the party the previous night. Because the club had bought kegs of beer from the Birdie Inn, they had spent about forty dollars in order to have that room for the party. Spacy and Travelin' Man were upset because Free Bird, Wizard and Earthquake who had reserved the room for the party had not consulted the rest of the club members before doing so.

Earthquake points out that at the previous meeting two weeks ago the club members had voted in favor of having the party.

Spacy: We didn't agree on the money, Earthquake. We agreed on the party.

Free Bird: How many people come to our regular meetings when they know it's at five o'clock every other Sunday?

Spacy: If they don't come, though Free Bird, they don't come. At least you could call us and let us know how much it's gonna be.
Free Bird: Well, what's the difference?

Spacy: You're takin' out our money, Free Bird, for this party and we don't even know about it.

The argument continues. Spacy and Travelin' Man maintain that decisions regarding the spending of club money should be made only with the explicit consent of club members. Free Bird and Wizard maintain that the club members are so lackadaisical about decisions regarding what the club should or should not do that it would be a waste of time to contact everybody and that contacting club members about each and every decision unfairly burdens the president and the vice-president. Wizard also points out that because the party had been so well attended, they could sponsor more parties in the future and actually turn them into money-making events if they charged non-members who came two dollars instead of one. Wizard, Free Bird, and Vandura continue to talk briefly about what improvements could be made for future parties of this type.

Without being resolved, the initial argument leads into a discussion about two other related club issues. The club needed to make better arrangements concerning the handling of money and who was going to take charge of it. However, because this task was formally the responsibility of the club treasurer, who had been Wild Fire, and because Wild Fire and Crazy Horse had not attended the last three meetings thereby violating a membership bylaw, some action had to be taken regarding their future status in the club, and appointing someone to handle the money. After approximately ten minutes, Star Baby takes over the meeting, usurping control from Free Bird.
Star Baby: Well, let's vote on what Wizard said about starting a checking account. Whose in favor of that?

Several people say "yeah."

Star Baby: Okay. Now let's decide on who's gonna do it.

Wizard: What do you mean? About who's gonna sign them?

Star Baby nods.

Wizard: Like I said. I just don't know what to do about the Wild Fire and Crazy Horse situation. They're either gonna have to be told they have to be here or get rid of 'em.

Star Baby: I wanna make a motion. Since Wizard and Free Bird are always here and since we trust them, they should be our check-signers. All in favor of them and gettin' this out of our hair?

Everyone present raises her or his hand.

Star Baby: Okay. Now, we are gonna have a party that Friday before New Years. We voted on that, right?

Free Bird: Not official, but we all agreed.

Star Baby: Are we having a meeting anytime between now and the party?

Free Bird: We're suppose to.

Star Baby: Okay. Let's appoint someone to call and let us know about the party on that night. Either that or if you haven't heard, take it upon yourself to pick up the phone and call someone. I mean, don't be so goddamn lazy. Call somebody.

Free Bird says he agrees with Star Baby and begins to mention which members are dependable enough to know what is going on pointing to Travelin' Man, Spacy, Wizard, Star Baby, himself and me.

Free Bird: Okay. We need to appoint a Master-at-Arms to take money at the party.
There is a brief silence.

Star Baby: I'll do it. I ain't afraid of nobody.

With Star Baby's last comment, the party issue is considered resolved and the club goes on to discuss several other things.

I have described each of these two concurrent club events in order to point out certain major differences in the nature of the Lady Vanners' participation in each of them. The differences I observed were by no means unique to these two occasions but rather occurred repeatedly. In particular, I came to recognize that gender was a more relevant organizational dimension in the structuring of some club events than it was in others and it was most relevant in precisely those situations where the central subcultural themes were being displayed. In these events, the significance of gender was greater than that of club membership. Males, whether members or non-members, were encouraged to joke with each other, get messed-up and engage in rowdy antics regardless of their attachment to a female and regardless of their membership status. Female actions and interactions were distinctly more subdued, did not involve getting messed-up or acting-rowdy, and were informed by whether or not they were attached to a male and whether they were a member of the club.

Yet, the relative reticence and social invisibility of the Lady Vanners which I observed at larger parties were not situational constants. Instead, at club gatherings where only club members were present or which were not focusing on the pursuit of a good time, the Ladys' mode of participation was similar to that of the males. During business meetings and smaller, club-exclusive gatherings, they frequently spoke out. Spacy raised issues and argued with the
male-leaders; Star Baby would sometimes simply take-over not only to express concerns of her own but also to more effectively direct the meeting when Free Bird seemed to be faltering; Wild Fire had served as both club secretary and club treasurer and through these two positions frequently set the club's agenda, pointing out things that needed to be done, implementing certain rules and enforcing them. If the van-ins and public parties were dominated by males, the club's meetings and smaller, private gatherings were not. If being a club member was less relevant than being a female in the nature of the Lady Vanners' participation in the former events it was more relevant than gender in the organization of the latter events.  

As I witnessed and experienced these situational differences in the Lady Vanners' modes of participation in club activities, I became aware of two major, interrelated processes underlying these differences and more specifically, constraining the nature of the Lady Vanners' behaviors in club celebrations. Both processes reflected and reinforced the masculinism of van culture but in different ways. On the one hand, those events and activities focusing on having a good time were simultaneously those through which the males displayed their collective styles of masculinity. At these events, the reality of gender differences and masculine control was reinforced through a system of rules and sanctions which limited the nature of women's participation lest they be defined and treated as immoral women undeserving of respect. On the other hand, the Lady Vanners did not get loud, rowdy and messed-up because we did not want to, that is, because we had certain shared interests and perceptions derived from a desire to keep our heterosexual relationships working smoothly and based upon the
influence which the cultural masculinism had over our experiences which functioned to induce an alternative mode of participation based on a negotiated identity.

Masculinism and Club Activities: Nice Girls Don't Act Like Nice Guys

The relevance of the masculinist typifications of females for prohibiting female adoption of a masculinized mode of social activity was demonstrated through several incidents. Each incident involved females who did not belong to the club, although some involved other Lady Vanners at van-ins. Each incident also shows how the interpretations made of these women's behavior by both the guys and the Lady Vanners were mediated by the process of sexual objectification central to the masculinist dimensions of the van-club culture.

One Sunday in February, the club had a birthday party for Wizard in the basement of Zookkeeper's family's house. Two young women who did not belong to the club and who were not friends of any of the Lady Vanners came to the party. They did know several of the guys in the club and had attended several other club parties in recent weeks.

On this particular Sunday, they had been skiing and arrived at the party already claiming to be drunk. While at the party they were loud and boisterous, laughed and sang loudly, and at several points walked up to the guys they knew and sat on their laps. Their activities were distinctly disruptive, but were activities I had witnessed many times before on the part of both male-vanners and male-outsiders. Typically, when men engaged in such behaviors they were either joined by other guys, or they were kidded later about having been so messed-up. This however was not the way these two women were responded to.
Instead, both the Lady Vanners and the guys in the club talked about them with disgust.

Wizard to me: God, isn't that disgusting. Just look at those two. I don't know who invited 'em but I'll bet that's the last time they ever come to any of our parties. That just isn't necessary.

Star Baby to Me: I wonder who invited those two little you-know-whats. How did they ever let themselves get that way. I wish some of the guys would get them out of here and take them home.

Zookkeeper to me: I don't know who invited those two tramps but I don't want 'em here. There just ain't no sense in the way they're actin'.

Later, Jay Bird and Vandura did help the two girls get home. Afterwards, as an indication of the moral outrage elicited by their actions, the Lady Vanners used this incident in subsequent attempts to change the rules and restrict outsiders' participation in club events.

Another time, Vandura and Jay Bird were telling Wizard, Zookkeeper, Earthquake, and myself about a party they had been to the previous evening and recounted an incident involving Vandura and another female who had been at the party.

Jay Bird (laughing): Vandura, you really shouldn't of done what you did, man.

Wizard: What he do?

Jay Bird: Aw, he was real nasty to some chick.

Vandura: Naw, I wasn't. She deserved it. You gotta admit she deserved it, man. She was really gettin' on my nerves.

Jay Bird: Whatdya mean? She was just interested in a little two inch pecker, that's all.

Vandura: She was wasted, man. She wouldn't leave me alone and I couldn't get rid of her so I just had to do something.
Wizard: For Christ's sake, what did you do?
Jay Bird: He picked her up, carried her out to the porch/
Vandura: And dropped her on her ass right on the ground.

All the guys laugh.

Zookkeeper: Shit, Vandura, I didn't know you had it in you, man.

Both of these incidents illustrate the effects of a double-standard of morality whereby women who dared to engage in the behaviors that the guys encouraged in each other were not seen as nice-girls but as immoral, disgusting "tramps," whose presence should not be tolerated. Indeed, Vandura's story describes what is essentially an act of physical violence by a male against a female, an act which was validated by the other guys not merely as acceptable but as exceptional. In thus sanctioning the young woman, Vandura gained status from the other guys.

Since I had not been at the party with Jay Bird and Vandura, I do not know how the woman had been behaving. Nonetheless, what is relevant for this particular discussion, is Vandura's belief that his behavior towards her was appropriate and deserved because she had been wasted and had made sexual overtures to him. While similar behaviors were the means by which males gained status and became nice-guys or great-guys, women who engaged in them were considered bad women. It was legitimate for a woman to drink and smoke dope, it was not legitimate for them to get messed-up and/or act rowdy as a result. Should a woman become loud, boisterous, disruptive and messed-up, she was seen by both the male and female vanners as immoral and undeserving of respect.
The application of this double standard had two additional implications. First, it illustrates the tendency for women's behavior to be both sexualized and denigrated when they attempt to engage in the types of deviations which the vanners positively sanctioned for guys. Secondly, and simultaneously, it signifies that it was through such behaviors that the men celebrated their masculinity, bonded as men, and set themselves above women. A woman who got rowdy and messed-up was seen as a tramp or a whore who was "asking for it" and the "it" which she received could mean anything from being dropped off the edge of a porch to being sexually assaulted. Witness, for example, Wizard's response to an incident at a van-in where a woman who had been lying on the ground in a semi-conscious state had been raped by several vanners.

Wizard: I just don't know what things are comin' to. This is the kind of thing that never used to happen at van-ins. They used to be good times where everybody could have some good, clean fun. Now, I don't know, things just aren't the same. Vanners are gettin' as bad as bikers.

Judi: I just can't believe that happened. Didn't anybody try to stop it?

Wizard: No. Why should they? Any woman who lets herself get like that is asking for it. Just like those women who expose themselves up on that stage. One of these days, some guys are gonna grab them and all hell's gonna break loose. It's a real shame.

In the argument which ensued between Wizard and myself over this incident and his reaction to it, I became aware not only of the sexualization-denigration of women who got messed-up, but their negative sanctioning was at least in part due to a fear that they would interfere with male-comraderie. Wizard was upset with the rape of this woman not because he was concerned with her welfare but because he was afraid that women like that might instigate inter-male conflict. When women
got rowdy, displayed their bodies, or got messed-up, they were making sexual overtures. If men followed their "natural instincts" and tried to have sex with her, then a fight might erupt between them and the men to whom she belonged. It was the possibility of inter-male violence that worried him, not the violation of the woman by men. She would be held responsible for both consequences. It was the woman's lack of control, not the men's, that Wizard ultimately perceived as morally wrong.

In sum, subcultural themes and celebrations were masculinized themes and celebrations at which women, whether vanners or outsiders, were not afforded the same rights of participation. The consequences of this masculinist form of gender-differentiated normative systems was to distance the Lady Vanners from those events and activities which symbolically displayed the collective identity associated with being a vanner. The Lady Vanners had, therefore, either to fight against the masculinism of the male vanners and assert their rights to be treated like "one of the guys," or construct an alternative mode of participating in this social context. They adhered to the latter strategy—a strategy which simultaneously involved our collusion with masculinist definitions of female-respectability and brought us into conflict with the guys and other girls in our struggle to achieve this respectability.

**Being a Lady Vanner:**

*Alternative Themes and Negotiated Identities*

Wild Fire, Star Baby, Spacy, and myself could not help but be aware of the denigration of certain types of women by the guys in the club; nor could we help but be aware that such denigration often was directed against women who sought to emulate masculine modes of participation in the clubs' good times. We were reminded of this
double standard and of the sexualization of females by the guys through their conversations and jokes. We took for granted that the guys perceived and evaluated females by standards of demeanor and conduct which they did not apply to other guys and which were far more limiting of the types of behaviors that women could legitimately engage in in seeking to have a good time.

Nonetheless, it would be inaccurate to say that we experienced this double standard and its effects as unfair or unjust—as preventing us from being and doing what we really wanted to be and do. Instead, from the beginning, the participation of the Lady Vanners in the van club was informed by an alternative set of interests and values which represented a type of negotiated solution to the cultural contradictions that our status as Lady Vanners created. The interests and identities which the Lady Vanners sought to accomplish were definitely informed by the masculinism of the vanning culture but not in a determinant manner. Rather, as negotiated solutions to certain cultural contradictions the Lady Vanners accepted certain masculinist standards of feminine-value in the persona and status they wanted to attain; and in so doing, they established a different set of cultural relevancies from those of the male vanners. Nonetheless, as Lady Vanners, they also tended to see themselves as different from and inherently better than most other girls with whom the club came into contact.

As vanners, Star Baby, Wild Fire and Spacy understood that they were perceived by others as atypical females and they took pride in this. In so doing, they expressed their rejection of certain traditional-stereotypical beliefs about femininity and "women's place."
This guy came up to me in the park, or, I mean, he like walked by my van and saw me sittin' there, ya know, and so he says, "Don't tell me you drive this." So, I just look at him and I say, "No, I'm just sittin' here so I can pretend to be a vanner." Then he says, he says, "No, seriously. Are you really a girl vanner?" So, I say, "Of course I am." I just couldn't believe that guy.

Spacy

You know the other night when we were sitting with those people from Wizard's apartment building. Well, that weird guy, the one that gave me the creeps, he leans over to me and says, "So, you're a vanner. I didn't know girls could be vanners." So I just give him this real cold stare and I say," Well, you're lookin' at one." Then he says, "You can really handle one of those things and everything?" I didn't even bother answering him. Nobody can be that stupid.

Star Baby

They were vanners and they were proud of that fact and of their ability to own and drive a van and they spoke with disdain of anybody who reacted with surprise or disbelief about the fact that they were "girl vanners." Like the male vanners, Star Baby, Spacy, and Wild Fire would have overtly challenged anyone's assertion that because they were women they cannot lead, cannot be assertive and if need be, take care of themselves. As Star Baby said on several occasions, "I'm not afraid of nobody." Furthermore, they would laugh at anyone's presumption that women do not like sexual intercourse or are too refined to speak about it with obvious enthusiasm. Each of them was sexually active and did not care who knew it. Hence, the Lady Vanners did accept as a valid part of who they were a sense of toughness and sexuality which they felt set them apart from many other females but which were still valuable components of their identities.

Still, they also knew that they were different from men and the male-vanners in what they thought and wanted, in how they should act,
and in the conditions in which they should be assertive and sexually active. They saw themselves not only as vanners but as "nice-girls" or "ladies" and expected others—males and females, vanners and outsiders—to treat them as such with the respect that such a status deserves. To the extent that they saw themselves as "ladies" they were male-identified women who accepted that their major goals and primary value depended upon being sexually attractive to men and achieving a heterosexual-love relationship with one man.

In order to elaborate more fully on the fundamental importance of achieving respect and love had for the Lady-Vanners, I would like to briefly examine how their relationship to the vans and vanning was different from that of the guys and was informed by their interests as females under masculinist standards of gender-differentiation.

As I outlined in Chapter Three, the van was the core symbol of the vanning culture and was imbued with several metaphorical associations which homologically represented certain central cultural values: independence, creativity, toughness and hyper-sexuality. In addition, and as such, it was an expression of self and an object invested with emotional commitment as a part of self and as a loved-other. It was critical, therefore, that the work of converting a van and taking care of the van be done primarily by the van's owner if he was to achieve the status of vanner.

For the Lady Vanners, however, the van simply was not invested with the same degree of personal significance, nor was it imbued with the same meanings. Similarly, being and becoming a Lady Vanner was not defined by either the women or the men by the same standards as were applied to being and becoming a (guy) vanner.
That the van was simply less relevant to the Lady Vanners than it was to the guys was indicated primarily by the fact that the Lady Vanners simply did not talk about their vans either to the men or with each other and became visibly bored when the guys did. Star Baby's nonverbal signal to me at the beginning of the business meeting I earlier described was not unique to that instance. Whenever the guys talked about their vans, as they frequently did, the Lady Vanners either sat there silently or, if possible, talked to each other about something else.

Because the van so seldom entered their conversations spontaneously, I had to ask Spacy, Star Baby and Wild Fire specifically about their decision to purchase a van and to join the club. Although the specific decision-making process differed for each of them, three basic themes emerged from their accounts: (1) a loved-male had instigated their interest in vans, (2) the van could serve to get them out of the confines of home and (3) they could thereby meet other people and particularly other guys.

I used to date a guy who owned a van and when I would drive his van I just got really hooked on it. So I decided to get one, and it was because, you know, Chris (Star Baby's son) and I like to go camping. It's just, it's kind of like an escape thing. People I get along with the best are people who are outdoors people. . . . I decided to join the club, well, that was the time that Yvonne and I were runnin' around together. And Wizard came down and handed me a flyer for a van-in and, uh, told me about the club and said, you know, "we're all meeting up on the hill over there and if I would be interested, come on up." And I did. Sat down with the group and they handed me an application to fill out. Told me I would be initiated by all the men in the club, which I loved, which never happened (laughs). I got one though and that was enough.

Star Baby
Well, uh, I used to go with this guy, Randy, who owned a van and we hung around with some other kids who had vans. I really like it cause, well, it let us do more than a car would (laughs). So after I graduated and, uh, got a job and I wanted to buy a van and my father said he would help me fix it up. That way I could live at home and still have my freedom. Then Randy and I broke up. That was like right around the time the club started, or Wizard was tryin' to get it goin'. Randy was gonna join too but then he didn't, but I really decided I wanted to stay in, you know, cause I really liked Wizard. I knew some of the other guys kind of, too. I just thought that that way I could meet somebody else maybe and have fun.

Spacy

Crazy Horse had wanted a van for a long time and I always did like 'em cause growing up we had one. And, uh, we both really liked 'em . . . For one thing they hold up a lot longer (than cars do) and . . . I don't know, I don't know, you know . . . vans are really, they're neat lookin' (laughs). So after we got ours, we went cruisin' looking for people with vans. We wanted to be around people with vans. That way you can be friends and have fun without spending a lot of money. Besides, I think it's important for Crazy Horse and I, well, you know, to be around other people especially other couples where we all get along.

Wild Fire

Not only did the Lady Vanners decide to buy a van and join the club primarily as a response to heterosexual influence and needs, but they considered it neither necessary or preferable for them to do the work of converting the van themselves. They, as well as the guys, acknowledged that it was appropriate for them to seek the help of males to whom they were attached in converting and caring for their vans, and it was appropriate for the males to oblige. Hence, Spacy had her father install rugs and windows, put on the flares, and construct a cabinet for her stereo and citizens-band radio. Wild Fire went with Crazy Horse to purchase equipment and helped in deciding what they should do, but Crazy Horse did the work. Star Baby sought the assistance first of Free Bird and, after she and Free Bird
broke-up, of Wizard and Quickdraw with whom she had the closest friendships, when she wanted anything done to her van. In all these, instances, the fact that the Lady Vanner sought a guy's assistance in working on her van was seen as perfectly natural by the other vanners.

Like the guys, the Lady Vanners wanted a "home on wheels" and valued their vans as a source of mobility through which they could temporarily escape the confining and isolating effects of their actual homes. However, they did not personify the objects or imbue them with significance as an expression of self. The van was a means of finding and being with others and an expensive and valued object, but an object nonetheless. They wanted it to look nice; they kept it clean and they expected others to respect it as their property, but they did not talk about it as if they were in love with it nor saw converting it as a basis for expressing creativity and individuality. Instead, for the Lady Vanners, becoming a vanners, doing a van and joining the club was mediated by their interests in achieving sociality generally and heterosexual relationships specifically.

If we did not talk about nor were not that concerned with vans, we did talk about and were concerned with the dynamics of the sociality and heterosexual relationships which we experienced as members of this social group. Our alternative foci, our perceptions of others, our relationships with each other and ultimately, the very organization of the club were critically informed by our attempts to accomplish status and respect as Lady Vanners under the masculinized standards of the dominant male culture. We, like the guys, wanted to have a good time but we did not perceive having a good time as being rowdy
and getting messed-up. Indeed, recognizing that "nice-girls" don't act that way, we had no desire to emulate the guy's interactive styles. The rowdy antics and joking interactions of the guys were perhaps entertaining but not really that admirable. Frequently, when the guys would tell obscene jokes or stuff popcorn up their noses or whatever, Spacy, Wild Fire or Star Baby would exchange a look of good-humored disgust with me. These interpretations were exclusively female, private understandings which the Males were probably not cognizant of, but which allows us as Lady Vanners to validate an alternative system of relevancies while socializing each other into a more constrained mode of participation suitable to being ladies.

We wanted to have fun, to be out playing with other people, but for us having fun was not equated with getting messed-up and rowdy. Rather, for us, being happy and having a good time was almost exclusively dependent upon how we were treated by the guys which in turn was dependent upon whether or not we were part of a heterosexual couple and/or had earned their respect. If we were single, then having-fun meant being sought after by other guys, knowing that they found you sexually attractive and were trying to get you interested in them. It was fun to be around guys and know that they thought you looked-good and occasionally, Star Baby would ask me to take a walk with her or go to the bathroom with her so that, however briefly, she would appear as a single-female and could experience some attention from other guys in the bar or at the van-in grounds. It was, of course, critical that they let you know they find you attractive without insulting you verbally or accosting you physically. They had to treat you with respect.
If coupled with a guy, then having a good time depended on how well your relationship was going. It was fun to know that the guy you liked and wanted, wanted and liked you and wanted to be with you.

Hence, we talked to each other not about vans but about the state of our heterosexual activities and relationships. In so doing, we created a distinctly female social world with its own private understandings.

I will return in the last section of this chapter to a more detailed discussion of the nature of the female sphere of social relationships and the social reality which we created in this sphere. Before doing so, however, I must examine the nature of the heterosexual relationships which consumed our interests, informed our identities, and were fundamental to the organization of the van club itself. What we were to experience as Lady Vanners and the struggles and conflicts which we engaged in were significantly influenced by the social rules through which heterosexual relationships and couples were constructed.

**Heterosociality and Heterosexuality: Women's Worth and Women's Work**

As I indicated in my earlier discussion of the meaning of sexuality in the van club culture, the van club was heterosexist. Erotic acts and sexual encounters were seen as appropriate and indeed pleasurable only when they occurred between a male and a female. Sexual acts or involvements between men or between women were seen as unnatural and immoral.

Given the existence of a heterosexism which defines sexual encounters as belonging exclusively in male-female dyads and given a masculinist double standard of sexuality which imposes upon women and not men the necessity of confining sexual activity to monogamous
social relationships, the question arises as to how these socio-sexual rule systems affect the nature of the relationships constructed by and forms of interaction available to male and female actors in a mixed-sex setting.

Within the van-club, three major principles organized the nature of heterosocial encounters and relationships: (1) all heterosocial interactions were perceived to have erotic properties; (2) the ideal form of heterosocial relationship is that of the heterosexual couple bonded by love and (3) the work of establishing a heterosexual couple should be primarily that of the male while the work of maintaining this relationship should be primarily that of the female. The interactive effects of these three principles created gendered-divisions in the social organization of the club and greatly affected the ability of the Lady Vanners to participate as members on the same terms as the guys.

In order to illustrate how these social principles were evident in the club's organization and the members' interactions, I will first discuss the types of heterosocial relationships which the vanners--both male and female--recognized. Then I will turn to a discussion of the rules by which the ideal heterosocial relationship, that of the heterosexual couple, was to be structured and the consequences of these rules for women's experiences, relationships, and struggles.

**Forms of Heterosociality: Just Friends versus Lovers**

That erotic interests were perceived by the vanners to be a natural or inherent property of all heterosocial encounters was evident in the accounts the vanners typically elicited from each other when one of them, whether male or female, was seen interacting with a person of the other sex under conditions of dyadic privacy. The following
dialogue, occurring after Wizard and Zookkeeper had seen Travelin' Man at the Reservoir talking with a girl by himself, is a typical example of such an accounting practice and its significance for the vanners' views of heterosociality.

Zookkeeper: Hey, Travelin' Man, who was that girl you were talkin' to? Not bad. Not bad at all.

Travelin' Man: Aw, if you mean Sally, me and her are just friends. She used, w-w-well, she used to date a friend of mine in high school and we would sometimes talk but that's all.

Zookkeeper: I don't know. Looked like more than talk to me but if you ain't interested, maybe you can introduce me to her (laughs).

Wizard: Now, Zookkeeper, you just heard Travelin' Man say that she was a friend so why would he want to do that to the poor girl. Why she'd never forgive him (laughs).

Another example shows how this eroticization of all private heterosocial encounters even included interactions between male and female club members. Zookkeeper and Star Baby had applied for membership in the club at the same time and hence, were to be voted on at the same time. Therefore, at the meeting when the club members were going to decide whether to accept each of their applications they were asked to move out of hearing range. As the two of them walked off together there were several comments which, albeit jokingly, warned them not to give into their natural sexual interests.

Wild Fire: You two behave yourselves!

Wizard: Don't do anything I wouldn't do (giggles).

Free Bird: Don't do anything I would do!

Whenever a male or female club member was alone with a person of the other sex, almost invariably some public remark was made and an
account elicited. In part, this accounting practice is indicative of the importance the male vanners placed on heterosexual encounter in the accomplishment of masculinity. Such public exchanges did acknowledge the encounter and gave a male vanner a chance to make a heterosexual encounter known to others. Yet, they also reveal the vanners' presumption that heterosocial interaction is primarily based upon and inherently involves an erotic interest. Hence, while guys "talk" to other guys and girls "talk" to other girls, guys and girls talking to each other are probably "flirting." By implication, heterosocial interaction was considered a means to an end rather than an end in and of itself; and the distinction between heterosociality and heterosexuality was minimized. As I will show later, the consequences of this sexualization of heterosociality was to limit the amount and nature of the relationships which the Lady Vanners could have with the guys in the club since such interactions would only be legitimate if sexual interest was also legitimate and under the masculinist dimensions of the club's culture, conditions of legitimate sexuality were more limited for girls than for guys.

Although the vanners tended to imbue all heterosocial encounters with sexual properties, they did recognize that under certain conditions heterosexual relationships could exist which did not involve sexuality. In particular, they had a typology of heterosocial relationships which were utilized in the accounts that they would give of their heterosocial encounters and which was based upon the heterosexual-couple as the ideal relationship to which all other heterosocial relationships were compared. More specifically, the male vanners and the Lady Vanners talked about three major forms of heterosocial relationships: "just-friends," "just-dating," and "boyfriend and girlfriend." The use of
the modifier "just" in denoting the first two types of heterosocial relationships signifies that these are types of relationships from which some aspect of the prototypical relationship, that of the boyfriend-girlfriend couple, is lacking.

Being "just-friends" or "just-good-friends" meant that a guy and a girl liked each other but were neither sexually involved nor had any interest in becoming so. As with homosocial friendships, members of these relationships enjoyed talking with each other and occasionally spent time together but had effectively eliminated or suppressed whatever sexual/romantic inclinations there might have been between them. Interestingly, while such relationships were relatively rare, heterosocial friendships which were also considered by their participants to being especially close were compared not to marital relationships but to sibling relationships in order to reaffirm the absence of sexual involvement. For example, when Star Baby talked about a guy she had known for years and whom she considered a very good friend she would describe their relationship as that of brother and sister ("He's been just like a brother to me").

While the vanners did acknowledge the possibility of heterosocial friendships, they also perceived them to be extraordinarily difficult to establish and maintain due to contravening internal and external factors. Internally, they considered the sexual urges between males and females to be powerful enough that if they did spend enough time together along it would be hard not to become sexually interested as well. Externally, and paradoxically, because sexuality is such a natural part of heterosocial relationships, should one or both of the friends have a boyfriend or girlfriend, then this person would probably not accept the friendship since it would challenge the sexual monogamy
of the love-relationship. In any case, heterosocial friendships were
seen as precarious and tenuous and treated with a note of suspicion by
others.

For example, in the early months of the club, Star Baby and
Wizard developed what both considered to be a close-friendship. Both
were in the process of establishing coupled-relationships but had as
yet been unsuccessful in realizing a commitment from the individuals
they were interested in. Because they had been unsuccessful in achiev­
ing a commitment from the others in whom they were interested in they
knew it was legitimate for them to see each other. Because they were
both seeking such a commitment, they trusted that there was little
chance (at least as things were) of becoming involved with each other.
For a while they got together fairly often and were able to give each
other some emotional support through the heterosexual difficulties
they were both having. Both of them also saw their developing friend­
ship to be a positive but special social accomplishment.

You know, Judi, Wizard and I have become pretty good friends.
We've learned to talk to each other about almost anything.
I know we both needed somebody to talk to. I think everybody
does, but sometimes, I think, you know, when you're younger
you sort of are too shy around members of the opposite sex.
You know, you can't get past all that boy-girl stuff.

Star Baby

I went over to Star Baby's place last night and we must have
stayed up 'til about one in the morning just talking. Joyce
(a friend of Star Baby) came over for a little while. She's
really nice, too. It felt good to just sit around and talk
for a change, you know, without anything else goin' on. It'snice just bein' friends, I'm serious, and I just wish more
guys were able to do that without thinking that everytime a
guy talks to a girl he's tryin' to get in her pants or
something. That's silly.

Wizard
Nonetheless, despite their positive feelings towards their own friendship and despite their affirmation of the realizability of this type of heterosocial relationship, both Wizard and Star Baby were later to speak with suspicion about the claims made by others to having that type of relationship with persons of the other sex. Hence, when Quickdraw began spending many of his evenings with Star Baby at her home, it was Wizard who refused to see their relationship as one of friendship even though both Quickdraw and Star Baby said that that was all it was. Wizard instead said, "Don't tell me that Quickdraw's over there all the time 'cause he simply wants to help her with her van. I'll just bet there's a lot more than that goin' on between the two of 'em." Similarly, when Heidi, a female-outsider, told Star Baby that she had been going places with Free Bird simply because she and he were "just friends," Star Baby refused to believe her. "Sure she calls him up and invites him to go bowling and it's because she wants to be friends. Well, you know what I said to that. I told him she could have him if she wanted him but I'm no fool."

The tendency to attribute sexual or erotic properties to male-female interactions functioned to set up social barriers to the formation and maintenance of male-female friendships since, as I will discuss in more detail later, under the masculinized heterosexism of the van club culture, this cultural practice was to curtail the heterosocial interactions which coupled women could have if they wished to be respected. Seeking to be friends with a male made a woman vulnerable to accusations of sexual involvement which would constitute a basis for a loss of respectability if she was involved in a monogamous relationship or if she had too many male friends.
"Just dating" relationships were heterosocial relationships in which the participants were seen as sexually and/or romantically interested in one another but had as yet made any emotional commitment to each other. In these relationships, dyadic encounters were primarily in the form of a "date," a type of interactive event unique to heterosocial relationships, in which the male would ask a female to spend time with him on a specified day or evening, often though not necessarily for a specified activity. For these relationships, social contacts were seldom the result of just hanging out at certain spots as they were for homosocial relationships. Instead, these types of association were planned and designed, typically by the male.

Essentially, for the vanners, a dating relationship was seen as temporary and intermediate between no relationship and becoming girlfriend-and-boyfriend. Dating was the means by which a guy and a girl who were apparently erotically attracted to one another could see if they might "fall in love," "become serious," and begin "going together." Furthermore, it was the explicit right of either person to date others although to do so was to suggest that you were not all that interested in becoming the boyfriend or girlfriend of the person you had been dating previously. In addition, while sexual contact was seen as a legitimate or expected part of these relationships, these were also perceived to be a matter of potential conflicting interests between the guy and the girl. As one would expect, given the masculinized double standard of the vanner, the vanners expected a guy to try for all he could get and a girl to hold back unless she really was interested in a relationship with him.

Ironically, the vanners sometimes interpreted a guy's refusal to seek sexual intercourse with a date as a sign of being interested in
establishing a commitment while interpreting a girl's acceptance of sexual intercourse with a date as a sign of being interested in a commitment. For example, one Sunday afternoon while sitting at the Reservoir, Wizard asks Earthquake how Travelin' Man's date the previous evening had been. Travelin' Man had told everybody that he had the date because he had been very excited about taking out this particular girl whom he had only met a few weeks ago and whom he considered real "good lookin'."

Earthquake: He said it went alright. I guess they have another date for next Friday or Saturday.

Wizard: God, he didn't waste any time.

Zookkeeper: Did he get any?

Earthquake: What?

Zookkeeper: Did he get any?

Earthquake: How the hell should I know!

Quickdraw: I'll bet he didn't.

Zookkeeper: Well, if I know Travelin' Man, I'll bet he tried.

Quickdraw: Yeah, but I know Paula (the girl Travelin' Man had dated) and she plays it pretty safe.

Wizard: Well, if they have another date for next week, then, he's either sick or he's in love.

Free Bird: You mean there's a difference.

The fact that Travelin' Man would consider another date with a girl who might not have been willing to have sexual intercourse with him was, in other words, seen by Wizard as a sign of an emotional bond as opposed to a mere sexual bond between Travelin' Man and his date.
Being Boyfriend-and-Girlfriend

If heterosocial friendship was a type of male-female relationship which the vanners perceived as the exception rather than the expectation in their social setting, and if dating-relationships were perceived as temporary or intermediate relationships preceding the entry into a more serious or committed heterosexual bond, they perceived the heterosexual couple—the boyfriend-girlfriend dyad based on bonds of love and exclusive sexual intimacy—to be the preferred and expected form of heterosocial relationship and the one which guys and girls were ultimately seeking to achieve with a person from the other sex-category. Explicit acknowledgment of the unique importance of these relationships was formally made in the club bylaws which permitted any vanner to bring his girlfriend (or her boyfriend) into the club as a member with all the rights and responsibilities that membership was supposed to afford. Such a right was not formally given to a vanner's same-sex friends.9

While both the guys and girls in the club perceived the heterosexual couple to be a special relationship, there also existed a sex-based division of labor regarding the doing of these relationships which reflected the sexual double standard of the club's culture and which ultimately restrained women's autonomous participation in club activities. Essentially, it was the male's right and responsibility to initiate contacts and do the work of eliciting a commitment should he so desire; but once a mutual commitment had been made, it was the female's responsibility to do most of the work necessary to maintaining it. The net effects of this division was to enhance male control over these relationships and, ironically, eliciting from females active collusion in their own and other females subordination. I will begin
by discussing the process by which couplings were established and then look at the rules by which they were supposed to be maintained.

Becoming Coupled. The process of beginning a relationship involved dating and initiating a dating relationship which was considered something guys and not girls should control. If a guy was "interested" in a girl, he could ask her out. However, given that achieving masculinity was determined in part by being able to "get" girls or to win them over, the guys tended to perceive this work as risky. To ask and be refused, or to decide that you wanted to have a more involved relationship with a girl who did not share this desire but still wanted to date others, was perceived by the guys to be hurtful and damaging to one's self-esteem. Simultaneously, the ability to refuse a date or a relationship represented a potential form of female power.

As a strategy for minimizing this risk, the guys typically engaged in a preliminary interactive process with available females known as "flirting." "Flirting" was virtually synonymous with "being friendly" to a girl, talking to, and joking with her. Nonetheless, there was enough ambivalence in the definitions given to a specific encounter, that a guy who approached an unattached or single female at a bar or during a club party could seek to control the definitions others gave to his actions in such a way as to lessen the potential negative repercussions to self should this preliminary contact fail to have the desired results. If the girl that was approached "flirted back," that is, talked and kidded with him, then he could interpret her behaviors as a sign of potential interest on her part and if he wanted, decide to set up a date with her. If she acted coolly towards him, then he could draw upon the masculinist cultural apparatus available to him to say that he was just tryin' to be friendly and she was a "bitch."
The significance of "flirting" as a preliminary sign of interest in a girl was indicated by the fact that almost all of the dates which the single guys in the club had during the months the club was together occurred with girls they had met and talked to at club functions. The presence of unattached or uncoupled girls at these functions thus presented an important means of pursuing not only sexual encounters but of seeking to find someone with whom a guy could become more deeply involved.

Should one of the vanners actually ask a girl for a date and be refused or be dating a girl in whom he was seriously interested but who wanted to date others, he could still attempt to save face either by denying interest and/or by claiming that the girl was not really a "nice-girl" and hence was unworthy of any serious interest. Two incidents illustrate each of these face-saving devices respectively.

Early in November, Earthquake had told Wizard that he wanted to take Spacy out on a date. Wizard encouraged him to do so, so Earthquake asked Spacy and Spacy accepted. The next Friday evening, he took Spacy to what the vanners considered to be a "pretty-fancy" place for a fairly expensive dinner. In doing so, he indicated that he really liked her. The very next evening, the club met at the River Bar to drink, play cards, and spend some time. By about 11:30 p.m., Spacy, Vandura, Earthquake, Wizard and myself were the only club members still there and the five of us decided to convoy up to the Castle Lot to see what was happening. For the trip there, Spacy asked Earthquake to drive her van while she rode with Vandura. When Wizard realized the seating arrangements, he perceived this situation to be peculiar and over the c.b. radio asked Earthquake to explain what was going on. Since Wizard knew that Earthquake was interested in Spacy, he assumed
that they should be traveling together and definitely, if Spacy shared
this romantic interest, she would rather be traveling with Earthquake
than with Vandura.

Wizard: Earthquake?
Earthquake: Yeah?
Wizard: Why is Spacy riding with Vandura?
Earthquake: It's okay. I trust her.
Wizard: Huh? What?
Earthquake: I don't know. Hell, I don't care what she does.

Wizard said no more and the conversation was dropped. In doing so, he
allowed Earthquake to maintain his self-esteem in the face of an
apparent rejection by ostensibly accepting his claim of disinterest.
Privately to me, he recognized that this disinterest was probably not
really valid and, moreover, reinforced the importance of male-comaraderie
against a female who, although also a club member, had refused to be and
do what one of the guys wanted.

Wizard: You know, that really bothers me about Spacy.
Judi: What's that?
Wizard: You know: that she went out with him one night and
then the next night won't have anything to do with him.
He really liked her and if she wasn't interested she
shouldn't have gone out with him. It ain't right to
lead him on like that.
Judi: Oh, I don't think she was leadin' him on or whatever.
She probably went out with him to be nice. After all,
it was just a date and she probably does like him and
all and didn't think it would be right to simply not
want to go on a date with him. Maybe she's just not
interested in anything more and wanted him to know
that.
Wizard: Yeah, I hear what you're sayin'. I guess there's
no harm done. But all I'm sayin' is, well, I just wish she'd make up her mind.

Judi: About what?

Wizard: About which of these guys she's really interested in. One night she's with Earthquake and next night she's with Vandura. They're all followin' her around like puppy-dogs.

Despite the fact that Spacy was a club member and hence could have legitimately expected to be able to be friends with any of the guys and associate with them as the opportunities arose, her status and rights as such were superceded by her status as a single-female who would "naturally" be the object of the single-guys' pursuit. Furthermore, according to Wizard, in a situation of conflicting interests between Spacy's wants and intentions and that of one of the guys, it was she rather than he who was probably to be held culpable.

The second incident involved Zookkeeper and a young girl-outsider named Betzy. Betzy was considered a very-sexy female or "fox," but she had earned the disgust of the guys and girls in the club by acting overtly sexual when she came to a club party wearing a revealing dress and sitting so as to reveal as much as possible. Zookkeeper evidently did not mind her behavior, proceeded to flirt with her most of that night, and subsequently began dating her. He brought her to a couple of club-outings and then suddenly stopped. In the presence of other club members, Wizard asked Zookkeeper where Betzy was and if they were still seeing each other. Zookkeeper replied that he had found out she had been seeing somebody else and so he had "dropped" her. "She's nothing but a little tramp and I'll be damned if I'm gonna have anymore to do with her no matter what she does."

Apparently, Zookkeeper had wanted her to date only him and Betzy had been unwilling to do this. While it was she who thus refused to
become exclusively committed to him, he made it sound like it was he rather than she who had controlled the dissolution of their relationship. In addition, he justified his actions by denigrating her and categorizing her as a type of immoral woman. None of the club members who heard Zookkeeper's account questioned him about it.

To judge from some of their conversations, the guys recognized that the work of initiating heterosexual involvements was theirs but considered this sex-based responsibility to be burdensome and unfair and something which girls could legitimately assume but refused to do so. Nonetheless, they also implied that should a girl "go after" a guy by initiating interactions or dates she would also risk lessening her sexual-social value by such actions. A "nice-girl," a girl who was a worthy object of a guy's love, would not be willing to pursue a guy because to do so would be to risk being "used" and, therefore, to "cheapen" herself. After all, a guy could accept a girl's overtures simply to have sex; but no girl should be seeking just to have sexual pleasure in her relationships with guys and a girl who has value as an erotic object and a respectable woman would prefer to be pursued by guys. Hence, both the guys and the Lady Vanners saw any girl's attempt to initiate a heterosexual relationship with a guy as indicative of a female who is either "hard-up" (so unattractive that she has to either pursue a guy or remain forever single) or an immoral woman (who would use her erotic powers to try to control situations or lacking in sexual control herself). Again, two incidents illustrate each of these interpretations in use.

Kim was a girlfriend of Spacy who for several months accompanied Spacy to almost every club party, get-together or meeting. She was also very interested in dating Travelin' Man, and told Spacy, Wizard,
and me repeatedly about how much she wanted to go out with him. When, however, Travelin' Man failed to show any interest in dating her, Kim began to call him up and ask him out. Travelin' Man repeatedly refused her by claiming to still be emotionally involved with another girl with whom he had broken up several weeks after the club started. He told the rest of us that the real reason he did not want to go out with Kim was because he simply did not find her physically attractive ("She's too fat.") Kim persisted in asking Travelin' Man until one evening, while the rest of the club was sitting in a bar, Travelin' Man came in, said that Kim was driving him crazy and that he did not know what he was going to do about her, and then left. Later, the rest of us began to talk about the situation and what should be done.

Earthquake: I don't know why he doesn't just say, "Yeah, bitch, leave me alone." I'll bet that would solve his problem.

Jay Bird: Naw, he can't say that exactly. That wouldn't be right. But he should lay it on the line with her. Just tell her right up front that he doesn't want to date her.

Star Baby: Yeah, I agree. There ain't no sense in being mean to her. Poor kid is pretty hard-up. I think Spacy should take her aside, though, and tell her "Listen, you're not helpin' anything by goin' after Travelin' Man that way. No guy really likes a girl who chases him."

Wizard: Oh, I don't know. I wouldn't mind if some girl wanted to throw herself at me (laughs).

Star Baby: Well, how 'bout, if I throw this pitcher at you, you poor thing. Better yet, how 'bout if I tell Kim that you really want to ask her out but that you haven't 'cause you know she's madly in love with Travelin' Man and you won't stand a chance.

Judi: Yeah, really. I wouldn't mind sharin' ya.

Star Baby: Sure and it be for a good cause. Travelin' Man'd be happy. Kim would be happy. Everybody'd be happy.
Wizard: And I'd be miserable. I got enough problems . . .

While Kim was considered a rather pathetic female whose heterosocial aggressiveness resulted from her unattractiveness as a sexual object, aggressiveness on the part of females who were sexually attractive was not as tolerated. Heidi was another female-outsider who participated regularly in club activities from January through March. Although single during this time, she initiated several "dates" with both Zookkeeper and Free Bird who were also single. She would show up at Zookkeeper's place of work and ask him if he wanted to go to lunch, she called Free Bird up and asked him to go with her to a night club; and she would call either guy simply to talk and see "how they were doin'." In both cases, Heidi denied having any romantic or sexual interest in either guy saying that she just wanted to be their friends and that she did not think there was anything wrong in asking friends if they wanted to go places with you. Nonetheless, her behavior was still seen as inappropriate by the vanners, for reasons stemming from the fact that nobody accepted her assertions that she was not really romantically interested in these guys nor trying to get them interested in her. She became seen and talked about as a "bitch" who was using her erotic powers to get guys interested in her and thereby threaten the unity of the club by not becoming committed to any one of them. Had Heidi confined her overtures strictly to one guy, she may have been reacted to with less animosity by the club members. However, she herself asserted that she believed it was wrong for a girl to pursue relationships with a guy if she wanted to be more than friends because "a guy just wouldn't respect a girl who did that." The responsibility for initiating dates and pursuing heterosexual relationships was the
guy's and in doing so he risked being hurt, but a female who did so risked being denigrated as an inferior or cheap sexual commodity.

Once a heterosexual relationship had been established and a guy and a girl were known to be "going-together," another set of social rules based upon a different gender-based division of labor structured the nature of their respective activities. These rules represent a set of expectations regarding the doing of heterosexual-monogamy (of being boyfriend and girlfriend) that were taken-for-granted by both the male and female vanners and which were overtly supposed to constrain both of their activities. However, in reality, given the heterosexist masculinism of the vanners' cultural system, the work of meeting these relational standards of bonding was primarily the girlfriend's and in doing so, she experienced greater limitations on her ability to act as an autonomous actor and to form social relationships with other persons than did her boyfriend.

Essentially, there were three major interrelated social rules for accomplishing heterosexual couplings and the bond of "being-in-love": (1) cosociality; (2) interactional restraint and (3) emotional primacy. Cosociality meant that the couple should exist and act as a single social unit for purposes of social activity. Interactional restraint meant that both partners should limit the amount and nature of their interaction with members of the other sex; while emotional primacy meant that persons who are in love should see that particular relationship as the primary relationship in their lives and experience their emotional well-being as contingent upon the state of this relationship.

The effects of these rules upon the behavior of guys-as-boyfriends and girls-as-girlfriends was differentially mediated by the
symbolic masculinism of the vanners' dominant reality which afforded women status on the basis of their conformity to standards of sexual monogamy and did not so rank guys. As a result, girls involved in coupled-relationships actually did most of the work involved in maintaining the relationship and conforming to these rules. In addition, in the process of conforming to these rules, the coupled-girls were socially segregated from single girls and all guys in a way not true for their boyfriends. In order to explicate these rules and their effects more fully, I will discuss each of them and the observational and experiential data from which knowledge of each rule and their gender-differentiated effects were acquired.

Cosociality. The most direct and immediate way in which two people displayed their coupledness was through cosociation. A boyfriend and girlfriend were expected to act as a social unit: to want to be together, to go places together, and to stay close to each other when at these places. The vanners always knew when one of the guys was in love because we would either see him with his girlfriend or we would not see him at all, and this cosociality was considered proper. If someone was known to be involved in a heterosexual relationship (or becoming involved) and came to some club function without his girlfriend, he would typically be asked to account for her absence. Furthermore, not only were a boyfriend and girlfriend expected to come to events together, but at these events they were expected to stay together, sit together, and stand together even if one of them (typically, the guy) was talking with someone else.

Nonetheless, in both observing and experiencing the demands of cosociality during club parties and outings, I also came to realize that the effects of this rule were not the same for guys-as-boyfriends
as they were for girls-as-girlfriends. These differential effects resulted from the fact that the activities in which the couple would participate and their movements at these activities were controlled primarily by the male. As a result, it was the girlfriend who was expected to make the effort to either stay with her boyfriend or to stay-put where he left her. The guys tended to control when and with whom the couple would talk. Girlfriends typically moved or traveled about as her boyfriend's appendage, a social status reinforced visibly by the tendency for guys, while standing and talking to each other, to throw an arm around the shoulder of their girlfriend. If a girl did not accompany her boyfriend, as for example when Wizard left me to talk to other guys at the Christmas party, it was generally because he wanted to be considerate of her needs when she was already busy talking to someone else but she was not supposed to leave that spot until her boyfriend returned. While she might not know exactly where he was and with whom he was talking, chances were that he did know exactly where she was and with whom she was talking. If he cared about her, then he was not supposed to leave her alone for very long; but nor should he have to follow her around. Instead, being together or cosociating meant that he should want her by his side he went and she should want to go with him. As a result, she simply had far less control or autonomy over the social interactions she could have and the social relationships she could develop.

I became aware of the gender-differentiated implications of this rule primarily by observing the interactive patterns of couples to include my own relationship with Wizard. In addition, I was able to witness several incidents in which it was apparently violated and the results of these violations.
One incident involved Travelin' Man and a young woman named Chris whom he had been going with for several weeks. Earthquake was giving a party for the club members and Travelin' Man brought Chris. During the evening, however, Chris repeatedly left Travelin' Man to talk to some people that she knew. On one occasion that I observed she went to talk to a girl; on several other occasions, she went to talk to some guys. That Chris's behavior was unusual for a girl involved in a heterosexual relationship with a guy was first brought to my attention by Wild Fire who at one point during the evening leaned over and whispered in my ear, "You'd never know she came with him, would you."

Travelin' Man evidently also thought Chris's activities were inappropriate for he became increasingly upset as the evening progressed and his anger was validated as legitimate by the other vanners. Zookkeeper with Earthquake's verbal agreement finally decided that Travelin' Man should "show Chris a-thing-or-two" and persuaded Travelin' Man to go with him to pick up a couple of other girls who wanted to come to the party. Travelin' Man and Zookkeeper left the party without telling Chris, and by the time he returned, she was angry and upset. As far as the vanners were concerned, she had gotten what was coming to her and the following afternoon, Zookkeeper, Earthquake, Travelin' Man and Wizard talked about the event and laughed at Chris's reaction.

Travelin' Man: Man, w-w-was she ever mad at me (laughs).

Zookkeeper: Well, it's her own fault. She shouldn't of been actin' like that in front of everybody.

Judi: I'm still not sure how she was actin'.
Zookkeeper: Didn't you see her flittin' about all over the place right in front of Travelin' Man?

Judi: Yeah, but I just figured she wanted to talk to people she knew.

Travelin' Man: Yeah, well, that's what she said, too. (In a mock, high-pitched female voice Travelin' Man pretends to be speaking for Chris). "Oh, there's so-and-so and there's so-and-so. God, I haven't seen them in such a long time. Why I just have to go see how they've been doin'."

Judi: So, didn't you go along with her? Maybe she just wanted to introduce you, too.

Wizard: Judi, I know what you're doin', but be serious.

Zookkeeper: Hey, I don't care what she wanted. If I take a girl somewhere and she came with me, I don't expect to go followin' her around all night. She should want to be with me, damn it, and if she don't, then, yeah, I'm gonna do whatever I damn well please and if she doesn't like it, tough!

Wizard: Yeah, well, I guess Chris learned her lesson anyway.

In other words, as the guys condescendingly informed me, a heterosexual couple should seek to stay together but the male should control that togetherness. Hence, a female who was coupled was expected to acquiesce to her guy's needs, wishes, and interests in socializing with others. He might allow her to spend some time alone, talking to others without him, but she had no such rights independently of his approval.

Another time, during the Christmas party which the club had at the Birdie Inn, I had been talking with Wild Fire when Wizard and Crazy Horse came over to us and said that they wanted to go out to the vans and smoke a little dope and asked us to come along. Wild Fire immediately got up to go along, but I wanted to finish the beer I was drinking so I told Wizard to go ahead and I'd be out in a couple of minutes. While I was sitting there gulping my beer, Zookkeeper sat
down beside me saying that he was depressed and needed to talk with Wizard and myself. I asked him what was wrong and he began to talk with me. Wizard came in a few minutes later to see where I was and I told him that I was talking to Zookkeeper about something and would join him shortly. Wizard then left but several minutes later, when I still had not joined him, returned to where I was sitting and angrily told me that he was leaving the party and that if I didn't want to leave that moment, I could find my own way home. Knowing, as he did, that I would be embarrassed to find another way home, I left with Wizard and in the argument that followed I was forcefully made aware of having violated a primary rule of female behavior in doing heterosexual relationships.

Wizard: I told you that I was going to smoke a joint with Crazy Horse and I asked you to come along. Ten minutes later you're still in talkin' with Zookkeeper. If you wanted to talk with him then you should have come with him.

Judi: I told you I would be out soon, but Zookkeeper was depressed and wanted to talk. He wanted to talk with both of us but you were outside and he didn't want to go. I couldn't just say "no," could I?

Wizard: Why not? Zookkeeper's a big boy.

As the argument continued, Wizard continued to justify his anger and his threat of abandoning me at the party by claiming that my first priority as a coupled-female at a larger gathering should have been to be with him, her boyfriend. In addition, he maintained that I should not have been talking so intimately to another guy in public, even if that guy was a mutual friend because "it just don't look right." Although Zookkeeper did tell Wizard not to blame me because it was he who had asked me to talk with him (and hence I had not done
it on my own initiative), Wizard never expressed any anger towards Zookkeeper or held him accountable for his actions. Their friendship remained firm while Wizard's and my relationship was seriously strained. Further, while Zookkeeper came to my defense, he merely attempted to assuage Wizard's anger. He did not question the legitimacy of the anger. According to Zookkeeper, Wizard was right in wanting me by his side and in being upset because I instead chose to talk with another guy. However, in order to fully interpret the significance of this incident and the preceding one involving Travelin' Man, it is not sufficient to consider only the rule of cosociality as it governed a coupled girl's behavior. It is also necessary to analyze them according to the second major rule of heterosexual-couplings: that of interactional restraint as the means of demonstrating a commitment to sexual monogamy.

**Interactional Restraint.** Being a member of a heterosexual couple meant that both the guy and the girl were to confine sexual activity exclusively to their girlfriend or boyfriend, that is, both were to be sexually monogamous. However, being sexually-monogamous entailed different sets of normative requirements for the girlfriend than it did for the boyfriend primarily because she was expected to refrain not just from having sexual intercourse with another guy but from any actions which could be seen as demonstrating or signifying that she might be interested in having sexual encounters with any other guy. In other words, given the sexual double standard which imposed upon girls and not guys the necessity of controlling and limiting their sexual contacts and given the tendency for the vanners to eroticize all but the most superficial interactions between a guy and a girl, a violation of the commitment to sexual monogamy could be attributed to
almost any interactions between a male and a female when one or both were involved in a coupled relationship with someone else. Furthermore, it was typically the female, whether single or coupled who was held responsible for the wrong-doing by other girls and other guys. Directly, the effect of this social process was to require of coupled-women that they restrain from any but the most superficial relationships with all males except their boyfriends. More indirectly, the effect was to produce sexually-segregated patterns of interactions and to create much real and potential hostility between coupled-girls and single-girls within the club's social network.

In order to remain free of any accusations of being unfaithful to her boyfriend which would jeopardize not only her love-relationship but also her reputation as a "good woman" or a "nice-girl," a girlfriend could legitimately interact with other guys only if her boyfriend was also present and interacting with them also. Similarly, single girls could interact with coupled-guys only when the girlfriends were present or they risked being accused of "going after" another woman's man and being characterized by others as a "slut." As a result, patterns of social interaction and social relationships in the club were structured around the dyadic relationships of boyfriends and girlfriends. All guys, whether single or coupled, could interact legitimately with each other but coupled-girls tended to have relationships only with other coupled-girls and single girls could interact easily only with other single girls and single guys. To cross these interactional barriers was for a girl to risk incurring the wrath either of her boyfriend if she was coupled or of other girls, if she approached a coupled guy. In only the rarest of circumstances did I observe an instance where a guy was held accountable for attempting to challenge
the sanctity of the monogamous bond and that involved a single guy who
was believed to be seeking to get a coupled guy to interact with some
single girls. 10  However, there were a series of incidents which
involved violations of the rule of interactional restraint which
illustrate that almost any interaction between a male and a female
could be sexualized and that it was almost always the girl who was
held responsible for these interactions when they were deemed to be
inappropriate.

The first set of incidents occurred during the early weeks of
the club's existence while the club members were attending their first
van-in together. I had not been able to go along but I did talk to
the other Lady Vanners about their experiences. In one such conversa-
tion with Wild Fire she told me that she was really angry with Spacy
and that she did not think Spacy could be trusted.

Judi: Why can't she be trusted?

Wild Fire: Because I know she went after Crazy Horse at the
van-in and I'm not the only one who knew it.

Judi: Why? What did she do?

Wild Fire: Nuthin' really except she would stand and just
stare at Crazy Horse. She would just stare at him with
this wierd look. You couldn't help but notice and
several other people told me she was after him.

From that point on, Wild Fire made frequent reference to the
incident and to her dislike of Spacy. In turn, the two women, although
both were members of the club, had almost no interaction during the
first few months of the club's existence. This incident also illus-
trates the precariousness of a single girl's status in a masculinist-
heterosexual world since, as Wild Fire herself admitted, Spacy had
done little more than look at Crazy Horse but this minimal interaction
was sufficient for her to earn Wild Fire's wrath and disparagement as a "little whore."

If Spacy were not in enough trouble as it was with Wild Fire, she subsequently also earned the animosity of Star Baby. Again, the incident occurred at that first van-in when Free Bird and Star Baby had just started "going together." Free Bird had gone with the club to the van-in but Star Baby had been unable to go with him because she had to work. Then, on Saturday evening after she got off work, she decided to surprise Free Bird and drive out to the van-in. Evidently, surprise him she did because she arrived shortly after he had been alone with Spacy in his van and everyone knew they had been engaging in sexual intercourse. Star Baby was unaware that anything had happened until she was subsequently told by Wild Fire. She then became intensely angry with Spacy and told me later that "that little girl's gonna find herself in a whole lot of trouble if she doesn't learn to stay away from other women's men." However, she also said that she wasn't really angry with Free Bird because they hadn't yet made any real commitment since they still wanted to be free to see other people. She wasn't angry with him, only disappointed, and she was disappointed not because of what he had done but because he had "done it behind my back" instead of being open and honest about it. In other words, although Star Baby explicitly discounted the rule of heterosexual monogamy as applicable to her and Free Bird's relationship, she still was angry at Spacy for being sexually involved with Free Bird and subsequently not only shunned Spacy for months but requested that Free Bird avoid talking to her too. As Spacy was later to tell me about these early experiences:
I just didn't know what I should do. At first I felt like it wasn't right that me and Free Bird or me and Quickdraw couldn't be friends because we had known each other even before the club started hangin' around together. But then it was kind of like, I shouldn't even be talkin' to anybody unless it was okay with their girlfriend. I knew I could talk to Wizard 'cause I knew you wouldn't get mad or anything but I felt like Star Baby and especially Wild Fire they were just watchin' everything I did. Not that I blame them really cause I guess that if I had been in their position I would of felt the same way but I just didn't want to feel like I couldn't even, you know, even talk to them without making somebody angry and makin' myself look bad.

Finally, there were two incidents involving me and my relationship with Wizard which illustrate the nature and effects of the rule of interactional restraint. In both cases, while Wizard was implicated, it was I that was expected to bare the burden of the problem. The first incident occurred during a club gathering at a local bar. While I was there I participated in a joking interaction with Jay Bird who grabbed one of my feet under the table and said he was going to take my boot off. This was the first time any of the vanners had joked with me and I was pleased. I considered Jay Bird's behavior towards me to be a sign of acceptance and liking. Unfortunately, my interpretation of the interaction and my response to it were not shared by Wizard because after we left he immediately informed me that I should not have allowed Jay Bird to pull on my feet.

Wizard: I'm not kidding, Judi. It makes you look loose. These guys won't respect someone that let's them get away with thing like that.

Judi: So what you're sayin' is that I've done something wrong when I was just trying to be friendly and if they get the wrong idea, then it's my fault.

Wizard: You can be friendly without doing things like that. You really should be more reserved. You can't expect these guys to see things the way you do. They're not gonna know you were just tryin' to be friendly. They're
gonna think you're interested in them and I don't blame them. That's just the way things are.

Once again by arguing with Wizard, I became painfully aware that assumptions of sexual interest overruled assumptions of friendship even when this involved joking interactions between club members, that this was improper for a coupled-female and that it was she rather than the males who would be held responsible for misconduct. As a coupled woman, I should either avoid participating in joking interactions with the other guys and thereby possibly never become close with any of them (or even risk being labeled a bitch) or play along with them and risk being seen as a woman unworthy of respect.

The second incident involved me and Heidi, a female-outsider to whom I have previously referred. Heidi had been Jay-Bird's girlfriend and considered both him and Vandura to be good friends of hers. She first came to a club party when she had been going with Jay Bird but even after they broke-up, continued to attend many club functions either with a girlfriend named Heather or by herself. Indeed, after a month or two, she began to call both myself and other club members regularly to find out what the club was doing so she could come too. Ultimately, this behavior precipitated certain changes in the club's bylaws that were instigated by the Lady Vanners. For now, the primary issue concerns Heidi's relationship with the guys in the club, particularly Wizard.

As I previously mentioned, Heidi had asked both Zookkeeper and Free Bird to do things with her and even though both of these guys were unattached at the time, her behavior was perceived as wrong by the vanners. However, in addition to this Heidi also called-up Wizard and myself and would go places with us whether or not the rest of the club
was going to go too. On two occasions, when I was busy doing something else, she even went somewhere just with Wizard. While many of her actions incurred the dislike of the other Lady Vanners, her relationship with Wizard precipitated an attempt on the part of Star Baby and Spacy (who were by this time close friends of mine and each other) to sanction her behavior with Zookkeeper's help. More specifically, at Star Baby's and Spacy's instigation, Zookkeeper accosted Heidi about her actions. Neither Heidi nor Zookkeeper actually told me about their encounter; nonetheless, both Spacy and Star Baby told me separately that it had occurred and what Zookkeeper had said.

Spacy: Zookkeeper told her (Heidi) that she shouldn't be treating Wizard and you any differently and that she shouldn't be kissing Wizard in front of you. If you think about it she already was comin' between you two like last Saturday when Wizard was in such a bad mood after bein' with Heidi.

Later, I heard from Star Baby as well.

Star Baby: Did you know that Zookkeeper got into a fight with Heidi the other night.

Judi: Heidi told me that she went over to his house to see him.

Star Baby: Well, Zookkeeper really let her have it. He told her that the club was tryin' to get tight and that they didn't need any outsiders around yappin' their mouths. Also, that it wasn't right for her to be hangin' around other girls' boyfriends and makin' it so obvious.

When Star Baby referred to Heidi's "hangin' around other girls' boyfriends and makin' it so obvious," I knew that she was referring both to Heidi's relationship with Wizard as well as Heidi's relationship with Free Bird. Although by this time Star Baby and Free Bird were no longer seeing each other, Star Baby still viewed Heidi's
overtures toward Free Bird to be a direct affront towards her.

Several aspects of this event represent significant aspects of the rule of interactional restraint as an essential aspect of doing heterosexual relationships. First, the fact that Star Baby and Spacy considered themselves to be good friends of mine made it seem imperative to them that they either warn me about or directly protect me from Heidi's presumed assault on my relationship with Wizard. Secondly, Heidi had in fact done little more than kiss Wizard goodbye in the Pizza Inn one afternoon when I was there and called him up to go bowling when I was busy. I had been fully aware of these encounters and Heidi knew I was fully aware as well. Third, Wizard had most definitely played a part in these activities. He did after all decide to accept Heidi's overtures when she made them. Nonetheless, it was Heidi not Wizard who was held responsible and accountable for making what were perceived to be sexualized interactions with a coupled-male. Similarly, it was I, not Wizard, who was told about Heidi's behavior and was expected to do whatever was necessary to protect my relationship. The work of maintaining the relationship and with it, the love and commitment of Wizard, was seen as my (the girlfriend's) responsibility.

In essence, the doing of heterosexual monogamy in a boyfriend-girlfriend relationship essentially imposed upon coupled-women the necessity of restraining their interactions with all other males and imposed upon single women the necessity of restraining their interactions with already "taken" or coupled males. The results of this rule was not only to segregate all coupled women from other males but to seriously divide coupled women from single women since the latter tended to be seen as a potential threat for even the slightest exchanges with a coupled-male. This divisive consequence of heterosexuality for
women's relationships were further exacerbated by the third major rule of coupled relationships.

**Emotional Primacy.** The final major rule for accomplishing boyfriend-girlfriend relationships concerned the personal and interpersonal experiences which the vanners' perceived to be a natural result of "being-in-love." "Being-in-love" was the social bond upon which heterosexual relationships were based and it was a bond perceived to be both essential for and unique to this type of social relationship. As such, it was also perceived to be a social bond stronger in its personal saliency than any other bond a person might experience to include bonds of friendship and bonds with parents, siblings or other kin. "Being-in-love" absorbed the individuals involved more than any other type of relationship that they would or could experience.

The emotional primacy attributed to this affective state was expressed in two major ways. First, a person's emotional well-being was considered to be intricately dependent upon how well her/his heterosexual relationships were going. Coupled males as well as coupled females had emotional highs as well as emotional lows attributed to the state of their heterosexual relationships. Secondly, because the love-attachment was perceived to be of greater importance than any other interpersonal bond, in the cases where a conflict between it and other relationships would arise, an individual was expected to resolve the conflict by remaining with his/her lover.

However, it was also true that the emotional work involved in maintaining the love commitment in the face of internal or external strains or threats was experienced by the women involved in heterosexual couplings as disproportionately their burden. In other words, despite the power which love was said to hold over both males and females, the
Lady Vanners spoke often about the greater potential labor and hither personal costs which doing emotion commitment extracted from them. Let me briefly consider how emotional primacy was evident in the interpersonal activities of club members and then consider how it was seen by the women to impose unequal shares of the work.

That an individual's emotional well-being was perceived to be inextricably dependent upon how well his/her heterosexual relationship was going was evident in the types of attributions that the vanners made when one of them would behave "out of character." Emotional extremes, whether that of exuberance or that of depression (which could not be connected to getting or being messed-up) were typically seen as signifying that something very right or very wrong had happened to one's love-relationships. Indeed, given the rule of cosociality, a mere involuntary separation was seen as a legitimate basis for a vanner's despondency, while almost any emotional outburst was considered legitimate if it was also perceived to be directly connected to either a fight, or even a break-up, with one's lover. For example, one evening the club had gathered at a night club in order to celebrate Travelin' Man's birthday. At this time, he was in love with a girl named Marie. During the preceding afternoon, Marie, Star Baby and Spacy had decided that they would try to surprise Travelin' Man by first having him believe that Marie would not be able to come to the party that night and then, of course, see that she eventually got there after he had already arrived. The intent was to construct a situation that they knew would make him unhappy, by separating him from Marie, in order to make his excitement and celebration that much happier. The structuring of this event illustrates the manipulation of Travelin' Man's emotional state through the dynamics of his love-relationship with Marie which
was seen as far more effective than any other would have been. As a Star Baby told me on the phone that afternoon:

I wish you could have seen Travelin' Man. He's just a basket-case. All he could talk about was Marie and that he didn't think he wanted to go (to the party that night) because Marie wasn't gonna be there. Poor guy. I almost felt like tellin' him and puttin' him out of his misery but I held back. I didn't want to ruin the surprise.

Similarly, on any other occasion when one of the guys would show up to a party or meeting "actin' depressed," it was generally understood to be a result of a fight with or rejection from a girl he had fallen in love with. By the same token, if one of the vanners would show up actin' crazy but not as a result of drugs or alcohol, the other vanners would ask him if he had fallen in love or exclaim that he "must be in love."

If a vanner's heterosexual relationship was perceived to be the primary determinant of his or her emotional state, then it was also the case that this social bond was believed to be more important to both males and females than any other relationship. When any interpersonal conflicts would emerge which ostensibly would challenge the bond between a heterosexual couple, it was expected that the members of the couple would act so as to preserve their relationship even if it meant losing other friends or potential friends. In situations, for example, where an individual's lover and a friend would come into conflict, then s/he would be expected to side with her lover and against his or her friend. For example, towards the last days of the club, Star Baby and Spacy headed a faction that had decided to leave Nomad Vans and form another club. Wizard remained as head of the original club. Since I was coupled with Wizard, I had been automatically excluded
from the political activities that Star Baby had organized against Wizard. Despite the fact that she and I had been very good friends, she had intentionally excluded me from her maneuverings not as a sign of hostility but indeed as a sign of caring. As she told me later:

You know, Judi, I never did have anything against you. I just knew you could never go against Wizard and I didn't want to put you in a difficult situation. I'm just sorry it came between us.

At the same time, the club's split was also seen as emotionally difficult for Vandura and for Quickdraw who had become involved with Spacy and Star Baby respectively. Vandura ultimately chose to align with Wizard but only by discounting any love for Spacy. As he later said:

I don't know what's gotten into her (Spacy). When I first met her, she was like no other girl. Now, I just don't know.

Quickdraw ultimately decided to go with Star Baby. In both cases, however, the rest of us knew that the determining factor would be their love of the Lady Vanners they were involved with. If they remained in love with Spacy and Star Baby, their primary loyalty would be to them and to those relationships, not to their other male friends.

However, despite the club's apparent recognition of the importance of heterosexual love for men as well as for women, the politics of masculinism informs the reality of what happens and in particular, that the getting and keeping of a man's love involved greater work and greater costs than the converse. To be worthy of a man's love meant that a woman had to act like a "nice-girl" which meant acting in deference to men's needs and according to the double-standard of appropriate conduct which under the rules of cosociality and inter-actional restraint restricted her autonomous participation and her
freedom of association. Spacy, in siding with Star Baby and in helping to engineer an attack against Wizard's control of the club, had not been a "nice-girl" and hence was no longer worthy of Vandura's love. He did not know what had "gotten into her" but she was no longer an acceptable love-partner. Should a woman not act like she wanted to be with her boyfriend when he wanted her to be; should she interact too freely and friendly with other men, then she, too, could lose her status as a nice-girl and hence be legitimately rejected by her boyfriend. Should he drop her or reject her when she had not done anything wrong, then he became the villain. However, the female typically had to conform to a far more restrictive set of behavioral standards in order to be the object of sympathy. The boyfriend's responsibility was to ask her to be with him and to seek to spend time with her. The responsibility of keeping the relationship together by acting so as not to incur his anger was hers. Similarly, the responsibility of reestablishing emotional commitment following a dispute was also hers. For example, in the following conversation between Star Baby and myself, we express both a recognition of our responsibility in "making-up" after disputes and that we experience this responsibility as burdensome but necessary. Star Baby and Free Bird had had a fight after which they had not seen each other for several days. She then calls me up to tell me that they are back together and all is well.

Star Baby: Free Bird and I are doing great again.

Judi: Great! What happened?

Star Baby: Well, I drove up to the river park yesterday afternoon and I saw his van there and he was just sittin' in it listening to music. I could tell he was actin' sort of depressed. So, anyway, I just went over and said, "Hey" and asked him how he was
doin'. And we started to talk and we just talked everything out.

Judi: So the two of you are doing well again?

Star Baby: Yeah. I guess so. At least for the time being. I don't know. You know, how come.... I don't know I've just never been able to figure out why it always has to be the woman who makes the first move. I know he wanted to get back together but he wasn't going to do anything until I did first. Seems like that's always the way it is, though. They get mad and then we have to apologize whether it's our fault or not. I guess it's worth it if you really love somebody but sometimes I get tired of it.

Judi: Yeah, I know what you mean. It's the same between Wizard and I. I have to make the initial move and apologize even if I don't think it's my fault.

Star Baby: Oh, right. Of course. I don't think anything I've done has been wrong. Yet somehow we end up in a fight and then I have to say I'm sorry. It just don't make sense (laughs). I guess they really are all a bunch of little boys.

The work of maintaining love, the work of acting like you always wanted to be together, the work of keeping the relationship monogamous and free of sexual threats were all primarily the responsibility of the females involved in a heterosexual love-relationship. As a result, our experiences and our relationships as Lady Vanners, what we could and could not do and whom we could and could not know, were centrally mediated by our heterosexual status. Being coupled with a guy and acting according to the rules of heterosexual commitment afforded us status and happiness as women worthy of men's respect and a particular man's love. As such, we could also expect to be protected and defended by the guys in the club from any verbal or physical harassment by other guys. Yet, such involvement also functioned to deny us the same freedom of movement and types of interpersonal relationships which the guys experienced. Being a single, independent or uncoupled girl meant that
one had greater freedom of movement and could legitimately engage in a lot more interaction with guys, provided they were single. It also meant that you were viewed with some distrust and hostility by coupled girls.

These structural parameters of our experiences and the problems and struggles which they produced ultimately served as the basis for the emergence of female friendships and female solidarity. As Lady Vanners we came to construct our own female-reality, establishing a position of influence over the males in the club to protect our interests using the very cultural apparatus that they could so easily use to control us and other women.

Female Friendships and Female Solidarity: Struggling for Respect and Love

The dynamics of heterosexual relationships resulted in gender-divisions in the organization of social relationships obtaining between members of the club and between club members and outsiders. As I described previously, male homosocial relations cross-cut group boundaries, could be engaged in regardless of the heterosexual status of the guys, and were created and displayed through the public activities and discourse that were male-controlled. The relationships which females could have with males and the nature of their participation in club activities was far more dependent upon their heterosexual status. Moreover, being involved in a heterosexual relationship affected the relationships between females in ways not true for those occurring between males.

I would like now to describe these female relationships. In so doing, I will be outlining a sequence of events the occurrence of which illustrates the contradictory consequences which masculinist
heterosexism had upon the Lady Vanners' consciousness of themselves, their interests and their relationships with each other. On the one hand, the Lady Vanners essentially colluded with the standards of feminine value and conduct imposed upon them by a masculinist cultural system in their evaluations of themselves and other females. In doing so they accepted that which ultimately served to divide them from other women and provide them with the primary source of their personal problems. On the other hand, because we shared a similar status, we saw each other as having similar values and problems. As a result, we were propelled into social relationships through which we provided each other with emotional support, validated each other's sense of personal dignity and worth in the face of insults to these, and ultimately created a social resource for engaging in overt political activity aimed at changing the club in ways perceived to serve our shared, female interests. Let me begin my discussion by focusing upon the form and content of the Lady Vanner's friendships and then move on to describe the specific actions we took as political actors in this club.

**Becoming and Being Friends: Our Private Understandings**

From the moment I first began participating in club activities, I had affectionate relationships with Star Baby and Wild Fire. When I arrived at a party or meeting, each of them invariably made it a point to greet me and these greetings typically included hugs. I was not so greeted by any of the guys; nor was I, for reasons I will consider shortly, so greeted by Spacy. For the first few months of the club's existence, Spacy was excluded from friendly interactions with the other three women in the club.

The friendships which Star Baby, Wild Fire, and I formed with each other were initially based upon the fact that we shared a similar status
from which we could presume mutual trust and similar interests. First, (unlike Spacy) each of us was involved in a heterosexual relationship with one of the guys in the club: Star Baby with Free Bird, Wild Fire with Crazy Horse, and I with Wizard. None of us came to any club party or meeting without our boyfriend/husband and at these parties and meetings we engaged in displays of physical attachment to our boyfriends who thereby also displayed their commitment to us. Crazy Horse would, for example, ask the club members if they didn't think Wild Fire had the "sexiest little nose in the world" and would then kiss it while everyone applauded. Free Bird would pick Star Baby up and carry her on his shoulders. Wizard walked with his arm about my shoulders as he talked and joked with other guys.

Secondly, and as a result of these relationships and the interpersonal actions by which they were displayed, we understood that we had status as "respected" and "valued" women in the eyes of the other club members. We were the girlfriends of men who had relatively high status in the club, and we conformed to the rules of doing heterosexual monogamy. Hence, we had achieved status as females who had erotic value and moral worth and we liked and trusted each other. We would invariably seek to talk with each other and to find out how one another was.

The amount of our interaction was, however, rather minimal when compared to the amount of time the guys could and did spend talking with each other. By virtue of the rule of cosociality, we were able to talk to each other only to the degree that the activities of our boyfriends would allow. As a result, our talk always had a quality of something grabbed-for or squeezed-in when our guys were momentarily busy doing something else, when we happened to be near each other.
during meetings or parties and/or when we had free moments to talk to each other over the phone during the day. Simultaneously, our talk also had a quality of secrecy—of a social exchange taking place in quieter tones, exclusive to the two or three of us, to be immediately ended with the appearance in our social space of any other person to include our boyfriend. Indeed, frequently our interaction took place at a distance and involved nothing more than a brief exchange of glances through which we could validate for one another a shared perception or reaction to some event happening around us. By virtue of the male control of public discourse, our talk remained private. By virtue of the rules for doing heterosexual couplings, it was frequently out of our control and susceptible to interruption. Nonetheless, we were still able to develop close personal relationships based upon a set of shared, private understandings about our personal lives, experiences and relationships. Whenever possible, we gossiped and through this gossip we constructed our own shared beliefs about what was relevant, appropriate, and moral for us as Lady Vanners in this particular social context.

Earlier in this chapter, I talked about the primary gender-based distinctions in subcultural themes. To reiterate briefly, the Lady Vanners simply were not that absorbed in their vans; nor were they interested in getting messed-up and acting rowdy. They tolerated these behaviors in the guys but they did not think it necessary nor appropriate for them to do the same things in order to have a good time. Frequently, in fact, when Wizard, Free Bird or one of the other guys would do something rowdy or engage in a joking interaction, Wild Fire would look at me, raise her eyebrows and with a slight laugh, shake her head. I would smile my agreement, "Yes, I don't know why
they do it either and it is silly, but I suppose it is harmless and it is actually somewhat entertaining." We did not have any desire to engage in rituals of rowdiness, and we didn't seek to express those personal identities the guys associated with those rituals or with the vans. Our concerns lay elsewhere, contingent upon the dominant reality expressed by the male vanners, but by no means identical with it.

As evident by what we did talk about to each other and by what we did and did not do as participants in club activities, what was of paramount importance to us as members of this club was preserving and protecting our heterosexual relationships and preserving and protecting our social identities as "ladies" in a setting which presented many potential threats to both. In order to show how these concerns informed our understandings and ultimately our political activities, I need to discuss the substance of our talk and the ideas and values which emerged from it.

Our discourse as female members of the club pertained almost exclusively to three major, highly interrelated issues: (1) the state of our relationship with our boyfriends; (2) our economic difficulties; and (3) our evaluations of and feelings about the other people external to our heterosexual relationship. Our role as friends was not necessarily to validate each others perceptions but rather to say and do whatever appeared necessary to make each other feel good or better. At times this meant even withholding certain perceptions about the nature of their problems and their relationships. In other words, our friendships were based primarily upon the giving and receiving of affective support and nurturance, of making each other feel better particularly when we were upset or troubled, worried or hurt by some major event or problem in our lives.
Most of our worries and troubles pertained to our relationships with our boyfriends (or husband). In some cases, these worries or troubles were occasioned by an overt conflict with our guys—a fight or an argument—and in these cases we would basically talk to each other about how unfair he had been and whether or not we should be the one to "make-up." As I mentioned in the previous section, typically the Lady Vanners recognized that regardless of who had been at fault, the primary responsibility for reestablishing the commitment to the relationship was theirs. We would also inform each other when our relationships had been reestablished and/or were going well. We considered our relationships to be going well when our boyfriends were making some effort to demonstrate that they loved us and wanted to be with us. For example, at the Christmas party, Wild Fire could not wait to show me the new ring which Crazy Horse had bought her for Christmas. Star Baby would call me whenever Free Bird would bring her a flower as he occasionally did. As friends, we would celebrate each other's good times and commiserate in each other's bad times knowing that these were almost totally contingent upon the state of our heterosexual relationships.

While many of our concerns about and problems with our heterosexual relationships were directly caused by some overt conflict, many of them were the result of our interest in preserving and protecting the relationships against those social forces which we perceived as threatening to it because they could lessen the guy's commitment. We perceived our heterosexual relationships to require our protection because we also believed that girls want and need a heterosexual love-relationship much more than guys do and that in becoming involved in such a relationship a girl gains certain social assets while a guy loses some. Hence, while finding the right guy to become committed to was a major goal of all
single girls, they would have to struggle against certain oppositional forces if they were to get and keep their guy committed to them. The best way to do this was to make sure that a guy "really loved" you because if he did, then your worries would be minimal. However, getting a guy to really love you depended upon being the type of woman who could offer a guy everything he needs from a heterosexual relationship and thereby offset the costs he might experience in becoming involved and be able to compete against any potential threats (other girls) in keeping him involved.

To be more specific, from the Lady Vanners' perspective, all heterosexual couplings, to include their own, were subject to two major sources of stress which could act to lessen the male's commitment to these relationships. These were costs which a guy experienced in falling in love with a girl and in moving from a single to a coupled status. First, a guy could come to resent the sexual constraints created by a love-commitment. Secondly, he might fear the economic burden which making a "real" commitment to a girl and getting married would automatically impose upon him.

Star Baby, Wild Fire and Spacy believed that if a guy "really loved" a girl, then he would automatically want to be "true" to her, that is, confine his sexual activity to her and only her. He would willingly and happily conform to the rules of heterosexual monogamy. Nonetheless, in so doing, he would be giving up the rights he had as a single-guy to pursue casual sexual encounters with a variety of girls. In the process, he might be exposed to enticements from other girls and guys which could make him doubt the goodness of a monogamous involvement.
Similarly, if a guy "really loved" a girl, then he would naturally want to marry her and thereby make a formal and more durable commitment to her. In so doing, he would of course assume responsibility to provide for their economic or material well-being and the Lady Vanners recognized that this responsibility may be something which a guy would be afraid of. If a guy was willing to give up his sexual freedom and to take on the responsibility of providing for a girl's material needs, then you knew that he really loved you and you could work at that relationship.

For the Lady Vanners, a girl's present and future happiness was dependent upon finding the right guy and getting him to marry you, and then keeping him committed to the marriage. The "right guy" would be a guy who would possess two essential qualities. First, he should be sexually arousing for you. Secondly, he should want to be with and take care of you.

When I first met Crazy Horse . . . I don't know . . . I guess I thought he was real cute and we started datin' and we really got along. I knew he was the right one for me though because he was just, just, well because I knew he loved me and he wanted to take care of me. So that was that (laughs).

Wild Fire

When I first met Free Bird, it was when Yvonne and I were up at the Reservoir and he and Wizard came up to talk to us cause they saw that I drove a van and I remember lookin' at Free Bird and thinkin' that he was really good lookin'. But what I really liked was that he was such a sweet guy because he almost acted like, you know, a protector kind of a person. . . . like I was a little girl and he had to shelter me from whatever might happen.

Star Baby

The Lady Vanners did consider the physical and erotic relationship which took place between them and a particular guy to be an
important part of what any girl would want in a relationship. Each of them spoke about liking and needing sexual intercourse and would reject a guy who, no matter how nice he may be, was not what they considered to be a "good lover." Hence, they also recognized that a girl should be able to have sexual encounters with a guy she thought she might like in order to know whether or not he "had what it takes" to make her feel good. However, they also perceived this capacity to be essentially "magical," that is, nothing which could be created by one's will or by intent. If it was there you would know it. If it was not there, it was never going to be there so you could effectively eliminate a particular guy as the "one for you." The following conversation between Star Baby and myself which occurred over the phone shortly after she and Free Bird had started "going together" illustrates some of these taken-for-granted perceptions which she had of the appropriate or natural sexual relationships that would exist between a girl and a guy if they were really supposed to try to form a relationship.

Star Baby: The thing about Free Bird, I mean, I know he's younger than me and all but I really think he could be the one. And I knew he just can't get over it either.

Judi: Pretty good, huh (laughs).

Star Baby: You got it (laughs).

Star Baby: It's like electricity and he just can't leave me alone not that I want him to.

Judi: Have you ever felt that way before about any guy?

Star Baby: Oh sure, you know that guy I was seein' last year and there have been other guys but, well, I'm not sure it was quite as intense or anything except maybe in the beginning. I just don't keep seein' a guy unless there's that special feelin' like we can't keep our hands off each other and can't wait to be
together. You know what I mean. Otherwise, what's the point. Money is great but it's not gonna keep you warm at night. I learned that from my first marriage.

Similarly, Spacy told me at one point when she was pregnant that Vandura wanted to marry her but that she had said no because "he's just not my type. I mean he's really nice and everything and I like him but he just doesn't do anything for me."

If finding the "right guy" was critically dependent upon being erotically aroused by him, having a good sexual relationship with a guy was not enough and according to the Lady Vanners, any girl who knows what is best for her will look for something more. The something more essentially meant that she should find a guy who respected her and who wanted to take care of her, a guy who treated her as if she was a valued and good woman and who would, therefore, never "use" her, that is, tell her that he loved her when all he really wanted was to have sex with her. A girl needs the kind of guy who loves her enough to want to protect her and provide for her so that she will not have to worry about her own economic survival.

That the Lady Vanners would be concerned with a guy's willingness to protect and take care of them in forming a commitment to him was understandable in light of the economic problems which plagued their existence and which also were a major topic of our conversations. Wild Fire and Crazy Horse were under continuous economic pressures resulting from an inability for either of them to get a high paying job and from Wild Fire's bad health. Throughout the club's existence, Wild Fire talked about being plagued with kidney disorders which not only would limit her ability to work and lessen her and Crazy Horse's income but
which also placed an additional strain on their limited financial resources in the form of medical expenses. Star Baby did own a home as a result of a previous marriage but she was also a single-mother and was unable to find a job which would offer her both decent working conditions and decent pay. She worked for a while as a beautician but allergic reactions to the chemicals forced her to leave this occupation. After this, she had a series of receptionist jobs, none of which she found either pleasant or monetarily adequate.

Getting a guy to love you enough to marry you and thereby want to take care of you was as far as they could see the only major strategy by which they could have any future security. Nonetheless, while they saw themselves as gaining a lover, protector, and provider through heterosexual commitments they also saw their boyfriends/husband as not having anything as tangible to gain and in addition, in losing his freedom and assuming certain responsibilities he would not have as a single guy. It was the existence of these threats and the actions of others which would make our guy's aware of them which we talked and worried about in our conversations.

You know, Judi, I really think he (Free Bird) is afraid of his feelings for me. I know he loves me but he is afraid of loving me. I don't think he ever really loved a girl before and he doesn't know what to do. He's afraid of making any commitment and yet he's also afraid of losing me.

Star Baby

I don't know what I'd do if Crazy Horse ever left me. Not that I think he would. I know he loves me but sometimes I feel so guilty. I know he's tryin' his best to, you know, take care of me but sometimes I'm afraid that it's just too much for him. He sees all these other guys just doin' what they please and havin' a good time without anything to worry about or nuthin' and, well, you know it's got to get to him now and then.

Wild Fire
In the face of these real costs to a guy, our task as girls who were in love with a particular guy became that of making ourselves valuable enough to him that he is willing to accrue the costs associated with being in a monogamous relationship and eventually marrying. In part, this value came from our sexual attractiveness to a guy. Wild Fire, Star Baby and Spacy all believed that women had the power with their sexuality to gain power over a guy, provided that she was sexually-attractive and sexually-competent. As Star Baby was fond of saying, "If you have your man by the balls, his heart and mind will follow."

However, since all sexually attractive women possess this power, if a girl is going to utilize this capacity to gain some power over a guy, then she either has to have a guy that no other girl would want or she has to be able to provide him with more than sex. As Wild Fire once stated it, "I know that the only way I'm gonna be able to keep Crazy Horse is to make him feel like he's special and like I'm special--like no other girl is capable of giving him the kind of love and fun that we have together." Any sexually attractive girl could make a guy interested in her but only a special type of girl will be able to keep him interested and make him want to marry her. In order to do this, a girl not only has to be sexually pleasing but she has to be capable of providing him with enough emotional support and love to make his life easier. She should have the strength and moral character to control her guy not only sexually but emotionally--to make him dependent upon her for his emotional needs. This type of woman--the good woman who is worthy of her boyfriend's love and commitment and of all other guy's respect--was the identity which the Lady Vanners sought to validate for each other and have validated in their
relationships with others. This concern with being seen and treated as ladies who were worthy of men's love and respect also permeated our talk and in particular, influenced our perceptions of and judgments about other people both males and females with whom we came into contact in various club activities.

How we talked about others and the types of feelings we had towards them were based upon gender-differentiated codes of conduct. Our gender-differentiated codes of conduct and typification systems, however, did reflect our attempts to create and validate our special status as Lady Vanners whose interests under a heterosexist-masculinist culture were concerned with being respected as good-women and protecting our love relationships. Through our gossip, we developed our own privately-shared evaluations of other people and their behavior. In general, we reacted towards other guys on the basis of how they acted towards us and we reacted towards other girls on the basis of how they acted (or were believed to have acted) towards the guys. The former evaluations represented what was essentially a struggle against the guy's power to utilize their masculinist standards of femininity and their cultural apparatus to insult or denigrate any of us; the latter evaluations represented our use of these very same standards to evaluate and denigrate other girls.

For the most part, we accepted the masculine typifications that the male vanners made of other guys. If they considered some guy a "jerk" or a "fag," we did also. Nonetheless, most of our gossip about guys was not about the jerks and fags who were excluded from club activities and with whom we interacted minimally anyway. Rather, we talked primarily about the guys in the club and drew distinctions
between them based upon our perceptions of how they behaved towards us specifically.

Basically, we dichotomized the guys in the club into "sweethearts" or "nice guys" versus "pricks" or "bastards;" and it was possible for any one of the guys to go from being one to the other by a single act or gesture. Generally speaking, a "sweetheart" was a guy who talked and acted towards us with either deference and/or as our protectors. In either case, they treated us not as they treated each other, or as they might treat other girls, but as respected and special women and we liked them for that. They could speak disparagingly of other women or of women-as-category and that did not matter. What was essential was that they never speak disparingly of any of us, and that they thereby set us apart from other women, thereby, acknowledging that we had a superior status. Hence, Star Baby considered Free Bird to be a sweetheart because he treated her as "a protector kind of a person." It simply did not concern her that Free Bird also routinely engaged in misogynistic activities. Similarly, Zookkeeper came to be seen as a sweetheart because he spoke repeatedly about the responsibility of the guys in the club to defend and protect the girls in the club and it was irrelevant that he also spoke about and acted towards other girls in a disrespectful fashion.

On the other hand, any actions directed toward any of us which implied a disrespect for us would incur our collective wrath and earn the guy involved disparagement as a "prick" or a "bastard." To act interested in us or appear to try to "flirt" with us when they knew we were involved in a relationship or to make any of us the brunt of a sexual joke or a denigrating remark, were actions which we perceived as implying that we were immoral women and would be seen by all of us as
justifiably worthy of our anger and condemnation. Similarly, to fail
to act toward us as full-fledged members of the club deserving of
special rights and relationships on that basis, to act with anger or to
be "unfriendly" towards any of us would also give rise to our shared
anger towards and disgust with some guy.

One afternoon shortly after the club's Halloween Party, Wild Fire
and I had the opportunity to talk about the party and share our percep­
tions of the event and the people who had been there. During our conver­
sation, Wild Fire told me that she did not like Yellow Jacket and when
I asked her why she said it was because he had demonstrated "too much
interest in her." I asked her what she meant by that and she replied:

Oh, he kept coming up to me and asking about how I was like he
was really concerned and everything and I don't know. It just
made me feel real uncomfortable. Crazy Horse noticed it too and
he didn't like it. I just didn't feel like he had any business
doing that and it really made me angry. He knows that I'm
married.

In this case, as far as Wild Fire was concerned, Yellow Jacket had not
followed the rule of interactional constraint that was supposed to limit
the interaction between a coupled-woman and another guy. In so doing,
he had implied that she was the kind of woman that would allow that sort
of behavior from another guy which in turn implied that she was not a
good-woman. He had acted disrespectfully towards her and she was
angry. I believed Wild Fire was being unfair in her interpretations of
Yellow Jacket's behaviors and told her that he may have simply been
trying to act-friendly by showing sincere concern for her health. She
acknowledged that I may be right but that she still did not trust
Yellow Jacket. My point in offering this alternative interpretation
was to relabel Yellow Jacket's perceptions of her but I also knew that
if I was wrong about his intentions then, indeed, he was a person
to be disliked and distrusted because we knew that Wild Fire's status as a respected woman who should be treated with deference and respect went without question.

Another time during a club meeting, Free Bird made a joke at Spacy's expense. Spacy and her friend, Kim, had rented a motel room the previous evening in order to provide a place for the club members to party. When Free Bird, who was then the club's president, began the meeting he decided to announce what Spacy and Kim had done by saying, "As I understand it, those two (Spacy and Kim) were open for business last night and I hear that everybody had a real good time." Spacy and I immediately exchanged glances to validate our mutual sense of insult. By his statement, Free Bird had implied, albeit jokingly, that Spacy was a prostitute and had thereby denigrated Spacy's status as a nice-girl. His joke was not funny to us.

Immediately after the meeting was over, Spacy came over to me and reaffirmed our shared sense of insult by saying, "Can you believe he said that! That bastard. I can't believe he said that!" I replied that I couldn't believe it either and that it made me angry. Nothing was ever said by either of us or Kim to Free Bird or any of the other guys. Our sense of insult remained a private one.

This shared affective reaction towards any of the guys who insulted us ultimately provided the Lady Vanners with the social support through which more direct action would subsequently be taken. Nonetheless, these reactions were not initially overtly expressed toward any of the guys. Instead, they remained a part of our private, female-based understandings. They provided us with a basis for reinforcing our status as Lady Vanners even in the face of a guy's assault against this status. Our mutual support and validation provided us with a
coalition to control the use of the guy's masculinist cultural apparatus against any of us. They might use these symbolic weapons to disparage other women, but they would not be able to use them against any of us. What other girls did might indicate that they were "bitches" or "sluts," but we were not just any other girls. We were Lady Vanners, and members of this club, and we should be expected to be treated like that regardless of what we did.

Our gossip about other females also reflected our shared struggle at negotiating a special status as Lady Vanners. On the one hand, we sought to preserve and protect our rights to being exempted from being subjected by the guys to the use of masculinist standards of appropriate female behavior against us by virtue of our membership in the club. On the other hand, we did utilize these standards against other girls who we perceived as attempting to intrude upon our territory.

For the most part, female-outsiders who attended club functions as a guy's "date" or "girlfriend, and who behaved like she should in that role, were seldom talked about. Missy, Panama Red's girlfriend, and Sharon, Quickdraw's girlfriend, occasionally came with their boyfriends to club meetings but we interacted with them minimally but politely. Otherwise, we simply did not concern ourselves with them.

However, virtually all female-outsiders who attended club functions independently of a male were subject to our scrutinization and typically failed to meet our standards. We felt that it was our right as club members to come to club parties without our boyfriends if we so chose (although while we were coupled, none of us did) and if single, to joke around with the guys without such behaviors implying moral/sexual impropriety. We were not, however, willing to extend such rights to other females. We considered all girls who came to the club
without a date or boyfriend, to be after one thing: the guys' attention and sexual interest; as such, they constituted potential competitors for our guys interest and love. Above all, we stood ready to condemn any female who for even the slightest reason could be seen as the type of girl who would violate a primary rule of female respectability: "going after another woman's man." These were the women we considered trash or sluts, those who would utilize their erotic powers to attempt to attract a guy who was already coupled. It did not matter to us if a girl had an active sexual history with a variety of guys so long as she restricted such sexual activity to single guys and to one guy at a time.

At the Christmas party which I described earlier, the majority of the females present were either Lady Vanners or had come as a date of one of the guys. However, later in the evening, two female-outsiders came together. These were Becky and Marie who had reputations among both the males and females as "whores." The guys even referred to them as the "gruesome twosome" and made frequent jokes about them in front of us. Nonetheless, when Becky and Marie entered the party, they were immediately surrounded by many of the vanners. Travelin' Man, Earthquake, and Free Bird proceeded to get drinks for one or the other. The guys were apparently ready to include them in their social activities despite, or perhaps, because of their reputations. Spacy, however, and her friend, Kim, were not.

As soon as Becky and Marie entered the party room, Spacy and Kim came up to me with obvious disgust. Both said to me, "I can't believe they let those two in here." They were upset with the admission of Becky and Marie not because of the apparently hypocritical behavior of the males who spoke disparagingly of the two girls and then responded to their presence with such exuberance. Rather, they were upset with
their presence because they felt them to be immoral women who on that basis should not be allowed to participate in club activities. For Spacy and Kim, Becky and Marie were women who did not play by the rules, who were not above utilizing their sexuality to lure on any man they wanted whether or not they had a boyfriend and whether or not it was a male in whom one of them might already be interested in having a relationship with. While Spacy was herself known to have had sexual intercourse with a number of the guys in the club and while Kim was known to be interested in and going after Travelin' Man, neither of them perceived any discrepancy between their evaluations of Becky and Marie and their own behaviors. They had a legitimate basis for their activities by virtue of their membership in the club and their friendship with one of the Lady Vanners respectively. Becky and Marie did not have any legitimate basis. From their perspective, it was appropriate to exclude such women from engaging in club activities on the same terms as they did. As yet, however, they lacked the means of doing so as long as the male-vanners refused to make a distinction between the participation of females who were members versus females who were not.

In general, how concerned we were with the presence of single-female-outsiders and how we felt about them depended upon whether or not we were ourselves single and the different types of interests which being single versus being coupled gave rise to. As single females in the club, Spacy and later, Star Baby were seeking to enjoy the heterosociality which being a member of the club offered them without competition for the guys' attention or interest (and without being seen as an immoral woman). The presence of other physically attractive girls interfered with this and they did not like having them around.
As coupled females, Wild Fire, myself and, initially, Star Baby were concerned about those single girls who acted like they might be interested in our particular boyfriend or whom we feared might be able to get him interested. In an important sense, therefore, it was really the reactions of our guys to these girls rather than the girls actions per se that influenced our feelings about them and our evaluations of their moral character. For example, while both Wild Fire and myself knew of Becky and Marie's reputations we also knew that our guys would not be interested in either of them because of comments which they had previously made. Hence, while Spacy and Kim became visibly upset about and concerned with their presence, Wild Fire and I did not even mention it in our conversations. Wild Fire was far more concerned about and hostile towards Spacy (whom she believed was interested in Crazy Horse) and another girl, Paula (whom she believed Crazy Horse found particularly attractive).

In the beginning of the club, therefore, whether or not we were coupled females influenced our perceptions of and concern about other female-outsiders. Eventually, as we solidified our relationships as Lady Vanners, we fought to exclude all female-outsiders from participation in club activities.

To summarize briefly, through our talk about our own relationships as heterosexual women and our perceptions of and feelings about other guys and girls, Star Baby, Wild Fire and myself constructed a shared reality focusing upon our two primary concerns: achieving and maintaining our heterosexual love-relationship and achieving and maintaining our status as respected women. In this process, as friends, we sought to help each other by listening to the problems and pains we experienced in being good heterosexual women and by validating our own moral worth.
against any guy or girl perceived as threatening either our respectability or our relationship respectively. Eventually, however, our relationships changed and coalesced such that not only did we give each other private support regarding our interests and needs as heterosexual women in a masculinist culture but we were able to take public action on behalf of these needs and interests as heterosexual women in a masculinist culture.

The Emergence of Lady Vanner Solidarity

As I stated earlier, from the beginning of the club, Wild Fire, Star Baby and I formed friendly relationships with each other as coupled-women and members of the club. Although Spacy was the only other female-member she was also the only single female member and she was deliberately excluded from female friendships. Both Wild Fire and Star Baby expressed nothing but distrust and dislike of her because they believed her to have attempted to go after their men. They expressed this dislike by shunning her at club meetings and parties. Although I did attempt to make friendly overtures toward her, I was not initially successful. As a friend of Wild Fire and as a friend of Star Baby, both of whom she knew disliked her, Spacy did not acknowledge any overtures on my part as signifying friendliness.

In the meantime, as the only single female member of the club, Spacy was frequently the center of the male vanners' attention. Although she generally brought a female friend with her to club parties, she typically was teased and kidded during these events by the single and coupled guys. Earthquake, Travelin' Man and Vandura took her on dates; Wizard, Free Bird, Quickdraw and Vandura had sexual intercourse with her; and while I never heard any of the guys speak
disparagingly of her until much later in the club's history, their interaction with her was definitely imbued with a certain ambivalent, gender-related meaning. Moreover, the form of the interaction which took place between Spacy and the guys in the club was unique to their relational status, that is, I did not observe similar types of interaction between her and male outsiders, between the guys and female outsiders, between the guys and the other coupled Lady Vanners, or between the guys and other guys.

In essence, the interaction between Spacy and the guys in the club was socially ambivalent in its meaning and significance because while overtly it involved the joking interactions and sexual bantering by which the men displayed friendship and comraderie with each other, it was covertly tinged with and vulnerable to a type of masculine sexual denigration of females. Hence, while the guys frequently made Spacy the focus of their attention; this attention almost frequently made her the target or brunt of certain collective or symbolic assaults which she had neither the cultural nor social resources to retaliate against. Without the social support of the other women who could share her sense of indignation and validate her respect-worthiness and denied the right to being treated with the respect afforded the coupled women, Spacy was in the difficult position of being required to accept good-humoredly male actions which would have been interpreted as illegitimate insults if directed at Wild Fire, Star Baby or myself.

For example, during the first several weeks of the club, Spacy was repeatedly "mooned" by Zookkeeper. Following one such mooning, which I accidently witnessed, Zookkeeper apologized to Wizard for doing it in front of me. In making an apology to Wizard he affirmed the inter-male rules of respecting another man's woman. Wizard in
relating Zookkeeper's apology to me also interpreted it as an indication of how much Zookkeeper respected me. Yet, when Spacy later expressed disgust at Zookkeeper's actions, she met with laughter from the other guys instead of sympathy. An act which could signify disrespect and illicit legitimate anger if directed at a coupled-woman was to be seen as a "joke" and an act of friendliness if directed at a single-woman. Still, as a female, Spacy could not moon Zookkeeper back or she risked being responded to with disgust.

Another time, Quickdraw, Earthquake, Travelin' Man and Zookkeeper played a practical joke on Spacy. While one kept her occupied playing a game of football in the River Bar, the rest broke into her van and removed whatever they could. Such an act would have constituted a violation of a serious taboo if done by any of the guys against each other: messing with another's van and Spacy did become extremely upset and called Wizard, who was then President, telling him that she was going to quit the club. Wizard responded by telling her that quitting was not the answer and she had to learn to stick up for herself. At the next meeting, he did advise the van club members to respect each other thus making an indirect reference to the event as inappropriate but no other formal accounting from the guys was asked for. Again, Spacy was supposed to accept good-natured actions which would have been interpreted as illegitimate if done to anyone else.

Eventually, Spacy began to be reticent and withdrawn at club gatherings. While she continued to attend parties and meetings, she stopped participating in any bantering with the other guys. She simply ignored them. Since I was not close to Spacy at this time, I do not know exactly what she was experiencing. I do know that even when she began to withdraw socially, she received no supportive
attention from either the guys or the Lady Vanners. Instead, repeatedly what I heard from Wizard, Travelin' Man and Earthquake was that they didn't know what was wrong with Spacy but she sure wasn't herself anymore. "She used to be fun."

Beginning in December, however, three major changes occurred which eventuated in the development of a strong friendship between Spacy and Star Baby and through that, a new female-based social center for the club. First, Wild Fire and Crazy Horse left the club. They ultimately were to rejoin for a few weeks prior to its dissolution; but by December they had stopped coming to meetings and parties so the club asked them to account for their absences and they responded by resigning their membership. They claimed that because of Wild Fire's illness which had forced her to quit her job, she and Crazy Horse were experiencing tough economic times. In addition, they objected to the tendency of the club to hold meetings and parties in the western part of the city since that meant that they, who lived on the eastern side of town, had further to go than most of the other members. In any case, as a result, they said they could no longer meet the attendance requirements and dropped-out. With Wild Fire's resignation, only three Lady Vanners remained, including myself, and since Wild Fire had been even more obvious in her hostility toward Spacy than Star Baby or myself, Spacy's tension around me and subsequently around Star Baby began to attenuate.

Secondly, by the middle of January, Star Baby and Free Bird's relationship had finally ended. They decided, after months of repeated arguments, to breakup. At the same time, the club asked Free Bird to resign from the Presidency which he did, but reluctantly. Hurt by the club's action and no longer bonded with Star Baby, Free Bird's
participation in club events lessened in amount and changed in form. He simply was no longer the socioemotional leader he had previously been at club gatherings. Star Baby, on the other hand, continued to participate in club events but as a single instead of as a coupled-female; and with this change in status, the nature of her participation also altered. Now, as a single Lady Vanner who had already been accepted by club members, she began to participate far more actively and vocally in club events. She interacted far more frequently and jokingly with the male-vanners and gradually became a far more significant member of the club than she had been previously.

The third and final major development involved Spacy's announcement right before Christmas that she was pregnant. As a young woman who had chosen to be sexually active with several different men in the club, she had apparently waived her right for any male support of this child or to hold any male responsible for her pregnancy. She believed that Wizard was the father. Wizard did not deny that he might be. He simply maintained that Spacy could not know for sure, that Free Bird probably was, and he not only refused to be held in anyway responsible for the child but advised Spacy to seek an abortion, which she refused to do. Free Bird and Quickdraw also denied that they could be the fathers. The only male-vanners who had had sexual intercourse with Spacy and who was willing to take responsibility for her pregnancy by marrying her was Vandura. She was not willing to marry him, however, claiming that he was not the father and that she "just didn't feel that way about him." While Spacy did receive emotional and some economic support from her parents who, despite her fears, were excited about the pregnancy, it was Star Baby more than any other person who offered her the greatest assistance in meeting the mundane and social needs of
a young, single woman expecting a child. This assistance began when Star Baby offered Spacy all the clothes and infant paraphernalia she had acquired when her son was born. It grew to involve a close personal relationship in which the two women basically shared their lives. Star Baby's concern for Spacy pertained not only to the latter woman's physical health and the well-being of her child. Star Baby was also concerned about the social and emotional needs of a young girl, unmarried, with a baby for whom she was responsible. While Star Baby supported Spacy's decision to continue with the pregnancy and have the child, she also believed that Spacy should be aware that she was in for some additional difficulties in accomplishing that which she would naturally most want to do: continue to have heterosexual relationships until she found the right man to marry. She, therefore, wanted to share with Spacy her own experiences as a single mother and to offer her what she could by way of advice and help.

I told her (Spacy) that it's a lot harder, you know, to get guys interested when you have a kid. They just don't want to get involved with you when they know you have a kid and anyway, it's a lot harder to go out and do things when you want to and have, you know, fun. You just don't have the same kind of freedom. Spacy's been used to goin' out whenever she wanted and more or less doin' what she pleased and I told her that all that's gonna change once the baby's here. It's gonna be a lot harder to date guys, much less find one who wants to marry ya and, you know, she should be aware of all that.

Throughout January, the two women spent more time together and in February, Spacy moved in with Star Baby where she stayed for the next several months while she continued to work. She claimed that her parents were "driving her crazy" because they did not want her to do anything so she just had to get away. During the last two months of her pregnancy she moved back into her parents' home but until then she
had intensified at the same time that their friendship with each other was growing and on Saturday afternoons they would call me up and ask me to join them at the Pizza Place or go somewhere with them. For the most part, our gatherings still pertained to club related places and activities; that is, we still met or went to places that had been club hang-outs and where any of the guys would, therefore, be able to join us; or we would get together to do something relevant to club activities and the male members. In particular, Spacy and I and Spacy's friend, Kim, assumed responsibility for carrying out a social ritual relevant to the solidification of club relationships and to increasing the guy's emotional dependence upon us: we baked birthday cakes and planned gatherings for the celebration of birthdays for those guys to whom we were attached because they had treated us with respect or were interested in us. Nevertheless, we were getting together independently of the guys and without specifically including them in our plans or activities.

In addition to the Lady Vanners, it was during this period that several other female outsiders also were attempting to be regular participants not only in club activities but also in our female-specific activities. Hence, Kim who had been Spacy's best friend, sought to spend as much time as she ever had with Spacy and came over to Star Baby's home whenever she could, helped in the cake baking and went with Spacy to club meetings and parties whenever Star Baby could not go. Heidi, the woman who had been a friend of Vandura's and Jay Bird's, also sought to establish friendships with myself, Star Baby, and Spacy and by virtue of these to be included in all club activities. Heidi not only called me frequently, she would also stop into the Pizza Place to see Star Baby and Spacy. Offending Star Baby early on by her actions towards Free Bird, Heidi sensed that Star Baby did not like her and,
preferred to live with Star Baby. The two women as a result developed a very close relationship. As both of them were eventually to describe their relationship, they became "just like sisters." Since neither of them was coupled with a male during this period of cohabitation, their relationship with each other was their closest bond.

Simultaneously, during February and March as a result of the two women's friendship and their cohabitation, the pattern of association and interpersonal commitments between club members began to alter. First, Star Baby and Spacy gradually became the socioemotional leaders of the club as Star Baby's home became a primary gathering place. Since, during the winter months, the club could not gather spontaneously in their previous hangouts, the Reservoir and the Palace lot, Star Baby opened her house to them. In addition, with her newly acquired independence from heterosexual coupling, she had become increasingly popular with the young single guys of the club whom she liked as well. Many of these guys had been used to spending time with Spacy anyway so they now wanted to see both of them. As a result, Star Baby's home became a primary center of club activities as almost nightly, one or more of the vanners would drop by to spend some time there talking to each other and to Spacy and Star Baby.

Secondly, while many of the male vanners, especially Vandura, Jay Bird, Quickdraw, Travelin' Man and Zookkeeper became increasingly attached to Spacy and Star Baby, there also began to emerge a type of female solidarity, that is, a group of women bonding as women and acting together on behalf of shared interests. The first major indicator of this social development was the increased occurrence of strictly female gatherings. At the core of these gatherings were the Lady Vanners: Star Baby, Spacy and myself. My friendship with both of these women
hence, avoided making any direct contacts with her. Nonetheless, she still wanted Spacy to be her friend and told Spacy so.

For a time it appeared that the five of us might become a regular sub-group within but acting somewhat autonomously from the male vanners and their friends. Perhaps, I thought, we could even become a fairly strong and cohesive alliance in challenging the behaviors of the guys towards women and their control over cultural celebrations. While a female political coalition did eventually emerge, it not only did not include the female outsiders but indeed was directed against them. While Star Baby and Spacy (and eventually, but briefly, Wild Fire) did attempt to instigate certain basic changes in the club on their own behalf their first political actions were directed against Kim and Heidi, rather than directly against any of the behaviors or activities of the male vanners. Indeed, they essentially elicited the help of Zookkeeper, Vandura, and Jay Bird in seeking the changes they sought and were able to do so by virtue of the interpersonal power they had gained in their socio-emotional bonds with these guys. I was not directly included in their political maneuverings primarily because I was still coupled with Wizard. On the one hand this was because I was simply less able to be with Star Baby and Spacy throughout their planning activities. On the other hand, since their actions were ultimately directed against Wizard, I was deliberately excluded due to their respect for the emotional primacy of the heterosexual bond even over close, female friendships.

Star Baby and Spacy led two major political movements within the van club. Since both actions are significant for what they indicate about the perceived interests of the Lady Vanners and for the club itself, I will describe each in some detail.
The Issue of "Outsiders": Boundary Tightening and Female Exclusion

The first overt political action engineered by Spacy and Star Baby on behalf of their perceived interests occurred at the February 18th meeting of the club and pertained to the participation of outsiders in club activities. "Outsiders" were, of course, any person, male or female, vanner or non-vanner, who did not belong to the club. Several months earlier the club members had dealt with an issue involving a particular class of outsiders and particular types of club events. More specifically, they had implemented a rule which required any vanners who did not belong to the club but who wished to join the club convoys to ride in the rear of the convoy or not to ride with them at all. This meant, of course, that the Lady Vanners, by virtue of club membership, were to be afforded certain rights and signs of status not permitted to other vanners who were males. That rule had been directed primarily against certain local vanners such as Mr. Purple Van and Squirrel whom the male vanners considered "jerks" by virtue of their overly rowdy actions during convoys.

On the meeting of Sunday, February 18th, however, the issue under consideration pertained to all outsiders and all club events and was indirectly designed to limit the presence of uncoupled females in club activities, particularly Kim and Heidi, who had increasingly incurred the animosity of Spacy and Star Baby respectively. Spacy and Star Baby, therefore, coalesced in seeking to end their problems with these two women outsiders by drawing upon their formal rights as club members and their informal influence over particular male members.

Several events precipitated this animosity and their political actions. Kim was increasingly perceived by Spacy as a nuisance who was using her alleged friendship with Spacy to pursue Travelin' Man.
Spacy began repeatedly to rebuff Kim but to no avail. Kim, in turn, was repeatedly hurt by Spacy's actions—by Spacy's refusal to return phone calls or to ask her to go with her to club activities—but she kept on calling and showing up at Star Baby's home and at meetings. As Star Baby and Spacy had become closer, Spacy had become increasingly distant from Kim.

I have previously described some of the actions which earned Heidi the hostility of Star Baby and Spacy. Heidi had "gone after" Zookkeeper and Free Bird by initiating dates with both of them. She had asked Free Bird to play racquet ball with her in front of Star Baby. She had repeatedly called Zookkeeper, had shown up unexpectedly where he worked to see him, and had made him presents. She had even called up Wizard and asked him to go bowling with her. As far as Star Baby was concerned, she was a bitch who not only would go after another woman's man but would go after several guys at once. Two specific events, however, made Star Baby angry enough to seek to do something in order to overtly sanction Heidi and exclude her from club activities.

Both events occurred within the same week. The first took place on Sunday, February 7th, at the birthday party which was being held at Zookkeeper's house. Heidi came to the party as did Heidi's best friend, Heather, and a friend of Heather's named Julie. Heather and Julie showed up already drunk and engaged in many behaviors which were indicative of how "messed-up" they were, sitting on the guys' laps and hardly able to walk. As I mentioned earlier, this type of behavior on the part of a female was considered disgusting by both the male and female vanners. Subsequent conversations with the club members indicated that there was a consensus that these two females should not have come
to the party and that they had done so because they had been invited by Heidi. Heidi denied having invited them but she was still blamed.

Then, however, on Wednesday, February 14th, Heidi organized a small gathering of herself and several club members to celebrate St. Valentine's Day. She invited Wizard, Free Bird, Spacy, Vandura, Jay Bird, and myself. While she had not specifically invited Zookkeeper, she would have done so had he not told her several days before that he was going to be busy on St. Valentine's Day. Otherwise, none of the other club members, including Star Baby, had been invited. Unfortunately for Heidi, not only had she excluded Star Baby from the event but she had invited Free Bird with whom Star Baby had claimed to have had a date for that evening. Free Bird said that he did not have a date with Star Baby and for whatever reason chose to accept Heidi's invitation. Now, hurt and disappointed by Free Bird's action and certain that he was not really interested in Heidi but had only gone with Heidi to hurt her and make her jealous, but essentially blaming Heidi for enabling him to hurt her, Star Baby with Spacy's and Zookkeeper's help decided to take action. Zookkeeper had already confronted Heidi by telling her that it was wrong for her to go after other women's boyfriends and telling her that she shouldn't be interfering in the club and trying to divide it up. Nonetheless, Star Baby did not think that was sufficient to end her problems so she and Spacy, with the help of Vandura, Zookkeeper, and Jay Bird, decided to utilize the resources at her disposal as a member of the club to institute the necessary rules to prevent further incidences of this type from occurring.

In attempting to do so, she did meet with some resistance from other members of the club. Since the debate which ensued illustrates the strategies which Star Baby employed and the contradictory
implications of heterosexism and friendship for the doing of relationships between club members, I will quote from the transcripts of this meeting at some length.

Wizard was president and he began the meeting by asking if any of the members had anything they wanted to talk about. He already knew that there was going to be some political maneuvers taken. Zookkeeper begins the argument by speaking to Wizard about the party the previous Sunday.

Zookkeeper: Okay. At that party we had for you? I wanna bring up somethin' about a certain person showin' up that was only fifteen years old. That could have got me in a lot of trouble, okay? I think we should know who is gonna be at these things and how old they are.

Wizard: Who brought her?

Zookkeeper: Heather. And I don't know who invited Heather cause I didn't.

Vandura: Oh, and another thing. Heather called my house last night at 12:30 and says she was from Nomad Vans and wondered where I was. Now, you know she didn't have any right to say that.

Star Baby: I'm so glad you guys brought this up.

Star Baby gets up and stands in front of the table where the club members were sitting.

Star Baby: Let me tell you all somethin'. I want the floor Goddammit! It's my turn. I've had it with these fuckin' little kids! These kids! These fifteen, sixteen year old puppies that think they're part of this club. I'm tired of it! They do not belong to or in this club. If they wanna come//

Wizard: Do something about it.

Star Baby: You boys do something about it. I don't even know//

Free Bird: We boys? (Free Bird turns toward Panama Red who is sitting beside him) Your name boy? Glad to meet you, Roy.
Star Baby: Now, Free Bird, you're in on it just as much as all the other guys. I don't think I have to name names cause everybody knows who they are. Everytime I turn around Heidi is calling me, wanting to know what Nomad Vans is doin', where we are, why we don't call her.

Wizard: She's eighteen.

Star Baby: I know but I'm sayin' she's not part of the club, ya know. I'm sayin' that when I have a party, if I wanna invite these people it's fine. But I don't know half these girls from Adam... I've heard so much gossip from these people who aren't even in the club about other people in the club and I don't think that's necessary.

There followed a lengthy discussion about the legalities of having minors at club functions where alcoholic beverages were being served.

Wizard: Well, as I understand it, we're gonna have a stipulation in the by-laws: can't have no minors, male or female.

Yellow Jacket: No minors? What if you're datin' a minor?

Zookkeeper: If you're datin', that's a totally different story.

Vandura: Only if it's an open party. If it's a club function, they shouldn't be there.

Gorilla: So, in other words, if it's a club function, you can't bring your girlfriend. That's what your sayin'.

Zookkeeper: If it's a club function and you're datin' a person, you're allowed to bring your date.

Wizard: Okay. Star Baby, did you have anything else?

Star Baby says there were a "whole bunch of things" but she can't think of what they are. She looks at Spacy who mentions something so quietly that I was unable to hear what she said, but evidently Star Baby did.

Star Baby: Ah, yes. No more outsiders are allowed at the meetings unless they are a member of the club or a future member.
Zookkeeper: Or joining the club.

Yellow Jacket: Like Missy (Panama Red's girlfriend)?

Wizard: All meetings? That's anybody?

Star Baby: The whole thing is . . . what we're tryin' to get away from. But the thing is kids comin' to our meetings and they're all havin' a good time and it's hard to get things organized and they're here to party and you can't have a meeting. Unless you got somebody who wants to be a member or somebody who wants to come and see what it's like. That's cool.

Spacy: Just like Quickdraw bringin' Sharon/

Yellow Jacket: I don't see anything wrong with that.

Gorilla: If I, if I'm datin' somebody, then I feel I should/

Star Baby: Okay. Let me put it to you another way. We're tryin' to run a club here, okay? If you work in a business, does your boss let you bring your buddy or your girlfriend to a business meeting at work? No.

Free Bird: This is a club. We're havin' fun.

Wizard: Can I say something else? Um . . . I'm not gonna tell Quickdraw there or Panama Red that they can't bring someone they're in love with. See what I'm sayin'? That doesn't make sense! In other words, there, uh, you know, you care for your van and you care for a woman and you should have those two things together.

There is loud applause and laughter.

Wizard: I think maybe the problem is, Spacy, as far as Kim is concerned . . . the thing that bugs me is she is able to come and put something in. In other words, those people really shouldn't be allowed to voice an opinion 'cause they're not involved. No, in Missy's case and Sharon's case, if they're around all the time, you know, I think they should be allowed to say something. But, you know, when you talk about outsiders that's just the problem.

Spacy: Well, she (Kim) is getting the wrong idea, like, just because she's there all the time, she should be a member.
Wizard: Well, the whole thing is, you know, if you guys want her to be, that's fine.

Yellow Jacket: How can we have a bunch of members that don't have vans? That's ridiculous.

Vandura: Really, man!

From this point, the debate continued as to whether or not the club should allow persons without vans to become members of the club. Wizard, Free Bird and Gorilla argued that there was really no reason why the club had to worry about this issue at all. Since the members had the ability to decide on an individual-by-individual basis as to whether or not someone should be allowed to join the club, there was no need to have a bylaw which would limit their ability in the future to admit a member whom everyone liked or who could contribute other things to the club even though he (sic) did not have a van. Star Baby, Spacy, Zookkeeper, Travelin' Man, and Vandura argued that, with the future exception of Jay Bird who had not yet been voted in as a member, they should pass a law that forbids anyone who does not own a van and who is not the girlfriend or boyfriend of a club member from being admitted to the club.

Star Baby's position ultimately had the greater support and by the end of the meeting, several changes had taken place. First, two new rules had been formally added to the club's bylaws. One limited the presence of minors in club functions to those who were dates of club members. The other forbade persons without vans from joining the club. When the club voted in the second law, Free Bird responded that he for one saw the rule as blatantly unfair and that he wasn't going to support it. Wizard told him that that was a "piss poor" attitude to have since every club member had to support what the club
as a club decided. Free Bird then quit the club.

With respect to the issue as to whether outsiders should be admitted to any club functions or meetings, Star Baby backed off her original demand to ban all outsiders from all club functions. Instead, acknowledging that club members should be allowed to bring persons whom they are dating, she suggested that instead of implementing a bylaw they just leave it up to each person's "good judgment" whom they bring with them. The rest of the club members agreed.

As I left the club meeting that afternoon, I felt a mixture of pride and disgust. On the one hand, I was really proud of Star Baby and Spacy for the type of action which they had taken within the club. They had acted together and overtly to control the meeting and to implement certain changes. They had been instrumental enough in mobilizing support from other members of the club to bring about the changes they had wanted.

Nonetheless, I also felt disgust at what they had sought to do, at the nature of the changes they had sought to make, and the implications of this for the status of women in the club. The issues they had raised and the changes they had sought had resulted from the hostility which they had experienced toward other women under the standards of masculinist heterosexuality; but rather than challenging this set of standards, Star Baby and Spacy had instead sought to establish rules which would severely limit the conditions under which women could participate in club activities.

In limiting the presence of outsiders in club activities, they had been successful in establishing a rule which would allow no single or uncoupled females to be present at club functions and meetings. The only females whom could attend were those who came as the "dates"
or "girlfriends" of the male members. The only time they encountered majority dissent was when they had attempted to make a policy which contradicted the principles of heterosexual relationships. As Wizard had stated, a commitment to vanning was also a commitment to having a relationship and these relationships are so important and special that to actively seek to place vanners into a choice between being with their girlfriend and being with the club contradicted a major subcultural theme. The position which Wizard articulated, and for which he received strong support from the other guys, was that heterosexual involvements were an essential part of being a vanner and the rules and procedures of club organization should reflect that interest, not contradict it.

However, short of this problem, the Lady Vanners were successful in mobilizing support for club rules which would limit other types of female participation and heterosocial activity. Even the issue concerning the admission of club members who did not own vans was differentially discriminatory against admitting females. Despite the sex-neutral terminology in which the rules were phrased, this rule was by far more likely to limit the presence of single female members than male members, because single females were simply far less likely to own a van of their own. Hence, the chances were that the only new females who would be admitted would be the girlfriend of a club member. If a male vanner was able to construct a dating or romantic relationship with a female outside the boundaries of club activities, then they expected to be able to include her in club functions regardless of her age and regardless of the function. Then, however, under the rules for doing heterosexual relationship the manner of her participation and her interaction with any of the guys would be constrained. No
longer would single females be able to attend so as to "go after" any of the guys. If enforced, these rules would ensure that Spacy and Star Baby would be the only uncoupled women present.

**Taking Over: The Attempted Overthrow**

From January through March, as Star Baby and Spacy's friendship grew and as Star Baby's home increasingly became the hub of club activities, the relationship between these two women and Wizard became increasingly antagonistic. The emergence of this hostility was evident in a series of incidents culminating in an attempt by Star Baby, with Spacy's and Wild Fire's support, to oust Wizard and Wizard's supporters from the club offices and replace them with people loyal primarily to them. From the Lady Vanners' perspective each of these incidents and their attempted overthrow was justifiable because Wizard had violated the standards of vanner friendship and respect that they had come increasingly to expect as club members. From Wizard's perspective, they were simply bitches attempting to control the club for their own self-interest and through their sexuality.

The first major indicator of a change in the nature of Star Baby and Wizard's relationship that I witnessed occurred on a Saturday afternoon, February 10th, a week before the meeting in which the Lady Vanners sought to exclude outsiders. On this afternoon, Star Baby, Spacy, and myself had been sitting in Pizza Hut playfully kidding each other about all the guys who were after each of them when Wizard walked in accompanied by Heidi.

Star Baby had been attempting to organize a club outing that night to the Railroad, a night club in the campus area. Wizard, however, had already agreed to attend a party being given by residents in his
apartment complex and wanted the club to go there. Star Baby did not want to go. She had met several persons who lived in Wizard's apartment building the previous Saturday and considered them strange.

When Wizard came into the Pizza Place with Heidi he refused to sit down and instead stood with Heidi talking about what the club should do that evening. The interaction was almost exclusively between Wizard and Star Baby and was very brief.

Wizard: There's a party to night at my apartment, and I think the club should go. It would do these kids good to meet some new people.

Star Baby: I just don't want to.

Wizard: Okay, then don't.

With that last statement, Wizard turned and walked out with Heidi following behind. After he left, Star Baby turns to me and says, "What's the matter with him? He acted like a real prick!" I said that I thought he was just upset because he really wanted the club to go to that party. Star Baby was angry, however, and said there was "no way" she was going to go to that party now.

The brief exchange intrigued me for several reasons. First, this was the first time I had heard Star Baby refuse to follow a decision made by Wizard or to acquiesce to his leadership. Secondly, while she was angry with Wizard for talking to us as rudely as he had, she blamed it primarily upon Heidi's presence and influence. As Spacy told me later prior to their attempt to exclude Heidi from further participation in club events:

"You know, Judi, she really was comin' between you two (meaning Wizard and myself). Like that afternoon we were in Pizza Place and he came in and acted like a prick to us."
He was really in a bad mood and he's not generally like that. I think it was because she was there and you were there and he just wanted to get out of there. She has no business comin' between you and him like that.

Furthermore, it became apparent that at least in terms of the club member's perceptions of what would be more fun that evening, Star Baby had the greater influence. As things turned out, only I, Wizard, and Heidi went to the party at Wizard's apartment building. Star Baby, Spacy, Vandura, Jay Bird, Quickdraw, and Zookkeeper went to the nightclub.

The second major incident occurred two weeks later when Star Baby asked Wizard to install a citizens-band radio antenna on the roof of her van. Wizard agreed and on Friday afternoon he and Earthquake picked up Star Baby's van, drove it over to Earthquake's parents home and put in the antenna. Earthquake then drove the van back to Star Baby's house while Wizard went to get me. Wizard and I then went over to Star Baby's house.

Star Baby and Spacy were in the kitchen. Star Baby was sitting on a stool and she did not get up as we entered her house. She was obviously angry. Wizard, recognizing that something was the matter, asked her what was wrong.

Star Baby: Why did you put the antenna in the middle of my van? It looks stupid there! Nobody has their antenna in the middle. It's always in the front.

Wizard: I told you the other night when we talked about it that that was where I was going to put it and you said that was fine. Remember I sat right here and drew you a picture showing you where I was going to put it and why. I have mine in the middle of my van. That's where you get the best reception.

Star Baby and Wizard continued to argue about the position of the antenna for a few minutes longer while Spacy and I remained silent.
Wizard attempted to elicit Spacy's support since she had evidently been in the house the evening that Star Baby and he had talked about the antenna but Spacy refused to be brought into it saying that she had not been paying any attention. Wizard finally said he wasn't going to talk about it anymore and walked out. I went with him and for the first time felt alarmed at Star Baby's accusations and at her anger. Wizard had spent the afternoon doing something for Star Baby which she could not do herself nor for him. I knew he had done the best job he could have. Instead of his actions being interpreted by Star Baby as a sign of renewed friendship and commitment she had lashed out at him in a manner which I perceived to be unfair and unkind. My sympathies were definitely with Wizard and when on the way home he told me that that was the last time he ever tried to do anything for "that bitch" I felt he was justified. Neither Star Baby nor Wizard were to mention this conflict again; nonetheless the increasing animosity between them was to be fueled by still another major incident involving Free Bird.

After Free Bird quit the club in February, none of the vanners with the exception of Earthquake continued to spend any time with him. As far as the other vanners were concerned, Free Bird had acted immaturely and disloyally and the club was better off without him. Towards the end of February, someone broke into Wizard's van and stole the car stereo unit that he had bought just three weeks earlier. Wizard believed it was possible that the stereo had been stolen by Free Bird as an act of vengeance. His only initial action was to ask Earthquake to find out what he could but Earthquake was unable to verify Wizard's suspicions. Finally, at a party given by Heidi in March, to which Free Bird had come, Wizard decided to directly confront him about the incident. Free Bird vehemently denied the charge on the
basis of the vanner's code of honor. He said that no matter how angry he may be at someone he would never "mess with" another guy's van. Wizard accepted this defense and feeling bad about his suspicions proceeded to make amends to Free Bird by asking him to consider rejoining the club. It was two weeks before Wizard formally mentioned this exchange and his request to the rest of the club members but by this time most of the members including Star Baby had already heard about it informally and for Star Baby, Wizard's actions were one more sign of their estrangement, as she was to make known to him shortly.

By this time, around the beginning of March, it was apparent to Wizard and to myself that the conflict for control over the loyalties of the club members between himself and Star Baby had given rise to a division in the club. Activities initiated by Wizard were seldom attended by Star Baby and Spacy. Activities initiated by Star Baby, and the almost daily gatherings at her home, were seldom attended by Wizard. The rest of the vanners split into three sub-groupings. Earthquake and myself remained attached primarily to Wizard and would go where he wanted. Zookkeeper, Vandura, Jay Bird, and Quickdraw remained attached primarily to Star Baby and Spacy and would spend much of their free time with them going where they wanted. Yellow Jacket and Gorilla were still participating in club meetings and occasionally in club functions but as always had a relatively marginal status in the club. They were ostracized by Star Baby and Spacy, tolerated by Wizard.

Then on March 1, Wild Fire and Crazy Horse rejoined the club. They were welcomed back in a unanimous vote of support by all the club members but it was Star Baby who acted as their major supporter and sponsor, publically defending their readmission at the March 1st meeting.
Wild Fire and Crazy Horse in turn became regular participants in the nightly gatherings at Star Baby's house.

With the readmittance of Wild Fire, the female sub-grouping changed its composition. Recognizing that my primary loyalty was to Wizard, Star Baby and Spacy spent less time on the phone with me and replaced me with Wild Fire. To solidify their friendships, Star Baby, Spacy and Wild Fire engaged in a strategy of desensitizing past emotional barriers. Since Wild Fire had been hostile toward Spacy in the past because Wild Fire had believed that Spacy had gone after Crazy Horse, the three women sat down one evening in order to "clear things up." What Wild Fire solicited from Spacy and got was a denial that Spacy had ever been interested in or sought to achieve a heterosexual relationship with Crazy Horse. As a result of Spacy's denial and as a result of Wild Fire's sympathetic concern for her pregnancy, the two women and Star Baby became close friends. Although at first Wild Fire and Crazy Horse also remained loyal to Wizard and myself splitting their time between us and Star Baby's home, ultimately they sided with Star Baby and Spacy as the struggle for control over the club developed into an open confrontation.

The series of events marking the attempt by Star Baby and Spacy to take control formally of the club began with the Sunday meeting of March 18. The meeting was held outside at the River Park and the club members were visibly anxious to be done with business and enjoy the afternoon. After two unsuccessful attempts to get everybody quiet so he could get on with the meeting, Wizard became angry, called them a "bunch of little kids," and announced that the meeting was over. Jay Bird and I attempted to proceed with the meeting and thereby to calm Wizard down but Wizard told us that it was no use. Star Baby and Spacy
immediately got up and walked to their vans. Before leaving, however, Spacy returned to where the rest of us were sitting and said that everyone was invited over to Star Baby's house later that evening.

Everyone but Wizard and I then went to the other side of the park to hang-out. Wizard and I went to the Pizza Place and by the time we arrived there, Wizard was feeling remorse for his rather extreme actions. He said that he realized he had acted rather harshly and decided that he should go back to the park and attempt to start another meeting where he could apologize for his actions. He also said he was really troubled by Star Baby and his relationship saying that it was about time they talk things over because, as he put it, it was obvious that she "has a burr up her ass" and he wanted to know why.

He did call another meeting and was able to get Star Baby to come to it but not Spacy. Spacy instead remained sitting in her van while the meeting went on. Wizard then apologized to the club members and defended his actions by saying that being president was a lot of responsibility and that he needed more cooperation from the other officers and all the members if this club was ever going to get anything done. He also told them at this time about his suspicions regarding Free Bird, Free Bird's denial and his request that Free Bird rejoin the club.

Following the meeting he met privately with Star Baby to ask her what was bothering her and to "clear the air" between them. Later, I asked Wizard what Star Baby had said and he told me that she mentioned three things he had done which signified to her a violation of their friendship. She was upset by his renewed friendship with Free Bird which she perceived as an insult against her given that Wizard knew that Free Bird had hurt her. She told him that she had also been upset because he had stopped getting his hair cut by her; and she told him that she
did not like the way he had been behaving toward the rest of the club members, behavior which she characterized as "hard-ass."

Wizard, however, refused to consider these reasons as valid. He instead told me that he perceived the animosity between Star Baby and himself to be based upon their heterosexual dynamics and in particular, by his refusal to succumb the way the other club members had to her sexual control. As he told me then, Wizard maintained that Star Baby had manipulated the other guys in the club into doing and believing whatever she wanted by interacting with them in sexually suggestive ways. While he did not believe she actually had sexual intercourse with them, he felt that she joked with them in such a way as to keep them all excited and "panting after her." Since he refused to play her game, that is, refused to show any sexual interest in her, her control over him was not established and she was out for vengeance. Interestingly enough, he also maintained that Spacy too had come under Star Baby's evil influence by similar means, that is through sexually-based control, saying that they were probably lesbians.

In any case, Star Baby evidently was not placated by Wizard's attempt to reestablish their friendship either for on the following Thursday, March 22, she called a secret meeting at her house. At this meeting, all the club members but Wizard, Earthquake, Gorilla, Yellow Jacket and myself were present. We did know that it was occurring nonetheless because Earthquake had been told by Travelin' Man that Star Baby had called a secret meeting.

Since I was not present at this meeting, I was not able to directly observe what transpired. From subsequent conversations with those who were present, however, I was able to determine broadly what took place. Essentially, Star Baby and Wild Fire attempted to convince
the other members that they needed to remove Wizard from the presidency. Star Baby was then the club's treasurer and she told the other members that Wizard had been borrowing money from the club funds in the past month and that it was obvious from his behavior that he was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the club and the people in it. She told them that she was afraid he might take the club funds and use them to relocate somewhere else far away from Central City. She, therefore, maintained that for the sake of the club, they should call for a reevaluation of the club officers at the next meeting and vote him out of the office of president. Neither she nor Spacy wanted to hold any positions themselves but at this meeting they discussed who would become the next officers. Spacy's and her influence was great enough that they almost achieved their objectives.

By the next Sunday, March 25, Wizard and I knew that there was going to be an attempt to replace him as the club president and Wizard had decided to go along with that. We did not know why; nor did we know that all the officers were going to be challenged. Wizard had also decided that as his last act as president he was going to have the club members use the first part of the meeting to go through the club bylaws so that they would all know exactly what they were responsible for and could change any section that they wanted to.

After going through the club charter, Wizard asked if anybody had anything else they wanted to bring up and as expected Zookkeeper said he thought they should evaluate all the officers and replace those who were not doing their jobs. Wizard immediately said that he was aware that many of the members were not happy with the way he was handling the presidency and that he therefore resigned. Zookkeeper was then elected president and took over the meeting. Since Zookkeeper had
been the club's vice-president that position needed to be filled. He
nominated Crazy Horse who was then voted-in as vice-president.

Next, the club members talked about the offices of Master-of-Arms
and Public Relations. Earthquake had been in the former office and
Travelin' Man in the latter. Star Baby suggested that Earthquake would
really be better as Public Relations officer since he had already been
doing a lot of the work for the club and Earthquake agreed. Travelin' 
Man was then elected to the office of Master-of-Arms.

Following this, the club talked briefly about an upcoming event
that Earthquake and Vandura had heard about which they thought would
be fun for the club to go to. I thought momentarily that the meeting
was about to end when Zookkeeper directed the meeting back to the issue
of the officers saying that they still had to talk about the secretary
and the treasurer. Since I was the club's secretary at this time, I
became the focus of subsequent events.

Wizard: Well, is there anybody who thinks Judi hasn't been
doing her job?

Spacy: Wizard, it's not that we think Judi hasn't done her
job. It's that somebody else wants it.

Gorilla
Yellowjacket: That's not right.

Judi: That's okay. I really don't mind. I'll just resign.

Earthquake: I, I, I don't think that . . . Judi's been a
good secretary, keeping notes and everything. She
really has.

Wizard: This really disgusts me. I've kept my mouth shut
so far going along with everything for the sake of
this club but this really disgusts me. All you guys
are out to do is, you're all out basically just to
disrupt things and cause conflicts in the club. It's
one thing to replace me if you don't think I've been
doing my job but to just go down and replace everyone
with no reason is ugly. If you wanted to be officers,
why didn't you go for your own van club? Why did you do nothing but come here and try to split this one up? It seems a little strange to me that all the same people who think there are all these problems with the club are the same ones that are ending up officers.

Jay Bird: I don't know what's going on here but this isn't what we talked about the other night. I've been friends with a lot of people in here but I don't want to sit around for anymore.

Jay Bird gets up and walks out. Wizard, saying that he agrees with Jay Bird, also gets up and walks out. Earthquake and Gorilla follow. I go over to Wild Fire with the club books and tell her that I really think she ought to become the club secretary. She is crying and tells me that she thinks I should keep them and that she had never meant to hurt Wizard or me. Spacy and Star Baby also tell me that nothing they had done had meant they did not care for me, that they had only done what they thought was best for the club.

Although Star Baby and Spacy's attempted take-over of the club had failed, the club radically changed after it. Spacy, Star Baby, Wild Fire and Crazy Horse quit Nomad Vans and decided to follow Wizard's suggestion and start a club of their own. Panama Red and Cisco Kid simply dropped out without explicitly or formally resigning from the club.

As far as the remaining members of the club were concerned, Wizard had merged as the hero of the day and Star Baby and Spacy the villians. During the remainder of that Sunday evening and the following two days, they all sought out Wizard to apologize to him, explain their behaviors, and solidify their relationship with him and their commitment to the club. With the exception of Quickdraw, who basically told Wizard that his loyalties were split because he was still interested in a relationship with Star Baby, the vanners systematically engaged in a
symbolic penance by reinterpreting their relationship with the Lady Vanners and by casting them into the personae of Bad Women or Bitches. Much as he had told me earlier, Wizard told each of the guys that they had been sexually-manipulated by Star Baby and/or Spacy and they voiced agreement. They had been led to believing that she had affection for them and cared about the club when really she was motivated by desire for power and control and had been using her sexual powers to get it.

Wizard: You know, you guys were being led around by the balls. She (Star Baby) was always grabbing you between the legs and everything and you liked it. I'll bet if you had done the same thing to her, tried grabbing her between the legs she wouldn't have responded the same way. I'm serious.

Jay Bird: Man, there ain't no excuses for what I did but I hope you know I never would of gone along with things if I had really known what they were up to. I began to wonder though as things were happening why they weren't sayin' anything. You know, they laid this heavy thing on us and we were left going 'Wow, we have got to do something and fast.'

Quickdraw: God, Wizard, she made you out to be the worst person that had ever lived and I guess I believed her.

Wizard: That's cause you wanted to. You wanted to believe her. I'm tellin' ya, I just hope you learned your lesson.

Vandura: It's Spacy I just don't understand. I mean, man, when I first met her she was like no other girl I had ever known. You could really talk to her. Lately though, she's turned into a real bitch. I don't even want to be around her.

Travelin' Man: W-w-w-well/

Wizard: W-w-w-well what?

Everyone laughs, including Travelin' Man.

Travelin' Man: Don't make fun of the way I talk, man.
Wizard: Why not? You talk funny.

Zookkeeper: I just wish I could tell those bitches a thing or two. When they started in on Judi and I saw the expression on your (meaning my) face. I felt so bad. I knew right then that I'd been the fool. I'll admit it: I was a fool.

Wizard: Alright, you were a fool (laughs).

Jay Bird: Women! There ain't no trustin' them. No offense, Judi.

Through this and other similar conversations, the guys enacted a type of interpersonal togetherness based on homosocial bondings, that is, a shared understanding that as males they had been duped by a couple of bad women. Under renewed claims of commitment to the club, the vanners continued to meet regularly during April and organized a trip to a van-in in Virginia to which they went at the end of that month.

Following that trip, however, the cohesiveness of the club attenuated rapidly. During May, Zookkeeper who was the club's president failed to hold any meeting and had little contact with any of the club members except Wizard. Relationships between several of the core members became increasingly conflict-ridden. Zookkeeper accused Jay Bird and Travelin' Man of becoming stuck-up. Wizard was angry with all of them for failing to assume any responsibility for organizing club activities and having regular meetings.

Finally, on June 6th, in an effort to salvage the club by resolving what he perceived to be the central issue, Wizard suggested that they "deformalize" the club, do away with officers, meetings and bylaws, and instead simply continue to get together and do things as friends. This intended transformation of the club into an anarchistic form of organization run solely on principles of friendship and mutual
interpersonal obligation and responsibility was not successful in keeping the club together. While Zookkeeper, Wizard, Travelin' Man, and Earthquake continued to see each other rather frequently, they and the remainder of the members got together on only a few occasions, for a couple of van-ins and several parties. The previous pattern of association based upon spending evenings and weekends together dissolved.

Meanwhile, Star Baby, Spacy, Wild Fire, and Crazy Horse did attempt to organize another club but were not successful in doing so. Later that summer, on one of the few occasions where the club went as a club to a couple of van-ins we did see them and at one, Star Baby camped with us. Still, for both the Lady Vanners and the male vanners, the days of participating in organized vanning had ended.

To say that the club dissolved as a result of the sex-based conflict over political control would be overly-simplistic. There were several basic organizational problems which plagued the club throughout its existence and which contributed to its ultimate failure. The contradiction between an emphasis on disorderly conduct as a means of pursuing a good time and an internal organization based on a hierarchy of authority and order-by-law; the inability to recruit additional membership; the conflict between the ideal of relationships based upon mutual caring and the realities of interpersonal dislikes and animosities were all factors responsible for the eventual dissolution of the club.

Nonetheless, the emergence of a female coalition and their struggle for control was also highly significant. This struggle and the events through which it was constituted must be seen as emerging from certain basic conflicts-of-interest between the male vanners and the Lady Vanners as a result of the principles of gender-differentiation which both accepted as a natural part of their world views. Under a masculinist
and heterosexist cultural system which defined females as sexual objects whose basis of respect and worth depended upon being coupled with a guy, being coupled and having respect meant that a female could not have the same freedom of participation and develop the type of relationships that the guys could have with each other. Being a single female meant that women had to struggle to keep the respect of the guys while still being able to enjoy heterosociality and friendships. The Lady Vanners sought to create a special status in the club which would enable them to have both by joining together to exclude single females and to manipulate the guys in the club to defending them and their interests against anyone—male or female—who challenged either their dignity and respectability, as did Wizard, or their heterosocial relationships with the guys in the club, as did Heidi and other single females.

Their political maneuverings almost succeeded and it is impossible to predict what the consequences for the club would have been had they gained their objectives. Yet, in accounting for the failure of their attempted take-over and the part, albeit a passive one, that I played in it, I can still see the effects of the masculinist parameters of the vanners relationships and the meaning of heterosexuality versus male-homosociality. It was by virtue of my heterosexual coupling with Wizard and the presumption that it was my primary commitment that Star Baby, Spacy, and Wild Fire excluded me from their political maneuverings and hence failed to elicit my cooperation for what they wanted to accomplish. It was also by virtue of my heterosexual coupling and my conformity to the rules applicable to a female in that status that I had earned a position as a respected and virtuous woman. Hence, the Lady Vanners presumed assault on me provoked the defensive and protective
response on the part of the male vanners which undermined their plans. I became the *cause célèbre*, but I was not the cause. My wants, interests or desires were never taken into account by Wizard or the other guys in coming to my defense. Instead, they subsequently framed the issue in terms of a "good woman" versus "bad women" as defined by their masculinist standards of appropriate female conduct. I was good because I had been committed to a heterosexual relationship with a single guy. Star Baby and Spacy were bad because they had utilized their erotic powers to control the guys and thereby control the club.

Ironically, it is also the case that while the Lady Vanners sought to gain some control over the club and its activities, their struggles never addressed the real basis of their shared problems. Indeed, they became involved in colluding with many of the masculinist standards of feminine virtue that were subsequently used against them. Our friendships were based upon an intimate sharing of personal problems stemming from being heterosexual women in a male-dominated, masculinist social setting. We came to look to each other for support and validation during the personal problems and bad times resulting from the conditions imposed upon us in this setting as we struggled to form heterosexual relationships in the midst of break-ups and fights, pregnancy outside of marriage, the threats of infidelity, the competition for male interest from other women, the loss of love, the loss of respectability, the loss of dignity. As such, our experiences and problems and the struggles that they gave rise to must be seen as those of persons whose very meaning in life and means of doing life are dependent upon "being-loved" by those who have the power to define us as unworthy of such love or to easily give their love to someone else. The Lady Vanners sought not to challenge male-authority only to wield
influence over those men engaging in it. The Lady Vanners sought not to challenge the masculinist principles of feminine worth and value only to ensure that they were defined as special women who should be afforded both. The Lady Vanners sought not to eschew heterosexism, only to be successful at it.
Footnotes

1Willis (1978), for example, did an analysis of the hippie subculture of the 1960's in which he devoted two paragraphs to a discussion of the hippies' "attitudes toward women." The implication of his presentation of this subculture are two-fold: that no hippies were women and that as a result an adequate ethnography of this subculture need only consider the perspective of male-participants, including, of course, their attitudes toward women, and not the perspective of women, including their attitudes toward men.

2It would probably be more accurate to say that perhaps the majority of more visible youth groups, those groups which hang-out on streets and which claim certain public sites as their territory, are male-dominated. As McRobbie and Garber (1975) point out, it may also be the case that adolescent or teenage women have a subcultural reality which they create and control but that their ceremonies and rituals are enacted not in public sites but in private places like bedrooms and bathrooms. Since sociological analyses have tended to focus upon public sites and public issues instead of private sites and private processes, this female-world and the experiences and relevancies of its participants have largely been ignored.

3On two occasions I did voice my feelings to the Lady Vanners. Once, during the wet-tee-shirt contest at a van-in, I told Wild Fire that I found the animal noises being emitted by the male-audience insulting and repulsive. Her response was that I should not pay it any attention because they were only for those women who go on stage and were not meant for women like us. Another time, while walking to a
bathroom in a bar with Star Baby, a strange guy said rather softly as she walked by, "Hey, Babe, what's your hurry." I then asked Star Baby if experiences like that ever upset or angered her. She replied, "Only if they touch, only if they touch. To tell you the truth, hon, I'd begin to worry if they ever stopped. Let's face it: I don't pour myself into these jeans just to have them look the other way."

Evidently, as long as these symbolic gestures of female sexual-objectification remained symbolic acts, then Star Baby not only did not experience them as degrading but indeed, actively sought and enjoyed them.

During club meetings, while the gender of club members did not appear related to the mode of participation, the gender of non-members was so related. Male non-members who attended meetings typically came as the friend of one of the guys in the club and would frequently interject comments or make suggestions regarding any issue under discussion. The female-outsiders who attended meetings typically came as either the girlfriend of one of the guys in the club or as a friend of Spacy. They almost never spoke at all regarding any issue under discussion, even when (as at one point) the issue directly affected them and their right to be there.

Interestingly, only Spacy and myself drank alcoholic beverages. Wild Fire would occasionally smoke dope. Star Baby consumed neither substance. Neither woman objected to female-drinking or smoking and accounted for their own abstention during parties in terms of highly individualized reasons ("I don't like beer." "I've had kidney problems in the past and am not supposed to drink.") The nature of their accounts indicate that they considered female-use of these substances perfectly
okay. Their reaction to those females who got drunk or messed-up indicates that they did not consider it proper for females to consume these substances in the same way or for the same purposes as the guys did.

Actually, I have far less overt evidence of the vanners' attitudes toward female-homosexuality than their attitudes toward male-homosexuality. Lesbianism or lesbian activity simply appeared to be a far less salient form of sexual-deviancy than male-homosexuality in their perceptions of others in their world. That they did consider lesbian relationships deviant, nonetheless, was made apparent by an incident that I will describe later in this chapter in which Wizard attributed Star Baby's and Spacy's coalition to lesbianism. In doing so, Wizard sought to negate the legitimacy of the women's actions and concerns by labeling them and their relationship as "abnormal" and hence not to be taken seriously. The use of the term "lesbianism" as an assault against Star Baby and Spacy was the only real overt indication I had that the vanners considered this deviant. That the Lady Vanners also considered it immoral and deviant was made evident in Star Baby's subsequent and vehement denial of her and Spacy "being any such thing."

Nevertheless, the fact that lesbianism otherwise never entered the jokes and talk of these people whose jokes and talks were inundated with sexual themes and even male-homosexual themes is, I think, not insignificant. Indeed, the apparent non-saliency of lesbian sexuality stems from a masculinism which defines women so exclusively as erotic objects of men's desire that the possibility of women as sexual actors choosing and controlling their sexual encounters on the same terms and
and with the same autonomy as men simply does not appear likely. As sexual actors, men might well become erotically interested in other men even though this is reprehensible and disgusting. As sexual objects, an inter-female sexuality was simply so unusual and unlikely as to be irrelevant. Women had no choice but to be heterosexual.

The vanners did recognize a fourth type of heterosexual relationship: being married. However, at the time I studied the club, of all the club members and their friends, only Crazy Horse and Wild Fire were married. Star Baby and Wizard had been married but were single while with the van-club. Because this type of relationship was something which the vanners viewed or tended to view as relevant to their future lives but not to their present lives, it did not effect the form of the heterosociality which was pertinent to the organization of the relationships between guys and girls in the club. Hence, I will not be discussing this type of relation at this point. However, since getting-married and staying-married was of paramount importance to the Lady Vanners as a goal during their time in the club, I will take more about their perceptions of marriage when I look at the nature and substance of female-talk.

None of the guys in the club but Travelin' Man had female-friends whom they associated with as they did with male-friends, that is, whom they would hang-around with, go places with, or simply "waste-time" with. As a single female in the club, Spacy and Travelin' Man did claim to be "just-friends" and would hang-out at places together. Later, she and Star Baby claimed to be "just-friends" with most of the guys in the club when Star Baby's home became a social center for the club and they would gather there in the evenings to talk and joke-around. Nonetheless,
relative to the network of male-homosocial friendships, the number of heterosocial friendships were rare and none appeared to extend beyond the boundaries of the club or to have any duration.

In reality, only three of the club members did not own vans: myself, Jay Bird, and Earthquake. I entered under the bylaw allowing for a coupled-person to be admitted and because I was in the truly unique position of researching the club as well. Jay Bird and Earthquake both came to club functions as the friends or "buddies" of male vanners: Jay Bird as the good friend of Vandura and Earthquake as the friend of both Free Bird and Travelin' Man. When they were subsequently voted in as members of their club, their admission was not justified on the basis of their homosocial friendships with vanners but on the basis of how much they had contributed to the club. Granting them membership was supposed to be a reward for all that they had done for the club prior to being a member, not because group boundaries should automatically be defined so as to include the close same-sex friends of vanners.

Wild Fire became angry with Travelin' Man because Travelin' Man had, in her words, "been showing Crazy Horse pictures of other girls and tryin' to get him interested in seein' other girls." She told me later that she had taken direct, though private, action against Travelin' Man by telling him that she knew what he was up to and that he had better stop it. Travelin' Man also told me later that he thought Wild Fire was wrong in her perceptions of his intentions but right in trying to protect the monogamy of her relationship. ("I, I, I didn't really mean nuthin' by showin' Crazy Horse those pictures but I guess it wasn't right for me to do that since he was married and all").
Since Crazy Horse and Wild Fire were married, he was essentially her husband, not her boyfriend and there were significant differences in these two role-relationships insofar as Crazy Horse was obligated to provide for, or help provide for, the material needs of himself and Wild Fire, and had primary responsibility for this. However, in my conversations with Wild Fire, it became painfully apparent to me that many of her concerns and worries about her relationship with Crazy Horse were the same as Star Baby's concerns regarding her relationship with Free Bird. Wild Fire did not feel that being married gave her security that her relationship would not end nor that it freed it (and her) from many of the same stresses, strains and threats acting against all heterosocial love-relationships. Since from this limited comparison, it appeared (paradoxically) that the Lady Vanners saw marriage as their primary goal at that point in their lives but also saw being-married and being-in-love-but-not-yet-married as requiring many of the same struggles on their parts, I will in this section simply use the term "boyfriend" and "girlfriend" to refer to the Lady Vanners' heterosexual relationships even though Wild Fire and Crazy Horse were technically "husband" and "wife."
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

In the opening chapter of this study, I stated that my purpose in undertaking this research was to begin the work needed for the development of a critical feminism through a participant observation analysis of gender as a social and cultural reality in the organization of a small, mixed-sex group of youths. In that chapter, I also claimed that the goal of a critical feminism would be not merely to describe the phenomenological realities created by human actors but also to understand the relationship between these meaning-systems and the material and ideological conditions to which they are a response and by which they are informed. In this concluding chapter, by way of both summarizing the major themes of my preceding analysis and in an attempt to be consistent with my theoretical objectives, I will make what are tentative suggestions pertaining to the relationship between the subcultural realities of the male and female vanners and their position in the productive and reproductive arrangements of patriarchal capitalism. In doing so, I will structure my discussion around three major issues. First, I will focus upon the subcultural themes of the male vanners, analyzing them as a mode of adapting to their position as young, working-class males marginal to the institutionalized spheres which define working-class manhood. Secondly, I will explore the relationship between the gender-ideologies which represented such a fundamental
dimension of the male vanners' subculture and the organization of club members' relationships. Finally, I will discuss the experiences and relationships of the Lady Vanners as subordinate members of this club who by virtue of their gender also possess a different relationship to the institutionalized arrangements of patriarchal-capitalism. In what is admittedly a circular line of reasoning necessitated by holistic analysis, these substantive divisions are reflective of the central theoretical point which I seek to make: that while temporarily sharing a social space, the significance of gender-differentiation under patriarchal capitalism was such that the male and female vanners did not share a similar set of interests, experiences or problems. Rather, the effects of and response to the conditions generated by their age and class statuses were mediated by patriarchal processes which, at least for the historical moment in which the club existed, engendered certain internal tensions within the club, recreated an exploitative relationship between individual women and men and subverted the ability of both the male and female vanners to develop a shared, politicized consciousness of their conditions.

Generational Politics and Patriarchal Processes in the Vanners' Subculture

Subcultures arise as the result of, and a response to, the contradictions between dominant ideologies of reality and the conditions of existence experienced by similarly situated actors. These subcultures represent attempts on the part of such actors to collectively solve such contradictions by creating an alternative reality that will enable them to understand and deal with these contradictions.

Recent theoretical developments addressed specifically to youth subcultures have explained the emergence of this type of subculture as
collective solutions on the part of young persons to certain contra-
dictions resulting from a complex set of historical changes in the
organization of the political economy of corporate capitalism in the
post-World War II period (Clarke and Jefferson, 1976; Clarke, et al,
1975). While the analysis of these historical processes is quite
complicated, in essence it is argued that in the face of a contracting
need for labor and an expanding need for markets, the period of "sub-
adolescence" or youth has been increasingly extended, creating a category
of actors who in previous generations would have been adults but are
now kept dependent upon parents while they are exploited both as
consumers and a cheap form of surplus labor (Clarke, et al, 1975;
Coleman, 1974; Danseron, 1961). The result has been the increasing
significance of generational divisions in the structuring of capitalist
society and in the consciousness of members of this society. As these
theoreticians have also argued, however, the emergence of generational
divisions should not be interpreted as a transcendence of class-divisions
in either the structuring of society or in the subcultural responses
created by subordinate actors (Murdock and McCron, 1976). Instead,
they claim that what is perhaps most significant for the sociological
understanding of youth cultures and their political meaning is the
analysis of the way in which the parent-class culture informs the
nature of both what youthful actors experience and how they interpret
these experiences. Politically, in other words, the most relevant
aspect of youth cultures is the consciousness of generational divisions
may serve to mute the consciousness of class and the inter-relationship
between class and generation (Murdock and McCron, 1975) because, as a
result, the subcultures which youths produce are an ineffectual solution
to their problems. As Michael Brake (1980:16) stated:
Subcultures offer, on the one hand, solutions of a magical rather than of a real nature to inherent contradictions of the socioeconomic system experienced at some level by the actor. With youthful subcultures, this is perceived and responded to by the actor as a generational problem (emphasis in the original).

These subcultural solutions are considered "magical" because they are based exclusively symbolic actions which may produce alternative identities that express alienation but are not directed at altering or transcending the conditions responsible for their alienation. For Brake (1980) and these other theoreticians of youth culture (see Hebdige, 1977; Hall and Jefferson, 1975), the failure of youth subcultures to create an effective, politicized and oppositional response to the contradictions they experience results from the failure of these youthful actors (a failure itself derived from hegemonic processes within the dominant culture) to accurately perceive the reality of class-relations and their own exploitation as these are pertinent to their generational status within particular classes. Their perceptions of their problems and conditions are instead confined to a generational and symbolic or "cultural politics" (Willis, 1978) which subverts their politicization.

Although I essentially agree with the emphasis which these writers place on the theoretical importance of class divisions for the analysis of youth culture, I also believe that a major lacuna in their research and theories is their failure to consider the significance of patriarchal arrangements and the production of a gendered-consciousness upon the form and substance of subcultural responses. In looking, as they do, primarily at male-exclusive youth subcultures, they mention the importance of masculinity as a focal concern of youth groups (Brake, 1980; Willis, 1978), but they have failed to consider these gendered
dimensions of youthful actors' collective identities as a relevant articulating axis between their subcultures and dominant ideologies; nor have they considered how the subcultures of youth groups may thereby be mediated by patriarchal relations as well as by capitalist ones. As Andrew Tolson (1977) has argued, however, patriarchal ideologies of masculinity are mediated by the class-based realities of work under corporate capitalism and serve as a primary basis for the control of workers. More specifically, among working-class men, compliance with the degrading, exploitative conditions of their labor is extracted through the patriarchal promise of dominance and emotional nurturance in reproductive relations based on capitalist-patriarchal processes whereby women's economic dependence-on and heterosexist-control-by men is insured. For working class males, the internalization of capitalist-patriarchal ideologies of their masculinity means the acceptance of the very productive arrangements which threaten their self-realization and politicization at work but place them into positions of dominance at home.

Applying Tolson's insights to the analysis of youth cultures suggests that it may be the case that the "magical" solutions created by young males results from an attempt by them to recreate a sense of "masculinity" which itself involves acceptance of their class-specific relation to productive and reproductive arrangements. In other words, the heightened generational consciousness of young males may not merely be the ideological distortion of class-mediated contradictions. Rather, given a masculinized consciousness, generational differences may be felt more acutely by them because as "kids" they are denied access to those positions in productive and reproductive relations that are synonymous with manhood. To the extent that they have a masculinized consciousness,
their existing status vis-a-vis these institutionalized spheres contradicts their identities because it contradicts the meaning of masculinity. This contradiction could in turn be resolved by creating an opposing meaning of masculinity (and, as a result, opposing the ideological basis for the control of male workers under capitalist relations) or by attempting to realize elements of masculinity in new, class-and age-specific ways. In the latter case, the dominant themes of the class-specific masculinity would be preserved but transformed in ways to make possible its accomplishment by young males.

I contend that the subcultural realities created by the male vanners represented an attempt to achieve the latter type of resolution to their experienced problems. More specifically, as an attempt to "explain" the male vanners' culture by suggesting connections between their subcultural themes and their relationship to the institutionalized arrangements of patriarchal capitalism, I maintain that their symbolic apparatus signified an effort to achieve a working-class masculine identity in a generationally specific form so as to allow for its accomplishment despite their marginality to the positions by which male-adulthood is to be realized. As such, the subcultural themes and identities of the vanners represented collective expressions of four major dimensions of their world-views: (1) an attempt to create a sense of productivity and autonomy through leisure time pursuits; (2) an ambivalent relationship toward the "dominant order" of adult, middle-class male society; (3) a consciousness of their marginality to that order as the result of generational-divisions and (4) the structuring of social relations in terms of a masculinist-heterosexist ideational system which sought masculine-comraderie and control of women's sexual and emotional resources in patriarchal relations outside of marriage.
Each of these themes, but especially the first, is symbolized in the vanners' relationships with their vans. Most importantly, within their subculture, the van was the core or dominant symbol and as such, represented an appropriation of a commodity and its transformation into a product. The vanners use of the van does not represent a passive response on the part of consumers to a mass-marketed object. Instead, in an interesting and paradoxical set of symbolic transformations, the vanners converted what was originally marketed as a work-related commodity into a leisure-related product. Being and becoming a vanner meant not merely owning a van but converting one so owned into an individualized expression of self.

As a generational and class specific means of expressing their subcultural concerns, the appropriation of the van was made both possible and relevant by the social situation of the vanners. On the one hand, with the exception of Wizard and Crazy Horse, because the male vanners were working but were still dependent upon their parents for food and housing, their limited financial resources could be used for the purchase and conversion of the van which otherwise would have been out of their reach, even though doing so simultaneously kept them financially dependent upon their parents. On the other hand, its purchase and use was a practical means of achieving certain ends relevant to being young males that would otherwise have been difficult to realize. As suburban youths without the street-corners and alleys available to working-class and lower-class youths of the central cities and without the segregated communities of college youths, the van represented a useful technological innovation. Like the automobile before it, the van provided a means of establishing a social network and creating a community by "cruising" and "hanging-out" at public
places available to young people lacking their own private space and legally-barred from many adult-controlled sites of sociality. However, the van went the auto one better because it also provided additional private space where a guy could engage in a whole-range of social activities free from the punitive surveillance of adult authorities: drinking alcoholic beverages, smoking marijuana and having intimate, heterosexual contact.

However, besides these practical meanings, when seen as a core symbol imbued with additional, metaphorical meanings, the van represented a symbolic expression of a masculinized self attempting to accomplish through leisure what could not be attained through work. The van was a product, an expression of self, and a friend or lover. Through his van, a vanner became a tough-but-friendly, independent, sexually-active "craftsman." Hence, he could be in his play and through his van what he could not otherwise be as producer or reproducer by the working class standards of masculinity.

As Clarke (1975) has pointed out, the search for meaningful social relations and an autonomous sense of self in leisure and consumptive pursuits has been a means by which working-class males have responded to the alienation experienced at work without actually opposing the conditions responsible for that alienation. This type of response is what Frank Parkin (1972) refers to as a "negotiated response" on the part of subordinate classes of actors to their subordination, falling between that of a "dominant consciousness" (wherein the actors either defer to the ordained hierarchy or aspire to move up in it) and an "oppositional response" (wherein the actors seek to transform the ordained hierarchy). In a negotiated response, members of the working class culture involved recognize their subordinate status but neither
totally acquiesce to nor totally oppose it. So, for example, in emphasizing the pursuit of leisure, albeit a pursuit contingent upon work, working-class males can lead respectable lives while refusing to see in work the measure of those lives.

So, too, the vanners emphasized in their vans and in their activities, a non-work related, masculine identity based on pursuing a good time. They thereby sought to symbolize an opposition to the dominant order which was represented in their consciousness as an amorphous "they" consisting of adult males who ran society and who lived "straight" lives conforming to the rules and roles of work and family. By emphasizing the pursuit of fun and pleasure and by equating those pursuits with rowdy behaviors, being messed-up on drugs and drink, and continuous jokes about homosexual and heterosexual encounters, the vanners symbolized their disdain for what they perceived to be the dominant, middle class mode of being male. Pleasure, not hard work, was the primary source of life's meaning and by their belief that pleasure came from rowdiness instead of propriety, drunkeness instead of sobriety, hyper-sexuality instead of repression, they expressed a rejection of what they perceived as the respectable, adult world's moral concerns.

For the vanners, work was mentioned only as a contingency for play—a necessary evil to be forgotten when they were together. Indeed, they frequently expressed a belief that if they could only convert everyone to their way of seeing things, the whole world would be made peaceful and happier, because that is what being a vanner is all about. Hence, the vanners' celebration of drunkeness and promiscuous sexual activity for physical pleasure, as well as their encouragement of actions which momentarily disrupted or "breached" rules of polite,
public decorum can be interpreted as symbolizing an opposition to the official, "straight" world. In addition, through such behaviors they celebrated, however fleetingly, a sense of comraderie and collective power in arenas of social activity external to those which placed them into competitive relations with each other and subordinate relations to other males.

Yet, this disdain and rejection was by no means total nor truly oppositional. And when considered in light of their total set of activities and the rules which structured those activities, what emerges is a relationship between the vanners and the world of adult males that is characterized by ambivalence. On the one hand, as was previously mentioned, the very focus upon leisure and consumptive activity does not seriously challenge or oppose the exploitation and subordination that working-class males experience in their work. On the other hand, even in their playful pursuits, any potential opposition to the heirarchies and rules of dominant reality that might have been enacted through "deviant" or "delinquent" challenges to respectable behavior was subverted by subcultural rules which contained members' action to times, places and conditions that would not be defined as a serious rejection of the existing order or their subordinate status within it. Hence, their deviant or "rowdy" actions were confined strictly to public situations and places where playful actions are tolerated or expected and pertained only to breaches of rules of politeness, the breaking of which could easily be seen as comical instead of offensive. Any actions at any time which would violate official laws pertaining to property and persons were considered illegitimate by the vanners and not to be tolerated. Similarly, a guy should party and get messed-up, but only if and when his responsibilities as son or worker were over,
never instead of or inspite of these responsibilities. The forms of conduct appropriate to those institutional spheres and one's position in it took precedence over those things one did as a vanner. In essence, the opposition of the vanners to the rules and roles of work and family involved primarily superficial and rhetorical expressions enacted in public. For the most part, they were conformists. Their pursuit of play and fun in activities which the dominant ideology defined as "non-productive" mirrored the playfulness of the vanners' opposition to that ideology. Still, the club was a place of play, of the meaningfulness of "meaninglessness" in which the larger cultural opposition between "work" and "leisure" could be turned on its head (although still accepted as an opposition) so that by glorifying the latter they could symbolically escape the self-defining effects of the former.

Their ambivalent relationship to the dominant order was further evident in and, in part, a result of the third major dimension of the vanners' consciousness which, consistent with the analyses of youth cultures previously mentioned, interpreted their position in society as an age-specific or generational problem. The vanners saw their marginal position to the spheres of productive and reproductive relations as a natural and temporary result of "being-kids," and thereby reduced historical and class-based changes in patriarchal-capitalism to natural, generational processes which simply had to be "waited-out" or lived through. The belief that their status was a temporary one did not negate their immediate feelings of marginality, which they collectively expressed through their leisure pursuits, but it did inform the nature of those responses. Repeatedly referring to what they would have to do or were going to do when they "grew-up" and became mature, the male
vanners saw their position and their mildly-antagonistic activities as a last fling and an appropriate part of being young. They were merely living out a brief interlude between the prison of school and the sober responsibilities of "manhood." Becoming a man required a commitment to a life-time of hard work as one struggled to earn more money so one could support a wife and children. Now, for the time being, they were "kids" who, with a few exceptions, still lived under the authority of parents upon whom they were economically dependent and without any dependents of their own. As a kid, one lacks the prestige and authority of "manhood," the social and emotional rewards which come from being head of a household, and the material benefits that come from having a decent job, but one can enjoy a freer, more autonomous existence during the hours one is not working. Hence, the guys in the club did not reject as legitimate the dominant beliefs about the social criteria constituting adult-manhood, nor did they perceive that achieving these requirements would be any more difficult for them than it was for their fathers. They simply perceived that by virtue of their age, a factor which would change in time, the time had not yet come where they needed to worry about getting on with meeting those criteria. In time, the right job would come along and the right girl would come along and they would give-up the pursuits of being young men and become respectable adult men, earning a decent wage and planning for a family one was capable of supporting. They would recreate the lives of their fathers.

The consciousness of the disparity between their present situation and their future roles was mediated by the fourth, final and most pervasive dimension of their subcultural themes which in turn reflected a fundamental means of collectively acquiescing to their situation. This dimension of the vanners' subculture pertained to the existence
and nature of their ideologies of gender. These ideologies were based upon certain dominant working class beliefs about the nature of male-ness, female-ness and heterosocial relations under patriarchal capitalism transformed somewhat to conform to the social conditions which the vanners were experiencing by virtue of their age. These gender-ideologies were perpetrated in the activities by which the vanners expressed their collective identities, their public discourse and rituals, and the rules by which they structured their relationships. At the core of these ideologies was a masculinist-heterosexism which in turn involved three major cultural themes: a celebration of masculine-comraderie, a double standard of sexuality, and the sexualization and subordination of women as objects which satisfy men's needs. By means of this masculine-heterosexist cultural apparatus, the vanners were able to control the social behavior of the female vanners while giving them formal equality and could attempt to recreate the heterosexual relations based upon the appropriation of a woman's sexual and emotional resources that patriarchal processes have taught working class males to seek at home.

The vanners sought to be "nice-guys." The mode of masculine demeanor and homosociality which they deemed appropriate is similar to what other researchers have described in their analysis of working class groups of males. The vanners sought to enact male relations based upon comraderie, or an egalitarian acceptance of and bonding with all male peers in club activities, and an organization of internal relations through a differentiation of status with a democratically elected leader whose actions or decisions are to be based upon group consensus (Whyte, 1955; Sennett and Cobb, 1972; Tolson, 1977; Stewart, 1981). As "nice-guys," one does not seek to be physically violent
toward other males as a means of gaining dominance but nor does one submit to such dominance attempts on the part of other male peers. One should be tough-but-friendly in seeking to establish homosocial relations based on a sense of age-and-gender solidarity and an acceptance of the rules of the group.

However, traditional working-class masculinity has also been based upon heterosexism, a double standard of sexuality, and beliefs in masculine superiority which taken together give rise to the subordination of women in heterosexual-monogamous relationships where they exchange their sexual, reproductive, and domestic labor for material support (Toison, 1976; LeMasters, 1975). Around these aspects of gender-ideologies, the vanners created a subculturally specific variant reflective of their generational status but still serving masculine interests.

They were decidedly heterosexist, viewing sexual intimacy between males (or between females) as unnatural and immoral. However, this was a masculinist-heterosexism insofar as what was defined as heterosexually appropriate behavior was gender-differentiated and male-benefitting. Being male meant needing and wanting sex and being able to satisfy these needs as frequently as possible either with a multiplicity of women in casual-relationships or with one woman in a love-relationship.

Women-as-other were reduced in the male discourse and celebrations to objects of sexual desire who want and need the love of a man. As objects who need to be used, a woman's social status or value was evaluated according to two major criteria: their desirability as erotic objects who can provide sexual pleasure and their respectability as moral beings who confine their sexual activities to monogamous relationships based upon an emotional commitment.
Nonetheless, while the vanners possessed a double-standard based upon the sexual-objectification of women and women's sexual control, there are specific aspects of these normative standards which are not necessarily the same as other descriptions of the double-standards employed by other groups. The male vanners did not see women as different from and inferior to men in all respects, hence they did not have a truly dualistic gender ideology which could be used to deny women the right to participate in any male activities in order to be afforded respect. They did not believe that women were inherently less able to perform all masculine occupations or pasttimes. Hence, they believed that any woman who could and did own a van should be allowed to become a vanner if she so desired. Similarly, they did not deny women the right to be sexually active prior to marriage. Consistent with LeMasters' (1975) analysis of working-class adult male sex codes, and contrary to Whyte's (1955) analysis of those of a lower-class Italian male gang, the vanners did not place high value on the virgin nor deny women the right to be sexually-active prior to marriage.

However, the apparently liberating significance of these beliefs was lessened by the fact that the ideologies the vanners did employ still reflected masculinist interests in controlling woman's sexuality by reducing them to sexual objects while seeking nurturance from them in monogamous relations. In order to more fully explicate these effects, it is first necessary to analyze how these masculinist ideologies structured the club members relationships giving rise to internal, gender-based divisions and tensions. Of critical importance in analyzing the patriarchal processes in the vanners' subcultural realities is seeing how their masculinist ideologies were produced and
reproduced in the structuring of heterosocial relations whereby gender-differentiated modes of participation were created.

**Gender, Heterosexism and the Organization of Small Group Life**

As both a female participant-in and observer-of club activities, I was acutely aware of the significance of gender as a critical basis for the organization of club activities and the structuring of relationships between club members. These gendered organizational processes in turn directly reflected and reinforced the masculinist-heterosexist ideologies produced by the males in their jokes, talk and ritual activities. In use, these ideological systems functioned as gender-differentiated and male-supremacist rules for interpreting the actions and interactions of participants and, thereby, served as a strategy for controlling women through what Greer Litton Fox (1977) has analyzed as normative restrictions. This patriarchal social control strategy permits women a high degree of direct and independent participation in the world while controlling that participation through the production of a feminized consciousness of self consistent with masculinized images. As a result, contrary to men, women's participation in the world is informed by a struggle to gain value and respect as "nice-girls" or "ladies" by conforming to standards of conduct and demeanor reflective of male interests.

A critical analysis of gender in group life must, however, avoid either falsely reifying ideologies by separating beliefs from the contexts and situations of their use by actors in interpreting each others behaviors or by assuming that the consciousness of actors is solely and isomorphically determined by these ideologies. Instead, an adequate understanding of patriarchal processes in group structure must
be concerned with considering both the tensions or contradictions potentially created by the interactive effects of gender and other forms of social differentiation and the nature of subordinated actors' attempts to understand and respond to the problems experienced as a result of their subordination.

Within the organization of the van club, and informing the experiences of the Lady Vanners, there existed a primary ideological contradiction between the rules and relationships deemed appropriate on the basis of gender and the rules and relationships deemed appropriate on the basis of membership in the club. While the former prescribed sex-segregated patterns of interaction based upon principles of male-dominance and female subordination enacted through the sexualization of women's behaviors, the latter rules prescribed relationships based upon the egalitarian, democratizing principles of friendship and group solidarity.

The formation of the van club to a certain extent represented an attempt on the part of those belonging to it to recreate primary relationships outside the household where, in this society, primary attachments tend to be confined. Hence, they constantly emphasized the ideal of friendship and cohesion in describing what the relationships of club members should be to each other and to the club. Similarly, they emphasized that all members were equal and could exercise political rights to express their interests within the club. Club members acknowledged to their obligation to like and respect each other; and, as Wizard repeatedly reminded they, by doing so, they could create a community of others to defend, support and help each other in coping with any external problems that life in society may cause.
In emphasizing, as the ideal of members relationships, friendship and solidarity, the formation of the club does represent an attempt on the part of the vanners to solve certain age and class based problems residing in the absence of a community of others with whom they could socialize and in the presence of competitive, superficial, and asymmetrical relations characterizing their experiences at work. And, consistent with the ideals of friendship that previous research has indicated seem to characterize American views of this form of social relationship, the vanners saw "being friends" as a social bond that emerges spontaneously from the interaction between two people and is based upon affective ties resulting from the intrinsic and mutual benefits that association provides (Suttles, 1970; Ramsey, 1968; Paine, 1969). According to these ideals, club members were to treat each other as equals in relationships based upon mutual trust, respect and caring and these ideals were to supercede any other status that club members might possess. Once in the club, a member was to be treated just like everybody else and as a friend.

Formally, and with respect to political rights of membership, the Lady Vanners were the acknowledged equals of the male vanners and their status as such was superior to that of any outsider, male or female. Hence, the Lady Vanners could and did assert claims, make complaints, raise issues, vote, and occasionally simply take over and lead a meeting.

However, despite the rhetorical emphasis on equality and despite the formal political rights afforded and exercised by the Lady Vanners in the context of group meetings, the actual form which their participation in club celebrations took and the nature of their relationships with the male vanners were informed by the masculinist
standards of heterosexism and female respectability. What the Lady Vanners did and the interpretations given to their actions were made on the basis of their status as females and the evaluation of these was dependent upon their heterosexual status as either single or coupled women.

The effects of these gender ideologies in use upon the structuring of club activities and the position and experience of the Lady Vanners within these were three-fold. First, all heterosocial interactions were imbued with erotic interest instead of friendly sociality which in turn, under the double standard of the vanners, meant that friendships between the guys and girls were made difficult to accomplish. Unless a female was single, in the name of female respectability, her interactions with the guys should remain superficial and public.

Secondly, while coupled-women were to be afforded respect, in creating and maintaining their heterosexual relationships, their ability to engage in autonomous action or to participate fully in club activities was negated. Instead, in the name of love and respectability as "good women," they took on the burden of doing these relationships under a set of rules reflecting masculine privilege and interests. To show commitment and to preserve sexual monogamy, they were to stay physically close to their boyfriends, allowing his patterns of interaction to determine hers; they were to take his side against all others and to smooth over any emotional difficulties; they were to refrain from any actions which would make them appear either sexually-promiscuous or sexually-interested in some other male; and they were to prevent any other female from attracting the sexual-interest of their males. The result was to distance coupled women from all other guys, instill a sense of distrust and competition with other single females, and to
exploit their emotional resources in order to make their boyfriends feel good and keep their love.

Third, the control of the cultural apparatus and the public discourse by which cultural meanings were disseminated and reproduced were kept in the hands of men. The Lady Vanners, like all females, were most likely to be subjected to the humiliation of sexual denigration for precisely those actions by which the guys enacted their focal concerns and masculinized identities. Those contexts of action where the subcultural themes involving symbolic opposition to dominant morality were expressed were precisely those in which sex-status superceded club-status and where women's appropriation of male forms of conduct would be the basis of her sexual-denigration.

Hence, despite a rhetorical emphasis on "friendship" and "democracy," both of which afforded females certain political rights, as long as their identities and the meanings given to their actions were mediated by sexist and heterosexist ideologies, they remained the social and cultural subordinates of males. To the extent that gender is sexuality, to the extent that masculine sexuality and feminine sexuality are defined by a double standard and to the extent that monogamous heterosexism propertizes women and limits their ability to act and interact freely, those formal rights of membership represent ideological distortion of the real subordination of women to men. Under these conditions, women are cast into a position where they must either achieve respect by participating in the exploitative relationship of heterosexual-monogamy or become vulnerable to the symbolic assaults against her moral worth.

The Lady Vanners did experience the frustration and pain of their subordination and exploitation. They did not react passively to this
situation. However, the form which their responses took was informed by a heterosexualized consciousness which undermined the effectiveness of their response in dealing with the problems of their lives within and without of the club.

Patriarchal Processes, Women's Consciousness and Women's Relationships

The Lady Vanners were heterosexualized women. Their relationship to the club was influenced by their desires to be attractive-to and coupled-with a man. This was the focal concern of their lives, their activities and their consciousness. As such, their perception of and relationship to the institutionalized spheres of capitalist-patriarchy was in certain ways different from and in conflict with that of the male vanners.

Like the males, the Lady Vanners were working class persons working in low-paying, routinized, dead-end jobs. Like the males, they were not participants in the reproductive arrangements of marriage and family. Like the males, they aspired towards a different and better future and perceived their social situation to be a temporary one; and like the males, they also had an ambivalent perception of their situation, believing that it was something to be simultaneously enjoyed and changed.

However, as young, working-class females, the structural conditions of their lives and their consciousness of their position was quite different. For them, a better future was not to be based upon their relationship to the socioeconomic system of production but to the achievement of an appropriate female status in the system of reproduction. The Lady Vanners understood and accepted that they could not hope to be economically independent, nor did they want to. They
believed that achieving a happy and secure future depended upon finding a man who would love them enough to marry them and provide for them. Hence, in joining the club and becoming Lady Vanners, they were not attempting to capture a working-class mode of masculinity but to negotiate an alternative feminine identity that would enable them to attract a male and enjoy themselves under conditions where, should they accept a traditional form of femininity and "woman's place," they could do neither. The van club offered them an escape from the confines of home, an ability to enjoy heterosexual relations outside of marriage and, hopefully, the chance to find the right man to marry.

Understanding the nature of the Lady Vanners' negotiated identity is important because it helps to understand their relationship to the club, to each other and to other women. They were not seeking to be like men and accepted that it was not really proper for a "lady" to act in ways culturally or subculturally defined as masculine. Hence, they were not attempting to express the same identities as vanners that the male vanners were. Who and what they were, and were trying to be, was heterosexualized which meant that they interpreted their own worth by masculinist standards.

Yet, they also did not see themselves as typical women whom, in their estimation, were too weak and too restrained to either enjoy themselves and to fully experience their own heterosexuality. They thought of themselves as strong and independent women but the meaning of these characteristics reflected their consciousness of their needs and interests as young, working class, heterosexual women. Hence, being tough enough to take care of or protect one's interests generally meant being willing to assume responsibility to maintain one's love relationship against the pervasive threats to that relationship that
existed in a world of ongoing heterosexual bonding and unbonding. For
the Lady Vanners, toughness as they expressed it, tended to imply a
willingness to oppose any woman who would threaten their heterosexual
relationship and any man or woman who failed to grant them status as
a woman worthy of respect. Similarly, they both accepted a sexual
double standard as right and appropriate and actively displayed a
sexually active self. They understood that women naturally, and hence
morally, seek emotional intimacy and commitment with their sexual
relationships but that they need and enjoy sexual relationships as well.
Finally, they expected that the guys in the club or any guy who cared-
for a girl, would protect and defend her from any actions by another
guy who was insulting or threatening. As heterosexual women, creating
and maintaining a heterosexual relationship was the basis for being in
the club and the focus of their social activity.

However, the heterosexist parameters that structured the social
relationships between guys and girls in the club and denied women's
equality, also informed the nature of the relationships which the
girls or Lady Vanners created with each other and other women. These
female relationships tended to reflect club boundaries and to be based
upon opposing forms, structured very differently from those existing
between the men. While the males could and did interact jokingly and
pleasantly with guys whom they were meeting for the first time and
although they could have a number of "buddies" whom represented a
network of associates with whom they could spend time without
necessarily being all that intimate or close, female relationships
tended to be an all or nothing affair. Relationships between women
were either characterized by intimacy and closeness or by distance,
distrust, and shunning.
The friendships which Star Baby, Spacy, Wild Fire, and myself formed remained quite private primarily by virtue of the male control of public discourse and by virtue of the demands of being in a heterosexual couple. Nonetheless, they served as a basis for the sharing of problems, the creating of our own interpretations, and the construction of a female-based understanding of the world in which we were operating. The intensity and intimacy of our relationships essentially constituted the basis by which we explored and supported our subjective experiences in a larger group where the production and dissemination of ideas about the world were out of our control. With each other and through each other, we could share our problems as women under masculinist-heterosexual standards which exploited our social nurturance and made us vulnerable to social shame and disrespect. Together, we could validate our respectability and gain emotional support when "victimized" by the effects of heterosexualization over our lives and wants, but we did not oppose heterosexism as the basis of our lives and wants. To be a friend was not to attack or to challenge the political powerlessness and personal pains resulting from the symbolic reality of patriarchal culture and patriarchal relations but to help each other cope with it.

In essence, what the Lady Vanners were living was what Adrienne Rich (1980:85) refers to as a "double-life." While we found in our relationships with each other affection, support, and emotional assistance for difficult times, we would still acquiesce to the greater importance or value of our heterosexual relationships, even if ultimately that meant a rejection of each other and even though in these heterosexual relations we were far more likely to experience
emotional exploitation than emotional support. As a result, the potential force of our bondings and our potential capacity to, in Rich's words (1980:87), "reintegrate love with power in women's lives," was diffused and undermined.

It would be easy, taken out of the larger class context, to view the heterosexist ideologies of the male vanners and the heterosexualized consciousness of the Lady Vanners as a progressive change from previous, traditional or dominant ideologies which limit a woman's sexuality to marriage and serve, thereby, to control her reproduction. While the vanners still clearly worked with a double-standard of sexual conduct, they did separate sexuality from marriage and, thereby, removed normative barriers to female sexual activity prior to marriage. "Nice-girls" or "ladies" had to be sexually monogamous but they neither had to be virginal prior to marriage nor sexual exclusively with one male during their lives. If the relationship which these women were in did not work out, they could seek to move on to another relationship without fear of moral condemnation.

To see these historically and culturally variant forms of heterosexism as progressive is to assume that ultimately they are more reflective of women's interests to experience and enjoy heterosexuality with more than one male-partner in her passage to monogamous marriage. Certainly, the Lady Vanners experienced this change as a definite improvement upon more sexually restrictive standards of past generations. However, the liberating potential of these changes is, I believe, jeopardized by the other class-specific interests of these women in coping with the material conditions of their lives. As working class females, the Lady Vanners' economic survival was dependent upon marriage. Exploited as females in certain sex-typed occupations
within the capitalist-patriarchal structure of productive relations, they looked toward marriage as the means of improving their material existence. They did not perceive marriage and heterosexual monogamy as a place of exploitation under the capitalist-patriarchal structure of reproductive relations. They were objectively trapped between these forms of female-exploitation, but as yet, their experiential history was such that they were conscious only of their problems at work and, perhaps, falsely-conscious of marriage as meaning security happiness and love. Nevertheless, their perceptions of their interests as young women was to find and marry the right man and given this, the heterosexist rules and ideologies of the van club were in conflict with their interests while serving those resulting from the social position of the males.

The male vanners also had traditional beliefs about the appropriate gender relations in the family. They believed that as males they should be able to provide for the economic support of their wife and children. But as young working class males, they also saw that they were presently incapable of doing so and only would be in time when the right job came along. Under these conditions, the heterosexist-masculinist ideologies of their subculture permitted them to achieve the male's right and privileges of heterosexual monogamy without its masculinized costs. They still expected women with whom they were coupled to provide them with emotional support, to be sexually available and to confine their heterosocial activities to only them while offering, in return, only the promise, easily broken, of providing for their girlfriends security some day in the future. Nonetheless, their masculinized consciousness also provided them with the ideological basis for their control at the hands of the patriarchal
structure. Rather than challenging the structural basis for their own subordination in the institutionalized spheres of work, they simply attempted to recreate their feelings of appropriate masculinity through alternative means and through the sexual and social subordination of women, upon whom they placed such responsibility for giving their lives meaning and happiness while giving them so little in return.
APPENDIX A

OFFICIAL CHARTER OF THE NOMAD VANS

All members are bound by this charter to be effective and active participators in the club functions. The bylaws of our club were voted in by members of this club and ascertained by majority vote. We, the members of the NOMAD VANS believe in our charter and the bylaws here set forth. Let no vanner ever cross or shame the name of the NOMAD VANS.

Effective from this Friday, 28 July 1978, forward.

I. MEETINGS:

A) Will start with roll call of current active members and introduction of new members and visitors.

B) Current active members should preferably sit together and visitors sit in a separate area to distinguish and recognize personnel.

C) Will be orderly and in direct supervision of master-at-arms to deal with excessive noise and policing of area.

D) No member will speak unless recognized by the raising of his/her hand, by the presiding council member (president, vice president, etc.)

E) Minutes of all meetings will be taken by the secretary.

II. COUNCIL MEMBERS RESPONSIBILITIES:

A) PRESIDENT

1. Will control club meetings, functions and runs with absolute authority.
2. Will answer for all club problems related to press, police, other clubs, etc.

3. No definite moves will be made without his knowledge and/or okay.

4. Reserves the right to take action on issues as he feels necessary if club members majority vote is unavailable and decisions must be made immediately.

B) VICE PRESIDENT

1. Will replace presidential position in his absence and assume same respect.

2. Will answer directly to President in all matters, and not make decisions, unless instructed to do so by President, or in his absence.

3. Will serve as the President's right hand man in all matters and carry out his commands.

4. Will make sure charter is upheld.

C) SECRETARY

1. Will take minutes of all meetings, collect and retain pertinent information relating to club meetings and functions.

2. Will keep council informed of negligent members, and problems related to the use of the charter.

3. Will be able to type and make-up monthly list of members for sponsors, clubs, etc.

D) TREASURER

1. Will collect dues, new members fees and fines given by Master-at-arms.

2. Will keep proper records of all money transactions,
deposits, withdrawals and checks written.

3. Will be prepared at all times to give balance of accounts and money available.

4. Should be contacted about all money transactions, etc.

5. Will have authority to sign checks in conjunction with President or Vice President.
   a) Checks require two signatures.

E) PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. Will take pictures at club functions and retain notebooks and albums for new members to relate with club.

2. Will assume control of all problems associated with relationships to newspaper, radio and T.V. advertisements.

F) MASTER-AT-ARMS (2)

1. Will control all discipline problems, policing of areas, guarding of vans and structuring of convoys including positioning of members in van convoys.

2. Will be allowed to hand out fines, limited to 25¢ to members not following bylaws of the club or regulations of areas visited. This will be collected by the treasurer during the monthly collections of dues. Failure to pay fines or repeated offenses will be grounds for immediate dismissal of membership from the club.

3. Will recruit deputies as needed for events and assign assistants when incapacitated.

4. Will be fair and impartial in handing out assignments and/or fines
III. REQUIREMENTS OF ACTIVE CHARTER MEMBERS:

A) Will abide by all club rules, regulations and abide by the areas visited by the club.

B) Will follow the directions of the council.

C) Will pay a $3.00 monthly fee, to be collected by treasurer at the first meeting of each month. No excuses. Members negligent in these dues will pay the bill within seven days or be fined 50¢ for each day overdue thereafter.

D) Must attend 50% of meetings and functions monthly. Repeated failure to attend meetings, functions and runs will put the member on restriction for 15 days. If members cannot make meetings, etc., he is asked to resign his membership or he will be dismissed by council. Re-entry will require $10.00 entrance fee and restrictions noted for new members. In the case of orders or legitimate problems the council will decide the outcome.

E) Will monitor channel 3 on C.B. radios and curtail abuse by other members or non-members. You are expected to use call letters and handles except during convoys.

IV. REQUIREMENTS OF NEW MEMBERS

A) Must submit application form and attend at least 2 meetings, 1 run or 50% thereof and be on restriction for at least 30 days, from entrance of application.

B) Must be voted into membership by council and majority vote of members present at meeting.

C) Will receive his/her membership card, certificate and patch as applicable and initiated when feasible. This will be done in the presence of the club.
D) Will not be denied entrance due to race, color or creed.
E) Vans only.
F) Cannot be elected to office on council until membership has been certified for at least 3 months.
G) Must have "NOMAD VANS" put on their van within 7 days after membership is confirmed or be fined 25¢ everyday thereafter until done. This can be in any legible form, paint or sign.

V. GENERAL BY-LAWS

A) Council members may hold an office for a period of 1 year until elections, being the first meeting of each July. Any member or members whom feel a council officer has not done his/her job may begin impeachment procedures at any given meeting. Kangaroo courts will be initiated and top officer, if not involved, will preside. Accuser will be prosecutor, accused; defendant, jury will be majority of members.
B) Officers of the council may maintain positions as long as he/she is elected.
C) 25¢ fine for the use of vulgar fuck at anytime especially in female members presence.
D) 15 minutes deadline for convoys.
E) Meetings every Sunday 5:00 p.m. at Griggs Dam & Reservoir.
APPENDIX B

APPLICATION FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP TO NOMAD VANS

DATE ________________________________

NAME ________________________________

ADDRESS ________________________________

CITY __________________ STATE __________ ZIP CODE __________

PHONE ______________________________

BIRTHDAY ____________________________

YEAR, MAKE AND COLOR OF VAN ________________________________

VAN NAME (IF ANY) ________________________________

RECOMMENDED BY ________________________________

I UNDERSTAND THAT AFTER A 30 DAY WAITING PERIOD A CLUB VOTE WILL BE TAKEN FOR MY MEMBERSHIP TO NOMAD VANS. I AGREE AS A MEMBER TO A $10.00 MEMBERSHIP FEE DUE ON DATE OF ENTRY AND $3.00 A MONTH FOR DUES THEREAFTER.

I AGREE THAT I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR ANYONE WITH ME, AND THAT I AM SUBJECT TO $.25 FINES FOR LITTERING, LANGUAGE AND HOT RODDING.

SIGNATURE ________________________________

DATE ________________________________
LIST OF REFERENCES

Acker, Joan

Allan, Graham

Althusser, Louis

Angrist, Shirley S.

Babladelis, Georgia

Barrett, Michele

Bart, Pauline

Bell, Colin and Howard Newby

Bem, Sandra and Daryl Bem

Brake, Michael
Brenton, Myron  

Bruyn, Sevryn  

Cassell, Joan and Murray L. Wax  

Chafetz, Janet Saltzman  

Clarke, John  

Clarke, John, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson and Brian Roberts  

Clarke, John and Tony Jefferson  

Clifton, A. Kay, Diane McGrath and Bonnie Wick  

Coleman, James S.  

Cook, Terry  

Currant, E. F., A. L. Dickson, H. N. Anderson and P. J. Faulkender  

Dahrendorf, Ralf  

Daniels, Arlene Kaplan  
Danserau, H. Kirk  

David, Deborah S. and Robert Brannon  

Davis, Fred  

Dawe, A.  

Deutsch, Morton and Robert M. Krauss  

Douglas, Jack  

Eisenstein, Zillah R.  

Falbo, Toni  

Faris, J. C.  

Firestone, Shulamit  

Fox, Greer Litton  

Freeman, Jo  

Garske, J.  
Gerber, G. L. and J. Balkin

Gerlach, Luther P. and Virginia H. Hine

Glennon, Lynda M.

Gough, H. G. and A. B. Heilbrun

Gould, Meredith and Rochelle Kern-Daniels

Hall, Stuart and Tony Jefferson

Hamilton, Peter

Hansen, Judith Freedman

Hartman, Heidi

Hebdige, Dick

Hirst, Paul Q.

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Kanter, Rosabeth Moss

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LeMasters, E. E.

Liebow, Elliot

Lopata, Helena Z. and Barrie Thorne

Lovell, Terry

Lundberg, Craig C.

Mathieu, Nicole-Claude

McCormack, Thelma

McDonough, Roisin and Rachel Harrison
McRobbie, Angela and Jenny Garber  

Mehan, Hugh and Houston Wood  

Millman, Marcia  

Millman, Marcia and Rosabeth Moss Kanter  

Mitchell, Juliet  

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Pleck, Joseph H. and John Sawyer  

Powdermaker, Hortense  

Radcliffe-Brown, A. R.  
Ramsay, O.

Reinharz, Shulamit

Rich, Adrienne

Rosaldo, Michele Z.

Rosaldo, Michele Z. and Jane M. Atkinson

Rosenkrantz, P. S., S. R. Vogel, H. Bee, I. K. Broverman and D. M. Broverman

Ruth, Sheila

Sanders, Clinton R.

Schwartz, Morris S. and Charlotte Green Schwartz

Sennett, Richard and Jonathan Cobb

Shaffir, W. B., R. A. Stebbins and A. Turowetz

Shibutani, Tamotsu

Simmel, George
Smart, Barry

Smith, Dorothy E.

Spence, J. T., R. Helmrich and J. Stapp

Spradley, James P. and Brenda J. Mann

Stericker, Anne B. and James E. Johnson

Stewart, Katie

Suttles, Gerald D.

Tolson, Andrew

Tresemer, David

Turner, Jonathan

Turner, Ralph and Lewis Killian

Walsh, David

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Whyte, William Foote

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