

Other issues are equally divisive. Do we advocate the cessation of therapeutic abortion of Down babies and then hope to God or whoever that we never have such a child? How can we hope to prevent abortion of disabled babies when we must advocate abortion for any woman who wants it? Is the woman who cannot cope with the needs of a disabled child any different from the woman who cannot cope with any child? Should she have less reproductive freedom? Is there a difference between not wanting a child and not wanting a particular child?

To have prenatal diagnosis and therapeutic abortion to give women and their partners a false sense of security, lulling themselves into believing that they can legislate biology, that they can assert their "right" to a healthy child... Finger's own personal experience shows that this is very much a false hope. Her child did not have a defect that could be determined prenatally; his was an accident, a chance happening in the birthing process. Other people are disabled due to accidents, to toxins in our environment, to illness and disease. We cannot enshrine the right to be born healthy and to stay healthy.

Finger's book raises the sometimes contradictory issues of reproductive technology in a way that reaffirms that the personal is indeed political, and reminds those of us who theorize that the political is, in the final analysis, extremely personal. The dilemmas she faces cut to the core of our own feelings about our children.

Finger is a wonderful writer and she instills in her reader a feeling of empathy not only for the author but for all women who must make the kind of choices that remain purely theoretical for most of us. The issues about which she writes involve us on a deeply emotional level, and that is how it should be. She forces us to look at our own politics and our own personal beliefs. She invites us to reflect upon our own sense of being women and mothers in today's world.

While we are far from consensus and equally distant from reconciliation, Anne Finger retains hope that, as women, we can maintain a sense of unity even when we sit on opposite sides of an issue. She continues to hope for a shared intimacy, "true intimacy, born of commonality and difference, born of our shared commitment to women, born of our willingness to sit with each other's truth."

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The Arena of Masculinity: Homosexuality, Sport and the Meaning of Sex. Brian Pronger. *Toronto: Summerhill, 1990, Pp. 305 hardcover.*

The Arena of Masculinity works with two different themes. On one level, it is a sustained analysis of homosexuality in sports, and the impact that the gay community and gay liberation have had on sporting life. Part of this argument is an examination of heterosexual masculinity in sports, and whether homosexuality undercuts that traditional emphasis. For example, gay men are said to be generally less competitive, aggressive, and violent than heterosexual men.

On a much wider level, the book is an analysis of homoeroticism. The analysis is sex-positive, and the stories that the men tell are often in their own voice. Pronger makes the difference between homoeroticism and heteroeroticism central to understanding the character of masculinity in sports. Gay male desire is said to be about the cultivation of erotic interest among equals, not the glorification of traditional male hegemonic power.

The broad-based revolutionary politics that invigorated gay liberation and sought affiliation with other oppressed groups is not the movement's overall defining characteristic now, if it ever was universal. The author feels that the new gay view of the world is more personal, more focused on individual pride. He makes it seem as if all gay men

once agreed with feminism in saying that the objectification of the body was undesirable, but that now, gay men have a new, more apolitical agenda.

Pronger's discussion of the gay interest in sports is largely related to bodybuilding. He says that the way in which gays develop their muscles is fundamentally different from that of heterosexual males. This is because the gay interest subverts and violates the role of masculinity. The gay male occupies a paradoxical position for Pronger, because the gay athlete both reveres and violates the desirability of masculinity. The paradoxical position gay men have affords them a better vantage point for male muscle-building than it does for heterosexuals. Pronger makes this idea do a lot of work, making it central to his analysis, but it is repeated too often.

The ironic subtext of homoeroticism in sports subverts muscles as the confirmation of orthodox masculinity. Denying their association with weaponry, muscles become style, a new part of the gay look. The fascination with muscles is a fascination only with appearance, not with the macho masculine role that traditionally goes with it. Yet it is difficult to shake the idea that, for men, muscles add credibility within a male heterosexist world. Sports have always emphasized the differences between men and women, and thus bodybuilding trades upon some very old cultural values.

The art of posing is a concern with artifice, semblance, with putting on an appearance which, in this case, conforms to a heavily invested symbolic masculine role. The new ironic attitude gay men can bring to muscle-building might be subjectively different for them, yet it still involves trading on a cultural icon that is very difficult to disrupt. The fact that acquiring muscles is so reinforced by the arts, pornography, and the fitness industry makes it all that much more difficult to subvert.

This analysis of homosexuality in sports is not that contentious. However, at a different level, Pronger argues that the paradoxical position of gay men makes homoeroticism better than heteroeroticism. This is based first in the not very novel feminist idea that the gender myth subjugates females

for the social and economic benefit of males. This power inequity is then embodied through heterosexual sexual relations. Pronger says that heterosexual erotic desire is despotic because it involves men dominating women. Homoerotic desire is seen as superior, as it rejects gender inequality while subverting masculinity.

This determinist reading of very traditional and repressive heterosexual practices is too glib. It very simplistically formulates all heteroerotic desire as the same and, through comparison, elevates homoeroticism as nonsexist. Straight men do not have a monopoly on misogyny. Heterosexual relations are not analyzed in their diversity or possibility. They are seen as orthodox, a rather crude portrayal of men pinning women for selfish phallic enjoyment. While Pronger's task is not an analysis of heteroeroticism, one could have wished for a better treatment of the topic.

I do agree that many men enjoy the privilege of masculinity, and enjoy it as if it were natural rather than an ongoing set of repressive practices. For either hetero- or homosexual men not to recognize this reality is to abdicate responsibility in the sexist division of power in our society. However, to advocate a sexual determinism actually goes against the very important point that we interpret and select from various cultural alternatives, and we could do so differently. Furthermore, to talk about the deeply submerged, subconsciously repressed homosexual desire in all men is a psychological determinism that is more popular than it is analytic.

Pronger maintains that the legitimacy of homosexuality is not in its equal difference to heterosexuality, but in its subversion of the orthodox gender myth, in its challenge to the power of patriarchy. It is undeniable that the inclusion of women as well as the homophobic denial of homoerotic content in sports is part of the masculine gender myth, but the case is theoretically overstated and perhaps not all that new. The analysis is sex-positive, however, and illuminating of the irony and paradox of which Pronger is so fond.

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