The subculture of bodybuilding is the backdrop of an analysis of some contradictions inherent in American masculinity. One of the most unusual, but telling of these has to do with "hustling": the widespread selling of sexual favors by bodybuilders to gay men. In this, one also finds the incongruent presence of homophobia. Hence, homosexual behavior is juxtaposed by anti-homosexual behavior. This study shows that this irony is necessary if the hustler is to maintain his alleged heterosexual identity. Hypermasculinity and strategies of economic survival in the highly competitive southern California bodybuilding scene are also examined in relation to hustling and more generally to American masculinity. Contradictions in bodybuilding are shown to be more problematic than studies of other street hustlers and prison populations where homosexual behavior is juggled with heterosexual identity.

INTRODUCTION

Some of American society's most exclusively male institutions, such as the military and organized sports, where masculinity is fashioned and most exaggerated have rarely been studied in depth, and seldom critically.¹ The following case study examines the social and psychological dimensions of masculinity within the sport subculture of southern California bodybuilding. There, one can find a variety of behaviors and conventions that exaggerate, yet reflect, the larger society's notions of masculinity. One of the most intriguing complexes of behavior is the condemned but prevalent practice of

¹Exceptions do occur. Rustad's (1982) work on women in the military is an excellent case in point, as are various chapters in Fussell's (1975) work. In sports one can cite a number of critical case studies (e.g., Brower, 1976; Yablonsky and Brower, 1979), though fewer case studies on men in sport (e.g., Messner, 1985).
" hustling." Hustling is the selling of sex to gays, and is the behavioral conflux for a variety of male traits: hypermasculinity, homophobia, and narcissism. I argue that while functioning to hold disparate segments of the bodybuilding community together, hustling (a) is partly a temporary response to an economic crisis in the competitive bodybuilder's pursuit of success, (b) fulfills some bodybuilders' need for admiration, (c) can support the comicbook notion of masculinity that is so prevalent in bodybuilding, and (d) is highly conflicting for those involved as they must maintain a self-perception of heterosexuality while engaging in homosexual practices. Borrowing from Reiss (1971) and Matza (1969), I show how hustling is carried out and how its practitioners juggle self-identity.

Riding on the coattails of the health movement, cultural fears of aging, and an increased cultural receptivity to mass spectacle, bodybuilding has experienced unprecedented growth in the past decade (Klein, n.d.; Lasch, 1979). This popularity is in part due to the societal resurgence of an atavistic notion of masculinity (e.g., films such as Rambo, The Terminator; New Wave fashion and hair styles) that has articulated what bodybuilders have always accepted as a standard for men. Comicbook masculinity depicts men one-dimensionally as stoic, brave to a fault, always in control, aggressive, and competitive. These qualities become synonymous with a well-built man. No form of sport or popular culture seeks to replicate the trappings of this notion of masculinity more than bodybuilding.

The function of sports in establishing male identity as a stereotype has been thoughtfully presented by Sabo and Runfola (1980) and Sabo (1985). This study, however, probes more deeply into a male subculture which simultaneously values the conventions and trappings of macho while enabling its members to engage in seemingly opposing homosexual acts. In particular, for hustling bodybuilders struggling to juggle these opposing notions, the psychological consequences can lead to a serious crisis.

THE SETTING

Field Methods

Based on anthropological fieldwork carried out between 1979 and 1985 at one of southern California's foremost gyms (here given the fictitious name of Olympic Gym), this study and its findings are part of a larger ethnographic work on the subculture of bodybuilding. In six years of intermittent study, 55 formal interviews, and

2 Hypermasculinity and homophobia, traits that are closely associated with rigid and authoritarian personalities (Smith, 1971; Sherril, 1974), are also related to the hustling behavior of men at Olympic Gym. In this article their role in psychological maintenance is somewhat abbreviated.
approximately 120 informal interviews (field interviews) were carried out with men and women from all strata at the gym. Of the core community of 150 (with approximately 90 to 100 men), I was able to secure formal interviews with 6 hustlers and informal (designated as field interviews herein) interviews with another 6. Quotes from hustlers are distinguished from other members of the core community by a capital 'H' after citing the type of interview. During field stays, observations were conducted daily, and some portion of each day was spent in active participation (for one six-month period, the author trained with two others who were preparing for an upcoming Mr. America contest; at another time the author served as a judge of a contest). Observations and interviews were conducted outside of the gym as well as in a wide variety of external contexts.

Some use was made of questionnaires in the early phase of the study, but high turnover of members made it more desirable to use in-depth interviews with long-term committed members. These interviews consisted of both closed and open-ended questions covering a wide range of areas: biographical, training, and interpersonal relationships (both within and outside of the gym). Additionally, open-ended questions were asked on a number of topics that interested the author at the time (e.g., hustling, steroid use, and bodybuilding politics).

The Social Setting of Olympic Gym

A few blocks from Muscle Beach is Olympic Gym, which is located among some of the world's elite gyms and is home to many world-class bodybuilders. The proximity of these facilities to each other, as well as the pull of Hollywood's media industry, exaggerates many of the flamboyant qualities of bodybuilding subculture.

Despite a membership of over 1500, the "real" bodybuilding community at Olympic Gym consists of a core of only about 150 devotees who follow the lifestyle of bodybuilding more or less full-time. This means working out seriously enough to develop a physique of a bodybuilder, and having the gym become the center of one's life. One's social relations, economic opportunities, and psychological balance revolve around the gym, much as the church or street corner functions for the religiously observant (Aschenbrenner, 1975) or urban social group (Kaiser, 1979).

The core community, however, is constantly in flux. Few bodybuilders wind up staying at Olympic Gym longer than five years. The women, not properly part of this study, now comprise about 30% of the population and are substantially different from the men in their social relations, goal orientations, and backgrounds (Klein, 1985a). At Olympic Gym most range in age between 19 and 25. Racial composition is increasingly mixed, and race relations are generally good.

For all the change in Olympic Gym, there is a definite social structure, one that reflects its position in the bodybuilding hierarchy (Klein, 1985b). Six strata can be distinguished and ranked in
terms of status. The respective numbers of each of these groupings increases as one moves down the hierarchy, forming a pyramid. The largest grouping has the least status, the smallest has the most. From top down the groups are (a) owners and managers, (b) professional bodybuilders, (c) amateur bodybuilders, (d) gym rats, (e) members-at-large, and (f) pilgrims and on-lookers (Klein, 1985b).

Southern California bodybuilders have, over decades, evolved a subculture replete with its own shared terminology, behavior, and values. As with all subcultures there is a cultural and social separation necessary to forge a collective identity—separation that often comes from being considered marginal or deviant by the larger society. Southern California bodybuilding has had a difficult relationship with the wider society. These days, however, under the guise of superior fitness and cultural popularity, bodybuilders relate to the outside world through a veneer of arrogance; an outward show of superiority that sprang from deep-seated inferiority. This insecurity is rooted in popular suspicions held about bodybuilders.

BODYBUILDING AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Many men gravitate to bodybuilding because of low self-esteem. The physique, it could be argued, is a mask or wall between low self-esteem and a potentially threatening outside world. If done within the supportive environment of the subculture of bodybuilding, the process of building oneself up can boost self-confidence. This is often projected as arrogance, so characteristic of their comments about outsiders (e.g., referring to them as pencilnecks), or their public posturing.

It is noteworthy that some of the traits that the public most disdains are imperative to the bodybuilder’s self-esteem. Narcissism, for instance, as in the bodybuilder who constantly gapes at himself in the mirror, has ironically been shown to have a positive function: bolstering a flagging self-esteem (Klein, 1987). The hypermasculine behavior of many bodybuilders that works to keep the subculture at arms-length from the mainstream also allows for development of the subculture.

The insecurity regarding traits such as shortness or physical impediments (e.g., hearing impairment) are seen by bodybuilders as "afflictions" which continue to pull people into bodybuilding decades after the first Charles Atlas ads appeared in comicbooks and men's magazines. Hence, unlike most sports that use positive impulses to recruit its devotees, bodybuilding has always recruited on the basis of what sport psychologist Butts (1975:56) termed the "neurotic element." Typical of this were comments as, "I don't know, I guess I wanted some size. I was, you know, real skinny." (Interview 5/12/83). Another bodybuilder said:

Yeah, I guess there's an element of insecurity in me that will always make me unsatisfied with my build. I think it's
true of most of the guys around here. You don't think that he (pointing) walks like that (exaggerating his musculature) because he's secure do you? (Interview, 11/5/79)

Because bodybuilding has the overt function of shoring up cracks in the egos of the people who come to it, the needs of the bodybuilders for acknowledgement and admiration is much greater than for the public-at-large. The subculture of bodybuilding institutionalizes many of the concerns of bodybuilders, objectifying their neuroses so that they may partially overcome them. This is done by promoting a shared world-view in which accruing size is equated with psychological enhancement. Yet for some the need for admiration and/or acknowledgement continues to go unmet.

Hypermasculinity and Bodybuilding Subculture

Feelings of weakness and insecurity are often masked by a veneer of power. The institutions of bodybuilding not only fetishize the look of power but also foster identification with and reliance upon figures of power. The author (1985a, 1987) has pointed this out both at the level of bodybuilding politics as well as within the institutionalized narcissism of bodybuilding. Both hypermasculinity and homophobia are in part reactions against feelings of powerlessness. Psychologist T. Adorno (1950:405, 428), who interpreted the "authoritarian personality," associated it with, among other things, hypermasculinity: an exaggeration of masculine traits such as overly muscled bodies, boastfulness, swaggering independence, and worship of power seen as cloaking feelings of weakness.

The background as well as behavior of many bodybuilders meshes with Adorno's characterization. Pleck (1982:34) goes so far as to claim bodybuilding as, "perhaps the archetypal expression of male identity insecurity." Administering the Cattel 16PF psychological test to a sample of men and women at Olympic Gym in 1982, Sprague (n.d.) too found a high degree of insecurity.

HOMOPHOBIA

One longtime professional at Olympic Gym noted the homophobia present as:

... natural, whenever you have a nicely developed body exposed to the public, you'll have people flocking around to see it. As far as men being attracted to me and that whole notion, I could care less. For so many this (bodybuilding) is a macho trip; and for the traditional male in America there's still a lot of homophobia. I know it abounds at Olympic Gym. (Field interview, 11/24/79)
The fear of homosexuality functions to socialize males. Lehne points out that homophobia curbs the range of responses in men so as to dichotomize between sexes, but he goes on to note athletes as the only male exception to many homophobic prohibitions:

Only athletes and women are allowed to touch and hug each other in our culture. Athletes are only allowed this because presumably their masculinity is beyond doubt. (Lehne, 1976:84)

The athletic exception turns on the same fundamental contradiction between homoeroticism and a rigid heterosexual identity, both of which are informed by misogyny. This is poignantly revealed in the autobiography of Dave Kopay:

David Kopay's story raises the question of not how could he emerge from his super masculine society as a homosexual, but how could any man come through it as purely heterosexual after spending so much time idealizing and worshipping the male body, while denigrating and ridiculing the female. (Kopay and Young, 1977:117)

Kopay, a 10-year veteran of the National Football League emerged from the closet and onto the front pages of many major daily newspapers when he suddenly admitted being gay. His termination from the NFL was as extreme as the excessive and vindictive news coverage. American male anxieties had been hit at the core. Pro-football players especially, it was thought, don't become gay because they are the gatekeepers of masculinity.

Other examples that juxtapose exaggerated masculinity and homoeroticism can be found in the widespread locker-room banter that often centers on homosexuality. Cliches on the subject abound and were common at Olympic Gym as well. However, because some of body-building's practices such as hustling, wearing very brief posing trunks, removal of body hair, unusual posing, etc., generate suspicion, the joking about homosexuality is often tense. Often what begins as a joke evokes very serious and menacing responses. Ironically, then, rather than reducing anxiety, homophobia in a body-building context works to generate anxiety around homosexuality. The practice of hustling is the activity that most brings together these disparate elements into a particularly thorny set of sociological and psychological issues for those who engage in it.

Elliot Gorn's (1986) insightful study of bare knuckle fighting in 19th century America, and the author's work (n.d.) also describe a form of gender narcissism that functions also to foster a disdain for women, or what is perceived of as effeminate. The implications for male socialization are obvious.
HUSTLING AND BODYBUILDING

Definition

The selling of implicit or explicit sex by a bodybuilder to someone gay is called hustling, and it appears to be widespread among southern California's most competitive bodybuilders. Both hustlers and the overwhelming majority of bodybuilders in southern California interviewed do not consider hustlers gay, however. Because they seek to retain heterosexuality as their avowed sexual preference, hustlers must find a way to justify the homosexual practices with heterosexual identities. The few who are gay, are seen as gay rather than as hustlers, even though they all engage in similar exchanges. Hustling is seen as something one does out of economic necessity; it is an economic strategy in a world of few options.

Actually, hustling can cover a range of behaviors from popping out of a cake nude at gay parties, to nude photography or pornography, to explicit sex with another man. "You do what your conscience lets you do" was the way one man put it. All hustling is paid for, however, and all hustling is with gay men. 4

Incidence of Hustling

Hustling is widely condemned yet, judging by interviews and observation, quite common. Estimates from a wide variety of Olympic Gym's core community claim that anywhere from 50% to 80% have or do now hustle:

Respondent: Here [pointing at the gym], there's a lot of hustling going on.
Author: What percentage [of bodybuilders] do you estimate are hustling?
Respondent: I don't know, but I'd say somewhere around half. S. over there still does it. So does M. and K., and A. actually gets off on it. (Field interview, 8/1/84)

Even if we were to half the estimate of the incidence of hustling, it would still be significant enough to be considered widespread. People freely admit it goes on, but almost never the person interviewed. This makes accurate assessment impossible. The stigma attached to hustling is so great that only six hustlers granted me formal interviews on the subject. Six others I knew hustled and admitted it but limited their comments. Still others were observed engaging in transactions (e.g., setting up dates and negotiating with potential clients). Despite the formal disapproval of and

4 Only one case of a man hustling a woman was recorded during my fieldstays, and this was also by a man who hustled other men. Female bodybuilders do not have to hustle because they tend to have higher status jobs and more education. There is also no history of female hustling in the subculture, making it more difficult to start it up.
discomfort associated with hustling, it seems to be increasing, prompting one well-placed member in the core community to comment:

When I first came here I wasn't aware of half of the situation, even though I had a few people hit on me. Before, people had to prove to me that they were gay, now you gotta prove to me that you're straight. Yes, if anything hustling’s increased. (Field interview, 12/13/81)

A set of 12 confirmed hustlers out of more than 90 men is small, but the fact that it took so long to get them to participate in this study underscores the sensitivity of the matter and a reluctance to discuss the subject.5

Hustling as an Economic Strategy

Both the money involved and the extensiveness of the network make hustling the bulwark of bodybuilding's underground economy. As such hustling functions to enable competitors, particularly amateurs, to subsidize their training and lifestyle until such time as they can succeed in turning professional or drop out of competition. In the 12 cases of hustlers for which I was able to document a shift in status from amateur to professional, all but one quit hustling. In short, hustling is an important economic strategy in an environment where access to resources is very limited.

Wore one to work for a living, training would have to fit into the few hours the gym is open before or after work. Given the modest educational background of most men in my sample, finding employment that allows work flexibility and pays enough for training is not likely.6 Certain jobs, however, do run in the gym community and get passed from one to another. Bouncers in bars, bodyguards, and bill collectors, all are jobs that make use of the large size of the bodybuilder, yet allow for his need for flexible hours.

5Ironically, the outbreak of AIDS has made it easier to discuss the subject of hustling with them. On a related note AIDS has curbed hustling somewhat. However, the more enterprising hustler-bodybuilders have begun making videos of themselves posing suggestively either nude or semi-nude. These are sold in place of sex acts by some.

6Male bodybuilders tend to come from blue-collar backgrounds. Their educational levels, relative to that of female bodybuilders is significantly lower. In one sample taken after my first year of fieldwork (1979-80) 16% of the men (n=40) graduated from college, as compared to 40% (n=38) of the women. The sample size is smaller because it was taken early on in the study, but it shows real discrepancies between the sexes regarding education achieved and work history. Work histories consistently showed men in menial jobs, while women had professionally oriented careers.
Compared to hustling, though, these jobs pay little. The market mentality that sees hustling as a means-ends relationship is evident in this hustler's typical comment:

It's not that I'm trying to make it [hustling] okay for me. This is a constant conflict in myself, because I don't have to be one. But I trained for Mr. America for eight hours a day -- eight hours of some sort of training. I couldn't do that working twelve hours a day in some shipyard. I simply couldn't do it. (Field interview, H, 1/30/84)

The economic connection between gays and bodybuilders is clear. Segments of the gay community have been bankrolling aspiring bodybuilders in southern California for decades. Gays can be found on the margins of the subculture, as well as in positions of importance (e.g., entrepreneurs, contest promoters, gym owners, judges, competitors, and gym members).

Hustling as a Psychological Strategy

The need for admiration that many bodybuilders have may be only partially satisfied within the institutional and cultural confines of the subculture. Some crave additional acknowledgement and, for them, a natural bridge exists to segments of the gay community. Whether they exploit it or not is another matter, but this potential source of psychological gratification gains impetus both from personal insecurity and the difficulty of succeeding in the southern California bodybuilding scene. Competition for titles is keen, getting into the magazines is very difficult, and the caliber of bodybuilders is world class. Informants often languished in obscurity in Los Angeles after having been highly successful elsewhere. However, in gay circles one can receive admiration or even become a minor celebrity. The sexual, economic, and psychological bond between gays and hustlers is complex, and at times a non-hustling element can dominate the relationship:

S. and I would see these guys in the gym and we'd say, "Okay, the guy looks down. Let's take him out." We took C. out one day. Took him to Griffith Park. We didn't know it, but it was his birthday and later he told us that it was one of the nicest times of his life. We didn't want a thing to do with him sexually. (Field interview, H, 2/22/86)

Drifting into Hustling

Matza's (1964, 1969) and Davis's (1971) notion of drifting into deviant identity was also evident in some of the people I interviewed. Drifting allows one to account for the time and psychological processes needed to alter thinking and take on a new identity.
The high risk in coming to Los Angeles to compete is coupled with the youthfulness and naiveté of many of the men taking the trek. Their economic vulnerability quickly becomes apparent to any veteran bodybuilder, as well as to the gays on the fringes of the community. Many veterans (gay and straight) offer these new arrivals tips on survival; some offering places to stay and jobs to get started. This is commonly done in the spirit of camaraderie. Some, however, are looking to "hit on" (make sexual advances toward) these youthful questers. They too may appear to be offering something out of friendship. It may be as innocent-appearing as one of the many ads on the bulletin board at the gym: "BODYBUILDER NEEDED FOR PHOTOGRAPHER. GOOD MONEY! CALL ___." Old timers assume these photos will be nude, and probably done by a gay photographer. They may warn the new arrival, but not always. Serious photographers worry that their ads will also be misconstrued and feel compelled to underscore the fact that they are "straight." Other advances may be more informal:

I knew a gay guy back in New York. One gay guy, and I liked him. I respected him. When I came out here I had guys hittin' on me, and I didn't even know it. I had a guy hand me a card that said he was a photographer. He said, "If you wanna make some bucks, give me a call." I said, "Geez thanks. That's great! Here's a guy doin' me a favor, wants to take photos of me." I didn't have any [photos] in my portfolio. That's great. Boy did I learn. It was my ass he wanted. (Field interview, 10/5/81)

The material needs of the young bodybuilder predisposes him to accept casual offers if they are forthcoming from acceptable quarters. When these offers are accepted and they come from men seeking sex, the pressures to reciprocate sexually can exert a powerful influence. Once sexual conventions have been violated by giving in to the pressure to hustle, the young man, much like a female prostitute in a similar situation, slips into the deviant identity (Davis, 1971).

Once involved, hustlers move into a network of gays who seek out bodybuilders. Hustlers begin to place and answer ads (some explicitly for sex, others for "escort service"), in the larger gay newspapers. Most, however, stay within the very personal network of the subculture or the larger network of gays from Palm Springs to San Francisco. Typically this means a "repeat business" of calling to make arrangements or waiting to be called. Some hustlers establish a large clientele that they guard against others, and very well known hustlers can command as much as $500 a visit. On a few occasions hustlers have parlayed hustling into lucrative gay-porno film careers. New arrivals to the scene are lured in more easily when they are informed of these successes. Expecting this kind of success, some novices will prematurely ask for outrageous fees:

A friend of mine who had never "done anything" before got into the idea of it. I told him, "Don't get into that sick shit," but he got some rich guy originally from
Oklahoma City to dig him. He demanded $500 and a plane ticket. Like if you get a lot of cake, it makes it [hustling] alright. Well, there are rates for that sort of thing, and the guy told my buddy to screw off. Within two days he was going for $50. (Field interview, H, 2/25/86)

THE CRISIS OF HUSTLING IN BODYBUILDING

For bodybuilders who hustle, their greatest contradiction lies in juxtaposing hustling and heterosexual identity. Reiss's (1971) study of street delinquents as hustlers and the norms they generate to separate themselves from homosexuals is particularly applicable here. Compared to the delinquents, the norms bodybuilders use to separate themselves do not work as well.

It is ironic that so many strands of the American male psyche are brought together in hustling: wanting to be seen as virile and sexually desirable; male bonding; homophobic currents; competition, and aggression. One hustler stated it this way:

It's kinda sad. We put ourselves in a bad social position. I know people who hire us for posing, but there's more expected than that. It puts bodybuilding in a shitty position—to be laughed at. Who's gonna help bodybuilders? A bunch of homosexuals, that's who. We're everything the U.S. is supposed to stand for—strength, determination, everything to be admired. But it's not the girls that like us, it's the fags! (Field interview, H, 10/4/81)

The awareness of this situation by hustlers themselves must be weighed against the needs that are met by hustling. The ease with which money is made is one compelling factor; but there is, as I will show, also a compelling psychological reward fostered by the hustler's personal needs. There is a great deal of anxiety around hustling. The difficulty of juggling one's self concept and rationalizing how others feel about you makes it difficult to handle. Many deny doing it. One top professional claimed it is just this avoidance behavior that makes hustlers so easy to spot. He noted that hustlers often won't look him in the eye as a result of a public stand he took on hustling. Sometimes, he pointed out, the hustler is so troubled that he develops nervous twitches.

In some instances, the anxiety of being a hustler who is acting straight reaches crisis proportions. During my stay at Olympic Gym, there were three reported suicide attempts as well as a greater number of bodybuilders who, in response to their conflicts, repudiated the subculture altogether. These men and women would often very suddenly become Born Again Christians. Finding God, however, is not the final solution. So long as one remains a competitive bodybuilder in southern California there is a strong pull exerted to re-engage in the repudiated behavior.
Understandably, promoters, organizers, and owners of publishing houses for bodybuilding products seek to conceal or downplay the institution of hustling. They see it as a threat to their vested interests. These people often cut a bodybuilder off from exposure in magazines and, thereby, wipe out the mail order businesses so vital to the up and coming bodybuilder. At Olympic Gym, hustling is officially repudiated, though there is a tacit understanding that it is imperative for survival.

Psychological Coping and Hustling

Creating a psychological framework that permits hustling while rejecting the possibility that they are gay, bodybuilders make primary use of compartmentalization as a defense. Other mechanisms, discussed below, are seen as derivative. Hustlers compartmentalize by separating their hustling from their straight life, prompting one young hustler to claim, "Hey, it's tougher for gay guys to hustle cuz they gotta be into it. But me, I can get it on with anybody. It's like I'm two different people." (Field interview, H, 11/30/80) Since the gym is an intimate universe, however, the separation so important to identity management is always in jeopardy, waiting only for the first angry outburst by another bodybuilder.

Competitive bodybuilders who hustle have difficulty handling both heterosexual and hustling relations. The time and emotional commitment hustling demands would create a host of problems for a serious heterosexual relationship. From the perspective of the women involved, simultaneous hetero-and-hustling relations of their partners might prove problematic since the women not only have to accept infidelity from their partners but also the homosexual nature of it. From the men's perspective, mixing the two kinds of relations can prove too complicated and, as this hustler phrased it, too morally problematic as well.

On any given time I can go out with a woman. But it's not very satisfying, like a regular kind of relationship. Women demand time, and I'm too involved with bodybuilding ... I miss her [pointing to pictures of an ex-mate that are all around his apartment]. I lived with that girl for a year and a half. But it's not that good. Several [women] know what I'm doing. Some can handle it, but some can't and that's another reason. I couldn't lie, that's why I'm not living with anybody. (Field interview, H, 3/19/82)

One novice hustler confessed to the woman he had been involved with about his "California" activities. After apologizing, he got her to come to Los Angeles from the Midwest. She seemed to understand, yet whenever they argued she would seize on his hustling past. Driving past his apartment, she would scream, "Charlie! You're a goddamn faggot!" Other hustlers make the transition back to their heterosexual relations more easily.
Sexual activity among competitive bodybuilders is an area of life that must be carefully parcelled out. The rigors of dieting, training, and more importantly, of excessive steroid use severely curb the capacity and will for sex. Trying to juggle homosexual and heterosexual contacts exacerbates this situation. One hustler (who was also gay) who was close to two other hustlers and their female mates pointed out some previously unknown wrinkles in this problem:

I used to hear these guys going on about their girls. The girls did this and that, and how great they were sexually. But I knew their girls real well, and they'd talk about how these guys would only go down on them in order to get them off [performing oral sex], ya know? But they, the guys, couldn't get it up. They couldn't get hard-ons no matter what. The girls were always goin' on about being horny. (Field interview, H, 2/22/86)

Compartmentalizing makes use of the ideology of heterosexuality. In this way the hustler may cling to his self-description of being heterosexual in the absence of any heterosexuality. It was not uncommon for men who hadn't had a heterosexual relationship for two or three years to continue to refer to themselves as straight, by invoking their past relations (pointing to pictures of ex-mates, or excessive reference to them as if they were momentarily coming back).

The need to distance oneself from loved ones and/or family may make use of psychological and/or social distance. As Reiss (1971) pointed out, the need for the hustler to deny the possibility of being emotionally dependent or involved in any way is critical. Kirkham's (1971) study of homosexuality in prisons also shows that for most inmates who maintained their heterosexual identity despite homosexual activity, two conditions must be met. First, they must be clear that they engage in the act only because they lack the opportunity for heterosexual contact. Second, they must be emotionally distant from the act. To make sure of this they often punctuate their acts with violence or macho toughness.

Social distance can be generated through the creation of intricate rules of behavior. Other gay-hustler studies point to a perception among hustlers that, despite engaging in homosexual behavior, they are not gay (Humphreys, 1970; Reiss, 1971). To promote this perception, intricate rules must be followed by both parties. As with Reiss's "peer-queer" relations, hustlers at the gym restrict their practices to oral sex, with the hustlers being fellated. However, there are more accounts in the gym of hustlers resorting to a wider series of behaviors than reported in Reiss's work. Some nude dancing at parties, as well as sex acts beyond the norm worked out between hustlers and homosexuals, are reported. Generally, it is the hustler who lays down the rules, but if the gay male is particularly assertive or very powerful in bodybuilding circles, this may be altered. The result is a good deal of jockeying for control in the relationship.
The Nexus of the Hustler-Gay Relationship

The nature of this relationship, despite its symbiotic qualities, is negative. This is sufficient to create a distance, which in this context is adaptive. Among their own, each side denigrates the other. Hustlers prefer to see themselves as exploiting gays for quick money, hence they seek to get as much as possible while giving little. For gays it is a sense of being able to buy these men, and so control them, that lets gays feel superior. Each side also feels stigmatized by the relationship. For gay men the stigma comes from having to buy sex when they ought to be desirable enough to have it offered to them. They, in turn, project their self-loathing onto bodybuilders whom they see as brutish and vulgar. Because it is the bodybuilder who often tries to establish the ground rules, there is a tendency for gays to see them as overly aggressive; while bodybuilders, having to deal with their homophobia, view gays as the source of their corruption. This of course exacerbates bodybuilders' homophobia.

As viewed by two gay bodybuilders, who are intimate with the scene in southern California, the predatory characterization of gays is erroneous, and is sometimes the fabrication of the hustler who needs to protect himself from doubts about his sexual preference or activities. Here, the hustler may mistakenly impute thoughts and behavior to gays:

Truth is that there are a lot of gays around bodybuilding who are kind, giving people. We didn't want a thing to do with most of the young hustlers. But they'd hang around us. It got so bad that we'd hear them coming up the stairs and go, "Oh no, don't answer the door." They'd even paw us, literally, and try to do other things that they thought we'd like, you know, just to get our attention. (Field interview, H, 2/22/86)

Homophobic relations are sometimes violent (Dundas, 1985:354). At Olympic Gym homophobia also, at times, spills over into abuse.

I remember Stan G. He'd grab gays who came into the gym to watch bodybuilders. He'd grab them and say, "Okay, fag. I want you out." Well, I saw him in the Village in New York, and he said he didn't really feel that way, but he felt like he was expected to do it. (Field interview, H, 3/25/83)

Don S. was this Marine who's now a cop. He would ask me why he never saw me at the bars. I'd tell him that I wasn't into that anymore. He'd encourage me to come in. But at other times he'd go around beating the shit out of gays and calling them "queers" and all. (Field interview, H, 2/22/86)

Hustling and homophobia become an instrumental complex. Engaging in homosexual behavior works to perpetuate homophobia, and homophobia as an escape valve thrives on this form of homosexual prostitution.
I'll tell you, being involved in it [hustling] reaffirmed my whole thing with straightness. I remember in San Francisco, I was involved in all this, and you start seeing these people as leeches and vicious. That's okay for some people, but that's not the way I wanna go. (Field interview, H, 12/29/81)

In this revealing statement we see that hustling can enhance heterosexual identification by amplifying and giving immediate, concrete focus to homophobia. As long as the hustler remains emotionally removed from the homosexual relationship by keeping it at the level of exchange, he distinguishes himself from the gay male who would do it for lust or love. He dislikes the men who have seduced him into homosexual acts, and this resentment convinces him, despite all evidence to the contrary, that he is not like them (i.e., straight). In addition, the needs he has for esteem, and for being physically appreciated—a need met primarily through men—can be realized as he affirms his heterosexuality. Hustling, then, is in the novel position of both resolving and creating crises in self-esteem and self-definition. Small wonder that despite condemnation from every side, hustling proves so tenacious. Said one man, "You don't think about it while you're doin' it [hustling]. It's after you stop that it gets really heavy. You don't know how hard it is to stop hustling." (Field interview, 5/2/82)

CONCLUSION

Bodybuilding is central to certain male anxieties which are accentuated by our society's restrictive notions about masculinity. While fostering behavior and values that underscore virility and macho posturing, the bodybuilding subculture simultaneously creates new problems stemming from some of those same sources. This examination of hustling was shown to be a conflux for contradictory characteristics, in part an outgrowth of juggling disparate roles. But the study of bodybuilding subculture can also inform the larger society's handling of masculinity. One important result, though it is beyond the strict scope of this study, is the restricted capacity of men to live a more meaningful and complete emotional life caused, in part, by this restrictive mindset. Since male traits like homophobia, hypermasculinity, and gender narcissism all exist in a dialectical relationship with female traits, what we see in our examination of men is an underevaluation of women, a disdain for the effeminate, and a loss of all that women stand to offer by not being men.

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