AGAINST SEXISM: TOWARDS ANDROGYNY

by

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Senior Honors Thesis
Completed Under the Supervision of
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May 22, 1976
I wish to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to Dr. Silvano Miracchi, my thesis advisor, for the time and energy that he devoted in helping me compose this paper. I am grateful for the numerous suggestions made by Dr. Miracchi concerning additional resource materials and structural and stylistic changes within the thesis. I also appreciate very much the encouragement that Dr. Miracchi offered me in regard to the progress of my paper.
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Sexism occurs when one's sex, sex orientation or subscription to certain sexual norms gives that person the right to certain powers, roles and privileges thus denying other groups of their rights. Sexism is the basis of many forms of oppression. For example, men and women both have enculturated to assume certain roles which limit each person's individual growth. Furthermore, as a result of sexism, we are not free to explore all of the alternate sexual behaviors that we could otherwise involve ourselves in. In this paper, I will argue that the persons that possess these rights, powers, and privileges as a result of sexism are not innately superior; rather, sexism is a cultural phenomenon. In Part I, I deal with the three major ways that sexism is allegedly justified: by history, biology and human nature. In Part II, I advocate restructuring our society in a fashion that would eliminate sexism.

To begin with, I examine the sexist* argument which provides an historical justification for sexism. I refute the argument by relating the historical succession of events which gave rise to sexism. Then I show that since the reasons behind the development of sexism no longer exist, we need to alter our society in order to compensate for the social change which has taken place.

*I want to make clear that throughout this paper, I am not using the term "sexist" in a derogatory fashion. Rather, I am using the term merely to provide description.
Nea, I look at the sexist argument which is used to justify sexism on the basis of biology.* I refute this by providing empirical evidence which shows that in some significant ways, females are biologically superior to males. I then attack the argument by saying that even if men were biologically superior, this would not morally justify better treatment for men.

I then present the sexist argument which is used to support sexism on the basis of human nature. I discredit this view by offering anthropological evidence which demonstrates the diversity of attitudes that exists among various cultures. This shows that to be natural really means to obey your society. Thus, there are alternate social arrangements that are as valid as those that presently exist in our cultural environment from the standpoint of being natural.

Since I believe discrimination against homosexuals to be the most extreme case of sexism, I further support each of my theories by furnishing reasons as to why homosexuality is as valid a sexual preference as heterosexuality.

I approach Part II of my paper from an ethical standpoint showing the necessity of eliminating sexism by illustrating how sexism psychologically and legally limits and damages men and women. I then discuss the damaging effects of sexism to our society in terms of sexism limiting a person's social usefulness thus effectively slowing down the progress of an hindering cultural achievements of our

*One of the premises of this argument is that males possess a superior physical body and superior mental capacity.
society that could otherwise take place without the existence of sexism. Next, I relate the detrimental effects of sexism on our society regarding politics. I then talk about homosexual oppression to further illustrate the limiting and damaging effects of sexism, again treating homosexuality as the most extreme form of sexism.

I end the paper by outlining actions that must be taken personally and politically as a result of the conclusions that are drawn from my study.
I. Against Sexism

A. The Historical Justification

A major justification of sexism comes from history. According to this view, some of our most central divisions of labor, rewards, etc. on the basis of sex are as they should be because they have stood the test of time since the days when primitive human society was nomadic or agricultural. The present cultural differences between men and women are, therefore, not merely accidental but reflect a process of cultural selection and evolution in which only the best of human institutions have survived and been refined. This puts the burden of proof on those who would challenge the authority of the past; only with the most overwhelming considerations would they make a plausible case for interfering with this natural historical process. I will now develop this argument and then proceed to show that it does not succeed, and further that the evidence relevant to it provides support for just the opposite conclusion.

The sexist argument goes like this: Historically, man's role has been that of provider whereas woman's role has been that of child raiser. This division of roles has fostered the traditional personality characteristics assigned to men and women. Earlier societies found this sex role differentiation to be valuable. The work required to provide the family with those items necessary for its subsistence involved a great deal of muscular strength.
Since the male generally possessed the muscular strength whereas the female didn't, the male was physically more capable than the female of fulfilling the role of provider. Someone had to perform the duties of child raising and housekeeping. Because of the female's weaker muscular composition and her reproductive function along with the fact that the male's time was occupied with hunting, farming, defense and those sorts of activities, it was necessary for the female to assume these responsibilities. These sex role differentiations have merely become part of the socio-cultural inheritance of our species and are justified.

According to this argument the economic circumstances of early society provided a need for division of labor along sexual lines and also those economic circumstances are still prevalent today. This is why the original justification for sexism is alleged to still stand as far as our present culture is concerned. After describing the kinds of circumstances that might be relevant to the argument for sexism, I will show that they are no longer operative for us. Not only have the circumstances changed enormously, they have changed in such a way that they provide evidence against sexism and for replacing it by an androgynous system which treats men and women simply as persons.

There are several kinds of factors in a primitive society that arise in making sexism reasonable. Although some of them are religious or social, I will concentrate on the economic factors -- understood in a broad sense.
Woman's reproductive function which includes lactation played a huge part in determining the roles. The role division was also influenced by the male's resources of greater physical size and strength. The hunting of large animals provide the members of this society with their major form of subsistence: not only food, but also materials for tools, clothing, shelter, etc. Defending members of the society from huge animals and other human beings also contributed to the preservation of the lives of the members of the society. This hunting and defense was most effectively carried out by a person possessing the greater amount of strength which was usually the male. In the nomadic societies, the hunting involved extensive travel. Since the women were generally rendered immobile because of their reproductive role, they remained at home to produce and raise children while tending to the tasks necessary to maintain the home. In the more recent pre-technological, agricultural societies, women still generally lacked the strength to perform these functions. In addition, it was necessary for women to produce many children in order to add to the family resources. This was especially important because of higher infant mortality rates. In both of these primitive societies, the nomadic as well as the agricultural, women assumed a position inferior to the men as a result of the male's superior ability to contribute to the basic economic needs.

But the very circumstances on which this account is based have changed since the industrial revolution. Technology has developed to the point that it is capable of
freeing women from the tyranny of their sexual-reproductive roles and of their smaller strength and size. Because of the mechanization of heavy labor, physical size is no longer relevant in determining who will perform various kinds of economic activities. This has allowed economic opportunities for women to increase substantially, so that women no longer need to depend on men for their support. In addition, those jobs which still require considerable physical effort, such as jobs in extractive and manufacturing industries like farming, fishing, lumbering, mining and factory jobs have declined in number relative to distributing, selling, technical and professional jobs as the society has developed technologically.¹ With the improved quality of life that the Industrial Revolution has brought about, the value of woman's role as bearing and raising children has also decreased. Large families are no longer economically necessary or desirable. Advances in medicine have lowered the rate of infant mortality. Since the average life span of humans has increased, women also have more time to themselves after the children are raised. In addition, effective methods of birth control have been introduced. All these factors have made the role of childbearer and child-raiser less important so that women no longer need accept their traditional roles.

Women's new freedom in defining themselves also extends to the choices of roles available to men. Men can play a more active part in childrearing and housekeeping. This will become especially desirable because the present structure of the family no longer includes grandmothers, sisters, and aunts who might help with these tasks.

These changes in technology, population size, family structure, and values require accompanying social changes to take place. The roles that have been assigned to men and women in the past are no longer appropriate to the changed material conditions in our society. The rigid cultural traditions that define males and females no longer serve any useful purpose. Moreover, as I will later demonstrate, they are the cause of much damage and oppression to all members of our society.

The historical justification of sexism becomes especially clear in the case of our attitudes toward homosexuality. I will show that the criticisms that I have made about the historical justification for the sex role differentiation apply in the case of homosexuality in an even stronger, simpler way.

The taboo against homosexuality in Western society is sometimes justified on a historical basis. For example, someone might say "that this is the way it has been in the past, so that is the way that it should be". One argument against that is that our social conditions have changed, so our social attitudes should change also in order to be consistent with the new situation.
The taboo against homosexuality in the Western world has its origin in the Judeo-Christian tradition as is the case with the majority of the West's sexual taboos. During the time that the Jews were searching for their promised land, they were struggling to survive as a culture. Consequently, the society placed taboos upon sexual acts which served no procreative function. In turn, we inherited this attitude. Obviously, there is no reason for this taboo to endure any longer. The population of our planet is dangerously large, so it would be foolish for us to approve of only those sexual acts which lend themselves to reproduction.

I must also say that although I believe that this was the Jew's justification for their sexual taboos, I feel that the same end could have been achieved not by placing limits on homosexuality, but rather by encouraging simultaneous heterosexuality for reproduction.

Since there is no current justification for the taboo against homosexuality as the historical reason for the taboo no longer exists, we should modify our attitudes such that our society recognizes homosexuality as being as valid a sexual preference as is heterosexuality. Androgyny is not only desirable, but it is also partly accepted. The fact is that our society already accepts some sexual acts which do not serve a procreative function (as when a married heterosexual couple employs some form of birth control while having intercourse).
There are two other general objections to a historical justification of sexism: the principle that "since this is how it was, this is how it should be". First, if this principle were accepted, it would defeat all proposals for social change whether in government, education, religion, etc. Second, the principle lacks moral force. Just because things were a certain way in the past does not show that it was morally right or desirable for them to be that way. Even if the majority of the population regularly committed robbery, for example, this would not make robbery morally acceptable by either our own standards or the standards of the society in question.
B. The Biological Justification

Another justification of sexism with regard to sex roles is on the basis of biology. The differences between males and females allegedly stems from corresponding biological differences. I will delineate this sexist argument and show why it does not work.

The argument begins by pointing out that the male possesses a superior physical body as well as superior mental capacities. The higher positions in our society should be filled by those with superior mental and physical capabilities. Thus, males should control governmental affairs and have economic advantages. Women should be left to the roles of child bearing and housekeeping. The attendant subjection of women then manifests itself in women becoming and being expected to become inactive, unambitious, uncreative, and helpless. In general, women are downgraded while men appear more knowledgable and capable of greater achievements.

In replying to this argument, I will first draw on empirical evidence which shows that in some important ways, females are biologically superior to males. Then, relying on a study of the California Gender Identity Center, I will show that while biology does determine the childbearing role, all other roles allegedly based on sex stem from culture rather than biology. Finally, I will attack the sexist argument from a different point of view: even if men were biologically superior, this would not morally justify preferential treatment for men.
Are women biologically inferior to men? Of course women are different from men. From this it appears that defenders of sexism have concluded that women are inferior to men. It is true that women are smaller and weaker than men to some extent. But there are other biological differences that are more basic; differences at the level of anatomical structure, hormonal secretions, and chromosomes. And as I shall presently show, when examined these more basic biological differences do not support the claim of male superiority. Instead, they go a long way toward establishing the superiority of women.

The anatomical differences between men and women begin with the difference in their respective reproductive organs. And it continues with the secondary sexual characteristics; for example, men have more body hair and women have larger breasts. At the hormonal level there are differences which distinguish men and women in their metabolism and growth rates, and which give them different primary and secondary sexual characteristics. The primary sexual characteristics emerge under the controlled action of hormones. In the male, with the onset of puberty the sex hormones trigger the enlargement of the penis and the scrotum and the development of the capacity for ejaculation. In the female, they bring the onset of menstruation and the development of the clitoris and the labia majora. As far as the secondary sexual characteristics are concerned, hormones control the enlargement of the breasts and pelvis in women, and the skeletal changes, the voice change, and the appearance of facial hair in males. The chromosomal structure of the
sexes are the last biological difference that I will discuss. Chromosomes are the small cellular bodies that carry the hereditary particles, or genes, which so substantially influence one's development and fate as an organism. Of the twenty-three chromosomes in the sex cells, only one is a sex chromosome and it can belong either to the kind called X, or to that called Y. Half the sperm cell carry X and half carry Y chromosomes. All the female ova in the female ovaries contain only X chromosomes. When an X-bearing sperm fertilizes an ovum, the resulting offspring is always female, XX. When a Y-bearing chromosome fertilizes an ovum, the offspring is always male, XY. This chromosomal difference is what distinguishes the sexes in a constitutionally decisive manner. The sex chromosomes are not responsible for the development of all the differences in sex characteristics. But they are decisive in determining whether an organism shall develop as a male or female.  

With these basic biological differences between men and women in mind, I will attempt to show that females are biologically superior. This calls for definition. I propose to measure superiority in any trait, whether biological or social, by the extent to which that trait confers survival benefits upon a person and/or social group. If a person functions in such a way as to live longer, be more 

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resistant to disease and have more progeny than others, that person is superior to the others. Before I proceed to establish the biological superiority of women, however, I want to stress I am not advocating a form of reverse sexism. I do not believe that females should assume a superior role to the males in our society. Rather, my view is that the evidence from biology supports an androgynous position.

Men have been considered superior to women on the basis of greater muscular power. To a large extent, the greater muscular power of the male has been an economically valuable trait, especially during the long period of human history when so much of the labor expended in human societies was in the form of muscle power. Today, as a result of advancements in technology which I previously discussed, machines do more than 90 percent of the work formerly done by muscle. This deprives muscular strength of its importance in evaluating biological superiority.

The significance of the male's greater muscular strength is rather negative. The male pays heavily for his larger body build and muscular power. Because his expenditure of energy is greater than that of the female, he burns himself out more rapidly and hence dies at an earlier age. The metabolic rate of the male is approximately 6 to 7 percent higher than that of the female. Whatever benefits men may

\[ \text{3Ibid, p. 32.} \]
have derived from larger size and muscular power in the
past are in the past. Today the advantages are mostly
with the smaller bodied, less muscular female.

The female sex survives the rigors of life better
than the male sex. Women endure all sorts of devitalizing
conditions better than men such as starvation, exposure,
fatigue, shock and illness. Traditionally, the female is
supposed to be the weaker sex. This has generally meant
that the female is more fragile and in general less strong
than the male. But the fact is that the female is con­
stitutionally stronger than the male and only muscually
less powerful; she has greater stamina and lives longer.

A different approach to the question of biological
superiority has been along the lines of brain size. It
has been argued that the inferiority of the female lies in
the lesser absolute size and weight of the female brain.
The male brain weighs on the average of three pounds and
the female brain, on the average, about 4 ounces less.
The argument is based on the assumption that more gray
matter results in greater intelligence for the male. But
this assumption is false. Scientific investigations on the
relation between brain size and intelligence have been
fairly numerous, and the general conclusion drawn from them
is that there is no relation whatever between brain size
and intelligence. The biggest human brain on record was
that of an idiot; one of the smallest was that of the gifted
French writer Anatole France. The idiot's brain weighed
over 2,850 grams; the brain of Anatole France weighed only 1,100 grams. Within the limits of the normal range of variation of human brain weight, human beings with big brains are not characterized by greater intelligence than those with small brains. 4

Consider now biological superiority from a chromosomal standpoint. The Y-chromosome appears only in males. So far at least four disease conditions have been traced to genes which occur only in the Y-chromosomes and so can be inherited only by males. They are barklike skin, dense hairy growth on the ears, nonpainful hard lesions of the hands and feet, and a form of webbing of the toes in which there is fusion of the skin between the second and third toes. Hemophilia is another predominantly male disease linked to the Y-chromosome. In addition, about 4 percent of American men are completely red-green color blind, while another 4 percent are color blind in varying degrees to red-green or other colors, whereas only half of a percent of American women are so affected. There are more than thirty serious disorders occurring in the male that are known to be a consequence of the possession of the Y-chromosome; they are conditions that can occur in a woman only if her father was affected and her mother carried the gene. 5

5 Ibid, p. 82.
These considerations show that males are not biologically superior. Instead, the evidence indicates that women are biologically better off than men. The female organism is biologically superior in the sense that its biological traits confer on it a higher survival value than the male. This neutralizes the biological reasons that would justify a dominant role for males and a subservient role for females.

But even if females were biologically inferior to the male as the sexist claims, it would be a mistake to argue as he or she does from the way things are (certain facts about biology) to the way things should be (preferential treatment for males). If males were biologically superior, it would not be reasonable for them to receive better treatment; for it would be just as reasonable if not more for the females to receive better treatment in compensation for their handicaps.

Besides biology there is another even more important factor in role differentiation by sex: social conditioning. According to the evidence I shall presently consider, people are sexually undifferentiated at birth regardless of the anatomy and physiology of the external genitalia. What makes a person adopt gender roles is society. In other words, the major factor in making a person into a man or a woman is not nature but culture. The California Gender Identity Center has studied persons who were victims of genital malformation and who were consequently assigned the wrong gender at birth. What was then discovered is
that it is easier to change the sex of an adolescent male, whose biological identity turns out to be contrary to his gender assignment and conditioning, through surgery, than through reconditioning. The reconditioning would have to undo the educational consequences of years, which have already succeeded in making the subject temperamentally feminine in gesture, sense of self, personality, and interests. Robert Stoller, who was involved in the studies done in California, concluded that:

"Gender is a term that has psychological or cultural rather than biological connotations. Indeed, so arbitrary is gender, that it may even be contrary to physiology."^6

This reduced importance of biology in determining gender differentiation is significant to the issue of sexism vs. androgyny in this way. Since gender differentiation is due to cultural conditioning, insofar as such conditioning is subject to our control, so is the overall character that is typically exemplified by each sex. Not only does the way things are not determine how they should be, it now turns out that places fewer limitations than was supposed on the way in which things should be.

These results apply even more clearly in the case of homosexuality. To show that heterosexuals are superior to homosexuals, sexists have used a biological argument similar to that for male supremacy: Homosexuals are biologically different from heterosexuals. Because of this they are

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biologically inferior. Therefore, homosexuals should be considered socially inferior and be accorded the status of social deviants. It is clear that this argument is a logical disaster area since both steps in it are invalid. But in addition, it fails because it is not sound as I will now show that the first premise is false; there are no biological differences between those who have a homosexual orientation and those that have a heterosexual orientation.

One of the biological differences sexists claim to find in homosexuals is at the level of chromosomes. But this claim is unfounded. By taking samples of bone marrow, blood, or skin tissue (all of which can be processed for a chromosomal count), no chromosomal difference was found between individuals who are predominantly homosexually oriented and individuals who have a predominant heterosexual orientation. A comparison of body builds in homosexually oriented and heterosexually oriented individuals produced the same result: no differences were discovered. Another difference sexists claim to find in homosexuals is that homosexuality is a genetically transmitted disease. But, this is obviously something that also can be claimed of heterosexuals; if homosexuality is inherited, so is heterosexuality, and if the one can be called a disease, so can the other. Moreover, if homosexuality were carried by a recessive gene, it would have disappeared long ago since homosexuals reproduce much less than heterosexuals.

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Another theory which is supposed to show a biological difference between heterosexuals and homosexuals is that the homosexuality is the result of an hormonal imbalance. But, it has been established that hormones influence the individual's sex "drive" but not the direction of his sexual behavior. When homosexual males are injected with the male sexual hormone (androgen), they do not become sexually aroused by members of the opposite sex as a consequence; rather, they become more aroused by other men.\(^8\)

The evidence which I have provided clearly shows that there is no biological difference between homosexuals and heterosexuals. Consequently, I have shown that the sexist argument which claims that heterosexuals are superior to homosexuals is unsound since I have shown that the major premise upon which their argument is based is false. Thus, there biology cannot be used to justify the existence of sexism in regard to homosexuality.

\(^8\)Ibid.
C. The "Human Nature" Justification

Appeals to "human Nature" are often made, sometimes in favor of sexism, and sometimes against change. I am going to show that human nature does not justify the existence of sexism. Moreover, I will show that change away from sexism is desirable.

The sexist argues as follows. The dominance of the male over the female as well as the roles assumed by the male and female, are a widespread social arrangement. Since so many people willfully participate in this social arrangement, it is a reflection of human nature. Therefore, trying to change or eliminate this system is futile.

The sexist has confused certain limited cultural beliefs and practices with the "human nature"; he has defined human nature as being whatever happens in Western culture. Thus, the sexist would explain away cultural differences by saying that the other cultures are perverse and so not really cultures in the true sense. But, this is absurd because each society could maintain this position concerning the rest. The error of the sexist is in not being willing or able to see possibilities beyond his or her own culture; in this, he is culturally myopic. In order to show that there are vast differences in the roles of males and females among the various cultures, I am going to draw upon studies done by Margaret Mead. Then, I will go on to show that the lack of sexism is desirable by discussing the lifestyle of the Mbuti tribe which is an egalitarian society.
Margaret Mead is the first modern anthropologist to be interested in the possible variation between cultures in masculine and feminine roles. In her book *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, she writes about three New Guinea tribes: the Arapesh, the Mundugumor, and the Tchambuli. She does in fact find variations among the concepts of masculine and feminine among the cultures and concludes that since there are other societies that define sex characteristics in a way that is different from that in which we define them in our society, then people are taught to behave in ways that are socially defined as masculine and feminine. So, masculinity and femininity are not due to human nature. Let us now take a brief look at the differences in cultures that Mead discovered.

Among the Arapesh, both male and female tend to have the sort of personality that would be described in Western society as 'feminine'. Male and female are passive and gentle, emphasizing the duties and joys of 'growing' children and looking after them. The main 'work' of both sexes is having and bringing up children. It is not 'unmasculine' for a man to feed and clean a baby, nor is aggression a feature of the masculine role. Aggression is disliked and discouraged by both sexes.

The Arapesh emphasis on 'femininity' and parenthood is reversed among the Mundugumor, where both sexes are 'masculine' in temperament and role. The women are as assertive and as vigorous as the men and dislike child-
bearing. Independence and considerable hostility characterize both adult males and adult females. Among the children personality differences between the sexes are virtually absent.

In the third tribe, the Tchambuli, Margaret Mead finds a complete reversal of the Western cultural pattern. The males are 'feminine' -- introspective, passive, domestic, and artistic. The females, on the other hand, are 'masculine' -- self-assertive, practical, and very much in control of the men. Mead concludes that "since those temperamental attitudes which have traditionally been regarded as feminine -- such as passivity, responsiveness, and a willingness to cherish children -- can so easily be set up as the masculine pattern in one tribe, and, in another, be outlawed for the majority of women as for the majority of men, we no longer have any basis for regarding aspects of such behavior as sex linked."\(^9\)

I agree with Mead: there is more than one way to divide up the roles between the sexes. The current sexual scene in the United States represents only one of many approaches to the creation of gender identity and roles. I am now going to show that it is an approach that can be improved by a move toward androgyny. For there are important considerations to show that the best gender differentiation is that which differentiates least. This can be seen by

looking at a society in which the sexes are considered equal: the Mbuti tribe.

"In Mbuti society the subsistence base is hunting and gathering wild vegetable food in the Congo rain forest. Food is plentiful and with the economic organization they have, not much time is required to get it. Leisure is a major occupation. Each band of about thirty families has its own territory which is 'owned' by the band as a whole. No one has monopoly or ownership of any part of it. The means of production--nets, spears, digging sticks--can be made by anyone. The division of labor is by age and sex, with age being more important. The old people and some older children watch the young children, while the adult men and women (and infants) go out for the hunt. Men's and women's subsistence contributions, though different, depend on each other and are done collectively. The men set up a large semicircle of nets and kill game driven into the nets; women act as beaters, and gather wild plants as well. By informal sharing, the catch is distributed fairly equally. Two things are important: 1) subsistence is a collective venture, no single married couple can make it on its own; 2) both men and women's contributions must be made together.

There are other 'egalitarian' societies where men are dominant over women. But Mbuti society differs from these in several ways. 1) It is a society of abundance; 2) men and women are equal producers of subsistence and their work is coordinated; 3) subsistence is a collective venture. Given the necessary job of any society to keep its members alive, the crucial decisions of social life come down ultimately to economic decisions. Where all men and women are equal and interdependent in terms of subsistence production, this equality between sexes extends to other aspects of social life: sex, marriage, consumption.10

The anthropological evidence does not support sexism. Moreover, there is evidence for the opposite conclusion:

the lack of sexism is desirable. Since there is no basis in nature for sex-role division and since there is anthropological proof that a society that regards the sexes as being equal is a better alternative, it is unreasonable to restrict ourselves to the role patterns that are prevalent in our society.

The concept that all homosexual acts are unnatural is a part of the ideology of our society. By unnatural, I mean statistically infrequent. Yet, within the perspective of greater human society, the belief that homosexual acts are unnatural has no validity. On the contrary, the findings of all relevant and intellectually respectable social research support the conclusion that homosexual acts represent natural forms of behavior. There is no sexual object choices or sexual behavior that is universally prohibited. There is no unbending set of norms that governs all sexual makeup or activity. I will now refer to anthropological studies to confirm these statements.

Ford and Beach published studies regarding sexual activity in different cultures in Patterns of Sexual Behavior. They found out of 76 societies, homosexuality was approved in 49 of these societies. Since we are generally exposed to only the behavior present in our society, we may find such a statistic to be amazing. But it can be rendered plausible by some examples of societies that condone homosexual behavior. In Northern Sumatra, the adolescents move to a hut of 6-15 persons of the same sex when they reach a certain age. While residing in these
huts, they participate in homosexual behavior. Then, the pattern is to involve themselves in heterosexual relationships when they reach a later age. The male members of all ages of both the Siwar tribe of Africa and the Keraki tribe of New Guinea are considered quite odd if they do not participate in anal intercourse with other males. The Australian Arandas condone lesbianism: women publicly stimulate the clitoris of other women without causing any sort of public disdain.

Homosexuality is not statistically infrequent among other societies. It is also true that it is also not statistically infrequent in our society. This is contrary to what the sexists would maintain. They hold that homosexuality is not natural because it doesn't take place. But, the evidence has just been hidden. I rely on studies done by Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Marin to support this. 5,000 men were interviewed. The results were: 1) 50% of American males have been conscious of specifically erotic responses to other males; 2) 37% have had at least one homosexual experience leading to orgasm; 3) 30% have come from being given a blow job by another male; 4) 18% have had at least as much homosexual as heterosexual experience for at least a three-year period between the ages of 18 and 65. In addition, 6,000 females were also interviewed. It was found that only 28% of the females in the study were conscious of specific erotic responses to another female. 13% have reached an orgasm from at least one
homosexual experience. (In analyzing these figures, it is important to realize that 14-19% of unmarried women and 1-3% of married women claimed to respond to neither heterosexual nor homosexual stimuli. Almost no men fell into this category. Thus, it would follow that a fewer percentage of females than males would respond to homosexual stimuli.)

Using anthropological evidence, I have shown that it is the society in which one finds oneself that defines which sex acts are normal and which aren't. Definitions of what sexual behaviors are appropriate to men and women are part of local and historical conditions. Moreover, presently existing conditions do not justify the taboo against homosexuality in our culture. As a result, heterosexuals as well as homosexuals should be able to engage themselves in any sexual act that they want as long as the persons involved consent and are old enough to consent.
II. Towards Androgyny

In Part I, by refuting the arguments used by sexists to justify sexism, I showed that there are alternate ways that we could structure our society. In Part II, I will demonstrate the desirability and even necessity of restructuring our society in a particular way; without the sexism that is now prevalent. I will show how men, women, and society in general suffer from the sex role division. I will then go on to show that this suffering could be stopped if the sexes became equal in an androgynous society.

Sexism is harmful not only to women but also to men, although sometimes in different ways. Of course there are some direct ways in which men benefit from sexism at the expense of women. But once one sees the ways in which men suffer from sexism as much as women, it becomes clear that even though men will have to lose some status and privilege without sexism, on the whole their gains in emotional satisfactions will more than compensate. I turn now to a discussion of how our traditional role division proves to be damaging to both sexes.

The traditional function for the female in our society is that of reproduction and nurturing while the traditional function of the male has been that of providing for a family. In this scheme a woman enters into a monogamous marriage, lives in a nuclear family and limits her interests and concerns to her husband and children. If she works, her job also includes being responsible for the domestic chores. In addition, her job adds few social contacts
other than those made at the laundromat or supermarket. This adds a social dimension to her dependency upon the husband because she has no one else with whom to communicate. There is also an economic dependency upon the husband that is important. It is not easy for an adult to have to ask another for everything. The economic dependency makes the male appear to play the more important role in the marriage since presumably the entire welfare of the family depends on him. As a result, the role of the wife is lowered to that of a menial assistant or a mere helper. The life of the family is expected to revolve around the husband: choice of where to live, needs, his work, his income, his choice of recreation, etc. Usually the wife manages the household to fit her husband's schedule. For a woman, the consequence of this sex role division of labor is that she becomes a form of chattel.

A man too becomes involved in a monogamous marriage. He assumes the role of providing for the wife and children. Even though he has a wider range of career choices, he is still very limited insofar as developing to his full potential. He is defined in terms of the occupation through which he fulfills his role of provider and protector. Since he gets his identity through his job, his job must be stable and promise security and happiness. There is pressure on him to be upwardly mobile in his career. This requires that he specialize and so lock himself into one type of achievement at the cost of inhibiting his expansion
as a person. A man is judged as a person by the type of job he has. If it is a high status job, he is shown respect. But, if the job has a low status or a man is unemployed, he is regarded as less of a man. As a result of these social dynamics a man becomes a success object. He chooses his career on the basis of what will best fulfill his role as a success object. The unfortunate result is that he dislikes his job because it gives him little personal satisfaction.

The expectations that a society has of men and women proves to be psychologically damaging to both. Men are supposed to be self-actuating, high achievers, and in control of their lives while women are supposed to be low achievers, dependent, submissive, and otherwise feminine. There are two main areas in which this sexism hurts both men and women. First of all, the high expectations put on men cause them to have the pressure to perform; whereas the low expectations on women causes them to actually achieve less. Secondly, these expectations encourage each sex to express only certain emotions and discourages each from expressing others. Women are encouraged to express those emotions that make them dependent and ineffective, while men are encouraged to express those that keep them on top—at the expense of their feelings. I will now discuss these dynamics in more detail, beginning with the pressure on men to perform and the expectations upon women to be low achievers.
Recall the adverse effects of the pressure to perform upon men in terms of the role of provider. The breadwinner role creates one of the strongest pressures on a man. By linking the male role to breadwinning, society tells him, "The higher your achievement, the more masculine you are". This pressures men to prove themselves adequate providers and to structure their lives so as to live up to these expectations. The social pressures on women are equally adverse. A woman is not able to achieve to her full potential because society expects little of the woman. So far, most women have lived down to the low standard society expects of them. Women have been presented with a certain image of themselves, have assumed that was their image, and consequently have become that image. A study done by Matina Horner showed that when young, ambitious women are faced with a choice between developing their abilities and their feminine image, they will choose to behave in ways that reflect their internalized gender role images. Horner terms this as the "motive to avoid success" and argues that "it is a latent, stable personality disposition, acquired early in life in conjunction with sex." Thus, what women do is not only a result of what they are allowed to do along the lines of education or employment, but also a result of what society expects of them.¹¹

Another way in which men have suffered as a result of sexist attitudes is that they have not been allowed by our society to express their emotions. This would make them vulnerable and so is incompatible with traditional male values. Men are generally either unable to handle emotions expressed by others, thus, emotionally incompetent; or they are unable to express their own emotions, thus emotionally constipated; or they are crippled by both of these emotional maladies. One unfortunate effect of emotional constipation is that the emotions get stuck in his system and either cause ulcers or are expressed as aggression. To the extent that a man must stifle his emotions, he loses touch with his feelings. Awareness of one's feeling is an important ingredient of individuality, an individuality that a man cannot experience unless he allows himself to react to situations honestly and spontaneously. Instead, a man must worry that he will be considered inferior because of his feelings. He is supposed to be decisive and always "on top of it all". To act otherwise makes him appear weak and vulnerable.

In our society men suffer as a result of the ways in which they are expected to structure their relationships. Men's relationships are not as fulfilling and gratifying as they could be. This is because men generally do not let down the guards that hide their weaknesses.

Thus, in their relationships they cannot experience the
closeness that can only be had if one "bares ones soul". Since men usually do not expose their weaknesses, they are unable to receive sympathetic feedback from those with whom he is involved.

The ways in which our society allows men to respond to each other hinders the development of warm, close relationships among men. Displays of affection between men are discouraged because of the homosexual taboo. So, as a substitute, male etiquette dictates that men shake hands impersonally (firmly and not for too long a period of time), slap each other on the back or even poke each other in the ribs. Only athletes can hug each other or pat each other on the rear-end without having their masculinity challenged because they epitomize the masculine value system. I believe that the limits on how men are allowed to express their feelings to each other deprives them of a great deal of satisfactory feedback and warmth.

The females in our society are permitted and even encouraged to overtly express certain emotions that males are not allowed to express. For example, when a four-year-old girl is hurt in some way, she is often told that it will make her feel better if she cries. But, if a boy is hurt, he is told that it is unmanly to let the tears escape. Even though females do have more freedom in this aspect of self-expression than do males, females too are oppressed emotionally by our society. Women are not
supposed to lose their temper or curse. So, if a person
does something to a woman that is hostile or destructive,
she is expected not to respond unkind. At least she is
supposed to channel her anger in a way that is more tra-
ditionally feminine, such as crying. This is destructive
to a woman because it makes her repress her own anger
when it occurs. A woman is supposed to lean on men for
support, and be weak. In other words, a woman is not
encouraged to be self-reliant. This results in many
women not being able to make effective decisions concern-
ing those matters which affect their own lives, because
the male has been making those decisions for her. The
woman is not supposed to question the male's actions or
opinions; she isn't supposed to "worry her pretty little
head" about a great number of things. If she would question
the male, she would be challenging his masculinity. A
woman is traditionally submissive, conforming and passive.
She is not supposed to take the initiative in many types
of interactions and endeavours. When a woman asserts her-
self and chooses to be self-reliant and make decisions for
herself, she is characterized as "trying to be like a man",
rather than being respected for acting on her convictions.
In fact, a woman a-pears successful in fulfilling her
traditional role if she acts as a reflection of her husband's
values and convictions, thus rendering herself opinionless
and losing her individuality. She is supposed to find ful-
fillment by playing secondary role to a male; by making the
male's happiness the goal in her life.
Males and females are both damaged also economically as a result of the male's traditional role being viewed as that of provider, and the female consequently being economically dependent upon the male. Although the female traditionally performs a necessary function and works very hard at it, she receives no monetary remuneration. She is cheap labor and is being economically exploited. This economic exploitation of women carries over into the job market as well. The exploitation of women results in the male's suffering economically. I will now discuss the various ways in which females are oppressed economically. This will include the slave-status that the females assume by being a housewife, the limited choice of occupations, and the smaller amount of pay that the female receives for doing the same job that the male does.

The job of a housewife is very time consuming. The responsibilities entail being "on duty" 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. The Chase Manhattan Bank's study of the time consumed by an average housewife's work revealed that it was 99.6 hours a week. The payment for these services depends upon the generosity of the husband-employer. The woman often depends upon there being money left over from household money given to her by her husband in order to have a little spending money of her own.

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13Ibid, p. 140.
In addition, short of divorce, it is almost impossible to quit or be fired from this job.

For myself, housework consists of boring, menial tasks, and I do not want to be forced to perform these chores just because I am a woman. I believe that women should be given a choice as to what type of job that they wish to have. But, even if a woman were given a choice and she chose to be a housewife, she is still exploited. Since the activities of cleaning and child-bearing do not produce capital, they are of no value, and woman's work is despised. It is important to point out to the women who prefer to be full-time housewives that their work is dignified, skilled, and important; that it deserves a salary just as much as that of their husband in the office or factory. It is interesting to note that even when a woman is employed outside the home, she is usually still responsible for the bulk of the domestic chores inside the home.

There is no question that sex is widely used as a basis for discrimination in the area of employment:

"Women are clearly concentrated in the least prestigious occupations, and the two familiar explanations are that 1) women are not trained and 2) women are not committed to their jobs, because they are concerned primarily with their homes and children.

The first reason is simply untrue. When the educational levels of men and women are compared in relation to the requirements of their jobs, the findings indicate that women are in general over-qualified."
The second reason is a self-fulfilling prophecy. If the alternative is a menial or boring job, women will surely choose to stay at home and be full-time wives and mothers. Research shows that when women are offered interesting jobs, they are as devoted as men are.  

The economic exploitation of women in the working world becomes obvious by looking at some statistics. Of the women who are employed, their average wages represent only half of the average income enjoyed by men. These are the U.S. Department of Labor statistics for average year-round income: white male: $6,704; non-white male: $4,277; white female, $3,991; and non-white female, $2,816. The disparity is made somewhat more remarkable because the education level of women is generally higher than that of men in comparable income brackets.

Although, as has been illustrated, women generally are engaged in the lower status occupations, income differences are not accounted for solely by differences in occupations:

"Even within the same occupations the median income of women employees runs considerably lower than that of men. For example, among sales workers, full-time women workers earn 40.4 percent the salaries of men. Among clerical workers they earn 66.2 percent, and among professional workers they earn 64.2 percent. Only twenty-five states have equal pay for equal work laws, and these are not vigorously enforced. They are also frequently circumvented by giving the woman's job a lesser title than that of the man." 

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An argument generally used to justify the lower pay given to women, is that theirs is a luxury income, which only supplements that of their husbands. The following statistics explode that myth:

"35% of all women of marriageable age are not married and study after study has shown that most women, married or not, work out of economic necessity. In fact, more than one-fifth of the sixty-five million women in this country aged sixteen and over live in poverty. Ten percent of the nation's families are headed only by a woman, but 40 percent of the families classified as poor have female heads."17

Occupations are linked to sex roles. Men occupy the more "important" positions; women, the less important. One reason for this is that people are placed in occupations according to the imagined characteristics of each sex. Men are thought to be stronger, more intelligent, more aggressive, more devoted to work than women. Therefore, their proper occupations are those that supposedly require such traits -- medicine, engineering, the ministry. Women are considered more nurturing, more understanding, kinder, and gentler than men; thus they are the nurses, teachers, librarians. Our society ranks men above women; therefore, their occupations are ranked higher.

It is true that women are substantially employed as professionals, but they are usually in professions that are inferior in status and pay to professions reserved for males: such as nursing or social work, as opposed to the learned professions, such as medicine and the law.

17Ibid, p. 42.
Women are clerks and secretaries; men are the managers and foremen. Few men are household workers, and almost no women are classified as laborers or farmers.

The economic exploitation of women is detrimental to males as well. I have already discussed some of the ways in which the male suffers psychologically as a result of his role of breadwinner. But, he also suffers in other ways from assuming this role. He is quite often forced to work over-time in order to meet his families' economic needs. Putting in many hours at his job, the male may be bringing home a great deal of money. But, he suffers because he has no time left to enjoy himself. A man also suffers economically because in some states, he is responsible for paying alimony to an ex-wife in order to help with her support. Alimony is the recognition that females are quite often unable to support themselves. Thus, if females earned as much money as males, there would be no basis for the payment of alimony. Insofar as the Social Security System is concerned, the male is discriminated against because of his retirement age being at a later age than is the female's.

There are several steps that need to be taken in order to remedy this economic exploitation. First of all, it is necessary to make provisions to compensate the person who does the domestic chores whether it be a man or a woman. This will make housework a more valuable job since the person doing it will be receiving a legitimate income. It is also necessary to enforce the laws that
provide women with equal pay for equal work such as Title VII. But, most important of all, people must realize that there is no basis for occupations to be sex role linked. Furthermore, we must show people how dividing labor on the basis of sex acts to the detriment of males, females, and society in general. Later, I will discuss how this oppression is harmful to our society.

Men and women's sex lives are not as fulfilling as they could be if the sexual attitudes of our society were changed. I will first describe the prevailing social attitude regarding sexuality toward each sex, then I will show how these attitudes limit our sexual enjoyment. I will first deal with the sexual attitudes about women. There has existed and still exists a sexual double standard between men and women. Men are allowed to go to bed with several women and are not criticized for this. On the other hand, if a woman has an active sex life with more than one man or with even one man to whom she is not married, she is labelled a "whore" or some such other degrading term.

Even though Kinsey laid to rest the part of the double standard that maintained women got no pleasure at all from sex, a sexual revolution has still not taken place. Adolescent boys grow up begging for sex from girls frightened for their reputation. A girl must decide how far to go to keep her reputation poised between prudish and loose. She wants to keep a man's respect while maintaining his sexual interest. It seems that her own needs and feelings must come second.
Traditionally, the male is supposed to be the
initiator of sexual relationships. This denies the
female the pleasure of playing the role of the pursuer,
of playing an active part in the sex act. Thus, most
women miss out on the trilling experience of stimulating
her partner into a state of sexual excitement through
her sexy embraces and carresses. Most women don't get
to watch their lovers passively respond to her sexual
advances, and initiations. By being victims of this
sexual double standard, women are denied fulfillment in
one of the most potentially enjoyable aspects of relation­
ships and experiences in life. It is time that females be
liberated sexually, that they be allowed to develop their
own sexual response levels and define and enjoy the forms
of their own sexuality.

Let us now examine how the current sex role division
proves sexually damaging to men. The pressure to perform
that I previously mentioned in relation to jobs also
applies to sex. First of all, it has been generally up
to the man to assume the responsibility of initiating new
sexual encounters. This forces the male to always be the
one that runs the risk of refusal which can be very de­
flating to the ego if one is refused very often. Besides,
this disallows the possibility that the male will be pur­
sued, which is a very gratifying experience. Also, sex is
viewed as a performance. The traditional view is that a
hard penis is necessary for sexual enjoyment. This makes
a man's sexuality penis centered. If a man can't get an erection, he regards himself as a failure because he is unable to perform. I believe that the emphasis in sex should be taken off of the genitals and we should not categorize sex in such a narrowly functional manner. Instead, sexuality should be viewed as a quality that is fused throughout the whole person. Orgasms are very nice, but they are not the end-all of sex. If the whole person is not involved, then the release experienced can only be partial. Males and females both would have more fulfilling sex lives if sex were regarded as an aspect or extension of communication rather than an entity in itself.

There are ways in which the sex role division is detrimental to society in general. Since women have been discouraged from developing their talents, society misses out on the potential contribution that women can make to the advancement of our society. In addition, since men are the majority of political officeholders, masculine values permeate the political arena. Let us now see the detrimental effects of these timeworn practices in more detail.

Since each person is only allowed to perform certain functions and participate in certain activities, the individual is only allowed to use a part of the talents that he or she has the potential of developing with the society. This hinders cultural development and limits the amount of achievement that takes place in all facets of our community. If each person were encouraged to develop her-
self or himself in those areas in which he or she were most skilled and/or interested, the availability of resources and the contributions to all the realms of our society would increase immensely.

U. S. politics has been the province of men, and it is understandable that it should be permeated by old masculine values. A new task awaits political scientists, and that is the discovery of ways in which politicians can be divested of opportunities for exercising masculine values, as they do. A politician wielding power in competitive, domineering, and violent ways is only acting by principles his community takes for granted. Here are some examples of the harmful effects of this political system that is based on masculine values:

"What do George Romney, Edmund Muskie and Thomas Eagleton have in common? Each had a political career severely damaged or totally ruined after an admission of weakness. George Romney admitted to being brainwashed; Edmund Muskie allowed tears to escape his eyes; Thomas Eagleton admitted to having had electric shock treatments. American society responded to each confession of vulnerability as its own shock treatment thoroughly willing to castrate each of them.

To internalize weakness -- to keep it to oneself and consequently to allow it to remain within oneself -- is the American public's method of castrating its leaders and itself; the weakness that remains within the leader is his ultimate defeat and often the nation's defeat as well.

The masculine mystique in all of us prevents us from electing leaders who can admit to being brainwashed or admit fault in Vietnam. It is that mystique which allows us to
accept a Watergate -- even after the wiretappers are found guilty and directly connected to the Office of the President. Nixon's genius politically was recognizing that the American people would accept erased tapes, ignored subpoenas and a blaming of the incidents on Haldemans -- but not an admission he was wrong or brainwashed. Rather than cry, he 'toughed it out,' 'kept a stiff upper lip,' associated the pressure for him to quit with a national weakness, saying 'we are not a nation of quitters.' He not only refused to examine himself but refused to give others the tools for that examination. He knew the American people well enough to know that wrongdoing clothed in weakness would be met with rejection, but that mistakes clothed in strength would be met with cynical acceptance ('that's just politics'). We can accept scandal with cynicism -- cynicism is an emotion we know how to express. No wonder Watergate is virtually a male soap opera. The masculine mystique is the masculine mistake.\textsuperscript{18}

"The values of toughness, aggression, physical prowess and 'smartness' (duping the other guy) can be seen as middle and upper-class norms when the middle- and upper-class American male deals in international politics.

The invasions of Cuba, Laos, Cambodia, the Dominican Republic and Guatemala, plus the emphasis on settling conflict physically in Vietnam, are but a few examples of the use of physical prowess rather than rational mediation in solving international problems. Nixon even failed to pay the regular lip service to the norm of peaceful means in his speech given during the invasion of Cambodia: he admonished the American nation not to become 'a second-rate power' and 'accept the first defeat in its proud 190-year history' by acting like a 'pitiful, helpless, giant.' The extent to which these norms are upper-class norms when it comes to international decision-making is illustrated clearly by the class backgrounds of the decision-makers, as listed in the Pentagon Papers.

When the man incorporated violence into his personal and family life, it becomes an inevitable part of his reasoning about political

political goals as well. He may know his country can already obliterate the 'other side'. However, adequate defense is not enough for him. He must be a member of the most powerful nation.

Clearly, if war is to be cut back the values by which a society chooses its leaders might be modified to include the choice of men with less masculine and women with some traditionally feminine interests. Leventhal and Shemberg find that people who possess some of the women's hierarchy of values are able to be aggressive when necessary and to avoid justifying violent stances and feelings because they cannot inhibit them. The women's movement has been systematically training women toward this end through 'assertiveness training'.

Anti-homosexual attitudes are prevalent in our society. Sexism reveals itself in many ways. There are the overtly anti-homosexual institutions of our society: the legal system and the police, the church, the nuclear family, the mass media, and the psychiatric establishment. But sexism is a part of all people, too, present in many of our behavior patterns.

Even though the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from their list of mental disorders in 1973, many people still regard homosexuality as being a mental illness. Now, if a homosexual is troubled by his or her sexual preference, he or she is labelled as having a sexual orientation disturbance. It is no wonder that a homosexual would have a sexual orientation disturbance solely as a result of the oppressive attitudes that presently exist in this society regarding homosexuality. I

19 Ibid, p. 93-94.
will now discuss specific ways in which homosexuals are oppressed in terms of the law and the media.

There are no laws against homosexuality per se because in general the law prohibits actions rather than states of mind. Thus, homosexuals are prosecuted for their homosexuality as a result of violations of ill-defined statutes. They concern sodomy and disorderly conduct. Sodomy is against the law in many states. It is defined as a crime against nature, and this includes anal and oral intercourse as well as any coital position other than "the missionary position" in some states. Consequently, heterosexuals as well as homosexuals can be and are convicted under these archaic statutes. Disorderly conduct statutes are much more vague. These laws provide that anyone who "loiters for lewd purposes" or that anyone who "solicits for lewd behavior" is subject to arrest and subsequent prosecution. Obviously, it is at the police officers' discretion to decide who is arrested for violating these laws. In addition, police officers sometimes act as a decoy to encourage a homosexual to approach him or her. In reality, a homosexual will not generally try to make sexual contact with a person of the same sex unless he or she picks up hints from the other person that he or she would be responsive to this type of contact because the homosexual has too much to lose by approaching just anyone.

Officers that conduct themselves in such a manner as well as the police that brutalize homosexuals are guilty
of lewd behavior rather than those whose sexual desires happen to be directed toward members of the same sex.

In a few states, there have been passed a "consenting adult law" which originated in Great Britain. This law provides that any sexual act that takes place in private between or among consenting adults is not illegal. We must work to get this sort of law passed in every state for the benefit of homosexuals as well as heterosexuals.

Other ways that the law acts oppressively toward homosexuals is in marriage laws, tax laws, adoption laws, and in the area of child custody. As is commonly known, homosexuals are not allowed to be legally married. This is oppressive because it precludes homosexuals from enjoying the benefits of family plans in insurance policies, etc. In addition, it is more difficult for two unmarried persons to receive credit or to buy a house than for a married couple. I also believe that the same criteria should be applied to homosexuals as to heterosexuals when considering them as prospective adopting parents.

Another institution which oppresses homosexuals is the media. The mass media until recently have ignored homosexuality. When gay protest marches take place, the media do not recognize the significance of even a very small turn-out. When a woman marches in a feminist protest march or a black in a black protest march, they are only declaring their militancy. But, when a gay marches in a gay protest march and carries a sign "I AM GAY AND I AM PROUD", this person is now subject to a great deal of
persecution. The fact that most gays hide their gayness coupled with the media's lack of coverage of gay issues is responsible for keeping the public ignorant as to what gays are really like and for keeping in the background issues that need to be explored. By assigning gay reporters to gay beats, perhaps gay events and gay sentiment would finally receive more fair coverage. Also, a reporter who would ordinarily use derogatory words as "fag" or "dyke" in his or her stories might think twice before using such damaging and degrading language if a gay reporter were sitting in the same room. It is very difficult for a gay or even a straight person sympathetic to the gay movement to write a "letter to the editor" protesting a story that discredits gays because of the social pressures that could result from such a letter. This makes it even more important to have gays reporting gay news.

As I have mentioned several times, "coming out of the closet" is a very significant step for a homosexual. There is no other minority (except for a few blacks) that can hide their membership in an oppressed group. Thus, revealing one's gay identity must be voluntary with the homosexual realizing all along that discrimination will not occur until or unless the society realizes that the person is gay.

I have demonstrated that there is no historical, biological, or anthropological justification for the existence of sexism. Furthermore, I have shown how sexism is
injurious to men, women, and the society in general. I will devote the rest of the paper to delineating some consequences for personal and political action which come out of my study.

One way in which we can curb the oppression that results from sexism is to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. We need to take legal action because law is a reflection and a source of prejudice. It both enforces and suggests a form of bias. I favor passage of the Equal Rights Amendment because I believe that it will provide a constitutional basis to prevent the government from abridging the rights of individuals on the basis of sex. The ERA will reduce discrimination against women in colleges and universities in the form of restrictions on enrollment, scholarships and fellowships. Women will get an equal chance to be accepted and to receive financial assistance. Women will gain control over their earnings and property and retain their maiden names when they marry if they want to do so. In addition, they will have the same right as men to choose their own legal residence. The ERA will make it easier for women to sign mortgages and leases, start businesses, take out loans, and obtain credit -- all of which are difficult at present in many states.

Of course, although passage of the Equal Rights Amendment will help, it will not wipe out sexism in a single stroke. We must begin at the individual level to
change attitudes. Each of us must strive for androgyny. Thus, one should structure one's personality in such a fashion that he or she adopts desirable traits that are both traditionally masculine and traditionally feminine. We should learn to respond in a manner that is appropriate to the occasion. For example, if a circumstance calls for one to act passively, one should do so. But if assertive behavior would be suitable, then we should act assertively. Don't allow your behavior to be dictated by artificial and limiting categories that are created by society. Develop yourself as an individual instead of becoming a caricature based on gender.

I feel that we as individuals can no longer let society define what our behavior shall be. Don't let yourself feel guilty about the way that you respond to various stimuli. Recognize your feelings and act upon them. Ignore oppressive attitudes toward masturbation, pre-marital sex and homosexuality. I am not advocating these behaviors for everyone. I am only proposing that we should have the freedom to enjoy these behaviors if we so desire without guilty feelings being forced upon us by our society.

The last way to change social attitudes is by raising the consciousness of the general population through written and oral communication, pointing out those very things that I have discussed in the preceding pages. I am not under the delusion that the monumental task of awakening social conscience and a sense of justice will be accomplished
easily. But, it can be accomplished if we commit ourselves actively to effecting this social change. As activists, dedicated to the cause, we can create our own future by simply living it. Defy the reality of the present and purposely live openly as though the present were the future. By perceiving and manifesting a new reality, we also create it. "Only in the change of the attitude of the individual can begin the change in the psychology of the nation."^{20}

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