

## "SISSIES" AND "TOMBOYS"

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It is regrettable that the labels "sissy" and "tomboy" exist, that distinctions between typical and atypical gender-role behavior are made, and especially that atypical children are penalized.

"Sissy" and "tomboy": what a mismatch of labels. Commonly used and commonly linked, they mean such different things. The dictionary itself documents the distinction: "tomboy"—a romping, boisterous, boyish young girl; "sissy"—an effeminate boy or man, a timid or cowardly person. Thus for a boy to be called "sissy" can be devastating. It pierces a boy's self-image at its most vulnerable point. By contrast, "tomboy" is said with approving tones, and does not detract from a girl's sense of worth.

While much is read, and more is said, about a "unisex" tidal wave covering the country, barely a ripple has touched the early childhood and adolescent population. The boy whose behavior patterns do not meet the peer group "macho" criteria is still called "sissy." The dreaded label produces parental anxiety and a troubled child. Here members of the helping professions can be called on to determine whether the behavior behind the term is the cause of this current conflict and if it bears significance for future concern. By contrast, the professional is rarely confronted by a parent or child troubled over "tomboyism."

The fundamental caveat for a physician in diagnosing significant childhood cross-gender behavior is similar to that in other medical areas: do not overdiagnose; do not underdiagnose. The probability statement "most children will outgrow it" is true. It may be sage medical advice to prescribe "two (metaphorical) aspirins, and if it still hurts, call me in the morning," but when this advice is *universally* applied, everyone can lose—physician, patient, and parents alike, for the exceptions that exist beyond "most children" deserve recognition and attention. I hope to convey here how to maximize the chances of giving appropriate reassurance and how to recognize when the child's behavior warrants more extensive evaluation.

Clearly, more parents are concerned about what they see as "feminine" behavior in sons than about "masculine" behavior in daughters. And rightly so if they are at all concerned over current and future conflict. Quite aside from the trauma of peer-group stigmatization, "feminine" boys definitely have a higher probability of maturing into sexually

atypical adults—and sexually atypical adult males experience more conflict in consequence of society's double standard vis-à-vis male homosexuality and lesbianism. In Anita Bryant's crusade against homosexuality her tendency to ignore lesbianism is reminiscent of the (perhaps) apocryphal accounting of Queen Victoria's refusal to endorse a Parliamentary act forbidding sexual contact between females: "Women do not do such things!"

There is a growing body of research information linking childhood cross-gender nonerotic behaviors with adolescent and adult sexuality. The pertinent data are impressive for males and increasingly provocative for females. In one study, two-thirds of adult male homosexuals reported a "girl-like syndrome" during boyhood (Saghir & Robins, 1973). This was characterized by a preference for girls as playmates, avoidance of rough-and-tumble play and sports, and being called "sissy." Another study (Whitam, 1977) found that about half of adult male homosexuals recalled a childhood preference for girls as playmates, an interest in doll play, and an avoidance of rough-and-tumble play. Less than 1% of the heterosexual males recalled such behaviors. What about "tomboys"? One investigation (Saghir & Robins, 1973) states that two-thirds of lesbians reported having been "tomboys" in grade school compared to less than one-fifth of heterosexual women. Higher rates of tomboyism for lesbians are also reported by Kaya et al. (1967).

The overlap here must be stressed. Clearly, all male children whose behavior is gender atypical, and who may be called "sissy," are not pretranssexual or prehomosexual. Obviously, neither are the "tomboy" female children. And it is certain that a more or less steady proportion of conventionally "masculine" boys and "feminine" girls will ultimately find their erotic and romantic needs better met by someone of their same sex.

Before proceeding with differential diagnosis, I want to stress that this article is not directed at "prevention" of homosexuality. Not only does the writer not know *how* to do it, but it is also certainly debatable as to whether one can or *should* do it. The article is specifically directed at providing some guidelines for members of the helping professions to follow in reducing concerns of parents who fear their child (usually male) is not developing "normally," and, in the rarer instances in which a child is significantly distressed over his

or her gender, at reducing that conflict.

It is often asked whether there are diagnostic psychological tests for significant childhood cross-gender behavior. Probably no single test is adequate. While some discriminate girls from boys, the clinician is on safer ground obtaining a careful listing of the preferred sex-typed activities from the parents and by talking with the child.

The following areas provide clues for differential diagnosis:

**Sex-Identity Statements:** The boy may say "I want to be a girl," or "I am a girl." These are not typical statements of young boys, especially if repeated. They call for further inquiry. Most "tomboy" girls, however, do not say they want to be male. The vast majority are content being female, but may prefer boy-type activities because they permit more freedom or are more highly valued by other children. But some "tomboys" do say they want to be male, and women desiring hormonal and surgical transformation into men (transsexuals) recall "always" having wanted to be male. However, we do not know about those with comparable earlier desires who are now comfortably female.

**Toy Preference:** While some attempts have been made to blur sex-role lines in toy selection, significant sex-typed preferences remain. Playing with "Barbie" or a truck still serves to differentiate girls from boys. For boys whose overall behavior is distinctly culturally feminine, "Barbie" may be the favorite toy.

**Age of the Child:** This is of paramount importance. Comparably atypical behaviors at age 8 signify more than at age 4. First, they have withstood the test of time. Second, the child may have passed over critical developmental drawbridges which may be no longer be recrossed.

**Caveat:** Rough and tumble play in itself does not characterize gender. Here is the most vulnerable of the "traditional" definitions of "masculine" and "feminine" behavior. Too many intellectually lively, esthetic boys have suffered because the modal cultural ethic prescribed roughhouse as "normal" behavior. Tomboy girls have been more fortunate.

How can we maximize the possibility of careful distinction between those children (particularly males) whose behaviors not only bring current distress but portend future conflict? We carefully listen to what parents mean by "feminine," "sissy," or "unmasculine" behavior. We distinguish those boys whose behavior does not fit the cultural stereotype, yet who are nevertheless comfortable in being boys, from those who want to be girls. Boys who more than occasionally cross-dress, regularly role-play as females, draw pictures replete with females and devoid of males, are speaking to us in their age-appropriate language. And when they say "I wish I were a girl," the message is trumpeted.

Fathers may "give up" on boys who are decidedly "feminine" in behavior or looks, or those who merely do not fit the conventional demands of boyhood. Such fathers need noncritical professional input regarding temperamental differences between boys in general, and about the special needs of their sons. There are father-son activities that are both in tune with the interests of the son and enjoyable to the father. Proven helpful are group projects oriented toward handicrafts, cooking, and camping out, and away from competitive sports. Leave Little League to the kid down the block.

Father-son alienation is repeatedly evident in autobiographies of adult males with sexual-identity conflict. But which was the chicken and which the egg? Did the fathers spurn

their sons, or did the sons find the interests and perhaps demands of their fathers on so different a wavelength as to preclude communication?

The sex of the peer group appears important. When boys play only with girls because "boys play too rough," parents can try to find companions who do not play rough. Also, both boys and girls should have a mixed-sex peer group. Since there are many vital social skills to be learned from interaction with both males and females, the child of neither sex should be deprived of the opportunity to mix freely with both sexes.

How does one make referral in a professional field in which most child psychiatrists and psychologists have had relatively limited experience? A few university departments of psychiatry have clinicians with a background in evaluating children with possible sexual-identity conflict. They include the State University of New York at Stony Brook, Columbia University, the University of California at Los Angeles, the University of Michigan, and Johns Hopkins University.

What if the professional suspects significant sexual-identity conflict and is not near a referral site? First, there are child therapists who are becoming increasingly familiar with the growing body of literature in this area, and a few phone calls may locate an appropriate referral. Second, depending on time availability, the physician may also find it practical to undertake an initial treatment program.

In some cases, a few basic modifications in the child's environment can be beneficial. Eliminate the demands on the boy for stereotypically boyish behaviors, such as athletics, which are outside his interests or abilities. Promote a more mixed peer group, one which includes males interested in other masculine activities besides competitive sports. Parents

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# SPEAKING OUT

## The Challenge Facing SIECUS

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In sexual health care the principal challenge facing professionals today is the application of the accumulated information, insights, and expertise to the interests, needs, and concerns of the masses of people throughout the United States, and indeed the entire world. Although professional preparation must, and will, continue in education, counseling, and therapy, it is critical that serious, concerted efforts be made at this time to facilitate the transmission of what we know about sexuality to the people who traditionally are not given access to such information in any primary or systematic way.

This means that we must first identify the extent to which people from all classes and groups understand the meaning of sexuality in their lives, so that our teaching methods can be developed in a manner that fits their needs and aspirations, and enables them to fulfill their individual and unique sexual potentials. A further challenge is to achieve this within the variety of frameworks of their cultural and religious beliefs.

It is no longer enough to maintain the concentric-circular development of the human sexuality movement. It was absolutely necessary at the beginning for health workers to teach and train *each other* within the circumference of their own knowledge and techniques. But we have more than passed the time for this ever-broadening approach, and must now go beyond ourselves to our constituencies, and provide people with evolving opportunities to reflect and learn about themselves as sexual beings, just as we have been enabled to do in our own lives.

In developing strategies, SIECUS has chosen the simplest way to conceptualize what must be offered to people everywhere: once again to go back to the World Health Organization definition of sexual health, and to design the necessary tactics by which our accumulated wisdom concerning the various aspects of this definition might be applied to or by each person in his or her own life situation:

Sexual health is the integration of the somatic, emotional, intellectual, and social aspects of sexual being, in ways that are positively enriching and that enhance personality, communication, and love.

Every person has a right to receive sexual information and to consider accepting sexual relationships for pleasure as well as for procreation. (WHO, 1975, p. 23)

If this needed and long-awaited easy availability of sexual health care information and education for the population as a

whole is effectively brought about, so that every person can freely take what is appropriate to any and all life circumstances or age groups, this will truly signal the beginning of the coming of age of sexual health care as a centuries-awaited discipline for the people served by all health and caring professionals.

Since 1964, SIECUS has been at the cutting edge of a circumference-widening movement that has been implementing SIECUS's primary goal of "establishing human sexuality as a health entity." Now, in addition to our usual work, we will be moving in a new direction representing a community service focus. Plans and programs already initiated reflect this new initiative. During the past year, SIECUS, in cooperation with the Department of Health Education of New York University, has been engaged in an exciting project with the Human Resources Administration of New York City (HRA) in an effort to develop and implement a training program in human sexuality for the field workers who interact with the more than 28,000 children served yearly by HRA. Programs have already been under way with top-level administrators, middle-management personnel, and direct-contact staff (social workers, child-care workers, houseparents, foster care and institutional staff members who work with lower echelon personnel such as maintenance people, etc.). This initial staff-focused program will be followed by a direct, sex education program which will be carefully monitored and evaluated.

In addition, SIECUS, in partnership with Community Sex Information, Inc., and NYU, plans to develop and implement a grass-roots, community sex information and education demonstration center in the New York area. This challenging project will focus on providing young people, parents, the disabled, their teachers, and others, with the unique opportunity to receive free, carefully prepared information and educational programs in a simple but relaxed and comfortable environment. Such a unique community model is in the early planning stage, and future issues of the *SIECUS Report* will, from time to time, reflect the progress of this and other sexual health initiatives to be undertaken by SIECUS.

### Reference

World Health Organization. *Education and treatment in human sexuality: The training of health professionals*, Tech. Rep. Series 572. Geneva, Switzerland: Author, 1975. (Available from Q Corporation, 49 Sheridan Avenue, Albany, NY 12210.)

# WHERE THE ACTION IS

## Numerous Benefits Expected From SIECUS—NYU Affiliation

*Marian V. Hamburg, EdD  
Chairperson, Department of Health Education,  
New York University*

The Department of Health Education at New York University and SIECUS entered into a special affiliation agreement on September 22, 1978. The agreement was signed by Dean Daniel E. Griffiths of NYU's School of Education, Nursing, and Arts Professions, and by Dr. Mary S. Calderone, president of SIECUS, on the occasion of the SIECUS open house in its new quarters. Starting on a two-year trial basis, the new arrangement is expected to enable both organizations to collaborate on projects that will greatly expand their programs. Such projects are likely to include research, the development of training programs, sponsorship of national and international conferences and seminars, the sharing of personnel in both formal and informal teaching, and jointly sponsored publications.

A successful nurturing of the new relationship should add strength to both organizations and to the human sexuality field. Although each party to the affiliation already has a claim to preeminence—SIECUS as the only national voluntary organization in its field and the NYU Human Sexuality Program as the first master's and doctoral degree curricula for professional preparation in sex education—a united effort

should give both enterprises even more stature.

SIECUS and the NYU Human Sexuality Program are old and good friends, having had a warm and mutually supportive relationship for many years. The origins of the NYU program go back to 1967 when the Department of Health Education received a grant from the U.S. Office of Education to develop the "Experienced Teacher Fellowship Program in Sex Education." Unique for its time, and possibly even for today, this training effort involved the participation of 20 elementary schoolteachers recruited from throughout the United States for a year-long master's degree program in sex education. In addition to providing a knowledge base in this previously neglected field, the training program provided opportunities to examine traditions, beliefs, and attitudes which affect education about sexuality. Dr. Thomas McGinnis was the project's family life education specialist.

SIECUS was a primary source of advice and consultation for that training program, with Mary Calderone and Deryck Calderwood contributing substantially to its concept and design and strongly advocating its experiential thrust. In addition, many SIECUS board members served as lecturers and discussion leaders.

That first NYU training effort in human sexuality became the subject of controversy midway through the year. As with all such programs, critics of sex education launched an attack which was widely publicized. As a result, not many of the participating teachers were permitted to put their new sexuality knowledge and teaching skills into practice on their return home. Despite this, the Department of Health Education by 1970 had received the approval of the university and of the New York State Education Department for the master's degree specialization in human sexuality. It was first called "Human Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Life Education"—and then later shortened to "Human Sexuality."

A sampling of titles of the human sexuality courses currently being offered includes Sexuality and Alcohol, Sexuality and Disability, Development of Human Awareness, and Alternate Lifestyles. The program this academic year has 39 master's and 36 doctoral candidates. In addition to teaching (primarily at the college level), the program's graduates work in community-service organizations, hospitals, and other health-care facilities.

A special feature of the Human Sexuality Program, as well as of other programs of the Department of Health



Dr. Mary S. Calderone and Dean Daniel E. Griffiths affix their signatures to the SIECUS—NYU affiliation agreement on September 22, 1978. Photo by Mark Schoen

Education, is the opportunity for learning experiences in foreign countries. In the summer of 1978, for example, Professor Deryck Calderwood, who has headed NYU's Human Sexuality Program for seven years, led a group of graduate students to Nairobi, Kenya, for four weeks of study there. The NYU faculty was supplemented by African faculty, and the curriculum included numerous field visits for firsthand observation of local programs. Professor Calderwood will be leading a similar trip in the summer of 1979 to Sweden, making it the third visit to that country by faculty and students representing NYU's Human Sexuality Program. (See announcement on SIECUS participation, p. 5.) The study of human sexuality abroad has also been the focus of NYU seminars in Denmark and Japan.

Having grown from a need to help teachers become comfortable and competent in dealing with the subject of human sexuality, the NYU program aims primarily to prepare professional personnel for school and community leadership roles in sex education.

The SIECUS-NYU affiliation formalizes a cooperative relationship that has been uninterrupted since SIECUS began in 1964. Under the new agreement, two places on the SIECUS national board of directors are reserved for NYU faculty; NYU departmental meetings, moreover, will be attended routinely by SIECUS representatives. Such mutual representation and sharing of views should inevitably expand the horizons of both organizations. Immediate plans include a jointly sponsored conference to be held at the university.

Sharing will also occur on other levels. The unique SIECUS library of over 1500 volumes of current literature on human sexuality will be housed and staffed in the quarters of NYU's Department of Health Education. The availability of this invaluable resource will be of great importance to NYU faculty and students, and all other qualified researchers.

With much interest and pleasure, moreover, the health education faculty and university administration are anticipating the availability of Dr. Mary Calderone as a major consultant and guest lecturer. Her wealth of knowledge and experience will add substance and luster to the NYU program. In that connection, the ink on the affiliation agreement was scarcely dry when Dr. Calderone was invited by Dean Griffiths to give the keynote address, known as the Weckstein Lecture, on Alumni Day of the School of Education, Health, Nursing, and Arts Professions on March 10, 1979. It is the expectation of the Department of Health Education, in addition, that from time to time some of the prestigious SIECUS board members will become involved in the NYU Human Sexuality Program as consultants and guest lecturers.

Another special resource that will be shared is the body of graduate students enrolled in the NYU Human Sexuality Program. Serving as interns for substantial periods of time, graduate students are able to help their sponsoring organizations engage in activities that are often otherwise beyond reach, performing, for example, as researchers, evaluators, conference organizers, and program developers.

The aforementioned benefits are only the obvious positive results expected from the formalized affiliation. While the expected beneficial impact on the fields of human sexuality and health education is difficult to predict in specific terms, there is little doubt that the new sharing arrangement will stimulate thought and action that might otherwise not take place. How much does happen, in the final analysis, depends on what we do together to make it happen!



Shown, left to right, at the reception following the signing ceremony are Barbara Whitney, SIECUS Executive Officer; Deryck Calderwood, Director of NYU's Human Sexuality Program and SIECUS Board of Directors member; Dr. Calderone; Marion V. Hamburg, Chairperson of NYU's Department of Health Education; and Dean Griffiths. Photo by Mark Schoen

## DO YOU KNOW THAT...

### SIECUS Elects 1979 Board

At the SIECUS Annual Meeting held in New York City on September 23, 1978, Michael Carrera, EdD, was elected Chairperson of the Board of Directors. New members joining the board are: Diane Brashear, MSW, PhD; Lorna Brown, MA; Frank Caparulo, MS; Ron Daniel, PhD; William H. Genné, MA, BD; Richard Green, MD; Jane Johnson, MSW; Albert Klassen, MA; Roger Mellott, MA; James B. Nelson, PhD; Lorna Sarrel, MSW; Raul Schiavi, MD; and Ann Welbourne, RN, PhD. (For a complete listing of the 1979 Board of Directors, see page 16.)

Dr. Mary S. Calderone, President, expressed SIECUS's appreciation for the dedicated work done by the members of the board who have completed their terms of office. They are: Pauline M. Carlyon, MS, MPH; Haskell R. Coplin, PhD; Harold I. Lief, MD; Philip M. Sarrel, MD; Leon Smith, EdD; and Frank E. Taylor, all of whom will serve on the 1979 SIECUS Advisory Panel.

### SIECUS-NYU Professional Colloquium

SIECUS is making special arrangements with New York University's Summer International Seminar in Human Sexuality in Sweden for a postgraduate learning experience during July 1979 which will focus on basic issues and concepts in human sexuality from intercultural points of view. For more information on this study program in Sweden, write to Barbara Whitney, Executive Officer, SIECUS, 84 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

# BOOK REVIEWS

**Breaking the Sex-Role Barrier.** Robert H. Loeb, Jr. In consultation with Vidal S. Clay, PhD. New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1977 (108 pp.; \$6.90).

*Reviewed by Anne H. Berkman, MA, Sex Counselor and Volunteer, Community Sex Information, Inc., New York City.*

Drawing on the work of Diane Gersoni-Stavn, Theodore Lidz, John Money and Anke A. Ehrhardt, Verne and Bonnie Bullough, and James McCary, among others, this book interprets the ideas of some of the finest writers and researchers in the field of sexual development. Classic studies of gender identity, concepts of genetic theory and the psychology of sex differences, the history of attitudes toward men and women, and the basics of human sexuality are explained at a high school reading level.

This book's purpose is to guide the reader through a structured exploration of the forces that program male and female behavior. The biological evidence and the parental and societal influences that create sex differences are examined systematically in clear and concise language. Robert H. Loeb is a writer who is interested in the sociological problems of young people. Vidal S. Clay is a woman teacher as well as a marriage and family therapist. Together they have created a fast-moving, informative book based on the belief "that both sexes need liberation from the myths and misconceptions of what it means to have been born male or female. Both sexes need to discover a new awareness."

*Breaking the Sex-Role Barrier* is a small book containing six chapters, each beginning with a self-test, a thought-provoking device. These tests reveal, even to the sophisticated

reader, the extent to which we are all prone to sexist role typing. The first chapter asks important questions about the obligations and pleasures of being male or female. Loeb and Clay's goal of liberation is expressed thus: "We hope that knowing about your human potential will give you enough faith in yourself to confront life with affirmation."

Chapter Two, "What Caused You to Be a Boy or Girl?" covers the basic biology and physiology of prenatal development and discusses the meaning of gender identity. The next chapter examines the primary factors that mold the infant into a certain kind of boy or girl, and includes well-reported studies describing the influence of parents and school on gender role definition. Chapter Four, on the role of women, offers a historical overview of what it has meant to be female through the ages. The comments by teenagers included in this section appear to have been selected for their stereotyped points of view, but not all young women today feel so heavily burdened by tradition. For example, the results of a survey of 1,543 New York teenagers published early in 1978 in the *New York Times* reveal changing goals and values. The 667 girls in the *Times* poll listed in first place "getting a job I enjoy" while "getting married" ranked in 14th place. Unfortunately, the teenagers who were interviewed specifically for the book have not been identified as to their backgrounds.

Continuing in a probing, consciousness-raising style, the chapter concerning the roles of men starts with self-test questions such as "Because fatherhood is far less demanding than motherhood, I (as a male) have more freedom to choose a fulfilling career. True, false, or questionable?" This is an interesting chapter which

explores the development of concepts about maleness. Although the feminist movement has been responsible for breaking many sex-role barriers for women, there has not been a comparable awareness of the masculine "trap." As the author points out, "In our culture the mask of tearlessness and fearlessness with which males disguise themselves has no survival value. Instead, it is apt to blunt a man's sensitivity, his sense of compassion, and can be the cause of emotional problems."

"Your Right to be You" is the final chapter. Having by now presumably learned some of the origins of sexist hang-ups, the reader is asked to put this new awareness to positive use. For example, teenagers can often reduce conflict with adults by understanding the restrictions that have handicapped their parents and other authority figures. Sexual attitudes toward the double standard, premarital sex, heterosexuality, love and lovers, and marriage are explored. Homosexuality as a sexual preference is included in the context of "the right to be you," and, in regard to its incidence and range, is particularly well handled.

The last chapter has its strong and weak points. The author states very clearly that the decision to have intercourse carries a responsibility for both partners to consider birth control. He is less convincing when writing about the meaning of love and the importance of sharing in an intimate relationship. A major area where polarized sex roles inhibit communication is within a sexual relationship. Loeb and Clay missed the opportunity to help young adults learn the art of communicating with a sexual partner. It would have been relevant to make the connection between liberation from sexist stereotypes and

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*Audience Level Indicators:* C—Children (elementary grades), ET—Early teens (junior high), LT—Late teens (senior high), A—College, general adult public, P—Parents, PR—Professionals.

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the growth and development of true intimacy.

*Breaking the Sex-Role Barrier* is a well-written book and a welcome addition to the literature on teenage sexuality. Source notes at the end of each chapter provide a bibliography for further reading. Although addressed to teenagers, adults who are interested in examining their sex roles, and professionals working with young people, should find this book a valuable resource. **LT, P, PR**

**X: A Fabulous Child's Story.** Lois Gould. Illustrated by Jacqueline Chwast. Houston, Tex.: Daughters Publishing Co., Inc., 1978 (unpaged; \$7.50).

Reviewed by Anne Backman, MA, SIECUS Publications Officer.

Once upon a time a book named X was born. This book was subnamed "A Fabulous Child's Story" so that nobody could tell whether it was a fabulous story for children or a story about a fabulous child. Its authors could tell, of course, but they couldn't tell anybody else. You see, it was all part of a very important xperiment.

All paraphrasing aside, this brief blockbusting story brings its readers face to face with the hallowed institution of gender identity. A child named "X" is brought up with only X and its parents (and, of necessity, the Secret Scientific Xperiment xperts) knowing whether it is a boy or a girl. One can imagine the problems that arise. "What is it?" "It's an X." Whispers spread. "There must be something wrong with it!" And where to buy its clothes, toys, etc. Boys' department? Girls' department? What games does it play? With boys or with girls? Which school bathroom to use? (The principal's, of course!) And so on.

Since the authors believe in the good fairy of adaptability, the xperiment ends happily ever after. But the book has an insidious fallout. Next time a visibly gender-identified newborn is presented for inspection, the odds are x to y that you'll find yourself gargling your instinctive pink or blue response.

Incidentally, I'll tell you a secret. The book is a fabulous story about a fabulous child for all genders of all ages. **C, P, A**

**Right from the Start: A Guide to Non-sexist Child Rearing.** Selma Greenberg. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978 (242 pp.; \$8.95).

Reviewed by Jane M. Quinn, ACSW, Supervisory Clinical Social Worker, Washington, D.C., Department of Human Resources.

Sex-role socialization, like sex education, begins at birth. Studies reveal that boys and girls are treated differently, spoken to differently, taught different skills, encouraged to explore their environments differently and to use different sets of muscles—so that by age three, they perceive their options and futures differently.

In her book *Right from the Start*, Selma Greenberg analyzes this process, pointing out what is wrong with it and explaining what can be done about it. Although her book is addressed to parents, its perspective, information, and advice would be useful to teachers, students, sex educators, child-care workers, and social welfare policy makers.

The author brings three sets of credentials to the writing of this new work: those of educator, mother, and feminist. Dr. Greenberg is professor of education at Hofstra University and has done pioneering work on the subject of nonsexist education for teachers and children. As a mother who has raised three children, she is able to share practical advice and relevant vignettes from her own family life and to recount her gradual awakening—and that of her husband and children—to the limitations which sexist childrearing patterns appear to impose on all family members. But, according to Dr. Greenberg, it is the third perspective, that of feminism, which truly separates her book from the countless other guides to childrearing now on the market.

In the first and introductory chapter, Dr. Greenberg spells out three general themes which underlie her philosophy of childrearing and which serve as an outline for the rest of the book. "The first is the constantly recurring insistence that we redesign the parent role so that it liberates rather than oppresses women. The second theme stresses the need to think about and act toward our infants and children in ways that allow them to develop vigorous and sound bodies, spirits, intellects, and emotions, and permit them the broadest possible life options. Third, I

believe parents are entitled to an added profit from the childrearing experience . . . a happy ending."

The author fleshes out this schema with chapters on redefining motherhood, fatherhood, and family power relationships; on sharing housework among family members, and separating housework from child-care responsibilities; and on examining current myths and socialization practices which result from these myths in light of the limiting effects they can have on children and parents.

It is in the analysis of this last point that Dr. Greenberg's ideas are most compelling and are most likely to be influential. Through citation of studies and actual observations of children, the author makes a good case for the need to change present-day sex-role socialization practices by demonstrating how differential treatment of boys and girls hinders the development of both sexes.

Another strength of the book lies in the critical examination of the assumptions upon which many current child-rearing theories are based. Readers are asked to consider possible flaws and sexist implications of such time-honored child development concepts as sibling rivalry, the Oedipal conflict, penis envy, adolescent rebellion, the one-to-one (mother-child) relationship, and sexual identification. In delineating "what is" from "what must be," the author strikes a hopeful note and points to ways that parents can help children of either sex build on their own particular strength.

Dr. Greenberg's writing style is informal, nontechnical, and at times chatty. References to literature, psychology, psychiatry, child development and education theory abound, but are not offered in a pretentious or self-conscious way. Many readers, however, may well be put off by the author's extensive use of exclamation points to convey emotion and by her repeated insistence that her book is more useful than the well-known childrearing guides authored by Drs. Spock and Brazelton. Even if one were to assume that a similarity of subject matter puts Dr. Greenberg's book in direct competition with those of her predecessors (which I firmly believe it does not), her readers have a right to be spared hearing this particular plea two and three times.

I believe there are several reasons

why sex educators will find *Right from the Start* helpful. The book can be recommended to parents who have an interest in nonsexist childrearing; it should prove useful to students in child development courses and in senior high school family living classes; and it may well alert many professional readers to the hidden sexism which exists in current social institutions and in contemporary childrearing practices. **LT, A, P, PR**

**Non-Sexist Childraising.** Carrie Carmichael. Boston: Beacon Press, 1977 (162 pp.; \$9.95).

**What Are Little Girls Made Of? The Roots of Feminine Stereotypes.** Elana Gianini Belotti. New York: Schocken Books, 1976 (158 pp.; \$7.95).

*Reviewed by Betsy A. Kelly, graduate student in Counselor Education, St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York.*

As the mother of a seven-month-old baby, I found these two books of particular interest. *Non-Sexist Childraising* was the more readable of the two, and clarified for me the many ways sexism creeps into childraising, even when we try to guard against it. In the Introduction, nonsexist childraising is defined primarily as "celebrating the myriad differences among girls and girls, and boys and boys—not blunting the differences between girls and boys." While I wholeheartedly endorse this view, by the end of the book I felt that Carmichael was advocating perceiving children just as children, almost to the point of denying the existence of two sexes, an approach I do not believe should be encouraged. The chapter on homophobia was beyond the scope of the book and could better be explored in a book dealing with homosexuality.

On the whole, however, the book was thoroughly enjoyable reading and brought out many points to be pondered and acted upon. It could serve as a useful guide for anyone contemplating having children who needs reassurance that there are others out there who are trying to combat sexism. It also outlines a practical, down-to-earth approach for taking sexism out of childrearing.

*What Are Little Girls Made Of?* is

more research-oriented and would be useful to those studying sex-role stereotyping behavior. In the first two chapters, "Expecting the Baby" and "Early Childhood," most of the research cited relates to mother-daughter or mother-son relationships. This emphasis implies that the father-child relationship is either nonexistent (which, if true, is worthy of mention and discussion), or that it does not add significantly to the stereotyping of a child, which I would find difficult to believe. Chapters three and four focus on the stereotyping effects derived from societal rather than home attitudes, through games, toys, literature, and schools. The cross-cultural references throughout the book were also interesting and enlightening.

A major point of the book is that children are exceptionally sensitive to everything that adults regard as appropriate for their sexes, and quickly learn to adapt their behaviors accordingly. Adults often mistakenly interpret this adaptive behavior as being "natural" for a certain sex, when it actually has been carefully manipulated.

*What Are Little Girls Made Of?* surveys a wealth of valuable research on

sex stereotyping during infancy and childhood through influences from the family, the media, and educational systems. It explicitly portrays how the seeds of feminine stereotypes are sown. This book is meant to be a valuable resource for the literate reader interested in sociological and anthropological research, but as such is not really appropriate or useful as a practical guide for the average parent. **A, PR**

**About Men.** Phyllis Chesler. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978 (281 pp.; \$10.95).

*Reviewed by Keith W. Jacobs, PhD, Department of Psychology, Loyola University, New Orleans, La.*

Three different approaches are used in distinct sections of this book to present a controversial description of men. The author begins by presenting images from various art forms (classic literature and mythology, paintings and sculpture, poetry) to present those characteristics which the author sees as differentiating men from women. The second part of the book presents autobiographical sketches of significant men in the author's life which emphasize her perceptions of the dynamics of these interactions. The final part of the book is an essay "about men," also with a psychodynamic interpretation of male behavior and the masculine personality.

The author suggests that the purpose in writing the book was to understand men. This understanding emphasizes a universal similarity of all men and, by inference, the differences between men and women. For example, men form a common bond between themselves, a "male bonding" that is universal to men and unique to them. In dynamics somewhat more complex than traditional psychoanalysis, the author seems to suggest that the basis for this bond is the male penis and the male's universal envy of the uterus.

The publisher's cover material and some of the text of the book appear to suggest that the book is the result of "years of research" and "interviews" with a thousand men. Selected excerpts quoted from some of these interviews can be found in the final part of the book. A reader might assume,

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based on the author's education or scientific training, that the data for the book came from objective interviews carried out with some quasi-random sample of American men. The author's preface more accurately suggests that she has been observing and "interviewing" men all her life. The sources of her data include her father, lovers, colleagues, friends—men presumably selected because they provide the data that is desired—and virtually anyone else from whom might be obtained "data" to indicate what has helped (or hindered) them from becoming who they are. There is no methodological reason for believing that the data can be generalized to other men, even though the conclusions are stated as though they are universal and exclusive to men. It should be noted, however, that this work is not a large-scale, objective, descriptive study.

Some of the conclusions reached about men are not consistent with other normative studies of human behavior, and in other cases there simply are no objective data against which her conclusions can be compared. On a more personal level, I find it extremely difficult to accept many of her conclusions, both because her data are different from mine and because I reject much of the way in which I (as a man) am being described.

Certainly there is some value in the book's description of men. That value lies largely in forcing each male reader to ask, "Is that me, am I that way?" The value is not that an accurate description of men is provided but that it should cause people to reflect about their behavior and the world in which they live. We do have wars, but are they all because men fear other men? Was the war in Vietnam really an act of fathers killing sons? It is suggested that "men, not women, are the deadliest killers on earth," but if so, is it for the reasons given? The author categorizes her boss in 1966 as a man "in his mid-forties, virile, magnetic, deadly," but was he really so? She may well have known "professor-husbands" who were "harvesters of young intellectual girl students" and "ringmasters of sexual orgies," but is that a true generality about college professors, and is such behavior really because of these men's awareness that they must themselves die someday?

The author makes an interesting case for the vulnerability of the sacred male

penis by her observation that men have prevented male nudes from being displayed in museums while female nude statues are frontally displayed. I also found interest in her observation that married men over 30 prefer to have intercourse in the morning because they can then escape the intimacy of the relationship with a partner to return to their male world. The data from the author's own experiences, from mythology, and from sources such as works of art in which the female body is mutilated, do indeed provide interesting data for a number of conclusions in the book.

The author suggests, "There are 'good' fathers, and 'good' mothers; but let us admit, even if the admission angers, frightens, or shames us, that while 'good' people do exist, they are a rarity, a miracle, a blessed exception." I would personally prefer to believe the opposite and to attribute her conclusions to what could be termed "sampling error."

This book does raise some issues which are vital to a study of sexual roles and to social behavior in general. My disagreement is with the conclusions and the generality given to them, not with the questions raised. The reader, male or female, who is willing to face a number of serious issues and accept the author's conclusions as only one perspective on them would probably profit from a serious study of this book.  
**A, PR**

**Dominus.** Natalie Gittelsohn. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1978 (291 pp.; \$10.00).

*Reviewed by Sam Julty, author of MSP (Male Sexual Performance) and the forthcoming Men's Bodies, Men's Selves (Dial Press, March 1979); member, NOW.*

In the introduction the author tells us that *Dominus* is "a report from men themselves about how the present status and the new psychology of women has affected not only their erotic lives, but also their entire experience."

Unfortunately, her description is poorly realized in the book's sixteen chapters. It would be more accurate to say that the report is a kaddish, a requiem for what she perceives as a loss

(or at least an erosion) of the typical behavior patterns men in our culture have been taught to accept as correct. The fact that men are examining, and to some extent rejecting, the roles assigned to them not only saddens Gittelsohn, but angers her. She is losing her "macho" man, and she does not like it. Like a spurned lover she lashes out at whoever she feels is responsible, and therein lies the only victorious aspect of the book—she succeeds in offending almost everything and everybody. Few are spared the tilt of her lance.

*On women's sexuality:* "Equality as perceived by women and eroticism as desired by them seemed antithetical. The quest for orgasm, even multiple orgasm, has been aggressively inaugurated." *On sexual sharing:* "It was getting to the moment when to screw your own wife just for the subjugating, domineering thrill of it would seem, well, tasteless—and uncaring." *On men seeking change:* "When dominus declined—weakening our heterosexual foundations—it perverted the meaning and substance of manhood, as manhood has always been understood. . . . They confessed gynecic longings; the wish to shed worldly obligations, the need to nurture, the itch to 'experiment' with homosexuality, the urge to abandon regular work, the desire to cry." *On masturbation:* "Masturbation was the salient 'erotic' act of the times for both men and women. Narcissus, not Eros, now stood for our sexual aspirations." *On the men's movement:* ". . . the men's movement created vaginal man. Soft, moist, and open, he venerates all that is feminine, it might be said, while at the same time disdaining women." *On gay men:* "The Main Street brute and the latent homosexual described two sides of a coin. They were both parodies of manhood, rationalizing male incapacity and the failure of nerve." *On black people:* "Excesses of feelings did not alarm these men and women."

By interweaving quotes with comments, Gittelsohn records the responses to questions presumably asked by her, although her sampling methods are clearly open to question. Present are the many ways men are reevaluating their position and their roles in a changing society. Missing, however, is a dispassionate analysis of all that has happened in the last decade to allow (indeed, force) men to examine the price of the title Lord and Master. Git-

telson missed the essential points of what the 1960s were all about for men—namely, the antiwar, civil rights, and feminist movements, the youth and sexual revolutions, Watergate, the rise of the multinational corporations, and the economic necessities which give us a work force of which almost half are women. Taken all together, these events have made men wonder just what masculinity is all about.

It seems strange to me that for all her traveling and for all the hundreds of men she spoke with she has not grasped the messages I get in any casual chat with a man at a bar or in a plane. I hear men concerned in ways they never were 20 years ago. I hear men questioning the need to perform on the job, in the home, with the children, within a relationship, and in bed. I hear men wondering whether the compulsion for performance has anything to do with having shorter life spans than women. I hear men not willing to forget the Vietnam experience and beginning to see correlations between masculinity and war.

I suspect Gittelson heard these same messages but chose to discard them. Instead, she gives us scorn and anger. Men are not men, she repeats, if they are not seeking marriage, if they are enjoying celibacy, if they are seeking intimacy with other men. Throughout the book, whenever she quotes a man who attacks the traditional sex role behavior, she uses her skill with words to make him look as if there is something wrong with him; in a few instances she expresses surprise that homosexuality is not appealing to such a man.

Her writing is brisk and journalistic. While I had no reason to doubt the accuracy of most of the anecdotes, my credulity was strained by some of the situations she described. For instance, how did she record in such detail what was said at a men's gathering in Virginia, or what happened at a faculty lunch on the campus of a small black college? In addition, if her descriptions of human sexuality workshops, the films shown and the language used by the sex educators, are indeed accurate, it should be cause for great alarm among us professionals.

On the title page is the inscription "Dominus, in Latin, means master—once a title of honor, accorded to men." Thus, the weakness of the book is encapsulated. A fuller and more accurate definition of the word reveals

that it was a title of rank accorded to men when "master" specifically meant ownership of slaves and land. In a way, Gittelson's definition for "dominus" and mine sum up the differences between her reaction to the changes in men, and mine. It will be a great day when her concepts of dominus join the term itself as a relic of the past. **A**

**Homosexuality and the Christian Faith: A Symposium.** Harold L. Twiss, ed. Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1978 (110 pp.; \$3.95 paper).

*Reviewed by Leon Smith, BD, EdD; member, SIECUS Advisory Panel.*

In an effort to help Christians think seriously about issues related to homosexuality and the church, Harold L. Twiss has compiled nine previously published articles (1976–77) representing points of view extending from very conservative to very liberal. This wide diversity of contemporary opinion reveals the way clergy are struggling with their consciences over these issues, for he has chosen a group of writers who are fairly representative of the religious community today.

The current controversy over homosexuality is a struggle of conscience because of events both within the religious community and within society. In Chapter 2, "A Biblical Perspective on Homosexuality," David Bartless

points out that, while most biblical interpretation until very recently categorically labeled homosexuality as sin, many biblical scholars are now becoming critical of the pre-Christian regulations delineated in the early Old Testament and of St. Paul's so-called "Christian" condemnations, on the basis that these tenets are in conflict with certain "biblical affirmations which are central to our faith." He holds that "Christians today are called to rethink their traditional attitude toward homosexuality" and to look "more openly and honestly at the empirical phenomenon of homosexuality."

Another liberal point of view is expressed by Theodore Jennings in Chapter 5, "Homosexuality and Christian Faith: A Theological Reflection." He believes that, given the fundamental principle of a gracious God, no theological basis therefore exists for heterosexuality to be considered "better" than homosexuality, and he points to the weaknesses of the biblical prescriptions against homosexuality. He says, "The church must stand with homosexuals against those sociopolitical structures that deprive them of the protection of the law and the rights and privileges of full members of society." He also urges exploration of the Christian concept of vocation as it involves homosexual persons.

Two chapters by conservatives are "How Gay Is Gay?" by Lynn R. Buzard ("The practice of homosexuality is clearly sin" from which such persons "ought to repent"), and "Sexual Dif-

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ferences: A Cultural Convention?" by John M. Battcau who on the one hand gives a rather "stern word of condemnation," and on the other concludes that "homosexuals must not be left with a stern word of condemnation from a distant and repulsed body of people called the Church; instead they must be faced with a Church, with Christians, with a God who reaches out to bless even through condemnation."

In Chapter 6, "The Dynamics of Sexual Anxiety," James Harrison, a Presbyterian minister who is a clinical psychologist, declares, "It is the fear of homosexuality that is destructive and not homosexuality per se." Further, out of fear that Christians may become too accepting of homosexuality which he sees as sin, William Muehl offers "Some Words of Caution" in Chapter 7.

In Chapter 8, "Conservative Christians and Gay Civil Rights," Letha Scanzoni, herself a conservative and a freelance writer, tries to be objective in reporting how conservatives facing the issue of civil rights in Bloomington, Indiana, in 1975-76 struggled toward a more compassionate understanding of homosexual persons by meeting them personally.

Chapter 9, "Shall Gays Be Ordained?" is not, as one might expect, a discussion of the issue, but is instead an attempt by Tracy Early, a journalist, to summarize the results of the controversy on this issue among the major churches in recent years.

The most objective chapter in the collection is the first, "Homosexuality, An Overview," by Alan Bell, co-author of the recently published book *Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity Among Men and Women*. He makes the case for "homosexualities" by illustrating from careful research how "homosexuals are as different from each other as heterosexuals are." This suggests that, in facing the issue, churches must learn to look beyond the common myths and stereotypic images of gay men and women and consider homosexuals primarily as the human beings they are.

This book is a must, it seems to me, for those who wish to see how deep—and at times illogical—the divergent views of committed Christians are on this troubling subject. These same differences are clearly reflected in the society as a whole. Their resolution is urgently needed, and will be facilitated by the spread of as much factual

knowledge about homosexuality as possible. **A, PR**

**Love and Sex: A Modern Jewish Perspective.** Robert Gordis. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1978 (290 pp.; \$8.95).

*Reviewed by Rabbi Bernard Kliffeld, DD, Temple Emanu-El, Long Beach N.Y.; member, SIECUS Advisory Panel.*

Today's "new morality" holds out promise of a more enjoyable life but it also creates problems, both manifest and unforeseen, which require an old-new wisdom for solution. Robert Gordis, professor of Bible and Philosophy of Religion at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, finds in Jewish tradition a substantial measure of light and direction for a viable system of behavioral standards in sex, love, and marriage.

In his book, Dr. Gordis, a leader of one of the largest Conservative congregations on the eastern seaboard, finds the "new morality" which dichotomizes body and spirit to be "an inversion of classical Christianity." Mainstream Judaism, on the other hand, while responding creatively to the felt needs of its adherents, as well as to changing circumstances, has never made this separation. Thus, for example, while biblical law has traditionally severely limited the rights and freedom of women (although it was in this respect far in advance of contemporary law in surrounding societies), rabbinic legal development was and is toward an ever-increasing measure of equality between the sexes. The Ketubbah, a marriage contract, was elaborated to provide specific protection to the woman in case of divorce or death of the husband. The biblical law (levirate) requiring the marriage of a dead man's childless widow to his brother was amended in Europe by the 10th century, after which it virtually ceased to be permitted. Procreation has always been considered a religious duty, but birth control is permitted. The Orthodox rabbinate is very strict regarding abortion, allowing it only in the case of an authentic threat to the life of the mother. The Israeli Knesset, however, adopted a law in 1977 which Gordis finds in consonance with the spirit of Judaism, permitting abortion in

case of danger to the life or health of the woman, if the child will be born physically or mentally handicapped, if the pregnancy was the result of rape, incest, or intercourse outside of marriage, or if the woman is below the age of 16 or over 40.

Only in marriage can human beings "fulfill the highest dictates of their nature." Society has long experimented with alternate lifestyles. They have been tried and found wanting. Monogamy has prevailed and "it offers the best hope for the well-being of the greatest number of men, women, and children."

Gordis seeks a viable code from the best insights of traditional morality along with the insights and proclamations of the present sexual revolution. His view that love and sex are indivisible for complete satisfaction in the man-and-woman relationship flies in the face of much current writing. Along with assuming that homosexuality is a viable alternative, the "new morality" proclaims that sex can be, and indeed is, enjoyed for its own sake; it need not have any restrictions except perhaps the avoidance of injury to the self or another. A final verdict on these ideas may never be reached, but there is no doubt that the attitudes derived from Judaism permit a healthy enjoyment of sex while insisting that love and responsibility, for the good of mankind, must ideally be part of sex. The book is scholarly, very readable, and written with understanding and compassion. **A, PR**

**Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach.** Suzanne J. Kessler and Wendy McKenna. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1978 (233 pp.; \$16.95).

*Reviewed by Marilyn Nelkin, MA, New Lincoln School; volunteer, Community Sex Information, Inc.*

As the title suggests, this book has two purposes. One is an examination of how we in Western society decide if someone is female or male. When we see a stranger, how we tell if she/he is a woman or a man? The authors call the process of making this classification gender attribution. But the book's main purpose is to introduce the concept of ethnomethodology and to show the advantages of its use, especially in re-

search. Briefly, the main points of ethnomethodology as presented by the authors are:

1. There is no objective reality.
2. What we think of as reality is a social construct.
3. There are certain methods that each society employs in order to construct its own reality so that its members are privy to shared perceptions.

People who approach research from this framework are not trying to understand an external reality but to understand the methods that a particular society uses to construct its particular universe.

In the preface, the authors contend that these two concepts, ethnomethodology and gender, can be separated so that "for those who do not find themselves compatible with phenomenologically based theories this book can be read as a set of questions about gender." If this can be done at all it will take a determined effort on the part of the reader. The authors have been so successful in weaving their arguments for ethnomethodology into the text that these general philosophical and epistemological questions tend to push the specific one of gender into the background. Nevertheless, the major questions concerning gender which can be extracted bear consideration by sexologists.

As ethnomethodologists, Kessler and McKenna work from the premise that two dichotomous genders do not have an existence in a reality which is independent of society. Rather, people in Western society *construct* the reality of two different and opposite genders. People then assume that this construction is an "irreducible fact" with an independent external existence. Because researchers are themselves also the products of this way of thinking, every kind of research on human sexuality, be it anthropological, biological, or developmental, inevitably assumes the independent existence of two, and only two, sexes. The authors urge throughout the book that research should begin with a different premise, namely, that to take for granted the objective reality of two genders is no more "true" than, say, sexual neutrality or  $x$  number of genders. With acceptance of this perception, the emphasis of research would no longer be on discovering how men and women differ but would focus on how we come

to see the vast array of human physical forms and behaviors as falling into only two classifications. The questions of research would then change from "how are men and women different?" to "what are other possible alternatives for defining human beings?" To reinforce their point of view Kessler and McKenna examine several anthropological, biological, and developmental theories. The second chapter makes the point that not all societies have divided the world up into two dichotomous genders, for some have made room for a third gender alternative. The authors point to the people in aboriginal North America "who received social sanction to become a gender other than to which they were originally assigned (named at birth)." Other societies have different gender realities from ours, so that ours is just as much a social construct as theirs and may be equally valid.

The next two chapters review biological and developmental theories concerning gender and make the point that "in seeing the biological sciences as the foundation for all behaviors, we tend to overlook the fact that this is only one of an infinite number of ways of seeing the world." There has been no scientific research that has established the "real" existence of two genders, and no necessary and sufficient reason has yet been offered to establish definitively the nature of masculinity or femininity.

The transsexual then is studied in an attempt to derive rules for attributing gender in a "normal" context from what happens in the "abnormal" situation. The authors try to analyze what transsexuals have to do to become accepted by society as a gender different from the one they were assigned at birth.

As gender stereotypes break down, people today are questioning the old definitions of femininity and masculinity. The authors suggest that instead of dichotomizing gender as we now do, we should think of it on a continuum and make no judgmental decisions about placement on the continuum. If one accepts the continuum idea, gender decisions in everyday life could be made on a probability rather than a definitive basis. This would give people the leeway to revise initial attributions without the problems they now experience, and we would not be so disturbed when faced with an unclear

gender attribution. Often what happens now is that when someone cannot make a satisfactory gender attribution about another person, she/he becomes upset, and her/his disequilibrium takes the form of anger at the person who is the cause of the confusion. This anger results in a collective intolerance for those who stray away from the stereotypes. If people recognized that they always made their attributions probabilistically, they would not have the same degree of investment in these decisions and would become more able to accept a greater range of sex-related attitudes, feelings, and behaviors in themselves and others.

The findings of the authors' experiments are interesting. They work from the premise that there is no one gender cue that holds in every situation as the definitive one for gender determination. Biologically, it is not chromosomes, hormones, or genitals. Anthropologically, there is no fixed female or male behavior that holds in every society. Psychologically, there is no way of feeling or acting that can be shown with uniformity to be "typically" female or male. To every definition there is the exception. "There is no rule for deciding 'male' or 'female' that will always work."

Their experiments tried to find how people would attribute gender without sufficient concrete cues. They used a series of overlay transparencies, each one showing a female or male characteristic, i.e., breast, penis, long or short hair, curved or narrower hips, etc. By placing one transparency over another, different people of more or less definitive gender types could be constructed, and the participants were asked to give the sex of the various figures. From an analysis of the responses, Kessler and McKenna concluded that the schema used in our society is to "see someone as female only when you cannot see them as male." This finding is not surprising in a male-oriented society and has important implications for sexual equality.

Overall, the book is thoughtfully planned and clearly written for such an intrinsically complicated and controversial approach. The bibliography is extensive and would be helpful to those planning gender research. There is also a long appendix which contains letters from a transsexual who is in the process of changing gender identity.

I have chosen to accent the points

above because they have the greatest interest for sexologists. The authors do not devote much time to these ideas, however, and present them almost in passing. The bulk of the book is devoted to persuading the reader of the advantages of ethnomethodology. For this reason *Gender* will mainly be of interest to students of philosophy, epistemology, and especially ethnomethodology. The sexologist without a background or a special interest in these areas will find the book hard going as the ethnomethodology gets in the way of the discussion of gender rather than enhancing it.

But whether or not one accepts the concept of ethnomethodology, *Gender* does reaffirm the idea that different people have different realities, and the sensitive educator and therapist must be constantly aware of this in dealing with students and clients. The book does not go beyond espousing the value of a greater number of options, whereas a discussion of choice among these alternatives is a fundamental for educators and therapists. The student or client presented with a vast array of options and no guidelines for choosing among them may be paralyzed, and this is one of the problems with the ethnomethodological declaration that having more options is a good in itself. There comes a point when an increasing number of options leads to chaos rather than to effective choice. **PR**

**The Shanor Study: Sexual Sensitivity of the American Male.** Karen Shanor. New York: Dial Press, 1978 (274 pp.; \$8.95).

*Reviewed by Keith W. Jacobs, PhD, Department of Psychology, Loyola University, New Orleans, Louisiana.*

This study of male sexual fantasies was apparently developed as a sequel to Dr. Shanor's earlier book on female sexual fantasies (*The Fantasy Files*, 1977), but seems to have been expanded into a major study of contemporary male sexuality. The contents are organized by relevant topics (orgasm, masturbation, fantasy) and by age groups (40s, 30s, 20s, golden years, and teens). Each section is written in a straightforward manner, presenting the author's conclusions and supporting these by quotations from her respondents. Detailed case studies are presented in several

chapters to provide greater insight into the various age groups.

Dr. Shanor presents a most positive approach to sexuality, one not limited to genital sexuality: "A person who feels healthy, alive, and good about the world is a sexual person." The view of male sexuality which emerges from her study contrasts abruptly with the traditional "macho" stereotype of the American male. As suggested in the book's title, he emerges as a sexually sensitive person, with a capacity for tenderness, who values the relationship as much as the sexual act itself. While there are some areas of agreement between her findings and those of previous studies, such as the frequency of masturbation, her findings also suggest a movement away from the behaviors and attitudes of the past. Also emerging in her portraits of American males is a tremendous variability in sexual behavior, particularly in terms of that with which men are comfortable. Her study seems to suggest that sexual attitudes and behavior are more or less age-specific, that social differences are disappearing, and that men are slowly being liberated from restrictive stereotypes. Some attention is also given to ethnic differences in sexuality (only 52% of her sample is Caucasian) and differences in sexual orientation (only 88% of her male respondents classified themselves as heterosexual).

She seems to go beyond her questionnaire and interview data in the extremely well-written and important final chapter, "Coming Together," in which she presents a more global view of male and female sexuality: "Men and women are learning more humanistic ways of relating based on sincerity and concern for 'the other.' They are learning to coordinate their true feelings with their bodies so sex will stop being a masquerade and can become a part of the person inside. They are becoming whole, sensitive human beings—enhancing their sexuality and their lives."

I would like to think that this work actually represents a rigorous scientific study of the American male, but, while the author includes an appendix containing demographic descriptions of the 4,062 males who completed her questionnaire, a copy of the questionnaire, and reference to an additional 70 intensive interviews each lasting several hours, conspicuously absent is any reference as to how these subjects

were selected or how the questionnaires were distributed. Even though the author asserts that her data are supplied by "a representative cross-section of American men," I simply cannot accept this degree of generalization without statistical explicitness. Her casual approach to basic methodological considerations is, therefore, the major weakness of this work.

This book may still, however, represent a valuable contribution to understanding male sexuality and promoting the emergence of man as a sexually sensitive being. In particular, the male who is uncomfortable with his perceived deviation from the male stereotype will find in this book a reassurance of the normality of being sensitive and "caring." While written primarily for general readership, this work should also be of value to professionals in the areas of sex education, therapy, and academics. I personally enjoyed reading the book, and was comfortable with the males presented. My overall impression of the book is positive, but overlain with scientific skepticism. **A, PR**

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## CORRECTION

While we make every effort to ensure that all SIECUS bibliographies contain the most accurate and up-to-date information available, occasionally errors do occur. Please note the following corrections to "Human Sexuality: Books for Everyone," which appeared in the November 1978 SIECUS Report:

Under the heading "Preteens": *Love and Sex and Growing Up* by Eric W. Johnson and Corrine B. Johnson is available in a revised hardcover edition (J. B. Lippincott Co., 1977; \$6.95), and in paperback (Bantam, 1979; \$1.75).

Under the heading "Early Teens": *Sex: Telling It Straight* by Eric W. Johnson will be available in a revised edition (J. B. Lippincott Co., 1979; \$6.95), and *Love and Sex in Plain Language* by Eric W. Johnson is available in a revised hardcover edition (J. B. Lippincott Co., 1977; \$6.95), and in paperback (Bantam, 1979; \$1.75).

We apologize to the authors and publishers for incorrectly listing their works.

# JOURNAL REVIEWS

## JOURNAL OF CURRENT SOCIAL ISSUES

Journal of Current Social Issues, 287  
Park Avenue South, New York, NY  
10010)

*Reviewed by Gary F. Kelly, Director of  
the Student Development Center,  
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### Vol. 15, No. 1, Spring 1978 Special Issue: Sex is Awful

I had thought lately that special issues on human sexuality were beginning to overlap and tread on old ground. This issue of a church-affiliated journal, however, is filled with perceptive, insightful articles which held my interest and opened new doors of understanding, even when I disagreed with some of their points. The introductory editorial by Paul Sherry notes the bewildering struggle which we perpetually face as we move toward a deeper level of understanding regarding sex. Sherry points out that this special issue attempts to avoid sensationalism, be sensitive to human feelings and anxieties, and be cautious about making unduly hasty conclusions. In most cases the articles are faithful to those goals. My only general criticism is that the issue seems to dichotomize all humans into heterosexual or homosexual, not paying enough attention to a variety of other sexual orientations and preferences. One could wonder if the other sexual minorities are held in a negative light.

The papers are organized into four very relevant sections: "Sources of Authority," providing a variety of guidelines for sexual decision making; "The Family and Teenage Sexuality," focusing on helping young people become responsible sexual persons; "Public Policy Issues," ranging from the ERA and homosexuality to sex and the handicapped; and a "Resources" section which includes far more than

the typical booklist. The issue is tastefully illustrated with carefully chosen photographs.

I have selected several articles to mention specifically in this review.

#### **Spirit and Flesh.** Nathaniel Guptill.

This is a sensitively personal statement in which the author faces some of his own feelings of inadequacy in dealing with sexual issues. Yet he emerges with some guidelines for sexual understanding that are positive and emphatic about the need for personal responsibility. Guptill's values are unabashedly biased, but the straightforwardness of his ideas appealed to me.

#### **Search for Identity.** James Harrison.

In this wide-ranging article, Harrison examines several important issues: the human need for guidance in sexual learning and decision making; the fading effects of the traditional authority of the church; and the limitations of science in dealing with some questions. In the latter part of the article, he discusses implications of some current sociosexual research in areas such as psychosexual development, sex differences, and families. The author concludes with a significant statement concerning the importance of associating science, religion, and sociology in the development of ethical systems which affect sexuality and the family.

#### **Tomorrow's Family.** Sol Gordon and Craig Snyder.

In this very hopeful and positive paper, which sees glimmerings of renewed excitement and cohesiveness within the American family unit, the authors combine current research findings on teenagers and their parents with strong, insightful recommendations for preserving the family's strength. Their political awareness is evident in their statement that "Unless we advocate responsible sexuality and lobby for beneficial programs, our legacy to our children will be one of alienation and increasing decay of family life."

#### **A New Authority: Images in the Media.** Nelson Price.

The author takes a close look at sex-related images portrayed in the media and the negative consequences these images have on young people's attitudes and value systems. He discusses the stereotypic sex roles and the resultant sexism so evident on current television. Another serious image is the tendency to laugh at sex, refusing to see it as an important, serious part of life. In general, human sexuality is consistently and constantly demeaned by the media. The article concludes with eight action suggestions for adults who wish to counteract these negative influences in their own families and in their society.

#### **One Mother's Journey.** Mary Black.

This is the story of a woman who had to face her son's homosexuality and deal with the many feelings of guilt and fear generated by this realization. It is a deeply sensitive treatment, covering all of the typical reactions which many parents of gays undergo: shock, guilt, anger, searching for causes and reasons, and—finally—loving acceptance. The article is "lovingly dedicated to all parents of children who happen to be gay," and would be helpful reading for any such parent.

#### **Two Churches Respond to Human Sexuality.** G. William Sheek.

This article thoughtfully compares various positions on human sexuality taken by the Roman Catholic church and the United Church of Christ. It does not in any way have a competitive flavor, but contrasts some central sex-related concepts from the two religious bodies. The author works for a better understanding of the implications of church teachings for church members and for society. An important conclusion of the paper is that both churches have challenged members of the Christian community to deal seriously with human sexuality and decision making as a new dimension of their ministry.

### "Sissies," Continued from page 2

can seek out other nonroughhouse boys to be playmates for their son. The boy should not receive positive responses from parents for cross-dressing or role-playing as a female. Fathers should be encouraged to spend more time with their sons in activities enjoyable to both—camping, fishing, reading, exploring. Boys should be told that they cannot change sex, and that cross-dressing does not transform a boy into a girl. At young ages, thinking on this matter can be concrete. Children should clearly know the anatomical differences between boys and girls, and that boys become men and girls women. They should know that disinterest in sports or roughhouse play does not leave becoming a girl as the only remaining option. They need to know that many boys and men have esthetic interests, do not enjoy roughhouse play, and that in a world they perceive as black and white, grays exist. If the boy is being teased because of feminine gestures and mannerisms, parents can gently but firmly point out these behaviors when they occur.

In this era of unisex, feminism, and a general blurring of sex roles, it may seem antediluvian to write an article called "Sissies" and "Tomboys." Yet these terms continue to express our society's descriptions and expectations of children's behavior. They immediately convey patterns of behavior that concern some parents, cause distress for some children, and may draw the family physician into the role of counselor.

I do not know how much "sex-typed" behavior is inborn, but clearly it is not entirely such. If society continues to accommodate to more variance from the stereotypical pattern, perhaps fewer children will be stigmatized and fewer will be pushed toward other-sex identification. I hope so. In

### In Memoriam

#### James Leslie McCary, PhD

On August 31, 1978, Dr. James Leslie McCary died in Houston, Texas, at the age of 59. A widely known and respected pioneer in the sex education field, he was a prolific writer with an international reputation as a behavioral scientist. His book *Human Sexuality*, now in its third edition, was the first such educational textbook and his course, "Human Sexuality, Marriage and Family," instituted at the University of Houston in 1964, became the first course of its kind in a U.S. university, and has remained a solid favorite of campus students.

Dr. McCary served on the SIECUS Board of Directors from 1970 to 1973, and his dedicated support was invaluable during the years of public resistance to the organization's stated goals and aims. His book *Sexual Myths and Fallacies* was dedicated to Mary S. Calderone and the pioneer workers of the Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S.

His death represents a great loss to everyone involved in the study of human sexuality.

the meantime, we can work at the macro-scale to reduce society's demands for conventionalism, and at the micro-scale to reduce conflict for a troubled family and a troubled child.

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## DO YOU KNOW THAT...

### Fifth International Symposium Includes Study Tour Option

The Fifth International Symposium on Sex Education, to be held on June 24-28, 1979, in Tel Aviv, Israel, is open to professional workers concerned with sex education—school physicians, gynecologists, pediatricians, psychiatrists, social workers, psychologists, counselors, teachers, sociologists, school administrators—and to nonprofessional persons interested in the promotion of sex education programs in their communities. This year's primary theme is "Sexuality and Sex Education in Childhood."

The first of these symposia was held in Tel Aviv in 1972, with the participation of 600 professionals from 23 countries, stemming from 20 different disciplines. The 1979 registration fee until February 28 is \$120 (\$60 for accompanying persons, and \$50 for students). From March 1, the respective rates are \$140, \$70, and \$60. For a copy of the preliminary program, including subtopics and guidelines for the submission of abstracts for papers, and for travel arrangement information, write to Stanley Piltch, Compass Tours, Inc., 70 West 40th Street, New York, NY 10018.

Plans are being made for a postconference study group tour of Israel (June 29-July 3) with an optional three-day visit to a major city in Europe (July 4-6). If you are interested in joining either the five-day or the eight-day tour (if the latter, please indicate which of the following cities you would prefer: Rome, London, Paris, Amsterdam, Athens), contact Mr. Piltch. Outside New York State you may call him toll free at 800/223-6393.

### Resources to Write for . . .

**Sex News**, a Monthly Digest of News, Views, Events, Publications and Resources, edited by P. K. Houdek, is an information-packed, easy-to-read four-page newsletter well worth its price. The material in each issue covers local, state, and national events concerned with human sexuality. Twelve issues cost \$5.50 (\$5 if payment accompanies order). Write to: Sex News, 7140 Oak Street, Kansas City, MO 64114.

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