I AM A WOMEN'S LIB ADVOCATE from way back and an optimistic one. I'm sure they'll win out. They can't lose! If the human race survives with an advanced technological culture into the twenty-first century (by no means a likely possibility, I'm afraid) then women will be free. Automatically. You see, I contend that what changes human behavior is not theory and idealism but the general tendency to accept the profitable, at least eventually. For instance, there was nothing that society could do about horse theft. Social obloquy, corporal punishment, lynching, and legal death penalty—nothing worked! And then the cure was developed, and a simple one—the automobile was invented. When fewer people wanted or needed horses badly enough to steal them, horse theft declined. Of course, we now have the problem of automobile theft, but that's another story, isn't it?

All right, women have been subjected and dominated (and taught to relish it and feel that being dominated was wonderful) for two biological reasons. They were physically smaller than men, for one thing, so that they could be physically beaten up if they forgot their place. Second, they bore children and suckled them and that tied them down. Between these two factors, men could dominate, and with physical domination a fact, cultural factors could nail that into place. Women were taught to be passive and accepting, and affairs were so arranged that women had no rights, economic or otherwise, under law; they could not earn a living or be sure of their next meal unless they accepted male domination.

But if we are to survive as a technological society into the twenty-first century, it will be only at the price of achieving population stability. (That will not be the only price, but it will surely be one of the prices.) Children will be a rare luxury by modern standards and women's role as wife and mother will be seriously depressed in importance. And if technology continues to advance, developing automation will make the work of mankind more and more a matter of controlling electrical contacts and making internal decisions—something for which women are as suitable as men. Man's superior muscle will go for naught and woman's smaller and defter fingers at controls may go for a lot.

Well, then once the social pressure on a woman to marry and have children is lifted, and once she can make a living for herself as easily (or more easily) than man can, what can possibly keep her in a state of domination but criminal force.

She may have other problems, but they will be *other* problems, not the ones she has been struggling with through all the centuries of civilization. I.A.

A-1

25 Patterns of Social Behavior: The Case of Sex Roles

In Psychology Today! An Introduction 1972

Human behavior often follows regular patterns. On a city street people drive their cars along predetermined paths, keeping to the right side of the road and signaling each turn; pedestrians walk on the sidewalk and cross at set places. Although the particular individuals taking part in the pattern vary from one moment to the next, the pattern remains essentially the same. Regularity of behavior is a feature of human life.

Personality characteristics also show a kind of patterning. Certain types of people often display a number of traits in common. Judges, for instance, typically seem sober, impartial, calm, and rational; stewardesses seem courteous, attractive, and efficient. There is also a good deal of consistency in the characteristics displayed by men and by women. Men often seem aggressive, independent, unemotional, self-confident, and competitive. Women often seem talkative, tactful, gentle, interested in their own appearances, aware of the feelings of others, and neat.

This chapter describes some of the psychological processes that underlie the patterning of human social behavior. The case of sex roles serves as a particular illustration of the way in which social behavior in general is patterned. Just as there are important differences in behavior and personality between men and women, there are also differences between people grouped according to such other characteristics as age, social class or occupation, and race. In addition, there are striking differences between cultures in these social patterns. In the investigation of these patterns three basic concepts are especially useful: social norms, social status, and social roles.

SOCIAL NORMS

Social groups hold established rules and expectations about human behavior that govern much of what we do. *Formal* organizations, such as universities, often have extensive sets of written rules and regulations: universities regulate not only academic matters, such as course requirements, but also many nonacademic matters, such as parking, the use of liquor on campus, housing, and general student conduct. The severity of punishment for a violation depends on the perceived seriousness of the offense. In *informal* groups, the rules and expectations are usually not explicit, and a person who does not follow them is more likely to be snubbed or criticized than to incur a fine. Yet informal group expectations often have powerful effects on people's conduct. In a group of friends each person is expected to behave in a way generally approved by the group, or he risks the consequences of disapproval and possible exclusion.

These rules and expectations for behavior are termed *social norms*. A norm is a prescription for conduct—a formal or informal set of ways that people are *expected* to behave. Judges are expected to be sober and serious, stewardesses to be efficient and courteous. Norms usually specify the range of behavior that is acceptable or appropriate in a given situation rather than specifying a precise act. Some norms such as those regulating automobile driving, control our behavior in obvious ways. The effects of other norms, however, are more subtle. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 22, cultures differ in their use of space. In every culture people stand or sit closer to others in intimate activities than they do in business or formal transactions. However, as E. T. Hall has shown in his book *The Hidden Dimension*, the actual physical distance that is appropriate for each type of contact varies from country to country. Members of a culture have learned the appropriate distances for each kind of contact, but outsiders may not have. Although people's behavior conforms to the group norms that apply to such behavior, people often are not consciously aware of those norms. It is only when someone violates the underlying expectations that guide our everyday behavior (for example, by standing too close or by acting in a manner that seems inappropriate for his or her sex) that we may become aware of the norms. Much of our behavior that we think of as natural (integral to our personality) and appropriate is governed by such subtle norms.

Figure 25.1
Sets of social norms define the relationship of performers to their audiences and the status relationship of common man to rulers. The great jazz musician Louis Armstrong once violated both these sets of norms in a single brilliant stroke. In the London Palladium in 1932 before King George VI of England, Armstrong (looking out toward the King) stunned the audience by introducing an encore with the words "This one's for you, Rex!"

SOCIAL STATUS

The members of most groups or social systems differ in rank or *social status*. Some positions within each group are more valued and respected than others and are associated with higher rewards and greater personal privileges. At work, the boss has higher status, a higher salary, and more power than his employees; in a movie company, the stars have more prestige and correspondingly higher salaries than the supporting actors or extras; at universities, tenured faculty outrank instructors.

Status comes from either of two sources. It may be *achieved*, or earned by effort: a poor medical student may become a world-renowned surgeon. Status, alternatively, may be *ascribed* on the basis of some inherited characteristic, such as family status or sex: in India, only a male child born into the Brahman caste can become a Brahman priest. Social interaction is strongly influenced by the status of the participants, whether achieved or ascribed.

Roger Brown, a social psychologist, notes that people's relative status is often reflected in forms of address. Whether one person addresses another by first name or by title and last name depends on the individuals' status relative to one another.

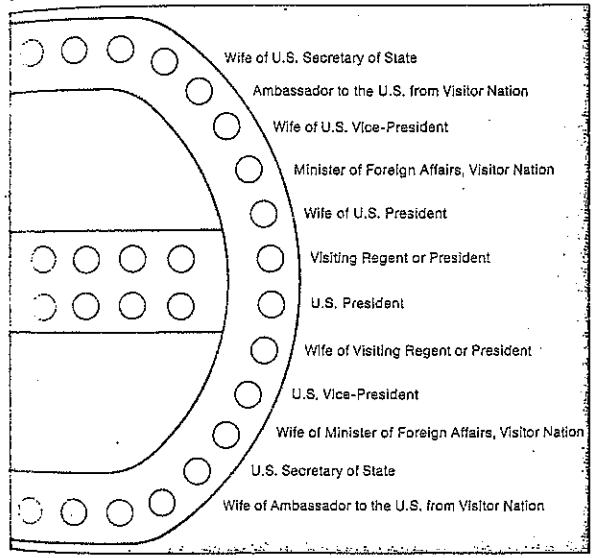

Figure 25.2
The seating arrangements at formal White House dinners illustrate the consequences of social status and the rigid adherence to its rules. (Top) at a recent White House dinner for the Economic Minister of Japan, President Nixon was seated in the middle of the dais; he was flanked on the right by the guest of honor, and on the left by the Economic Minister's wife. Mrs. Nixon sat next to the guest of honor, and the Vice-President's wife was seated to her right. Vice-President Agnew was placed to the left of the wife of the Economic Minister. (Bottom) the seating diagram for the formal White House dinner for President Pompidou of France, showing a somewhat similar adherence to the status of the participants.

In the United States, when people of unequal status interact, the superior is addressed by title and the inferior by first name. Many rules of etiquette are based on social status.

Status commonly affects interaction even in situations where it is not supposed to be a factor. On juries, for example, there is a strong norm of equality dictating that all jurors should be treated as equals. Nonetheless, in a study of mock juries, F. L. Strodtbeck and collaborators found that jurors with higher occupational statuses were much more likely than those with lower statuses to be elected jury foremen. They also participated more actively, had greater influence on the final decision, and were perceived by others to be more competent for the jury task. Status often influences not only the frequency and quality of a person's participation in

a discussion but also, more generally, who interacts with whom. College freshmen tend to make friends with fellow freshmen; secretaries are more likely to eat lunch together than with executives. It is clear that norms governing social interaction depend to a large extent on the relative status of the participants.

SOCIAL ROLES

A *social role* can be thought of as simply a cluster of social norms (for behavior, for personality traits, and so on) applicable to some specified social category of people. Any occupation provides an example of a social role. Occupations have far-reaching consequences for the behavior people are expected to display. They dictate the hours people are expected to keep, their clothes, and the skills they must display. Occupational roles also affect how much people tell about themselves to others. A person might disclose personal details to friends or family, clergymen, doctors, or even strangers but not to business associates. Some people acquire special privileges because of their occupational roles: an accountant may check our accounts, a dentist our teeth, a dressmaker or tailor our measurements—and these activities seem appropriate and reasonable. Occupational roles influence the emotions people are expected to display, at least during working hours. At work, an accountant is expected to be careful and precise, a mortician to be solemn.

One of the most important sets of social roles is that attached to gender. The term *sex role* refers to the set of expectations that a society in general shares about what a woman, by virtue of her femaleness, and a man, by virtue of his maleness, should be or should do. Sex roles also have implications for most other role relationships, such as that between husband and wife, boss and worker, teacher and student, opposite-sex jury members, or friends. In the following section the origins and implications of these sex roles are examined in greater detail.

THE ORIGINS OF SEX-ROLE DIFFERENCES

Gender plays a central part in determining the patterning of human behavior. We hardly need to be reminded that men and women are different—that they speak

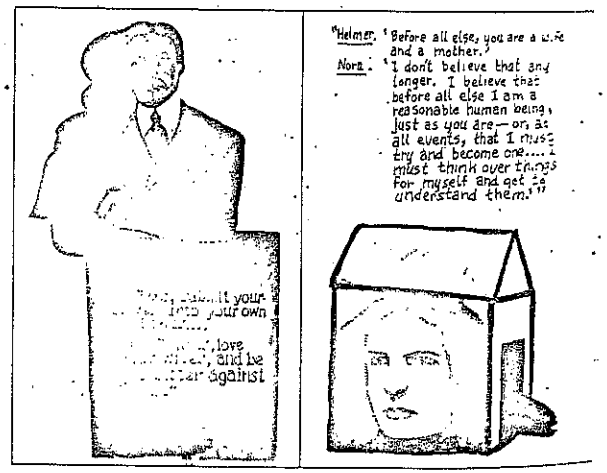

Figure 25.3
Two radically different views regarding women's roles. For a very long time, our culture has assumed that "a woman's place is in the home"; accompanying this assumption is the requirement that she be passive, maternal, and subordinate to her husband's wishes and needs. The growing movement for women's liberation emphasizes the restrictive and oppressive effects of such dictates and encourages both men and women to subscribe to the attitude expressed in the right-hand quote, said by Nora, in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*.
[From *Colossians* 3:18-19; from Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House* (trans. R. Farquharson Sharp). In *Four Great Plays by Ibsen*. New York: Bantam Books, 1967, p. 65.]

their time in different activities and often have different interests, aptitudes, and temperaments.

A central question in any discussion of sex differences concerns how much they can be attributed to innate biological factors and how much to learned cultural factors. Physical differences between men and women seem to be determined primarily by biological factors. In most societies, men tend, on the average, to be taller than women and to have more muscle, more body hair, and so on. Women tend to mature earlier and live longer. But how, if at all, does biology contribute to the formation of such psychological traits as dominance, aggressiveness, cooperativeness, and nurturance?

Theories Stressing Biology

The possibility of sex-linked differences in temperament and personality receives support from several sources. Research on nonhuman primates and other mammals, conducted in both laboratories and natural settings, has found that in most species males are more dominant, active, energetic, and ready to fight than females. Studies of human societies suggest that in every known society that has warfare, it is the men who do the fighting.

Another line of research that supports the idea of biological sex differences focuses on the effects of male and female hormones on personality and behavior. For instance, during the course of the menstrual cycle women undergo large fluctuations in the relative levels of various hormones. Several investigators have found fairly consistent relationships between these hormonal changes and differences in mood, feelings of self-esteem, and sexual desire as well as in such seemingly unrelated behaviors as crime and automobile accident rates. It is not clear, however, whether these factors operate directly or whether their effects are mediated by social expectations about, for example, the way women are supposed to feel and act during menstruation. Research has also shown great individual differences in the extent to which women are affected by menstrually related hormonal changes. Other scientists have noted that males may also experience periodic variation in relative hormonal levels. Thus, the question is still open.

Some theorists have attempted to use biological differences to explain complex behaviors. Freud believed that anatomy is a major determinant of one's total personality and that differences between male and female anatomy account for what he saw as women's greater passivity and lower aggressiveness, their greater narcissism and masochism, and their weaker consciences. Anthropologist L. Tiger has recently suggested that human males have evolved to be more dominant than females and to form a special kind of bond among themselves that has made possible the organization and management of political, military, and economic institutions. Tiger theorizes that mixed-sex groups are not as effective in these three areas and that the exclusion of females from male groups may thus have biological origins. The evidence for these grand views of Freud and Tiger is tenuous. They stand mostly as interesting speculations. It is common for biological explanations to be used to back up the idea of the naturalness or unchangeability of some pattern of human behavior that may in fact be under the control of societal norms.

Theories Stressing Culture

Support for the preeminence of cultural factors in the determination of sex differences comes from a variety of sources. Anthropologists and other social scientists hold that gender is not only a biological category but a social category as well. Every culture has a set of beliefs about the *natural differences* between men and women. But there are enormous variations between cultures in the particular qualities that are considered to be masculine and those that are considered to be feminine. Social scientists generally assume that members of different cultures do not differ significantly in their innate psychological make-up and that differences between cultures may therefore be taken to result from social learning in shaping behavior and personality. Three cross-cultural examples may help to clarify the extent to which definitions of masculine and feminine behavior are patterned by society.

Figure 25.4
Margaret Mead, an anthropologist, has a seemingly inexhaustible fund of energy. She has studied many cultures and has formulated many important theories in anthropology. One concept that she has discussed and written about extensively is *cultural relativity*; this principle states that behavior and experience must be evaluated in their cultural context. No behavior is intrinsically good or bad, normal or deviant, healthy or disturbed; only when one's culture deems an act deviant is it deviant.

Emotionality In America it is believed that women are more emotional than men. Women cry more easily and have trouble concealing their feelings. It is men who are the masters of the "poker face." In Iran, however, the pattern is reversed. According to E. T. Hall, in *The Silent Language:*

> Men are expected to show their emotions. . . . If they don't, Iranians suspect they are lacking a vital human trait and are not dependable. Iranian men read poetry; they are sensitive and have well-developed intuition and in many cases are not expected to be too logical. They are often seen embracing and holding hands. Women, on the other hand, are considered to be coldly practical. They exhibit many of the characteristics associated with men in the United States.

Iranians consider men to be superior to women, and the society is definitely patriarchal. In other words, emotionality in Iran is considered both natural and desirable in males and is highly valued.

Sexuality In America, it is commonly agreed that men are more sexually aggressive than women, more easily aroused sexually, and less able to control their sex drives. However, other cultures have very different beliefs about sexuality. Margaret Mead has noted that among the Arapesh of New Guinea it is equally permissible and common for either men or women to initiate sexual activity, and no natural differences in sexual desire are believed to exist between the sexes. Among several African groups and American Indian tribes, it is thought that women are naturally more highly sexed than men.

Physical Strength Americans feel that they know for sure that women are naturally the weaker sex. Women are considered wise to do the light work of housekeeping and leave heavy jobs to men. E. Albert reports, however, that in Africa women constitute the chief agricultural force. When she told her African friends that in America men do the heavy work, they were openly distressed.

> This was a mistake, they maintained. Everybody knows that men are not suited by nature for heavy work, that women are stronger and better workers. Men drink too much and do not eat enough to keep up their strength; they are more tense and travel about too much to develop the habits or the muscles needed for sustained work on the farms.

The point of this example is not that African men are physically different from American men or that they could not be trained to do heavy labor. Rather, it is that they are not believed to be—and do not believe themselves to be—as able in this endeavor as women and are not expected to try to compete.

Reconciling the Theories

How can the biological and cultural approaches to sex differences be reconciled? It is possible that there are some underlying biological differences in temperament between men and women. Energy level and readiness to fight may be examples of sex-linked traits. But within each sex there is very wide variation on any trait. It is important to realize that each trait covers a continuum of behaviors. An analogy with height may clarify this point. On the average men in America are taller than women; nevertheless, there is considerable variation in height among both men and women. A woman who is six feet tall is taller than most of the men she meets. A man who is five feet tall is shorter than most of the women he meets. Psychological traits also vary widely within each sex. Although the range of activity levels among men may be generally higher than that among women, there are many exceptions

to this rule. It would not be unusual to find a woman who is more energetic than most men.

Even if there are basic *predispositions* that differ, on the average, between the sexes, human beings are remarkably flexible. Cultural factors do much to mask certain characteristics and accentuate others. Innate predispositions do not directly determine actual behavior (see Chapter 2). How aggressive people are, for example, depends not only on their readiness to fight but also on the *consequences* of aggressive acts. In situations where physical fighting leads to dishonor or social disapproval, for example, most people will inhibit whatever predispositions to fight they may have. Society patterns our lives in many subtle ways, which we may become aware of only when we run up against different cultural patterns. The preceding discussions of norms about the use of space and of cultural differences in masculinity and femininity provide examples of hidden societal influences.

The following sections explore the ways in which gender as a social category affects our behavior and personality. The discussion is organized around two familiar concepts, social status and role. At birth, in most societies women are ascribed to a subordinate social status with respect to men. And both sexes are required to conform in some degree to cultural sex roles—expectations and standards—about how males and females *should* behave.

SEX ROLES AND SOCIAL STATUS

One current advertisement proclaims "You've come a long way, baby!" And in fact the status of women in Western culture is improving. However, it would be a serious mistake to believe that the status of women in America today is equivalent to that of men. Both in society at large and in particular personal relationships such as marriage, women generally occupy subordinate positions. In this country, many of the most blatant *legal* inequalities in status between the sexes have been formally abolished. Women can vote, own property, and sign contracts. They are protected by law, if not in fact, against discrimination in employment. Nevertheless, discrimination continues in occupational, professional, and other areas. Many absurdly discriminatory laws still exist. For example, women may not build rockets in Massachusetts, and married women in America may not produce wine at home, a privilege reserved for "heads of households."

Status Differences in Society at Large

Informal status differences between men and women are easily observed. "Woman's place" is still in the home, rather than in positions of power and prestige. It is men who govern the country, manage industry, direct armies, negotiate peace, and lead us in prayer and other religious activities. The Judaeo-Christian tradition perpetuates a patriarchal order. Just as God the Father rules mankind, so woman should be ruled by her husband. In the words of St. Paul, "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." In English, "man" and "mankind" and the male pronouns "he," "him," and "his" are used to refer to both male and female humans. It is not surprising that Strodtbeck's jury study found that women, like men of low status, were less active and influential.

In America, as in most societies, there is not only a division of labor by gender but also a division of power and prestige. Some time ago, sociologist G. Myrdal suggested that there are striking similarities between the positions of women and of blacks in our male-dominated and white-dominated American society. The adjacent list summarizes Myrdal's observations.

Status Differences in Marriage

Status differences are also found in more personal or intimate relationships. When a woman marries, she gives up many of the rights we associate with adult citizenship.

Some Parallels Between the Statuses of Women and Black Americans

Both have "high social visibility" because of physical appearance, dress, or both.

Originally both were considered property in Western culture and were controlled by male family heads.

Historically neither group could vote.

Neither historically had legal rights over property or guardianship of children.

Both were believed to have inferior mental capacities. At first only limited educational opportunities were provided for them; later, a special type of education was deemed appropriate.

Each has been assigned to a subordinate "place" in the social system: Social approval rests on their staying obediently in this subordinate status; any effort to alter this scheme is abhorred.

The myth of the "contented woman" who does not want to enjoy such civil rights as the right to vote and equal social and job opportunities serves the same social function as the myth of the "contented Negro."

It is difficult for either to take part in government by attaining important public office.

There have been certain jobs allocated to women and others to blacks. These jobs are usually low in salary and in prestige.

It is considered "unnatural" for white men to work under black supervisors or for males to work under female direction. In addition, women generally prefer not to have women bosses, and blacks have often felt the same way about working under other blacks.

A kindly paternalism such as a guardian feels for his ward has been thought of as the ideal solution.

Figure 25.6 *(opposite)* An important aspect of personality development during childhood is the acquisition of the sex role prescribed by one's culture. We begin to be "sex-typed" at birth, as shown in the upper left photograph. Little girls are taught to be gentle (upper right), and they receive considerable practice at being "just like Mommy" (lower left). Young boys, in contrast, are allowed and encouraged to be aggressive, active, and energetic (middle right and lower right). These roles are so pervasive that most readers would be surprised to see these same photographs with the sexes reversed (because boys "should not" wheel baby carriages, and girls "do not" throw rocks).

At her marriage she is symbolically "given away" to her husband by her father, and the happy couple becomes "man and wife"—rather than "woman and husband." In most states it is unlawful for a married woman to use her maiden name in legal transactions. Furthermore, divorced women with children are frequently forbidden to reassume their maiden names; they must keep the names of their former husbands, and if they remarry they must assume the names of their new husbands. In many states, married women may not buy property or take out loans in their own names. Attempts to eliminate such inequalities usually meet with difficulties—legislators tend to dismiss reform proposals as unworthy of serious consideration; the part of the federal antidiscrimination law applying to sex was originally inserted as a humorous attempt to discredit the bill.

There has long been a sexual double standard that treats sexual infidelity by wives much more harshly than that by husbands. Popular magazines often counsel wives to accept their husband's philandering, because "men will be men."

Marriages differ enormously in the extent to which husband and wife share in power and decision making. Domineering husbands are common, but domineering wives violate accepted standards of status within marriage, especially within middle-class families. Examples of apparent status reversals in which a man is "henpecked" by his forceful, dominant wife are not rare, but in many ways, subtle and unsubtle, husbands typically have more decision-making power by far. Even if both spouses work, for example, it is expected that the husband's job or career will determine where the couple lives and when or if they will move. The wife typically makes household decisions, but the really important decisions are made by the husband.

SEX ROLES AND PERSONALITY

In growing up, each person must come to terms with the standards and expectations held by his or her culture for men and women. These standards are based on two factors: (1) beliefs about human nature and the qualities of "normal" men and women and (2) societal images of the ideal man and woman. Cultural standards are not mere descriptions but rather prescribe what men and women should actually *be like*. The same boy, for example, would acquire quite different personality traits and behavior patterns depending on whether he was raised in America or in Iran.

In America, women are supposed to be warm, charming, sensitive, emotional, and nurturant, to use intuition rather than logic, and to act somewhat dependent and submissive toward men. Men are expected to be competent, unemotional, logical, dominant, independent, and somewhat aggressive. Several studies of sex-role stereotypes, such as that done by P. Rosenkrantz and his co-workers, indicate:

1. Adult men and women hold similar beliefs about the qualities that characterize both typical and ideal males and females.
2. Adults tend to see themselves as fitting the stereotype for their sex.
3. Adults of both sexes believe that a greater number of masculine traits are socially desirable or valuable than feminine traits.
4. Psychiatrists and other health-care workers tend to see the mentally healthy or "normal" person as one who conforms to society's sex-role expectations.

To be considered psychologically healthy an individual must exhibit the qualities considered appropriate for his or her sex. Those who do not—and there are some in every society—must bear the psychological cost of being considered different.

Appropriate Social Roles and Skills

Sex roles determine not only the qualities expected of men and women but also the skills and social roles that are considered appropriate. A female is supposed to gain a command of all the skills associated with the custodial care of the family and its living quarters—such as cooking, sewing, keeping house, shopping wisely, and caring

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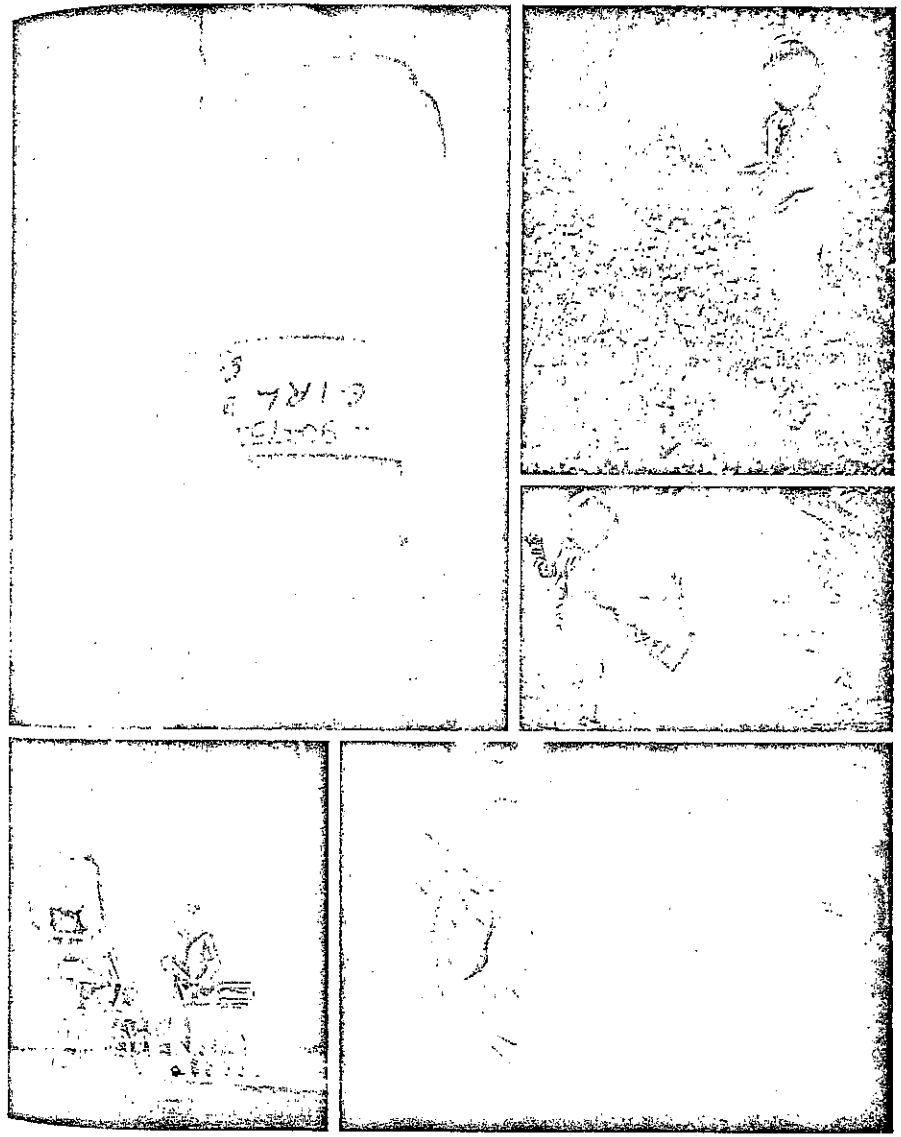

for others, especially children—so that she can succeed in her major sex-determined social roles of wife and mother. A male is expected to develop athletic abilities and intellectual and mechanical skills, which will be needed in two of his major social roles: job-holder and head of the family. For males, occupational roles are primary. Because the male is considered the major family provider, the adequate performance of his roles of husband and father depends heavily on his economic achievement. There is no thought that when a young man marries he might give up his job.

Human Interaction

It has been suggested that American sex roles orient men and women toward different aspects of social interaction. Women are expected to be *social and emotional specialists*, who focus on other people's needs and on the maintenance of social relationships. Men are supposed to be *task specialists*, who are interested in manipulating objects and ideas to achieve some specific goal, often in an impersonal atmosphere. In Strodtbeck's jury study, for example, although all participants played the same social role of juror, many of the statements of men concerned ideas, whereas those of women tended to be responses to male suggestions or attempts to reduce conflict.

Concerns in Marriage

Some investigators have suggested that the female sex role encourages a woman to seek personal satisfaction and feelings of competence and success in her relationships with others—particularly with men, especially her husband, and with children. A man, in contrast, is supposed to fulfill himself through his work and other outside activities. His major role in the family, it is suggested, is that of a task-oriented provider. There is not, of course, an absolute division between the sexes in these matters. Studies by J. Heiss of couples who were dating and engaged and by G. Levinger of middle-class American married couples found that as couples progressed from dating to marriage, the woman's near-monopoly over social-emotional matters seemed to decrease. Both husbands and wives studied said it was important to praise the other, to ask about the day's events, and to discuss personal feelings. In addition, both cited affection and companionship as the most important goals in marriage, rather than economic security (which they ranked sixth).

Actuality Versus Stereotypes

These findings and others demonstrate that sex-role personality differences, like other role-related personality differences such as those dictated by age or income level, are not absolute. At times, women are expected to exhibit qualities that are considered masculine, and men are expected to exhibit qualities that are considered feminine. Women, in fulfilling their socially prescribed, primary roles of wife and mother, certainly engage in task-oriented behavior (although perhaps not in competition with men): in planning meals or running a household, in shopping or bargain hunting, women may be not only task-oriented but aggressive and competitive as well. Similarly, men's behavior toward their wives may show sensitivity, gentleness, and warmth.

Traditional sex-role behavior may be more likely to occur in some relationships than in others. There may be class and subgroup differences in expectations. In addition, the depth of the relationship affects sex-role conformity: When a couple first starts dating, the female may try to act as typically feminine and the male as typically masculine as possible. But as the relationship becomes more serious, the behavior of both may become less stereotyped.

Sex roles, like all social roles, change over time. In the past, marriage has often been an economic arrangement in which the wife received financial support in return for providing valuable domestic services. In modern America, the economic aspects of marriage may be diminishing. Although social-emotional relationships are

supposed to be the *primary* concern of women, occupational roles outside the ne—and the traits that go with them—are increasingly acceptable socially.

E EFFECTS OF ROLE BEHAVIOR ON PERSONALITY

al roles can have profound effects on personality. Although we may enter and e some roles—such as that of airplane passenger—very casually, others are not asily cast off. To a woman who has borne and raised three children, motherhood ot a role to be entered or dropped at will. Rather, it is a key element of her concept or sense of personal identity, and the tasks, perspectives, and psychologi- characteristics associated with its performance may have become central to her rsonality. Similarly, a man who has spent thirty years practicing law has major chological investments in his career. The habits of logical reasoning and careful beration that he learned in law school may become part of his personality. In dition, women have been prepared for the role of motherhood and men for fessional or other working roles since childhood.

Some roles are played quite consciously, and we may be acutely aware of their nctions on our conduct. But others become such a part of our personality and f-concept that their loss creates major psychological disturbances. The business- an who reaches retirement age and the woman whose children grow up and leave me may both suffer from the loss of important social roles. They may become verely depressed and feel at a loss to find activities to occupy their days. In modern merica the average woman has more than twenty years of life left after this event; hich poses a social problem of major proportions. Sex roles inevitably have signifi- nt effects on our personalities. Although space does not permit a full discussion f this topic, some of the effects of playing masculine and feminine roles in our ciety are outlined in the following section.

ychological Costs of the Masculine Role

he masculine role is in many ways the more privileged, especially in the middle ss. Nonetheless, it carries some special burdens as well, such as service in the rmed forces, harsher penalties for identical criminal offenses, and Social Security tirement compensation at a later age than women. But the greatest costs of the le are associated with long-term denials of certain human traits. The male roles f husband and worker make stringent demands. The income, life style, and social- ass status of a man's wife and children derive from his achievements as a worker; herefore, these dependents have vested interests in his performance. The demands f his work role may also deprive a man of close contact with his children. The sharp mphasis on family roles for women and work roles for men severely limits the range f experiences for both sexes. Many men might enjoy such activities as cooking or aring for children if they could escape the restrictions imposed by their sex roles.

Being a "real man" is defined in the United States as being tough, stoical, and nemotional. These psychological dimensions hamper men's ability to express their motions, which, according to S. Jourard and others, may have dire consequences. Men do have tender and strong emotions, Jourard argues, but are forced to deny r conceal them. A man is required to hide a part of himself, of his inner experience, om both himself and others. Jourard believes that to love another person, we must know that person well and be aware of his or her psychological needs and moods; men, therefore, may be harder to love than women are, because they are harder to know. Many critics of contemporary sex roles suggest that the masculine role ncourages men to treat other people as objects rather than as unique individuals. Many men treat women primarily as sex objects or pretty dolls without the range f human interests, feelings, responses, and abilities that male persons may have. Men also often expect their female companions to accept the primacy of male terests, activities, and demands in any given situation. Such an orientation, it is rgued, is potentially harmful to both parties because it deprives them of opportuni-

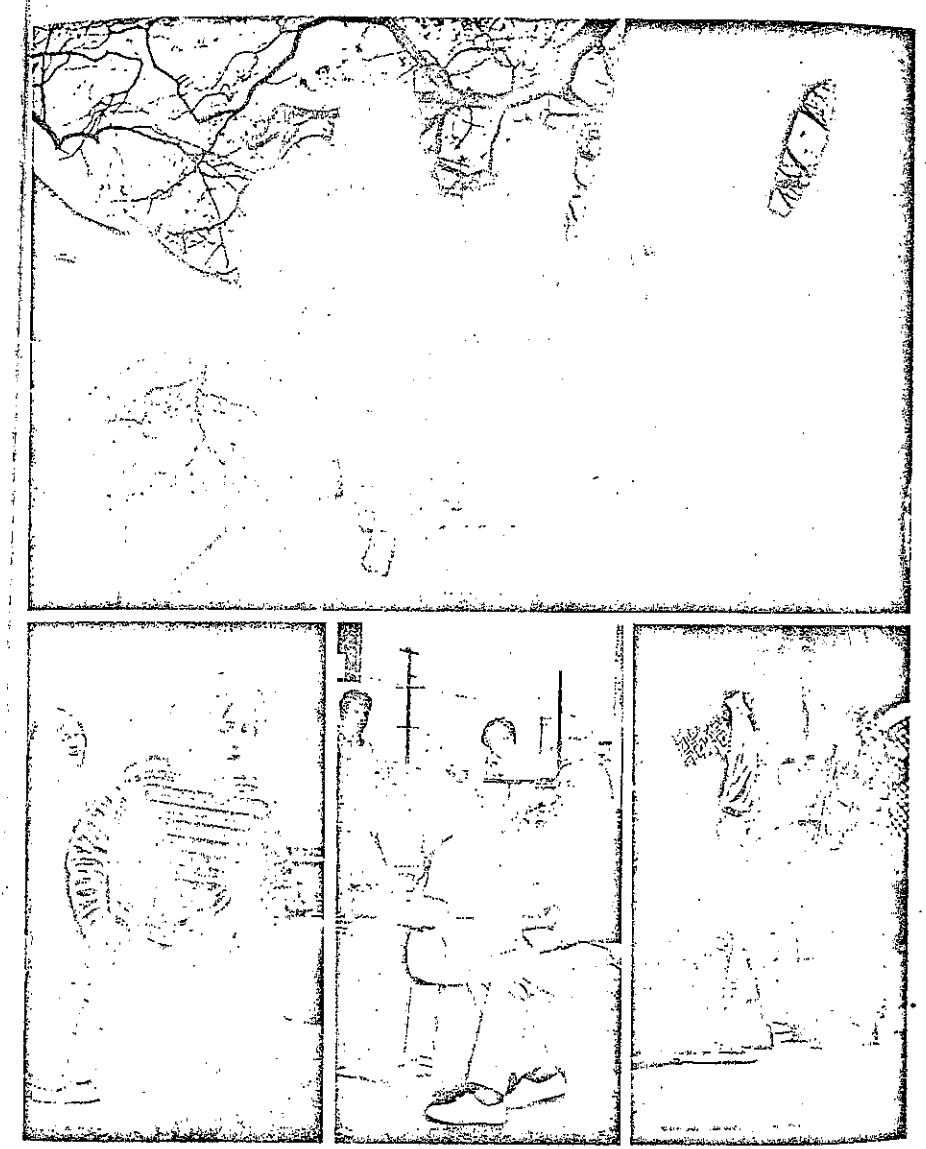

Figure 25.7 *(opposite)*
Little girls and boys grow up. Although their behavior changes, it still reflects the sex roles of the culture. When we execute behaviors typical of members of the other sex, we are not supposed to perform quite like them. When a girl plays baseball, for example, she is not expected to hit home runs and pitch fastballs; she is expected to run and throw "like a girl." A boy is not supposed to be comfortable while caring for babies or preparing a meal; he is expected to feel awkward and out of place. These expectations are unfortunate, for they influence otherwise competent behaviors that would be rewarding to the performer.

ties for honest communication and the sharing of meaningful personal experiences. Significantly, there have been deplorably few studies of the effect of male sex roles on personality. Perhaps most social scientists—the majority of whom are male—do not wish to engage in close scrutiny of the disadvantages of male dominance.

Psychological Costs of the Feminine Role

Occupying an inferior social status and playing a subordinate social role have negative effects on women. For example, women are often prejudiced against other women, preferring male doctors, ministers, lawyers, dentists, and job superiors—and many educated women scorn female company. In a study done by H. H. Remmers and D. H. Radler in 1957, women were slightly less likely than men to vote for women political candidates. In a recent study by P. Goldberg, women college students were shown a series of professional articles on topics ranging from nutrition to city planning. Half the students were told the articles had been written by men, and half were told they had been written by women. Regardless of the topic, the same articles were rated as less persuasive, less well written, and of poorer quality when they were thought to be the work of women. Both clinical observations and psychological research indicate that many women experience feelings of inferiority. For example, J. P. McKee and A. C. Sheriffs found that in a large sample of college students, 61 percent of women but only 29 percent of men reported feeling intellectually inferior. It is overwhelmingly more common for girls and women to wish they were men than for men or boys to wish they were women.

Why do many women feel personally inferior, at least occasionally, and believe that women are generally less well suited for positions of high status than men? Popular views attributing such feelings to *penis envy* stem from Freud's suggestion that these feelings derive from anatomy: Little girls supposedly fear they have been castrated and envy the male penis, and a woman's unconscious belief that she is mutilated or incomplete may remain with her throughout life and cause her to view all women negatively. (Note that Freud himself was an opponent of women who were seeking role equality with men and felt that women were not suited to serious activity outside the home; see Chapter 21.) But today, even Freudians, such as M. Torok, believe that Freud overemphasized biology. It is not the male penis that women covet but male social power and prestige. Women feel inferior partly because they recognize the inferiority of the social position they occupy, partly because they have been socialized to their society's view that women, including themselves, somehow deserve their subordinate status. Women who have overcome the pressures against success for women also often unconsciously relinquish their identification with other women and identify with men, who are not forced to hide or stifle their talents.

All societies make conflicting demands on their members, but for modern American women, cultural contradictions have reached major proportions. As a college senior, Mirra Komarovsky described the predicament arising from the conflict between American ideals of personal achievement and equality and the reality of female sex-role prescriptions:

> All through grammar school and high school my parents led me to feel that to do well in school was my chief responsibility. . . . But recently they have suddenly got worried about me. I don't pay enough attention to social life, a woman needs *some* education but not that much. . . . The next few years are, after all, the proper time to find a mate. But the urge to apply what I have learned and the challenge of this profession is so strong that I shall go on despite the family opposition.

Regardless of whether a woman chooses to devote herself to her home and family or to try to combine marriage and a career or even to remain an unmarried career woman, she can rarely escape this basic American dilemma.

The research of M. S. Horner provides one striking example of the psychological

conflict these cultural contradictions can create. Horner postulates that both men and women who are interested in achievement experience some fear of failure but that American women may have the additional *fear of actually succeeding*. In Horner's experiment, as described in Chapter 19, she presented women college students with the beginning of a success story about a girl named Anne who finds herself at the top of her medical-school class and asked them to write an ending for it. She found that most women students, in contrast to men students (for whom the same story had a male character), wrote unhappy endings. The negative endings could be classified into three types. Some indicated that Anne's success might lead to *social rejection*. In one girl's story both Anne and her boyfriend, Carl, are in the same medical-school class. Anne is upset; she wants Carl to do better than she. The next term she deliberately lowers her grades and eventually drops out to marry Carl and raise his children. Other stories indicate a *concern about normality or femininity*. One girl's story has Anne both ecstatic and guilty about her success. She feels driven and finally suffers a nervous breakdown. In the end she quits school and marries a successful young doctor. In the final group of stories, Anne's success is *denied*. One girl wrote that Anne was nonexistent, a code name created by a group of medical students. Horner notes that for women, academic success may be a mixed blessing, leading to personal satisfaction and the realization of long-term goals but posing a threat to relations with men and to their sense of femininity.

THE ACQUISITION OF SEX ROLES

The appropriate sex role is among the first of all his many roles that a child acquires, and it has major effects on later development. By three years of age, and usually much earlier, most children can correctly tell you whether they are boys or girls, and in the next year or two almost all can apply appropriate labels to others. By about age five, American children perceive major physical and behavioral differences between their parents and have learned the basic sex-role stereotypes. They know that mothers are nurturant, have less social power, and are supposed to stay home. Fathers are prestigious, fearless, aggressive, and competent at tasks outside the home. In one study cited by L. Kohlberg, three- and five-year-old children were asked "When you grow up, would you like to be a mamma or a daddy?" The three-year-olds gave no consistent preferences, but 97 percent of the five-year-olds named the

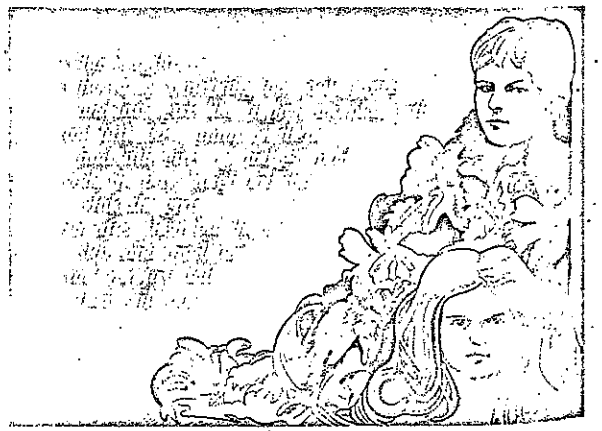

Figure 25.8
The seven-year-old girl who wrote this poem perceives that "little girls" and "little boys" behave differently, and she competently voices her frustration at the stereotyped role playing inherent in these differences.

same sex of the parent of the same sex. Although children of both sexes attribute more prestige to men, most children will name their own sex when asked if it is better to be a girl or a boy.

How do children learn about sex roles? What makes them prefer one sex to the other? What motivates the young boy to want to grow up to be a daddy and a little girl to want to be a mommy? Psychologists are still trying to answer these difficult questions, and there are currently many controversies and disagreements in the field. The following sections present three different views about the acquisition of sex roles, the same three views that are presented in the discussion of social and moral development in Chapter 8. Current research provides some support for each. In reading them, you might consider how each answers the questions we have raised and whether the three might be combined.

Social-Learning Approaches

Social-learning approaches to sex-role development are probably closest to many people's intuitive, common-sense ideas. According to social-learning theorists, such as W. Mischel and P. Mussen, children come to behave in sex-appropriate ways because they are actively taught to do so by parents, peers, teachers, and others.

In all cultures, many behaviors are sex-typed: their social consequences differ according to whether they are exhibited by males or by females. In the United States little girls are rewarded for sewing, playing with dolls, and looking pretty but are discouraged from playing football, running around, or acting overtly aggressive. Boys may be ridiculed or ignored for playing with dolls but receive praise for athletic skill. Sex typing begins at birth and continues throughout life. Children rapidly learn to discriminate sex-appropriate behaviors from inappropriate ones. They learn, for instance, that physical aggressiveness and independence are usually permitted or encouraged only in boys.

From the social-learning perspective, sex-role behavior, like all behavior, is controlled by its consequences. Actions that bring rewards tend to recur, and those that bring punishment tend to disappear. Imitation also plays an important part in sex-role learning. Children often learn new sex-appropriate behaviors by observing models, and it is in this context that the parent of the same sex as the child may assume special importance. The learning of sex-typed behaviors is a gradual process, in which the growing child adds more and more appropriate behaviors to his repertoire and generalizes the performance of old behaviors to a broadening circle of situations. The child's actions are slowly molded to fit the requirements of his culture and of its immediate representatives among his family, friends, teachers, and other socializing agents.

Parents encourage independence in their children in some areas and dependence in others. J. Kagan and H. A. Moss have shown that dependency remains more stable from childhood to adulthood for women than for men. They suggest that these patterns may prevail because Western culture encourages and reinforces dependency in females at the same time that it discourages and punishes it in males.

According to E. K. Beller, a person shows dependency by seeking attention, recognition, help, closeness, or physical contact from others; a person shows independence by taking initiative, trying routine tasks, or completing activities alone. Because the female sex role in Western culture is essentially passive-dependent, the changes from dependence in childhood to the amount of independence expected of a mature woman may be relatively minor. Males, however, are expected to develop out of their early dependency into independence and autonomy.

The Freudian Approach

Freudian and social-learning approaches differ in several important ways. First, Freud believed that psychological development is not continuous but rather is

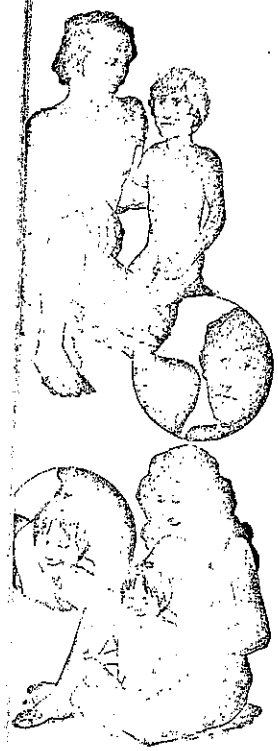

Figure 25.9
Because of his *castration anxiety* during the Oedipal phase, the boy renounces his mother as a sexual object and identifies with his father. This identification leads to his development of a masculine character, according to psychoanalysts.

characterized by a sequence of distinct developmental stages (see Chapter 21). The establishment of the child's sex-role identity occurs during the phallic stage. Second, although both Freud's theory and social-learning theory emphasize the importance of the parent of the same sex as the child, Freud believed that this parent is more than simply a model for the imitation of sex-appropriate behavior. In Freudian theory, *identification* rather than imitation is said to occur: The child strives to be like the person identified with, to take on the character, values, and behavior of the other. Although imitation may involve the copying of a fairly complex behavioral sequence, identification involves much more, namely the acquisition, *as a unit*, of many aspects of the model's personality, and their development into the superego, or conscience. Freud believed that the child acquired not only sex-role identity but also cultural values and a sense of morality through the identification process.

A third difference between the Freudian and social-learning approaches involves the relative importance assigned to biological and cultural factors in the development of sex roles. Freud put great stress on anatomy, innate sexual drives (libido), and maturation. As a result, he was forced to postulate that the sex-role development of boys and girls occurs in different ways.

As infants, both boys and girls take the mother as primary love object, and then presumably identify with her because of her warmth and nurturance. For boys the developmental problem is to retain the mother (or women in general) as the love object but to shift identification from her to the father. For girls the problem is to retain their identification with the mother but to shift the choice of love object to the father (and thus to men generally). The family interaction necessary to bring about these changes occurs when the child is between three and five years old and is based in part on the child's knowledge of the differences between male and female genital anatomy. As the boy's love for his mother intensifies, he begins to see his father as his rival. The boy both envies his father for possessing the mother and fears him because he imagines that his father might in anger castrate him. The boy, perceiving his own powerlessness, gives up the competition. Instead, he identifies defensively with the father, saying, in effect, "If I am just like you, then you won't harm me." The boy's fears are consequently reduced, and he enters a "latency period" of dormant sexual interests. At the same time, he gains his father's masculine perspective on the world, his motives, morality, and mannerisms.

For the girl, this family interaction takes place differently. Since infancy, she has both identified with her mother and had her as her primary love object. In the phallic stage the girl begins to worry that she has been castrated and may even fear that her mother has mutilated her. Thus, she is motivated to reject her mother as a love object in favor of her father. She envies the male penis and believes that in possessing her father she can possess or control one or can obtain a substitute in the form of a baby. Her *identification*, however, has stayed with the mother. Freud speculated that because the girl never feels threatened by a future castration, never switches her identification, and never undergoes defensive identification, a resolution of the family drama may be slow in coming. She may continue to see her mother as a competitor throughout life. In addition, she may forever have a weaker conscience than a man. The evidence to support Freud's exact script for sex-role development is not very convincing (U. Bronfenbrenner, for example, cites some weak points in Freud's arguments); today few developmental psychologists accept all Freud's speculations. However, many have retained the general concept of identification and have suggested that it may be motivated by nonsexual envy of the model's power and competence, by love for a warm and nurturant model, or both.

The Cognitive-Developmental Approach

An interesting and quite different theory of sex-role development has recently been proposed by L. Kohlberg. Rather than beginning with social norms or psychosexual

maturation, Kohlberg begins with the changing cognitive world of the growing child. (See Chapters 5 and 6 for a detailed description of this development and Chapter 8 for a description of Kohlberg's treatment of moral development.) Kohlberg has shown that young children believe they could change gender if they really wanted to. In one study four- to eight-year-olds were shown a picture of a girl and asked whether she could be a boy if she wanted to or if she played boys' games or had a boy's haircut and wore boys' clothes. Most four-year-olds said that she *could* change sex. By age six or seven, however, children insisted that there was no possible way for such a change to occur. Kohlberg believes that this shift in children's conception of gender is part of a more general sequence of cognitive development. The same four-year-old who tells you he could change sex might also tell you that the family cat could become a dog if its whiskers were cut off. Adults agree that if you pour a pint of water from a tall skinny glass into a short fat one, the volume of water stays the same, but most four-year-olds would state that the short glass had less. Young children do not see the physical world as constant in the same way adults do. Only when, through a combination of experience and maturation that seems to be largely unaffected by external reinforcement, they reach a more advanced stage of development do they believe that gender, water volume, and other physical properties are conserved or retained despite changes in external appearance. Freud believed that the uncertainty often shown by very young children about their gender is due to their wishes and fears; Kohlberg argues that it is really due to the state of development of their cognitive skills.

For Kohlberg, sex-role development begins when the child is first labeled "boy" or "girl." By age two or three, as noted above, children can apply the proper label to themselves, and they slowly learn to apply the labels to others, often on the basis of external cues, such as clothing. At five or six, their beliefs about their own gender identity become permanently established. Once children have labeled themselves, they are motivated to behave in ways that are consistent with their labels. They come to value things and activities that are associated with being a "boy" or a "girl." According to Kohlberg, the sequence is "I am a girl (boy), therefore I want to do girl (boy) things, therefore the opportunity to do girl (boy) things—and to gain approval for doing them—is rewarding." This is a reversal of the social-learning sequence, which runs "I want rewards, I am rewarded for doing girl (boy) things, therefore I want to be a girl (boy)." In Kohlberg's scheme, the child is primarily motivated neither by rewards nor by sexual wishes and fears but by the desire to act in a consistent and competent manner—to do girl things, if she is a girl, and to do them well.

In analyzing sex-role stereotypes, Kohlberg notes some apparent universals. As mentioned earlier, by age five or six, children consistently attribute (1) power and prestige to males, (2) aggression and exposure to danger to males, and (3) nurturance and child care to females. Reasoning from the fact that such stereotyping appears very early and is more clear-cut between five and eight years of age than later, Kohlberg suggests that the stereotypes are not acquired through direct learning of the roles of parents or siblings but rather are *created* by the child for himself, on the basis of male-female differences in body build and in extrafamilial social roles. Kohlberg, like Piaget, sees each child as an active creator of concepts rather than a passive recipient of cultural products. According to Kohlberg, children associate social power with physical power, which in turn is based on physical size. Children, noting that parents are bigger, more powerful, and more competent than children, may reason by analogy that men—who tend in our culture to be larger and to marry women who are shorter than they—are bigger and stronger and therefore more powerful and competent than women.

The roles men and women play outside the family also strongly affect children's sex-role stereotyping. By age six or seven almost all the children in one study were

aware that the influential roles of president, policeman, and general are filled by men. Kohlberg suggests that the father's occupational role leads children to attribute greater power and prestige to him. Most six-year-olds in one study identified the father as "the one who is best in the family," and many said it was because "he works and makes money."

Kohlberg recognizes that children tend to imitate the parent of the same sex. His explanation depends on neither the nurturance nor the power of the model but rather on the model's competence and on the child's recognition that the model is of the same sex he or she is. The young boy classes himself as male and strives to play the role skillfully. Therefore he finds males more interesting as models than females. The boy is motivated to imitate a model similar to himself—that is, one occupying the same sex role—who is also prestigious. Presumably the same holds true for females: girls find women more interesting as models for imitation and tend to imitate models they perceive as competent. Boys typically select their fathers and girls their mothers, and, according to Kohlberg, it is only as a *consequence* of imitating the father or the mother that the child begins to develop a special emotional relationship with that parent.

CHANGING SOCIAL PATTERNS

Human behavior is patterned, but its patterns are never rigidly fixed or constant. Cross-cultural studies indicate that social norms and roles vary greatly from society to society. They also change as time passes. Today in America, many people are actively trying to change the traditional masculine and feminine roles. The impetus for change comes from diverse sources, including more general social changes and the effects of cultural values. Changing social conditions have often led to the creation of new roles and the modification of old expectations for men and women. As human societies have moved from Stone Age hunting-and-gathering cultures to agricultural to metal-working cultures to modern industrial cultures, the social roles regulating the behavior of men and women have undergone many changes, both subtle and drastic. To take an example from recent American history, World War II changed American society dramatically. Men were sent abroad to fight, and a severe labor shortage was produced at home. In response to this emergency, C. Bird reports that the United States Department of Labor declared that "it can hardly be said that *any* occupation is absolutely unsuitable for the employment of women." Rosie the Riveter became a popular figure in mass culture as women, both single and married, learned to drive trucks and operate cranes and were welcomed into the armed forces, the professions, and medical schools. At first, most women saw their jobs as temporary, but by 1945 more than half told opinion pollsters that they would like permanent employment outside the home.

But as the men returned, the women were a glut on the labor market. Women's magazines and other mass-communication media and government publications, in conjunction with psychiatrists and doctors, began to urge that the only true and proper fulfillment for women was to be found in the home, in the care and nurturance of husband, house, and children. By the mid-1960s fewer and fewer women were continuing their education past college and entering professions; the proportion of women to men in graduate schools had dropped below that in the 1920s and continued to decline. In the late 1960s, however, the women's movement, which had been largely dormant since women had achieved the right to vote, reemerged with strong arguments against the downward trends. The women pointed out the contradictions between the requirements of the female role and American ideals of democracy, equality of social and educational opportunities, freedom of choice, and the realization of one's potential.

People made aware of these contradictions between social roles and ideals often either try to deny the situation or else to support change. Suggestions about reducing

status differences based on sex in America have included (1) permitting women to raise their status by entering high-prestige occupational roles, which may require the development of child-care centers and other facilities to relieve women of some family responsibilities; (2) increasing the prestige of feminine activities such as housekeeping and child care, perhaps by recognizing them as real occupations and providing them with pay; (3) eliminating many of the current distinctions between "masculine" and "feminine" activities by letting both men and women spend part of each day at home and part at work; and (4) making some aspects of family life, such as cooking or cleaning into cooperative enterprises, so that each family is not an isolated unit that must satisfy all its own domestic needs. You can undoubtedly add many other possibilities to this list.

Changes in any one social role usually have implications for other related roles. It is clear that any changes in female roles will have major implications for male roles as well. Some men are actively encouraging change, trying to understand the psychological consequences of traditional roles and to create a changed masculine role that would encourage men to be more emotional and sensitive to others and less competitive and aggressive. Social psychology cannot tell you what stand to take on these contemporary issues. That you must decide for yourself. But the foregoing analysis does suggest that to the extent that sex roles create problems, these problems affect both men and women.

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