When the question of equality for women arises, it is often labelled "Women's Liberation." This is perhaps unfortunate in that the term "Women's Liberation," though it has eminently rational and positive connotations in my own mind, has become in general use a pejorative term—like "Communist," "hippy," "student activist"—so that the sound of the words "Women's Lib" often signal that rational discussion is over and that increasing polarization and emotionality will mark what is to follow. As well, "Women's Liberation" has come to mean (in the minds of many people) a destructively militant attempt to make women into men, trampling over the needs of children in the process. (The converse idea, i.e. that men might wish to exchange places with women, appears much less frequently, which in itself is an indication of the inferior status of women.) This perception is in reality a distortion of the feminist position—it is a fantasy deriving from a projection of ruling-class ego and guilt, comparable to white paranoid fantasies of blacks running rampant, raping white women and enslaving white males. Moreover, recent research findings indicate that sex-roles are liberalizing only in the direction of the masculinization of the female role,1 so that the popular distortion of the feminist view may be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

It is important, therefore, to begin from the basic position that women do not want to exchange places with men (that in fact women are trying hard to locate some genuine pride in being women); that the liberation of women (as of any group) cannot be accomplished at the expense of others (relinquishment of inequitable privileges must occur, however). The victimization process is not transformed by having the aggressor and the victim change places—it is the process itself and the mentality which accompanies it which must be changed. Divesting oneself of these destructive fantasies, it is clear that the liberation of women, as of any group of human beings, is an honourable enterprise, worthy of careful, reasonable and compassionate consideration.

Given this positive impulse, the question arises as to what an ideal society would provide for women. To speak of a feminist Utopia, however, is something of a contradiction in terms in that an ideal society is presumably one which facilitates satisfying and fully developed lives for every person in that society. The issue really comes down to whether one ought to design a society for human beings, allowing individual men and women to fit in as they prefer—or whether the needs and characteristics of women are so qualitatively different from those of other human beings that special roles and functions in society ought to be reserved for them—that is, a woman's place. To what extent should the anatomical and physiological differences between women and men be used as a basis for social
differentiation?

This does not refer to the functions of mating or suckling of children where the connection between biological structure and behaviour is clear, obvious, and where reasonably similar physical acts of conception, child bearing and suckling occur cross-culturally regardless of varying social prescriptions. The woman's issue currently being argued in our society concerns the complex array of behaviours beyond the mating and child-bearing functions. Ought we to require of men and women different dress, occupations, temperament, personality, habits of thought, relationships with children, etc.? Or, should the sex-roles—the present expected patterns of behaviour that distinguish men and women—be modified to become human roles, emphasizing the commonalities rather than differences between men and women, allowing differences to emerge along individual lines? Or the differentiations perhaps ought to be made functionally, on some other basis than sex.

Essentially, sex-roles are values—and ones which are so basic that to most people the traditional or usual differentiation of the sexes represents not only the familiar and the comfortable—but also what is right, natural, proper, and good. 2 To suggest that some women might get deeper satisfactions from self development than from raising children or that particular men might enjoy being homemakers more than being bread winners seems, to many, as preposterous as questioning truth and justice. Attempts to raise these possibilities evokes the same response that occurs whenever any basic and previously unquestioned cultural value is attacked: that is, people respond with astonishment and incomprehension, followed in rapid succession by anxiety, hostility, ridicule and resistance.

But the real issue is not just the fact that this society divides labour, personality, temperament, dress, social interaction and even scholarly endeavor among male-female lines, but the fact that these qualities, activities and behaviour are valued more or less, depending upon whether they are seen as male or female.

Research has clearly established that masculinity and femininity are differentially esteemed and rewarded in this society.3 The financial compensations through which our rather materialistic society indicates merit, are parcelled out unequally in favour of men; women often do not receive equal pay for equal work and tend to be channelled into lower-paying jobs.4

Studies from the 1930s to the present have established that most people have a clear idea of the characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity, and that these images of the sexes are so widely-held that they can
be correctly called stereotypes. Given a list of adjectives, experimental subjects endorse these terms to describe a male: aggressive, independent, consistent, realistic, objective, always thinks before acting, not at all easily influenced, dominant, likes math and science, not at all excitable in a major or minor crisis, active, competitive, logical, worldly, skilled in business, direct, knows the way of the world, feelings not easily hurt, adventurous, makes decisions easily, acts as a leader, etc., etc. These traits form such a consistent cluster the researchers named the male stereotype the "competency cluster." Women are seen as possessing polar opposites of these qualities—as being inconsistent, unrealistic, subjective, passive, excitable, etc.

Further, recent research has established that although there are some positive characteristics associated with femininity—sensitivity to other's feelings, tactfulness, gentleness, neatness and quietness, religiosity—that the masculine sex-role image is by far the more socially desirable. Asked to describe a non-sexual ideal human being, subjects, including mental health professionals, describe a picture very close to their stereotype of masculinity. Translated into simple-minded everyday terms, that means if you walk into a room full of people you've never met before the odds that you will be perceived as a person with socially desirable characteristics are quite a lot higher if you're male.

So much for the myth that our society has women on a pedestal! The research on the images of men and women in fact suggests that males are a high-prestige group in this society, comparable to whites in relation to blacks. The images of women, far from being the exalted "worshipped womanhood" variety, are strikingly similar to other disadvantaged, low-status groups, for example, the poor, children and various racial and ethnic groups. Thus, male behaviour is the standard, to some extent the ideal, against which female qualities are evaluated and, in many instances, found wanting.

The next logical question is what are the consequences of this differential evaluation of men and women? It is interesting that in psychology, during the period from 1930 to 1960, while there were vast numbers of studies investigating male-female differences, the differential evaluation of men and women was, for the most part, taken for granted. So, studies which found that boys showed a much greater preference for the masculine role than did girls for the feminine role attributed this to the greater cultural prestige and privilege of males—but no one really went on to question whether male superiority was a necessary or good thing. The cultural disadvantages of women were, to a great extent, accepted. With the coming of the sixties
and the Women's Liberation Movement, this changed and some soul-searching began about the extent to which social science experts were serving as promoters of the cultural status quo, rather than as value-free objective scientists.12

The new feminist literature of the late sixties stimulated my interest in investigating the effect of women's low status on their relationships with each other. I wanted to find out if women—since they had many of the characteristics of a minority or disadvantaged group—would exhibit what Allport described as the self-hatred of the member of a low-prestige group. Allport has described how black people, Jewish people and other members of disadvantaged groups reacted to their own group with shame and disparagement. They shared the opinion of society that it was better to be white or Gentile, and some even went so far as to try to dissociate themselves from their own group, preferring the company as well as the qualities and accomplishments of the dominant or high prestige group.

Feminist literature asserted that women do this—that we women participate in denigrating female qualities and accomplishments, disparaging other women, rating masculine society, qualities and accomplishments superior to those of our sisters.14

On the other hand, diehards for the sex-role status quo argued that the worlds of men and women were separated but equal and that even if the images of women were less favourable, there were as many compensations in the woman's place as in the man's world.15 It seemed important to bring some empirical data into this morass of accusations and rhetoric; the question being—what effects do the negative images of femininity have on women's willingness to identify themselves with the collective problems of their own group? Does the inferiority of the female status affect women's willingness to associate themselves with and to be positive and supportive toward other women?

To find out, I studied 296 Maritime University students (women and men) examining the extent to which they included both positive and negative stereotyped masculine and feminine qualities in their self-description.16 These same students then answered a questionnaire which tapped ten different aspects of what I called same-sex affiliation or group belongingness.17 Same-sex affiliation does not refer to heterosexuality or homosexuality. Rather, it refers to variations in willingness to choose members of own sex as associates, all other things besides sex being equal, in situations where there is no objective or factual reason for choosing persons of one sex or another, any more than there would be a reason for choosing a person of a particular race, hair colour, or any other physical characteristic.
Subjects were given a fairly broad range of questions to assess their self-reported attitudes to relationships with people of their own and the opposite sex—in play, work, crisis situations (or important tasks), and in personal friendship. Other factors assessed the subject's pride, loyalty and positive beliefs about own sex as a group, and their willingness to be seen by others or like the stereotyped sex-role (i.e. masculine or feminine) and as like the typical person of their own sex.

The first and most striking finding that emerged consistently across the board in the research was that men and women differ drastically in affiliation or bonding with their own sex. This was true for every factor but one. The idea that men's and women's worlds are separate but equal would—in respect to their willingness to associate with and identify with their own sex as a group—have to be amended to separate and very different.

For example, on the factor to do with acceptance of sex-role labels, the men indicated that they enjoyed being called a "real man" and liked having attention drawn to their masculinity. The women were not at all positive about having attention drawn to their femininity, even in the form of a compliment. This finding is particularly ironic in a society which propagandizes femininity and in which millions of dollars of advertising money are poured into the glamourization of femininity. Yet it follows logically from the realization that beneath the glamorous myth of femininity lie a number of qualities which are negatively valued in this society, even when they are possessed by a woman. It's not a compliment to be told that you think like a woman; yet, it is intended as a compliment to be told that you think like a man. (Of course, for a woman to be told this is an indirect slur, since it implies that "male thinking" is somehow different and better than "female thinking.") The story is told that a feminist movie maker, after some really positive experiences working on a film with Norman Mailer, said, "You're a real sister, Norman." Mailer is said to have responded profanely.

The next outstanding finding was that on three out of the four factors relating to how and with whom subjects spent their time and their preferences in hypothetical situations, men were the more preferred and most frequently reported companions for both men and women. The situations varied from casual socializing to whom you'd prefer as your boss, your co-worker, your subordinate; from whom you'd like as your companion in an emergency to the friends you spend time with having coffee, going to movies, goofing around, studying, and so on; from whom you'd like as a university instructor to your preference
of associates in a discussion on politics. On the three factors which covered these areas—broadly speaking, Working Relationships, Important Tasks, and Relaxed Socializing or Companionship Situations—the pattern was exactly the same. Men preferred men and women preferred men. Not "gentlemen prefer blondes" but "everyone prefers men" as playmates, workmates and as better people to have around when there's trouble or when you need a leader.

On these factors, then, and on the one mentioned previously, women and men behaved exactly as minority and dominant group members would be expected to behave. (The term "minority group" as used here refers to a group of people singled out for differential and unequal treatment on the basis of physical or cultural characteristics.) Further evidence was provided by the findings which showed a significant interaction between the stereotypes held by the individual woman and her degree of affiliation with her own sex. This emerged on six of the ten factors, showing a clear, although complex, relationship between the stereotypes and same-sex affiliation. For example, the more competent the woman, the less likely she was to show pride in women as a group, the less likely she was to indicate loyalty to other women and the more likely she was to evidence a desire to dissociate herself from other women. When it is remembered that traits of competency form part of the stereotype of masculinity, it is not surprising that women who reject the negative traits of femininity and describe themselves as competent, also display a rejection of their own group similar to the black person who emulates the white culture and tries to pass as white.

It is also interesting to note that these findings run directly contrary to Tiger's theory of "male bonding" as a source of the differential male-male and female-female interaction patterns. Thus, the demonstrated connection between the stereotypes (which are learned cultural images) and the degree of positive and favourable relationships with own sex in a variety of situations suggests that socially learned behaviour is involved.

The results imply that it is not so much that women are their own worst enemies, as the cliché has it, but that they face not only the tangible barriers to equality such as job discrimination and unequal pay but also the invisible barriers of social expectations from both men and women. These operate as a self-fulfilling prophecy—most likely in exactly the way that Rosenthal and his associates have demonstrated that when less is expected of people, they produce less; when more is expected, they produce more. And certainly the results show that women must include themselves as among the adversaries on the road to equality. As one woman wrote it, "Women's Liberation is finally only personal. It's hard to fight an enemy
who has outposts in your head."23 In view of these results, the hope expressed by the Royal Commission of the Status of Women in Canada that women should unite to help each other achieve equal status appears somewhat distant unless women's consciousness of the self-disparagement process is raised. Fortunately, the effectiveness of education toward a liberated picture of women is demonstrated by Malmo-Levine's finding that women who had participated in a Women's Liberation consciousness-raising group experience exhibited significantly higher same-sex affiliation than did other groups of women.

As well, the strong preference shown by the males for their own sex as working associates is also likely to create barriers to the admission of women to top-level positions if these subjects retain the same choice tendencies when they are in a position to grant access to employment and to the public forum. The implication of this research would be that men would tend to choose other males as work and political and leadership associates in keeping with their own non-conscious preferences and image of the male's appropriate qualities for the job.

Why not choose the person who is associated in everyone's mind with the traditional qualities of worker and leader—the competent, logical, realistic, objective, assertive, rational, independent person—the epitome of
stereotyped masculine qualities. Why not choose the man for the job? Why not, indeed.

And women who ought to be able to answer the "why not"--these university-educated women--in this study shared cultural preferences with men. The women who described themselves as most competent were also the most likely to prefer men as leaders, workmates and companions.

No conspiracy this, but more detrimental in its potential, for even the well-intentioned person is likely to behave in ways that negate those intentions without any awareness of having done so. And the choice is connected with the stereotyped images of masculinity and femininity. That is, the preferences for males in these spheres is exactly what would be predicted considering masculinity as a high-prestige stereotype.

Examining the implications, particularly considering the lower female bonding in high competency women, the alienating and conflicting consequences of the feminine sex-role stereotype again become clear. In that it was the most stereotypically feminine women (the "low competency" women) who showed the strongest affiliation with their own sex, the results suggest that to feel loyal, solid, at one with other women is to forego competence--to relinquish most of the qualities that are socially valued and rewarded in this society.

And, for many women, it may be an actual downgrading of their own capability.26 No wonder that Horner 27 found that some women have developed a motive to avoid success! Not only may achievement unsex them and alienate them from men and marriage--it may also alienate them from other women, from the solace that outgroup members find in solidarity.

The results for competent women begin to look, as Eleanor Maccoby 28 said, like "something of a horror story. It would appear that even when a woman is suitably endowed intellectually and develops the right temperament and habits of thought to make use of her endowment, she must be fleet of foot indeed to scale the hurdles society has erected for her and to remain a whole and happy person while continuing to follow her intellectual bent."

Most ironically, the preferences for males in work, leadership and in social situations may push women toward the very presentation of themselves as sex objects that many women decry. That is, being sexually attractive to men is an almost certain means whereby a woman can secure interest and attention in many gatherings. It is not that being sexy is necessarily demeaning rather than pleasurable--it is so only when sex appeal is seen by a woman as the only reliable basis from which to generate interest in herself as a person. Thus arises the sad spectacle of women struggling to retain youthful sexuality
and masculine attention long after age, marriage and motherhood should have made such efforts unnecessary as well as inappropriate. (This refers to experiencing oneself as a sex object, with all the cosmetic falsification that accompanies it. The forthright enjoyment of one's own sexuality on through old age is a healthy and delightful prospect, but genuinely available only as women "disobey the conventions.")

The situation really leaves the individual woman in a position of pitting her own personality, accomplishments and self against these subtle, unspoken, non-conscious but powerful biases. The fact that particular women manage daily to surmount these expectations—often by achieving positions which command respect—is a tribute to their persistence in the face of barriers all the more treacherous for being unspoken and virtually unrecognized, even by women themselves.

It begins to be understandable that many women have chosen to relinquish some of their competence, that many have not attempted the very difficult dual role and that relatively few women have chosen demanding, genuinely success-oriented careers. The defensive adoption of extreme femininity by some career women takes on a new dimension in the light of this evidence that competency may alienate a woman from her sisters.

The Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada stated:

The stereotype of the ideal woman has its effect upon Canadian Women. It appears that many women have accepted as truths the social constraints and the mental images that society has prescribed, and have made these constraints and images part of themselves as guides for living. This theory could partly explain why some women are little inclined to identify themselves with the collective problems of their sex and tend to share the conventional opinions of society. Social scientists have noted a similar phenomenon in their study of certain minority groups, or people treated as inferior. Their members often fail to identify with their own group. This is particularly true of individuals who cross the border separating them from the majority and who then adopt its attitudes and standards.

It seems, from the preferences exhibited by the women in the same-sex affiliation study, that women, especially those more identified with traits of masculinity (high competency women) do suffer from this collective "self-hatred."

In individuals, self-hatred is often linked to a very deep sense of guilt. Applying this to the collective disparagement of women, one thinks of
the way a woman often blames herself and her sisters for the misfortunes that have befallen them—"women are their own worst enemies." During a recent (June 1975) series of 20 public hearings on the Status of Women in Nova Scotia, I was struck by how frequently such sentiments were voiced. It was exceptional to find a session in which some person, usually a woman, did not blame women themselves for their cultural disadvantages.

There is a sense of self-punishment in guilt that makes a person tolerate, almost welcome, poor treatment, as though they were only deserving of the second rate. This relates directly to the reluctance, even timidity, with which many women greet the idea of equality, willing to ask for it as a favor (as long as men are not seriously inconvenienced), but unable to proudly lay claim to it as a right, a heritage, an inherently valid state of being. Thus, women express fear of causing damage to the male ego of relinquishing superiority, are concerned with the effect of strong, proud and equal women on male potency, identify with husbands' and families' desire for a son to carry on the family name, but fail to see the tragedy of themselves and their daughters being accorded so much less than the full dignity and worth of being a person.

The "long suffering" aspect of traditional femininity which makes so many women bear the brunt of family problems, nurturing others almost beyond their own endurance and leaving so little room in their lives for their own needs and self-development may well be an aspect of this sense of self-devaluation. In this sense one may better understand the battered wife, who sustains beating after beating, often for years, because she feels as though she has failed as a woman in not "making her marriage work," and, in failing, somehow deserves the punishment of being battered. This woman seems to epitomize, in the extreme, the denigration of women, the self-hatred that is a part of everywoman's femininity. And the sisterhood, the bonding with other women that is so necessary to discovering the value of womankind and of herself is rendered that much less likely to occur by this very devaluation process.

Collective self-hatred operates as a barrier to sisterhood in very basic ways. It makes women put each other down ("just a housewife"), not just because they are competing for male attention but because they share the destructive myths of the culture. Female bonding is seriously inhibited by women blaming their sisters for the existence of sexist prejudices. "It's really that sort of woman--too passive, too aggressive, too feminine, too masculine, too timid, too shrill, too apathetic, too militant, etc.--who makes it hard for the rest of us." It
focuses attention on males, as a high prestige group and manifests itself in a preference for male company—"Who wants to talk to a bunch of women?" And finally, self-devaluation operates most strongly as a barrier to sisterhood among those women who exhibit high competency so that those who may be most likely to succeed are also most isolated from their sisters.

Some of the alienation of high competency women may be the Queen Bee syndrome in operation—how many women who are successful in traditionally male fields consider it a compliment to be told, "you're not like most women?" It may be this self-devaluation process that underlies the often remarked barrier between the housewife and the "working woman." (This refers, of course, to women employed outside of their homes. All women work, but only those whose work is paid for are socially recognized as being "working women." This is a particularly clear instance of the devaluation of women, in this case of their labour in home-making and child rearing.) The put-downs of "Women's Lib" by many women are another, rather poignant instance of the division that exist between women.

In many ways, these barriers to sisterhood are the most serious consequences of self-hatred, in that they operate to keep women fragmented, in some degree less able to unite to achieve their own liberation. (This is, of course, in addition to the fragmentation among women that occurs because they are working in separate nuclear households, connected to society through their husbands.) And even when the bonding between women does occur, it may not be fully understood or recognized as valuable. In the same-sex affiliation research, women were found to be preferred by both sexes in intimate personal friendships. When subjects were asked whom they confided in, talked to about personal problems and family matters, their closest friends, there was a significant tendency for both sexes to report that these close personal associates were women. So women were the preferred associates in one factor of reported relationship patterns—that which dealt with close personal friendships. Women also showed a significant willingness to make positive statements about all-female groups that belied the myth of female cattiness. The women further evidenced greater loyalty to their own sex than did the men (although the highly competent women did not do so.)

The qualities of warmth and expressiveness which formed the positively valued aspects of femininity seem to be showing up here. In this society, men are not encouraged to form close personal relationships, particularly with each other. Men are not socialized to develop the qualities which make for in-
timate, emotionally rewarding relationships. Qualities of warmth, understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others are not seen as masculine in this society. Thus, just as men are preferred companions in work, crises and casual socialization, women are more valued when personal feelings and experiences are the focus of the relationship. The results read like a textbook on complementary sex-roles and their outcomes!

Brenton 49 has described the dehumanizing and, he feels, unmanning influence of over-emphasis on work and the constriction of emotional, feminine qualities in the lives of males. He argues that as males are encouraged to incorporate feminine expressive qualities, the family unit will be strengthened, men will be better able to adapt to retirement, to unemployment and to a future leisure society and that a more secure sexual identity, based upon genuine acceptance of self and own sex, will result.

Proponents of androgynous roles for the sexes as sources of enrichment will find a good deal in the same-sex affiliation data to support the argument that a fully human life cannot be available to men until they are more free to incorporate the desirable qualities of femininity—the warmth, the sensitivity to others, the emotional expressiveness; and that a fully developed life for a woman must include the opportunity to be competent—to be rational, logical, objective, realistic and assertive, without being alienated either from her own sexual identity or from her sisters.

However, the evidence that attitudes are changing only in the direction of the masculinization of the female sex-role 50 emphasizes the urgency of women discovering pride in these valued "feminine" qualities. (Women do not, of course, have any corner on these attributes. They are presumably linked to the female only as part of stereotypic femininity and the consequent socialization emphases for girls.) As Herman and Labreque 51 have pointed out, qualities of cooperation, empathy and intuition have not only been suppressed in the male, but whole areas of the culture have been dehumanized by an overemphasis on competitive, "machismo" values.

The hope must be that as women form ties with their sisters, breaking through the barriers of mutual mistrust, and supporting each other, the qualities and relationship styles previously regarded as "feminine" will be fully recognized and adopted by both men and women, so that the liberation of women will become the humanization of society.
belief that women's role is supportive in society and the consequent willingness of women to assume subordinate rather than leadership positions was an important factor; F. Bird, *et al.*, pp. 354-356; see also J. Bernard, *Academic Women* (University Park, 1964), pp. 46-108, for a discussion of "professional" versus "fringe benefit" status among women in academia; T. Bailyn, "Notes on the Role of Choice in the Psychology of Professional Women," in *R. Lifton (ed.), The Woman in America* (Boston, 1965), pp. 238-246, discusses the difficulties impeding a woman's choice of a professional career pattern.


35. L. Toews, "Self-Hatred in College Women ... ."


42. L. Toews, pp. 85-105, 136-137.


50. E. Wagner and T.L. Fay, "Components of Sex Role Stereotypes ... ."