

SOC 105-007

1 May, 2023

Final Paper

Through everyday life, we are able to easily observe the differences between men and women. The way humans think, speak, and act, coincide with who we are biologically. In today's age though, we have seen the ways of femininity broaden while the ways of masculinity have stayed the same or even become more narrow. How do these roles play a part in affecting society? No matter how hard we try, there will always be dividing classes amongst us because that is a part of our inner essential nature. These roles guide society's policies and acceptable/unacceptable behaviors, and I believe the concept of men and women and pitting them against each other is crippling to the world we live in.

I grew up in a nuclear, stereotypical household, I have two parents who are still married and one sibling, my older sister. Growing up alongside my sister allowed me to realize the *quirks* of my parents' relationship. My mother has no true identity, if not through other people. Her purpose is to help others but she neglects herself. My father, sister, and I all joke around and call her friends, her "fixer upper friends". She finds people and takes them under her wing. She gives them money, she takes care of said persons children, she'll go as far as throwing them a baby shower or funeral for a family member. She has lost her identity throughout the years but it started happening fast once my sister and I started transitioning out of the house for college. It has been shown that mothers grieve as if they had lost a loved one once they are "empty nesters". My father on the other hand is very independent. He is a handyman who spends most of his time on projects in our garage or heading out to his property he bought on the lake, building his own cabin. Given their personalities, my sister and I get an abnormal feeling when they go on a date

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night or an event by themselves. They bicker often, although it's easy to see both of their views on whatever the minuscule subject may be. My parents are christians, both raised baptists, so they stick to the script pretty closely in our house. My mom takes on the "traditional woman" hobbies such as keeping a clean house, going shopping for the groceries, and cooking dinner for my family. The fact that they are so traditional may have hurt our family more than helped it. Thankfully, my sister and I are extremely ambitious and want to be educated with good careers, but if we had followed in our mother's footsteps it wouldn't have been good for either of us in today's evolving society.

There is a different dynamic between my sister and her husband; the contrast between my mother and sister is drastic, although there is a masculine presence in both of their lives, it differs completely in the roles produced. Opposed as to how my mother *needs* a husband because she does not work and does not have a degree, my sister does not need to be supported financially because she has already found stability in her career. She chooses companionship as an addition to her life whereas my mother has a need for that masculine leadership in her life. My sister and her husband both go to their full time jobs everyday. They come home and they cook together, they clean up together, and they carry out the same duties in the household such as laundry and cleaning.

Lillian Rubin explains how women want and need intimacy more than men do. They crave for this feeling so deeply that they abandon boundaries in their relationship and start to consume everyone else's feelings. Once this routine begins, womens fear of being able to control these boundaries makes their identities, their individuality, go out of sight. Opposingly, men

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don't innately know what women need to hear. In Rubin's book, *Intimate Strangers*, there is a section where the wife and the husband are just going back and forth about asking how his day was. His only answer to this question was "good" which pushed the wife into a spiral because he wasn't "communicating enough" and she thought something was wrong with him. The husband then goes on to explain that he chooses to stay "shutmouth" because if he is not then she normally does not like his responses. The husband views this spiral as childish because he believes she is just looking for attention and/or a fight. Although biology does play a role in these differences, many stereotypes are being learned throughout generations. Seeing how this daily interaction carries on between the husband and wife, society makes assumptions which get carried out eventually by other men and women. The meaning of a woman is given by a man. The very concept of a "woman", is a male concept. ADD MORE

Once I reached an age to start understanding the arguments my parents had and tried to analyze them, I just believed it was mainly because my mom was annoying, not that there was an underlying concept. By understanding the thought processes behind most men and women, I'm able to see past the argument that's at stake but instead why it is happening. My mom badgering my dad about my sister and I or why he hasn't done something to her liking, such as leaving the garage clean, was more than those specific issues but she actually felt ignored. Looking through this sociological lens, we can now see how these roles play apart in affecting society and not just personal relationships. These sex categories that humans get placed in lead to communication boundaries that are men and women specific. Humans naturally crave to be in groups such as clubs, organizations, friend groups, or even as large as religion. Women have been on the rise

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with the expansion of “femininity” over the years. You can be feminine while welding, you can be feminine while sweating, you can be feminine with body hair. Men are still expected to play their role that was expected from them years ago. If a man is a tennis player, our first thoughts are not the same as they would be if he said he was a football player. If men openly cry to you, some women do appreciate it, until a certain point. Therapists still say how children may have problems when they're older if they do not have a strong “father figure”. When producing our roles as humans, no matter the gender, it happens through everyday experience. I believe that instead of pointing out whether the actions being generated are acceptable because they are done by a man or woman, we need to have standards for only *human* actions. People will always “do gender”, it is a part of our DNA, but we should be able to take our judgments away from that person's gender and apply it to them as a whole. Society functions under leadership well, we have seen what too much or too little has done throughout society, but this leadership does not need to be masculine.

Men and women *do* have roles to play in society, which holds it together. But, to what ends as a society are we willing to go to hold these stereotypical roles in tact? The stereotypes and barriers need to be broken down; women need to take charge more in everyday situations, and men should be more open to the idea of women in positions of authority and achieving more for themselves. So many fields are male dominated such as politics or smaller industries like restaurants. More times than not, a manager will be a man. This further marginalization of women stems from when society embraces these “needed masculine” notions. Leadership does not equal masculinity. Gender equality does not reciprocate the same equity.