
The Love - Scarcity

Think of days as the deaths of Love
Neglected, because higher needs are satisfied.
Love dies of public decency on special occasions,
As protocol thwarts feelings,
And decorum snubs emotion.

Social commitments are but a cortege,
The funeral of obvious caring,
Due to be buried under the soil
Of sentiment.
A shallow sorrow passes by
A mourning (kinder the self)
For something deeper.

Gillian Fisher

Sex-Role Stereotyping

In July I went to the International Conference on Sex-Role Stereotyping at Cardiff - the first such conference ever held in Europe.

As paper succeeded paper, it became more and more obvious that sex-role stereotyping is an extraordinary source of pain and suffering to women, and hardly less harmful to men.

What a stereotype does is to tell us how we *should* be behaving as a woman, or as a man. Each stereotype has a content - a set of detailed statements about how you should be. Women should be warm, tender, sensitive to the needs of others, compassionate, gentle, sympathetic and eager to soothe hurt feelings. Men should be aggressive, acting like a leader, dominant, willing to take a stand, possessed of leadership qualities, competitive and brave and have a strong personality. Women who don't live up to these things feel guilty; men who don't live up to them are made to feel ashamed. Women shouldn't be cool, critical or selfish; men shouldn't be submissive, sheeplike or soft.

In reality, of course, women are sometimes warm and sometimes cool; men are sometimes aggressive and sometimes submissive. They need to be so, because of changing circumstances and situations, and they are so. Sometimes men and women do

not feel much like their stereotypes at all. And as someone said - 'To be born with a penis does not ensure that one will be brave. . . Having ovaries does not assure a girl that she will love housework.'

So the stereotypes are heavy and very narrow. They do not allow the individual person the space to grow up in the unique, appropriate way.

Towards the end of the conference there were a number of papers on intervention programmes designed to change these stereotypes, and delegates were taken through a couple of exercises from these programmes. It seems that it is not too hard to raise awareness on these issues quite substantially in a reasonably short space of time. One of the groups involved has actually produced a manual: *Intervention Strategies for Changing Sex-role Stereotypes, a Procedural guide* by Eileen T. Nickerson and others. (Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 2460 Kerper Boulevard, Dubuque, Iowa 52001, U.S.A.).

It is hoped to organise a workshop based on this manual sometime this winter, so that people in the Country who are involved with the struggle to change Sex-role stereotypes can pick up detailed hints and methods.

During the final plenary session of the Conference, a resolution has been passed calling for more action and intervention research to be funded by Government bodies, rather than the purely descriptive type of research most favoured in this country up to now.

John Rowan