

become more aware of the stresses caused by growth processes in their husbands; the simplest way to do this is for them to become more aware of these processes in themselves.

What are the psychological and physiological signs that a person is entering an acute phase of personality growth? Subjectively, the person will, consciously or unconsciously, experience a heightened sensitivity to rejection and a heightened reaction to the frustration of new and spontaneous behaviours. Rejection and frustration will be followed by stress caused by internalised rage which, in turn, will lead to physiological symptoms. These vary from person to person and obviously depend on the basic physiological make-up of each individual. A rise in blood pressure is one of the commonest symptoms.

Groddeck (1949) wrote: "disease is a vital expression of the human organism." Both he and Freud held that illness had a purpose, that it could be used as an alternative mode of expression by the personality. There has been more recent evidence suggesting that defensiveness is directly related to tumour growth. Blumberg (1954, 1956) and Klopfer (1957) related personality variables to rapid or slow tumour growth. Blumberg found that: "Patients with fast growing tumours were more defensive, had greater motivation to appear good and less disturbed than they really were." Klopfer's results were similar. In 1966, Le Shan carried out an in-depth study of 450 cancer patients; he reported "I never saw a cancer patient who had an outlet for his emotional energy that was as full as it could have been." (both studies reported by Margot Robinson, 1978). In these cases, there appears to be a definite correlation between degree of awareness of and ability to find expression for, emotional states and severity of illness.

Until personality growth in adult life is recognised as not only an on-going but an inevitable process, the connection between the body and the emotions will remain confused. For this reason I would like to hear from anybody who would be willing to take part in an observational research group and, keep a record of emotional and physiological states both in themselves and, as far as can be ascertained, in other people. A great deal of evidence is lying around unseen because it is not looked for.

References

- Blythe, Peter.** "Stress". Pan Books Ltd, 1975
Klass, Alan. "There's Gold in Them Thar Pills." *Penguin Books*, 1975.
Robinson, Margot. "Visual Imagery, Bioenergetics and the Treatment of Cancer," in *Energy and Character*, Vol.9, No.1. Jan. 1978.
-

Antonia Boll

A Woman is a Person too

Just Like a Girl: How Girls Learn to be Women by Sue Sharpe (Penguin, 95p.)

I had given up trying to review Sue Sharpe's *Just Like a Girl* because it aroused such vivid and painful emotions in me. It's wrong, though, to keep from your notice a book which so clearly traces the history of women's discontent

and shows how the majority of British women still follow traditional patterns and attitudes, though there is a dawning sense of identity in a few. Christine, in the book, sums it up like this:

If a lady is to be anybody she's not to be at home all the time. I mean - she is a person after all. She's not a person you put away in the cupboard that cleans up the house and has children, and the husband does everything else. No, it's not fair - after all, she's living. She should go to work, not even for the money, but to be someone and do something.

We learn our sex stereotypes at primary school where boys are expected to be mischievous and untidy and girls conformist and docile. Our first reading primers show Janet standing aside and watching while John has adventures. At home, Mother gets Lorraine to help with the dishes while she lets Kevin run wild with the neighbourhood gang. And we learn how to be little ladies, graciously busy in spacious white suburban kitchens, by watching the box all day.

Next: in secondary school, girls begin to under-achieve, because we have been taught that it's unfeminine to be pushy and clever. By the same token, boys are supposed now to forge ahead, as they are to be the serious breadwinners of the future. Only the girls with determined parents behind them can overcome convention and keep on performing according to their ability. The rest drop back into monotonous jobs which never stretch them or pose a serious challenge to the needs of the family.

Our emotional energy goes into Romance, fed by the media. When that turns sour, we invest everything in The Family. In case we ever felt cocky about managing well, in difficult times on dwindling resources, the adverts are always with us to remind us of the Feminine Ideal. We know how far short we always fall of those sexy soubrettes with newly-laundered hair. In our old jeans, scruffy and bad-tempered, we fail, we fail

And yet - capitalism apparently has need of us. It thrives on our steady consumption of fish fingers, baby lotion, heated rollers. And it depends on our devotion to The Home, that haven where the Breadwinner can relax and vent the emotions that he dare not express at work. Then too, we raise the alienated work-force of the future, compliant boys and girls, obedient and unquestioning of their sex-linked roles.

So much for conditioning. But how many people *want* to change? A few girls dream of becoming mechanics or pilots but not many want to be trail-blazers or break away from normal patterns.

The difficult thing for anyone wishing to become an individual is how to step away from the collective stereotypes and let your own personality through. The central dogma of our sex-linked behaviour is that MALE equals superior. In company with many other 'educated' women, I have tried to get round this by cultivating my 'masculine' side: being 'brainy', attempting to cope with the environment by working out theories about it; being the good liberal parent, etc.

C.G. Jung wrote this in 1927 about modern woman:

She gives expression to one of the cultural tendencies of our time: the urge to live a complete life, a longing for meaning and fulfilment, a growing disgust with senseless one-sidedness, with unconscious instinctuality and blind contingency The woman of today is faced with a tremendous cultural task - perhaps it will be the dawn of a new era.

Jung was always way out ahead of everybody in his understanding of the human being at the very deepest level. There is a lot of shrillness and hysteria in the women's movement and at its worst it can seem like a sordid struggle to beat men at their own game. But Jung's point is one that Sue Sharpe is also making. The over-insistence on female passivity has led everyone - men too - into a blind alley of apathy and resentment.

Sue Sharpe says:

For women, following the stereotype can lead to self-sacrifice and an implicit acceptance of inferiority. For men, the active pursuit of ambition can consume their lives and destroy intimate relationships with other people, especially women and children. The changes that women wish to make in their role in this society should never be equated with the self-destructive position of men.

For instance, when talking about work, she notices that:

Men surrender to a de-humanizing rat-race, agreeing to productivity deals which make work more unpleasant in return for promises of increased wages which soon get swallowed up by inflation while working conditions remain the same.

"Women" she says "are less easily conned into exchanging conditions for cash." It is qualities like this 'feminine' common-sense and a respect for the human values which need to be brought back into favour. We have worshipped Materialism and it has smiled upon us with its shiny metallic eye, but this god is nourished by sacrifices just like any other. It requires us to trade in our individuality and to become the faceless ones in its service.

There have been so many studies of our behaviour patterns, some of them throwing a welcome light into the dark places of our unconscious activity. One which I am glad to discard though is Bowlby's theory of 'maternal deprivation' because it had the effect of making us all feel thoroughly inadequate.

It's a recent thing for mother to have sole care of her children, as our author points out. In fact it's 'people deprivation' that kids suffer from nowadays. Where once there were grannies and aunts and grandads and a whole bustle of other children, now there is only mother, frantically getting through her chores. "Dissatisfied mothers can produce the same 'harmful' effects as negligent ones" says Ms. Sharpe. It is really better for a woman to go to work and leave her child with a minder, than to stay home, resentfully 'doing

her duty'. Thank goodness for the growing movement to share responsibility for children, as in the various types of commune, where kids can make lots of relationships and mother is no longer the only adult they know well and cling to in the isolation of the nuclear family.

(In this context, I recommend Nell Dunn's book *Living Like I Do* which honestly explore the joys and hazards of 'shared' families. It is very democratic: the children are interviewed too.)

Marriages that *do* work are often underpinned by the extended family where the child spends time regularly with 'Nan' and other relatives. The Bethnal Green surveys in the late fifties showed how new housing estates, when they split family networks, caused unexpected hardship and loneliness, especially to young wives and their mothers who were used to sharing the work of raising children together.

In a section called Black Girls in Britain, Sue Sharpe looks at the attitudes and expectations about marriage among girls who all go to school together in Ealing but who spring from such diverse cultural origins as the West Indian, Indian and native English. It is sad to realise that our much-vaunted freedom of choice, when based on the illusion of romantic love, is so much more likely to lead to heartbreak and broken families than the so-called repressive system of arranged marriages where contentment is the general rule.

We can't put the clock back but it is urgent that we should learn more about relationship and the reality of 'the other'. In my experience, hostility and misunderstanding between the sexes means emotional poverty for everyone.

I've just opened my November issue of S & S and found this remark by Edward Eichel: "It is not by coincidence that relationships are in crisis; our struggle is an initiation into a new age of relating." This is the positive aspect of a book like *Just Like a Girl*. It opens up the whole area of what is *actually* going on. The source of women's bitterness at being under-valued and men's fear of women 'taking over' is normally not discussable and so never gets cleared up in the interests of a more profound understanding of one another's sense of self. When we can look at such things calmly, I feel sure that better relations between the sexes will result.

The book makes unhappy reading when you realise how many women still fall short of their potential and suffer on account of it. Ms Sharpe tells of black girls who hope to be nurses but are not taking any of the courses which would qualify them for training. They still live in a world of illusion and it looks as if nobody cares.

But of course there is questioning, there is heart-searching. And a steady look at the facts de-mystifies the struggle. It's the old story that you have to become conscious of what is wrong before you can do anything to change it.

Wholeness will come for each of us when we learn to accept and encourage our inferior side. It is not so much women themselves who need to be raised

up as the despised qualities which they represent. "Getting grounded", for instance is something that people in the growth movement all respect as a worthwhile activity. Traditionally, it has been women who kept everyone grounded by their firmly rooted 'earthy' quality. We have allowed our own power to be undervalued by being subservient to a paternalistic culture.

In her chapter on Contradictions in Female Education, the author says:

Girls and women have been forced and accustomed to embrace a fundamentally ambivalent position. Many have drawn a lot of satisfaction and enjoyment out of activities specific to their 'domestic' role as women, while these are generally assumed by society to be inferior to the activities of men. . . . It is a double-bind situation: if girls go after what society deems most important, succeeding financially and academically in a career, then they may lose in 'femininity'; while if they concentrate on their 'proper' role, it is inherently of lower economic and ideological status.

Ms. Sharpe instances some studies in America which shows how this double standard operates. "The concept of a 'mentally healthy' woman requires that she maintain qualities that society looks down on. The researchers themselves comment:

Clinicians are more likely to suggest that healthy women differ from healthy men by being more submissive, less independent, less adventurous, less competitive, more excitable in minor crises, having their feelings more easily hurt, being more emotional, more conceited about their appearance, less objective, and disliking maths and science. This constellation seems a very unusual way of describing any mature, healthy individual."

No wonder encounter groups are full of aggressive women and passive men! We're all misfits in an impossibly constricting framework.

I was so delighted to hear of the 400 women who marched unexpectedly through Soho, throwing vegetables through the porn-shop windows. At last an element of humour has crept into the bitter struggle for recognition; when you can laugh at the enemy, it is beginning to lose its power. Sue Sharpe doesn't go into the specific area of sex-ploitation so I won't dwell on it, except to say that it is another way in which the individual is subtly diminished and rendered less capable of making honest, straightforward relationships.

The theme of this book, for me, is 'Finding Ourselves'. I have always been in unwitting conflict about my roles as a woman and I believe that this has undermined me as an individual. All those negatives in the American clinicians' list add up to being No-one and this is how I have often experienced myself. What I hadn't realised before reading *Just Like a Girl* was how far my attempt to not live 'me' was culturally determined. I have acted on the assumption that: If it is wrong to be who I am, then I can't be anyone. I don't think I am alone in this feeling of being cut off from my own core.

We must throw off these clumsy collective descriptions which so confine our lives and re-discover the essence of ourselves. It is good fun to throw cabbages, and an excellent way to draw attention to blatant social abuses, but the real struggle is against society's deriding representative - the Insidious Devaluer within.

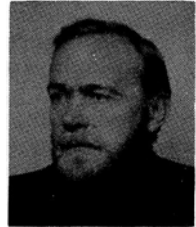
References

Young, Michael and Wilmott, Peter. *Family & Kinship in East London and Family & Class in a London Suburb.* (originally published by Routledge & Kegan Paul)

Durin, Nell. *Living Like I do.* (Lorrimer)

Mark Matthews

Fed up with Feminism



Introduction.

The motivation for this article has been building for a considerable time. The stimulus to actually do it arose from a proposal by feminists that the editor should in future ban all words which have sexist connotations. In principle the idea is sound but the extreme lengths proposed need challenging. I accepted long ago that gestures were necessary along with real changes. For example we now say chairperson and draughtsperson and I insist that to follow their own logic we should also introduce woperson. Or is it woeperson?

To make my case clear I have structured this article rather formally. Following this introduction I have detailed firstly the situation as I see it. This is followed by my criticisms and fears; balanced by my hopes and suggestions. I have also added a conclusion. I believe my position to be moderate but in order to create emphasis I have taken the male view wherever a mutual position seemed unclear.

My critics will be pleased to know that some six years ago I was classed as one of the M.C.P.'s for the year by Vogue. The issue was my suggestion that to relieve executive stress, secretaries should have a knowledge of massage. Oh dear, I bet I have done it again. Men rally round, we have to make a stand somewhere.

The Situation.

Historically the roles have invariably been polarised. Men were masculine and dominant. While in terms of civil liberties the women were definitely in a weak position I do not know if they were less happy. In any event they invariably avoided having to go to war. Equally there have been a number of female rulers who were not noticeably different in style to male peers. I do not think there is a great merit in using history in this issue.