

## A. MISOGYNY AND THE COLLEGE GIRL

Perhaps one of the most consistent findings in regard to sex differences cited in the literature is the fact of differential evaluation of the two sexes. Both men and women tend to value men more highly (Kitay, 1940; McKee & Sherriffs, 1957; Sherriffs & McKee, 1957; Smith, 1939).

In the study by Sherriffs and McKee, the authors find that "women are regarded as guilty of snobbery and irrational and unpleasant emotionality" (1957, p. 463). The most general finding is that there are reliably perceived sex differences, and both sexes are in substantial agreement in valuing the salient male characteristics and denigrating the salient female characteristics. Consistent with this theme is the finding by French and Lesser (1964) that "women who value intellectual attainment feel they must reject the woman's role" (p. 128).

Even such feminists as Simone de Beauvoir (1953) and Betty Friedan (1963) believe that women differ unfavorably from men on a wide variety of dimensions. But whatever the facts as to the nature and extent of true differences between the sexes, Allport (1954) makes it clear that antifeminism can function as any other prejudice to organize and distort experience and perception. Indeed, it is the very distortion of experience and evidence that is for Allport and others definitional of prejudice.

The major purpose of the present study was to investigate the operation of perceptual distortion in reflecting prejudice toward women. More specifically the focus of this study was on the prejudice of women toward women in the areas of intellectual and professional competence.

### METHOD

#### Subjects

One hundred and forty female undergraduate students were randomly selected to participate in the study. A pre-experiment occupational rating

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scale was completed by 100 subjects, and 40 subjects took part in the experiment proper.

## Procedure

In a preliminary step, normative data were obtained for a six-point rating scale which asked subjects to decide for a list of 50 occupational fields "the degree to which you associate the field with men or with women." Based on these data two occupations strongly associated with men (law, city planning), two strongly associated with women (elementary education, dietetics), and two occupations intermediate in regard to sexual association (linguistics, art history) were identified.

Six articles were selected from the professional literature of these six occupational fields.<sup>1</sup> The six articles were edited and abridged to approximately 1,500 words each and combined in booklets. Fictitious titles and authors' names appeared on the first page of each article. The critical experimental manipulation had to do with the name of the author. For any one article half the booklets had a male author's name, and half had a female author's name. Only the first name was altered, e.g., John T. McKay, Joan T. McKay. Each booklet had three "male" articles and three "female" articles.

The instructions to the subjects, who were all seated together in a large lecture hall, were as follows:

In this booklet you will find excerpts of six articles, written by six different authors in six different professional fields. At the end of each article you will find several questions which are to be answered before you proceed to the next article. You are not presumed to be sophisticated or knowledgeable in all the fields. We are interested in the ability of college students to make critical evaluations of professional literature.

At the end of each article, the subjects were required to answer nine questions which were the same for all subjects and all articles. The questions were as follows, with the exception, of course, that the author's name was changed as appropriate:

1. How valuable for the general reader would you consider Mr. McKay's article to be?
  1. extremely valuable
  2. moderately valuable
  3. some value
  4. little value
  5. no value
2. How valuable for the professional person in the field would you consider Mr. McKay's article to be?
  1. extremely valuable
  2. moderately valuable
  3. some value
  4. little value
  5. no value

1. The original sources for the six articles in the fields of linguistics, law, art history, dietetics, elementary education, and city planning were, respectively, Vossler (1932), Kittrie (1964), Hunter (1956), Stare (1964), Bruner (1961), Gans (1962).

3. Quite aside from content, how effective would you judge Mr. McKay's writing style to be?
  1. extremely effective
  2. moderately effective
  3. partially effective
  4. moderately ineffectual
  5. extremely ineffectual
4. Based on this article, what would you judge Mr. McKay's professional competence to be?
  1. extremely competent
  2. above average competence
  3. average competence
  4. below average competence
  5. incompetent
5. To what extent did you agree with Mr. McKay's point of view?
  1. complete agreement
  2. great deal of agreement
  3. partial agreement
  4. little agreement
  5. complete disagreement
6. How profound would you judge Mr. McKay's article to be?
  1. extremely profound
  2. moderately profound
  3. somewhat profound
  4. little profundity
  5. not at all profound
7. Based on your reading of this article, what would you guess Mr. McKay's status in his field to be?
  1. great status in the field
  2. more than average status in the field
  3. average status
  4. less than average status
  5. little or no status in the field
8. To what extent did Mr. McKay sway your opinions about the issues discussed in his article?
  1. completely
  2. a great deal
  3. somewhat
  4. very little
  5. not at all
9. If you were to assign a grade to Mr. McKay's article, what would it be?
  1. A
  2. B
  3. C
  4. D
  5. F

The general hypothesis was that female subjects would show a tendency to value the professional work of men more highly than the work of women, even when the work was identical, but that this tendency would be inversely related to the degree of "femaleness" associated with the particular professional field.

## RESULTS

The means for the nine questions for the six pairs of articles are presented in Table 1. For each article a summary score based on the scores of all nine questions was computed. Differences between summary scores for each pair of the six articles were analyzed by means of Mann-Whitney U tests, as outlined by Siegel (1956). The results of these analyses are summarized in Table 2.

Based on this analysis, it is clear that the general hypothesis receives only very partial support. Only one statistically significant difference was obtained. That difference, consistent with the hypothesis, reveals that for a field with high male association, city planning, the male-authored article is more highly valued than the female-authored article ( $U = 130.5$ ,  $p < .05$ ). For the other articles, the data were generally in the predicted direction but failed to achieve conventional levels of statistical significance.

In order to determine possible differences in the sensitivity of the nine

**TABLE 1**  
Means for the Six Pairs of Articles on the Nine Evaluative Questions

Question	Articles											
	(1) Linguistics		(2) Law		(3) Art		(4) Dietetics		(5) Education		(6) City Planning	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	3.15	3.65	2.25	2.70	2.65	2.15	1.95	2.25	2.10	2.10	2.30	2.65
2	3.10	3.50	2.30	3.00	2.50	2.80	3.65	3.45	2.25	2.50	2.70	2.90
3	2.65	3.05	2.50	3.05	2.55	2.30	1.50	2.05	2.15	2.20	2.10	2.35
4	2.50	2.85	2.10	2.60	2.30	2.20	2.15	2.35	1.95	2.30	2.50	3.15
5	2.70	3.15	2.15	2.65	2.55	2.40	1.65	1.75	1.70	1.65	2.55	3.45
6	3.35	3.70	2.50	2.95	2.80	2.85	3.35	3.45	2.60	2.80	2.75	3.30
7	2.80	3.55	2.30	2.95	2.50	2.85	2.70	2.80	2.25	2.65	2.70	3.30
8	3.95	4.25	3.05	3.15	3.20	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.50	3.05	3.75
9	2.75	3.00	2.05	2.55	2.30	2.05	1.85	2.10	1.95	2.05	2.45	2.45

Note: The lower the score, the more favorable the rating.

**TABLE 2**  
Differences between Summary Scores of the Six Pairs of Articles

Article	Mean		U	p <sup>a</sup>
	Male	Female		
Linguistics	26.95	30.70	146.0	<.07
Law	21.20	25.60	155.0	<.10
Art history	23.35	23.10	197.5	n.s.
Dietetics	22.05	23.45	173.5	n.s.
Education	20.20	21.75	165.0	n.s.
City planning	23.10	27.30	130.5	<.05

<sup>a</sup>One-tailed tests.

**TABLE 3**  
Differences between Male and Female Articles for the Nine Evaluative Questions

Question	N	z	p <sup>a</sup>
1	36	1.50	<.06
2	36	1.50	<.06
3	35	.68	n.s.
4	32	3.00	<.001
5	37	1.64	<.05
6	34	1.19	n.s.
7	30	2.75	<.003
8	32	.002	n.s.
9	33	1.05	n.s.

<sup>a</sup>One-tailed tests.

questions to evaluate sex differences, the following procedures were used: a difference score was obtained between the summed score on the male articles and the summed score on the female articles for all subjects for each of the nine questions. Differences were analyzed by means of sign tests; these are summarized in Table 3. The results of these analyses again offer partial support for the general hypotheses. For all questions the results were in the same direction, male articles were more favorably evaluated than female articles. For questions 4, 5, and 7 the differences were statistically significant, the values being, respectively,  $z = 3.00$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $z = 1.64$ ,  $p < .05$ ; and  $z = 2.75$ ,  $p < .003$ . For questions 1 and 2 the results approached statistical significance, the values being the same for each question,  $z = 1.50$ ,  $p < .06$ .

The final analysis of the data evaluated the direction of the difference for all questions on all pairs of articles. Nine questions for six pairs of articles yielded 54 mean comparisons. Of the 54 mean comparisons, 3 means were tied, 7 means favored the female authors, and 44 favored the male authors. A sign test analysis yields  $z = 5.04$ ,  $p < .001$ .

It is clear from these data that the hypothesis concerning the general tendency among women to evaluate more favorably the work of men than of

women was confirmed. The hypothesis that this tendency would be lessened as the "femaleness" of a professional field increased was not supported.

## DISCUSSION

The empirical fact of reliable sex differences across a wide range of psychological tasks and experiences is too well known to need citation. That many of these differences lend themselves to evaluative judgments of good-bad or favorable-unfavorable is also clear. In the research previously cited, it was noted that women are generally evaluated less favorably than men.

Two basic steps would seem to be involved in this evaluative process. First, the individual must make a determination as to the existence and nature of a sex difference. The second step involves a value judgment of the perceived difference. Either or both steps may involve inaccuracy. The accuracy of the perception of difference is a simple empirical matter, whatever methodological difficulties might be involved in ascertaining the relation of the perceived to the true difference.

Ascertaining the accuracy of the evaluative step in the judgmental process is clearly more complex. Nonetheless, it would seem reasonable to suggest that the accuracy of the value judgment is a function of the logical relation of the perceived difference to a given and stated set of criteria.

It would seem clear, then, that a difference can be accurately perceived and inaccurately valued. It is, however, obvious that for the entire judgmental process to be accurate, the basic perception of difference must be accurate. Much of the research in this field has been concerned with the perception of difference, irrespective of the accuracy of the perception.

In the present study, true sex-related differences were eliminated. Consequently, the basic general finding that the work of men was more highly valued than the work of women represents obvious distortion.

Further, it should be noted that there was nothing in the experimental procedure or in the instructions to the subjects that specifically directed the subjects' attention to sex differences as such. Their attention was directed specifically to the intellectual qualities of professional literature, and they were informed of the authors' sex only in an indirect and incidental manner.

The data clearly suggest that the subjects were sensitive to the sex of the author and that this logically irrelevant fact served to distort their judgments. Both the sensitivity and the distortion are characteristics of prejudice, and it seems clear that these young women did, in fact, reveal a significant prejudice against women.

It is not yet clear how pervasive are these attitudes across populations and experiences. Nor is it clear that principles derived from the study of ethnic and racial prejudice can be directly applied to these attitudes. It does seem clear, however, that antifeminism among women is a phenomenon of theoretical and social significance.

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## Personal Journal

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### B. A PERSONAL JOURNAL

I remember in the 1950s, when I was an undergraduate, commuting to Columbia University from my home in the Bronx. It was an hour's trip either way, but I had my choice of two routes. I could take the Independent subway to 59th Street and transfer to the IRT back uptown to 116th Street, or I could take the D train to 125th Street and walk across Harlem to school. If the weather was good, I took the Harlem route.

The walk through Harlem took me past a drug store which advertised two products in its windows I had never seen or even heard of before: *hair straightener* and *skin lightener*. It was a time of innocence, perhaps cultural, perhaps personal, but in any event I was led to muse about the ultimate con-

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Source: Prepared especially for this volume.

sequences of discrimination and persecution, the acceptance by the victim of the criteria for his or her victimization. Surely not a new idea, but it was new to me, my own private act of discovery.

I do not recall with the same exactness when it was specifically that I encountered similar examples with other people and other groups. As a general part of my experience, widely shared, I am sure, I have encountered the Jew who is flattered when told he “doesn’t seem Jewish” and the woman pleased to be told that she “thinks like a man.” Perhaps these examples are dated; I hope so, but they were a part of my experience growing up in America after World War II and a part of the experience that I brought with me to the study of psychology.

In graduate school I became interested in studying Jewish anti-Semitism. One methodological problem I encountered in this research was that all the available scales I could find that alleged to measure anti-Semitism seemed to me to be too obvious. I tried for a while to construct a more subtle measure of anti-Semitism using such items as:

1. Who was the greater scientist, Newton or Einstein?
2. Which is the more appropriate food symbol of the United States, ham and eggs or apple pie?

I don’t know if such items were either subtle or valid. In any event, nothing much came of this research. Nevertheless, the general idea of studying self-hatred remained.

The idea took a somewhat different form and concerned a different target group after I began teaching at Connecticut College. The college, which is now coeducational, was, when I first started to teach there in the 1960s, exclusively a women’s college. I remember being struck by the passiveness of the students; the women were bright, able, hard-working, but with few exceptions they lacked intellectual aggressiveness. I also remember at the end of one course reading a final exam that I thought superb by a student whose name I didn’t recognize. I remember feeling sure that had this student been a male, *he* wouldn’t have been anonymous.

But the incident which most sharply led me to consider the differences between male and female college students and which prompted my research on the misogynous attitudes of women was the following: I had been asked by a neighboring school to teach a course. This school was a fine, liberal arts college, very much like Connecticut College except that its students were men only. I knew these students to be similar to the students at Connecticut in intelligence, ability, and background. They were in substance the brothers of the women I taught at Connecticut, but they were very different in their classroom behavior. These male students were actively involved in the class in a way that the girls rarely were; they spoke up, they seemed enthusiastic and deeply interested, their comments and ideas were far-ranging—and it took me nearly a month to discover I was getting a first-rate snow job. These guys

hadn’t done ten cents’ worth of reading since the course had started, a fact which their enthusiastic chatter had successfully obscured long past the time that a sensible teacher should have ferreted out their scheme.

The contrast then between these “brothers and sisters” was sharp. The girls could be counted on to do the work, the guys could be counted on to do the talking. This formulation is surely too sweeping, but it did help to sharpen some questions I had always had about my students. The more I thought about this particular incident, the more others came to mind. The only coordinated meaning I could impose on these experiences was my sense that these young women did not value themselves as they should, that because they were women they chose to participate in and compete in a different world of experience, a less good one. They denigrated themselves and other women. They were, in short, prejudiced against women.

The “hard” part of the research was now completed: The question was asked. It remained now only for me to put the question into an experimental form and to decide on certain technical questions such as sample, sample size, and measuring device.

In reading the work of other people in this general area, two facts seemed to emerge:

1. There were a lot of data that *suggested* prejudice toward women.
2. There were no data to *prove* the phenomenon.

Most of the studies simply elicited negative evaluations of women. Are men or women more generous? Such a question, whatever the answer, is not sufficient to demonstrate prejudice. What is required is the demonstration that the evaluation is not consistent with the personal experience of the subject and that the attitude is not modifiable by new and contradictory evidence.

The first task then was to devise an instrument that would provide a sample of misogynous attitudes. I do not recall now the single moment when I hit upon the idea to prepare pairs of identical articles in which the author’s first name, and therefore sex, would be varied. The idea emerged, precisely how or why I don’t know, other than that I was immersed in a set of questions forcing a set of experimental requirements that my idea seemed to satisfy. The mechanics of selecting the articles and fitting them together in an experimental instrument are discussed in the preceding article.

The experimental task I undertook, then, was to establish experimentally the existence of the phenomenon of prejudice toward women by experimentally controlling the relevant evaluative experience. If I had asked my subjects “Who is more likely to write a good article on city planning, a man or a woman?” the answer to such a question would leave the question of prejudice untouched. By asking subjects to evaluate *identical* articles that differ only in the *sex* of the author, the difference in evaluation can be attributed only to that experimental difference.

The next basic question with which I was confronted was the selection of subjects. Here I must admit that I was guided in large part by convenience. I taught at a women's college, so obtaining female college students for subjects was an easy thing to do. Such a sample appeared to me to be an entirely proper and experimentally conservative choice as well. I reasoned that if a bright, selective group of young women, from a setting in which they were continually being exhorted to achieve academically and in which they were provided with numerous models of women who had attained scholarly careers, demonstrated prejudicial attitudes, then women less intellectual, without the stimulation of such a favorable setting, would be even more likely to be prejudiced.

It should be noted that my reasoning that the subject sample was a good one did not settle the question. The question remained an empirical one which would ultimately be answered empirically or not at all. But all researchers must make decisions about the manner of their experiment in the absence of entirely adequate information, and I made the decision about the sample for the reasons I cite.

As noted in the report of the research, the subjects were gathered together in a large lecture hall and the data were collected in a single session. At the end of the testing, because there was no longer any reason to maintain deception, I asked the subjects what they thought was the true purpose of the experiment. A majority of the young women admitted that they thought it was as I had represented it to them: a study to determine "the ability of college students to make critical evaluations of professional literature." Others, the more skeptical ones, imagined some other purposes. None recognized the true intent of the research.

When I explained to the students what the research was all about, the first general reaction was laughter. The next reaction, pretty much shared in by all, was to deny the possibility that the authors' sex had influenced their evaluation. Indeed, a substantial number of subjects claimed that they hadn't been aware of the authors' sex when they made their evaluations. In light of the results, this reaction in itself is an interesting phenomenon.

How successfully the research dealt with the question it was intended to answer is a judgment I'd prefer not to make. But I do take this satisfaction from my work: I challenged an area of human importance. Others are doing more to answer the questions that remain and to effect social and personal change, and that's as it should be.