The Women's Movement:

Have Community Colleges Responded?

Eileen J. Rossi

Over twelve years ago, Betty Freidin published her best seller "The Feminine Mystique," which is credited with igniting the current women's movement. As Elizabeth Janeway notes, though Freidin's book was not the first feminist work, "it was published at a time when an eager audience was ready to hear its message." Eager, indeed, were women to march, to rally, to organize, to lobby, to file suits and to publicize for parity with men in politics, employment and education. True, some women stayed quietly at home, barely whispering "anatomy is not destiny," but others ventured out to question, publicly, their once wholly accepted, sub-missive relationships to husbands and lovers, to children and analysts, and even to their own bodies. Since that time, the Women's Liberation Movement, as it came to be called, has grown so that in 1973—ten years after the publication of Freidin's book—the Carnegie Commission proclaimed that women's demands for "equality of treatment in all aspects of life" constituted the "second most fundamental revolution in the affairs of mankind."

In 1975, designated International Women's Year by the United Nations, community colleges should, no doubt, be assessing their answers to the questions of the women's movement. However, educators have shockingly little data by which to measure their progress in curriculum, special services, and affirmative action, because as yet no individual nor group has assumed the leadership for organizing a comprehensive body of accessible information.

Educators must rely, by and large, on hearsay evidence or personal experience to trace advances in community college women's programs. Even when they chance upon a nugget of more objective information, they are likely to suspect that the majority of community colleges, encouraged by the federal government's failure to encourage affirmative action, have simply not taken women's programs seriously.

Thus, lacking research guides to the history of community college women's programs and hoping to side-step hearsay evidence, I began with personal experience during the early 1970's. Like many of my feminist colleagues, I became "involved" in women's programs when I was scheduled to teach a women's studies course at my college and when four-year college and university women were rallying around the issues of women's studies and affirmative action. In 1971, recognizing the need to "legitimize" women's studies and to inform women about the intricacies of affirmative action, Dr. Komilayn Feig, then of the University of Pittsburgh, sought and won funding for the first Education Professions Development Act Institute designed exclusively for women in higher education. Wanting to develop teaching skills in a relatively new field, I applied for the program; and while I had the good fortune to be selected an Institute fellow, I had the misfortune to be in the minority as a community college educator. Even though that month in Pittsburgh was remarkably rewarding, I returned to California convinced that somebody should develop a similar program, taking into account the unique character of community colleges as institutions of higher education.

Women's Organization

As a result, in 1971, I drafted the proposal for "Woman: Her Challenge to the Community College," a training program designed exclusively for community college counselors, faculty, and administrators.
Women's Programs in Community Colleges at the AACJC National Convention (a first for the Association) which drew about 100 people; and then in 1975 two Forums at the Convention, one called "Women of Influence" and another "Female-Male Communication on the Job," which together drew over 350 people. We have witnessed, as well, chapters developing in several areas of the country and local groups offering conferences such as the "Women and Power" workshop sponsored by the San Francisco Bay Area group last May.

But one of our most notable accomplishments is that we did win Council status with the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) and assumed a seat on the Board of Directors of the Association on July 1, 1975. Very obviously, then, the Women's Council does not advocate separatism from men on the grounds that the system is inherently corrupt and unresponsive to feminist concerns. Like the National Organization for Women, the Women's Equity Action League, and others, AACJC is concentrating on entering and reforming existing institutions rather than abandoning them. Indeed, the Association Constitution states the purpose, "To foster the development of comprehensive educational, career, and life opportunities for all persons." This philosophy and the fact that AACJC provides a focal point for sharing fem-

Findings of Study

On the surface, Nichols discovered that slightly over half the responding colleges offer credit courses and/or non-credit experiences designed for and about women. He found certain trends in each of these categories. For example, in the category "specialized courses" he discovered that literature is "the largest single discipline represented" among a group including Sociology, History, and Psychology. In the category "non-credit offerings" he discovered that 40 per cent of the responding institutions provide "programs designed to encourage women to continue their education," giving them the edge over other types of offerings. This latter finding supports the impressions of educators studying women's programs in the field. For instance, Betty Inman of Orange Coast College reports 82 of them for a sabbatical leave project, reports substantial interest in programs for the returning women.

The 50 per cent figure for "programs overall" and the 30 per cent figure for re-entry indicate that many colleges are responding to women students. However, because feminist educators are calling increasingly for comprehensive, inte-

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2 Ibid., p. 6.
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grated programs, one might ask whether the figures include numerous, isolated attempts in a couple of areas or programs which combine curriculum and services. At the charrette (working conference) on "Multiple Roles in Contemporary Society," which was held at Phoenix College in February, 1975, participants overwhelmingly expressed the need for coordinating and supplementing existing courses and programs within the structure of a women's department or division. In fact, on the last day of the conference, they unanimously passed the following resolution:

Childcare centers, special supportive services and special curriculum under the direction of a certified staff member, are necessary components of any program designed to meet the needs of women in education.

Those participants knew what Inman stressed in her study: coordination has been a major barrier to administering programs and serving women students, mainly because of the traditional split between curriculum and services in most colleges. Yet the Michigan study does not get at this fact of women's programs.

Furthermore, taking a second look at Nichols' statistics, one perceives really minimal support for either credit curriculum or most special services. Although literature courses are popular in comparison to others, only 19 per cent of the respondents reported them; and only 12 per cent reported courses in psychology, sociology, and history. Moreover, in gathering data for one of the major purposes of the study—to ascertain how many colleges operate Women's Resource Centers—Nichols learned that only 12 per cent do so; then, asking precisely what the center included, he uncovered even gloomier information. Nichols found that only 12 per cent of the total number of responding institutions offer special counseling, 6 per cent "comprehensive daycare," and a mere 2 per cent (14 colleges) special financial assistance through a Women's Resource Center.

However, because the Women's Bureau reports that one of four colleges (all levels) operate some sort of pre-kindergarten program for children, one might question, for example, the low childcare figure. Thus, because the survey measures services as components of a women's center, it is possible that the results do not accurately reflect how successfully community colleges have fulfilled services needs.

Little Concern For Women Students

However, when one considers the replies to one of Nichols' final questions, "What is the degree of concern for women students at your college...?" one begins to doubt again the reality of institutional commitment to women's programs. Twenty-two per cent of the respondents indicated little or no concern for women students; only 27 per cent expressed high concern, and the rest took the "safe, middle-of-the-road," "moderate" concern for women students. Thus, while the curriculum and services at some community colleges show that these schools have apparently recognized women as persons, feminist educators might question the quality of the offerings and the depth of institutional commitment to them.

However, given current enrollment facts, it is unbelievable that any educator would express less than "high concern" for women students. According to the National Center for Education Statistics the number of women enrolled in two-year institutions has increased 33 per cent from 1972 to 1974 compared to an overall increase of only 27 per cent. The growth in numbers of women enrolling part-time has been even more striking, with an increase of 20 per cent from the fall of 1973 to the fall of 1974.

Recently, a community college president observed incredulously, "Sixty percent of our students are female, and half of them are over thirty-five."

Feminist educators expect that women students will become even more visible now that Title IX Regulations have gone into effect. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, of course, prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in "education programs or activities" receiving federal funds.

While an analysis of the Regulations lies beyond the scope of this article, it should be noted that Title IX covers athletics, counseling, and certain key offerings such as industrial, business, vocational, and technical courses. In addition, it requires that if enrollments contain a "substantially disproportionate number of one sex," an institution must determine whether or not the cause is sexist counseling.

Of course, feminist educators

11 Nichols, p. 3.
12 Sandy Drake, American Association of Community and Junior Colleges Staff, personal letter, June 5, 1975.
14 Ibid., 24131.
recognize that legislative glitter is
not always pure gold. On Campus with Women reports that “four
women’s rights groups and a national
education association” have sued HEW for non-enforcement
of federal anti-discrimination laws and that the Civil Rights Commissions
recently concluded that HEW “has repeatedly permitted civil
rights violations by colleges and
universities to continue without
imposing sanctions.” In fact,
women’s groups have known for a
long time that even when sex
discrimination charges are proved,
no government action follows. Thus,
feminists understand the legislative
potential of Title IX, but they also
question whether or not the federal
government will use that potential.

Affirmative Action?

No doubt the government’s non-
action partly explains the scarcity of
information on yet another type of
women’s program. That is, edu-
cators lack truly significant data by
which to measure their progress in
affirmative action. For example, a
superficial reading of the statistics
in sex distribution of community
college administrators—available
in the Supplement to the 1975
AACJC Directory for the first time
this year—reveals that women account
for 24 per cent of the adminis-
trators and men 76 per cent in
early 1,200 community colleges. However, if one analyzes these
figures, one begins to doubt not

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only their usefulness but also their
validity.

When I noted that my own state,
California, lagged behind the national
average with a ratio of 85 men to 15
women administrators, I became such an analyst. Since
AACJC reports only an overall
percentage and percentages by
state, I turned to the California
Community Colleges Directory for
1974-75 to better understand the
meaning of the California figure.
Here I discovered some curious
facts. According to my count, 12
per cent—not 15 per cent—of the
administrators in one of the largest
systems in the country are female.
Indeed, AACJC’s California total
is larger than the Directory total,
which fact probably accounts for the
3 per cent discrepancy; but which fact also suggests the
important question: how does the
reporter distinguish administrators
by job title? salary? certification?

Next, assuming that the California
Directory lists administrators in
order of increasing responsibility,
I discovered that a mere hand-
feful of the women are more than
half way up the ladder at their
institutions. Finally, I realized that
37 per cent of all California women
administrators are either librarians
or registrars. Another 19 per cent

hold positions in Student Services.
Of course, California’s record has
“improved” since publication of
the Directory, because not one but
two women have recently been
appointed heads of community
colleges in the state. However, this
fact does not much change the national
figures on women chief
executives because both women were
already community college
presidents. Thus, I was not
surprised to learn from AACJC staff
that among Presidents and Executive Deans in 760 public community
colleges there is a grand total of eight women.

However, because the AACJC
statistics do not give the kind of
detail suggested above, I turned to
two professional organizations,
both of which are listed as sources
of information on community
college administrators in the AACJC
Fact Sheet. In response to my
request for information on community
college women administrators, I
received similar replies from both
organizations. Neither group knew
of sources singling out community
college women administrators; both
suggested general sources on
women in higher education; and both
referred me back to AACJC.

Lack of Information

Clearly there is an almost utter
lack of pertinent, formally organ-
ized, accessible information on
women administrators in commun-
ity colleges. This information is not
available because apparently, com-
munity college institutions, encour-
ded by the government’s non-
action, are not taking women’s
affirmative action programs seri-
ously. Again, if the AAWJC News-
letter can be used to measure ac-
tivity, one finds only an occasional,
cryptic note about plans being
developed or suits being filed. A
preliminary analysis of a recent
AAWJC membership survey re-
veals that many women do not
know whether or not their colleges
have affirmative action plans; and
further, if plans exist, they may not
have read them. This suggests that
colleges either have not bothered
to develop them or they are not
providing them to staff. This inter-
pretation is bolstered by the fact
that AACJC had to note after each of
its lists of students, faculty, and
administrators in the Supplement
to the 1975 Directory that the sum
of male and female students, the
sum of male and female faculty, and
the sum of male and female admin-
istrators do not equal the total
enrollment, certificated staff, and
administrative staff in each state
because “some colleges did not provide [data] by sex.”

13 Project on the Status and Education of Women, On Campus with Women,
(May, 1975), 1-2.
14 American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, Supplemental
report, 1975 Community, Junior, and Technical College Directory (Washington,
15 Drake, letter.
16 National Association of College and University Business Officers and Col-
lege and University Personnel Association, personal letters. July 16 and July 14,
1975.
17 American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, pp. 7-13.
while apparently progressing somewhat in women's programs—have been hampered by a near void of significant information by which to measure their advances in curriculum, services, and most notably, affirmative action.

Need for Clearinghouse on Women's Programs

Thus, I join the 44 percent who responded “yes” to Dr. Nichols' final survey question: “Is there a need for a national clearinghouse on women's programs at community colleges?” Yes, I say, because a clearinghouse would collect, organize, and disseminate a comprehensive body of information and so correct the present fact of inadequate and insufficient data on women's programs. In this way, the energy of the women's movement would be channeled into clearly worthwhile programs, as the clearinghouse could provide needs assessment models, program concepts, and evaluation instruments for women's programs. After talking with individual women and reading the AAWCJC Newsletter, I am certain these tools exist, but regrettably, as an American Council of Education staff person recently explained, the bulk of this information remains unpublished.

Further, concluding the report of his Women's Programs Survey, Dr. Nichols challenged the American Association of Women in Community and Junior Colleges to organize such a clearinghouse. Indeed, it would be appropriate for the Association to do so, as one of its 1975 needs to the community college establishment—both AACCJC and individual institutions can expect, in the next year, an increasing number of pointed questions about what they are doing or not doing for women's programs as well as stronger and stronger appeals for specific support. Until questions are answered and appeals are honored, women will remain, as they were nearly five years ago, a challenge to the community college.

Summary

The women's movement is clearly changing the texture of American society, but not necessarily, the community college systems across the country. Curiously, in the very schools which are philosophically pledged to educate and improve the majority, there is a certain aloofness towards the demands of women.

It is difficult to assess the community colleges' degree of real response to women's concerns because there is a dearth of solid information on the subject. This fact

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20 Ibid., p. 1.
21 Nichols, pp. 3-4.
"We're a society trying to assimilate a revolution, which can be summarized by saying that 38 million working women won't go home again."

"Meet me at the art gallery at 11:45," my sister is saying. The words are totally ordinary, but the tone isn't. Nor is the meaning behind them. This is my younger sister speaking. She's chosen where to go, when to go, and she is not asking me—the long dominant older sister—she is telling me.

What has happened is that Maureen has gone to work. After fourteen years of housewifery and motherhood, she has taken an administrative position in a marine research laboratory. With work has come a sense of self-assurance. At the moment, her new assertive personality is staggering about on unsteady legs—a little unsure here, over-aggressive there—but it is the first of a series of changes in her attitudes and family relationships that, if she is at all typical, will come with her new employment.

Because my husband and I both work at night, our understanding of one another is strong. We share the same患 through things like the 2:00 a.m. hunger for an old cheese sandwich. Or the 5:00 a.m. bedtime for our children. It is a problem, but one we handle.

For my sister is representative of the New Norm, the working wife who has transformed the typical family in this country into a two-earner family. The storybook family we always thought was typical—working father, homemaker mother, Dick, Jane, and Spot—has begun to recede into legend. In only 34 percent of today's families does the husband alone work. Forty-four percent of couples now have women employed in the labor force and the trend is likely to continue. (The figures do not include those families of students, retired couples, and others in which neither spouse works.) The myth that the traditional family is natural and expected persists despite evidence to the contrary.

My own immediate family has known four varieties of the New Norm. In the mid-fifties, my mother went back to work to raise the standard of living of a family with four children. One sister worked to help put her husband through graduate school. Now another, her children having reached the ages of eleven and thirteen, is working to fill a variety of economic and personal needs. I myself have never stopped working even during the years of my marriage. My third sister is at home with a young child, but I have no doubt that she eventually will join us in the working world.

The New Norm is my mother, my sisters, me—and most likely you. When we stop and look around, it is we who are typical and not the stay-at-home wife. We can paraphrase Pogo and say, "We have seen the future and it is us."

And the future, to the extent we can judge from the present, looks very different from the past. The change in the nature of families is nothing less than revolutionary. It affects every aspect of our lives: the structure and economic function of the family, the roles its members fulfill, and their relationship to one another. It is a change that we have hardly begun to recognize, let alone confront and assess.

"Our situation today can best be described as a society trying to assimilate a revolution," says Carolyn Shaw Bell, professor at Wellesley College and prominent labor market economist. "This revolution... can most simply be summarized by saying that 38 million working women won't go home again."

The leaving is symbolic as well as actual. In moving outside the home, women are also casting off their status as dependents and, almost like fledglings leaving the nest, are becoming adult and independent in new ways.

This profound change in the nature of the family raises a raft of interesting questions:

Will women acquire greater power in their families—and in society—by sharing in the breadwinner's role?

Will their changed status mean that their looks and age matter less? Will the transformation from consumers to producers bring new prestige to the older woman whose usefulness does not end with the maturity of her children?

I was going through some papers I had brought home from the office and my husband had the television on and looked up to see a commercial showing his woman basting a chicken before giving her a kiss on the cheek at the door of a supermarket. I thought to myself: These people are making commercials who are they kidding? Don't they know that not all of us are as old as I am?

What will happen to women's traditional work—the care of home and children? Will it be shared by men? Will it increasingly move out of the home and be taken over by restaurants, cleaning services, and day-care centers? Or, as in eastern Europe, will women simply bear the burden of two jobs, one inside and one outside the home?

What will happen to children? Will there be fewer of them? Will they be more independent? Will they grow up with new ideas about the roles of men and women?

Will the stress due to the shifting roles shake the family and increase the divorce rate? Will more women choose not to marry as marriage becomes less of an economic necessity? Or will the fact that marriages are more freely and equally entered into make them happier? Will there be an increase of bliss in the universe?

How will the money earned by wives be spent? Will there be a rise in the standard of living? A general increase in wisdom as more families are able to
“Despite the lag in the sharing of household tasks, a redistribution of power between husband and wife takes place when the wife goes to work.”

afford college educations?
How will people change? Will the ideal man be more nurturant? Will the ideal woman be more independent?
These questions suggest some of the possible effects of the change in the nature of the family. The answers cannot
yet be known with certainty but by looking at the future-that-is-us, and at what little research has been done, we can gauge some of the impact of the working wife.

“That noise you hear in the background is my husband loading the dishwasher,” said my friend Carol, mother of three children between thirteen and nineteen, when I called to ask her how working had affected her life. Carol, married to a writer, had recently taken a job as a psychologist in an alcoholism program. “I will probably prepare dinner and then we’ll probably both yell at my daughter to clear the dishes.”

The first effects of a wife’s working may be seen in terms of her other job, her role in the care of the home and children. The immediate impact is to cut in half the amount of time spent on housework. According to a study by Joann Vanek, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Queens College, the woman employed outside the home spends twenty-six hours a week doing household chores, while the unemployed woman spends fifty-five hours a week.

With a twenty-nine-hour cutdown, some housework simply gets eliminated. Alice, whose children have reached their teens and who recently returned to teaching, says, “I simply don’t clean as much as I used to, certainly not in that old compulsive way when I was terribly worried about things like waxy yellow buildup. Now I no longer feel repudiated by the sight of a dustball.”

Work allows women to excuse themselves from things they didn’t want to do anyway and fills needs formerly filled in homemaking. Carol’s case is rather typical. “I cook very simple meals,” she says, “and I spend a lot less time meeting unwelcome obligations like entertaining relatives.”

Rhoda, a New Jersey mother of two, who recently took a job running the office of a group of doctors, puts it this way: “If anything has hurt in my house, it’s dinner. I used to make gourmet meals every night. I’m a creative person, but I had nothing to create, so I was creating dishes. Now I no longer have the need.”

Housework that doesn’t actually get eliminated may be done more efficiently: “I now shop once a week; before I was always running out to the stores,” says Sarah, a Brooklyn mother of three who just went back to work as a bookkeeper. Some household chores may shift outside the home: the family eats at restaurants more often or the clothes go out to the laundry. The first thing many women do is hire a cleaning woman to come in once a week. “I can now justify having a cleaning woman,” says Carol. “I need the help.”

Such farming out of household chores represents a critical change in attitude. “I was brought up to think I was supposed to cook and clean and keep house,” says Carol. “My parents came from Europe and the idea was that I’d damn well ‘better earn my keep.’” The Vanek study postulates that the major reason unemployed women spend longer hours doing housework—and surprisingly they even spend more time than employed women on evenings and weekends when husbands are home—is to demonstrate to themselves and others that they are making a contribution to the household. The working woman has no need to do this; she has a paycheck.

So far, there is little evidence that husbands are moving toward an equal share of household responsibilities. Joann Vanek found that husbands of employed women give no more help than husbands of unemployed women. Both spend only a few hours a week helping out, mostly shopping.

Will the United States follow the lead of eastern European countries, where, despite the fact that women have been working in large numbers for a long period of time, they still shoulder almost all the burden of child care and housework? “The whole question of household responsibility is an extremely important

one,” says Stanford economist Myra Strober. “How many more women will be able to pursue professional careers if the current pattern holds? Now it’s only the woman who has extremely high energy who can hold down two jobs. Are we just going to continue to say, ‘Oh, yeah, it’s a shame professional women don’t get more rest?’” Says Carolyn Bell, “The task of the next revolution is to bring about a situation where the work performed at home is a responsibility for human beings instead of a burden for women.”

Despite the lag in the sharing of household tasks, a redistribution of power between husband and wife does take place when the wife goes to work. The fact that the woman now has direct access to money rather than receiving it through her husband improves her bargaining position. Studies have shown
"Childbearing is a particularly expensive business when a woman's potential earnings are added to the costs of raising the child through college."

The power each partner has in a marriage is dependent on the resources he or she commands. Women who work have more decision-making power than those who don't. Some of this may be the result of an increase in real power (money, new knowledge, and contacts), but again, attitude is all-important. The new feelings of value and assurance that my sister and other newly employed women demonstrate will be carried into their dealings with their husbands and children. The woman who is making decisions and giving orders at work is not likely to relinquish the exercise of these abilities when she goes home.

As Jeanne, who recently rejoined the ranks of the employed as an interior designer, puts it: "I spend all day making decisions for other people; I can't go home at six o'clock and magically turn into Dolly Docile. Sure, we have more arguments in the family these days, but I think my husband and kids like the new feisty me better than the old docile." Then there's my sister. In her job she's required to make plans and inform others of them. How much of her new behavior with me is simply a result of that practice?

The shifting relationships between husbands' and wives' roles place great stress on the contemporary family. In my sister's case the stress is minimal. She disrupt her marriage. On the other hand, Rhoda's husband accepts the situation less than wholeheartedly. "He would prefer having me at home, but agreed that I needed to work. Even so, I feel it's a blow to his ego, that he feels it somehow reflects on him as the provider in the family."

Perhaps the most difficult situation is the one in which the wife is forced to work. Several years ago my friend Bill, a Boston businessman, faced a series of financial setbacks. Simultaneously, his youngest child became critically ill and required lengthy hospitalization. The family had no medical insurance. "Nancy had to go to work to keep the family from going down the drain," says Bill. "It was actually harder for her because I was in favor of her working. I'd like to see her as a corporate vice-president, which she is equipped to be in every way. Instead, she took a low paying teaching job. I think she'd feel better about having to work if I shared her attitudes. She doesn't want to work. She wants to be the way I call 'provided for'—not just provided for; she expects it as her due." Bill is nontraditional in other ways. "My idea of heaven is standing next to a woman I care about in the kitchen chopping parsley and drinking white wine. But I do much less cooking now than I used to just to keep the peace."

Whichever way attitudes fall, disagreement places stress on the marriage. "As women in my town go back to work, marriages are falling apart as if all the warranties ran out," Carol reports. "I feel like I'm a pioneer in a wagon train. Every night you put the wagons in a circle, but every night the Indians knock off a couple more."

Recently at a dinner party in Chicago, I heard a two-career couple—he's a doctor and she's a lawyer—arguing over how much child care each would do if they had a baby. He was offering a third but she was holding out for a full 50 percent. Whether or not they'll be able to arbitrate their differences, such attitudes can't help having an effect on the number of children working couples have. In many cases, the effects of the new expectations may be expressed in subtler ways than open negotiation. Now that some husbands see themselves having a more active role in child care they may consider differently the issue of how many children to have. The fantasy of Daddy coming home from the office to freshy-bathed, contentedly-gurgling children and a wife dressed in crisp ruffles can hardly survive in the face of current realities. With what effect on the birth rate?

In any case, there is a clear statistical association between working wives and small families. The question is, do women who have smaller families find they have more time and desire to work, or do women who enjoy working deliberately limit the size of their families? The answer is probably a little of both.

Women who work may have less need to express their creativity through childbearing. And, from a purely economic point of view, childbearing is a particularly expensive business when a woman's potential earnings are added to the costs of raising the child through college. The grand total of child-rearing expenses plus the loss of the mother's potential earnings during that period is calculated at $84,000 for a woman with an elementary school education, $99,000 for a woman with a high school diploma, $122,000 for the college-educated woman, and $143,000 for a woman with some graduate school.

In addition to being fewer, the children in a two-earner family will be different. "I used to pick up after everybody," says Rhoda. "Now the children do their own rooms. They're learning
"Money, no matter how little, brings possibilities—
I might even go back to college."

That their things are their responsibility, kids grow up earlier when their mothers work. It’s also easier to let them live their own lives if you have your own life.” Her sentiment is reinforced by Kate, a psychologist in her late forties. "The fact that my kids are leaving the nest doesn’t bother me,” she says. "which isn’t the case with friends of mine who don’t work and who see their children leaving home as a complete loss of their own raison d’etre. My life, my own growth and satisfactions, were never tied up in my children."

Children whose mothers work may also see their parents in less stereotypical ways, or at least in different stereotypes. Isabel Sawhill is director of the Urban Institute’s Program of Research on Women. In her family, she does the cooking and her husband, New York University President John Sawhill, does the dishwashing. "I am just amazed watching my teenage son,” she says. "He is totally imitative of what my husband does. He automatically washes the dishes whenever he’s home from school without being asked, almost as if it were his responsibility. On the other hand, he never offers to help cook—that’s women’s work."

Studies have shown that children of working mothers are less likely to de-

value the intellectual abilities and competence of women and are more likely to see their fathers, as well as their mothers, as warm and expressive. And, of course, fathers may come to place a greater value on their involvement with their families relative to their careers. "The most exciting thing in my life now is watching Adam grow and develop," one new father, a San Francisco scientist, told me. Since Adam’s birth, he has been getting up at 5:30 every morning to feed and change him and make the breakfast coffee before going off to work. "The only problem is that I’m tired all the time,” he says, echoing the age-old complaint of female parents.

Yet another effect of the working wife is expanded options for families. The husband may be better able to weather a period of unemployment and thereby hold out for the job he really wants rather than settle for one he doesn’t. Or he may be able to change careers. A young lawyer I know decided he really wanted to be a potter, a career change that might have been impossible had his wife not been bringing home a paycheck. In another family, the wife’s earnings placed a safety net under her husband as he switched from a career in public relations to one in theatrical production. Or the job may enable the wife to go back to school.

Although women are now earning 27 percent of all family income, little is known about how this money is spent. Obviously, however, the two-earner family has more economic options than the family with only one breadwinner, most notably those options that represent a higher standard of living—college tuition, vacations, major appliances.

"My husband and I have never spent any time alone since the children were born," says Sarah. "This summer we’re sending them to camp and going away by ourselves. Money, no matter how little, brings possibilities. I’m thinking of going back to college, too. I feel now I can afford it better. I wouldn’t feel guilty about it." For Rhoda, too, the money may mean an extra trip—going back to Europe or whatever." And my sister just called to ask what I thought of England or Mexico as a vacation possibility. "You seem to be planning to spend a lot of money,” I said. "Well, we’re both working,” she answered.

All in all, we are in a time of transition best described by Carolyn Bell’s image of "a society trying to assimilate a revolution." We are between the traditional marriages of the past and the totally egalitarian marriages which may emerge in the future. Although the realities have changed, many laws and social arrangements—social security and income tax, for instance—are still based on the old assumptions.

Says Stanford economist, Myra Strober, "The American way of doing this is very ad hoc. The philosophy that is becoming more and more entrenched is, ‘If you want to work, you figure out how to do it.’ But many women don’t have any choice.” At ever econonic level, working women need help. They need relief from social security and tax structures that discriminate against them, they need help in shareing the burdens of the home, and they need day care to use if they desire.

Yet, if we are indeed in a time of transition and if families are changing in response to the new realities, the outlook is an optimistic one. We may look forward to equality between the sexes and marriages based on companionship rather than economic need. Men will have been freed from the full burden of family support. The decision to have children will be made only for whatever intrinsic satisfaction they bring. The care of children and the home will be shared by both men and women. Men will become more nurturant and involved in the satisfactions of family life. Women, like my sister and yours, will come to participate more fully in the world and to feel the enhanced sense of self-esteem and well-being that comes from exercising the full range of their abilities and talents.

Oh brave new world that has such people in it!

Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language in NCTE Publications

At the 1974 NCTE Convention members adopted a resolution calling for the preparation of guidelines for NCTE publications and correspondence to help insure the use of nonsexist language. We sought reactions and suggestions from members of the Committee on the Role and Image of Women in the Council and the Profession, from editors of Council journals, from professional staff members at NCTE. Copies of the guidelines went in the fall to all members of the Board of Directors. At the 1975 Convention the Board of Directors adopted a formal policy statement which read in part: "The National Council of Teachers of English should encourage the use of nonsexist language, particularly through its publications and periodicals."

The Directors did not vote on the guidelines themselves. Had they done so, it would require a later action of the Directors to add to or modify the guidelines. They are reproduced here to guide all interested Council members in implementing the policy adopted by the Directors.

—Robert F. Héogan
NCTE Executive Secretary

Introduction

"Sexism" may be defined as words or actions that arbitrarily assign roles or characteristics to people on the basis of sex. Originally used to refer to practices that discriminated against women, the term now includes any usage that unfairly delimits the aspirations or attributes of either sex. Neither men nor women can reach their full potential when men are conditioned to be only aggressive, analytical, and active and women are conditioned to be only submissive, emotional, and passive. The man who cannot cry and the woman who cannot command are equally victims of their socialization.

Language plays a central role in socialization, for it helps teach children the roles that are expected of them. Through language, children conceptualize their ideas and feelings about themselves and their world. Thought and action are reflected in words, and words in turn condition how a person thinks and acts. Eliminating sexist language will not eliminate sexist conduct, but as the language is liberated from sexist usages and assumptions, women and men will begin to share more equal, active, caring roles.

Recognizing these problems, members of the National Council of Teachers of English passed a resolution at their 1974 convention directing the Council to create guidelines ensuring the use of nonsexist language in NCTE publications and correspondence. Although directed specifically to NCTE editors, authors, and staff, the guidelines will also benefit members at large. Whether teaching in the classroom, assigning texts, determining curriculum, or serving on national committees, NCTE members
directly and indirectly influence the socialization of children. They help shape the language patterns and usage of students and thus have potential for promoting language that opens rather than closes possibilities to women and men.

These guidelines are not comprehensive. They identify sexist usages that plague communication and discuss specific problems that NCTE encounters in its role as an educational publisher. The guidelines do not offer a new dogmatism. Detailed and vigorous arguments continue over many of these language patterns. These debates have not been resolved; rather, an attempt has been made to identify usages that concerned men and women find objectionable and to propose alternatives.

General Problems

Omission of Women

1. Although man in its original sense carried the dual meaning of adult human and adult male, its meaning has come to be so closely identified with adult male that the generic use of man and other words with masculine markers should be avoided whenever possible.

   Examples
   
   mankind
   man's achievements
   the best man for the job
   man-made
   the common man

   Alternatives
   
   humanity, human beings, people
   human achievements
   the best person for the job,
   the best man or woman for the job
   synthetic, manufactured, crafted, machine-made
   the average person, ordinary people

2. The use of man in occupational terms when persons holding the jobs could be either female or male should be avoided. English is such a rich language that alternatives to the much-maligned man—person (as in congressperson) can almost always be found (representative).

   Examples
   
   chairman
   businessman, fireman, mailman

   Alternatives
   
   coordinator (of a committee or department),
   moderator (of a meeting), presiding officer,
   business executive or manager, fire fighter,
   head, chair
   mail carrier

In the interest of parallel treatment, job titles for women and men should be the same.

   Examples
   
   steward and stewardess
   policeman and policewoman

   Alternatives
   
   flight attendant
   police officer

3. Because English has no generic singular—or common-sex—pronoun, we have used he, his, and him in such expressions as "the student... he." When we constantly personify "the judge," "the critic," "the executive," "the author," etc., as male by using the pronoun he, we are subtly conditioning ourselves against the idea of a female judge, critic, executive, or author. There are several alternative approaches for ending the exclusion of women that results from the pervasive use of the masculine pronouns.

   a. Recast into the plural.

   Example
   
   Give each student his paper as soon as he is finished.

   Alternative
   
   Give students their papers as soon as they are finished.

   b. Reword to eliminate unnecessary gender problems.

   Example
   
   The average student is worried about his grades.

   Alternative
   
   The average student is worried about grades.

   c. Replace the masculine pronoun with one, you, or (sparingly) he or she, as appropriate.

   Example
   
   If the student was satisfied with his performance on the pretest, he took the posttest.

   Alternative
   
   A student who was satisfied with her or his performance on the pretest took the posttest.
d. Alternate male and female examples and expressions.

   Example
   Let each student participate. Has he had a chance to talk? Could he feel left out?

   Alternative
   Let each student participate. Has she had a chance to talk? Could he feel left out?

4. Using the masculine pronouns to refer to an indefinite pronoun (everybody, everyone, anybody, anyone) also has the effect of excluding women. In all but strictly formal usage, plural pronouns have become acceptable substitutes for the masculine singular.

   Example
   Anyone who wants to go to the game should bring his money tomorrow.

   Alternative
   Anyone who wants to go to the game should bring their money tomorrow.

5. Certain phrases inadvertently exclude women by assuming that all readers are men.

   Example
   NCTE convention-goers and their wives are invited . . .

   Alternative
   NCTE convention-goers and their spouses are invited . . .

Demeaning Women

1. Men and women should be treated in a parallel manner, whether the description involves jobs, appearance, marital status, or titles.

   Examples
   lady lawyer
   Running for Student Council president are Bill Smith, a straight-A sophomore, and Kathie Ryan, a pert junior.
   Senator Percy and Mrs. Chisholm

   Alternatives
   lawyer
   Running for Student Council president are Bill Smith, a straight-A sophomore, and newspaper editor Kathie Ryan, a junior.
   Charles Percy and Shirley Chisholm or Mr., Percy and Mrs. Chisholm or Senator Percy and Representative Chisholm

2. Terms or adjectives which patronize or trivialize women or girls should be avoided, as should sexist suffixes and adjectives dependent on stereotyped masculine or feminine markers.

   Examples
   gal Friday
   I’ll have my girl do it.
   career girl
   ladies
   libber
   coed
   authoress, poetess
   man-sized job
   old wives’ tale

   Alternatives
   assistant
   I’ll have my secretary do it.
   professional woman, name the woman’s profession, e.g., attorney Ellen Smith
   women (unless used with gentlemen)
   feminist
   student
   author, poet
   big or enormous job
   superstitious belief, story, or idea

Sex-Role Stereotyping

1. Women should be shown as participating equally with men; they should not be omitted or treated as subordinate to men. Thus generic terms such as doctor or nurse should be assumed to include both men and women; “male nurse” and “woman doctor” should be avoided.

   Examples
   Writers become so involved in their work that they neglect their wives and children.
   Sally’s husband lets her teach part-time.

   Alternatives
   Writers become so involved in their work that they neglect their families.
   Sally teaches part-time.
2. Jobs, roles, or personal characteristics should not be stereotyped by sex.

_Examples_

the elementary teacher . . . she
the principal . . . he

Have your Mother send cookies for the field trip.

Write a paragraph about what you expect to do when you are old enough to have Mr. or Mrs. before your name.

(spelling exercise)
While lunch was delayed, the ladies chattered about last night’s meeting.

_Alternatives_

elementary teachers . . . they
principals . . . they

Have your parents send cookies for the field trip.

Write a paragraph about what you expect to do when you grow up.

While lunch was delayed, the women talked about last night’s meeting.

_Sample Revised Passages_

Many of the general problems just discussed overlap in practice. Substantial revisions are sometimes necessary:

_Example_

O’Connors to Head PTA

Jackson High School PTA members elected officers for the 1975-76 school year Wednesday night at the school cafeteria.

Dr. and Mrs. James O’Connor were elected co-presidents from a slate of three couples. Dr. O’Connor, a neurosurgeon on the staff of Howard Hospital, has served for two years on the PTA Budget and Finance Committee. Mrs. O’Connor has been active on the Health and Safety Committee.

Elected as co-vice-presidents were Mr. and Mrs. Tom Severns; secretary, Mrs. John Travers; and treasurer, Mrs. Edward Johnson. Committee chairmen were also selected. Each chairman will be briefed on his responsibilities at a special meeting on June 3. The revised budget will be presented at that meeting.

Principal Dick Wade announced that Mrs. Elizabeth Sullivan had been chosen Teacher of the Year by the Junior Women’s League. She was nominated in a letter written by ten of her students. Each student discussed how she had influenced him.

Mrs. Sullivan, an English teacher at Jackson for ten years, is the wife of Joseph Sullivan, a partner in the law firm of Parker, Sullivan and Jordan, and the mother of two Jackson students.

Smartly attired in a blue tweed suit, Mrs. Sullivan briefly addressed the group, expressing her gratitude at receiving the award.

_Alternative_

O’Connors to Head PTA

Jackson High School PTA members elected officers for the 1975-76 school year Wednesday night at the school cafeteria.

James and Marilyn O’Connor were elected co-presidents from a slate of three couples. James O’Connor, a neurosurgeon on the staff of Howard Hospital, has served for two years on the PTA Budget and Finance Committee, and Marilyn O’Connor, president of the League of Women Voters, has been active on the PTA Health and Safety Committee for three years.

Elected as co-vice-presidents were Jane and Tom Severns; secretary, Ann Travers; and treasurer, Susan Johnson. Committee coordinators were also selected and will be briefed on their responsibilities at a special meeting on June 3. The revised budget will be presented at that meeting.

Dick Wade, principal of Jackson High School, announced that Elizabeth Sullivan, an English teacher at Jackson for ten years, had been chosen Teacher of the Year by the Junior Women’s League. She was nominated in a letter written by ten of her students. Each of the students discussed how they had been influenced by her.

Sullivan briefly addressed the group, expressing her pleasure at receiving the award.

_Specific Problems_

The under-representation of female writers and scholars in many fields has been variously attributed to systematic neglect of women or to the broader social conditions which have discouraged women from pursuing professional careers. This neglect of women has no relation to their competence; research shows people rate a work more highly when it is attributed to a male author than when it is attributed to a female author. Quality need not be sacrificed in urging that an honest attempt be made to represent female as well as male writers and scholars.
Books or Collections of Articles Discussing Professional Issues

1. Authors of monographs and editors of collections should use and encourage the use of nonsexist language. Readers will be aware that language cannot be altered when articles are reprinted from another publication.

2. Sexist language in a direct quotation cannot be altered, but other alternatives should be considered.
   a. Avoid the quotation altogether if it is not really necessary.
   b. Paraphrase the quotation, giving the original author credit for the idea.
   c. If the quotation is fairly short, recast as an indirect quotation, eliminating the sexist language.

   **Example**
   Among the questions asked by the school representatives were several about curriculum areas, including the following question: “Considering the ideal college graduate, what degree of knowledge would you prefer him to have in the following curricular areas for an executive position: ...?”
   **Alternative**
   Among the questions asked by the school representatives were several about curriculum areas, including a question asking what degree of knowledge the ideal college graduate should have in the following curricular areas to obtain an executive position: ...

**Booklists**

1. A committee choosing items for a booklist should seek books that emphasize the equality of men and women and show them in nontraditional as well as traditional roles. Children's favorites may contain sexist elements; these books may be included provided the annotations reflect awareness of the sexist elements.

   **Example**
   More than anything, sixteen-year-old Sandy wants to date Joe Collins, captain of the tennis team. Sandy's interest in sports now seems childish and her friends boring. The schemes she contrives to attract Joe's attention make for delightful reading.
   **Alternative**
   More than anything, sixteen-year-old Sandy Draper wants to date Joe Collins, captain of the tennis team. A determined Sandy gives up her interest in sports and neglects her friends as she tries to attract a shy Joe. Readers can decide for themselves whether Sandy's actions are realistic.

If this is impractical, the introduction or preface should explain why some of the books were chosen despite their sexist elements. The committee should encourage teachers to review books for classroom use, if the books reflect sexist attitudes, teachers should discuss these attitudes and the changing roles of women and men.

When selecting picture books, the committee should also be careful that the illustrations show males and females actively participating in a variety of situations at home, work, and play.

2. Careful consideration should be given to the organization of booklists. Books should not be categorized by traditional male and female interests. Special efforts should be made to include books that portray males and females in nontraditional roles.

3. All annotations in the booklist should be cast in nonsexist language.

   **Examples**
   Through the discovery of new cave paintings in southern France, the author reconstructs the life of prehistoric man and shows him as a person remarkably similar in feelings and emotions to man today.
   Forceful analysis of the black's image of himself and the present state of the black revolution.
   Amy is certain that she is going to become a nurse when she grows up, but a sudden case of tonsilitis leads her to change her mind.
   **Alternatives**
   Through the discovery of new cave paintings in southern France, the author reconstructs the life of prehistoric men and women and shows them as people remarkably similar in feelings and emotions to people today.
   Forceful analysis of the black's self-image and the present state of the black revolution.
   Amy is certain that she is going to become a nurse when she grows up, but a sudden case of tonsilitis leads her to encounter with Dr. Jane Gilmore, Amy changes her mind.
Teaching Units

Giving careful thought to the topic of a unit, its organization, and the examples and questions to be used will help prevent sexist treatment. For example,

- Fiction and poetry units should include materials by and about both women and men. If an obviously sexist piece is included, the discussion questions should bring out this fact.
- A unit on classics should be accompanied by questions that promote discussion of the treatment of women and why their image differs from that of men.
- Activities should not be segregated by sex; e.g., girls may build stage sets, boys may sew costumes.
- Units on usage and spelling should include examples that promote nontraditional views of male and female roles.

**Examples**

- Jill carefully stitched the hem in her new dress.
- Eddie quietly crept up the back stairs.
- After passing the exam, the steel mill made Tom an apprentice rigger. (misplaced modifier)

**Alternatives**

- Jill balanced carefully as she reached for the next branch of the old tree.
- Eddie quietly cradled the sick kitten.
- After graduating from college, Macpherson and Associates hired Nancy as an apprentice architect. (misplaced modifier)

Research

1. Careful consideration should be given to the methodology and content of research to ensure that it carries no sexist implications. (This does not deny the legitimacy of research designed, for example, to study sex differences in the performance of certain skills. Researchers are encouraged to consult the American Psychological Association Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language listed in the bibliography.)

2. The sample population should be carefully defined. If both males and females are included, references to individual subjects in the report of the research should not assume that they are male only.

3. The examples used for case studies should be balanced in numbers of male and female subjects if both sexes were involved in the study.

Reference Books (Bibliographies, Indexes, Style Manuals, Teacher’s Guides)

Reference books can be implicitly sexist through their organization and content—what is left out can be as telling us what is included. If the subject has been studied primarily by men, a special attempt should be made to discover whether women have also made significant contributions.

Journal Articles

1. Articles which contain sexist language but are otherwise acceptable for publication should be returned to the author with a letter of explanation, perhaps encouraging the author to rewrite the article and suggesting that she or he consult these Guidelines. Alternately, the editor may choose to edit such articles to eliminate sexist language.

2. Instructions to prospective authors in the front matter of the journal should include a notice to the effect that

   In keeping with the Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language in NCTE Publications, the editor reserves the right to edit all articles which contain sexist language.

Conclusion

Important as language is, improving it is to little purpose if underlying assumptions and traditional omissions continue. The Committee on the Role and Image of Women in the Council and the Profession works to ensure equal treatment of women and girls as students, teachers, administrators, and Council staff. If women never enter the author’s world, it little avails a journal or book editor to scrupulously eliminate “man . . . he” references. However, when authors or editors do find it necessary to use selections that contain sexist language or sexist attitudes, the attitudes should be discussed in the introduction, in a headnote, or in some other appropriate place.
The dramatic changes in language now taking place pose a special challenge to NCTE members and staff. Whether the members work as teachers, authors, or editors, they not only help shape students' language patterns but are also viewed by the public as custodians of what is "correct" in the language. The very newness of these changes in our language offers English teachers a unique opportunity. Under their guidance, eliminating sexism can bring a new vitality to the English language.

References

Authors and editors who would like to see further examples of sexist language and suggestions for how to cope with them should refer to these publications, sources of many items in the NCTE Guidelines.


"He" Is Not "She." Los Angeles, Calif.: Westside Women's Committee. (Available from the publisher, P.O. Box 24020, Village Station, Los Angeles, California 90024.)

Additional copies of the Guidelines are available from NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801 (1-15 copies free; more than 15, 6¢ each prepaid). Ask for Stock No. 19719.
January 19, 1977

Lois Phillips  
S.B. City College Women’s Center  
720 Cliff Dr.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93109

Dear Ms. Phillips:

I would like to take this opportunity to commend you and the Women’s Center for doing an incredible job for the community. The programs and activities of the Center have been well planned, promoted and implemented along with being of critical importance to women in Santa Barbara.

I am very impressed with the quality of the services and feel the Women’s Center is a viable component to the overall City College program. I feel confident when I refer a woman to the Center that she will be given assistance and needed information on her future educational plans.

It is my hope that you will continue your great efforts to provide services to women in our community.

Sincerely,

Jean Roberts  
Director

JR:jb