

Sexual roles inhibit relationships

A comment by
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There is a qualitative difference between being male or female and being masculine or feminine. Masculinity and femininity are the roles we play in accordance with our being male or female. In my state of being very conscious of these roles, I view them as games people play — nothing more.

The actual problems and anxieties of human existence go far beyond sex differences and inequalities, but manifest themselves strongly in this area. From the very beginning of our lives we search for security and some meaning for our existence to overcome our individual isolation and emptiness. What we fail to do is find this security within ourselves as people or, more precisely, find a base for this security within ourselves and then project ourselves in our relationships with others.

What we tend to do instead is try to find ourselves through or in others — to try to build the base for security in those we "love". Consequently, we are insecure within ourselves, and depend upon other people too much for our happiness and personal fulfillment. This dependence is most evident in the relationship between man and woman in our society today. From this arises reliance on masculine and feminine games

to relate and become indispensable to one another.

It might be wise to ask what love really is, or what we have made it to be. "I love you" and "I need you" are synonymous because of the basic insecurities we have failed to overcome. Love is monogamy, possessiveness, jealousy. It is egoistical and selfish. We are unable to love in a free, spontaneous way because we think in terms of "catching" people's love, rather than of loving them. Love is merely another game for us, although we have made it a matter of life and death because of our deep dependency upon it. In love as in cards, we think in terms of winning and losing.

In order to perpetuate our dependencies we have come up with the ingenious games of masculinity and femininity. The male plays virile, "big-daddy" protector. He is expected to be strong both physically and emotionally. He may confide in his spouse as to his weaknesses, but it is not socially acceptable to show them in public.

Woman is expected to compliment this image by playing passive, fragile, benevolent, virgin and mother, and is allowed to publicize her weaknesses. There are many variations of the two roles, but generally they follow that pattern. Each compliments the other in furthering a dependency relationship: protector

and protected.

If man is going to be opening doors for someone, woman must be that someone. The issue over chivalry and door opening is very minor, but in relation to the larger context it's a beautiful example of the absurd rules and regulations by which we live. Wouldn't it be easier if the one who arrived at the door first, or is in the most advantageous position, opened it? Can't we stop playing our little games and relate to each other in a mutual and understanding way? We worry too much over such trivialities as door opening and who's "supposed" to make advances.

Masculinity and femininity roles are oppressive to the individual, as they limit individual potential. Our social values are distorted while our roles are hierarchical and sado-masochistic by the very nature of our dependency upon them. Love (of a generous and equal nature) is impossible between superior and inferior as its base cannot be freed from selfish interests. Until we are able to come to terms with ourselves as individuals and gain some basis of self-security, we will be unable to get rid of the existent hierarchies and dishonesty, and will be unable to love in a human way.



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