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Misrepresented by "Women's Lib"

It is a pity that the Women's Liberation Movement took the direction it did and acquired an image with which "liberated" as well as "unliberated" women quite frequently cannot identify. Rightly or wrongly, in the mind of the public "Women's Lib" tends to represent a group of sexually frustrated women trying to take revenge on men, whom they secretly admire but are unable to attract.

This image is a liability to the cause of women. Discrimination against women is a fact and a severe problem. Women's rights involve more significant matters than questions like who should wash the dishes. These are essentially private problems and should remain a matter of choice for the individual. What are important are such "public" problems as legal rights, equal pay for equal work, and protection against discrimination in getting jobs or promotions.

Thinking of man as the enemy is alien to many women who enjoy their femininity and are genuinely fond of men. The group of women I am talking about is not interested in finding out how to live without men but would like to know how to live and work with men in a mutually satisfying way. These women do not want to avoid having a family but are interested in having both a family and a career. This often means doing two jobs, one at home and one at work, and they are willing to do so. These are the many working women who do not wish to throw away their families, or their bras, but want to get satisfaction from both their private lives and their careers. Unfortunately nothing is heard of this group because it is so much more newsworthy to report on the odd, the shocking, or the ridiculous.

Such basic rights for women as equal pay for equal work and equal opportunity in hiring and promotion are relatively explicit, although not necessarily clear-cut in every situation. Much more difficult to pin down are the subtle "put-downs" that men engage in when faced with women in professional or occupational environments. The intensity of the "put-downs" seems to increase in direct proportion with the competence of the woman colleague involved.

Academia is a rather dramatic example of an institution in which sex discrimination exists. A recent study at Rutgers University, for example, found that while men faculty are more or less evenly distributed in the upper and lower faculty ranks, the women are concentrated in the lower, nontenured ranks. Women at the full professor rank are on the average older than the men full professors and earned their Ph.D.'s earlier. Moreover, the qualifications of Ph.D. and publication seem to be rigorously applied to women faculty, while a number of men who have no Ph.D. or who have not published are found in the senior ranks.

The married woman fares even worse than her unmarried colleague, according to a study by the National Academy of Sciences. The salaries received by married women were 70 to 75 percent of those received by men at the same interval after receipt of the doctorate. Salaries of single women were somewhat higher than those of married women, although still markedly lower than men's salaries.

Examples of this kind abound, and men should take an honest, soul-searching look at the problems and aspirations involved. Perhaps if they understand them better they will become more sympathetic to the cause of women who do not want separate lives from them, but would like to be equal partners and be given the opportunity to develop and contribute their talents for the enrichment and enjoyment of life lived by men and women together.—SUSAN ARTANDI, *Graduate School of Library Service, Rutgers University, State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick 08903*