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ABSTRACT

This study assesses college students' reactions to both men and women who were portrayed as behaving in a manner either congruent or incongruent with sex-role stereotypically based social expectations (e.g., either crying or evincing anger in response to either the death of a spouse or severe job criticism). The subjects were 94 women and 107 men, randomly assigned to one of eight situation/sex of performer/behavior conditions. The overall results of the study provide further support for the contention that men who deviate from the stereotypically masculine role do not risk devaluation. However, the results suggest that "cross sex" behavior in women is viewed less tolerantly than in men, and imply that men appear to have a potentially wider latitude of sex-role appropriate behavior than women. The author points out that these results were obtained in a social psychology laboratory and may not be replicable in the field. (PFS)

Androgynous Men: The "Best of Both Worlds?"[1]

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The resurgence of the feminist movement during the last decade has provided the impetus for an intensive reexamination of the functional value of traditional male and female sex-roles. Rapidly accumulating empirical evidence clearly indicates that rigid adherence to social roles assigned on the basis of sex and delineated in accordance with sex role stereotypes limits the human potential of men and women (Bem, 1976; Bem & Lenney, 1976; Heilbrun, 1976; Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1975a). Nevertheless, the adequacy of men's and women's behavior in their socially defined roles continues to be evaluated on the basis of how well those behaviors conform to expectations defined along stereotypic lines (Tresemer & Pleck, 1974).

For example, the results of a number of studies assessing college students' reactions to women depicted as deviating from the stereotypically female role by displaying competence (presumably a male-appropriate characteristic) suggest that competent women are less positively valued than equally competent men (Bem & Bem, 1970; Deaux & Taynor, 1973; Dipboye, Fromkin, & Wiback, 1975; Fidell, 1970; Goldberg, 1968; Pheterson, Kiesler, & Goldberg, 1971). Indeed, the price of such deviation has even been found to include social rejection (Hagen &

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Kahn, 1975; Horner, 1972; Schaffer & Wegley, 1974). This is true despite the fact that competent women are generally preferred to incompetent ones (Deaux, 1972; Spence & Helmreich, 1972; Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1975b) and that competent women with masculine interests are preferred to competent women with feminine interests (Kristal, Sanders, Spence, & Helmreich, 1975; Spence & Helmreich, 1972) at least as long as those masculine interests do not preclude feminine concerns such as marriage and childrearing (Kristal et al., 1975; Shaffer & Wegley, 1974). These findings may be interpreted as evidence for increased societal tolerance for women who endorse masculine attitudes and values and behave accordingly.

Unfortunately, little is known about the reactions of others to males who deviate from the stereotypically defined masculine role, although it has been widely assumed that the male role is even more narrowly defined than the female one. For example, there is some evidence to suggest that sex-role deviance is more severely punished when displayed by boys than girls (Fling & Manosevitz, 1972; Lansky, 1967; Hartley, 1959). Furthermore, Seyfried and Hendrick (1973) found that college students rated a man whose expressed attitudes were considered inappropriate for his sex (such as endorsing the statement, "If I marry, I would enjoy preparing meals for my family") as less socially attractive than a woman with masculine attitudes.

However, the results of two recent studies (O'Leary & Donoghue, Note 1; O'Leary & Donoghue, Note 2) attempting to assess whether men depicted as deviating from the traditionally defined male role risk devaluation suggested that the latitude of behavior deemed acceptable for men was not

limited by the traditional masculine stereotype. In the first study, a male stimulus person (SP) portrayed as deviating from the "masculine" stereotype by displaying nontraditional traits (warmth and expressiveness) and nontraditional vocational interests (kindergarten teaching) was preferred to a male SP who was depicted as displaying traditional traits (dominance and aggression) and as interested in pursuing a traditionally "masculine" career (business).

The lack of correspondence between subjects' reactions to hypothetical and "real" others with whom they interact has often been noted in the psychological literature (Hagen & Kahn, 1975). In study two, male and female college students interacted in three-person groups with a male confederate who adopted either a nontraditional (pick him up after school every day) or a traditional (tell him to fight back) stance toward the problems of an 8-year-old boy called a sissy by a peer. Although the nontraditional SP was not preferred to the traditional one he was not devalued by college students, regardless of their sex suggesting that a greater (or potentially greater) flexibility of action is afforded adult men (as compared to adult women) in contemporary society.

The current study was designed to further explore the implications of these findings by assessing college students' reactions to both men and women who were portrayed as behaving in a manner either congruent or incongruent with sex-role stereotypically based social expectations (e.g., either crying or evidencing anger in response to either the death of a spouse or severe job criticism).

Method

Subjects

The subjects employed in the current study were 201 students enrolled in introductory level psychology courses at a moderate-size midwestern university who volunteered to participate in an experiment of extra credit. The 94 women and 107 men were randomly assigned to one of eight situation/sex of performer/behavior conditions.

Materials

The stimulus materials produced for the current study consisted of four one-minute videotape recordings of an actor or an actress crying or evidencing anger. Pretests indicated that 10 male and 10 female college students found the visual level of intensity of the emotions expressed by the actor and actress to be approximately equal. Auditory stimuli were not used.

Subjects were asked to indicate the extent to which "the characteristics of the person" and "the characteristics of the task" caused the performance to which they were exposed. Responses were made on separate 7-point scales labeled at 0 ("had very little impact") and at 7 ("had very great impact"). Subjects were also asked to estimate on an 11-point scale, anchored at 0 and 100, the percentage of performers who would have played the role in a fashion similar to the one they had just witnessed. Three additional 7-point scales were used to tap the subjects' evaluations of the actor or actress' performance (very poor-very good), the appropriateness of that performance given the role (very appropriate-very inappropriate), and the advisability of hiring the performer in the future (definitely yes-definitely no).

In order to assess the subjects' perceptions of the performer as sex typed (masculine or feminine) or androgynous they were asked to describe her or him on the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974). The BSRI is comprised of a Masculinity Scale and a Femininity Scale, each of which contains 20 personality characteristics selected on the basis of sex-typed social desirability. Characteristics selected for the Femininity Scale include affectionate, gentle, and understanding; characteristics selected for the Masculinity Scale include ambitious, dominant, and self-reliant. The BSRI also contains 20 items generally held to be socially desirable for both sexes (for example, conscientious, sincere, and adaptable). Subjects indicated on a 7-point scale from 1 ("Never or almost never true") to 7 ("Always or almost always true") how well each characteristic described the performer. The degree to which the performer was perceived as sex-typed was defined as the student's t-ratio for the difference between the total points assigned to the feminine and masculine attributes, respectively.

Finally, subjects were asked to indicate the extent to which the performer, and his or her behavior, was perceived as masculine or feminine on two separate bipolar semantic differential scales. Two additional open ended questions asking for a description of the performer's behavior and the situation to which he or she was responding served as manipulation checks.

Procedure

Subjects were scheduled four at a time. Upon arriving at the laboratory subjects were seated in separate cubicles containing a videotape monitor equipped with headphones. They were told to put on the headphones

in order to receive further instructions. The sex of the experimenter and of the person issuing the instructions was randomly varied for approximately half of the subjects in each condition.

The experiment was introduced as part of a research program designed to explore how women and men cope with predictable crises of adult life. Subjects were told that as a first step in the project a number of professional performers had been hired to respond to a specific adult crisis in the way they thought most people would, and that each of them would be exposed to and asked to evaluate a different video-taped performance in order to aid the researchers in selecting performers to make additional videotapes for a subsequent study.

One of two situations to which the performer was asked to respond was then introduced. Half of the subjects were told that, the performer you are about to view was asked to portray, "a person whose boss has just severely criticized their performance on the job" (work). The other half of the subjects were told they were viewing "a person who has just been told about the death of their spouse" (death).

Following the 1-minute visual presentation subjects were instructed to open the evaluation booklets provided by the experimenter at the beginning of the session. They were reminded to give their honest impressions of the performer in order to facilitate the "best possible hiring decision for the next study." In order to insure anonymity subjects were told not to put their names on the evaluation booklet and to place it in the designated "evaluation box" when they finished before opening the cubicle door to signal the experimenter. Finally, they were cautioned to wait for the signal to "begin" and to answer the questions in the order in which they appeared in the booklet.

The materials detailed above were presented in the order described with one exception. The two open ended questions which served as manipulation checks were presented first. After the evaluation booklets were completed, subjects were debriefed, their questions were answered and they were thanked for their participation. As they left the laboratory the experimenter cautioned them not to discuss the study with anyone else as the experimental design was complex and many of their classmates would be asked to participate during the course of the semester.

Results

The experiment was designed as a 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 factorial with all factors between subjects. There were two levels each of sex of subject, situation (death and work), sex of performer, and emotion (anger and crying).

The open-ended responses to the two questions that served as manipulation checks, "Describe what the performer did on the videotape," and Describe the situation to which the performer responded" were coded for accuracy of perception. In no case were the subjects' descriptions of either the behavior of the performer or the situation to which he or she responded at odds with the intended manipulations. Subjects accurately differentiated between visual presentations of anger and crying and accurately reported the situation to which the performer responded as death of spouse or job criticism.

The 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 analysis of variance on subjects' ratings of the extent to which the performer's emotional response was caused by "the characteristics of the person" yielded a significant main effect for Sex

of Subject, F (1, 180) = 10.00, p = .002. Female subjects were more likely to attribute the cause of the performers' emotional response to "something about the person" (M = 4.44) than were male subjects (M = 3.73). A significant interaction for Sex of Subject by Emotion, F (1, 180) = 4.36, p = .03 was also obtained. Female subjects were more likely to view anger as personally caused (M = 4.50) than were male subjects (M = 3.32) althouth this difference did not reach significance when Tukey's HSD Test (Kirk, 1968) was applied. No other main effects or interactions were obtained involving Sex of Subject on any of the dependent measures.

The 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 analysis of variance on subjects' ratings of the extent to which the emotional response of the performer was caused by some "characteristic of the situation" (or environment) revealed only one significant effect; a main effect for Situation, F (1, 179) = 3.74, p = .05. Subjects were more likely to attribute the performers' response to death as situationally caused (M = 4.9) than the response to work criticism (M = 4.0).

Analysis of subjects' estimates of the percentage of performers (out of 100) who would respond to the situation as did the one they witnessed revealed a significant main effect for emotion, F (1, 83) = 6.23, p = .01. Subjects viewed anger as less characteristic (48.9%) than crying (56.8%) regardless of situation. Significant interactions for Situation by Emotion, F (1, 183) = 12.86, p = .000 and Sex of Performer by Emotion, F (1, 183) = 18.63, p = .000 were also obtained. Subjects were likely to view crying in the face of death as more characteristic than anger and to view female tears as more characteristic than female anger although again, these differences did not reach significance using Tukey's HSD.

Despite evidence based on pretests that the intensity of the two emotions displayed were approximately equal and that there were no differences as a function of the sex of performer, a significant main effect was obtained for Emotion, F (1, 180) = 7.83, p = .005. Subjects who viewed the performer crying rated the performance higher than subjects who viewed them evidencing anger. This effect was most pronounced when the female performer cryed, F (1, 180) = 5.27, p = .02, although multiple comparisons of the means for Sex of Stimulus Person and Emotion failed to reveal any significant differences.

Analysis of the subjects' perceptions of the extent to which the performer was sex-typed (masculine or feminine) revealed significant main effects for Sex of Performer, F (1, 184) = 165.66, p = .000, and Emotion, F (1, 184) = 8.93, p = .003. The female performer was viewed as more feminine than the male performer and crying was viewed as more feminine than anger. A significant interaction between Sex of Performer and Emotion, F (1, 184) = 7.33, p = .007, was also obtained. Subjects viewed the female performer's emotional responses (M = 4.45 and M = 5.56) as more feminine than the male performer's emotional responses (M = 2.48 and M = 2.53). This effect was most pronounced when the female performer cried.

Analysis of the subjects' perception of the extent to which the behavior of the performer was sex-typed masculine or feminine revealed significant main effects for Situation, F (1, 184) = 18.55, p = .000, Sex of Performer, F (1, 184) = 53.44, p = .000, and Emotion. F (1, 184) = 51.50, p = .000). Subjects rated performers' responses to death as more feminine than their responses to work. They also rated the female performer as more feminine than the male performer, and crying as a more feminine emotion

than anger. Significant interactions were obtained for Situation by Sex of Performer, F (1, 184) = 9.73, p = .002, and Sex of Performer by Emotion, F (1, 184) = 22.03, p = .000. The male performer's response to work was viewed as more feminine (M = 2.38) than his response to death (M = 3.89) but not as feminine as that of the female performer in either situation. (Ms = 4.51 and 4.75, respectively). The behavior of the female performer was viewed as more masculine when she evidenced anger (M = 3.42) than when she cried (M = 5.84). The behavior of the male performer was seen as more masculine than that of the female for both crying (M = 2.89) and anger (M = 3.39).

Subjects' ratings of the performer's characteristics on the BSRI were scored using the procedure recommended by Bem (1974). A 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 analysis of variance on those scores indicated that performers responding to work criticism were seen as significantly more masculine (M = 2.93) than those responding to death (M = 3.35), F (1, 184) = 22.48, p = .000, that male performers were rated as significantly more masculine (M = 3.35) than female performers (M = 2.99), F (1, 184) = 3.98, p = .05, and that crying was seen as significantly less masculine (M = 2.27) than anger (M = 4.06), F (1, 184) = 95.85, p = .000. A significant interaction between Situation and Emotion, F (1, 184) = 6.33, p = .01, revealed that the performer who evidenced anger in response to either work criticism (M = 4.06) or death (M 4.06) was perceived as more masculine than one who cried in response to work criticism (M = 1.83) or death (M = 2.73).

Finally, the results of a regression analysis revealed that the extent to which perceivers rated the behavior of the performer as sex-typed masculine was primarily a function of the extent to which they viewed the performr himself or herself as masculine or androgynous. These two variables accounted for 51% of the variance obtained.

Discussion

The overall results of the current study provide further support for the contention that men who deviate from the stereotypically masculine role do not risk devaluation. Male and female college students agreed that anger was more characteristic of men than women, that crying was a more common response to death than anger, and that crying is feminine and anger masculine. However, they were unwilling to devalue a male stimulus person who cried in response to severe job criticism. On the other hand, they rated the behavior of a female stimulus person who evidenced anger in response to job criticism as inappropriate and masculine. these results suggest that perceivers view "cross sex" behavior in women less positively than in men, and imply that men have the potential to exercise a considerable amount of freedom in responding to environmental demands. Not only do adult males appear to have a potentially wider latitude of acceptable sex-role appropriate behavior than adult women but the acceptability of that behavior appears to be determined, in fact, by the fact that males engage in it. For example, in a recent series of studies Touhey (1974 a, b) found that the "promise" of greater male involvement in fields traditionally reserved for women enhanced the perception of their value. In contrast, the "threat" of greater numbers of women entering male-dominated professions was sufficient to lead to the devaluation of the occupations themselves by subjects of both sexes. Yet, in both instances, men and women were depicted as deviating from their stereotypically defined roles.

The negative impact of sex-role stereotypes, so apparent when women about whom little information is available, are evaluated do not seem to affect the evaluation of men. It should, of course, be noted, that the

current results were obtained in a social psychology laboratory and may not be replicable in the field. Subordinates, peers, and supervisors might not respond to a male worker's tears in the same way they would to his anger. Yet, these results suggest that adult men can exhibit feminine traits (e.g., concern) and feminine behaviors (e.g., consideration) without being labeled deviant. Such androgynous men may be able to function effectively in the roles of both social emotional and task leaders, and in this respect represent the "best of both worlds."

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Androgynous Men: The "Best of Both Worlds?"

Measure		Male performer				Female performer			
		Death		Work		Death		Work	
		Anger	Cry	Anger	Cry	Anger	Cry	Anger	Cry
Disposition	Male	3.27	4.00	3.60	4.53	3.11	3.87	3.33	4.11
	Female	4.35	3.83	4.50	4.09	4.28	5.14	4.73	4.38
Environment	Male	4.83	4.40	3.50	4.30	4.88	4.75	3.55	3.88
	Female	4.78	4.00	3.92	4.89	5.21	4.92	4.13	3.92
% Performers	Male	54.1	61.0	65.0	44.6	33.3	72.5	45.5	64.4
	Female	50.0	50.0	57.0	47.6	36.0	67.1	50.6	47.8
Performance	Male	4.75	5.20	5.10	4.76	4.00	5.62	4.11	5.11
	Female	4.78	4.66	4.78	5.19	4.66	6.07	4.64	4.71
Appropriate	Male	5.00	5.40	3.70	3.82	3.88	6.25	3.77	4.55
	Female	4.35	5.25	5.21	4.42	3.73	5.42	3.73	3.71
Hire	Male	4.41	4.70	3.80	3.38	3.88	5.25	3.33	4.11
	Female	4.28	4.33	4.00	4.19	3.66	5.71	2.93	3.28
Sex typed performer	Male	2.16	2.50	2.90	3.33	4.22	5.87	4.33	5.44
	Female	2.21	2.00	2.64	2.33	4.93	5.00	4.33	5.92
Sex typed behavior	Male	2.16	2.70	4.10	4.30	3.33	6.25	3.22	5.77
	Female	2.00	2.66	3.28	3.90	3.40	5.06	3.73	6.28
BSRI	Male	4.16	2.66	4.00	1.46	3.88	2.75	3.66	1.77
	Female	4.50	3.16	4.00	2.42	3.73	2.33	4.40	1.42

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