

# the dialectic of liberation

## PURPOSE

What I intend to do is to reveal the conditions which gave rise to the inequality of the sexes; the form which it takes; and show briefly how this will be overcome.

## THE PROBLEM

Early, unenlightened man was for the most part, subject to his environment; that is, he had little or no control over it, was afraid of it, and was awestruck by it. When lightning created fire he could not ascribe meaning for the event, and, in subjection to mysterious forces, ascribed the act to magic, divinity, etc. He was not able to scientifically articulate the forces of nature as we can today. The latter capacity enables man to rise above the forces which hitherto rendered him subordinate. What this means simply is that knowledge and the understanding that it gives rise to, liberates.

Lacking in knowledge early man was shortsighted, that is, when lightning created fire he drew the hasty conclusion that fire was created by lightning, only. He had a tendency to generalize on the basis of one observation. This is characteristic of the child. In other words, he was subject to his observations as they revealed themselves. It is because of this I believe that man noticed a biological difference between one sex and the other and drew the conclusion that they were in fact, different. This conclusion became integrated and articulated within all social and cultural epochs throughout history. In the establishment of all cultures, the "difference" of the sexes determined the roles the sexes were to play thereby maintaining and perpetuating the "difference" between the sexes. Man consists of both male and female - both necessary for the propagation of the species. Propagation has always been extremely important in every society in history, and consequently, the role-differentiation was seen to be vital. Male and female were ascribed different though specific roles which articulated every aspect of that particular individuals existence, from birth to death. The fact that these "men" and "women" were individuals was either unheard of, not important, or unnecessary to worry about.

A division occurred between "men" and "women" which remains with us today - unfortunately it still takes essentially the same form.

There is of course a very important difference between the male and female - for creative purposes. However, due to contemporary enlight-

enment, we are no longer subject to these "differences"; we may be cognizant of them, but we can (and must) rise above these "differences" (which are only biological - physiological) to that level of apprehension which recognizes neither "male" nor "female" but rather, persons as persons, "Selves", individuals. You will notice that these terms are not sexual, that is they denote neither "male" nor "female".

## THE PRESENT SITUATION

Due to contemporary enlightenment - technological and scientific advance specifically a culture has come into being the nature of which no longer requires "men" and "women" to strictly adhere to their historically defined roles. That is to say, it is no longer necessary for "men" to be demonstrably virile, dominant, or protective and possessive. Likewise it is no longer necessary for "women" to be "bare-foot and pregnant, cleaning house, washing, sewing and so on. Although some of this is still to some degree a possibility for each sex, but it is no longer the exclusive function for a particular sex.

Our present culture has extended the range of possibilities for each individual. No longer is it necessary for "women" to be tied to the restrictive function of household chores; nor is it the exclusive function for the "male" to be a breadwinner.

The old roles break down. In so doing, males cease to be "men" as that role defines them. Likewise, females cease to be "women". The possibility exists now for the individuals who hitherto were subject to their roles, to "break out" and realize their ownmost possibility - that of Being their "SELF"

## THE DIALECTIC

It has been said of old, "money is the root of all evil" This is only partly true, for money in itself is indifferent to good or evil. What might be said is, "ignorance is the root of all evil." This is to say that at the root of all man's problems lies mis-understanding - due to his necessary ignorance of himself and the world. Necessary, because man cannot know all there is to know due to his changing world - which, if he did, would render him omniscient and, hence, omnipotent; if this were to be the case, the human task would be superfluous.

Society consists not of individuals, but rather of roles. True, it is individuals

by: STAN DALTON

play these roles, but not as individuals, rather, as roles and what they designate. Consequently the role-playing individual is alienated from himself thereby creating a tension between his "Self" (which constantly seeks its "Self") and the role.

At birth, when the sex of the individual is discovered, there is an immediate placement of the individual into a role either male or female. From that moment the individual is cultivated as, and expected to conform to, whatever the definition of that role (male or female) indicates. Males are "taught" to be males, and females are "taught" to be females.

Their childhood is spent as a preparation for the adult version of their roles. Consequently, "man" and "women" are "different", and are treated as such. Social, moral, and legal connotations are conferred upon these roles thereby rendering the differences more definite.

Contemporary enlightened society has made it possible for both sexes to become aware of the differences. Most notably it has been "women" who have noticed that these roles are not definitive. "Women" have, consequently, felt the yoke of oppression in a male-dominated society more so than "men" because it is they, in their awareness of other possibilities for existence, who are to suffer most. Before, they were not so aware that they were oppressed and, therefore, were not oppressed. One must be aware of oppression before one can be oppressed otherwise it is accepted as the "natural state of affairs."

The contemporary Women's Liberation movement is a manifestation of oppression. However, it is destined to fail - indeed it must. Consider my argument now. If "women" persist in having equality with "men" they may indeed succeed, but they will not be liberated. The reason is, simply, that so long as "women" insist on being "women" the differences - and hence the inequality - will persist.

We cannot have "women" equal to "men" and at the same time maintain sexual differentiation. For, so long as there is a difference between "men" and "women" they will be seen as different and, hence, unequal. If equality should come about, these roles ("men"- "women") will be dissolved (biologically the difference will remain; but we will not be psychologically "subject" to these differences as we were