Psychological Adjustment and Life Style of Single Lesbians and Single Heterosexual Women

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The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and a 60-item structured interview questionnaire were administered to 25 white single homosexually-oriented women and 25 white single heterosexually-oriented women between the ages of 20 and 45 years in order to investigate their psychological adjustment and current life styles. Groups were equivalent on age, marital status, educational and occupational levels, and other demographic variables. Groups did not differ in total psychological adjustment as measured by scale scores on the MMPI nor as evaluated by blind expert raters using the MMPI profiles. Groups differed significantly on the Masculinity-Femininity (Mf) scale ($p < .001$) and the Hypomania (Ma) scale ($p < .05$). On the interview questionnaire, which included current living situations, roles and relationships, behavior and friendship patterns, and drinking, drug, and suicidal behavior, no major differences between groups were found. Differences between groups were found only on items directly related to sexual orientation. The findings clarify some of the myths and misconceptions about lesbianism.

While numerous scientific investigations have been devoted to the subject of male homosexuality, there is still a great scarcity of reliable knowledge about lesbianism.

Most early psychological theories and studies about homosexual-

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ity were based on the fundamental premise that heterosexuality is the only "healthy" and acceptable form of emotional and sexual orientation (e.g., Bergler, 1956; Caprio, 1957). Numerous earlier studies were based on individual case histories of subjects who engaged in homosexual behavior and were in private therapy or were patients in psychiatric clinics (e.g., Benedek, 1952; Bergler, 1956; Gluckman, 1966). There is an increased general awareness of the fallacy in extrapolating dynamic personality formulations from a clinical sample and generalizing them for all individuals with a preferred homosexual style of life.

In recent years, due to changing social values and attitudes, a number of investigations have attempted to challenge the assumption that homosexuality is a mental illness characterized by neurosis and emotional maladjustment. To date, many research findings indicate that lesbians are as well-adjusted psychologically as heterosexually oriented women (Armon, 1960; Freedman, 1967; Hopkins, 1969; Thompson, McCandless, & Strickland, 1971; Siegelman, 1972). Nevertheless, results contradictory to those cited above can be found in other research investigations (e.g., Kenyon, 1968; Saghir & Robins, 1973).

The majority of the studies have focused on the etiology of the lesbian orientation and on sexual aspects of lesbians' lives, while relatively few have explored female homosexuality within the total framework of a preferred style of life. The purpose of the present investigation was to explore aspects of lesbians' psychological adjustment and modes of life. A group of single lesbians and a comparable group of heterosexual women were selected and a study conducted to determine their current modes of life and dimensions of psychological adjustment and to discover any significant differences between the two groups in these areas.

The basic stance taken in the present study is in agreement with Simon and Gagnon (1967), who recommend a broad view and suggest that researchers examine homosexuality "in the context of general patterns of social and personal adjustment and [be] sensitive to the possible variety in the ways of being a lesbian" (p. 250). In distinction to previous studies, the present investigation may be considered as significant in several respects: it utilizes clearcut criteria regarding the subjects' sexual orientation; it employs a sample of nonclinical, noninstitutionalized lesbians who were not selected on the basis of any affiliation with a lesbian organization; it uses a control group of single heterosexually-oriented women that is more comparable to the lesbian group than the more often used married
controls; it uses a standardized clinical measure as well as an extensive, structured interview questionnaire; it focuses primarily on the sample's current behavior and feelings; it presents information on alternative ways that single women live in our society; and it represents an attempt to test the validity of some widespread stereotypical beliefs about lesbianism.

It was hypothesized that the group of single women whose preferred sexual orientation is homosexual and a comparable group of single women whose preferred sexual orientation is heterosexual would not differ in overall psychological adjustment. In other dimensions of personal and social life, however, it was predicted that the homosexual and the heterosexual women would differ only on variables directly related to the defining variable, sex orientation, and not on other variables related to life styles. Specifically, it was hypothesized that the two groups would differ in some aspects of sexual experiences in preadolescent and adolescent years, first sexual experience, satisfactions and dissatisfactions regarding current love relationships, and social and sexual roles. The groups would not differ on dimensions regarding family background, friendship patterns, work patterns, social, leisure, and affiliational activities, and drinking, drug, and suicidal behavior.

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects were 50 white single female volunteers recruited through "friendship pyramid" (Boxley, 1973; Thompson et al., 1971). Twenty-five subjects were assigned to each of two groups on the basis of self-ratings on the seven-point Kinsey Homosexuality Rating Scale (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948). Women included in the homosexual group (Group 1) had scores of five or six on this scale indicating "exclusively or mainly homosexual" preference. Women in the heterosexual group (Group 2) had scores of zero or one, indicating "exclusively or mainly heterosexual" preference. Additionally, on the Gough Fe Scale (1952) administered to each subject to measure masculinity or femininity of interests, the two groups were significantly different, t(48) = 2.7, p < .01. Mean age for both groups was 30.5, with a range from 20 to 45 years. The groups did not differ on demographic variables including marital status; number of children; educational level, occupational category, and social class (using Hollingshead's 1957 occupational scoring system and social class index); income level; number of siblings; ordinal position within the family; religion at birth; current degree of religious affiliation; or current experience in psychotherapy (see Tables 1 through 4).
Measures

Psychological adjustment was assessed by use of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). The MMPI is a widely used personality inventory, originally developed “to assay those traits that are commonly characteristic of disabling psychological abnormality” (Hathaway and McKinley, 1943). A further measure of psychological adjustment was based on the judgments of two clinical psychologists, both of whom were Diplomates of the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) with extensive clinical and research experience with the MMPI. Given blind records containing only the subjects’ age and scale scores excluding the Masculinity-Femininity (Mf) scale, judges were told that the 50 profiles came from two groups of women—homosexual and heterosexual—and were asked to make three types of judgments regarding the fifty randomly ordered MMPI profiles. First, they were asked to sort the profiles into nine equidistant categories on a continuum from most adjusted (1) to least adjusted (9). Second, they were asked to indicate which of the nine categories fell within each of the following three ranges: (a) essentially “normal” adjustment; (b) significant problems that do not represent a serious handicap in psychological adjustment; and (c) significant problems which probably do represent a serious handicap in psychological adjustment. Finally, judges were instructed to sort the 50 profiles into two groups: (a) homosexual and (b) heterosexual. In this sort, the Mf scale was not included in the scale profiles. One week later, judges were asked to sort the profiles again, this time with the Mf scale included.

Dimensions of life styles were assessed by use of a 60 item multiple-choice questionnaire developed for this study. This questionnaire tapped four primary

| Table 1 |
| Distribution of Women by Educational Levels |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education attained</th>
<th>Lesbian women</th>
<th>Heterosexual women</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial college training</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post graduate training</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 (3) = 2.5, p > .05. \]
Table 2
Distribution of Women by Occupational Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational categorya</th>
<th>Lesbian women</th>
<th>Heterosexual women</th>
<th>Total n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Categories are based on Hollinghead's (1957) seven-point Occupational Scale: 1—higher executives, proprietors of large concerns and major professionals; 2—business managers, proprietors of medium sized businesses, and lesser professionals; 3—administrative personnel, owners of small independent businesses, and minor professionals; 4—clerical and sales workers, technicians, and owners of little businesses; 5—skilled manual workers; 6—machine operators and semi-skilled employees; 7—unskilled employees.

\[ x^2 (3) = .252, \ p > .05. \]

aspects of life style: (a) Dimensions of Current Living—Self and Family (biographical and family data); (b) Dimensions of Roles and Relationships—Personal, Sexual, and Social (information regarding preadolescent and adolescent sexual experiences, first sexual experience, dimensions of current love relationships, and aspects of social and sexual roles); (c) Dimensions of Friendship, Work,
Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yearly Income</th>
<th>Lesbian Women</th>
<th>Heterosexual Women</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000-9,999</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-14,999</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000-19,999</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 (4) = .416, p > .05.$

Social and Other Behavioral Patterns; (d) Dimensions of Drinking, Drug, and Suicidal Behavior. The questionnaire was developed by means of a rational approach with an initial pool of 100 items which was independently evaluated and revised by five expert judges including three clinical psychologists familiar with research methodology and the area of homosexuality.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Lesbian Women</th>
<th>Heterosexual Women</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopalian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 (4) = 3.862, p > .05.$

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Procedure

Each subject was individually interviewed in a relaxed atmosphere by the same female interviewer. All interviews were taped with the consent of the subject. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured and maintained. Subjects were interviewed in the investigator's office, in her home, or in the subject's home, depending on the subject's preference. Before the interview, each participant was told that the study concerned alternate life styles among single women, and given identical instructions. At the time of the interview, subjects were handed a test packet coded with their identifying number. The order of presentation of measures was as follows: Kinsey Scale, biographical data, Gough Femininity-Masculinity Scale, interview questionnaire, and MMPI. Upon completion of the interview questionnaire, the subject was given an MMPI self-administering booklet with an answer sheet and asked to complete it at home and mail back the completed test. Return rate was 100 per cent. Average duration of interview for both groups was two and a half hours plus an average of 30 minutes more for an additional 20 interview items for the homosexual group.

RESULTS

MMPI Scale Scores

On the measure of scale elevation for total profile no significant difference between groups was found. A scale score is considered elevated or "non-adjusted" if it is two or more standard deviations from the mean. In Group 1, fourteen women had profiles with no scales elevated, and in Group 2, eleven women had profiles with no scale elevations. Scale Mf was not elevated for any of the fifty subjects.

When groups were compared on the eight clinical scales individually, a significant difference between groups was found for two scales. On the Mf scale, mean score for Group 1 was 48.27, $SD = 8.05$, and mean score for Group 2 was 40.59, $SD = 7.33$, $t(48) = -3.53, p < .001$. On the Hypomania (Ma) scale the mean for Group 1 was 60.91, $SD = 7.64$, and the mean for Group 2 was 65.79, $SD = 8.82$, $t(48) = 2.09, p < .05$.

Measures of Expert Judgment

Interrater reliability between the judges on ratings of psychological adjustment (PA) based on MMPI profiles was high: $r = .925$. There was no significant difference between groups on PA ratings
by judge 1, \( \chi^2(2) = 4.68, p > .05 \), nor was there a significant difference between groups on PA ratings by judge 2, \( \chi^2(2) = .81, p > .05 \). When judges' ratings were pooled, there was again no significant difference on ratings between groups, \( \chi^2(2) = 3.13, p > .05 \). Table 5 shows pooled ratings for the two groups on the PA continuum.

When the two judges were asked to sort the 50 profiles (Mf scale excluded) into two mutually exclusive groups—homosexual and heterosexual—their accuracy was at a chance level. Judge 1 was 60% accurate, \( \chi^2(1) = 1.34, p > .05 \); judge 2 was 56% accurate, \( \chi^2(1) = .32, p > .05 \). Agreement between judges was also at a chance level, \( \chi^2(1) = .00, p > .05 \).

When the judges sorted the profiles with Mf scale included, they differed in their accuracy. Judge 1 was again accurate at a chance level, \( \chi^2(1) = .00, p > .05 \); judge 2 had an accuracy of 68%, \( \chi^2(1) = 5.12, p > .05 \).

**Interview Questionnaire**

There were four dimensions of style of life tapped by the questionnaire. Results are presented in the order in which the items were administered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological Adjustment ratings ( a )</th>
<th>Lesbian women</th>
<th>Heterosexual women</th>
<th>Total ( n )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - 9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Lower numbered ratings indicate greater degree of psychological adjustment.

\[
\chi^2 (2) = 3.13, p > .05.
\]
Dimensions of Current Living—Self and Family. On all items in this dimension, there were no significant differences between groups. Items in this section included parental dominance (approximately half of each group stated that mother was more dominant than father, \( \chi^2(4) = 6.22, p > .05 \)); family's attitude toward sex (about 30% from each group reported their parents' attitude as being restrictive and another 30% in each group reported a permissive attitude, \( \chi^2(3) = 1.39, p > .05 \)); relationship with mother (half of the women in each group reported close and caring relationships with mother whereas the other half in each group reported having a distant relationship); relationship with father (in both groups about 44% reported a close and caring relationship with father; in Group 1, 28% reported no relationship with father, and in Group 2, 24% reported no relationship with father).

Dimensions of Roles and Relationships—Personal, Sexual, and Social. No significant difference between groups in early heterosexual dating patterns was found. Mean age at first date for Group 1 was 14.3 and for Group 2, 14.7, \( t(48) = .46, p > .05 \). There was also no difference between groups as to age of the person on whom they had their first “crush.” About 60% in both groups had their first crush on someone of their own age and 40% on people older than they were.

Circumstances surrounding first sexual experience with a woman for Group 1 and first sexual experience with a man for group 2 were similar. Mean age for Group 1 and Group 2 respectively was 19.9 years and 18.7 years, \( t(48) = 1.05, p > .05 \). The situational aspects surrounding this sexual experience were similar for the two groups. In both groups, the woman's partner had had previous sexual experience, had a mean age of 22 years and had been introduced to the subject in about 70% of the cases either at school or through friends. For all women in Group 2 and for the majority in Group 1 the first sexual experience was heterosexual.

About 80% of the women in both groups reported they were currently in a love relationship. There was no significant difference between groups on length of current (or most recent) relationship, \( t(48) = .67, p > .05 \); mean duration for groups combined was 22 months. However, significantly more women in Group 1 (68%) than in Group 2 (24%) are currently living with their lover rather than living alone or in other arrangements, \( \chi^2(4) = 16.42, p < .01 \). Significantly more women in Group 1 than in Group 2 expressed
satisfaction with their relationships: in the emotional sphere, $\chi^2(1) = 10.16, p < .001$; sexually, $\chi^2(1) = 5.26, p < .05$; in terms of friendship, $\chi^2(1) = 3.71, p < .05$; and in sharing of interests, $\chi^2(1) = 6.06, p < .01$.

Between groups no difference was found with respect to monogamy. Over 50% in each group reported having a monogamous relationship, $\chi^2(1) = 3.42, p < .05$.

When subjects were asked whether they play "clear-cut" social roles, there was a significant difference in response between groups. More women in Group 2 indicated they play sex-stereotyped social roles than women in Group 1, $\chi^2(3) = 11.89, p < .05$. Over 50% of the women in Group 1 reported that they never had played sex-stereotyped social roles and one third in this group reported that they had played such roles but did not now. In contrast 20% of the women in Group 2 stated that they currently play "clear-cut" sex-stereotyped social roles and another 36% in this group reported sometimes playing roles.

With regard to sexual role playing (active-passive), the groups again differed, $\chi^2(3) = 11.82, p < .01$. More than 50% of the women in both groups stated that their sex roles with partner are mutual. While 25% in Group 1 reported taking an active role, no one in Group 2 reported taking an active role. In Group 2, 16% reported playing a passive role while only 4% in Group 1 reported playing a passive role.

There was no significant difference between groups on reports of difficulty in achieving orgasm, $\chi^2(2) = 3.53, p > .05$. About 50% of the women in both groups reported no difficulty in achieving orgasm.

Groups also did not differ with regard to the desire for children. Forty-four percent of the women stated they do not wish to have children; 20% that they do wish to have children; the remainder were undecided or only sometimes wishing to have children.

In division of household chores with their partners, the groups again did not differ nor did they differ in reporting financial arrangements between themselves and a partner. About 75% in each group stated they shared finances on an equal basis with the rest reporting separate financial arrangements.

*Dimensions of Friendship, Work, Social and Other Behavioral Patterns.* No significant differences were found between groups on number or sex or marital status of friends. Fifty-four percent in
Group 1 and 48% in Group 2 said most of their friends were women. Interestingly, four women in Group 2 and none in Group 1 reported that most of their friends are male.

Sixty percent in Group 1 and 75% in Group 2 said they were doing work they want to do and for which their training was appropriate. Mean length of time on present job for the total sample was 14.4 months with no significant difference between groups, $t(48) = .105, p > .05$. Groups also did not differ on number of times fired from a job. Only two women from Group 1 and five from Group 2 had ever been fired. Neither of the women from Group 1 reported being fired for being a lesbian.

One difference that did arise between groups dealt with having to compromise vocational choice. About 70% of the women in Group 2 reported having had to compromise their vocational choice, whereas 70% in Group 1 reported never having had to compromise vocational choice, $\chi^2(1) = 3.92, p < .05$. In both groups the most frequent reasons given for a compromise included “being a woman,” lack of college education, and marriage.

There was no significant difference between groups on frequency and amount of leisure time. About 65% of Group 1 and 80% of Group 2 spend their vacations traveling, $\chi^2(1) = 1.92, p > .05$.

The groups did differ with regard to type of organizational participation. In each group, about 50% of the women were members of some organization, with equal percentages in both groups belonging to feminist groups or professional organizations. However, women in Group 2 were more likely than those in Group 1 to belong to a political organization, $\chi^2(1) = 3.55, p < .05$. Of the women in Group 1 who reported any organizational affiliation, 85% also reported being members of lesbian organizations as well, although the sample was not recruited directly from or through any lesbian organization.

Drinking, Drug, and Suicidal Behavior. Frequency of drinking or visiting bars and frequency of drug usage did not differ between groups. Of the total sample, 50% said they never frequent bars, $\chi^2(4) = 2.84, p > .05$. Half of the women in each group stated that they have never taken any kind of drugs, $\chi^2(2) = .75, p > .05$.

No difference was found between groups on thoughts of, or attempts at, suicide. Eleven women in Group 1 and 13 in Group 2 had thought at some time about committing suicide; four women in Group 1 and two women in Group 2 had tried to commit suicide.
DISCUSSION

No major differences were found in psychological adjustment between the women with a preferred homosexual orientation and the women with a preferred heterosexual orientation. This finding is in accord with the findings of the majority of recent research studies (Armon, 1960; Freedman, 1967; Hopkins, 1969; Thompson et al., 1971; Siegelman, 1972). The distributions of the two groups overlap on psychological adjustment (see Table 5).

Regarding the measures of expert judgment, the results imply that, with the Mf scale excluded, the expert judges were unable to find any "lesbian" characteristics on the MMPI profiles which would guide them in identifying a profile as that of a heterosexually oriented woman or that of a homosexually oriented woman. This evidence indicates that there is no "lesbian" characteristic on the MMPI profiles but, rather, that there are certain patterns of response which vary from subject to subject and are not associated with the woman's sexual orientation.

The groups differed on the Ma scale with heterosexual group scoring higher than the homosexual group. The Ma scale is generally characterized by a high level of activity, spurts of productivity, distractability, enthusiasm, and an optimistic, enterprising personality in need of novel stimulation. Hathaway and Meehl (1952) noted, "The high energy level of this group is also shown in the common use of the terms talkative, enthusiastic, and versatile" (p. 223). The high Ma women described themselves as enterprising and sociable, in the sense of mixing well.

It may be speculated that while the active, verbal and socially outgoing personality patterns of the heterosexual group might account for the subjects' motivation to participate in this research, the lesbian group in comparison might have been motivated by a desire to support an investigation designed to widen knowledge on the scarcely researched subject of lesbian psychological adjustment and life style.

In the absence of any other studies on lesbianism known to us which use the MMPI as an objective measure of psychological adjustment, it is not possible to make conclusive statements as to these findings.

A significant difference was found between the two groups on the Mf scale of the MMPI: the lesbians scored higher (more "masculine") than the nonlesbian group. It has not yet been determined
empirically what the Mf scale measures in women. We have two groups of single women who differ in their preferred sexual orientation and who also significantly differ ($p < .001$) on a continuum of a set of masculinity-femininity values which, however, are not clearly identified.

The popular interpretation of high Mf scale scores based on traditional ideas concerning sex role stereotypes may be misleading. One must read such results with caution. According to the MMPI manual (Hathaway and McKinley, 1943), the Mf scale was designed to measure "the tendency toward masculinity or femininity of interest pattern" (p. 5), but the three major sources of the MMPI on item selection and validation procedures agree that its major aim was to identify sexual inversion in males. Although an elevated score is thought to be related to homosexuality in men, there is no such diagnostic implication of high scores for women. "Scale 5 coded low may fit a more or less general concept of femininity, and Scale 5 coded high is found in patterns suggesting an outgoing mode of social adjustment" (Drake and Oetting, 1959, p. 25). It is important to understand that any other interpretation of this scale, in terms of sexual orientation, is without empirical evidence.

The terms masculinity and femininity as psychological constructs are in great flux at this time in our society, and while they are much discussed, we are still unable to correctly define the concepts or come up with clear criteria for their measurement. Indeed, Bem (1975) has begun to evaluate the proposition that "masculinity" and "femininity" may be outdated standards which seriously restrict an individual's behavioral options. Until more is known, then, value judgments, often implicit in general and professional applications, should be made and received with caution.

The hypothesis concerning life styles was only partially substantiated and, on the whole, the results indicate an absence of major differences on several of the dimensions of styles of life that were measured in this study.

One could speculate that the overall similarities between the two groups are due to the basic socialization process in our society, in which the socialization patterns impinge differentially on the two sexes, with a separate and unequal effect on the personality development of males and females (Maccoby, 1974). Lesbians have been brought up in a heterosexual culture which perpetuates different ways of being for little boys and little girls, and later for men and women.

The overall homogeneity of the sample implies that single women
in our society have many dimensions of life style in common, regardless of their preferred sexual orientation. Such homogeneity raises the question of whether or not being a single woman in this society is a more overriding characteristic in terms of life style than being homosexually or heterosexually oriented.

The differences in life styles that did emerge between the two groups have important and interesting implications. A noteworthy finding is the apparent difference in the quality of the relationship between two women as compared to that between a man and a woman. Regarding stereotypical social and sexual roles, it appears that the members of the lesbian sample relate to their partner in a more reciprocal and nontraditional way than the women in the control group relate to their heterosexual partner. The lesbians also expressed greater satisfaction in the emotional, sexual, and friendship aspects of their relationship than their heterosexual counterparts. Also, according to the responses, the lesbians have achieved a greater vocational self-determination (compromised their vocational goals less).

Again, the reader is reminded that both samples were select and clearly not representative of all lesbian or heterosexual single women and that, therefore, the findings can be generalized only to women similar to those investigated in this study.

When the butch/femme dichotomy (patterned after the heterosexual male/female roles) was tested in the present study, mixed responses were elicited from the lesbian group, revealing transitional personal and social attitudes. We find that femininity is an elusive term in today's rapidly changing world, and the changing roles of women are just as confusing to lesbians as they are to nonlesbians. On evaluating the results, it seems that single women in general, and lesbians in particular, are moving away from the traditional male and female social role patterns.

The above findings throw some doubt upon some of the traditional assumptions about lesbians. Are they really more "masculine" in their behavior than their "normal" heterosexual counterparts, or are they more free to develop both their feminine and masculine and, in fact, their total human potential? It is possible that, rather than being "masculine," the lesbian woman, by virtue of being an outlaw, has had to develop personality qualities that have been traditionally the domain of the male, such as independence, self-determination, competence, and aggression.

Numerous research studies could be cited to strengthen this assumption. Freedman (1967), for example, commented:
It appears that women who engage in homosexual relations are either initially more independent and inner directed than women who engage in heterosexual relations or else they develop this self direction and independence as a reaction against societal pressures against their mode of sexuality. (p. 89)

Hopkins (1969) suggested that "a good descriptive generic term for the average lesbian would be 'independent'" (p. 1435); and Thompson et al. (1971) found that "the female homosexuals checked more adjectives and were higher for the scale measures of self confidence" (p. 239).

One can speculate, too, that the differences in the Mf scale scores on the MMPI between the two groups (high Mf scores for the lesbians) may be due to the greater freedom with which lesbians can draw values from the continuum of qualities ascribed to "cultural femininity or masculinity."

Research has produced evidence that sex role and behavioral options for both men and women have been narrowed by socialization, a process prescribing and defining what the behavior of each sex "should" be (Kagan, 1964). Since the socialization process in our society has differential effects on the development of males and females, the question is: To what extent must we continue to adhere to and encourage such a dichotomized set of values which, in the light of today's changing social scene, may soon become obsolete? A growing number of heterosexual women feel that their conventional "feminine" roles are humanly too restrictive, too confining.

Finally, it should be noted that many of the questionnaire responses seem to dispel a number of unenlightened myths and popular preconceptions about lesbian lifestyle and lesbianism. Some of the responses reveal the lesbian respondent not as a heterosexual reject but as a woman who chooses to love another woman. This interpretation appears plausible. Early heterosexual experiences were found to be quite similar between the two groups, indicating that lesbians date, sometimes have extensive heterosexual experiences, and so on, but at some point in their lives choose to relate to women rather than men. Much of the evidence obtained runs counter to popular belief: the women in the sample were not seduced into homosexual relationships by older lesbians; in the majority of cases, their first lesbian experience was mutually initiated, with a partner of the same age group; the lesbians in the sample reportedly are not sexually promiscuous but women who enter, stay, and leave relationships in a process similar to that of any heterosexual couple; and the
great majority of the lesbian subjects do not play the "butch/femme" roles. Further, the findings indicate that the lesbians in this study do not have poor work records as compared to their heterosexual counterparts, and that they are not excessive drinkers or drug users, nor are they prone to attempt suicide. The lesbians in this study, just as the heterosexual single women, manage their love relationships, their family relationships, friendships, jobs, and social life in a variety of ways.

While it is important to consider society's negative sanctions and harsh repression of homosexuality, it is also important to note that in spite of these great societal pressures many lesbians function as well as their heterosexual counterparts as far as the sample of this study is concerned.

In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that lesbian and heterosexual women are comparable in terms of their psychological adjustment and similar in the dimensions of life styles that were tested. A plausible explanation for these findings may be that these women are all the products of the same female socialization process in our culture.

It is suggested that further study in this area with increased focus on current human behavior may provide added insights and avoid the limitations of a "retrospective" bias. Research focusing on specific areas within the wide range of life styles might provide more in-depth understanding. In addition, investigations of the variable of the subjects' affiliation with lesbian and/or feminist organizations may increase the understanding of its possible effect upon the subjects' adjustment and life styles. Finally, further investigations should also use samples of other races and socioeconomic levels to increase the generalizability of information.

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