

Editorials
Commentary

'La difference' versus Unisex

By Martin L. Gross
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In a world too often pained by noxious experience, one pleasant fact continually emerges to give pleasure to mankind: the differences between the sexes.

The vigorous French aphorism "Vive la difference!" seems to have served homo sapiens well, but it is now being challenged by the new rallying cry of "Unisex!" It is a perverse philosophy based upon the false assumption that men and women are not so different after all — that the supposed variance is just a biologic trifle and a romantic legend propagated by the oversexed.

The Unisex theme has many ugly ramifications for civilization, the most obvious of which is the new matched clothes for men and women. Advertisements for new spring outfits feature couples wearing the same flamboyantly feminine cotton print slacks, some with floral motifs that on men could create more than a stir at Yankee Stadium or at a Teamsters meeting.

DELICATE FASHIONS on men are not overly indicative, as the masculinity of a D'Artagnan illustrates. But the Unisex clothes theme of today appears to be a symptom of an underlying sexual erosion. As the two sexes come closer together,

in mind as well as fashion, the American female is undoubtedly becoming more masculine while our men are increasingly feminized.

More bluntly put, women are becoming harder, while men seem inordinately weaker.

The life style, psyche and attitudes of the sexes are becoming conjoined, with grave injury to both. Where once a too-great chasm separated the sexes, they now too-often act and respond together, or similarly creating a new Unisex inferior to both its predecessors.

This conclusion is not based on any supposed rise in male homosexuality, for the elegant perversion has always affected two to three percent of men. Neither is it meant to be compared with the caveman and wilting violet stereotypes in which the woman is permitted only a batting eyelash and the man is all hero and restrained violence.

SOME WOULD LIKE us to believe that only different-shaped genitals really differentiate the sexes. But history tells us that the masculine traits of detached intellect that created science, industry and government, the ability to fight physically to live, and the singular challenge of adventure and the new horizon, have enabled human beings to survive on this planet.

Similarly, the female talents for socialization, family-orientation and culture provide many of the goals and methods through which mankind has created society. As we tamper with the sexes, we therefore risk a great deal.

Several trends tend to weaken the two-sex social system. One is excessive fraternization between the sexes. The historic all-male club, young boys immersed in science and sports, men's poker, pinocle and bowling circuits, the all-boys prep schools and colleges provided the environment in which masculinity could develop without great restraint. Similarly, the female society had its hallowed privacy and special routes to maturity.

BETTY FRIEDAN'S powerful "Feminine Mystique" was an excellent argument for the feminist view, but it confused a generation of women, many of whom would otherwise be more-than-content to make their highly individualistic family contribution to society. The new feminist group, NOW, has even compared American women to racial minorities, successfully compelling the New York Times and other New York City papers to omit mention of sex in help-wanted ads, adding some confusion to the hiring of truck drivers and girl Fridays.

The weakened Unisex male may be a less-than-satisfactory leader for a society that needs direction, and a poor mate for women who have universally sought strength with compassion from the male.

The hardened Unisex female can hardly serve as the healthy counterpart to the aggressiveness the male needs to survive. As she becomes overly-aggressive herself, his home as well as his career will have the unsettling cutting edge of a competitive jungle.

THE CHILD WHO results from such a Unisex home can hardly understand the requirements of life, being unused to the extraordinary warmth and insight of a true female and the fair but firm sense that only a man can give an offspring.

Pants-built-for-two can be a wild put-on to entertain family and friends. But as a symbol of sexual deterioration it frightens one male who thoroughly enjoys, and respects, "la difference."

A brother a brick

"Bring a brother and a brick."

The use of the weathered stones to build a symbolic wall at Tuesday's demonstration is an interesting irony. In most college demonstrations the bricks might be used for other, more noticeable purposes.

The symbolic closing off of one administration entrance is not, by any stretch of the imagination, analogous to Harvard or Berkeley or several other campuses where buildings have been occupied. But it must have been done for a purpose.

It is hoped that at Wednesday's session, the student demonstrators will fulfill that purpose and deliver the list of their concerns, so that administrators and students will know what it's all about. Tuesday's stand-in was like a signal for silence, so that someone with a message could say something. Now that the University is listening that something should be said.

And if the grievances are legitimate, that something should be heeded.

The point is, discussion of concerns should start immediately. Delaying this can only provide opportunity for an incident of anger.

Ed Icenogle

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De profundis ... by Fred Schmidt

For better or worse, Ted Kennedy, our last chance to perpetuate the Camelot myth, cannot escape his identity. Certainly up to the present that identity has proved advantageous.

Throughout his political career he has faced charges of nepotism, yet he has always prevailed, from his victory over Speaker John McCormack's nephew in 1962 to his recent flattening of Russell, Son of Huey.

And the Democratic Party is not about to ignore the advantage of Kennedy's name — even Mayor Daly is trying to get on the bandwagon.

WHILE MOST AMERICANS readily proclaim the folly of voting for a man simply because he is related to a noted (or canonized) public figure, few are willing to disqualify Ted Kennedy from consideration for the Presidency. Amen to that.

There is little doubt that if he wants the Democratic Presidential nomination in 1972, it's his. And, if Sweet Richard's negotiations don't stop our confrontations by then, Kennedy well might find himself in the White House.

So, you say, very big deal. Every school child knows that. Perhaps so, but the Old Guard of the GOP is apparently just finding it out. And the word has gone forth from Pennsylvania Avenue — STOP KENNEDY!

RICHARD COEUR DE LION, of course, won't soil his hands in trying to discredit the Massachusetts prodigy — everyone knows that Dick would never stoop to dirty politics. He has instead deployed the finest men available for the task — Spiro T. Ev, and a soft-shoe artist named Murph.

But even for these professionals, the task is not easy. In spite of itself, the public has a soft spot in its heart for Ted Kennedy. Even when he calls for recognition of Red China, even when he blisters U.S. policy towards Biafra, even when his wife wears a micro-thing to a formal Presidential ball, the public sighs and forgives.

MURPH THE JERK, away from California and Ronnie (the Earthquake cometh!) long enough to join Kennedy's fact finding tour to Alaska, may a great move to sabotage the trip by returning home along with two fellow Republicans. Just a publicity stunt for Kennedy, they say. (Nixon watchdog Herb Klein did as much for George McGovern's survey of hunger in America.) One of Murph's cohorts, William Saxbe of Ohio, finally admitted that Kennedy cannot help it if poor people throng about him and newsmen write stories accordingly.

Incidentally, the result of the GOP walkout was more publicity for Kennedy.

These tactics are par for the political course. Kennedy is perfectly capable and, I hope, willing to return blow for blow. He has already taken one strictly political stand, seconding the general public's demand for tax reform.

BUT SOMETHING NEW has been added by the GOP. Kennedy is now being depicted as the arch-enemy on the ABM and Spiro T. has been telling certain GOP senators that a vote against the system constitutes support for Kennedy against Nixon. Cooper, Hatfield, Javits, Case, Goodell, and a handful of less prominent Republican senators who have been outspoken against the ABM are being intimidated to change their stand.

If the Republican administration is so sacred of Ted Kennedy already that it not only starts an early smear campaign but must even attempt to arbitrarily regulate the performance of individuals who helped elect it (yet who would so like to think for themselves on some crucial issues), then I suggest that said administration induce itself in some choice Portnoy activity. The administration is dedicated to bringing us together again (again?) — but apparently tis' to be on the administration's terms.

If Kennedy's or any liberal's ideas, positions, and programs are going to be automatically considered anathema simply because they come from the opposition, opinion will only be further polarized. Opinion camps will become more and more militant and actions more and more rash.

Voices less responsible than Kennedy's will be heard. In this vicious cycle, a return by President Nixon to his old "used car" brand of politics will shatter any hope of progress or reform in the next four years.

After the war-- What to do with SE Asia

By Flora Lewis

Bangkok, Thailand — Peace in Vietnam isn't around the very next corner, but it is evident through southeast Asia now that the issues ahead are the post-war issues.

Generals still concentrate on fighting, diplomats have barely begun to negotiate. But, most people when they speak of problems now are groping for an outline of what they will face when the war is over. This is perhaps the most difficult period. The present demands action that gets in the way of planning. The future demands planning that gets in the way of present action.

But the need to look ahead is growing urgent if peace, when it comes, is not to be hopelessly tarnished. It would be the climactic tragedy if the mistakes of an ill-conceived, mismanaged war are compounded by the abandon of those war aims which were sound.

FOR THE NON-COMMUNIST countries of Asia, looking ahead means primarily trying to foresee American policy. Until the U.S. develops, decides and explains its post-war Asian policy, nothing will settle here.

It should be understood that in the meantime, nothing is taken for granted. People here have become acutely aware of the divisions and disagreements among Americans. Most like what they have heard from President Nixon, but they aren't sure how far it goes and even less sure how far Nixon speaks for the longer-range intentions of America.

They see a gamut of possibilities all the way from a strong American presence in search of the kind of close partnership that the U.S. had with Europe following World War II, to total U.S. withdrawal and an indifference to Asia that America has not shown since the start of this century.

IT IS OBVIOUS and accepted that Asia's most pressing need is stability and a sense of security. The prevalent feeling is that this can best be achieved by establishing some kind of neutral buffer around China and North Vietnam. That idea is not the same as containment, pressing up against an aggressive power and trying to hold it in, because it also offers a forward safety zone to China and North Vietnam.

But, as one veteran European diplomat pointed out, there can be no such thing as a buffer unless it is between two bulwarks. Nor is there anything in Asia which can provide a balancing bulwark to China except America's presence. That can eventually develop, as western Europe has developed its own solidity. But not in a vacuum. And its present stage, non-Communist Asia would be a vacuum without America.

SOME SERIOUS CRITICS of the Kennedy-Johnson Asia policy have plunged to the opposite extreme, advocating withdrawal if not from the whole Western Pacific then from all the mainland and the offshore islands. It has been suggested

that the U.S. should confine its power in this great region to the sea and to those southern Pacific states which look and sound and think like us, Australia and New Zealand.

It is true that some previous American policymakers had a stuffed-attic approach to the world, collecting bases and commitments all over the world and never discarding what had outlived its value. That got the U.S. into trouble and would get it into more trouble if pursued with a hoarder's zeal.

IT IS EQUALLY true, however, that it will take the physical commitment of reasonable American power in Asia to make anyone believe in an American moral and political commitment to a peaceful, orderly world. That means deploying with careful selection, in full consultation with all friendly Asian states, and most important perhaps with the evident support of the bulk of American opinion.

The time is coming for the great American debate that has so bewildered friend and foe to reach a conclusion. America can choose a wise Asian policy or a foolish one. But until it has a policy, clearly endorsed by most of its people, it can't come to terms with this tremendous part of the world. Meanwhile, doubt about U.S. intentions is becoming at least as unsettling to non-Communist Asia as fear of a militant China and North Vietnam.

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Campus opinion

Sex and its proper perspective; a few errors

Dear Editor:

Sex is indeed rediscovered by each successive generation — and that is too bad. Unlike many areas of human activity adequate information about facts and advances in sexual thought are not routinely passed on to the young. Could it be that this unfortunate circumstance is the direct result of our culture's attempt to control sexual activity through ignorance, guilt, and fear? It seems apparent, then, with recent advances in contraception, biology has been superseded by technology and our ancient control effort is no longer necessary, nor desirable.

I found Mr. Butler's psychosexual developmental classification system informative and incomplete. It seems justified to refer to the stages of development we observe as "exploration, experimentation, and exploitation." These states may well precede "meaningful" amative-sexual relationships.

I would advocate the possibility that mature adults are also capable of relatively "meaningless" liaisons that do nothing, but add delightful variety and adventure to their lives. Mr. Butler seems to be saying that sex with love is good and sex without love is exploitation. I would remind him that exploitation is not a purely sexual phenomenon

in human affairs and that his argument involves a bifurcation that dismisses entirely a legitimate alternative.

Mr. Butler's reference to an Ivy Leaguer who wished the girl he "was in love with" was a virgin again, left me cold. If that young man truly "loved" the girl, he would wish only that she was finding and would continue to find life satisfying. The young Ivy Leaguer has simply revealed that he remains entirely culture bound and threatened by human sexuality. Too bad he must suffer so needlessly.

I must surely agree with Mr. Butler that much current dating behavior is dysfunctional. I do not feel that the cure for this dilemma is a return to abstinence, fear, and mysticism. I suspect that such dysfunctional behavior and attitudes will disappear when young people have adequate knowledge, understanding, and experience in heterosexual activities. Then and only then will sex be placed in its proper perspective.

D. A. Hackenberg

Dear Sir: Those of us at the University of Nebraska Medical Center interested in family planning efforts were sent a copy of your several articles of March

28, 1969. While this topic was undoubtedly of real interest to your readers, numerous errors of fact were present, some of which could be of considerable importance.

To cite only a few: "Can a girl become pregnant at the time of menstruation. The answer is no" (False). "The IUD costs about \$32." (It costs about 25 cents) "A morning-after pill is being investigated, . . . although severe side effects result." (Stillbirth has been marketed for over 25 years, and used as a post-coital contraceptive for five. Side effects are minimal.)

The headline "Planned Parenthood Concepts Unknown Among Uneducated" perpetuates a myth. Jaife's report is primarily of historic interest, and statements that urban low-income couples have difficulty obtaining contraceptives, and do not employ effective methods simply are not true.

Your own University has rather extensive programs of research, federally supported patient service, and education in family planning. If future articles are planned, we would be pleased to provide accurate data.

Warren H. Pearse, M.D.
Professor and Chairman
Department of OB-GYN