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SEXISM

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INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR AND CULTURAL PRACTICES

Malagodi and Jackson (1989) noted distinctions between *troubles* and *issues* in a manner useful to this chapter. Troubles are individual and personal. They are explained by the contingencies operating at the individual level. An employee who is paid less than other employees for comparable work because she is female has a personal trouble. An issue, on the other hand, is a trouble experienced by a group of people. It is not explainable at the level of individually operating contingencies. Issues are understood within a broader cultural context. As a group, college-educated women earn approximately 60% of what their male counterparts earn (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1991). This is an issue. The solution to issues requires analysis at both individual and cultural levels. It is important to consider women's issues at the cultural level. As Malagodi and Jackson (1989) warned:

> Members of a culture, be they ordinary people or people in power, are not led to examine seriously, to challenge, or to change even personal-orbit local contingencies—let alone broad social-system metacontingencies—when widespread personal problems that occur within that system are viewed as troubles arising out of common human failings rather than as issues arising out of fundamental failures of

> the culture's political, economic, legal, religious, educational, mental-health, and other institutions of social control. (p. 27)

The purpose of this chapter is to use a behavior analytic approach to define sexism, to explore its extent in our culture, and to analyze potential sources of, and explanations for, its continuance. Nonviolent sexist behavior is analyzed both as individual behavior maintained by contingencies of reinforcement and as cultural practices that may have had survival value in the past, but no longer do. Further, major feminist schools of thought on sexist behavior are described, and suggestions for behavioral interventions to combat sexism are presented.

Sexism Defined

Women's issues are conceptualized here as a continuum of behavior collectively labeled sexism. Sexism is a socially acquired repertoire, one which reflects specific societal values. It is defined as a response class emitted by men and women that produces consequences ranging from denying women access to reinforcers and restricting their opportunities to acquire and emit certain repertoires, to endangering their health and lives. Examples of sexist behaviors according to this definition include the writing and purchasing of elementary school textbooks and tests that underrepresent girls in active, interesting, and exciting roles. This practice contributes to the teaching of gender-specific roles, which limit girls' access to reinforcers. The middle of the definitional continuum describes behaviors that discourage women from considering and persevering in certain career and job choices. These behaviors include differential treatment of boys and girls in math and science classes in elementary and secondary schools; the creation of work environments hostile to women, primarily through the sanction of sexist language; the expectation that women will do the majority of child care and childrearing activities; and the induction of men to upper-level administrative positions through the use of "good-old-boy" networks that exclude women. The last level on the definitional continuum contains behaviors that harass women and threaten their safety and even their lives. It is, however, beyond the scope of this chapter to analyze violence toward women.

Prevalence of Sexism

Sexist behaviors are institutionalized and prevalent. The major institutions that teach sexism are the family and schools. The development of sexist repertoires in the home is described later. Research on sexist behaviors in education has focused on the portrayal of male and female characters in stories and on the differential treatment of boys and girls in classrooms.

Researchers analyzed the ratio of male-to-female characters in children's stories and textbooks during the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1970s, boys or men were the main characters in 61% to 75% of the stories examined (Britton & Limpkin, 1977; Graebner, 1972). Animals and objects—not identifiable by gender ("other")—constituted 23% of main characters. Male roles included doctors, science teachers, military officers, ministers, and writers, whereas female roles were those of teachers, nurses, clerks, stewardesses, and cooks (Hitchcock & Tompkins, 1987). Hitchcock and Tompkins also examined six major series of basal readers for changes in ratio between male and female characters. Boys or men were the main characters in 18% of the stories; girls or women were the main characters in 17%. The category of other rose to more than 60%. The researchers concluded that writers and publishers were not increasing representation of girls in nontraditional roles. They were effectively sidestepping the issue by creating larger numbers of characters with no gender identification. Findings for math texts' use of story-problem characters parallel those for reading (Nibbelink, Stockdale, and Mangru, 1986).

The research of Sadker and Sadker (1985) produced much evidence of differential treatment of boys and girls in classrooms. Boys talked more than girls in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms. There was widespread sex segregation in classrooms at all educational levels. Teachers were more likely to punish girls than boys for calling out answers during class discussion. Boys received more praise from teachers and were criticized more than girls. In vocational settings, teachers gave male students extended directions on how to complete tasks for themselves. Teachers were more likely to do a task for female students. This last finding was as prevalent in early childhood classes in arts and crafts projects as it was in the Coast Guard Academy, where instructors explained to males how to operate equipment and operated it for female students.

The education experienced by women students at the university level also differs considerably from that of men because of the prevalence of sexist behaviors. Myers (1993) noted that 70% of women college students experienced either sexual or gender harassment on campus. Examples included degrading statements about their clothing, body, or sexual behavior.

If students learn what is taught, what male students learn is significantly different from what females learn. The absence of nontraditional models for boys and girls in textbooks maintains specific values of the culture relative to what men and women should and should not seek or expect. The cost of maintaining these values will be addressed later in this chapter. Thus, there is ample evidence that sexist behavior is a dominant practice in education.

There is also evidence that work environments are less than supportive to women in nontraditional careers or jobs. Apart from pay inequities (Ostertag & McNamara, 1991), women experience varying levels of

discrimination, ranging from sexist language to harassment in the workplace. Myers (1993) detailed the prevalence of these behaviors with data suggesting that more than 50% of all women working in the private sector "reported negative consequences . . . for refusal to comply with sexual propositions" (p. 83). Some effects of these sexist behaviors include interference with the ability to do the job and an uncomfortable work environment for women. Sutherland (1987) documented the differential treatment of women by employers, especially in jobs typically held by men. Further, women occupied lower positions and lower status jobs, engaged more in part-time work, and were more likely to become unemployed in times of economic stress.

Social Costs of Sexism

The personal and social costs of sexist behaviors are inestimable. Chronic underrepresentation of women in the sciences, medicine, law, administration, and almost all top-level government positions results in a paucity of models for these careers (Fox Keller, 1985). This in turn ensures the difficulties experienced by those women who break the mold and accomplish nontraditional goals. The absence of women in rank-and-file jobs affects the choices of problems researched in science and medicine. For instance, it is only since 1993 that federal funding for large-scale medical research into breast cancer, a major cause of death in women, has been made available. Further, the research on heart disease, the number-one killer of women in the United States, has yet to include large numbers of women participants. Because many women have primary child-care responsibilities and lower paying jobs, more women-headed single parent families are at or below poverty level than similar families headed by men (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1991). The waste of talent and underdevelopment of skills is most evident and most difficult to document in the prevalent belief that women are and should be the primary homemaker and parent. The energy and time these roles require detract from that needed to pursue a demanding, better paying career (Favell, 1989). The negative outcomes of sexist behaviors have been brought to public attention by feminist special interest groups. As a result, in the past decade major changes in policy and practice have been made.

Existing Knowledge and Conceptual Base for Combating Sexism

Most of the work to identify and combat sexist behavior has grown and developed into a new discipline called feminism. Feminism, not unlike psychology, has many philosophies reflecting its multiple sources. It is not possible to reduce feminist theory to a couple of paragraphs without making some very difficult choices. However, it is appropriate to attempt to describe briefly the major types of feminisms, with their concomitant social agendas and some of their better known advocates. An excellent overview is provided by Tong (1989), from which the following summaries are drawn (pp. 1-11). Seven theoretical approaches to feminism can be distinguished. They are:

1. Traditional Liberal Feminism identified with Mary Wollstonecraft (1975) and John Stuart Mill (1869/1970).
   Basic premises: Custom and law prevent women from developing their full potential through educational opportunities. With equal educational opportunity and civil rights, women will achieve in ways comparable to men.
2. Marxist Feminism identified with Engels (1972), Bentson (1969), Dalla Costa and James (1972).
   Basic premises: As long as class distinctions exist and the majority of private property is owned by men, women will never have equal educational or economic opportunities. With the abolition of private ownership, women will no longer be economically dependent on men and will be able to achieve equality.
3. Radical Feminism identified with Firestone (1970), Rich (1979), Millett (1970), French (1985), and Daly (1978).
   Basic premises: Neither Marxist nor traditional liberal Feminism go far enough. Women are oppressed by all societal institutions, which are male-dominated and patriarchal. All institutions as we know them must be abolished. This includes the biological family. Biology is a fact women and men must overcome, not accept as the basis for gender-role differences.[1]
4. Psychoanalytic Feminism identified with Dinnerstein (1977) and Chodorow (1978).
   Basic premises: Freud's theories, particularly that of the oedipal complex, inform psychoanalytic feminism. Women-dominated childrearing forces boys to give up their first love object, the mother, to avoid castration at the hands of the father. In this way, boys become fully integrated into the dominant male culture. Girls, on the other hand, do not completely separate from their mothers, so they never become fully integrated. The only solution is dual parenting, in which men and women take equal shares in disciplining and nurturing.
5. Existential Feminism identified with Simone de Beauvoir (1949/1974).

[1] In B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two* (1948), social arrangements, particularly child rearing practices, are closest to those advocated by the radical feminist perspective.

Basic premises: Woman is the *other* in relation to man, who is the *self*. In other words, women are always second-class citizens and outsiders; they are "objects" whose meanings are interpreted for them by men. Only women themselves can transcend the definitions and labels of femininity coined by men by working, by becoming intellectuals, and by socially transforming society.

6. Socialist Feminism associated with Mitchell (1974), Hartmann (1981), and Jaggar 1983).

Basic premises: Socialist feminism differs from Marxist feminism by adding notions from radical and psychoanalytical feminisms to the Marxist position. Socialist feminists attempt to completely explain the origins of women's oppression by both analyzing capitalism and patriarchy as distinct forms of oppression (dual-systems theorists) and by analyzing capitalism and patriarchy together as one indistinguishable system (unified-systems theorists).

7. Postmodern Feminism identified with Derrida (1978), Lacan (1977), Cixous (1981), and Irigaray (1985).

Basic premises: Postmodern feminists reject the notion that one unifying concept, however complex, can explain women's oppression. Women's experiences of oppression differ across racial, class, and cultural lines. The more and diverse feminist thought that can be generated, the better.

The following are some common concerns feminists from all these theoretical approaches share. Feminist scholars tend to have an interest in praxis (providing a direct connection between a theoretical position and the practices and behaviors related to that position) in which women and men are reeducated to examine existing scholarship from a feminist point of view (Luke & Gore, 1992). Feminists have identified sexist practices in the lives of women through the organization of community-based, consciousness-raising groups. Women's studies departments have been established on campuses where feminist scholarship is critiqued and where the once little-known works written and composed by women are the major focus. Notions of male power and female disempowerment are examined. Many feminists have sought to locate the causes of women's oppression by men (Nicholson, 1990). Other feminists like hooks (1989, 1984), Rich (1986), and Ellsworth (1989) consider oppression of women to have many levels, depending on the influence of racism and classism. These writers claim all women experience varying degrees of each "-ism"; therefore, no two women's experiences of oppression are exactly alike.

Whatever particular forms of feminism now exist, the public arm of this movement, the National Organization for Women, has lobbied extensively and successfully for legislative changes on women's behalf. For example, public attention has been focused on the uses and effects of sexist language, so that now most publishing criteria require nonsexist language guidelines to be followed. Affirmative action procedures exist in all public sources of employment in a deliberate attempt to alter hiring biases. It is undeniable that feminist political action networks have brought about significant changes in language and practices in public settings. It is likely such changes will continue, though not without resistance (Faludi, 1991). It is a problem that the analyses by many feminists of sexist behavior cause a strong element of blame directed toward men. This in turn has made it easier to stereotype as man-haters those women who call themselves feminists. hooks (1984) suggested that people advocate feminism rather than call themselves feminists. This allows a person to belong to any discipline and espouse feminist values, for instance, to be a behaviorist and advocate feminism.

Feminists acknowledge that human behavior must change for women to be treated equitably. Behavior change is certainly the domain of behavior analysts, some of whom have examined the contributions of women to the field (Favell, 1989; Myers, 1993; Poling et al., 1983). To date, however, this community has not considered sexist behavior to be a major research topic. With the current interest of several behavior analysts in the possible contributions of cultural anthropology to behavior analysis (Glenn, 1988; Malagodi, 1986; Malagodi & Jackson, 1989; Malott, 1988), there is the potential to analyze sexist behavior as cultural practices that, at one time, had materialistic outcomes. That is to say, such behavior had useful practical consequences at some point in human evolution. Perhaps such an analysis can be conducted without blame.

Behavioral Analysis of Sexism

The domain of behavior analysis is the explanation, prediction, and control of individual human behavior. Determinants of individual human behavior are sought in the contingencies of behavior operating in the immediate environment, coupled with the unique history of the individual with those contingencies or ones similar to them. A person acquires a repertoire through a combination of contingency-developed and rule-governed behavior. With respect to verbal sexism, an individual's sexist behavior is maintained largely by the verbal community's contingencies of reinforcement. A worker who whistles and makes obscene comments to a woman walking past is reinforced by the verbal approval of his colleagues. He may be considered a suspect member of that community if he does not engage in this behavior where it is accepted practice. How does a person acquire a sexist repertoire? The verbal community into which an individual is born reinforces and explicitly teaches sexist repertoires to a greater or lesser extent. The models for sexist behaving that are most prevalent are in both written and visual media.

The home is the first place where sexist behavior is conditioned and maintained. When aggressive behavior by girls is punished more severely than similar behavior by boys, boys learn to behave more aggressively. When boys are expected to do certain chores and not others (e.g., take out the trash and not do dishes), they learn that certain tasks are gender-specific. A man can often articulate these differences as rules when challenged to participate in atypical tasks by saying: "That's women's work." This statement represents a rule specifying that only women may do certain work and that men are likely to be punished for doing that work. The punishers are most often the verbal community such as the man's friends, his family, even his wife. In short, sexist behaviors can be explained by the contingencies of reinforcement, by the avoidance of punishing situations, and by rule-governed behavior. But this analysis does not account for the generational presence of the type of verbal community described above. Why did such sexist verbal communities develop, and how are they maintained across generations? Only by using the notion of the metacontingency (Glenn, 1986), defined next, can such behaviors be understood and changed.

Cultural Practices: Definitions and Types

The domain of cultural anthropologists is cultural practices, their development, maintenance, and change. Cultural practices involve the interrelated behavior of two or more people and the environments in which those practices occur. Among the many types of cultural anthropologies, cultural materialism, as exemplified in the works of Harris (1980, 1981, 1983), has been described as the most compatible with radical behavior analysis (Malagodi, 1986).

Harris (1979) identified three levels of cultural practices—infrastructural, structural, and superstructural. Infrastructural practices are primarily productive and reproductive in nature. In other words, cultural practices that produce population increases, decreases, or control are infrastructural, as are practices that feed and protect people. Examples of infrastructural practices might be different types of farming, food processing, and birth control. These are key practices because changes in these affect changes in practices at the other two levels. Harris believes that infrastructural practices determine the forms and limits of practices in structure and superstructure (Malagodi & Jackson, 1989).

The second type of cultural practice consists of a culture's structure. Here are found major institutional practices such as education, political organizations, family systems, military, police, and religions. These are built on infrastructural practices and they change in response to them, though not immediately. An example here might be the structural practice of education in terms of the typical school year. When societies, including the United States, were agriculturally based, students could not attend school during the summer because extra labor was needed to harvest crops. Harvesting is an infrastructural practice. Now, with the advent of mechanization and the exodus from rural to urban areas, additional labor is not required on the same scale. (Child labor laws may have also influenced the change from using children to hiring adults when necessary.) But for most students, the school year remains the same, despite changes in the relevant infrastructural practices. The no-summer school year now has other outcomes besides the original one. In many families, both parents work and rarely share the school-year schedule. Child care has become a pressing problem during the summer. The impetus for changing to a 12-month school year is strong and, in some locations, has already been successful. This example illustrates the interconnectedness of cultural practices as well as the delay between changes in one level and their effects at the second level.

The third level of cultural practices compose the superstructure. Practices related to literature, art, games, sport, advertising, rituals, myths, and ideologies are superstructural.

Glenn (1988) interpreted a cultural practice to be "a set of interlocking contingencies of reinforcement in which the behavior and behavioral products of each participant function as environmental events with which the behavior of other individuals interacts" (p. 167). The behavior of each individual participating in the practice influences that of some other individuals in the same practice and is influenced in turn by the behavior of the others. The cultural practice becomes a metacontingency when the practice has outcomes that contribute to or adversely affect the survival of the culture. The outcomes of the practice are the result of the combined behavior of all individuals engaged in the practice. Consider child care by women as a cultural practice. Although the specific behaviors engaged in by each mother may differ slightly or significantly from each other (e.g., the type and amount of foods used, clothes worn by the children, time spent with children, medical care provided), the result of the aggregate behavior of mothers in all variations of this practice might be children ready to benefit from formal education in varying degrees. Other participants in this cultural practice may be other family members, pediatricians (and other medical personnel), social service agencies, and welfare. If enough children are not prepared to benefit from formal education at the usual age in a given community, child care practices may be examined and changed.

A fundamental principle of Harris' cultural materialism is the belief that cultural practices have materialistic origins (Malott, 1988). That is, cultural practices such as premodern traumatic abortion and female infanticide developed because they had survival value for the cultures in which they flourished (Glenn, 1988).

One last concept merits discussion. If metacontingencies have outcomes that are remote, small, and cumulative, how do they affect the behavior of the participants in the practice? What is the connection between remote outcomes and the probability of behaving in certain ways? Malott (1988) made a case for the intervention of rules and rule-governed behavior as this link. Basically, direct-acting contingencies affect the future probability of behavior regardless of whether the person knows (can state verbally) the contingency as a rule. For example, if you reverse your car without looking first and hit a harder object than your car, you will be less likely to do the same behavior again in the near future. Indirect-acting contingencies cannot control behavior because their outcomes are too remote, too far removed in time, or too small to be significant. An example of an indirect-acting contingency might be the effects of smoking. All the long-term effects of smoking are negative, and many of them are life-threatening, but one does not get cancer by smoking a pack of cigarettes. There is no immediate strong negative effect. Malott suggests that indirect-acting contingencies work only when direct-acting contingencies operate as part of them or in their place. For behavior to be rule-governed, the behaver must be able to articulate the rule. If the rule is hard to follow, regardless of its ultimate benefits, it will not control behavior. The substitution of an easy-to-follow rule for a hard-to-follow rule would control the behavior by establishing "the stimuli associated with noncompliance as an aversive condition; and a reduction of those aversive stimuli in turn reinforces compliance" (p. 190). Malott further suggested that religious organizations frequently provide the easy-to-follow rules by providing the threat of supernatural punishment for noncompliance. This form of compliance is dependent on the existence of a prerequisite repertoire of effective control by rules stated by others.

Sexist Behavior as Cultural Practices

The expectation that child rearing is women's work disadvantages women in many ways. The amount of time and energy they can give to their careers is reduced. A disproportionate share of homemaking and child care is still the lot of professional women in general (Pizurki, Meija, Butter, & Ewart, 1987). Doing certain household chores and not others because of gender is sexist behavior. How might this be described as a cultural practice? Child rearing and labor division can be analyzed as interrelated cultural practices. It is true that this analysis might apply only to certain cultures and not to others.

The cultural practice of child rearing by women probably had many determinants. Clearly, women became associated with child rearing because of their biological role in reproduction. The fact that infants and toddlers who were breastfed had a lower mortality rate than those who were not breastfed may be another reason. This connection may not have been noticed explicitly, because the outcome of the practice was gradual and cumulative. Another outcome of the practice of lactation was the decreased likelihood of becoming pregnant. This connection certainly existed as a rule and may have maintained the behavior. The materialistic outcomes of this cultural practice included healthier children and healthier mothers—it clearly had survival value. Whether religious easy-to-follow rules enabled such practices to be maintained is unclear. Certainly in Western European countries in preindustrialization times, the Roman Catholic church had clear expectations for what women could and could not do. The church certainly supported the role of women in child rearing.

Cultural practices rarely exist in isolation but intertwine with other related cultural practices. Just as there are clear biological origins for the practice of child rearing by women, some cultural practices most likely developed because of male biology also. In times when even the simplest activities of providing heat and food required physical strength, men had a clear advantage. Cultures that provided better food, heat, and protection because of their superior strength tended to survive better than those that did not. So there is a possible biological explanation for some division of labor between the genders. These activities reduced the likelihood that men would be available for child rearing. They also increased the probability that rules were developed identifying specific tasks to be the exclusive domain of men or women.

A third practice that contributed to women-centered child care and gender role differentiation relates to property ownership and legal inheritance procedures (Rich, 1986). Whereas it was clear who the mother of a child was because it was physically possible to prove, it was not possible until very recently to prove paternity. With men typically the protectors of the property, it became important to identify who their inheritors were. When women were kept in a residence with her children—away from the possibility of having children by other men—a man's inheritance was assured.

With women raising children and men engaged in political matters outside the home, other rules were easier to provide to keep women from entering the realm of male political power. Women might be more likely to stay in the home if they believe it unsafe physically for them to go outside without the protection of their husband. This is a much simpler rule to follow with potentially immediate consequences than an inheritance rule. And the outcomes of all three practices—woman-centered child rearing, men-centered war and protection, and property transfer practices—all had survival value.

Once practices are established, the behavior of individuals in the practices is explained by the contingencies of reinforcement. The practice is taught to new members and thus maintained generationally. Individual

exceptions to the practice, women who did not have children or who became soldiers and did not assume typical female roles, did not affect the outcomes of the practices because most women participated. Practices become self-sustaining as long as certain conditions remain unchanged. These conditions are the outcomes of infrastructural practices. As long as there are enough children born to replace population losses and enough food to feed those children, the cultural practices remain unchanged. When something happens to change the balance of population and food production, practices at the structural level change. The problem with this scenario is that when the outcomes of the original practices no longer have survival value and are so remote and small that they are not articulated or have weak control over behavior, damaging practices can be maintained.

Changes in Survival Value of Cultural Practices

As previously stated, practices that develop in response to contingencies can be maintained after the original contingencies no longer apply. This may happen for at least a couple of reasons. First, the connection between the outcomes and the practice may not be articulated. The rule is never stated. If the outcome is negative, ignorance of it will not promote change in the practice. For example, from the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s the drug DES (diethylstilbestrol) was commonly administered to pregnant women with a history of miscarriage and other problems (Boston Women's Health Book Collective, 1984). One long-term outcome of the DES was an increased incidence of cancer in the daughters of women who took the drug. This connection was not known to the consumers of the drug—their ignorance of it allowed administration of the drug to continue. Second, practices may have multiple outcomes in complex societies. Some of these may be positive and some, negative. Clear statements of contingent relationships may be confusing because they seem to contradict each other. It is interesting to examine some of the massive changes in cultural practices relative to women that occurred during and after World War II as an example of deliberate cultural engineering.

When most of the male work force was inducted into the armed forces during this war, production on the home front had to be maintained by those men not drafted and by women. In the course of a few short years, the roles of women changed dramatically. Jobs typically held by men became open to women, and women were actively encouraged to engage in them. Operating heavy machinery, steel work, welding, and other heavy industry production processes were suddenly the work of patriotic women. The infrastructural cultural practices of reproduction and production changed. The changes in metacontingencies were articulated by government spokespersons, in cinema newsreels, and in other news media. Explicit rules specifying the connection between women working and industrial output were stated. Even in entertainment practices changed. For instance, women's baseball teams had only tentative public approval before the war years. During the war, however, the first (and only) professional women's baseball league was established (Gregorich, 1993). A second drastic change in cultural practices occurred at the end of the war when the working population reverted to its prewar status. Women were urged—and indeed forced—to give up their jobs to the returning men. Once again, certain jobs were men's work and child rearing was women's major task. The use of media to encourage women to be satisfied with a return to the home was well documented by Friedan (1963) and was discussed by Faludi (1991). This example of immediate and pervasive change was made possible by the explicit connection made between old cultural practices, no longer possible, and the desired outcomes. To meet the desired outcomes, new practices were designed and implemented. Most cultural practices do not change this suddenly even when their outcomes cease to have survival value. This is an example of deliberate cultural engineering.

It is likely that what are now called sexist practices—which once may have had survival value—no longer benefit the cultures in which they exist. Apart from the example of wartime-emergency cultural behavior changes, the connection between sexist practices and their outcomes is more difficult to state in rule form. Changes in infrastructural practices have occurred that have removed the need for the maintenance of the sexist practices of child care and gender role differentiation. The lack of survival value of these practices is best articulated by the various feminist theories.

Major economic changes have occurred in the past 150 years that have broken the connection between existing practices and their survival contributions to society. With mechanization and the development of electronic tools, the need for excessive physical strength has diminished almost to the point of disappearing. Hence, women can physically do most of the tasks men do. Advances in medical care and birth control in non-third world countries have removed the need for women to lactate for lengthy periods of time (Kamal, 1987). Finally, the verbal community itself has changed in no small measure due to the rise of feminism. What feminists have done for the collective consciousness of women is to tact the contingencies that affect their lives. In their consciousness-raising groups, feminists assist other women in identifying and articulating "oppressive" practices in their lives (Shakeshaft, 1989). Feminists labeled punitive contingencies for women and for men. This process is akin to taking the first few courses in applied behavior analysis and then seeing human behavior, describing it, and explaining it, differently from before. It is acquiring a different verbal repertoire. Women have become more articulate about the roles they are expected to play and have become aware of the roles they could play. When the difference between these scenarios is large and

negative, women have expressed anger and outrage (hooks, 1989). For many women now, with their new repertoires, old models no longer suffice. Women label sexist behavior to be clearly disadvantageous to them. And with these changes came other problems.

Positive teaching practices need to be used when shaping new nonsexist repertoires. Some new verbal repertoires are acquired in a male-blaming atmosphere. Major changes in verbal behavior and physical behavior are suddenly expected of men. Women entered the work force in larger numbers, and child care has become an economic issue and a moral one (Faludi, 1991; hooks, 1984). Women are exposed to rules that specify the harmful consequences of their working full time and not providing traditional homes for their children. There is an atmosphere of threat and unease in some public forums in which women's issues are discussed. Some efforts to change sexist behavior and attitudes encounter strong resistance. If behavior analysts could be persuaded that sexist behavior in all forms no longer has survival value for the cultures in which it is practiced as normal behavior, positive behavior change efforts could be designed and would be more successful.

Implications for Intervention and Prevention

Some sexist repertoires are more amenable to change than others because of their accessibility and their public nature. For example, it is easier, relatively speaking, to change educational institutions than family institutions because education takes place in a more public arena, and the preparation of teachers is an ideal stage for intervention. Family institutions, on the other hand, are far more difficult to influence and are more resistant to change. The notion of the privacy (and even sacredness) of family life prohibits access in many instances to opportunities to change practices in the home. It also severely limits accountability mechanisms. In other words, whereas you can require changes in behavior for grades at university (admittedly not the ideal contingency), you have no such leverage when working with families on issues like sexist behavior. Intervention at the preservice, teacher-preparation level has the potential to influence both educational and family practices for, at least, college students. Other public arenas, such as advertising, are prime targets for intervention to change sexist behaviors. The consumer has the ultimate power to buy or not to buy and to let the manufacturer know when its advertising or product is sexist. So, although institutions that transmit culture are changeable, some are more accessible than others.

Behavior analysts have the potential to affect sexist behaviors in several ways. Behavior analysts have extensive experience in planning and bringing about successful behavior change in many individuals (see, for example, Geller's, 1992 work on safety belt usage). If specific sexist repertoires are identified in behavioral terms, interventions can be designed to change those repertoires. Here are some examples of several sexist practices and suggestions for changing them.

Toy Selection

Selecting toys purely on the basis of a child's gender rather than a child's interest (e.g., buying building blocks and computer games for boys and dolls and needlework for girls) is sexist behavior. Several interventions can be tried here to change the behavior of day care workers, parents, and toy manufacturers. University preservice early childhood programs could specifically address the issue of toy selection and use. However, many child-care workers do not have postsecondary educations. Workshops could be offered to child-care workers as part of their training. This training will improve in quality only when parents demand it, however, so parents will have some say in what that education might contain. Community centers could offer parent workshops to make them aware of sex bias in toy selection and to suggest ways parents could influence toy manufacturers. Ultimately, toy manufacturers care about profits and their reputations. The power of purchasing can be used judiciously. In other words, purchasers of toys should differentially reinforce nonsexist toy manufacture and advertising.

Chores

Traditional gender roles have boys doing outdoor chores and girls doing indoor chores. Boys take out the trash, and girls wash dishes. Parent education, particularly by other parents through modeling, is a suggested intervention for this practice. Labeling chores only as individual or cooperative might help prevent using male and female designations.

Teacher Behaviors

Examples of sexist behaviors by teachers include using low-level questions for girls and high-level for boys, giving more help to girls and expecting boys to complete tasks more independently, asking questions more frequently of boys than girls, and asking gender-specific questions (e.g., "What do the girls think?") when it is not warranted. Interventions at teacher preservice and inservice levels might be awareness workshops in which sexist behaviors are discriminated from nonsexist options, alternatives to sexist behaviors are shaped and modeled, and self-management skills are taught to enable teachers to monitor and change their own behaviors.

Car Sales

Women pay more than men for the same cars. Some car dealers will not allow women to test drive cars if their husbands are not present, a practice which implies the decision to buy is influenced more by the husband than by the wife. Specific technical aspects of cars are discussed with men but not with women. This occurs even though individual interests of men and women vary considerably in this area. To change these behaviors, men and women should withhold reinforcers from car dealers who engage in them by buying cars from nonsexist dealers. Both women and men should be encouraged to write letters to sexist sales staff, informing them that their sexism was the reason a purchase was not made. Workshops on how to change sexist verbal behavior should be provided to dealers.

Behavior analysts can influence sexist practices in other ways. Behavior analysts have articulated coercive practices and their consequences (Sidman, 1989). Existing interventions for sexist behavior can be analyzed in terms of their level of coercion. When there is strong countercontrol exerted it is usually in response to contingencies perceived as coercive. Perhaps the acknowledgment of the costs of sexist behavior to men as well as women might make antisexist interventions the domain of both. Feminist practices have occasioned anger and resentment among men and women and have failed to attract large numbers of both genders for that reason. Consider the following simple example of using coercion to change a sexist repertoire. A colleague teaching a women's studies class used an interactive pedagogical approach. Students' comments were actively solicited in class. All class members were given a metal button that emitted a loud click when squeezed. Students were told to click whenever they judged a peer's comment to be sexist. In a short time, comment frequency was reduced, and students complained of feeling excessive anxiety. In such a situation, some students would opt for a class environment that did not punish their verbal behavior. Rather than change their repertoires, others would make no further comments. The generation of a more risk-free, nurturing classroom might support more dramatic changes in verbal behavior without generating collateral negative emotions.

From the writings of B. F. Skinner (1949) comes a unique vision of a nonsexist society in *Walden Two*. The living experiment of Communidad Los Horcones, established in 1973, is an ideal testing ground for small community cultural engineering. An examination of this community's success in changing sexist behavior might be instructive for applications to other small communities.

Behavior analysts participate in many cultural practices as parents, teachers, scientists, and so forth. Turning the behavior analytic lens on sexist practices they experience or participate in might have interesting results.

Finally, behaviorists interested in combining behavioral with cultural analyses could do culture-specific investigations of current sexist practices. Outcomes of these practices in terms of their survival value need to be identified and articulated.

A behavior analytic examination of sexism is potentially useful in several ways. It could provide explanations for sexist practices at the cultural level without allocating blame. No one is presented as the villain, the aggressor, or the power-hungry male determined to keep women in disadvantaged positions in society—although all such types exist. Sexism as cultural practices are explained like all other cultural practices; they probably developed in response to situation-specific contingencies and evolved into practices. Some of these practices became rules. Despite the passage of time, the invention of tools, industrialization, computerization, and other major changes, these rules were transmitted from one generation to the next. They did so even when their original, practical usefulness had changed or, as in many cases, had disappeared. Thus, contingency-developed behavior became rule-governed behavior, and the rules became tradition completely out of touch with the contingencies that generated them. Sexism as cultural practice has outcomes in the modern age that, ultimately, disadvantage all members of society.

A behavior analytic explanation has implications for interventions to change sexist behavior. With a keen understanding of the power of consequences over future probability of behavior, behaviorists can design change projects that use predominantly positive interventions. For such interventions, there is less likelihood of countercontrol and resistance to change. To design improved cultural practices that have survival value, behavior analysts must understand sexism as both an individual behavioral repertoire and a cultural practice.

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III

CHANGE IN PRIVATE RELATIONSHIPS