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Is There An American Woman?

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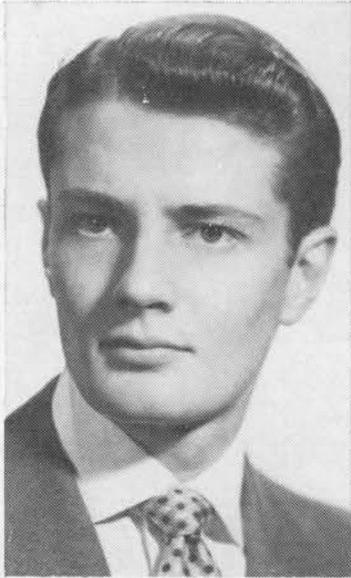
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Is There An American Woman?



Maxwell D. Epstein, Iowa State's Foreign Student Advisor, wrote this article for the International Newsletter, a publication which serves as a forum for news and views of cultural and international interest. The article is reprinted here with the permission of its author and the International Newsletter.

From what Epstein has learned from foreign students, there is a great difference in the roles of women throughout the world. He says, "The role of women is changing all over the world, but most countries haven't quite reached the equalitarian level that we have." Epstein is a native of Denver, Colorado, and received his B.A. degree at the University of Colorado in Boulder. He is now working toward his master's degree.

* * *

Just to dispel any doubts about me in the reader's mind, let me point out that I am aware that there is an American female. Between the American man and the American woman we still observe a biological difference, though certain steps have been taken to disguise that difference by means of similar dress.

But socially, politically, economically, ideologically and romantically our women have moved far toward our men, and our men have come part way to meet them. Somehow we have confused equality with identity. In the struggle to raise the status of women and to grant them equal rights, we have lowered both sexes to a sort of common denominator in which each loses identity. We think it old-fashioned to speak of the separate functions of women and men, with one notable exception—childbirth. Even here, as soon as the biological function of woman is completed, the two sexes begin acting interchangeably as nursemaids, sharing the responsibility for the care and maintenance of the babies.

Simone de Bouvier, the famous French feminist, compares the role of women in the world to that of suppressed minorities, such as the Negro in America, but her's is a misleading comparison. Man and woman should play a complementary part to each other—Negroes and whites should play identical parts in the same society. Men and women have different kinds of intellectual excellence. Men, in general, plough more readily through an abstract field. Women, in general, are more attuned to interpersonal relations. Men are more romantic, women more realistic; men more daring (and reckless), women more conservative. Cars traveling at 90 miles per hour are driven by men. No such generalizations between Negroes and whites would be possible.

Perhaps, as Madame de Bouvier suggests, the present differences between the function and thinking of the sexes (she thinks there is too much difference) can be attributed to the handicap under

which women have historically operated—their monthly incapacitations, pregnancies and small children, or perhaps there is some inherent difference in psyche—no matter. Women were happier when they complemented and were complemented by their men—when they knew their part and men knew theirs and each was different.

Certainly women should be allowed to work, at whatever jobs they can perform, for the same wages paid men doing the same job. The question is why so many women want to work outside their homes for reasons other than financial necessity—why they prefer groveling in the market place to being womanly. We should elevate them to feminine creatures, different from men, more lovely than men and a little mysterious to men. We must discard our cynical notions of the physical relations between the sexes and bring up the next generation of women to understand the differences between monotony and fidelity, intrigue and scheming, mystery and pragmatism, emotion and intellect and desire and need. For the men we must advocate the assumption of maleness, without the desperate demonstrations of virility and fearlessness our youth now feel compelled to give, and without the notion that sharing the male role constitutes maturity or democracy. We are anxious to be democratic, but even modern democracy has a division of labor.

I am not advocating that men become tyrants again; their greatest pleasure might lie in pleasing their women, but that does not mean handing them the driver's wheel. In fact, all honest women secretly or openly prefer to feel

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ing found on garment tags should also be noted for best results.

DuPont laboratories recommend the following method for whitening discolored nylon garments. (Follow the steps in order until the desired results are realized.)

1. Wash garments with soap or synthetic detergent.
2. To approximately one gallon of hot water (160°F.) in an enamel container add one package of "Rit Color Remover" and immediately add wet garments; stir gently while maintaining temperature. If after 30 minutes whiteness is restored evenly, remove garments and rinse thoroughly in hot water. If whiteness is not restored, leave in 30 additional minutes. Temperatures in excess of 160° F. may set wrinkles which are difficult to remove by ironing.
3. To approximately one gallon of warm water add two tablespoons of chlorine bleach and two tablespoons of detergent. Immerse garments and with occasional stirring let soak for 30 minutes. Rinse thoroughly in warm water.

4. For final rinse, immerse garments in approximately one gallon of warm water containing a tablespoon optical whitener or brightener.

Drip dry and iron with a steam iron or a dry iron at "rayon" setting. Any precautions supplied by the manufacturers of any product used should be followed.

Correct water temperature, addition of a water softener, correct amount of soap or detergent, use of proper bleach for fibers in the garment and exact following of directions will enable you to have just as lovely a blouse a year from now as the day you received it.

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themselves protected and provided for by a man they consider capable of the job. If they think not, they probably just have not had the experience. And man, contrariwise, may want to be with one woman or several women, but he wants to take care of someone whose physical and mental self takes up where his leaves off. The combination is fitting and proper. It requires some interplay of opposites, not the melding of anomomies.

To the persons from the newly arisen democracies I offer warning: Do not confuse democracy with uniformity — let your men and women be.

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