

SEX-ROLE IDENTIFICATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD:  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ROLE IDENTITY  
AND CONFORMITY TO PARENTS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Problem

The prevalence of books, magazine articles, and groups concerned with the problem of personal identity, including sex-role identity, indicate the interest and concern felt by Americans today. The current identity problem may be based in the acquisition of stereotypic roles which do not equip the individual with the ability to cope with society's changing expectations and demands on role behavior.

The changing roles of men and women are stimulating a renewed interest in the etiology of sex differences. The assumption that the adoption of the stereotypic male or female role is desirable and healthy is being challenged. Androgyny, the incorporation of desirable aspects of both roles, is an alternative to the stereotypic roles. The assumption that androgyny is a desirable alternative indicates the need for new approaches to the search for an understanding of sex-role identification (Stein, 1976).

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Identification and Modeling

Three theories of sex-role development have emerged from past research. The psychoanalytic theory proposes that the child learns



his sex role through identification with the same-sex parent. The social learning theory emphasizes reinforcement by same-sex models and punishment of cross-sex behavior as the determining factors of sex-role identification. The cognitive learning or self-socialization theory explains the development of sex-role identification as an orderly, age-related process corresponding with the level of cognitive development (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974).

No one theory has proved to be adequate to explain sex-role development. Maccoby, et al. (1974) state that

. . . genetic factors, 'shaping' of boylike and girl-like behavior by parents and other socializing agents and the child's spontaneous learning of behavior appropriate for his sex through imitation . . .

are the factors that interact in the formation of sex-role identification (p. 360).

"An individual adopts behavior characteristic of his own sex because it is expected, not because he prefers it nor because he is so identified" (Lynn, 1966, p. 469). Lee (1976) states that a sex role is not a fundamental human characteristic but rather a cultural invention. Present socialization practices emphasize sex differences and force children into sex-typed behaviors and stereotyped roles (McCune and Matthews, 1976).

It appears that sex roles which relate to behavior dictated by society are not distinguished from identity which relates to a person's self concept. Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, and Rosenkrantz (1972), report that their findings indicate:

1. A strong consensus about the differing characteristics of men and women exist across groups which differ in sex, age, religion, marital status, and education.

2. Characteristics ascribed to men are positively valued more often than characteristics ascribed to women. . . .
3. The sex-role definitions are incorporated into the self concepts of both men and women. . . .
4. Individual differences in sex role self concepts are associated with (a) certain sex role relevant behaviors and attitudes such as actual and desired family size and (b) certain antecedent conditions such as mother's employment history (p. 61).

The terminology also reflects the lack of differentiation between roles and identity. Smart and Smart (1972) refer to the process of thinking, feeling, and acting in ways culturally defined as appropriate for one's sex or consistent with one's biological characteristics as sex-typing. According to Kagan (1964), "the degree to which an individual regards himself as masculine or feminine will be called his sex-role identification" (p. 144).

Modeling is a product of the child's identification with his parents. The child's overt behavior reflects his identification with the model's behavior and/or values and feelings. For example, the behavior of the child who avoids messy activities like finger painting is an expression of identification with the parental value that it is undesirable to be dirty. The child who washes his tricycle after observing his parents washing the family car is imitating their behavior. Any attempt to understand the acquisition of a sex-role identification necessitates studying the child's behavior.

#### Socializing Agents

Various aspects of the socialization process have been probed to ascertain the degree and the effects of their influence on the

child's sex-role development. It appears that many of the socializing agents reinforce the stereotypic role concepts.

### Television

The vast amount of time preschoolers watch television prompted Sternglanz and Serbin (1974) to study sex-role stereotyping in children's television programs. Their findings indicate that the child is exposed to programs in which females are in a distinct minority, where men and women are shown performing different acts limited by what is considered to be sex-appropriate behavior, and where men and women experience differential consequences for a given behavior.

### Books

An investigation of popular picture books reveals that the small number of women appearing are depicted in the nurturing, passive role. The predominant male character is depicted in the active, leadership role (Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada, and Ross, 1972).

### Teachers and Peers

Fagot and Patterson (1969) observed that preschoolers are more likely to receive positive reinforcement from teachers and peers for sex-appropriate behavior. Serbin, O'Leary, Kent, and Tonick (1973) report findings indicating that sex differences in behavior are reinforced by teacher responses and that this reinforcement may be the basis of sex differences in cognitive abilities. A survey of

preschool teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and reactions to boys' and girls' behavior indicates that sex-role stereotyping is common in teachers' beliefs and expectations about behavior (Chasen, 1974).

### Siblings

Siblings act as models. A sibling tends to reinforce same-sex behavior regardless of the sex of the child. Older siblings exert more power and thus are more effective in reinforcing than are younger siblings (Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg, 1965).

### Parents

Parents are assumed to be the preschool age child's primary models of same-sex and cross-sex behavior. Research in the area of imitation of same-sex or cross-sex models reveals contradictory findings. Fling and Manosevitz (1972) report no significant relationship between parents' and preschoolers' responses on the It Scale for Children. Using dolls for models, Kohlberg and Ziegler (1967) found that four-, five-, and seven-year old children are orientated toward the same-sex parent. Jastrzemski (1975) reports a significant, positive relationship between a child's toy choices and the same-sex parent's choices. The Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) review of research on modeling reveals that modeling is not significant in the development of sex-typed behavior. "This conclusion seems to fly in the face of common sense and to conflict with many striking observations of sex-typed role playing on the part of children" (p. 300).

## Methodology

Popular methods used in studying the development of sex-role development are the It Scale for Children (Brown, 1957), toy or game preferences, doll play, and behavioral observations. Contradictory findings may be the result of the methodological problems in studying sex-role identification of children.

Researchers cite methodological problems in studying sex-role development. Lansky and McCay (1963) report "that for many items of standard masculinity and femininity tests, the bipolar assumption is untenable" (p. 421). Many measurements of sex-role identification present only the stereotypic male and female poles and the subject is forced to identify with one or the other (Kohlberg, 1966). Careful interpretation of data obtained from observations of sex differences in behavior is indicated by the finding that the label of boy or girl leads to observed differences in perceived behavior of the child (Condry and Condry, 1976). Thompson and McCandless (1970) report a masculine bias in the It Scale for Children. The "It" is perceived as masculine.

## Sex-role Behavior and Awareness

Apparently, children learn sex-role behavior at a young age. Fagot, et al. (1969) state that by age three, the two sexes have distinct repertoires of behavior. Thompson (1975) attributes the 24-month-old child with the ability to identify the sexes and an awareness of certain aspects of stereotyped clothes and common articles. At 30 months, the child uses gender related nouns and

pronouns correctly, is aware of his own sex, identifies with the same-sex role, and shows pronounced awareness of stereotyped clothes and household articles. The 36-month-old child's behavior is affected by his/her sex-role identification. Fling, et al. (1972) report sex differences in play interests at age four.

Sex roles appear to become more stereotyped as the child grows older. Boys tend to show stereotypic sex-role behavior and preferences at an earlier age than girls. A significant positive correlation between preschool and elementary school masculinity scores for boys, indicates that boys appear to be more firmly sex-typed and more stable over time than girls (Fagot and Littman, 1975). Kindergarten children possess considerable knowledge about adult sex-role stereotypes and this knowledge increases to the second grade level (Williams, Bennett, and Best, 1975). Nadelman (1974) reports that six- and eight-year-old children prefer same sex items more than opposite sex items and the preference is stronger in boys than in girls. Fling and colleague (1972) state that although children of three and four make sex-typed choices neither sex makes sex-appropriate choices significantly more often than the other.

Differences in preschoolers' willingness to engage in cross-sex activities have been analyzed by Hartup and Moore (1963) whose findings indicate that boys are more likely to avoid sex-inappropriate toys. Sears, Rau, and Alpert (1965) report no sex differences in the amount of time spent in sex-appropriate play areas in the nursery school setting. Preschool boys were significantly more anxious and embarrassed than girls when offered a cross-sex toy for home use (Ross and Ross, 1972). Luce (1975), in a study of the influence of

the women's liberation movement on the sex role development of young children, reports a pattern that indicates more cross-sex choices by boys reared by feminist parents and by girls reared by parents from the general population.

#### Summary

1. The variety of contradictory findings about sex differences in sex-role identification appear to be based in differing assumptions proposed in the theories of sex-role development and in the methodology used to research this development.

2. The need for new approaches to the research of sex-role identification are indicated.

3. It is apparent that more research is needed to strengthen and to expand the present knowledge of sex-role identification development in children.

#### PURPOSE

The present research was undertaken in an attempt to expand the current knowledge about the acquisition of sex-role identification through a study of children and their parents. The general purpose was to investigate the relationship between the sex-role identity of preschool children and their parents as indicated by responses to a toy preference test and the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974). The specific purposes were to:

1. Revise and validate a toy preference test developed by Jastrzembski (1975).

- (a) To compare the toy scaling by Jastrzembski's subjects with the toy scaling responses of parents of preschoolers.
2. Investigate the relationship between parent responses to the Bem Sex Role Inventory and to the Revised Toy Preference Test.
3. Investigate the relationship between responses on the toy preference inventory by the child, and
  - (a) the same-sex parent
  - (b) the opposite-sex parent
5. Investigate the relationship between responses on the toy preference inventory by the male and female parent of
  - (a) a female child
  - (b) a male child
6. Investigate the children's responses on the toy preference inventory according to
  - (a) age
  - (b) sex
7. Investigate the difference between sex-stereotypic choices on the Bem Sex Role Inventory made by male parents and those made by female parents.

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. There will be no difference in the toy scaling responses by the subjects in the Jastrzembski study and by parents of preschool age children.



2. There will be no relationship between parent's responses on the toy preference inventory and the Bem Sex Role Inventory.

3. There will be no relationship between responses on the toy preference inventory by the child and

- (a) the same-sex parent
- (b) the opposite-sex parent

4. There will be no relationship between the responses on the toy preference inventory by the child and the responses on the Bem Sex Role Inventory by

- (a) the same-sex parent
- (b) the opposite-sex parent

5. There will be no relationship between responses on the toy preference inventory by the male and female parent of

- (a) a female child
- (b) a male child

6. There will be no difference in the children's responses on the toy preference inventory according to

- (a) age
- (b) sex

7. There will be no differences between sex-stereotypic choices on the Bem Sex Role Inventory made by male parents and those made by female parents.

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD AND PROCEDURE

This study was undertaken in an attempt to strengthen and to expand the present knowledge of sex-role identification using a new approach based on the assumption that androgyny is a desirable alternative to the present stereotypic roles. This chapter includes a description of the characteristics and selection of the subjects, a description of the procedure used to revise and to further validate The Toy Preference Test devised by Jastrzemski, a description of the Bem Sex Role Inventory, descriptions for administering the instruments, and descriptions of procedures for analysis of the data.

#### The Toy Preference Test

The choice of The Toy Preference Test was based on the assumption that the parents' selection of toys for their child while reflecting their own sex-role identities also influences their child's sex-role identity. It was also assumed that both parents and children could relate to the selection of a toy.

#### Selection of the Toys

The 44 toys included in the Jastrzemski study and selected for this study were chosen on the basis of:

1. Observed popularity with preschool children in an Oklahoma State University Nursery School Laboratory.
2. Recommendations by professional staff members of the nursery school.
3. Similarity to toys included in a study by DeLucia (1963).

### Scaling the Toys

Subjects. The subjects who participated in the toy scaling portion of this study were 28 parents of 8 male and 8 female preschool age children enrolled in one of the Oklahoma State University Nursery School Laboratories. The sample included 14 male and 14 female parents ranging in age from 28 years of age to 45 years of age. Parents of preschoolers were selected on the assumption that they would be knowledgeable about which toys were preferred by or equally acceptable to male and female children.

The subjects were contacted by telephone. The experimenter explained the study, sought their cooperation, and arranged an appointment to complete the toy scaling test at the subject's home.

Jastrzemski's subjects were 13 male and 70 female students enrolled in a marriage class at Oklahoma State University. The subjects ranged in age from 18 years of age to 25 years of age. Jastrzemski asked the students to rate 48 slides of common preschool toys on a nine-point continuum scale.

### Procedure for Revising the Toy Instrument

Duplicates were made of the 3 x 5 black and white photographs used in the Jastrzemski study. The original photographs were made

of toys obtained, with permission, from one of the Oklahoma State University Laboratory Nursery Schools.

The 44, 3 x 5 photographs were placed in random order in a photograph album. The pictures were numbered from 1 to 44. The subjects were asked to rate each toy on a continuum scale with one being most masculine and nine being most feminine. Each subject recorded his or her response on a score sheet provided by the experimenter by circling a point on the continuum. The continuums were numbered from 1 to 44 to correspond with the numbering of the pictures of the toys. A sample toy scaling score sheet is presented in Appendix A.

Following the procedure outlined in the Jastrzembski study, the mean score was calculated for each toy. The Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test was used to determine the relative magnitude as well as the direction of the differences of the mean scores obtained in the Jastrzembski study and the present study. The result,  $z = -1.54$  (two-tailed  $p < .1236$ ) indicated that the null hypothesis, there is no difference between the mean scores, cannot be rejected.

The toys were placed in rank order according to the obtained mean score. In order to obtain three equal groups of 14 toys, two toys were eliminated on the basis of similarity to other toys included in the sample. The toys in the upper, middle, and lower one-third were numbered from 1 to 14. Like numbered toys, one from each of the three groups (upper, middle, and lower) were matched to compose a group made up of one masculine, one neutral, and one feminine toy.

### The Revised Toy Instrument

The matched groups of 3 x 5 black and white photographs were mounted on sheets of heavy white tagboard. The pictures, placed side by side, were labeled A, B, and C. The order of the masculine, feminine, and neutral toy was alternated on each successive page of the booklet in the following manner: M-F-N, F-N-M, N-F-M, M-N-F, F-M-N, N-M-F. Each sheet was numbered from 1 to 14 and laminated with clear contact paper. The sheets were attached together with metal rings. The instrument was titled The Revised Toy Preference Test.

Enlargements, 8½ x 11, of the black and white photographs were mounted, labeled, ordered, and numbered in identical fashion on large sheets of heavy white tagboard. The enlarged version of the toy test was used when the toy test was administered at a parent meeting.

Table I shows the toy groups and the mean score for each toy. The difference between the scores of the masculine and feminine toy was not more than 3.72 and not less than 1.93. In Jastrzemski's toy test instrument, the difference between the scores was not more than 4.04 and not less than 1.25. The range of the mean scores for the present study was from 2.82 to 8.43 as compared with a range from 1.69 to 8.75 in the earlier study.

### The Bem Sex Role Inventory

The Bem Sex Role Inventory is a list of 60 adjectives which describe personality characteristics. The subject indicates, on a scale

TABLE I  
COMMON NURSERY SCHOOL TOYS:  
GROUPS AND MEAN SCORES

Feminine Toy & Score	Neutral Toy & Score	Masculine Toy & Score
1. Dress-up Clothes 8.43	Doctor Kit 5.07	Tinker Toys 4.71
2. Dolls 7.46	Crayons 5.07	Leggos 4.68
3. Ironing Board 7.46	Puzzle 5.03	Large Wooden Blocks 4.60
4. Doll Bed 6.69	Sand Pail & Equipment 5.03	Lincoln Logs 4.57
5. Dishes 6.68	Easel 4.96	Wooden Pushcart 4.39
6. Stove 6.61	Rhythm Instruments 4.93	Boats 4.36
7. Brooms & Mops 6.14	Dominoes 4.93	Garden Tools 4.18
8. Doll House 6.03	Uklele 4.86	Wheelbarrow 4.10
9. Lotto 5.96	Tricycle 4.82	Train 3.82
10. Books 5.89	Wooden Riding Car 4.82	Airplanes 3.78
11. Wooden Beads 5.57	Balls 4.82	Dumptruck 3.39
12. Stuffed Dog 5.50	Telephones 4.78	Cowboy Clothes 3.32
13. Play Dough 5.32	Jungle Gym 4.75	Roadgrader 3.11
14. Puppets 5.29	Barn & Animals 4.75	Woodworking 2.82

from 1 to 7, how the characteristics describe him or her. The inventory has separate scales for measuring an individual's masculine and feminine characteristics from which an androgyny score can be calculated. The Bem Sex Role Inventory was selected on the basis that it avoids the bipolar assumption that forces the subject to identify with either the male or female role. A detailed explanation of the Bem Sex Role Inventory is provided in Appendix B.

### Administering the Instruments

#### Subjects

Children. The toy preference inventory was administered to 74 three-, four-, and five-year old children enrolled in two Oklahoma State University Laboratory Nursery Schools and in a private nursery school in Stillwater, Oklahoma. The children ranged in age from three years, no months to five years, four months.

Parents. Sixty-three mothers and 63 fathers of the 74 children tested participated in the study. The selection of parents was limited to two-parent families as scores for both parents were desired. The eleven sets of parents not included in the study chose not to participate for various personal reasons. The socioeconomic level of the subjects was judged to be in the middle class range.

#### Procedure

Children. The experimenter observed at each nursery school prior to administering the toy test in an attempt to establish rapport with the children. All of the children at each center were given the

opportunity to participate in the study. Each child was tested individually by the experimenter in a quiet area of the center. The child was asked to choose the one toy on each page that he or she would most like to play with. Each toy was named by the experimenter. The children indicated their response by pointing to or by naming the toy. The response for each page was recorded by the experimenter on a score sheet by placing A, B, or C by the corresponding number on the score sheet. Each child chose a toy to take home from a variety of small plastic animals, community helpers, and cowboys. A sample score sheet is provided in Appendix C.

Parents. The parents' cooperation was secured at parent meetings at the nursery schools. Parents not in attendance at the meetings were contacted by telephone to arrange an appointment for the experimenter to administer the inventories at the subjects' home. In both instances, the experimenter explained what was entailed in cooperating with the study.

The experimenter distributed a three-page-booklet which was comprised of the toy test score sheet, a page of instructions for the Bem Sex Role Inventory, and the Bem Sex Role Inventory titled Personality Description. A sample booklet is provided in Appendix D.

The toy test was administered first. The parents were asked to select the one toy on each page that he or she thought was most appropriate for a child the same age and the same sex as their preschool age child. The subjects recorded their response for each page of the toy instrument by writing A, B, and C by the corresponding number on the score sheet provided by the experimenter.



The experimenter then explained the procedure for completing the Bem Sex Role Inventory, referred to as the personality description, by going over the provided instruction sheet with the subjects. The subjects selected the most appropriate response, on a continuum from 1 to 7 (1 being never or almost never true and 7 being always or almost always true). The selected response for each personality characteristic was recorded in a box beside the adjective. Upon completion of the inventories, the experimenter explained the purpose of the study and thanked the subjects for their time and cooperation.

#### Reliability of the Toy Test Instrument

Forty-two children, including 18 males and 24 females, were retested within 7 to 14 days following the initial test. The children who were retested were selected at random from the 74 children included in the initial test.

The overall reliability of the instrument was determined by calculating the Pearson  $r$  correlation for the 42 subjects. The result,  $r = .7658$  ( $p < .001$ ), indicated that the instrument could be accepted as reliable. The Pearson  $r$  correlation calculated for Jastrzembski's toy preference instrument was  $r = .45$  ( $p < .002$ ).

The Pearson correlation coefficient indicated the reliability of the instrument by sex as  $r = .367$  ( $p < .01$ ) for males and  $r = .603$  ( $p < .01$ ) for females and by age as  $r = .682$  ( $p < .01$ ) for three-year olds,  $r = .589$  ( $p < .01$ ) for four-year-olds,  $r = .759$ , n.s. for five-year-olds. Tables II, II, and IV give the reliability data.

TABLE II  
 PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENT REFLECTING  
 RELIABILITY OF TOY TEST INSTRUMENT

N	<u>r</u>	Level of Significance
42	.7658	$p < .0001$

TABLE III  
 PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENT REFLECTING  
 RELIABILITY OF TOY TEST INSTRUMENT BY SEX  
 (N = 42)

Sex	<u>r</u>	Level of Significance
Males (N = 18)	.367	$p < .01$
Females (N = 24)	.603	$p < .01$

TABLE IV  
 PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENT REFLECTING  
 RELIABILITY OF TOY TEST INSTRUMENT BY AGE  
 (N = 42)

Age	<u>r</u>	Level of Significance
3:0 to 3:11 (N = 14)	.682	$p < .01$
4:0 to 4:11 (N = 23)	.589	$p < .01$
5:0 to 5:4 (N = 5)	.759	N.S.

## Treatment of the Data

### Scoring

The Toy Test. The Revised Toy Preference Test was scored by assigning a point value of -1 for each masculine choice, 0 for each neutral choice, and +1 for each feminine choice. The points were totaled and the resultant score, ranging from a possible -14 to +14, indicated the individual's sex-role identity score. Scores of -4 to -14 were classified as masculine, scores falling between -3 and +3 were classified as androgynous, and scores of +4 to +14 were classified as feminine. The cut-off points were determined by calculating the median scores on the toy test for parents of male children and for parents of female children. The median score for the parents of female children was +4 and the median score for the parents of male children was -4.

The Bem Sex Role Inventory. The procedure for obtaining the androgyny difference score consisted of calculating the total of the subject's ratings of the masculine adjectives, the total of the subject's ratings of the feminine adjectives and then subtracting the masculinity score from the feminine score.

The resulting score, the androgyny difference score, was classified as masculine, androgynous, or feminine, using the cut-off points suggested in the scoring packet for the Bem Sex Role Inventory. Scores of -9 to -120 were classified as masculine, scores between and including -8 and +8 were classified as androgynous, and scores of +9 to +120 were classified as feminine.

### Analysis of Data

Frequency distributions were prepared. Percentages were used to compare children's toy test scores with toy test scores of parents, to compare children's toy test scores with the Bem Sex Role Inventory scores of parents, to show the relationship between parent responses to the Bem Sex Role Inventory and to the Revised Toy Preference Test, to compare the responses on the toy preference inventory by the male and female parent of a female child and a male child, and to compare the children's responses on the toy preference inventory by age and sex. A Pearson  $r$  correlation was calculated for all of the above. A two-factor, factorial design analysis of variance was calculated to determine the significance of the difference between sex-stereotypic toy choices made by male children and those made by female children. The same statistic was used to determine the significance of the difference between sex-stereotypic choices on the Bem Sex Role Inventory made by male parents and those made by female parents.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the sex-role identity of preschool children and their parents as indicated by responses to the Revised Toy Preference Test and the Bem Sex Role Inventory. This chapter includes data analysis for sex and age differences in toy preference of children, parental sex differences in toy selection and on the Bem Sex Role Inventory, the relationship between children's toy test scores and toy test scores and Bem Sex Role Inventory scores of parents.

#### Data Analysis

##### Children's Toy Test Scores

On the initial test, with a possible score ranging from -14 to +14, the range of scores for male children was from -13 to +3 and the range of scores for female children was from -7 to +11. Of the 33 male children scores, 20 were classified as masculine, 13 as androgynous, and 0 as feminine. The female children's scores were classified as follows: 3 masculine, 13 androgynous, and 14 feminine. Table V shows the distribution of the children's test scores by age and sex. The mean score for boys was -4.73 and the mean score for girls was +1.93.

TABLE V  
 DISTRIBUTION OF TOY TEST SCORES OF  
 CHILDREN BY AGE AND SEX  
 (N = 63)

Group	Female Children			Male Children		
	Age 3 (N = 10)	Age 4 (N = 14)	Age 5 (N = 6)	Age 3 (N = 11)	Age 4 (N = 17)	Age 5 (N = 5)
M	2/10	0/14	1/6	5/11	13/17	2/5
A	3/10	7/14	3/6	6/11	4/17	3/5
F	5/10	7/14	2/6	0/11	0/17	0/5

Key:

M = Masculine (-4 to -14)  
 A = Androgynous (-3 to +3)  
 F = Feminine (+4 to +14)

### Parents' Toy Test and Bem Scores

On the toy preference test, the range of scores for the parents of male children was -11 to +4 for fathers and -12 to +14 for mothers. The range of scores for fathers and mothers of female children was -3 to +10.

Scores on the Bem Sex Role Inventory ranged from -62 to +8 for male parents and from -33 to +53 for female parents out of a possible range from -120 to +120. The 63 male parent scores were classified as 43 masculine, 20 androgynous, and 0 as feminine. Of the 63 female parent scores, 9 were classified as masculine, 21 as androgynous, and 33 as feminine.

### Comparison of Scores

A Pearson  $r$  correlation was calculated to compare children's toy test scores with toy test scores of parents, to compare children's toy test scores with the Bem Sex Role Inventory scores of parents, to compare parent responses to the Bem Sex Role Inventory and to the Revised Toy Preference Test, and to compare the responses on the toy preference inventory by the male and female parent of a female child and a male child. The results indicated that there was no significant positive or negative relationship for any of the comparisons.

A frequency distribution (Table VI) was prepared to compare children's toy test scores with toy test scores of parents. The distribution reveals that 55 percent of the 33 male children were in agreement with the same-sex parent, with 11 classified as masculine and seven

TABLE VI  
 COMPARISON OF CHILDREN'S TOY TEST SCORES  
 WITH TOY TEST SCORES OF PARENTS

Children's Scores (N = 63)		Male Parents (N = 63)			Female Parents (N = 63)		
		M	A	F	M	A	F
Boys (N = 33)	M (N = 20)	11/33 33.3%	7/33 21.2%	2/33 6.1%	12/33 36.4%	8/33 24.2%	0/33 0%
	A (N = 13)	6/33 18.2%	7/33 21.2%	0/33 0%	9/33 27.3%	3/33 9.1%	1/33 3.0%
	F (N = 0)	0/33 0%	0/33 0%	0/33 0%	0/33 0%	0/33 0%	0/33 0%
Girls (N = 30)	M (N = 3)	0/30 0%	2/30 6.7%	1/30 3.3%	0/30 0%	1/30 3.3%	2/30 6.7%
	A (N = 13)	0/30 0%	6/30 20.0%	7/30 23.3%	0/30 0%	9/30 30.0%	4/30 13.3%
	F (N = 14)	0/30 0%	4/30 13.3%	10/30 33.3%	0/30 0%	7/30 23.3%	7/30 23.3%

Key:

M = Masculine (-4 to -14)  
 A = Androgynous (-3 to +3)  
 F = Feminine (+4 to +14)



as androgynous. No male child's toy test score was classified as feminine, while two male parents' were classified as feminine.

The comparison of male children's test scores with the toy test scores of the female parent shows that 45 percent were in agreement, with 12 being classified as masculine and three as androgynous. The test score of one mother of a male child reflected feminine toy choices for this child. In spite of the fact that this mother insisted she wanted to participate, her behavior as well as her atypical responses suggested strongly to the interviewer that this mother was resistant to the project and possibly was making a deliberate effort to distort the data.

Comparing the 30 female children's test scores with toy test scores of the same-sex parent, 53 percent of the scores were in agreement, with seven classified as feminine and nine as androgynous. Fifty-three percent of the female children were in agreement with the opposite-sex parent. Ten of the scores in agreement were classified as feminine and six as androgynous. No male or female parent of a female child had a test score which reflected a composite masculine score, whereas 10 percent of the female children's toy test choices were classified as masculine.

Table VII was prepared to compare the children's toy test scores with the Bem Sex Role Inventory scores of parents. The comparison of the child's responses with the same-sex parent's responses on the Bem Sex Role Inventory revealed that 42 percent of the male children were in agreement with their father and that 46 percent of the female children were in agreement with their mother.

TABLE VII  
 COMPARISON OF CHILDREN'S TOY TEST SCORES  
 WITH BEM TEST SCORES OF PARENTS

Children's Toy Test Scores (N = 63)	BEM Test Scores						
	Male Parents (N = 63)			Female Parents (N = 63)			
	M	A	F	M	A	F	
Boys (N = 33)	M (N = 20)	11/33 33.3%	9/33 27.3%	0/33 0%	1/33 3.0%	9/33 27.3%	10/33 30.3%
	A (N = 13)	10/33 30.3%	3/33 9.1%	0/33 0%	2/33 6.1%	4/33 12.1%	7/33 21.2%
	F (N = 0)	0/33 0%	0/33 0%	0/33 0%	0/33 0%	0/33 0%	0/33 0%
Girls (N = 30)	M (N = 3)	3/30 10.0%	0/30 0%	0/30 0%	1/30 3.3%	0/30 0%	2/30 6.7%
	A (N = 13)	10/30 33.3%	3/30 10.0%	0/30 0%	1/30 3.3%	6/30 20.0%	6/30 20.0%
	F (N = 14)	9/30 30.0%	5/30 16.7%	0/30 0%	3/30 10.0%	3/30 10.0%	8/30 26.7%

Key for Toy Test:

M = Masculine (-4 to -14)

A = Androgynous (-3 to +3)

F = Feminine (+4 to +14)

Key for BEM Test:

M = Masculine (-9 to -120)

A = Androgynous (-8 to +8)

F = Feminine (+9 to +120)

A comparison of responses of the male and female parent scores on the toy test (Table VIII) reveals that 52 percent of the parents of a male child were in agreement on toy choices for their child. Fifty percent of the parents of female children were in agreement on toy choices.

A two-factor, factorial design analysis of variance was calculated to determine the significance of the difference between sex-stereotypic toy choices made by male children and those made by female children. The result  $F = 46.85$  ( $p < .001$ ) indicates that the sexes differ significantly in the pattern of toy choices. Female children exhibit greater flexibility in identifying with the cross-sex and androgynous roles than do male children. The same statistic revealed that adult females and males also differ significantly,  $F = 3547.78$  ( $p < .001$ ), in the pattern of choices on the Bem Sex Role Inventory. Again, females exhibited greater flexibility in identifying with the cross-sex and androgynous roles.

#### Summary of Findings

1. A consensus about sex-appropriate toys for three-, four-, and five-year old children exists across groups which differ in sex, age, education, and marital and parental status.
2. A sex-role identity inventory which includes an alternative choice, androgyny, is a more reliable measure of sex role identity than the inventories that are based on the bi-polar male and female assumption.

TABLE VIII  
 COMPARISON OF PARENT RESPONSES ON TOY TEST  
 FOR FEMALE CHILD AND MALE CHILD

		Male Child (N = 33) Female Parent			Female Child (N = 30) Female Parent		
		M	A	F	M	A	F
Male Parent	M	12/33 36.4%	5/33 15.2%	0/33 0%	0/30 0%	0/30 0%	0/30 0%
	A	8/33 24.2%	5/33 15.2%	1/33 3.0%	0/30 0%	7/30 23.3%	5/30 16.7%
	F	1/33 3.0%	1/33 3.0%	0/33 0%	0/30 0%	10/30 33.3%	8/30 26.7%

Key:

M = Masculine (-4 to -14)

A = Androgynous (-3 to +3)

F = Feminine (+4 to +14)

3. Females, children and adults, are more likely than males, children and adults to identify with the cross-sex or androgynous role.

4. There is no significant relationship between preschoolers' and the same-sex or opposite sex parents' responses on The Revised Toy Preference Test.

5. There is no significant relationship between preschoolers' responses on The Revised Toy Preference Test and parents' responses on the Bem Sex Role Inventory.

6. There is no significant relationship between parents' responses to the Bem Sex Role Inventory and to The Revised Toy Preference Test.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the sex-role identity of preschool children and their parents as indicated by responses to The Revised Toy Preference Test and the Bem Sex Role Inventory. The relationship was measured using a new approach based on the assumption that androgyny is a desirable alternative to the present stereotypic roles.

#### Summary

The Toy Preference Test developed by Jastrzembski was revised. Twenty-eight parents of preschool age children rated 44 common nursery school toys as masculine, neutral, or feminine on a nine-point scale. Forty-two toys were divided equally into groups of three on the basis of the obtained mean score and resultant rank. The Revised Toy Preference Test contained 14 pages of groups of three toys, one masculine, one neutral, and one feminine, on each page. The toy test was administered to 74 three-, four-, and five-year old children. The Revised Toy Preference Test and the Bem Sex Role Inventory were administered to 63 fathers and 63 mothers of the 74 children who had participated in the study. The parents not included in the study

chose not to participate for various personal reasons or were a single parent and were excluded as scores for both parents were desired.

The sex-role identity scores were obtained for each child and parent, using The Revised Toy Preference Test. An additional sex-role identity score was obtained for each parent, using the Bem Sex Role Inventory.

The Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test was used to determine the relative magnitude as well as the direction of the differences of the mean scores obtained in the Jastrzembski study and the present study. A Pearson  $r$  correlation was calculated to determine the reliability, overall, by age, and by sex, of the toy instrument. The Pearson  $r$  correlation was also calculated to determine the relationship between parents' responses on the toy preference test and the Bem Sex Role Inventory; the relationship between responses on the toy preference test by the child and the same-sex parent and the opposite sex parent; the relationship between the responses on the toy preference test by the child and the Bem Sex Role Inventory by the same-sex parent and the opposite sex parent; and the relationship between the responses on the toy test by the parents of a female child and by the parents of a male child. Frequency distributions were prepared to describe the non-significant relationships mentioned above.

#### Implications of the Study

Results of this study supported the findings reported by Broverman, et al. (1972) that a strong collective opinion about the differing characteristics of the sexes is held by groups which differ in

age, sex, education, and marital status, and that characteristics associated with the male role are more highly valued than the characteristics associated with women. In the present study, the finding that parents of preschool children did not differ from college students in their ratings of common nursery school toys suggests that the consensus about the differing characteristics of the sexes extends downward and includes sex-appropriate toys for young children. The mean scores obtained for the toys tended toward the masculine side of the scale which might be interpreted as indicating that characteristics associated with the male are more highly valued by our society. The finding that females, children and adults, exhibit a greater tendency to identify with the cross-sex role than do males, children and adults, also suggests that the male role and associated characteristics are viewed as more desirable in our society.

A review of the literature concerned with the problem of which sex develops sex-typed behavior and preferences first, and which sex exhibits the more stable sex-typed behavior and preference over time, reveals contradictory findings. The trends found in this study suggest that female children and adults are more likely to identify with the cross-sex and androgynous role than male children and adults. This trend suggests the possibility that the female child's flexibility in identifying with alternative roles may have been interpreted in earlier studies to mean that male children develop sex-typed behavior and preferences before female children. It appears that this may not be true since adult females were also found to exhibit greater flexibility in sex-role identification.



The findings that no significant relationship existed between the child's responses on the toy test and the parent's responses on either the toy test or the Bem Sex Role Inventory supported the finding reported by Fling and Manosevitz (1972) that no significant relationship existed between parents' and preschoolers' responses on the It Scale for Children. The data are also in agreement with the Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) conclusion that modeling is not significant in the development of sex-typed behavior.

Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) state that "Children do not develop androgenously" (p. 298). To the experimenter's knowledge, all instruments used to study sex-role development have been based on the masculine, feminine, bi-polar assumption which forced the subject to identify with one or the other. It appears that androgynous development has not been tested empirically. The Revised Toy Preference Test was developed so as to include an androgynous toy choice. The finding that 41 percent of the 63 children's toy scores were classified as androgynous could be interpreted to mean that children do indeed develop androgynously.

The Pearson  $r$  correlation was used to determine the overall reliability of The Revised Toy Preference Test and The Toy Preference Test. The level of significance of The Revised Toy Preference Test ( $p \lll .0001$ ) was higher than the level of significance of The Toy Preference Test ( $p < .002$ ). This finding indicates that measures of sex-role identity which include the alternative (androgynous) choice are preferable to the measures based on the bi-polar assumption of masculinity and femininity.

### Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations are made for future research:

1. Include preschool age children in the scaling portion of the study.
2. Expand the sample to include subjects from lower socioeconomic levels.
3. Include older siblings in the study, having them make toy choices for a child the same sex and the same age as the primary subject.

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**APPENDIX A**

**RESPONSE SHEET EXAMPLE: SCALING  
OF THE TOYS**

Age 30

Female \_\_\_\_\_

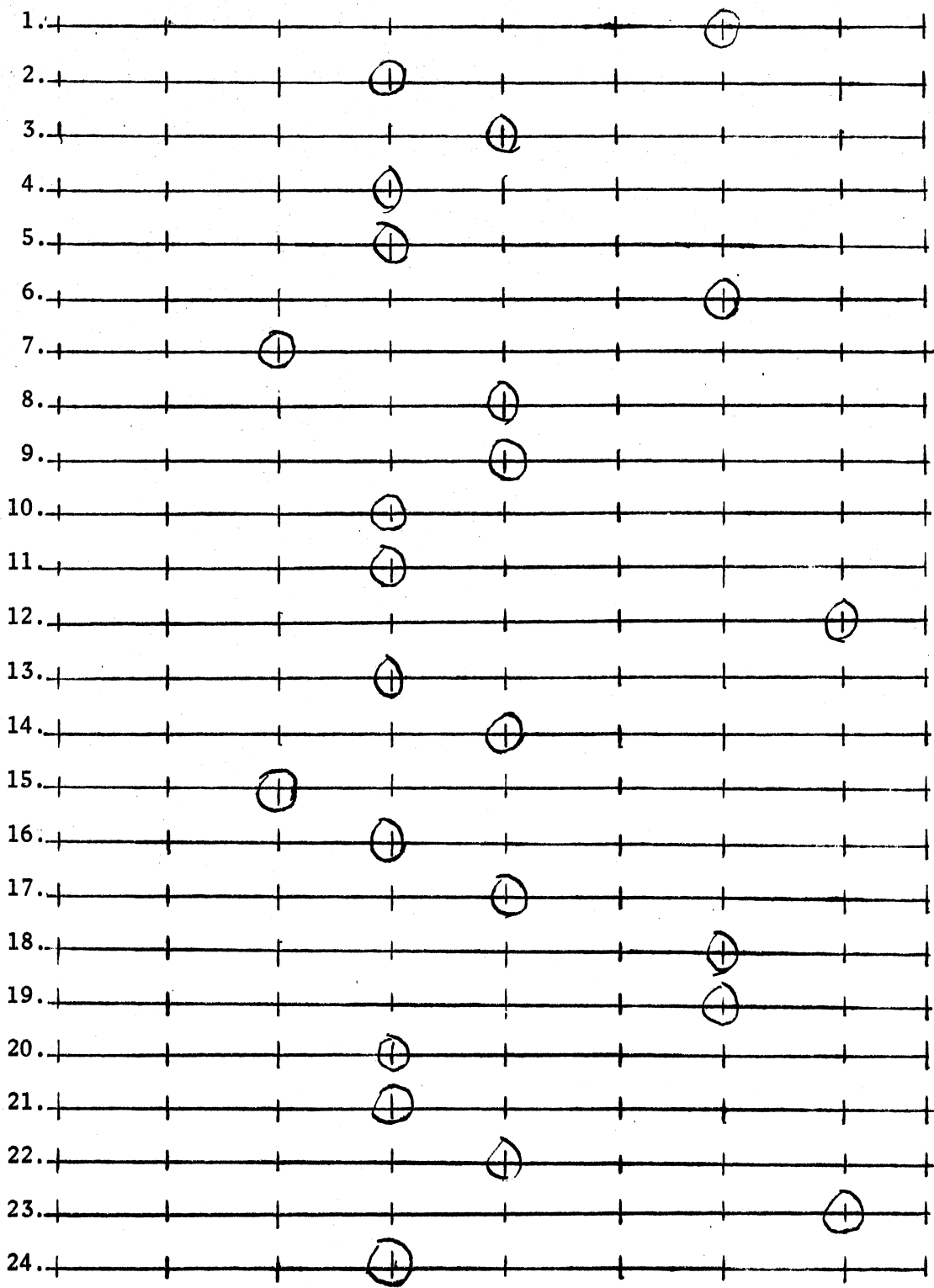
Male X

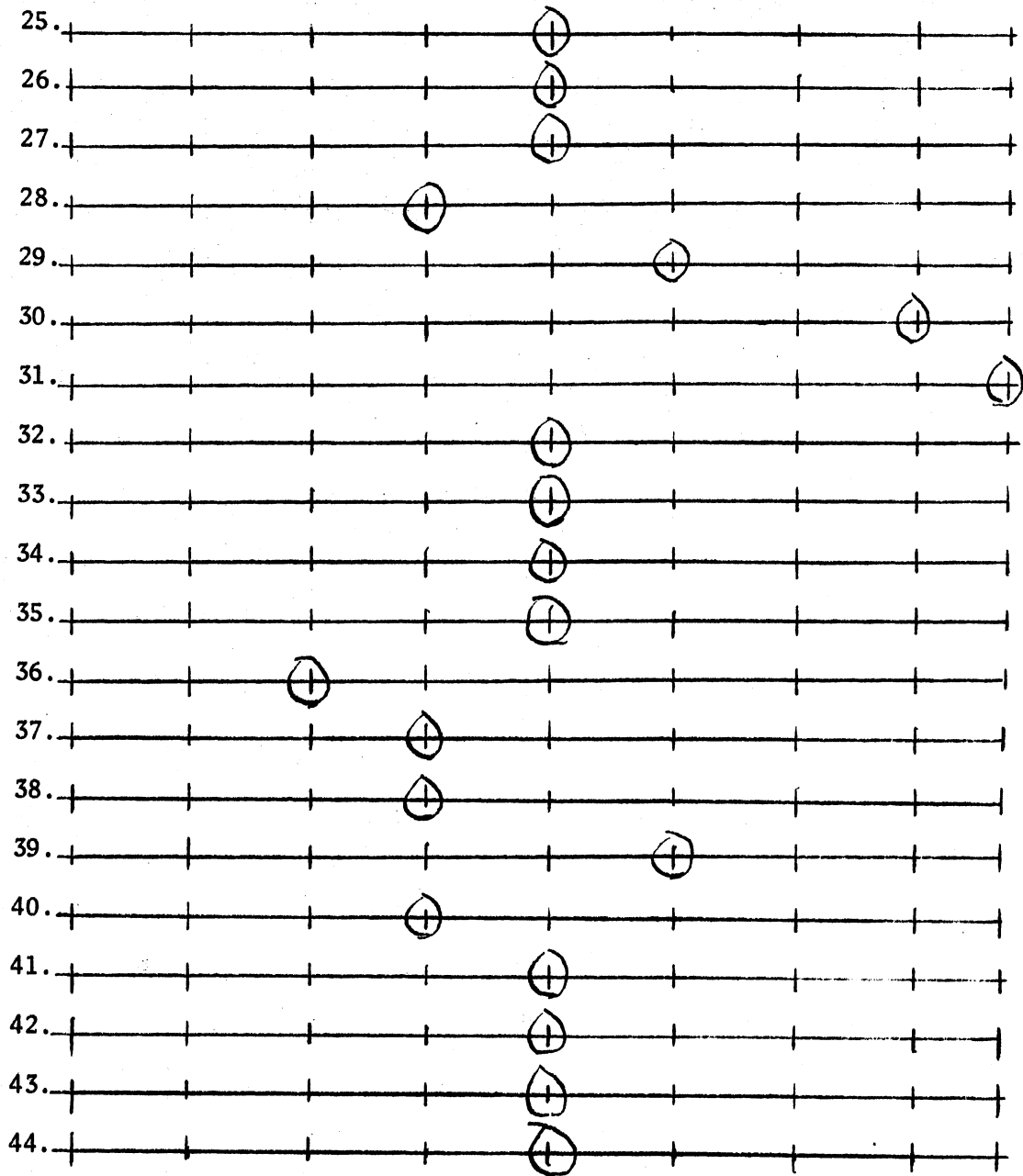
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Children 2

Most masculine

Most feminine







**APPENDIX B**

**DESCRIPTION OF BEM SEX ROLE INVENTORY**

## BEM SEX-ROLE INVENTORY<sup>1</sup>

The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) is a new sex-role inventory that treats masculinity and femininity as two independent dimensions, thereby making it possible to characterize a person as masculine, feminine or androgynous as a function of the difference between his or her endorsement of masculine or feminine personality characteristics. It contains a number of features that distinguish it from other, commonly used, masculinity-femininity scales, for example, the Masculinity-Femininity scale of the California Psychological Inventory (Gough, 1957). First it includes both a Masculinity scale and a Femininity scale, each of which contains 20 personality characteristics. These characteristics are listed in the first and second columns of Table 1, respectively. Second, because the BSRI was founded on a conception of the sex-typed person as someone who has internalized society's sex-typed standards of desirable behavior for men and women, these personality characteristics were selected as masculine or feminine on the basis of differential endorsement by males and females as most other inventories have done. That is, a characteristic qualified as masculine if it was judged to be more desirable in American society for a man than for a woman, and it qualified as feminine if it was judged to be more desirable for a woman than a man. Third, the BSRI characterizes a person as masculine, feminine, or androgynous as a function of the difference between his or her endorsement of masculine and feminine personality characteristics. A person is thus sex-typed, whether masculine or feminine, to the extent that this difference score is high, and androgynous, to the extent that this difference score is low. Finally, the BSRI also includes a Social Desirability scale that is completely neutral with respect to sex. This scale now serves primarily to provide a neutral context for the Masculinity and Femininity scales, but it was utilized during the development of the BSRI to insure that the inventory would not simply be tapping a general tendency to endorse socially desirable traits. The 20 characteristics that make up this scale are listed in the third column of Table 1.

The BSRI asks a person to indicate on a 7-point scale how well each of the 60 masculine, feminine, and neutral personality characteristics describes himself. The scale ranges from 1 ("Never or almost never true") to 7 ("Always or almost always true") and is labeled at each point. On the basis of his responses, each person receives three major scores: a Masculinity score, a Femininity score and, most important, an Androgyny score. In addition, a Social Desirability score can also be computed.

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<sup>1</sup>This information is adapted from Bem, S.L. The measurement of psychological androgyny. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 1974, 42 (2), 155-162.

### Scoring

The Masculinity and Femininity scores indicate the extent to which a person endorses masculine and feminine personality characteristics as self-descriptive. Masculinity equals the mean self-rating for all endorsed masculine items, and Femininity equals the mean self-rating for all endorsed feminine items. Both can range from 1 to 7. It will be recalled that these two scores are logically independent. That is, the structure of the test does not constrain in any way, and they are free to vary independently. The Androgyny score reflects the relative amounts of masculinity and femininity that the person includes in his or her self-description, and as such, it best characterizes the nature of the person's total sex role.

It should be noted that the greater the absolute value of the Androgyny score, the more the person is sex-typed or sex reversed, with high positive scores indicating femininity and high negative scores indicating masculinity. A "masculine" sex role thus represents not only the endorsement of masculine attributes but the simultaneous rejection of feminine attributes. Similarly, a "feminine" sex role represents not only the endorsement of feminine attributes, but the simultaneous rejection of masculine attributes. In contrast, the closer the Androgyny score is to zero, the more the person is androgynous. An "androgynous" sex role thus represents the equal endorsements of both masculine and feminine attributes.

TABLE IX

## ITEMS ON THE MASCULINITY, FEMININITY, AND SOCIAL DESIRABILITY SCALES OF THE BSRI

Masculine Items	Feminine Items	Neutral Items
49. Acts as a leader	11. Affectionate	51. Adaptable
46. Aggressive	5. Cheerful	36. Conceited
58. Ambitious	50. Childlike	9. Conscientious
22. Analytical	32. Compassionate	60. Conventional
13. Assertive	53. Does not use harsh language	45. Friendly
10. Athletic	35. Eager to soothe hurt feelings	15. Happy
55. Competitive	20. Feminine	3. Helpful
4. Defends own beliefs	14. Flatterable	48. Inefficient
37. Dominant	59. Gentle	24. Jealous
19. Forceful	47. Gullible	39. Likeable
25. Has leadership abilities	56. Loves children	6. Moody
7. Independent	17. Loyal	21. Reliable
52. Individualistic	26. Sensitive to needs of others	30. Secretive
31. Makes decisions easily	8. Shy	33. Sincere
40. Masculine	38. Soft spoken	42. Solemn
1. Self-reliant	23. Sympathetic	57. Tactful
34. Self-sufficient	44. Tender	12. Theatrical
16. Strong personality	29. Understanding	27. Truthful
43. Willing to take a stand	41. Warm	18. Unpredictable
28. Willing to take risks	2. Yielding	54. Unsystematic

Note: The number preceding each item reflects the position of each adjective as it actually appears on the Inventory.

**APPENDIX C**

**RESPONSE SHEET FOR CHILDREN FOR REVISED  
TOY PREFERENCE TEST**

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_ Child's age \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

INVENTORY I

Parent (M) Date _____	Parent (F) Date _____	Child Initial Date	Retest Date	Parent (M) Date _____	Parent (F) Date _____
1. _____	_____	C O	_____	F _____	F _____
2. _____	_____	B O	_____	M _____	M _____
3. _____	_____	A O	_____	A _____	A _____
4. _____	_____	B O	_____		
5. _____	_____	B -1	_____		
6. _____	_____	C +1	_____		
7. _____	_____	B +1	_____		
8. _____	_____	A +1	_____		
9. _____	_____	A O	_____		
10. _____	_____	B O	_____		
11. _____	_____	C O	_____		
12. _____	_____	C +1	_____		
13. _____	_____	B +1	_____		
14. _____	_____	A +1	_____		

**APPENDIX D**

**EXAMPLE OF PARENT TEST BOOKLET**

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age 5 Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Sex FParent's Name \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ F 

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. B8. B2. B9. A3. A10. C4. C11. A5. C12. B6. A13. C7. B14. B



BEM SEX-ROLE INVENTORY  
DIRECTIONS AND SCORE SHEET

On the next page you will see a large number of personality characteristics. We would like you to use these characteristics to describe yourself. That is, we would like you to indicate, on a scale from 1 to 7, how true of you these various characteristics are. Please do not leave any characteristic unmarked.

Example: sly

Mark a 1 if it is NEVER OR ALMOST NEVER TRUE that you are sly.

Mark a 2 if it is USUALLY NOT TRUE that you are sly.

Mark a 3 if it is SOMETIMES BUT INFREQUENTLY TRUE that you are sly.

Mark a 4 if it is OCCASIONALLY TRUE that you are sly.

Mark a 5 if it is OFTEN TRUE that you are sly.

Mark a 6 if it is USUALLY TRUE that you are sly.

Mark a 7 if it is ALWAYS OR ALMOST ALWAYS TRUE that you are sly.

Thus, if you feel it is sometimes but infrequently true that you are "sly", never or almost never true that you are "malicious", always or almost always true that you are "irresponsible", and often true that you are "carefree", then you would rate these characteristics as follows:

Sly	3
Malicious	1

Irresponsible	7
Carefree	5

## DESCRIBE YOURSELF

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
NEVER OR ALMOST NEVER TRUE	USUALLY NOT TRUE	SOMETIMES BUT INFREQUENTLY TRUE	OCCASIONALLY TRUE	OFTEN TRUE	USUALLY TRUE	ALWAYS OR ALMOST ALWAYS TRUE

Self reliant	Reliable	Warm
Yielding	Analytical	Solemn
Helpful	Sympathetic	Willing to take a stand
Defends own beliefs	Jealous	Tender
Cheerful	Has leadership abilities	Friendly
Moody	Sensitive to the needs of others	Agressive
Independent	Truthful	Gullible
Shy	Willing to take risks	Inefficient
Conscientious	Understanding	Acts as a leader
Athletic	Secretive	Childlike
Affectionate	Makes decisions easily	Adaptable
Theatrical	Compassionate	Individualistic
Assertive	Sincere	Does not use harsh language
Flatterable	Self-sufficient	Unsystematic
Happy	Eager to soothe hurt feelings	Competitive
Strong personality	Conceited	Loves children
Loyal	Dominant	Tactful
Unpredictable	Soft-spoken	Ambitious
Forceful	Likable	Gentle
Feminine	Masculine	Conventional

VITA<sup>1</sup>

Janet Kathryn Sawyers

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

**Thesis:** SEX-ROLE IDENTIFICATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD: THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ROLE IDENTITY AND CONFORMITY  
TO PARENTS

**Major Field:** Family Relations and Child Development

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**Professional Experience:** Student Trainee Social Worker, Boone  
County, Columbia, Missouri, Summer, 1967; Social Worker  
for Kansas City, Missouri Head Start Program, Summers,  
1968, 1969; Kindergarten Teacher, Shawnee Mission Schools,  
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Grade Teacher, Department of Defense, Overseas Dependent  
Schools, Okinawa--1970-1972, Italy--1972-1973, Germany--  
1973-1975; Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of  
Family Relations and Child Development, Oklahoma State  
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