

## Sexist therapists: An APA report

"The iatrogenic effects of urging a woman to accept her 'femininity' should be obvious." In other words, the sexist attitudes of a psychotherapist might cause rather than cure some of the emotional problems faced by women. But even if this conclusion is "obvious," as Julia A. Sherman of the University of Wisconsin says, it does not keep sexism from entering into psychotherapy. This is among the findings of the American Psychological Association's task force on sex bias and sex role stereotyping in psychotherapeutic practice.

Last summer, the APA's Board of Professional Affairs appointed a 10-member group (including Sherman) to examine the extent and manner of sex bias and stereotyping in psychotherapy. A preliminary document has been prepared, and the final report is due in June.

As part of the study, 2,000 questionnaires were sent to female members of the APA. The psychologists were asked to give detailed information on sexist practices encountered during their schooling, as consumers of psychotherapy and as colleagues in the discipline of psychology. Five general areas of sex bias were identified: fostering of traditional sex roles, bias in expectations and devaluation of women, sexist use of psychoanalytic concepts, sexual exploitation of female clients and viewing women as sex objects.

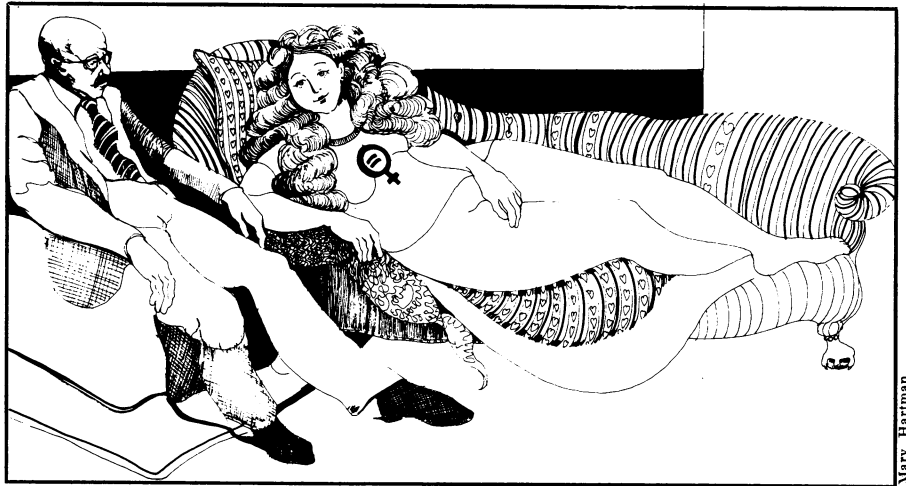
More than 100 responses to the questionnaire have been compiled as a casebook intended to be used to sensitize therapists to the problems of sexism. The examples in the casebook vividly illustrate the type (if not the amount) of sexism that exists among psychotherapists:

- . . . the therapist's failure to point out that it is quite natural for an intelligent woman with a Ph.D. to feel frustrated and unsatisfied by a 24-hour-a-day, 7-days-a-week routine of housework and care of small children.

- . . . I have had women report to me that they could not continue in therapy because the objective seemed to be for them to learn to adjust better to their roles as wives, mothers, daughters (underlings of one kind or another) and they needed to become free persons.

- I know of a therapist, seeing a married couple, who asked questions about the husband's work, then went on to other matters, unaware that the wife was an eminent biologist.

- My femininity was "questioned" by a male therapist colleague when I disagreed with him over marital and child-rearing principles.



Mary Hartman

- Initially I went to my husband's ex-analyst since I respected him and his skill . . . his priority was to 'adjust' me to my husband's needs without much reference to what might be ideal for me.

- I was in psychoanalytic therapy and was constantly reminded the man should run the home . . . that women were naturally bitchy and need to be controlled.

- . . . women should be docile, supportive and submissive to men.

- . . . a male therapist . . . insisted that there was no such thing as rape—that the woman always asked for it in some way.

- All psychologists I had were males. Several of them made jokes about and/or ridiculed the work, writing, research and ideas of women who presented opposing ideas to those advanced by males (e.g., any question of "penis envy" was treated as a joke). No serious consideration could be elicited for "breast envy" or other such topics meriting study.

- . . . I found my colleagues (male) chuckling over their decision that all a client needed was a "good man" banging her once in a while. When I disagreed, one psychologist said, "Don't give us any more of that liberation crap."

- Surprisingly many colleagues (male and female) still define maturity in women as the capacity for vaginal or-

gasm. My feeling is that women who do not experience or report this are seen (and therefore subtly treated) as emotionally limited.

- I have personally seen three cases where the woman had sexual relations with her previous therapist and have indirect knowledge that this is a highly prevalent activity. In the cases I have seen, this experience was detrimental. One woman took her case to the local Ethics Committee wherein I witnessed additional lack of regard for her and her feelings. [In an appendix to the report Freyda Zell argues that physical intimacies between therapist and patient are not necessarily destructive.]

The questionnaire also asked how psychology should respond to the problems of sexism. Most respondents urged an educational effort on the graduate-school level and in postgraduate workshops, lectures and consciousness-raising sessions. Part of this effort would be reexamination of theories and texts. It was also urged that the APA code of ethics be changed to deal with the question. Some respondents even suggested legal sanctions to deal with sexism.

How the APA will respond to the report is still in doubt. According to the APA MONITOR, the report is meeting with some resistance from the Board of Professional Affairs. The complaint is that the report itself is biased, since only women were questioned and since only 320 of 2,000 responded. □

## X-ray source with a new twist

The term pulsar covers different kinds of objects, some of which emit radio waves, some X-rays, at least one light and several more than one kind of radiation. X-ray pulsars have generally come in two classes, the short period and the long period. The short-period pulsars, with pulses on the order of every few seconds, are believed to be single objects, probably neutron stars, and the pulsations are attributed to the motion of a radiation-emitting hot spot

that is carried around like a lighthouse beam. The long-period variety are thought to be binary systems, and the pulsations, of a few hours duration or more, are explained as a result of repeated eclipsing of the emitting object as it orbits its companion.

Now there is a third class, intermediate period. It is represented by the source designated A1118-61, discovered by an experiment built by the Mullard Space Science Laboratory of

University College, London, and flown recently on the satellite Ariel V.

In the April 17 NATURE C. J. Eyles, G. K. Skinner and A. P. Willmore of the University of Birmingham and F. D. Rosenberg of the Mullard Space Science Laboratory report the position of the source as right ascension 11 hours, 18 minutes, 59 seconds, declination minus 61 degrees, 35.3 minutes, a location in the constellation Centaurus. J. C. Ives, P. W. Sanford and S. J. Bell Burnell of the Mullard Space Science Laboratory discuss a study of 39 days of its spectral records. Its

period is 6.75 minutes. Both the beamed radiation of a rotating neutron star and the square-wave appearance of the pulses of an eclipsing binary system are ruled out by the quasi-sinusoidal appearance of the new object's pulses. Thus it seems to be neither of those objects. The investigators' tentative suggestion is that the new source is a close binary system composed of two compact objects, instead of a fairly wide binary system composed of one compact object and one normal star as the long-period sources are supposed to be. □

## How black was my body?

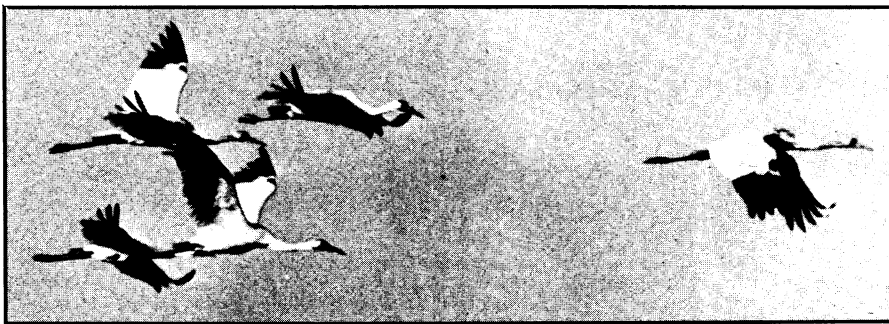
It is now about 10 years since radio astronomers began to find that the universe is pervaded by a background flux of microwaves that seems to represent the radiation of a blackbody at a temperature of 3 degrees K. Such radiation can be interpreted as a relict of a big-bang explosion at the beginning of the universe, and its discovery was widely hailed as an important support for the big-bang theory.

But the ultrafastidious have always prefaced their hosannas with a certain caveat: In the radio microwave range the spectrum shows a neat straight line, which can belong to a blackbody but may also be part of a graybody or Rayleigh-Jeans spectrum, which has

nothing to do with the big bang. It was necessary for full certainty to make measurements in the submillimeter range, where a blackbody spectrum would show a characteristic curve. Such a measurement is impossible from the ground, and it has just now been made with balloon-borne equipment.

In the April 21 PHYSICAL REVIEW LETTERS, D. P. Woody, J. C. Mather, N. S. Nishioka and P. L. Richards of the University of California at Berkeley and the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory report that in the range between 2.5 millimeters and about half a millimeter the spectrum is that of a blackbody at 2.99 degrees K. with 90 percent confidence. □

## Whooping cranes survive disease threat



When waterfowl in Nebraska began dying in drastic numbers last week of avian cholera, ornithologists in Texas panicked. Several of the nation's flock of 49 wild whooping cranes, which winter along Texas's Gulf shore, had just left for their nesting grounds in Canada. The cranes customarily stop in Nebraska to rest, and officials envisioned a mass epidemic among the birds. The disease has already killed 15,000 of the Sacramento Game Refuge's 140,000 waterfowl.

When nine of the whooping cranes landed in infected waters April 18, game wardens tried in vain to shoo them off with airplanes, but 36 hours later all nine of the birds took flight voluntarily, seemingly unaffected by

the disease. (The infection kills a bird in 24 hours.) Six more birds from the Aransas Wilderness Refuge in Texas were frightened from the waterways, and only two more cranes, still wintering in Texas, have the flight to Canada to go, says Frank Johnson, manager of the Aransas refuge.

In the early 1940's only two dozen of the birds existed in America, and as a last-ditch effort to save whooping cranes from extinction, biologists established an artificial hatchery, importing eggs from Canada, at Patuxent Wildlife Refuge in Maryland, where a total of 14 experimental birds are studied. For the first time ever, a Patuxent captive crane has laid an egg, due to hatch in 30 days. □

## Soviets help India into the 'space club'

Less than a year after joining the elite nuclear club (U.S., U.S.S.R., France, China), India has joined the only slightly less select membership of the space club (U.S., U.S.S.R., Canada, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain) with the orbiting of its first satellite.

Named Aryabhata, the Indian-built probe was launched from the Soviet Union with a Soviet rocket on April 19, much as the United States has launched spacecraft for nations without their own boosters. One of the major goals of the Indian Space Research Organization, in fact, is to develop a rocket of its own, as well as a national launching facility at Sriharikota on the country's east coast. The booster is envisioned as a four-stage vehicle capable of sending a 40-kilogram payload into a nearly circular orbit about 400 kilometers above the earth. (Such a booster would not have been sufficient for Aryabhata, a 300-kilogram probe whose orbit ranges in altitude from about 569 to 610 kilometers.)

The satellite is a scientific probe, as are most initial space club bids. It is instrumented for X-ray astronomy, a high-energy neutron and gamma-ray search during intense solar activity, electron monitoring in earth's ionosphere and ultraviolet measurements of the night sky.

Soviet assistance was reportedly needed on several fundamental aspects of the satellite such as its stabilization system, on-board data storage and solar and chemical power sources. Nevertheless, Indian officials view the project as, in the words of President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, "putting India on the map." An indication of the high priority of Indian space research is that the budget of ISRO doubled between 1967 and 1970, more than doubled again by 1972 and had nearly doubled a third time by the end of last year. The number of workers in the Indian space program has also been doubling about every two years to a present total of more than 8,000.

Besides the satellite and launch vehicle efforts, ISRO has a third major project in the works, which will begin in early August when the U.S. ATS-6 satellite begins a year of service relaying informational television programs through inexpensive community receivers in about 2,500 rural Indian villages. Another 2,500 will receive ground-based rebroadcasts of the programs, which, under the guidance of the Indian government, will deal with such topics as agriculture, health and family planning. □