

### SEX DIFFERENCES IN EMOTIONAL OUTLETS

BEFORE reliable measures of intelligence existed it had been generally assumed that women were less intelligent than men. When these alleged differences in intelligence are measured, however, they have been found on the whole to be practically negligible, if, indeed, there be any consistent sex differences.

Recent test development has made it possible to make similar measures of the alleged differences in the emotional natures of the sexes. We have recently compared about six hundred college men with about four hundred college women on the Colgate mental hygiene tests. These are tests of indirect emotional outlets which are indicative of mental or emotional instability.

There are forty-eight items of behavior pertaining to introversion in the tests. College women we find much more introvert than college men, the average woman appearing to be about 10 per cent. more introvert. This means that women tend—or may be forced—to live their emotions largely within their own mental sphere, while the men live their emotions more in associating with others.

There are thirty-two traits of psychasthenia in the tests. The women are more inclined toward this spurious mental fatigue, being on the average about 20 per cent. more psychasthenic than the men.

Neurasthenia is tested in twenty-two items of the tests. Again we find the women with an excess of these indirect emotional outlets, although not to so marked a degree as they were in psychasthenia.

In signs of hysteria there have been no demonstrable differences. This may be due to the tests lacking validity in the section dealing with conversion outlets. The reliability of this section is about .95, but the validity is low. The reliability of the other sections is above .8, and the validity is high.

The unfavorable showing of women on these tests may be due in part to some selective influence rather than to any inherent differences by and large. Can it be that emotionally unstable women are attracted to college?

In 1910, which is the last year with available figures, one out of every 1,416 men from twenty to twenty-four years of age and one out of every 1,815 women of the same age range were admitted to a state hospital as a mental patient. Among twenty-five thousand college students in 1923-24 the ratio was one man per 1,079 and one woman per 876. Among the general population the incidence of extreme emotional instability as typified in a psychosis is greater among men. Among the college population, however, the incidence is greater among women.

This may be due to the age group from the general population being slightly older than the college population. Or it may be due to the woman inclined toward emotional instability entering college.

In practically every instance statistics record an excess of male over female psychoses, both in absolute numbers and in ratio to the general population. Typical figures are those gathered from twelve states in 1919 by the National Committee for Mental Hygiene. These showed one male from each 1,105 of the total male population and one female from each 1,199 of the general population admitted to a state hospital during the year. This shows a slight and perhaps insignificant predominance of psychoses among men.

Some psychoses are the product of physical forces in the environment rather than of indirect emotional outlets. Eight times as many men, for instance, were confined because of traumatic mental disorder. Five times as many men suffered general paralysis, caused by social disease. On the other hand over three times as many women had mental disorder associated with pellagra. These psychoses due to exogenous influences should be eliminated in comparing the inherent emotional differences of the sexes. When these are eliminated the ratio is one out of 1,444 men and one out of 1,355 women. When the psychoses due fairly directly to environmental factors are excluded the balance shifts in favor of the male. This may confirm the findings on the mental hygiene tests and indicate that the college incidence rate of psychoses fairly represents the true conditions with the sexes under somewhat more similar environmental stresses than exist outside of the cloistered seats of education.

Granting, however, that when the present environmental stresses are equalized among students there is a preponderance of undesirable emotional outlets among women we have yet to demonstrate that the difference is inherent in sex. From earliest childhood the restraints and training of the sexes differ and the difference we find in middle adolescence may be a reverberation of this early environment. Our data can not be interpreted as showing that there are innate differences, the differences may be acquired. The trend of opinion is that the emotional outlets such as we are testing are acquired. Data are being gathered which bear on this point. The very practical problem of an effective difference remains, regardless of its origin.

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