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# Gender Role Orientation in Same- and Cross-Gender Friendships

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GENDER ROLE ORIENTATION IN  
SAME- AND CROSS-GENDER FRIENDSHIPS

by  
Mary Beth Scanlon

Master of Arts, University of North Dakota, 1986

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty  
of the  
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for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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May  
1990

This dissertation submitted by Mary Beth Scanlon in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done, and is hereby approved.

Paul H. Wight  
(Chairperson)

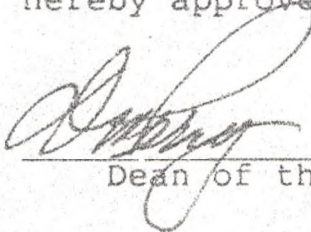
Mark Halv

J. P. P. P.

J. P.

London L. Sevinjer

This dissertation meets the standards for appearance and conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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Degree Doctor of Philosophy

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## ABSTRACT

The present study was designed to investigate the relationship between individuals' gender-role orientations and the strength and rewardingness of their friendships. The study was guided by a series of questions centered around the assumption that androgynous individuals exhibit greater behavioral flexibility from one situation to another. Androgynous individuals were expected to provide a broader range of interpersonal rewards, forming stronger and more rewarding friendships than gender-typed individuals. In addition, androgynous individuals were expected to respond equally favorably to both same- and cross-gender friends, making gender-role orientation a factor attenuating gender differences in friendship.

A total of 105 women and 101 men used the Acquaintance Description Form to describe both a same-gender and cross-gender friend. Each subject also responded to the Bem Sex-role Inventory for herself or himself and for each of their selected friends.

Comparisons were made among the different gender-role orientations of the subjects, their friends, and the Acquaintance Description Form variables.

Overall, both genders indicated stronger and more rewarding friendships with same- than with cross-gender friends. The results indicated that the gender-role orientation of the subjects was not a factor in the quality of either same- or cross-gender friendships. For women, the perceived gender-role orientation of the friend was significantly related to the quality of the friendship. Women perceived androgynous friends of either gender as providing the most rewarding friendships, and undifferentiated friends of either gender as providing the least rewarding friendships.

In addition to indicating that both women and men find their stronger friendships with same-gender friends, the results showed that women, but not men, considered androgynous friends of either gender to be more rewarding. Therefore, rather than attenuating gender differences in friendship, gender-role orientation was another variable on which women's and men's friendships differed. This suggests that women are responsive to a broader range of possibilities within friendship. Contrary to the widely accepted characterization of men's friendships as agentic, but not communal, and women's friendships as communal, but not agentic, this study suggests that women's friendships are both communal and agentic.



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Friendship is an untapped natural resource. Particularly during the difficult times of recent years--high unemployment and inflation, a loss of faith in government and a general disenchantment with traditional values--friends can offer comfort and support; they are the threads keeping us connected to the world. The evidence is all around us that friendship is valued. Making sure that children have friends is a fundamental parenting function; the lure of "friendship" is used to sell successfully almost anything--from real estate to deoderant; Dale Carnegie's book, How to Win Friends and Influence People, written in 1936, is still a hot item after ninety-five printings and almost eight million copies sold (Block, 1980, p. 2).

Yet with all the current focus on friendship, many people consider it an obscure entity. Friendship is a familiar word and yet there are no clear definitions of it. According to popular conceptions, a friend is a person with whom one shares both activities and private feelings.

Rubin (1985) stated, "Friendship in our society is strictly a private affair. There are no social rituals, no public ceremonies to honor or celebrate friendships of any kind, from the closest to the most distant--not even a linguistic form that distinguishes the formal, impersonal relationship from the informal, personal one" (p.4). She emphasizes the private quality of friendship and its uniqueness to each person.

In spite of the popular, and sometimes professional (e.g., Rubin, 1985), opinion that friendship is a private, subjective, and therefore unique relationship from one set of friends to the next, the characteristics of friendship are neither totally indefinable nor totally unpredictable. Quite the contrary, since the early 1960's, scholars in various branches of the social and behavioral sciences have become increasingly interested in studies of attraction and relationships and increasingly sophisticated in the manner in which they conceptualize and conduct them (see, e.g. Duck, 1986). Systematic studies have shown, among other things, that 1) individuals are more likely to become and remain friends if they have agreeing rather than disagreeing attitudes and values; 2) individuals are likely to respond with attraction and friendliness toward others who indicate liking for them and an appreciation for their individuality; 3) pairs of friends usually have profiles of personality traits that are more similar than



those of non-friends; and 4) pairs of friends are more satisfied with their relationships if they feel that there is a fair and equitable rather than inequitable exchange of rewards between them. More recently, several researchers (e.g. Davis and Todd, 1982; Wright, 1978) have attempted to conceptualize and measure what many individuals see as the essence of friendship, i.e. its voluntary character and its emphasis upon the mutually perceived individuality of the partners involved.

Along with the foregoing correlates of friendship, numerous studies of the kind to be reviewed in Chapter II have led to the conclusion that there are some important ways in which the friendships of women differ, on the average, from those of men. Such studies prompted Bell (1981) to conclude, "When we look at friendship in society, we can see many variations. But there is no social factor more important than sex in leading to friendship variations" (p. 55).

Researchers generally summarize the differences between women's and men's friendships by saying that women are typically more socio-emotional, personal, or "communal" while men are more activity-centered, task-oriented, or "agentic". In other words, female friends are more likely than male friends to stress interpersonal intimacy, to be more self-disclosing, to disclose at more personal levels, and to get together just for the sake of talking. Male

friends are more likely to stress working together, playing together, and getting together for some structured activity that is external to the friendship itself.

The work of Bem (1975) on gender-role orientation eventually introduced a qualification of these overall gender differences in friendship. She challenged the long-standing contention that masculinity and femininity are opposite extremes on a bipolar continuum, proposing instead that some individuals, whether male or female, express characteristics that are favorably associated with both masculinity and femininity. Bem classifies such individuals as androgynous. By the same token, she classifies individuals expressing only those characteristics favorably associated with either masculinity or femininity as, accordingly, masculine or feminine. Finally, she classifies individuals expressing neither favorably masculine nor favorably feminine characteristics as undifferentiated. Masculine men and feminine women are considered gender-typed, or "traditional". Feminine men and masculine women are considered cross-gender typed.

Researchers interested in relationships have begun to take Bem's gender-role classifications into account in their studies of attraction and friendship. Fisher and Narus (1981) for example, found that androgynous and feminine subjects, regardless of gender, indicated higher



levels of intimacy in their friendships than did masculine or undifferentiated subjects. Furthermore, androgynous men were found to be more emotionally expressive overall than were masculine men, and to be equally expressive with their male and female friends (Narus and Fisher, 1982). In contrast, masculine men indicated more expressiveness with their female than with their male friends. Lombardo and Levine (1981, 1984) found that androgynous men reported generally higher levels of self-disclosure to both male and female friends. Androgynous women also were equally self-disclosing to both male and female friends, whereas gender-typed, i.e. feminine, women were more self-disclosing to their female friends.

Although these studies were confined to limited tendencies within friendships, i.e., levels of intimacy and self-disclosure, the findings suggest several questions about ways in which gender-role orientations may be related to broader and more detailed aspects of friendship. Do some individuals form more intense and involving friendships than others, depending upon their differing gender-role orientations? Do people with different gender-role orientations find correspondingly different kinds of rewards in their friendships? Are people with different gender-role orientations, as perceived by their partners, able to provide different kinds of rewards in their friendships?

The foregoing general questions formed the basis for this present study. The purpose of the study was to determine which, if any, of the variables specified in Wright's (1985) multidimensional model of friendship would be significantly related to the subjects' gender-role orientations. Because of the paucity of research on this particular problem, the study was not guided by any specific set of hypotheses. However, theorizing and research about gender-role orientations (e.g. Bem and Lenny, 1976), as well as the previously cited studies by Fischer and Lombardo and their collaborators, draw attention to an apparent openness and flexibility on the part of androgynous persons. Therefore, due to the greater range of behaviors available to androgynous persons, one might expect their friendships to be generally more rewarding and less strained than those of masculine, feminine, and undifferentiated individuals.



## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the early 1960's, scholars in various branches of the social and behavioral sciences have become increasingly interested in studies of attraction and relationships. These scholars' interest in the study of relationships led to the completion of numerous studies on friendship patterns of both males and females. Most of these studies focused on same-gender friendships. Some researchers, however, conducted studies on cross-gender friendships. These studies of friendship led to the conclusion that there are some important ways in which the friendships of women differ, on the average, from those of men.

#### Gender Differences in Same-Gender Friendships

Studies of friendship often reveal differences between men and women with respect to their same-gender friendships (Babchuk & Bates, 1963; Booth, 1972; Booth & Hess, 1974; Bell, 1981; Williams, 1985;). Rubin (1985) concluded that women's friendships consist of self-revelation, intimacy, and emotional support; whereas men's friendships seem to revolve around shared activities. Bakan (1966) described

women's friendships as communal and men's friendships as agentic, reflecting the same emphasis in their relationships as Rubin. Weiss and Lowenthal (1975) found that male friends tend to emphasize commonality, characterized by shared activities and shared experiences. In contrast, female friends tend to emphasize reciprocity, characterized by emotional support and confiding.

Reis, Senchak, and Solomon (1985) as well as Williams (1985) found that conversations among male friends reveal little information about personal feelings and focus more on impersonal matters.

In summary, it appears that males and females have different interaction patterns in their same-gender friendships. Men tend to have friendships that revolve around a specific activity and which lack frequent personal self-disclosure. Women, on the other hand, tend to have friendships that involve mutual sharing of personal information and emotional support. The studies presented thus far focused on only same-gender friendships. When looking at cross-gender friendships, do the same gender patterns persist?

#### The Frequency of Cross-Gender Friendships

Men and women have always recognized each other as potential romantic partners. But outside of romantic encounters, do men and women consider each other friends?



Extensive research has examined same-gender friendships, but relatively little has focused on cross-gender friendships. Perhaps this is because cross-gender friendships are less common.

Different investigators have reported varying frequencies of cross-gender friendships. Booth and Hess (1974) interviewed adults age 45 and older and found that 35 percent of the men and 24 percent of the women reported having at least one close friend of the opposite gender. In comparison, only 18 percent of the women and men in Block's (1980) sample reported cross-gender friendships. This figure decreased for married people, as only six out of 100 married people reported cross-gender friendships. Rubin (1985) reported that 42 percent of the men and 34 percent of the women had cross-gender friendships. Again, this figure decreased once people got married, as only 22 percent of the men and 16 percent of the women who were married or living with someone reported cross-gender friendships. Rose (1985) interviewed university students and found that 67 percent of the married men and 53 percent of the married women reported cross-gender friendships. Again, the rate was higher for single individuals, as all of the undergraduates, all of the single graduate men, and 73 percent of the single graduate women reported at least one cross-gender friendship. The foregoing studies indicate that cross-gender friendships, although less

frequent than same-gender friendships, do exist and are apparently more frequent among men than among women.

#### Gender Differences in Cross-Gender Friendships

Accumulated findings suggest that men are more likely than women to consider members of the opposite gender as friends. In fact, many men prefer female to male friends. Rose (1985) found in her sample of young adults that only 33 percent of the men indicated a preference for same-gender friendships while 60 percent of the women preferred such friendships. Rubin (1985) found a similar preference among men to have women friends and of women to have women friends.

In terms of the patterns of their interactions, men report more acceptance and intimacy in cross-gender friendships than do women (Rose, 1985). Rubin (1985) viewed men as oriented to solving problems in interpersonal situations and women as more oriented to understanding the process of such situations. This difference in orientation makes conversation less than satisfying for the two people involved as the man quickly looks for a solution, while the woman slowly digests all the intricacies of the situation. Narus and Fischer (1982) found that "masculine" men reported greater expressivity in their cross-gender friendships than in their same-gender ones. However,



androgynous men were similar in their level of expressivity in both types of friendships.

#### Comparing Same- and Cross-Gender Friendships

Both men and women report differences between their same-gender and their cross-gender friendships. Bell (1981) found that both men and women reported that they would reveal more to a same-gender friend than they would to a cross-gender friend. In contrast, Rose (1985) found that men's cross-gender friendships were similar to their same-gender friendships in the amount of acceptance, intimacy, and companionship they experienced. For women, however, cross-gender friendships provided less acceptance and intimacy than same-gender friendships. Hacker (1981) found that self-disclosure is greater in same-gender compared to cross-gender friendships for both men and women. She also found that in cross-gender interactions, "men tend to hide their weaknesses and women to conceal their strengths" (Hacker, 1981, p. 385). In contrast, Rubin (1985) found that men are more open, confiding, and intimate with their cross-gender friends than they are with men. She found that of the males she interviewed, 33 percent reported having a best friend, most of whom were women, whereas of the 75 percent of the women who reported having best friends, almost all of them were other women. There does seem to be some difference, therefore, in the

amount of self-disclosure between cross-gender and same-gender friendships, but the pattern is unclear.

Taken as a whole, research on cross-gender friendships, raises more questions than it answers. It appears that men and women do have friendships with one another and that these friendships tend to be homogeneous to some extent. Marital status, education level, age, and occupational status are important factors that have an impact on the number of cross-gender friendships formed. There seem to be differences between male and female friendships, but, again, the pattern of differences does not seem to be clear.

#### Gender-Role Orientation

One factor which can attenuate gender differences in friendship is gender- role orientation. Until recently, scholars generally conceptualized masculinity and femininity as bipolar, i.e., as opposite ends of a continuum. From this perspective, a person may be strongly or weakly masculine, strongly or weakly feminine, or neutral; however, he or she could not be considered both masculine and feminine. In fact, socializing agents often train children to believe that certain characteristics and behaviors are appropriate only for men and others only for women. Masculinity was equated with behaviors considered to be instrumental, while femininity was equated with



behaviors considered to be expressive. This gender-role dichotomy has served to obscure the very plausible hypothesis that some individuals possess valued characteristics of both genders. Some persons can, at any given time, be either masculine or feminine, instrumental or expressive, assertive or yielding. "Androgynous" is the term used to describe this potential for expressing either feminine or masculine qualities (Bem, 1974). The androgynous person can seemingly be either masculine or feminine, depending on the demands of the situation.

Bem (1974) created a gender-role inventory, the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI), which looked at masculinity and femininity as two orthogonal dimensions. The BSRI was created with the idea that the gender-typed person has internalized society's gender-typed standards of desirable behavior for women and men. The characteristics comprising the different scales are based on social desirability rather than on the basis of differential endorsement by males and females. The items on the scales are considered positive masculine or positive feminine attributes.

Using this inventory, people can be classified as either masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated. The androgynous person is one who scores relatively high on both the masculinity and the femininity scales of the inventory. The masculine person scores high on just the masculine scale and the feminine person scores



high on just the feminine scale. The person who scores low on both scales is referred to as undifferentiated. The introduction of the concept of gender-role orientation added a new dimension to the study of friendship. The gender-role orientation of an individual may be an attenuating factor in the differences between males and females in their friendships. Bem and other researchers have used the BSRI in order to study specific aspects of friendship.

### Intimacy

Fischer and Narus (1981) investigated the relationship between gender-role orientation and close interpersonal relationships. Looking specifically at intimacy in same- and cross-gender relationships, they found that androgynous and gender-typed people differed from each other in measurements of intimacy. Intimacy was most prominent in female-female relationships, followed by cross-gender, and then male-male relationships. In a follow-up study, Narus and Fischer (1982) examined expressivity in males. They found variations in men's expressivity based on their gender-role. Androgynous men were found to be more expressive than masculine men. When the type of relationship was studied, masculine men reported less expressivity in same-gender compared to cross-gender friendships. The type of friendship did not influence the

androgynous men as they were equally expressive in both types of friendship.

### Self-Disclosure

Lombardo and Lavine (1981) looked at patterns of self-disclosure and gender-role stereotyping. Androgynous males reported self-disclosure levels higher than those of traditional males. Further, the amount of self-disclosure was similar for androgynous men's best male and female friend. This finding suggests that the gender of the target person was less important to androgynous males. Androgynous women were more likely to self-disclose to peers of both genders more so than with their parents. In contrast, gender-typed females self-disclose more to females, including friends and mothers, than to males. This difference suggests a greater potential for openness to members of the opposite gender for androgynous women.

Lavine and Lombardo (1984) replicated the findings that androgynous women prefer self-disclosing to their male and female friends more so than with their parents. They also found that androgynous men were more self-disclosing with both their friends and their fathers than were gender-typed men. The authors conclude that androgynous adults show "good levels of peer relationships and give indications of greater ability to communicate with the opposite sex" (p. 743).



### Behavioral Flexibility

The term androgyny implies that a person can use both instrumental and also expressive traits, depending on the demands of the situation. Incorporated into Bem's theory of androgyny is the idea that androgynous individuals display greater gender-role adaptability in a greater variety of situations. In a series of studies, (Bem, 1975; Bem & Lenney, 1976; Bem, Martyna, & Watson, 1976), Bem has produced evidence demonstrating that androgynous persons are more flexible and able to vary their behavior based on situational requirements rather than being constrained by gender-role stereotypes. People identified as "masculine" or "feminine" do not display as much flexibility in their behavior. Since the androgynous person has both masculine and feminine characteristics, he or she is able to react to the particular situation and engage in the most effective behavior (Bem, 1975). Wiggins and Holzmuller (1978) followed up on Bem's studies of androgyny and interpersonal behavior. As in Bem's studies, they found greater behavioral flexibility for androgynous individuals. Persons classified as androgynous were more flexible in their behavior on five of eight major dimensions of interpersonal behavior. The researchers also found that androgynous men seemed more flexible than androgynous women in their interpersonal behavior.

Helmreich, Spence, and Halahan (1979) dispute the findings suggesting that androgynous people demonstrate greater behavioral flexibility. Their results indicate that androgynous people are more flexible in those behaviors manifesting a higher degree of both instrumentality and expressiveness, but, they do not generalize to all types of behaviors. Further, they argue that the BSRI measures instrumental and expressive traits rather than gender-roles.

This review of the literature suggests that there are differences between the friendship patterns of androgynous individuals and gender-typed individuals. The gender differences found in same-gender friendships are not present in androgynous individuals. Androgynous men and women demonstrate greater flexibility in their behavior. However, the studies completed thus far have investigated such limited aspects of friendship as intimacy and self-disclosing. Social scientists have not studied relationships as a whole, i.e. in depth and in detail, with respect to the possible influence of gender-role orientation. One reason researchers have limited their studies to isolated friendship variables is that, until recently, broader conceptual and measurement models were not available. Beginning in 1969, however, Wright has developed a technique for exploring a number of interrelated relationship characteristics. According to



Lea, (1989), Wright's approach has become widely known and used.

### A Model of Friendship

Wright (1978) developed a theory of friendship based on a conception of the self. This conception of self has as a central concept the belief that a central motivation for a person is his or her concern for the well-being and worth of the entity he or she defines as his or her "self" (Wright, 1978). A person tends to behave in ways that maintain or support his or her positive concept of the self.

The concern a person has for his or her "self" manifests itself in five behavioral tendencies that provide a motivational link between the self and interpersonal relationships. First, an individual behaves in ways that will maintain or reaffirm his or her sense of individuality or uniqueness. A second behavioral tendency is for an individual to behave in ways that reaffirm or assert his or her highly valued self-attributes. Third, an individual tends to evaluate attributes of himself or herself positively in situations which compel or encourage self-evaluation. A fourth behavioral tendency is for an individual to be oriented to changes in his or her self-attributes in the direction of growth or positive changes. Finally, an individual will attempt to avoid or

neutralize situations which threaten his or her self-worth or the well-being of the self. "Therefore, the self-referent motives play an important part in interpersonal and person-group relations" (Wright, 1982, p. 5). For it is in these relationships that one is able to satisfy the behavioral tendencies.

According to the theory, friendships are formed and maintained because they are rewarding. These friendships are rewarding because they allow the fulfillment or expression of self-referent motivation (Wright, 1984). Wright based his theory primarily on results from studies using the Acquaintance Description Form, an instrument created to analyze the different variables involved in friendship.

#### The Acquaintance Description Form

Wright (1969) introduced the Acquaintance Description Form and has published several revisions since that time (see Wright, 1985). This measurement device allows for the study of the strength and amount of reward in a specified interpersonal relationship. By using the Acquaintance Description Form, one is able to learn more specifically about friendships and see differences or similarities between friendships on many different variables.

The Acquaintance Description Form, ADF-F(inal), consists of 65 items, comprising 13 scales that measure



different variables associated with a particular relationship between the person completing the form and a targeted other person.

The ADF-F includes two measures of the strength of the relationship which together provide a measure of the total relationship strength. The first of these is Voluntary Interdependence (VID). Voluntary Interdependence measures the extent to which two people seek each other out during their free time, in the absence of any external pressures or constraints to the relationship. The second measure of relationship strength is Person-qua-Person (PQP) which measures the degree to which a person views another as genuine, unique, and irreplaceable in the relationship.

There are five scales which measure the direct rewards or "values" of the friendship. Self-Affirmation Value (SAV) refers to the subject's perception of the target person's ability to facilitate the recognition and expression of his or her more important and highly valued qualities. Stimulation Value (SV) measures the degree to which the target person is viewed as providing new experiences and fostering an expansion of the subject's knowledge, ideas, or perspectives. Utility Value (UV) refers to the willingness and ability of the target person to use his or her own resources to help the subject meet his or her own personal goals. Ego Support Value (ESV) measures the degree to which the subject sees the target

person as providing support, encouragement, and help in maintaining the subject's view of himself or herself as a competent, worthwhile person. The final measure of rewards is called Security Value (SV). This scale measures the degree to which the target person is perceived as being safe and nonthreatening.

In addition to these values, the ADF-F includes a measure of the extent to which at least one person in the relationship must expend time or energy to clarify actions or words in order to prevent hurt feelings. This scale also measures the amount of patience and restraint necessary to keep the relationship intact. This measure of tension or strain in the relationship is referred to as Maintenance Difficulty (MD). General Favorability (GF) measures the degree to which the subject responds to the target person in either entirely positive or negative ways. It was previously, routinely, used as a general correction factor, but is now only used in specific instances.

Four scales were added to the original ADF to allow for the differentiation between friendships and other types of relationships. Permanence (Perm) refers to the degree to which the person sees the relationship as long lasting and unlikely to break up even under changing circumstances. Social Regulation (SoRg) measures the degree to which social norms and regulations affect the relationship and create pressures to behave in specific ways. Exclusiveness



(Excl) refers to the degree to which the relationship is viewed as being strictly dyadic and involving exclusive access to certain forms of interactions or activities. The final scale is called Salience of Emotional Expression (Emo). This scale measures the degree to which the subject regards direct expressions of positive feelings, such as liking and affection, important elements of the relationship.

#### Purpose of the Study

Our review of the literature on gender and friendship revealed a clear and fairly robust pattern of differences between women's and men's same-gender friendships. This pattern may be summarized by saying that women tend to be more socioemotional and expressive in their friendships, while men tend to be more activity oriented and instrumental. The pattern of gender differences in cross-gender friendships is less clear and less robust. Nevertheless, the most consistent findings suggest that men claim a greater number of cross-gender friendships than do women, and that men often interact with their cross-gender friends with higher levels of intimacy and self-disclosure than with their same-gender friends. Women, on the other hand, indicate higher levels of intimacy and self-disclosure with their same- rather than with their cross-gender friends.

Consistent and robust or not, studies that take into account the subjects' gender-role orientations demonstrate that these differences do not necessarily hold for women and men in general. The expression of psychological intimacy in friendship appears to be characteristic of individuals who are classified as either feminine or androgynous, regardless of gender. Moreover, unlike their masculine, feminine, and undifferentiated counterparts, both androgynous women and androgynous men show equally high levels of self-disclosure in their same-gender and cross-gender friendships.

Studies showing the attenuating influence of gender-role orientation have been limited to the levels of intimacy and self-disclosure that subjects are willing or able to express in their friendships. However, they suggest the possibility that gender-role orientations may be related to broader and more detailed aspects of friendship such as the intensity and degree of involvement of the friends, the kinds of rewards sought from and provided to friendships, and the ease or difficulty the partners have in maintaining the friendship. These are precisely the kinds of characteristics specified in Wright's (1985) conceptual and measurement model of friendship.

The purpose of the present study was to determine which, if any, of the variables measured by the



Acquaintance Description Form would be significantly related to women's and men's gender-role orientations as measured by the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (Bem, 1975). Because theorizing and research about gender-role orientations emphasizes the flexibility and resilience of androgynous persons, the study's focus was upon differences between gender-typed and androgynous subjects. However, due to the paucity of the research on gender-role orientations and friendship, as well as the total absence of such studies dealing with a comprehensive set of friendship variables, the study was based on a series of questions rather than a set of formally stated hypotheses. The specific questions addressed by the study were as follows:

1. Do subjects tend to see their friends as having the same gender-role orientation as themselves? In cases where friends are seen as having different gender-role orientations, in what ways, if any, does the difference affect the strength of the friendship?
2. Do androgynous individuals have friendships that are stronger or more intense than those of gender-typed individuals?
3. On which, if any, of Wright's friendship values do androgynous individuals experience more rewarding friendships than do gender-typed individuals?

4. Do androgynous individuals consider the expression of emotions a more important aspect of friendship than do gender-typed individuals?



## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

#### Subjects

A total of 103 males and 108 females volunteered to participate in the study. The experimenter or cooperating contact persons solicited the participation of the subjects, all nonstudent adults, from organizations, groups, and businesses in a metropolitan area of about 500,000 people in and around Minneapolis, Minnesota.

#### Materials

##### Acquaintance Description Form Final

As described in Chapter I, the ADF-F is a self-report questionnaire which consists of 65 items comprising 13 scales (see Appendix A). Each subject completes the form by responding to statements about his or her relationship with an acquaintance referred to as the Target Person (TP). The subject rates his or her level of agreement with each statement on a Likert scale ranging from zero to six, where six indicates "definitely, absolutely no doubt about it" or "always" and zero indicates "definitely not" or "never." The possible score for each scale ranges from zero to thirty. The thirteen scales of the ADF-F include the

following: Voluntary Interdependence (VID), Person-Qua-Person (PQP), Stimulation Value (SV), Self-Affirmation Value (SAV), Ego Support Value (ESV), Security Value (SecV), Utility Value (UV), General Favorability (GF), Maintenance Difficulty (MD), Social Regulation (SoRg), Permanence (Perm), Exclusiveness (Excl), and Salience of Emotional Expression (Emo). The total relationship strength score, which is a combination of the VID and PQP scales, ranges from zero to sixty.

Wright (1985) conducted numerous studies to establish the reliability and the validity of the ADF throughout its development. These studies yielded test-retest correlations that were consistently around 0.85 or higher, except for the Maintenance Difficulty scale. The correlations for this scale were generally somewhat lower, around 0.75 for women and 0.73 for men. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was found to be consistently around 0.82 or above, for all the scales (Wright, 1985). Wright's studies supported both the validity and the differential sensitivity of the different scales for both men and women with the qualification that women do not distinguish as clearly between Ego Support Value and Self-Affirmation Value (Wright, 1985).



### The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI)

The Bem Sex-Role Inventory is a self-report questionnaire composed of sixty items comprising three scales; masculinity, femininity, and social desirability. These three scales each consist of twenty personality characteristics. The social desirability scale is not used in assessing gender-role orientation, so it was not used in the study. Bem (1974) selected the items for the masculinity and femininity scales on the basis of their rated social desirability for men and women respectively. The subject completes the BSRI by indicating on a seven point Likert scale how well each of the 60 masculine, feminine, and socially desirable personality characteristics describes him or her. The scale ranges from 1, "never or almost never true", to 7, "always or almost always true". Summed ratings of the masculinity and femininity scales indicate the extent to which a person endorses masculine and feminine personality characteristics as being self-descriptive.

Subjects, in the present study, were identified as masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated, based on a method described by Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1975). First, the median value for all subjects for each scale is computed. The subject's gender-role orientation is then designated by determining whether his or her mean score falls above or below the median value on the

masculinity and the femininity scales. This method classifies individuals scoring above the median on both masculinity and femininity as androgynous. Males scoring above the median on masculinity and below the median on femininity are classified as gender-typed, as are females scoring above the median on femininity and below the median on masculinity. Individuals scoring below the median on both the masculinity and femininity scales are classified as undifferentiated.

Bem's (1974) studies of the test-retest reliability of the BSRI indicated that scores on masculinity, femininity, androgyny, and social desirability all remain quite constant over a four week period (masculinity  $r=.90$ ; femininity  $r=.90$ ; androgyny  $r=.93$ ; social desirability  $r=.89$ ). In several studies of construct validity, Bem (1975) found: 1) that individuals describing themselves as masculine or androgynous demonstrated masculine independence in conformity type situations; 2) that individuals describing themselves as feminine or androgynous demonstrated "feminine" playfulness; and 3) androgynous persons demonstrated characteristics of both masculine and feminine behavior. In addition, Bem and Lenney (1976) found that gender-typed individuals were more likely than androgynous or gender-reversed subjects to prefer gender-appropriate activity and to resist gender-inappropriate activity. Again, androgynous



individuals demonstrated behaviors that are characteristic of both masculine and feminine individuals.

#### Demographic Information Sheet

Each subject filled out a demographic information sheet constructed by this researcher (see Appendix B) requesting the following information: age, gender, education, occupation, marital status, and length of the friendship with each of the Target Persons.

#### Procedure

Subjects in service organizations and businesses in Minneapolis, Minnesota, were contacted and invited to participate in the research. The participants were given a packet which consisted of a background information sheet, two ADF-F forms and three Bem Sex-Role Inventory forms. The contact person described the instructions to the subjects when the packets were given out, plus instructions were included on the cover letter and on the forms themselves. Answer sheets were also provided for all of the forms. The answer sheets were clearly marked with one of three titles; self, same-gender friend or cross-gender friend. All participants were informed of the confidentiality of the research and assured that they would remain anonymous. The subjects were given the opportunity to discontinue their participation at any time.

The participants first filled out the background information sheet which provided basic demographic information. Each participant then filled out a BSRI describing himself or herself. Each participant was also instructed to fill out two other BSRI forms according to his or her perceptions of two different Target Persons. One form was filled out in reference to his or her closest same-gender friend and the other form was filled out in reference to his or her closest cross-gender friend. The stipulation was made that the subject choose his or her "best" friend of both genders, but exclude his or her romantic partner or spouse.

Participants were asked to fill out two ADF-F forms for the same Target Persons described by the BSRI forms. Since it cannot be assumed that completing one form would not interfere with the responses given on the second form, the answer forms were counterbalanced so that self, same-, and cross-gender friends were presented first equally often. Because subjects completed the questionnaires at home, one can not be certain in which order they were filled out. When the subjects had completed the forms, they returned the entire packet to the experimenter or contact person.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Characteristics of the Sample

A total of 108 women and 103 men returned data packets. Several of the packets, however, did not include subjects' responses to a cross-gender friend. Responses from these incomplete packets were eliminated from any of the data analyses, so that the actual sample size was 105 women and 101 men. Subjects in both the women's and the men's groups ranged in age from the early twenties to the late fifties. The respective mean ages for the women and the men were 37 and 38 years. Sixty-four percent of the women and 61 percent of the men were married. Of the remaining women, 18 percent were single, 15 percent were divorced, and 3 percent were separated. Of the remaining men, 26 percent were single, 12 percent were divorced, and 1 percent were separated.

With respect to educational levels attained, 37 percent of the women had completed high school, 6 percent had completed some type of vocational-technical program, 16 percent had completed an associate in arts degree, 33 percent had completed a bachelor's degree, and 8 percent had completed a master's degree. Thirty percent of the men

had completed high school, 1 percent had completed some type of vocational-technical program, 20 percent had completed an associate in arts degree, 32 percent had completed a bachelor's degree, 11 percent had completed a master's degree, and 7 percent had completed a professional degree (e.g., had completed law school).

The subjects worked in a wide range of occupations and no one was unemployed. No one worked primarily in the home. Among the women, the occupations included county worker, teacher, supervisor, computer operator, sales representative, daycare provider, social worker, accountant, bookkeeper, physical fitness instructor, media director, and office manager. Among the men, the occupations included county worker, supervisor, youth worker, electrical engineer, teacher, construction worker, attorney, social worker, writer, welder, barber, and security guard. In all, thirty distinctively different occupations were represented among the women and thirty-four among the men.

Subjects reported lengths of friendship with their respective Target Persons that varied from less than 5 years to 21 or more years. Percentages of women indicating same-gender friendships of varying lengths were as follows: less than 5 years, 20 percent; 6-10 years, 22 percent; 11-15 years, 21 percent; 16-20 years, 15 percent; 21 years or more, 22 percent. For women's cross-gender friendships,



the percentages were as follows: less than 5 years, 14 percent; 6-10 years, 39 percent; 11-15 years, 24 percent; 16-20 years, 12 percent; 21 years or more, 11 percent. The percentages of men indicating same-gender friendships of varying lengths were: less than 5 years, 21 percent; 6-10 years, 25 percent; 11-15 years, 11 percent; 16-20 years, 17 percent; 21 years or more, 26 percent. For men's cross-gender friendships, the percentages were: less than 5 years, 50 percent; 6-10 years, 26 percent; 11-15 years, 7 percent; 16-20 years, 12 percent; 21 years or more, 5 percent.

#### Classification of Subjects and Target Persons

Subjects were grouped by gender-role orientations and by the perceived gender-role orientations of their Target Persons. These categories were determined by the method Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1975) developed and which was endorsed by Bem (1981). First, the median value of the masculinity and the femininity score on the Bem Sex-Role Inventory was calculated. The median values of 4.8 for femininity and 4.85 for masculinity were strikingly similar to those of 4.9 and 4.95, respectively, reported by Bem (1981). Subjects scoring above the median on masculinity and below the median on femininity were classified as masculine. Subjects scoring above the median in femininity and below the median on masculinity were classified as

feminine. Subjects scoring above the median on both masculinity and femininity were classified as androgynous, and those scoring below the median on both masculinity and femininity were classified as undifferentiated. The same procedure was followed in assigning Target Persons to perceived gender-role orientations on the basis of the femininity and masculinity scores the subjects had attributed to them.

These groupings were used in various ways to assess the relationship of gender-role orientations to each of the 13 variables measured by the Acquaintance Description Form (ADF-F). The large number of comparisons involved in these analyses dramatically increased the probability of spuriously significant differences at conventional levels of significance. Therefore, the level of statistical significance for each analysis was set at .004. This rather stringent criterion was selected because it provided overall protection at the .05 level for any given set of analyses.

Interaction of Gender-Role Orientations of Subjects  
with Perceived Gender-Role Orientations of Target Persons

#### Treatment of Data

Preliminary analyses were conducted to determine whether scores on the ADF-F variables were significantly related to the interacting effects of the Gender-Role



Orientation (GRO) of the subject and the perceived GRO of her or his Target Person. My initial plan was to conduct a series of 4(GRO of subjects) x 4(perceived Gro of Target Persons) ANOVAs. However, this sixteen-part division resulted in an uneven distribution of subjects within cells so that there were several empty and extremely low frequency cells. Thus, the intended 4 x 4 ANOVAs were not feasible. As an alternative, a series of 4(GRO of subjects) x 2(Similar or Dissimilar Perceived GRO of Target Persons) ANOVAs were performed. Four analyses were conducted for each ADF-F variable, i.e., female subjects responding to female Target Persons, female subjects responding to male Target Persons, male subjects responding to female Target Persons, and male subjects responding to male Target Persons.

### Results

The only ADF-F variable showing a significant effect of the interaction of the subjects' GROs with the similarity or dissimilarity of the Target Persons' GROs was that of Stimulation Value for female subjects responding to male friends. The F-ratio for this interaction was 6.82 (df=3,93);  $p=.0005$ . Comparisons of individual means revealed that this interaction was due to the tendency of both Masculine and Androgynous women to rate similarly Masculine or Androgynous male friends high on Stimulation

Value. These comparisons are presented graphically in Figure 1. The mean Stimulation Value score for the Masculine Subject/Similar Target group was 22.67 and that for the Androgynous Subject/Similar Target group was 21.69. Both of these means were higher than that of the Masculine Subject/Dissimilar Target group with 15.92 and the Androgynous Subject/Dissimilar Target group of 18.89. They were also higher than those of the Feminine Subject/Similar Target group with 16.14 and the Feminine Subject/Dissimilar Target group of 21.25, and the Undifferentiated Subject/Similar Target group with 16.2 and Undifferentiated Subject/Dissimilar Target group of 17.83.

Because only one of these analyses yielded a significant interaction effect, separate analyses were used to assess the relationship of subjects' GROs to each ADF-F variable, and the GRO of the Target Person to each ADF-F variable.

Subjects' GROs, Target Persons' GROs,  
and the ADF-F Variables

#### Treatment of the Data

The strength of the relationship of the various GROs and perceived GROs to each ADF-F variable was assessed by the correlational method. First, each subject was assigned a GRO "score" of 0 or 1, depending upon whether the GRO in question applied to her or him. That is, all subjects in



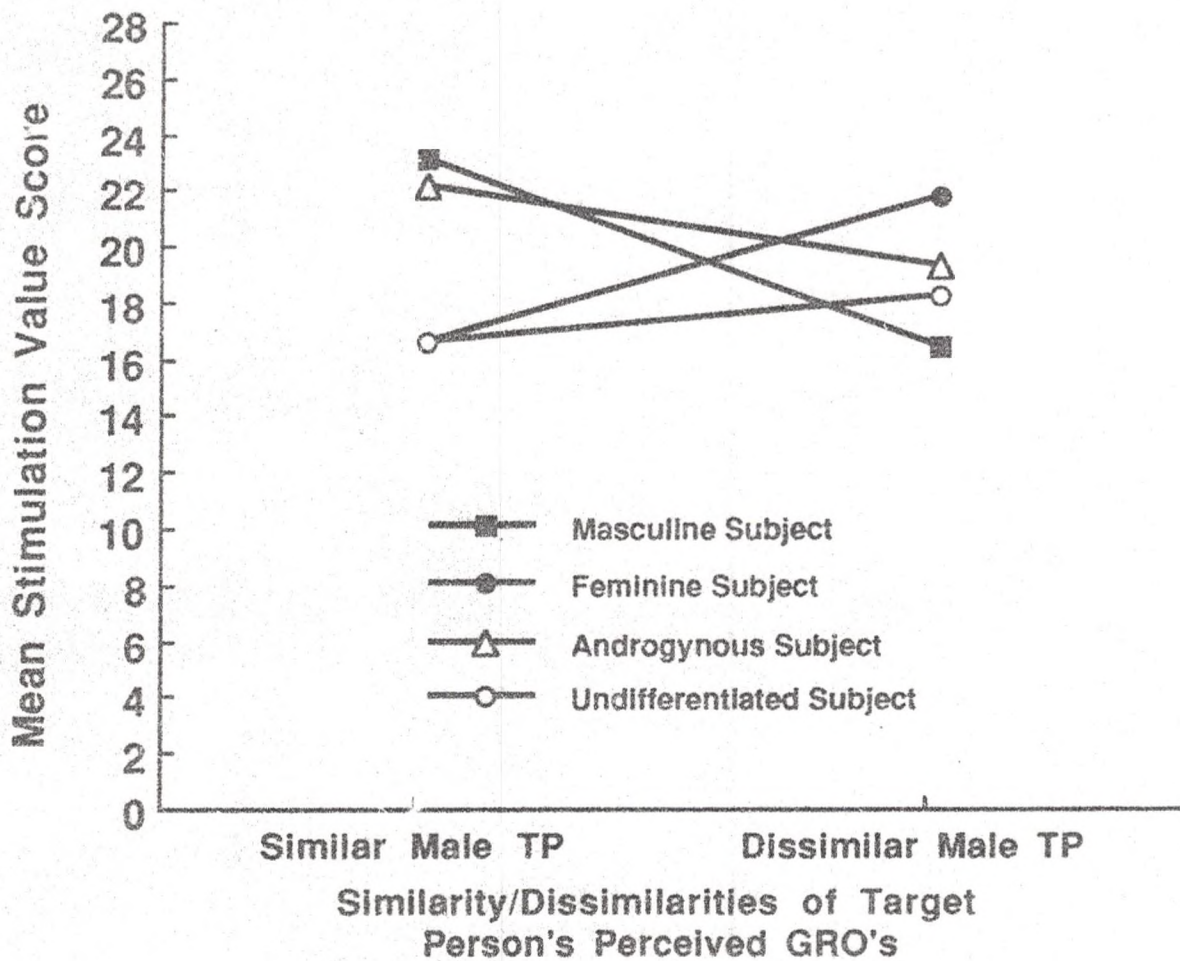


Figure 1. Mean Stimulation Value Scores for Female Subjects Responding to Male Friends

the Androgynous category were assigned a score of 1 on androgyny, and all other subjects were assigned a score of 0. All subjects in the Masculine category were scored 1 on masculinity and all other subjects were scored 0. A similar procedure was followed in assigning perceived GRO scores to each of the Target Persons. Thus, roughly one-fourth of the subjects and Target Persons in each gender role category scored 1, and the remaining three-fourths scored 0. Point-biserial correlation coefficients were computed to determine the relationship of these GRO and perceived GRO scores to each ADF-F variable.

### Results

Point-biserial correlations of ADF-F variables with GROs of both subjects and Target Persons are listed in Tables 1-4. Table 1 lists correlations for female subjects responding to female friends. This table yields the greatest number of significant correlations. There were no significant correlations associated with the GRO of the subject, or for the masculine or feminine GROs of the Target Person. There were however, positive correlations between the Androgynous female friend and five of the ADF-F variables: Stimulation Value, Utility Value, Self-Affirmation Value, Ego Support Value, and Voluntary Interdependence. Conversely, there were negative correlations between the Undifferentiated female friend and



Table 1  
 Point-biserial Correlations of ADF-F Variables with Gender Role Orientations  
 of Subjects and with Perceived Gender Role Orientations of Target Persons:  
 Female Subjects Responding to Female Friends

ADF-F Variable	Orientation of Subject				Perceived Orientation of TP			
	Fem	Masc	Andro	Undiff	Fem	Masc	Andro	Undiff
SV	.02	-.17	.18	-.08	-.14	.05	.30**	-.24
UV	.20	-.18	.13	-.23	-.08	.03	.31**	-.32**
SAV	.13	-.10	.14	-.24	-.01	-.18	.36**	-.27*
EXCL	-.10	.21	-.06	-.01	-.05	-.03	.07	.00
MD	-.23	.24	-.06	.12	-.12	.14	-.16	.21
ESV	.18	-.17	.08	-.16	.00	-.10	.31**	-.29*
GF	.17	-.23	.15	-.1	.12	-.04	.21	-.38***
EMO	-.01	.07	.11	-.20	-.11	.05	.14	-.08
SECV	.16	-.23	.07	-.05	.16	-.14	.18	-.29*
SORG	-.10	.07	-.01	.06	-.02	.10	-.02	-.04
VID	.08	-.06	.09	-.15	-.08	-.04	.28**	-.21
PQP	.17	-.09	-.02	-.11	.00	.01	.24	-.31**
PERM	.07	.09	-.04	-.14	.10	-.05	.12	-.23

\*p&lt;.01

\*\*p&lt;.002

\*\*\*p&lt;.001

six of the ADF-F variables: Utility Value, Self-Affirmation Value, Ego Support Value, General Favorability, Security Value, and Person-qua-Person.

Table 2 lists correlations of female subjects responding to male friends. Similar to the case with their female friends, there were no significant correlations associated with the GRO of the subject, or the masculine and feminine GRO of the Target Person. There were positive correlations between the Androgynous male friend and three ADF-F variables: Stimulation Value, Self-Affirmation Value, and Ego Support Value. Again, there were negative correlations between the Undifferentiated male friend and four ADF-F variables: Stimulation Value, Self-Affirmation Value, Utility Value, and Ego Support Value.

Table 3 presents correlations of male subjects responding to female friends. There were no significant correlations associated with the GRO of the Target Person, or for the Masculine, Androgynous, and Undifferentiated male subject. There was one positive significant correlation between the Feminine male subject and Salience of Emotional Expression.

Table 4 lists the correlations for the male subjects responding to male friends. Here again, there were no significant correlations associated with the subject's GRO, nor for the Feminine or Undifferentiated male friends. There was a significant negative correlation associated



Table 2  
 Point-biserial Correlations of ADF-F Variables with Gender Role Orientations  
 of Subjects and with Perceived Gender Role Orientations of Target Persons:  
 Female Subjects Responding to Male Friends

ADF-F Variable	Orientation of Subject				Perceived Orientation of TP			
	Fem	Masc	Andro	Undiff	Fem	Masc	Andro	Undiff
SV	.15	-.12	.09	-.19	-.18	.08	.27*	-.26*
UV	.17	-.15	.14	-.24	-.07	.00	.19	-.27*
SAV	.11	-.12	.18	-.24	.13	.12	.34***	-.33***
EXCL	-.14	.05	.07	.05	-.06	.10	.07	-.16
MD	-.13	.15	.01	.01	-.08	.17	-.06	-.07
ESV	.21	-.09	.01	-.19	.09	-.12	.31**	-.27*
GF	.18	-.11	.06	-.20	-.02	-.07	.20	-.13
EMO	.12	-.01	.05	-.21	.02	-.02	.22	-.24
SECV	.12	-.03	.03	-.17	.24	-.11	.06	-.12
SORG	-.11	.05	.02	.07	.01	.05	.05	-.12
VID	.02	-.04	.10	-.11	-.05	.01	.19	-.18
PQP	.14	-.13	.11	-.19	.01	-.07	.20	-.15
PERM	.06	-.03	.06	-.11	-.06	.00	.16	-.13

\* $p < .01$

\*\* $p < .002$

\*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 3  
 Point-biserial Correlations of ADF-F Variables with Gender Role Orientations  
 of Subjects and with Perceived Gender Role Orientations of Target Persons:  
 Male Subjects Responding to Female Friends

ADF-F Variable	Orientation of Subject				Perceived Orientation of TP			
	Fem	Masc	Andro	Undiff	Fem	Masc	Andro	Undiff
SV	-.06	.07	.19	-.20	-.16	.16	.09	-.04
UV	-.01	.10	.07	-.17	-.04	-.01	.05	.00
SAV	.18	-.03	.20	-.32	-.11	.00	.19	-.05
EXCL	.02	.09	.00	-.11	.00	-.03	-.03	.06
MD	.07	-.12	.08	-.02	-.02	.02	.01	-.01
ESV	.06	-.01	.13	-.17	-.03	.15	.05	-.15
GF	-.17	.22	-.01	-.08	.03	.00	.11	-.16
EMO	.31**	.19	.07	-.14	-.13	.09	.05	.03
SECV	.15	.05	-.18	-.01	.01	.05	-.10	.05
SORG	.03	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.04	.14	-.05	-.03
VID	.14	.02	-.01	-.13	.07	-.03	-.13	.07
PQP	.18	.03	-.06	-.13	-.15	.13	-.05	.12
PERM	.11	-.02	-.12	.03	.09	-.12	-.18	.09

\*\*p<.002



Table 4  
 Point-biserial Correlations of ADF-F Variables with Gender Role Orientations  
 of Subjects and with Perceived Gender Role Orientations of Target Persons:  
 Male Subjects Responding to Male Friends

ADF-F Variable	Orientation of Subject				Perceived Orientation of TP			
	Fem	Masc	Andro	Undiff	Fem	Masc	Andro	Undiff
SV	-.14	.02	.20	-.09	-.01	-.15	.21	.03
UV	-.11	-.02	.09	.03	.04	-.10	.04	.07
SAV	.01	-.10	.13	-.03	.10	-.08	.00	.03
EXCL	.14	-.06	-.05	-.02	.10	-.08	.00	.03
MD	.14	-.05	.04	-.11	-.03	.17	-.22	-.01
ESV	-.14	-.10	.21	.04	.06	-.25*	.16	.13
GF	-.15	.20	.02	-.09	.19	-.23	.25*	-.03
EMO	.17	-.20	.05	.19	-.19	.06	.06	.06
SECV	-.14	.02	-.04	.14	.12	-.17	.09	.06
SORG	.11	-.08	.07	-.08	-.07	-.06	-.10	.18
VID	.07	-.05	.09	-.08	.23	-.23	.13	.04
PQP	.03	-.09	.05	.03	.15	-.19	.17	.01
PERM	-.01	-.23	.00	.25	.14	-.23	.01	.17

\*p&lt;.01

with the Masculine male friend and Ego Support Value. There was also one significant positive correlation associated with the Androgynous male friend and General Favorability.

Gender of Subjects, Gender of Target Persons,  
and the ADF-F Variables

#### Treatment of the Data

Direct comparisons were made between women's and men's responses on each ADF-F variable by means of a series of 2(Gender of subject) x 2(Gender of Target Person) ANOVAs. These analyses yielded statistically significant overall differences on nine of the 13 ADF-F variables. One of these nine comparisons indicated that the overall mean score for women on General Favorability was significantly higher than that for men, with no significant gender of subject by gender of Target Person interaction. It will be recalled that the General Favorability scale provides a measure of biased responses to the ADF-F items. Thus, the remaining eight significant gender differences may have been due, at least in part, to the tendency of women to respond to their Target Persons in an entirely positive way. Prior to further consideration, therefore, the scores for these eight ADF-F variables were corrected for General Favorability and then reanalyzed.



The correction procedure was an adaptation of that described by Wright (1969). This adaptation of Wright's procedure involved three steps. First, the regression of the General Favorability scores on each of the other ADF-F scores was computed. Second, the regression equation was used to predict a subjects's score on the ADF-F scale under consideration from her or his known score on General Favorability. Third, this predicted score was subtracted from the subject's actual score on the ADF-F scale. As a final step, a constant of fifteen was added to the difference to minimize the number of negative scores. Thus, the correction procedure yielded a set of eight ADF-F scores with the effects of each subject's "halo effect" removed. The correction procedure set the overall mean for any given ADF-F variable at 15.

#### Results: Uncorrected ADF-F Scores

The mean General Favorability uncorrected ADF-F scores for the male and female subjects' male and female friends are presented in Table 5. The table also lists the corresponding F-ratio for the gender of the subject (A), gender of the Target Person, a repeated measure (B), and the interaction of AxB. As previously stated, there were significant F-ratios for nine of the thirteen ADF-F variables: Stimulation Value, Utility Value, Self-Affirmation Value, Ego Support Value, General

Table 5  
 Mean GF-Uncorrected ADF-F Scores of Female and  
 Male Subjects Responding to Same- and Cross-  
 Gender Target Persons

ADF-F Variable	Gender of Subject (A)				F(A)	F(B)	F(AxB)
	Female		Male				
	Female	Male	Female	Male			
SV	19.94	19.40	17.72	18.42	10.16**	11.05	13.59
UV	23.47	21.66	20.35	20.96	10.45**	2.93	12.05*
SAV	24.06	21.90	21.04	20.93	15.07*	11.21**	9.16
EXCL	5.64	7.02	6.68	5.84	7.36	.24	4.12
MD	7.42	8.33	8.88	9.04	3.02	2.53	1.25
ESV	23.77	23.00	21.60	20.66	22.13*	8.27	.08
#GF	25.52	24.87	23.79	23.16	14.36*	3.41	1.13
EMO	15.82	14.87	14.66	13.53	3.82	7.05	.05
SECV	25.59	23.90	22.69	22.29	18.49*	8.35	3.13
SORG	7.56	9.66	10.09	9.32	2.31	3.36	15.78*
VID	19.45	16.28	15.24	17.63	4.40	.77	39.91*
PQP	25.37	23.52	21.89	22.65	17.10*	2.38	13.74*
PERM	16.37	15.02	12.70	14.07	16.11*	2.74	10.40**

\* $p < .001$   
 \*\* $p < .002$   
 \*\*\* $p < .003$

#Please note the main effect differences for GF; females rated their friends higher than males on GF. This effect was corrected for in subsequent analysis.



Favorability, Social Regulation, Voluntary Interdependence, Person-qua-Person, and Permanence.

Results: GF-Corrected ADF-F Scores

The mean General Favorability corrected ADF-F scores for the eight variables with significant F-ratios from the uncorrected analysis are presented in Table 6. The table also lists the corresponding F-ratio for the gender of the subject (A), gender of the Target Person, a repeated measure (B), and the interaction of AxB. With the GF corrected ADF-F scores, one of the eight variables, Stimulation Value, no longer has a significant F-ratio.

Four of the ADF-F variables had significant gender of subject by gender of friend interaction effects: Utility Value with  $F(1,204)=11.10$ ,  $p<.002$ ; Self-Affirmation Value with  $F(1,204)=10.74$ ,  $p<.002$ ; Voluntary Interdependence with  $F(1,204)=37.73$ ,  $p<.001$ ; Person-quo-Person with  $F(1,204)=18.47$ ,  $p<.001$ . A comparison of the means shows that female subjects rated their female friends higher than their male friends on all four variables while male subjects rated their male friends higher than their female friends.

Social Regulation showed the opposite pattern of means in its significant gender of subject by gender of friend interaction with  $F(1,204)=11.00$ ,  $p<.002$ . A comparison of the means shows that female subjects rated their male

Table 6  
 Mean GF-Corrected ADF-F Scores of Female and  
 Male Subjects Responding to Same- and Cross-  
 Gender Target Persons

ADF-F Variable	Gender of Subject (A)				F(A)	F(B)	F(AxB)
	Female		Male				
	Female	Male	Female	Male			
SV	15.66	15.14	14.31	14.87	3.31	2.31	2.79
UV	15.95 <sup>a</sup>	14.85 <sup>ab</sup>	14.01 <sup>b</sup>	15.16 <sup>ab</sup>	2.80	.00	11.10 <sup>**</sup>
SAV	15.98 <sup>a</sup>	14.99 <sup>ab</sup>	13.97 <sup>b</sup>	15.01 <sup>ab</sup>	5.48	.00	10.74 <sup>**</sup>
ESV	15.47	15.95	14.50	14.59	9.54 <sup>***</sup>	1.26	.56
SORG	13.91 <sup>a</sup>	15.18 <sup>ab</sup>	15.94 <sup>b</sup>	14.81 <sup>ab</sup>	1.34	.04	11.00 <sup>**</sup>
VID	16.59 <sup>a</sup>	14.00 <sup>b</sup>	13.22 <sup>b</sup>	16.04 <sup>a</sup>	1.03	.07	37.74 <sup>*</sup>
PQP	16.16 <sup>a</sup>	14.85 <sup>ab</sup>	13.80 <sup>b</sup>	15.15 <sup>ab</sup>	6.24	2.87	18.47 <sup>*</sup>
PERM	16.59 <sup>a</sup>	15.03 <sup>ab</sup>	13.34 <sup>b</sup>	14.87 <sup>ab</sup>	9.13 <sup>***</sup>	1.91	14.38 <sup>*</sup>

\* $p < .001$

\*\* $p < .002$

\*\*\* $p < .003$

a, b Means in a given row not having the same superscript differ significantly,  $p < .004$ , according to the Newman-Keuls test.



friends higher than they did their female friends on Social Regulation, while male subjects rated their female friends higher than their male friends.

There was a significant main effect of gender of the subject on Ego Support Value with  $F(1,204)=9.54$ ,  $p<.003$ . A comparison of means revealed that female subjects rated both their male and female friends higher on Ego Support Value than male subjects rated their friends

There was a significant main effect of gender of the subject on Permanence with  $F(1,204)=9.13$ ,  $p<.003$ , which was further qualified by an interaction between gender of the subject and gender of the Target Person with  $F(1,204)=14.38$ ,  $p<.001$ . A comparison of means revealed that female subjects rated their female friends higher on Permanence than they rated their male friends, while male subjects rated their male friends higher than they rated their female friends.

#### Summary of Results

1. Masculine and Androgynous females perceived their Masculine and Androgynous male friends as providing more Stimulation Value than other friends.
2. There were no other significant interactions between the GRO of the subject and the GRO of the Target Person besides Stimulation Value.

3. In both women's same-and cross-gender friendships, there were no relationships associated with the GRO of the subject, or with the masculine and feminine GRO of the TP.

4. In female same-gender friendships, there was a positive relationship between Androgynous friends and Stimulation Value, Utility Value, Self-Affirmation Value, Ego Support Value, and Voluntary Interdependence.

5. In female same-gender friendships, there was a negative relationship between Undifferentiated friends and Utility Value, Self-Affirmation Value, Ego Support Value, General Favorability, Security Value, and Person-Qua-Person.

6. In female cross-gender friendships, there was a positive relationship between Androgynous friends and Stimulation Value, Self-Affirmation Value, and Ego Support Value.

7. In female cross-gender friendships, there was a negative relationship between Undifferentiated friends and Stimulation Value, Self-Affirmation Value, Utility Value, and Ego Support Value.

8. In male same-gender friendships, there was no relationship associated with the GRO of the subject, or with the feminine or undifferentiated GRO of the TP.

9. In male same-gender friendships, there was a positive relationship between Androgynous friends and General Favorability.



10. In male same-gender friendships, there was a negative relationship between Masculine friends and Ego Support Value.
11. In male cross-gender friendships, there was no relationship associated with the GRO of the TP, or the masculine, androgynous, or undifferentiated GRO of the subject.
12. In male cross-gender friendships, there was a positive relationship between Feminine male subjects and Salience of Emotional Expression.
13. Both male and female subjects rated their same-gender friends higher than they did their cross-gender friends on Utility Value, Self-Affirmation Value, Voluntary Interdependence, Permanence, and Person-Qua-Person.
14. Both males and females rated Social Regulation higher in their cross-gender friendships.
15. Women rated their friends higher on Ego Support Value than men did.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to determine which, if any, of the variables measured by the Acquaintance Description Form would be significantly related to women's and men's gender-role orientations as measured by the Bem Sex-Role Inventory. Previous studies of gender-role orientations and relationships were neither sufficiently extensive nor sufficiently definitive to permit the statement of formal hypotheses. Therefore, the present research was guided by a series of questions rather than predictions. Even so, the questions themselves were based on assumptions about the probable impact of gender-roles. These assumptions led to some clear but tentative expectations.

The primary assumption was that androgynous persons typically display behavioral flexibility and a high level of adaptability from one situation to the next (e.g. Bem and Lenny, 1976). Therefore, androgynous individuals should be able to provide a wider range of interpersonal benefits and hence be able to form stronger and more rewarding friendships than nonandrogynous individuals. Furthermore, this same flexibility and adaptability should



make it easier for androgynous individuals to interact in equally sensitive and rewarding ways with same- and cross-gender friends, making gender-role orientation a factor attenuating gender differences in friendship.

The two major findings of the present study provided no confirmation for the expectation that subjects' gender-role orientations would attenuate gender differences in friendship and only limited confirmation for the expectation that persons who were androgynous would provide more rewarding friendships than those who were nonandrogynous. Rather, the results showed 1) that both women and men found their stronger and more rewarding friendships with same- rather than opposite-gender partners with no attenuating influence due to androgyny, and 2) women, but not men, rated friends of either gender whom they perceived to be androgynous as more rewarding than those whom they perceived to be nonandrogynous. Therefore, far from demonstrating that gender-role orientation is a factor attenuating gender differences in friendship, the present results indicate that gender-role orientation is yet another variable on which women's and men's friendships may be expected to differ. Taken together, the two major findings have implications that extend and refine our understanding of the different meanings that friendship has for women as compared to men.

## Same- versus Cross-gender Friendships

Both women and men perceived their same-gender friendships as being stronger, more enduring, and generally more rewarding than their cross-gender friendships. In terms of specific benefits, the subjects rated their same-gender friends as more helpful and cooperative, as more capable of facilitating the subject's awareness of her or his highly valued personal qualities, and as being unique and irreplaceable in the relationship. Both women and men considered their same-gender friendships to be more highly controlled by the rules and expectations of society.

This finding concerning the overall preference for same-gender friends is consistent with the bulk of the early work that describes women's friendships as communal and men's friendships as agentic (see, e.g., Bakan, 1966; Weiss and Lowenthal, 1975; Wright, 1982, 1989). To the degree that women, as a group, want and expect friendships to be centered around such personal matters as emotional expressiveness and the sharing of confidences, they are most likely to find those wants and expectations met in friendships with other women. To the degree that men, as a group, want and expect friendships to be centered around goal-directed tasks and mutually engaging activities, they are more likely to have those wants and expectations met in friendships with other men. In other words, cross-gender



friendships are apt to be less intense and rewarding simply because friendship itself has a different meaning for most women than for most men.

#### Perceived Androgyny and Friendship: Another Gender Difference

The women in this study rated friends of either gender whom they perceived to be androgynous as more supportive and encouraging, as more self-affirming, and as more helpful and cooperative than those whom they perceived to be nonandrogynous. In contrast, women rated friends of either gender whom they perceived to be undifferentiated as generally unrewarding. Thus, given that women as a group indicated stronger and more rewarding friendships with same- rather than with cross-gender partners, their friendships with members of either sex were influenced by the partner's gender-role orientation. For men, the perceived gender-role orientation of one's friend was not related to the strength of the friendship nor to the rewards provided by the friend.

#### A Broadened View of the Meaning of Friendship for Women

The fact that women's friendships were related to androgyny whereas men's were not suggests that women are responsive to a wider range of possibilities within

friendship. Women found their friendships with partners possessing both feminine and masculine qualities as the most rewarding and those with partners possessing neither as the least rewarding. If a woman perceives a friend as having a feminine gender-role orientation, and presumably as providing a communal friendship, she finds that friend rewarding. If a woman perceives a friend as having a masculine gender-role orientation, and presumably as providing an agentic friendship, she also finds that friend rewarding. However, if she perceives a friend as having an androgynous gender-role orientation, and presumably providing a friendship that is both communal and agentic, she finds that friend especially rewarding.

Viewed in this light, the findings suggest that the characterization of men's friendships as agentic is appropriate, but that the characterization of women's friendships as communal is not quite accurate. This inaccuracy may be understood perhaps most clearly by restating the difference in terms of what the characterizations exclude as well as what they include: men's friendships are agentic but not communal; women's friendships are communal but not agentic. To state this difference in a modification of Wright's (1982) figurative expression, "Men's friendships tend to be side by side (not face to face) while women's friendships tend to be face to face (but not side by side)." The present findings imply



that, whereas men's friendships do tend to be exclusively agentic, women's friendships tend to be both communal and agentic. Or, more figuratively, men's friendships tend to be side by side; women's friendships tend to be both face to face and side by side.

#### A Modified View of Gender Differences in Friendship

Bell's (1981) conclusion that "there is no social factor more important than sex in leading to friendship variations" (p.55), although possibly overdrawn, found support in the present findings. Women and men do appear to differ in the meaning they attach to friendship. These different meanings, however, are not quite what Bell and others have typically assumed them to be. Scholars (e.g., Caldwell and Peplau, 1982; Hacker, 1981) typically characterize women's friendships as involving a great deal of talk, self-disclosure, emotional expressiveness, and the sharing of confidences-- all to the relative exclusion of mutual involvement in tasks, projects, and activities external to the friendship itself. These same scholars typically characterize men's friendships in the opposite way. The real difference appears to be that women regard friendship as a broader and more comprehensive relationship than do men.

The pattern that emerges for women is that a good friendship is a relationship in which the partners find

satisfaction in working together, playing together, going places together, sharing confidences, and relating to one another in deeply personal ways. When and how much they do "agentic" things and "communal" things undoubtedly varies from time to time and from situation to situation.

The pattern that emerges for men is that a good friendship is a relationship in which the partners enjoy the camaraderie of working together, playing together, going places together, and concentrating on relatively impersonal matters. This does not mean that men never share confidences or get deeply personal in their friendships, but much evidence to date (see, e.g., Wright, 1989) indicates that they do so much less than women do.

The observation that men's friendships are so much less communal than women's friendships has generated a certain amount of clinical concern about the "inexpressive male" (see, e.g., Lewis, 1978). The assumption lying behind this concern is that it is psychologically, and sometimes physically, unhealthy to be emotionally inhibited and inexpressive. This concern is probably exaggerated and possibly completely unjustified. Although men tend to be inexpressive in their friendships, they are not necessarily inexpressive in other kinds of relationships. In other words, it is not that men, as compared to women, are emotionally inexpressive, but that men do not see friendship as a relationship in which such expressiveness



is necessary or appropriate. Tognoli (1980) observed that men tend to confine emotional expressiveness and deeply personal sharing to close relatives and to marital or romantic partners.

#### Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

In addition to providing evidence that both women and men find their stronger and more rewarding friendships with same-gender partners, the present study revealed that women who perceived friends of either gender as androgynous considered those friends to be especially rewarding. These findings suggest that the behavioral flexibility associated with androgyny does, indeed, enable an androgynous person to provide a broader range of reward and that women are more responsive than men to that broader range of rewards. One plausible interpretation of women's greater responsiveness to androgynous friends is that, contrary to previous characterizations of women's friendships as almost exclusively communal, they are both communal and agentic. This interpretation, in addition to some methodological limitations of the present study, suggests several possibilities for further research.

First, our suggested characterization of women's friendships as being both communal and agentic, although plausible, should be tested directly. Previous studies of gender differences in friendship (e.g., Caldwell and

Peplau, 1982; Fischer and Narus, 1981; Hacker, 1981) have explored only such communal variables as intimacy, self-disclosure, and "just talk," and found them to be significantly stronger in women's than in men's friendships. These same studies have not actually measured the agentic aspects of friendship, but only assumed that if a friendship is not communal, it must be agentic. Further studies of gender and friendship could directly observe or measure both communal and agentic aspects of personal relationships. Only if this is done will we be able to determine whether women's and men's friendships actually differ in agentic as well as in communal characteristics.

Second, the present study was not based on data from pairs of friends responding to questions about one another. Rather, it was based on data from one person responding to questions about one same- and one cross-gender friend. Therefore, the finding that women indicate a relationship between friendship rewards and the perceived androgyny of their friends is difficult to interpret precisely. The finding may mean that women are correct in the way they perceive the gender-role orientations of their friends and consider their androgynous friends to be more rewarding. It may also mean that women who find their friends more rewarding rate them as androgynous. Further studies of a truly dyadic kind could clarify this issue. Is a person's ability to be especially rewarding to a woman friend based



on her or his own self-perceived androgyny? Or is androgyny a characteristic a woman attributes to a friend because that friend is especially rewarding? Or might both conclusions be correct? Only studies providing data about a friend's gender-role orientation as perceived by both the subject and the friend herself or himself can provide answers to such questions.

Third, interested researchers may be well advised to restandardize the Bem Sex-Role Inventory or to devise another means of measuring gender-role orientation. It may be necessary to update gender-role measures as society goes through changes in perceptions about women's and men's roles. The construction of the BSRI was based on the social desirability of a list of specific characteristics for women in general and a separate list for men in general. As women and men gain more freedom in their societal roles, the characteristics that differentiate between women and men on social desirability may change. For example, increasing numbers of women are in the work force and in professional positions. Therefore, such traits as assertiveness, independence, and competitiveness may be more socially desirable for women today than they were when the BSRI was developed almost twenty years ago. By the same token, increasing numbers of men are sharing in household duties and child rearing responsibilities. Therefore, such traits as warmth, expressiveness, and

gentleness may now be more socially desirable for men than they once were. Such changes may make it necessary to redesign the BSRI to provide a more refined and accurate portrayal of masculinity, femininity, and androgyny in contemporary American life.

Finally, concerning the characteristics of the sample for the present study, the subjects participating in the present study were non-student adults representing a broad range of ages and occupational and educational levels. The relatively large number of volunteers involved makes this a good cross section of the general population or, more specifically, a general urban population. Previous studies of attraction and interpersonal relationships have relied heavily upon convenience and on "captive" samples of college students. Because college students represent a highly specialized population, researchers are confronted with the possibility that their results may not be applicable to non-student samples. Although that particular problem is not an issue in the present study, another problem is, i.e., the diversity of the sample. One cannot be certain whether the results of this study reflect responses from the entire sample or from a limited sub-sample contributing an especially strong effect. In view of previous findings, this possibility seems unlikely. According to previous research, the ADF-F variables are not appreciably affected by age or occupational status (see



e.g., Wright and Bergloff, 1982). In addition, median scores on the BSRI in the present sample were virtually identical to those found by Bem (1974) in her studies with college students. Even so, in future studies, researchers might be well advised to use either more carefully delimited samples or extremely large samples that include clearly identifiable subsamples.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A  
ACQUAINTANCE DESCRIPTION FORM (ADF-F)

## ACQUAINTANCE DESCRIPTION FORM (ADF-F)

## Statements

This form lists some statements about your reactions to an acquaintance called the Target Person (TP). Please indicate your reaction to each statement on the special answer sheet you have been given. Perhaps some of the situations have never come up in your relationship with TP. If this happens, try your best to imagine what things would be like if the situation did come up.

1. TP can come up with thoughts and ideas that give me new and different things to think about.
2. If I were short of cash and needed money in a hurry, I could count on TP to be willing to loan it to me.
3. TP makes it easy for me to express my most important personal qualities in my everyday life.
4. Because I think of my relationship with TP as a "one-and-only" arrangement, I would consider it wrong to form the same type of relationship with anyone else unless TP and I had already decided to call it quits.
5. TP's ways of dealing with people make him/her rather difficult to get along with.
6. If I accomplish something that makes me look especially competent or skillful, I can count on TP to notice it and appreciate my ability.
7. TP is a genuinely likable person.
8. When I get together with TP, my emotional reactions are strong enough that I am definitely aware of them.
9. I can converse freely and comfortably with TP without worrying about being teased or criticized if I unthinkingly say something pointless, inappropriate, or just plain silly.
10. Because of the kind of relationship we have, most people would think it unnatural or improper if TP and I did not spend quite a bit of time together.



11. If I hadn't heard from TP for several days without knowing why, I would make it a point to contact her/him just for the sake of keeping in touch.
12. If TP were to move away or "disappear" for some reason, I would really miss the special kind of companionship (s)he provides.
13. If I were asked to guess how long my relationship with TP will last, I would say I consider myself committed to the relationship "till death do us part."
14. When we get together to work on a task or project, TP can stimulate me to think of new ways to approach jobs and solve problems.
15. If I were looking for a job, I could count on TP to try his/her best to help me find one.
16. TP is the kind of person who makes it easy for me to express my true thoughts and feelings.
17. Because my relationship with TP is not the kind that people ordinarily get jealous about, I would consider it perfectly all right if TP were to have the same basic type of relationship with another person or persons.
18. I can count on having to go out of my way to do things that will keep my relationship with TP from "falling apart."
19. If I am in an embarrassing situation, I can count on TP to do things that will make me feel as much as ease as possible.
20. If I were asked to list a few people that I thought represented the very best in "human nature" TP is one of the persons I would name.
21. When TP and I get together, we spend a certain amount of time talking about the good feelings and emotions that are associated with our relationship.
22. TP is the kind of person who likes to "put me down" or embarrass me with seemingly harmless little jokes or comments.

23. If I thought realistically about it, I would conclude that at least half the things TP and I do together are necessary because of people's expectations or other social pressures that have nothing to do with the really personal aspects of our relationship.
24. If TP and I could arrange our schedules so that we each had a free day, I would try to arrange my schedule so that I had the same free day as TP.
25. TP expresses so many personal qualities I like that I think of her/him as being "one of a kind," a truly unique person.
26. I consider my relationship with TP so permanent that if s(he) had to move to a distant city for some reason, I would move to the same city to keep the relationship going.
27. TP can get me involved in interesting new activities that I probably wouldn't consider if it weren't for him/her.
28. If I were short of time or faced with an emergency, I could count on TP to help with errands or chores to make things as convenient for me as possible.
29. TP treats me in ways that encourage me to be my "true self."
30. Considering the kind of relationship we have, there are certain kinds of things that TP and I do together that I would consider inappropriate for either of us to do with anyone else.
31. I have to be very careful about what I say if I try to talk to TP about topics that s(he) considers controversial or touchy.
32. If I have some success or good fortune, I can count on TP to be happy and congratulatory about it.
33. TP has the kind of personal qualities that would make most almost anyone respect and admire her/him if they got to know her/him well.
34. If I thought realistically about my relationship with TP, I would conclude that many other things are more important than its emotional aspects.



35. I feel free to reveal private or personal information about myself to TP because (s)he is not the kind of person who would use such information to my disadvantage.
36. Many of my acquaintances have such definite ideas about the responsibilities that go along with my relationship with TP that they would strongly disapprove if I did not live up to them.
37. If I had decided to leave town on a certain day for a leisurely trip or vacation and discovered that TP was leaving for the same place a day later, I would seriously consider waiting a day in order to travel with him/her.
38. "False sincerity" and "phoniness" are the kinds of terms that occur to me when I am trying to think honestly about my impressions of TP.
39. If my relationship with TP became too dissatisfying to be worth the trouble, I could call it off or ease out of it with little difficulty.
40. When we discuss beliefs, attitudes and opinions, TP introduces viewpoints that help me see things in a new light.
41. TP is willing to spend time and energy to help me succeed at my own personal tasks and projects, even if s(he) is not directly involved.
42. TP is the kind of person who makes it easy for me to do the kinds of things I really want to do.
43. Because I regard my relationship with TP to be a pretty exclusive thing, I would consider it wrong for either of us to develop the same basic type of relationship with anyone else unless we had decided to go our separate ways.
44. I have a hard time really understanding some of TP's actions and comments.
45. If I have to defend any of my beliefs and convictions, TP is the kind of person who supports me, even if (s)he does not share those beliefs or convictions with me.
46. TP is a pleasant person to be around.

47. If I thought realistically about it, I would conclude that I spend very little time thinking about the emotions I most often experience in my relationship with TP.
48. When I am with TP, I feel free to "let my guard down" completely because (s)he avoids doing and saying things that might make me look inadequate or inferior.
49. The kinds of things TP and I do together are strongly influenced by definite social obligations that go along with the kind of relationship we have.
50. When I plan for leisure time activities, I make it a point to get in touch with TP to see if we can arrange to do things together.
51. When TP and I get together, I enjoy a special kind of companionship I don't get from any of my other acquaintances.
52. If something happened so that my relationship with TP was no longer satisfying, I would keep on with it anyway for legal, moral or ethical reasons.
53. I can count on TP to be ready with really good suggestions when we are looking for some activity or project to engage in.
54. If I were sick or hurt, I could count on TP to do things that would make it easier to take.
55. Doing things with TP seems to bring out my more important traits and characteristics.
56. Because I regard my relationship with TP to be a "one-and-only" arrangement, I would be very disappointed if I found out that TP had developed the same basic type of relationship with anyone else.
57. I can count on communication with TP to break down when we try to discuss things that are touchy or controversial.
58. TP has a way of making me feel like a really worthwhile person, even when I do not seem to be very competent or successful at my more important activities.
59. It is easy to think of favorable things to say about TP.



60. If I were to list the most important aspects of my relationship with tp, positive emotional experiences are among the things I would include.
61. TP is quick to point out anything that (s)he sees as a flaw in my character.
62. If I thought about it really objectively, I would conclude that society has quite a few rules and regulations about the kind of relationship I have with TP.
63. If I had just gotten off work or out of class and had some free time, I would wait around and leave with TP if (s)he were leaving the same place an hour or so later..
64. TP is the kind of person I would miss very much if something happened to interfere with our acquaintanceship.
65. If I thought realistically about it, I would conclude that my relationship with TP could easily be dissolved if necessary.

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APPENDIX B  
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET



## Background Information Sheet

Subject Number \_\_\_\_\_

Your Gender F \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_

Your Age \_\_\_\_\_

Your City and State of

Residence \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status Single \_\_\_\_\_ Married \_\_\_\_\_

Divorced \_\_\_\_\_ Separated \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Education Level

Completed \_\_\_\_\_

What is your present

Occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you and your closest same-gender friend been  
involved in your present friendship

relationship? \_\_\_\_\_ years, \_\_\_\_\_ months

How long have you and your closest cross-gender friend been  
involved in your present friendship

relationship? \_\_\_\_\_ years, \_\_\_\_\_ months

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