Case Study 7.1

Sexist Perspectives: Old and New

As you can see from the names and dates for the individuals listed below, sexist attitudes have existed throughout history including some of the most highly educated and powerful men in various cultures. Match the statement to the person who made it:

1. There’s nothing in the world worse than woman -- save some other woman.
A. Euripides (480-406 B.C.E.)

2. Women are the Gate of Hell.
B. Erasmus (1469-1536)

3. (Woman) is not oppressed, for nature has ordained that she should live under the protection of a husband while she fulfills her mission in life as a mother.
C. Aristophanes (444-380 B.C.E.)

4. There is no evil so terrible as a woman.
D. St. Jerome (340-420)

5. (There is) a larger amount of narcissism in women . . . to be loved is a stronger need for them than to love.
E. President Richard M. Nixon (1913-1994)

6. Women are to be talked to as below men and above children.
F. August Strindberg (1849-1912)

7. Most women have no character.
G. Lionel Tiger (1937-present)

8. A wise woman is twice a fool.
H. Lord Chesterfield (1694-1773)

9. Equality will cause problems. Doctors and nurses, executives and secretaries, producers and actresses can and do manage because there is a status and dominance difference between them. It is relatively “normal” for men to seek sexual access to females who are their subordinates.
I. Alexander Pope (1688-1744)

10. I am proud of the women . . . who don’t hold office but hold the hands of the men who do.
J. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)
Critical Thinking Questions:

1. Having taken this quiz, why do you think there has been a consistent pattern of negative attitudes toward women across different cultures and different eras?

2. All of the quotations are sexist, but which of them expressed an idea that bothered you the most? Explain.
Case Study 7.2

Majority vs. Minority: Defining a Pluralist Perspective

Read and write a separate response to each of the following questions based on whether or not you believe it represents a policy or activity that encourages pluralism.

1. Should schools in neighborhoods that serve predominantly Mexican-American students serve primarily Mexican food in the cafeteria?

2. Should schools in neighborhoods that serve predominantly Jewish children serve primarily kosher food in the cafeteria? Substitute Jewish holidays for Christian holidays?

3. Should schools in predominantly black neighborhoods be allowed to enforce African American hair and dress codes? Serve primarily "soul" food? Require everyone to complete black history courses?

Critical Thinking Questions:

1. What does each of these three questions have in common?

2. What is different about the third question from the previous two questions?

3. On what basis would you reject all three questions as contradictory to pluralism?

(Feedback for #3)

What each question does is replace the current majority (whites) with the majority that happens to live in that neighborhood (Mexican-Americans, Jews, and African Americans respectively), but continues the practice of imposing the desires and standards of the majority on the minority groups. Pluralism does not advocate for imposing the wishes of the majority on minority groups. Pluralism advocates for mutual respect and supports policies and practices (in schools and elsewhere) that affirm the value of each diverse group in society. Pluralism promotes group identification as part of one’s individuality and supports policies and practices to affirm that individuality in every person.