FOURTEENTH EDITION

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN SEXUALITY

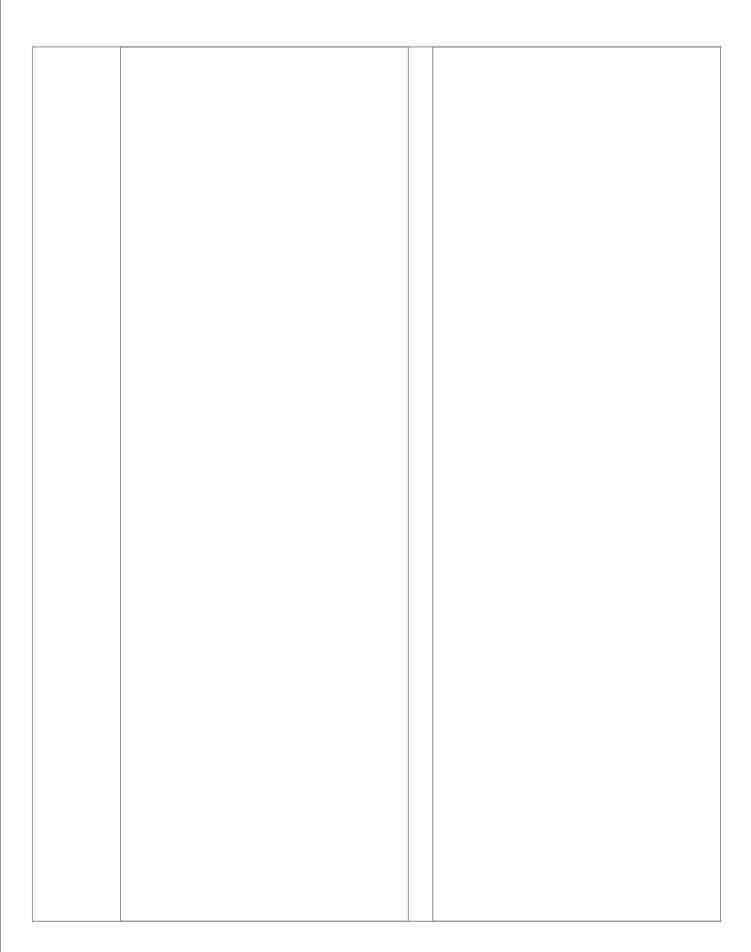


JANET SHIBLEY HYDE JOHN D. DELAMATER



HUMAN SEXUALITY





UNDERSTANDING HUMAN SEXUALITY

Fourteenth Edition

Janet Shibley Hyde

University of Wisconsin—Madison

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UNDERSTANDING HUMAN SEXUALITY, FOURTEENTH EDITION

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In Memoriam

John D. DeLamater (1940–2017)

In 2017 I lost my coauthor and husband, John DeLamater, to a fatal heart attack. A professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, John dedicated his career to the field of sexuality. He taught an undergraduate human sexuality course every year beginning in 1975. John worked hard at that course, always seeking new ideas and training dozens of graduate students as teaching assistants. Especially worthy of note is John's outstanding service to the field as editor of the *Journal of Sex Research* for two terms totaling 10 years. He was deeply committed to the journal and mentored many authors in ways to improve their papers.

John's contributions to sexuality research began with an early study in the 1970s of patterns of what was then called premarital sex among college students, resulting in a book coauthored with Patricia MacCorquodale. Over the last decade, John devoted himself to developing a life cycle approach to sexuality, resulting in multiple journal articles and a coedited book, Sex for Life: From Virginity to Viagra.

John earned his PhD at the University of Michigan in 1969 in social psychology at a time when Michigan had a remarkable joint PhD program between sociology and psychology. John continued to be committed to social psychology throughout his career, teaching the undergraduate course annually. He was the author of the textbook *Social Psychology*, framed for an audience of sociologists.

His contributions to the field of sex research are undeniable and were recognized by awards such as the Kinsey Award from the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality. He will be sorely missed.



Author Biographies

Janet Shibley Hyde, the Helen Thompson Woolley Professor of Psychology and Gender & Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, received her education at Oberlin College and the University of California, Berkeley. She has taught a course in human sexuality since 1974, first at Bowling Green State University, then at Denison University, and now at the University of Wisconsin. Her research interests are in gender differences and gender development in adolescence. Author of the textbook *The* Psychology of Women and Gender: Half the Human Experience +, she is a past president of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality and is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She has received many other honors, including an award for excellence in teaching at Bowling Green State University, the Chancellor's Award for teaching at the University of Wisconsin, and the Kinsey Award from the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality for her contributions to sex research. In 2000-01 she served as one of the three scientific editors for U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher's report Promoting Sexual Health and Responsible Sexual Behavior. In 2019, Dr. Hyde was the inaugural recipient of the Alfred C. Kinsey Award from the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University.

John D. DeLamater passed away in December 2017. He was the Conway-Bascom Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, having received his education at the University of California, Santa Barbara and the University of Michigan. He created the human sexuality course at the University of Wisconsin in 1975 and taught it regularly. He published papers on the influence of marital duration, attitudes about sex for elders. and illness and medications on sexual expression. He coedited the Handbook of the Sociology of Sexualities. He was the coauthor of the textbook Social Psychology. He was a Fellow of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality and the 2002 recipient of the Kinsey Award from the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality He received awards for excellence in teaching from the Department of Sociology and the University of Wisconsin and was a Fellow and past Chair of the Teaching Academy at the University of Wisconsin. He regularly taught a seminar for graduate students on teaching under graduate courses.



Contents in Brief

CHAPTER	1	Sexuality in Perspective	1
CHAPTER 2	2	Theoretical Perspectives on Sexuality	23
CHAPTER 3	3	Sex Research	42
CHAPTER 4	4	Sexual Anatomy	67
CHAPTER !	5	Sex Hormones, Sexual Differentiation, and the Menstrual Cycle	89
CHAPTER 6	6	Pregnancy and Childbirth	114
CHAPTER	7	Contraception and Abortion	146
CHAPTER 8	8	Sexual Arousal	179
CHAPTER 9	9	Sexuality and the Life Cycle: Childhood and Adolescence	214
CHAPTER 10	0	Sexuality and the Life Cycle: Adulthood	235
CHAPTER 1	1	Attraction, Love, and Communication	259
CHAPTER 12	2	Gender and Sexuality	286
CHAPTER 13	3	Sexual Orientation: Gay, Straight, or Bi?	310
CHAPTER 14	4	Variations in Sexual Behavior	338
CHAPTER 1	5	Sexual Coercion	361
CHAPTER 16	6	Sex for Sale	381
CHAPTER 1	7	Sexual Disorders and Sex Therapy	408
CHAPTER 18	8	Sexually Transmitted Infections	431
CHAPTER 19	9	Ethics, Religion, and Sexuality	453
CHAPTER 20	0	Sex and the Law	478
EPILOGUE		Looking to the Future: Sexuality Education	505
BIBLIOGRAF	PHY		B-2
GLOSSARY			G-1
INDEX			I-2
DIRECTORY	OF F	RESOURCES	DR-2
connec	ť	McGraw-Hill Education Psychology APA Documentation Style Guide	



Contents

Preface xv



CHAPTER 1

Sexuality in Perspective 1

Sex and Gender 2

The History of Understanding Sexuality: Religion and Science 3

Religion • Science

The Media 6

Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Sexuality 7

Variations in Sexual Techniques •

Masturbation • Premarital and Extramarital

Sex • Sex with Same-Gender Partners •

Standards of Attractiveness • Social-Class and Ethnic-Group Variations in the United States

A Sexually Diverse World: Sexuality in Two Societies

A Sexually Diverse World: Sex in China 16

The Significance of Cross-Cultural Studies

Cross-Species Perspectives on Sexuality 18

Masturbation • Same-Gender Sexual Behavior • Sexual Signaling • Human Uniqueness • The Nonsexual Uses of Sexual Behavior

The Sexual Health Perspective 20

Critical Thinking Skill 21

Summary 22

Suggestions for Further Reading 22



CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Perspectives on Sexuality 23

Evolutionary Theories 24

Sociobiology • Evolutionary Psychology • Gender-Neutral Evolutionary Theory

Psychological Theories 27

Psychoanalytic Theory • Learning Theory • Social Exchange Theory • Cognitive Theories

A Sexually Diverse World: Learning Theory and Sexual Orientation in a Non-Western Society 33

Critical Theories 35

Feminist Theory • Queer Theory

Sociological Perspectives 36

Symbolic Interaction Theory • Sexual Scripts • Social Institutions

Critical Thinking Skill 40

Summary 41

Suggestions for Further Reading 41

CHAPTER 3

Sex Research 42

Measuring Sex 43

Self-Reports • Behavioral Measures • Implicit Measures • Biological Measures

Issues in Sex Research 45

Sampling • Accuracy of Measurement • Extraneous Factors • Ethical Issues

The Major Sex Surveys 50

The Kinsey Report • The NHSLS • The NSSHB • Sexual Behavior in Britain and Australia • Ethnicity in Research • Magazine Surveys

Milestones in Sex Research: Alfred C. Kinsey 51

Studies of Special Populations 55

Web-Based Surveys 55

Media Content Analysis 56

Qualitative Methods 57



CONTENTS

Milestones in Sex Research: Masters and Johnson:
The Physiology of Sexual Response 58

Experiments 60

Meta-Analysis 61

Statistical Concepts 62

Average • Variability • Average versus

Normal • Incidence, Prevalence, and

Frequency • Correlation

Critical Thinking Skill 64

Summary 65

Suggestions for Further Reading 66



CHAPTER 4 Sexual Anatomy 67

Female Sexual Organs 68

External Organs

A Sexually Diverse World: Female Genital Cutting 72
Internal Organs • The Breasts

Male Sexual Organs 77

External Organs • Internal Organs

First Person: The Pelvic Exam 82

Cancer of the Sex Organs 82

Breast Cancer • Cancer of the Cervix, Endometrium, and Ovaries • Cancer of the Prostate

86

First Person: Testicular Examination
Cancer of the Testes

Critical Thinking Skill 87

Summary 88

Suggestion for Further Reading 88



CHAPTER 5

Sex Hormones, Sexual Differentiation, and the Menstrual Cycle 89

Sex Hormones 90

Sex Hormone Systems in Males
Systems in Females

• Sex Hormone

Prenatal Sexual Differentiation 93

Sex Chromosomes • Gonads • Prenatal Hormones and the Genitals • Descent of the Testes and Ovaries • Brain Differentiation • Homologous Organs • Atypical Prenatal Gender Differentiation Milestones in Sex Research: Endocrine Disrupters 95

Sexual Differentiation during Puberty 99

Changes in Girls • Changes in Boys • Changes in Behavior

A Sexually Diverse World: The Debate over the Treatment of Intersex Individuals 100

The Menstrual Cycle 105

Biology of the Menstrual Cycle • Menstrual Problems • Psychological Aspects of the Menstrual Cycle • Cycles in Men

Critical Thinking Skill 112

Summary 113

Suggestions for Further Reading 113

CHAPTER 6

Pregnancy and Childbirth 114

Conception 115

Sperm Meets Egg: The Incredible Journey • Improving the Chances of Conception:
Making a Baby

First Person: Planning a Pregnancy? 116

Development of the Conceptus 118

The Embryo and Its Support Systems • Fetal Development

Pregnancy 121

The Stages of Pregnancy • Sex during
Pregnancy • Nutrition during Pregnancy •
Effects of Substances Taken during Pregnancy

Birth 128

The Beginning of Labor • The Stages of Labor • Cesarean Section (C-Section) • Childbirth Options

After the Baby Is Born: The Postpartum Period 132

Physical Changes • Psychological Changes • Attachment to the Baby • Sex Postpartum

Breast-Feeding 134

Biological Mechanisms • Physical and Mental Health

Problem Pregnancies 135

Ectopic Pregnancy • Pseudocyesis
(False Pregnancy) • Pregnancy-Induced
Hypertension • Viral Infection during
Pregnancy • Birth Defects • Rh
Incompatibility • Miscarriage
(Spontaneous Abortion) • Preterm Birth





Infertility 138

Causes of Infertility • Psychological Aspects of Infertility • Treatment of Infertility

Assisted Reproductive Technologies 140

Artificial Insemination • Sperm Banks • Test-Tube Babies • Embryo Transfer • GIFT • Gender Selection • Prenatal Genetic Diagnosis

Critical Thinking Skill 144

Summary 144

Suggestions for Further Reading 145

CHAPTER 7

Contraception and Abortion 146

Hormonal Methods 147

The Combination Pill • Other Kinds of
Pills • The Patch • The Vaginal
Ping • Dana Propaga Injections ("The Sh

Ring • Depo-Provera Injections ("The Shot") • Emergency Contraception

First Person: Margaret Sanger–Birth Control Pioneer 150

LARC 153

Implants • IUDs

Condoms 155

The Male Condom • The Female Condom

Diaphragms, FemCap, and the Sponge 158

The Diaphragm • FemCap • The Sponge

Spermicides 160

Withdrawal 162

Fertility Awareness (Rhythm) Methods 163

Sterilization 165

Male Sterilization • Female Sterilization

Milestones in Sex Research: History of the Development of Sophisticated Methods of Contraception 168

Psychological Aspects: Attitudes toward Contraception 168

Abortion 169

Abortion Procedures • Psychological Aspects • Men and Abortion

A Sexually Diverse World: Abortion in Cross-Cultural Perspective 172

New Advances in Contraception 174

Male Methods • Female Methods

Critical Thinking Skill 177

Summary 177

Suggestions for Further Reading 178

CHAPTER 8

Sexual Arousal 179

The Sexual Response Cycle 180

Excitement • Orgasm • Resolution • More on Women's Orgasms

Other Models of Sexual Response 185

Kaplan's Triphasic Model • The Sexual Excitation-Inhibition Model • Emotion and Arousal

First Person: William Masters and Virginia Johnson 187

Neural and Hormonal Bases of Arousal 189

The Brain, the Spinal Cord, and Sex • Brain Control of Sexual Response • Hormones and Sex • Sex Offenders—Castration or Incarceration?

A Sexually Diverse World: Sexuality and Disability 192

Milestones in Sex Research: Mapping the Sexual Brain 195

Pheromones 199

Sexual Techniques 200

Erogenous Zones • One-Person Sex • Two-Person Sex • Aphrodisiacs • Sexual Satisfaction

First Person: The Protestant Ethic:

Sex as Work 210

First Person: A Personal Growth Exercise—Getting to Know Your Own Body 211

Critical Thinking Skill 212

Summary 212

Suggestions for Further Reading 213

CHAPTER 9

Sexuality and the Life Cycle: Childhood and Adolescence 214

Data Sources 215

Infancy and the Preschool Years
(Birth to 4 Years) 216

Attachment • Self-Stimulation • Child-Child Encounters • Sexual Knowledge and Interests • Knowledge about Gender

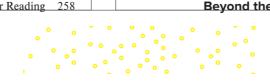
Childhood (5 to 11 Years) 218

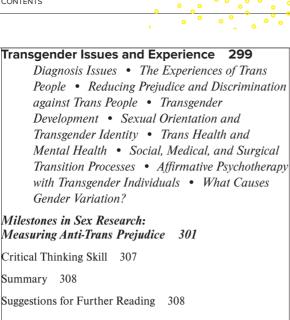
Masturbation • Heterosexual Behavior • Same-Gender Sexual Behavior • Sex Knowledge and Interests • The Sexualization of Children



CONTENTS Xi

	Adolescence (12 to 18 Years) 220	CHAPTER 11
	Masturbation • Same-Gender Sexual Behavior • Heterosexual Behavior •	Attraction, Love, and
	Too Early Sex • Romantic Relationships •	Communication 259
	Internet Use, Risk, and Sexting Risky Sex and the Adolescent Brain	Attraction 260 The Girl Next Door • Birds of a
	Milestones in Sex Research: The Impact of the Media on Adolescent Sexuality 222	Feather • Physical Attractiveness • The Interpersonal Marketplace • Attraction
	Milestones in Sex Research: Teen Pregnancy and Parenthood 228	Online • Explaining Our Preferences
	The College Years 230 Masturbation • Patterns of Heterosexual Behavior • Casual Sex • Same-Gender Sexual Behavior	Intimacy 264 Defining Intimacy • Intimacy and Self- Disclosure • Measuring Intimacy Love 266
		Triangular Theory of Love • Attachment
	How Sexuality Aids in Development 232	Theory of Love • Love Styles • Passionate
	Critical Thinking Skill 233	and Companionate Love • The Biology
	Summary 234	of Love • Measuring Love • Two- Component Theory of Love • Cross-Cultural
	Suggestions for Further Reading 234	Research
		Milestones in Sex Research: Jealousy 270
10 m	CHAPTER 10	Communication 275
	Sexuality and the Life Cycle:	Communication and Relationships • Techniques
1	Adulthood 235	of Good Communication • Fighting Fair • Checking Out Sexy
W. Commission	Sex and the Single Person 236 Sexual Unfolding • The Never Married • Being Single	Signals • Relationship Education A Sexually Diverse World: Gender Differences in Communication 278
	Cohabitation 239	First Person: How Solid Is Your Relationship? 282
	Marital Relationships 240	Critical Thinking Skill 284
	Marital Sexuality • Sexual Patterns	
	in Marriage • Sex and the Two-Career	Summary 284
	Family • Keeping Your Mate	Suggestions for Further Reading 285
	Milestones in Sex Research: Are Americans Having Sex More Frequently? 243	CHAPTER 12
	Nonmonogamous Relationships 246 How Many People Engage in Extramarital	Gender and Sexuality 286
	Sex? • Influences on Extramarital	Gender Roles and Stereotypes 287
	Sex • Attitudes toward Extramarital Sex • Internet Infidelity • Equity and	Gender Roles and Ethnicity • Socialization
	Extramarital Sex • Open Nonmonogamous	Psychological Gender Differences 291
	Relationships • Consequences of	Gender Differences in Sexuality 292
	Nonmonogamous Relationships	Masturbation • Attitudes about Casual
	Postmarital Sex 250	Sex • Use of Pornography • Arousal to
	Sex in Later Life 251	Erotica • The Orgasm Gap • Sex Drive
	Physical Changes in Women • Physical Changes in Men • Attitudes about Sex and the	Why the Differences? 294
	Elderly • Sexual Behavior	Are the Differences Bogus? • Biological Factors • Cultural Factors • Other Factors
	Critical Thinking Skill 257	A Sexually Diverse World:
	Summary 257	A Sexually Diverse World: Male Sexuality 297
	Suggestions for Further Reading 258	Beyond the Young Adults 298







CHAPTER 13

Sexual Orientation: Gay, Straight, or Bi? 310

Attitudes toward Gays and Lesbians 311

Attitudes • Gays and Lesbians as a Minority Group

Milestones in Sex Research: Does Gaydar Exist? 313

Life Experiences of LGBs 316

LGB Development • Lesbian, Gay, and
Bisexual Culture and Communities • Gay and
Lesbian Relationships • Lesbian and
Gay Families

Milestones in Sex Research: The Ethics of Sex Research: The Tearoom Trade 320

First Person: A Gay Couple: Lee and Bob 321

How Many People Are Gay, Straight, or Bi? 322

Sexual Orientation and Mental Health 324

Sin and the Medical Model • Research Evidence • Can Sexual Orientation Be Changed by Therapy?

Why Do People Become Gay or Heterosexual? 325

Biological Theories • Learning Theory • Sociological Theory • The Bottom Line

Differences between Gay Men and Lesbians 329

Sexual Orientation in
Multicultural Perspective 329

A Sexually Diverse World: Ritualized Homosexuality in Melanesia 331

Bisexuality 332

Stereotypes and Prejudice • Bisexual
Development • Mostly Heterosexuals •
Pansexuals • Concluding Reflections

First Person: Sexual Fluidity and Questioning 333

Critical Thinking Skill 335

Summary 336

Suggestions for Further Reading 337

CHAPTER 14

Variations in Sexual Behavior 338

When Is Sexual Behavior Abnormal? 339

Defining Abnormal • The Normal-Abnormal Continuum

Fetishism 340

Why Do People Develop Fetishes?

First Person: A Case History of a Shoe Fetishist 341

Cross-Dressing 342

Drag • Female Impersonators • Transvestism

Sadism and Masochism 343

Definitions • Sadomasochistic Behavior • Causes of Sadomasochism • Bondage and Discipline • Dominance and Submission

Milestones in Sex Research: Sexual Addictions? 344

Voyeurism and Exhibitionism 347

Voyeurism • Exhibitionism

Hypersexuality and Asexuality 349

Hypersexuality • Asexuality

Cybersex Use and Abuse 351

Other Sexual Variations 352

Prevention of Sexual Variations 354

Treatment of Sexual Variations 355

Medical Treatments • Cognitive Behavioral
Therapies • Skills Training • AA-Type 12-Step
Programs • What Works?

Critical Thinking Skill 359

Summary 359

Suggestions for Further Reading 360

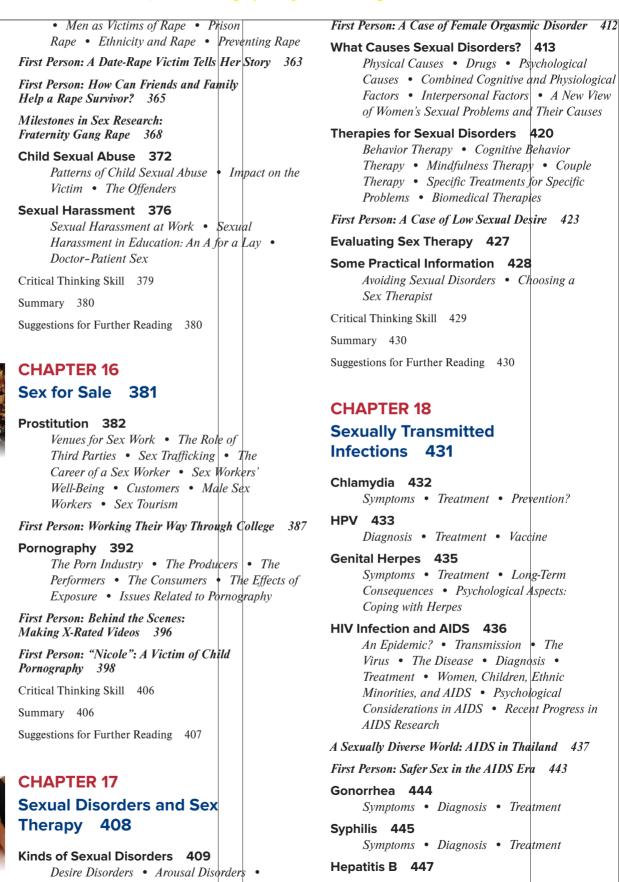
CHAPTER 15

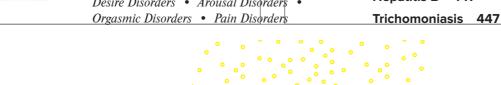
Sexual Coercion 361

Rape 362

The Impact of Rape • Date Rape • Marital Rape • Causes of Rape • The Role of Alcohol in Sexual Assault • Rapists









Zika 448

Pubic Lice 448

Protecting Yourself 448

First Person: Cool Lines about Safer Sex 449

Other Genital Infections 450

Candida • Prostatitis

Critical Thinking Skill 451

Summary 451

Suggestions for Further Reading 452



CHAPTER 19

Ethics, Religion, and Sexuality 453

Basic Concepts 454

Sexuality in Great Ethical Traditions 455

Classical Greek Philosophy • Judaism • Christianity • Humanism

Sexuality in Other Major Religions 460

Islam • Hinduism • Buddhism

A Sexually Diverse World: Dissent over Sexual Ethics in the Roman Catholic Church 461

Contemporary Issues in Sexual Ethics 464

Sex Outside Marriage • Contraception • Abortion • Homosexuality • HIV and AIDS

A Sexually Diverse World: Religious Position Statements on Abortion: Pro-life versus Pro-choice 470

Technology and Sexual Ethics 473

Toward an Ethics of Human Sexuality 475

Critical Thinking Skill 476

Summary 476

Suggestions for Further Reading 477



CHAPTER 20

Sex and the Law 478

Why Are There Sex Laws? 479

What Kinds of Sex Laws Are There? 480

Crimes of Exploitation and Force • Criminal
Consensual Acts • Crimes against Good Taste •
Crimes against Reproduction • Criminal
Commercial Sex

A Sexually Diverse World: Universal Sexual Rights 483

Discriminatory Laws Related to Sexuality 485

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity • Same-Sex Marriage

A Sexually Diverse World: Legal Issues for Transgender Persons 486

Sex-Law Enforcement 487

Trends in Sex-Law Reform 488

Efforts at Sex-Law Reform • Right to Privacy • Equal Protection • Victimless Crimes • Freedom of Speech • Reproductive Freedom • Ethnicity, Social Class, and Sex Laws

Sex and the Law in the Future 499

Sex-Law Reform and Backlash • AIDS and the Law • The Legal Challenge of Assisted Reproductive Technologies

Critical Thinking Skill 503

Summary 504

Suggestions for Further Reading 504

EPILOGUE

Looking to the Future: Sexuality Education 505

In the Home, in the School, or Somewhere Else? 505

Standards for Sexuality Education 507

What to Teach at Different Ages 507

Children's Sexual Knowledge • Children's Sexual Interests

The Curriculum 509

Abstinence-Only Programs • The Politics of Sexuality Education • HIV and AIDS Risk Education • Comprehensive, Theoretically Based Programs

A Sampling from a Comprehensive Sexuality Education Curriculum 511

The Teacher 513

Condom Availability 514

Effective Multicultural Sexuality
Education 514

Bibliography B-2

Glossary G-1

Index I-2

Directory of Resources DR-2

ECONNECT McGraw-Hill Education
Psychology APA Documentation
Style Guide



Preface

Hyde and DeLamater—Continuing a research-based tradition in sexuality

ince its conception, Understanding Human Sexuality has achieved distinction and success by following the science of human sexuality. The first of the modern sexuality textbooks, *Understanding* Human Sexuality introduced this topic to students through the science that has uncovered what we know about the field. Groundbreaking when it first appeared. this research-based tradition continues to result in a contemporary, balanced introduction to human sexuality in an integrated system that engages students in learning the content of the course, about others, and about themselves.

A Personalized Experience that Leads to Improved Learning

SMARTBOOK™ How many students

think they know every-

thing about human sexuality but struggle on the first exam? Students study more effectively with Connect and SmartBook.

SmartBook helps students study more efficiently by highlighting what to focus on in the chapter, asking review questions, and directing them to resources until they understand. Connect's assignments help students contextualize what they've learned through application, so they can better understand the material and think critically.

New to this edition, SmartBook is now optimized for mobile and tablet and is accessible for students with disabilities. Content-wise, it has been enhanced with improved learning objectives that are measurable and observable to improve student outcomes. Smart-Book personalizes learning to individual student needs, continually adapting to pinpoint knowledge gaps and focus learning on topics that need the most attention. Study time is more productive and, as a result, students are better prepared for class and coursework.

For instructors, SmartBook tracks student progress and provides insights that can help guide teaching strategies.

Better Data, Smarter Revision, **Improved Résults**

For this edition, data were analyzed to identify the concepts students found the most difficult, allowing for expansion upon the discussion, practice, and assessment of challenging topics. The revision process for a new edition used to begin with gathering information from instructors about what they would change and what they would keep. Experts in the field were asked to provide comments that pointed out new material to add and dated material to review. Using all these reviews, authors would revise the material. But now, a tool has revolutionized that model.

McGraw-Hill Education authors have access to student performance data to analyze and to inform their revisions. This data is anonymously collected from the many students who use SmartBook, the adaptive learning system that provides students with individualized assessment of their own progress. Because virtually every text paragraph is tied to several questions that students answer while using the SmartBook, the specific concepts with which students are having the most difficulty are easily pinpointed through empirical data in the form of a "heat map" report.

STEP 1. Over the course of three years, data points showing concepts that caused students the most difficulty were anonymously collected from SmartBook for Understanding Human Sexuality.

STEP 2. The data was provided to the author in the form of a Heat Map, which graphically illustrated "hot spots" in the text that impacted student learning.

STEP 3. The author used the *Heat Map* data to refine the content and reinforce student comprehension in the new edition. Additional quiz questions and assignable activities were created for use in Connect for Human Sexuality to further support student success.



Powerful Reporting

Whether a class is face-to-face, hybrid, or entirely online, McGraw-Hill Connect provides the tools needed to reduce the amount of time and energy instructors spend administering their courses. Easy-to-use course management tools allow instructors to spend less time administering and more time teaching, while reports allow students to monitor their progress and optimize their study time.

- The At-Risk Student Report provides instructors with one-click access to a dashboard that identifies students who are at risk of dropping out of the course due to low engagement levels.
- The Category Analysis Report details student performance relative to specific learning objectives and goals, including APA learning goals and outcomes and levels of Bloom's taxonomy.
- Connect Insight is a one-of-a-kind visual analytics dashboard—now available for both instructors and students—that provides at-a-glance information regarding student performance.
- The SmartBook Reports allow instructors and students to easily monitor progress and pinpoint areas of weakness, giving each student a personalized study plan to achieve success.

Preparing Students for Higher-Level Thinking



New to the Fourteenth Edition, **Power of Process**, now available in

McGraw-Hill Connect[™], guides

students through the process of critical reading, analysis, and writing.

Faculty can select or upload their

own content, such as journal articles, and assign analysis strategies to gain insight into students' application of the scientific method. For students, Power of Process offers a guided visual approach to exercising critical thinking strategies to apply before, during, and after reading published research. Additionally, utilizing the relevant and engaging research articles built into Power of Process, students are supported in becoming critical consumers of research.

Concept Clips help students comprehend some of the most difficult ideas in human sexuality. Colorful graphics and stimulating animations describe core concepts in a step-by-step manner, engaging students and aiding in retention. Concept Clips can be used as a presentation tool in the classroom or for student assessment.

New in the Fourteenth Edition, Concept Clips are embedded in the ebook to offer an alternative presentation of these challenging topics. New clips cover topics such as attraction, mate selection, and learning gender roles. Concept Clips help students comprehend some of the most difficult concepts in human sexuality.

Interactivities, assignable through Connect, engage students with content through experientical activities. Topics include first impressions and attraction.

Through the connection of human sexuality to students' own lives, concepts become more relevant and understandable. Newsflash exercises tie current news stories to key principles and learning objectives. After interacting with a contemporary news story, students are assessed on their ability to make the link between real life and research findings.

At the Apply and Analyze level of Bloom's Taxonomy, Scientific Reasoning Exercises offer in-depth arguments to sharpen students' critical thinking skills and prepare them to be more discerning consumers regarding information in their everyday lives. For each chapter, there are multiple sets of arguments related to topics in the Human Sexuality course, accompanied by autograded assignments that ask students to think critically about claims presented as facts. These exercises can also be used as group activities or for discussion.

Following the Science to Understand Human Sexuality

Understanding Human Sexuality is grounded in science and the research that informs science. This foundation, drawn from several perspectives, is reflected



PREFACE XVII

by the authors. Janet's background is in psychology and biology. John's was in sociology. We bring these different perspectives to this introduction to human sexuality. The importance we place on science and evidence-based reasoning comes from the desire to provide students with an understanding of human sexuality based on the best available research and also on what we see and do as researchers ourselves. Janet's research has explored psychological gender differences and similarities, focusing on gender and sexuality as well as topics such as sexuality in dual-earner couples. John's research investigated the influences of the person's history and current relationships on sexual expression, and the relative importance of illnesses and medications on sexuality in later life.

The quality of sex research is highly variable, to put it mildly. Some journalists think they are sex researchers if they have interviewed 10 people and written a book about it! Too often we see equal weight given to an article from the local newspaper and a refereed journal article from the New England Journal of Medicine or the Journal of Sex Research—and those few readers who are motivated enough have to do a lot of detective work to find the real source for a statement. It is the responsibility of authors to sift through available studies and present only those of the best quality and the greatest relevance to this course. It is a thrill to observe that the quality of sex research improves every decade.

Following the Science to Understand Oneself and Others

Studying human sexuality requires more than simply progressing through the material. To genuinely learn the concepts, students must look at their own sexual health, relationships, and consider how sex impacts their lives. For that reason, it is important that everyone who reads *Understanding Human Sexuality* feels connected to the content and finds it useful. The author has used a research-proven approach to ensure this book is diverse and practical. Here are some of the major themes found throughout:

- Chapters are as "trans-friendly" as possible, both in language used and content covered.
- The Supreme Court ruled and established nationwide same-sex marriage just as the last edition was

going to print, so it was covered only briefly. Now this ground-breaking decision and the social trends it reflects is integrated into multiple chapters.

- Inclusion of practical information such as finding sexual satisfaction, how cohabitation can impact relationships, and the benefits of mindfulness-based sex therapy.
- A multi-ethnic and multi-cultural perspective is presented throughout on topics such as same-gender relationships and contraception.
- Appreciation of the diversity of human sexuality along many dimensions including age, marital status, special needs, and gender preferences.

Understanding Human Sexuality aims to help students feel confident in what they are learning and show them how to apply it.

Milestones in Sex Research

Endocrine Disrupters

Figs are born hermaphrotilic, with mixed male and female organs. Male turtiedoves display reduced courtship and nesting behaviors. A preschool girl beginning sproving puble hair. These cases and dozens of others was appeared in the news in the last decade. Are the contract of the contr

tes is the phenomenon of endocrine disrupters (some see called endocrine-disrupting chemicals or EDCs), which are chemicals found in the environment that affect the endocrine system and cause adverse effects exual development?

vironment affect
xual development?

and cause adverse effect
on animals, includin
humans. Evidence of
the effects of endocrine disrupter
es both from studies of animals in the wild and from

caretuiny controles aboratory experiments.
What chemicals are the culpture Some are pesticides
such as attraities and DDT, used by farmers and others to
used to the such a such as the su

Why should we care about a few hermaphroditic frogs or preschoolers with puble hair? Scientists see these cases as examples of the proverbial canary in the mine shaft that is, they are small signs that something terribly dangerous is happening. The European Union is staking steps to regulate these chemicals, but we have seen little action

Meanwhile, a carefully controlled study shows that pregnant women with high exposure to pithalatas (found in plastics) are more likely to give birth to blay boys with undescended testes, hydrocels, and phyopogalias, a condition in which the urethral opening is not at the tip of the penis, but somewhere the along if (see Figure 5) (Sathyanarayana et al., 2016). Studies in both the United States and Denmark show that breast development in girls is occurring one year earlier now than it did a few decades ago (Akspladee et al., 2009). The peaticide residues in fruits and vegetables have been linked to lower sperm counts in men (Chiu et al., 2015). And on a Chippewa Indian reservation in a part of Ontario that is heavily populated with chemical manufacturing plants, only 35 percent of the babies born today are boys. According to an official statement by the Endocrine Society. The [research] identifies EDCs as contributing to outcomes related to impaired reproduction.

function, and metabolism and increased propensity for hormone-sensitive canEndocrine disrupters: Chemicals in the environment that affect the endocrine system and cause adverse effects on animals, including humans

Additional Resources

Mc Graw Hill The **Instructor Resources** have been updated to reflect changes to the new edition; these can be accessed by faculty through Connect for Human

Sexuality. Resources include the test bank, instructor's manual, PowerPoint presentation, and image gallery.

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Annual Editions: Human Sexualities

This volume offers diverse topics on sex and sexuality with regard to the human experience. Learning Outcomes, Critical Thinking questions, and *Internet References* accompany each article to further enhance learning. Customize this title via McGraw-Hill Create at http://create.mheducation.com.

Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Human Sexuality

This debate-style reader both reinforces and challenges students' viewpoints on the most crucial issues in human sexuality today. Each topic offers current and lively pro and con essays that represent the arguments of leading scholars and commentators in their fields. Learning Outcomes, an Issue Summary, and an Issue Introduction set the stage for each debate topic. Following each issue is the Exploring the Issue section with Critical Thinking and Reflection questions, Is There Common Ground? commentary, Additional Resources, and Internet References all designed to stimulate and challenge the student's thinking and to further explore the topic. Customize this title via McGraw-Hill Create at http://create.mheducation.com.

Chapter Changes in the Fourteenth Edition

Human sexuality is one of the most exciting courses to take or teach. Part of the reason is that things are constantly changing across science, social attitudes, and even the law. Sex impacts all of our lives in countless ways and that's why watching the field progress is enlightening and encouraging. Each year there are advances in contraception and a better understanding about how outside variables, such as drugs, impact those options. We are still learning how the adolescent brain manages sex, especially while negotiating social networking. Each year, advances are made in the prevention and treatment of AIDS. There is even a deeper understanding of love and attraction.

A major goal of the previous edition was to make the book "trans friendly." This revision has taken an even bigger step towards ensuring a book that is comfortable for transgender individuals to read and study. It includes a strong section in the chapter "Gender and Sexuality" on the transgender experience, those who have a nonbinary identity, and those who seek gender reassignment.

Much has changed in the new edition of this textbook. A list of chapter-by-chapter changes follows:

Chapter 1. Sexuality in Perspective

- Section on media effects and media theories rewritten to reflect the latest thinking
- Concepts of individualistic, collectivistic, and honor cultures added

PREFACE XIX

- New data challenging the universality of romantic-sexual kissing
- Updated Table 1 on social class variations in sexuality
- Updated Table 2 on ethnic group variations in sexuality
- The term *Latinx* added
- Biracial and multiracial added to discussion of ethnicity
- New data on LGBTs in China

Chapter 2. Theoretical Perspectives on Sexuality

- Gender-neutral evolutionary theory (Gowaty) added to section on evolutionary theories
- Sexual fields theory deleted to streamline chapter
- Performativity (e.g., performing gender) added to section on critical theories

Chapter 3. Sex Research

- More information on ethnicity in research
- Updated material on studies of special populations, including recruitment through websites
- "Prevalence" added in statistical concepts
- Section on web-based research updated

Chapter 4. Sexual Anatomy

- New data on pubic hair removal and its consequences
- Updated material on female genital cutting and labiaplasty
- Updates on cancer statistics and treatments
- Updates on the male circumcision controversy and the data

Chapter 5. Sex Hormones, Sexual Differentiation, and the Menstrual Cycle

- Surprising new findings that estradiol and progesterone levels do not differ between men and women; only testosterone levels do
- Evidence on endocrine disrupters updated
- New data on fluctuations in performance, or lack thereof, across the menstrual cycle
- New information on the Nepalese Hindu custom of chhaupadi, in which a menstruating woman may not live in her home and sometimes resorts to living in an animal shed

Chapter 6. Pregnancy and Childbirth

- Chapter streamlined and shortened substantially
- New evaluation of the accuracy of websites and cell phone apps in predicting the fertile window
- Updated material on fetal alcohol spectrum disorder
- Section on assisted reproductive technology (ART) updated

Chapter 7. Contraception and Abortion

- Table 1 on contraceptive practices around the world updated
- Added information on drugs that may interact with emergency contraception drugs
- Reasons the U.S. abortion rate is down 25 percent from 2008
- Updated information on FDA approval of use of mifepristone for medical abortion
- Table with abortion rates around the world updated
- Nestorone-testosterone contraceptive gel for men added in New Advances
- Sperm-binding beads added in New Advances

Chapter 8. Sexual Arousal

- Chapter streamlined and shortened
- New data on reasons people pretend orgasm
- New material in Mapping the Sexual Brain: research on brain regions activated when deciding on risky sexual behavior
- New section on sexual satisfaction

Chapter 9. Sexuality and the Life Cycle: Childhood and Adolescence

- New study on nudity and doctor games in Danish preschools
- Section on the media and adolescent sexuality updated
- Updates on teen pregnancy and sharp declines in rates
- New section on Risky Sex and the Adolescent Brain
- Thorough updating of material on adolescents' use of social networking sites and sexting

Chapter 10. Sexuality and the Life Cycle: Adulthood

- Figure 2 on sexual frequency as a function of relationship status, gender, and age, converted to an easier-to-read table
- Updated discussion of the cohabitation effect and serial cohabitation
- New feature: Are Americans Having Sex More Frequently?

- Statistics on extramarital sex updated and streamlined
- New material on open nonmonogamy

Chapter 11. Attraction, Love, and Communication

- Chapter streamlined and shortened
- Table 1 on homophily in marriage updated and racial homophily in online dating added
- Section on online and app-based attraction, meeting, and dating revised and updated
- New material in section on Attachment Theory of Love
- New section on Love Styles replaces section on love as a story
- Table 2 on cross-cultural views of love improved
- New Critical Thinking box

Chapter 12. Gender and Sexuality

- New conceptualizations of parents' gendered socialization
- New material on gender differences in impulsivity
- Replaced the classic Heiman (1975) psychophysiology study of gender and arousal to erotic materials with a contemporary study (Suschinsky et al., 2009)
- Section on Transgender Issues and Experience reorganized, updated, and expanded
- New section on Affirmative Therapy with TGNC people

Chapter 13. Sexual Orientation: Gay, Straight, or Bi?

- Updated statistics in Table 1 show continuing trend toward more favorable attitudes
- New material on implicit attitudes toward LGBs
- Updated statistics in Table 2 on percentages of people with same-gender sexual behavior, identity, and attractions
- A positive psychology approach to same-gender couple relationships introduced
- New table on attitudes toward homosexuality in nations around the world
- The term *pansexual* introduced

Chapter 14. Variations in Sexual Behavior

- Chapter streamlined and updated throughout
- Section on sexual addictions/compulsions rewritten and updated

- New research on asexuality
- New material on cybersex use and abuse

Chapter 15. Sexual Coercion

- New material on what friends and family can do to support a rape survivor
- Phenomenon of sextortion introduced
- Section on Sexual Harassment updated, including the #MeToo movement and the new National Academy of Sciences report

Chapter 16. Sex for Sale

- Chapter streamlined throughout
- New material on the Internet and sex work, including camgirls
- New data from pornhub.com
- New technology of virtual reality pornography
- Section on Effects of Porn Exposure rewritten, framed by the differential susceptibility to media effects model

Chapter 17. Sexual Disorders and Sex Therapy

- New section on Mindfulness-Based Sex Therapy
- New section on Testosterone Treatments for Testosterone Deficiency (hypogonadism) in men
- Added coverage of new combination drugs for women's sexual desire problems

Chapter 18. Sexually Transmitted Infections

Statistics updated throughout

Chapter 19. Ethics, Religion, and Sexuality

 Pro-life and pro-choice statements of religious groups updated

Chapter 20. Sex and the Law

- Chapter rewritten to reflect the Obergefell v. Hodges Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage
- New box, Legal Issues for Transgender Persons
- New Critical Thinking box on transgender rights and the distinction between legal evidence and scientific evidence

PREFACE XXI

- New section on crisis pregnancy centers and the Supreme Court ruling on them
- Updated with new Supreme Court cases, e.g., Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt on abortion

Looking to the Future: Sexuality Education

- Updates on federal spending on abstinence-only programs, and rebranding them as "sexual risk avoidance"
- New evaluations of condom availability programs

Acknowledgments

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Over the course of the first 13 editions, numerous reviewers contributed to the development of *Understanding Human Sexuality*. Space limitations prevent me from listing all of them, but their contributions endure, as does my gratitude to them. I am especially grateful to the reviewers who helped shape this edition:

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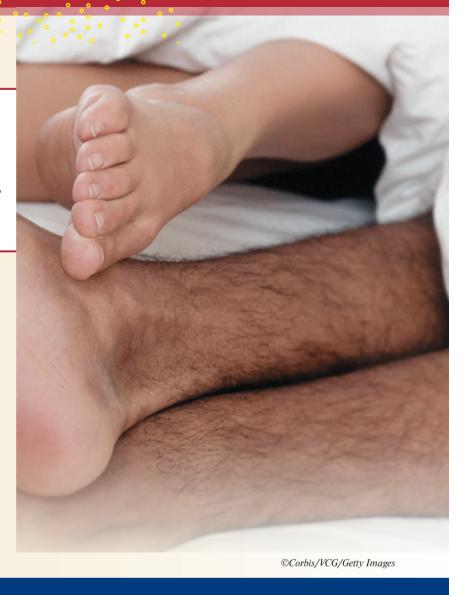
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- 1. Do they have sex in other cultures the same way we do in the United States?
- 2. Is sexual behavior similar in all social classes in the United States?
- 3. Is homosexuality found in other species?

Read this chapter to find out.





Sexuality in Perspective

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

Sex and Gender

The History of Understanding Sexuality: Religion and Science

Religion Science

The Media

Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Sexuality

Variations in Sexual Techniques Masturbation Premarital and Extramarital Sex Sex with Same-Gender Partners Standards of Attractiveness Social-Class and Ethnic-Group Variations in the United States

The Significance of Cross-Cultural Studies

Cross-Species Perspectives on Sexuality

Masturbation

Same-Gender Sexual Behavior

Sexual Signaling

Human Uniqueness

The Nonsexual Uses of Sexual Behavior

The Sexual Health Perspective



ou're so beautiful," he whispered. "I want a picture of you like this with your face flushed and your lips wet and shiny." . . . He tore open a foil packet he'd retrieved from his pocket. Mesmerized, she watched him sheath himself, amazed at how hard he was. She reached out to touch him, but he moved back, made sure she was ready, and then slid neatly inside her, so deeply she gasped. She contracted her muscles around him, and he closed his eyes and groaned, the sound so primal, it made her skin tingle.*

Human sexual behavior is a diverse phenomenon. It occurs in different physical locations and social contexts, consists of a wide range of specific activities, and is perceived differently by different people. An individual engages in sexual activity on the basis of a complex set of motivations and organizes that activity on the basis of numerous external factors and influences. Thus, it is unlikely that the tools and concepts from any single scientific discipline will suffice to answer all or even most of the questions one might ask about sexual behavior.[†]

*Debbi Rawlins. (2003). Anything goes. New York: Harlequin Blaze. Used by permission.

[†]Laumann et al. (1994).

Strikingly different though they may seem, both of the above quotations are talking about the same thing—sex. The first quotation is from a romance novel. It is intended to stimulate the reader's fantasies and arousal. The second is from a scholarly book about sex. It aims to stimulate the brain but not the genitals. From reading these two brief excerpts we can quickly see that the topic of sexuality is diverse, complex, and fascinating.

Why study sex? Most people are curious about sex, particularly because exchanging sexual information is somewhat taboo in our culture, so curiosity motivates us to study sex. Sex is an important force in many people's lives, so there are practical reasons for wanting to learn about it. Finally, most of us at various times experience problems with our sexual functioning or wish that we could function better, and we hope that learning more about sex will help us. This book is designed to address all of these needs. So let's consider various perspectives on sexuality—the effects of religion, science, and culture on our understanding of sexuality, as well as the sexual health perspective. These perspectives will give you a glimpse of the forest before you study the trees: sexual anatomy and physiology (the "plumbing" part) and sexual behavior (the "people" part), which are discussed in later chapters. But first we must draw an important distinction between sex and gender.

Sex and Gender

Gender: Being male, female, or some other gender such as trans.

Gender binary: Conceptualizing gender as having only two categories, male and female.

Sometimes the word *sex* is used ambiguously. In some cases it refers to being male or female, and sometimes it refers to sexual behavior or reproduction. In most

cases, of course, the meaning is clear from the context. If you are filling out a job application form and one item says, "Sex:," you don't write, "I like it" or "As often as possible." It is clear that your prospective employer wants to know whether you are a male or a female. In other cases, though, the meaning may be ambiguous. For example, when a book has the title *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, what is it about? Is it about the sexual practices of primitive people and whether having sex frequently gives them pleasant temperaments? Or is it about the kinds of personalities that males and females are expected to have in those societies? Not only does this use of *sex* create ambiguities, but it also clouds our thinking about some important issues.

To remove—or at least reduce—this ambiguity, the term *sex* will be used in this book in contexts referring to sexual anatomy and sexual behavior, and the term **gender** will be used to refer to being male or female or some other gender such as trans.

Almost all the research that we discuss in this book has been based on scientists' assuming the **gender binary**, the idea that there are only two genders, male and female. In the chapter "Gender and Sexuality," we consider some of the contemporary research on people who are outside the gender binary.

This is a book about sex, not gender; it is about sexual behavior and the biological, psychological, and social forces that influence it. Of course, although we are arguing that sex and gender are conceptually different, we would not try to argue that they are totally independent of each other. Certainly gender roles—the ways in which males and females are expected to behave—exert a powerful influence on the way people behave sexually, and one chapter is devoted to gender and its connections to sexuality. How should we define *sex*, aside from saying that it is different from *gender?* Many Americans count only penisin-vagina intercourse as sex (Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2007; Sewell & Strassberg, 2015). Nearly everyone agrees that penis-in-vagina intercourse counts as sex, but there is less agreement about whether oral-genital sex counts as "having sex." Some people think it does and others think it doesn't (Horowitz & Spicer, 2013). Our definition in this textbook includes much more than that, though.

A biologist might define sexual behavior as "any behavior that increases the likelihood of gametic union [union of sperm and egg]" (Bermant & Davidson, 1974). This definition emphasizes the reproductive function of sex. However, medical advances such as the birth control pill allow us to separate reproduction from sex. Most Americans now use sex not only for procreation but also for recreation.¹

These definitions assume that sex is heterosexual. What about same-gender sexuality? A study of sexual minority people indicated that, for men, anal intercourse was the behavior most likely to count as "sex" (Sewell et al., 2017). For women, it was oral-genital sex.

The noted sex researcher Alfred Kinsey defined *sex* as behavior that leads to orgasm. Although this definition has some merits (it does not imply that sex must be associated with reproduction), it also presents some problems. If a woman has intercourse with a man but does not have an orgasm, was that not sexual behavior for her?

To try to avoid some of these problems, **sexual behavior** will be defined in this book as *behavior that produces* arousal and increases the chance of orgasm.²

The History of Understanding Sexuality: Religion and Science

Religion

Throughout most of recorded history, at least until about 100 years ago, religion (and rumor) provided most of the information that people had about sexuality. The ancient Greeks openly acknowledged both heterosexuality and homosexuality in their society and explained the existence

of the two in a myth in which the original humans were double creatures with twice the normal number of limbs and organs; some were double males, some were double females, and some were half male and half female (LeVay, 1996). The gods, fearing the power of these creatures, split them in half, and forever after each one continued to search for its missing half. Heterosexuals were thought to have resulted from the splitting of the half male, half female; male homosexuals, from the splitting of the double male; and female homosexuals, from the splitting of the double female. It was through this mythology that the ancient Greeks understood sexual orientation and sexual desire.

Fifteenth-century Christians believed that "wet dreams" (nocturnal emissions) resulted from intercourse with tiny spiritual creatures called *incubi* and *succubi*, a notion put forth in a papal bull of 1484 and a companion book, the *Malleus Maleficarum* ("witch's hammer"); the person who had wet dreams was considered guilty of sodomy (see the chapter "Ethics, Religion, and Sexuality") as well as witchcraft.

Over the centuries, Muslims have believed that sexual intercourse is one of the finest pleasures of life, reflecting the teachings of the great prophet Muhammad. However, the way that the laws of the Koran are carried out varies greatly from country to country (Boonstra, 2001; Ilkkaracan, 2001).

People of different religions hold different understandings of human sexuality, and these religious views often have a profound impact. A detailed discussion of religion and sexuality is provided in the chapter "Ethics, Religion, and Sexuality."

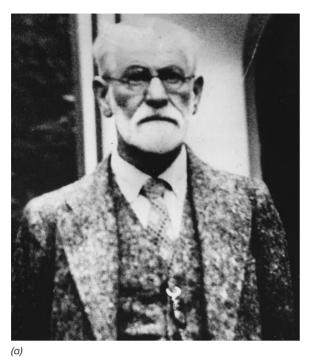
Science

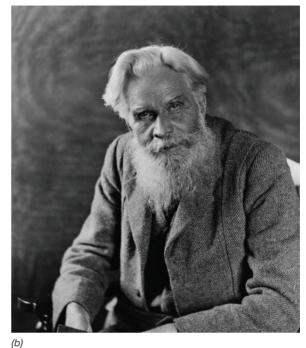
It was against this background of religious understandings of sexuality that the scientific study of sex began in the 19th century, although, of course, religious notions continue to influence our ideas about sexuality. In addition, the groundwork for an understanding of the biological aspects of sexuality had already been laid by the research of physicians and biologists. The Dutch microscopist Anton van Leeuwenhoek (1632–1723) had discovered sperm swimming in human semen. In 1875 Oskar Hertwig (1849–1922) first observed the actual fertilization of the egg by the sperm in sea urchins, although the ovum in humans was not directly observed until the 20th century.

A major advance in the scientific understanding of the psychological aspects of human sexuality came with the work of the Viennese physician Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), founder of psychiatry and psychoanalysis (Figure 1a). His ideas are discussed in detail in the chapter "Theoretical Perspectives on Sexuality."

It is important to recognize the cultural context in which Freud and the other early sex researchers **Sexual behavior:** Behavior that produces arousal and increases the chance of orgasm.

¹Actually, even in former times sex was not always associated with reproduction. For example, a man in 1850 might have fathered 10 children; using a very conservative estimate that he engaged in sexual intercourse 1,500 times during his adult life (once a week for the 30 years from age 20 to age 50), one concludes that only 10 in 1,500 of those acts, or less than 1 percent, resulted in reproduction. ²This definition, though an improvement over some, still has its problems. For example, consider a woman who feels no arousal at all during intercourse. According to the definition, intercourse would not be sexual behavior for her. However, intercourse would generally be something we would want to classify as sexual behavior. It should be clear that defining *sexual behavior* is difficult.





 (\mathcal{D})

Figure 1 Two important early sex researchers. (a) Sigmund Freud. (b) Henry Havelock Ellis.

(a) ©AP Images; (b) ©Hulton-Deutsch Collection/Corbis/Getty Images

crafted their research and writing. They began their work in the Victorian era, the late 1800s, both in the United States and in Europe. Norms about sexuality were extraordinarily rigid and oppressive (Figure 2). Historian Peter Gay characterized this repressive aspect of Victorian cultural norms as

a devious and insincere world in which middle-class husbands slaked their lust by keeping mistresses, frequenting prostitutes, or molesting children, while their wives, timid, dutiful, obedient, were sexually anesthetic and poured all their capacity for love into their housekeeping and their child-rearing. (Gay, 1984, p. 6)

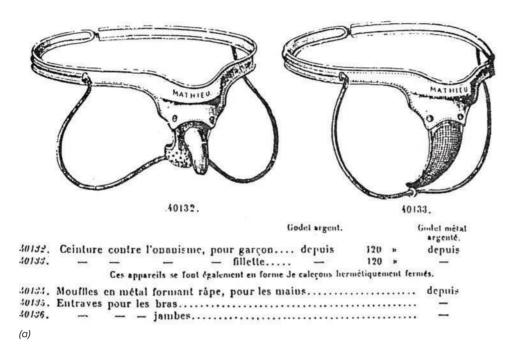
Certainly traces of these Victorian attitudes remain with us today. Yet, at the same time, the actual sexual behavior of Victorians sometimes violated societal norms. In his history of sexuality in the Victorian era, Gay documented the story of Mabel Loomis Todd, who, though married, carried on a lengthy affair with Austin Dickinson, a community leader in Amherst, Massachusetts. Many people actually knew about the "secret" affair, yet Mrs. Loomis did not become an outcast (Gay, 1984). Doubtless, this wide discrepancy between Victorian sexual norms and actual behavior created a great deal of personal tension. That tension probably propelled a good many people into Dr. Freud's office, providing data for his theory, which emphasizes sexual tensions and conflict.

An equally great—though not so well known—early contributor to the scientific study of sex was Henry Havelock

Ellis (1859-1939; Figure 1b). A physician in Victorian England, he compiled a vast collection of information on sexuality—including medical and anthropological findings, as well as case histories—which was published in a series of volumes titled *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* beginning in 1896. Havelock Ellis was a remarkably objective and tolerant scholar, particularly for his era. He believed that women, like men, are sexual creatures. A sexual reformer, he believed that sexual deviations from the norm are often harmless, and he urged society to accept them. In his desire to collect information about human sexuality rather than to make judgments about it, he can be considered the forerunner of modern sex research.

Another important figure in 19th-century sex research was the psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902). His special interest was "pathological" sexuality. He managed to collect more than 200 case histories of pathological individuals, which appeared in his book titled *Psychopathia Sexualis*. His work tended to be neither objective nor tolerant. Nonetheless, it has had a lasting impact. He coined the concepts of sadism, masochism, and pedophilia, and the terms *heterosexuality* and *homosexuality* entered the English language in the 1892 translation of his book (Oosterhuis, 2000). One of his case histories is presented in the chapter "Variations in Sexual Behavior."

One other early contributor to the scientific understanding of sexuality deserves mention, the German Magnus Hirschfeld (1868–1935). He founded the first sex research institute and administered the first large-scale





(b)

Figure 2 Devices designed to prevent masturbation. (a) The Victorian era, from which Freud and Ellis emerged, was characterized by extreme sexual repression. Here are some apparatuses that were sold to prevent onanism (masturbation). (b) Are things so different today? Here are current devices for sale on the Internet, for the same purpose.

(a) ©Granger/Granger-All rights reserved; (b) Courtesy of A.L. Enterprises

sex survey, obtaining data from 10,000 people on a 130-item questionnaire. (Unfortunately, most of the information he amassed was destroyed by the Nazis.) Hirschfeld also established the first journal devoted to the study of sex, established a marriage counseling service, worked for legal reforms, and gave advice on contraception and sex problems. His special interest, however, was homosexuality. Doubtless some of his avant-garde approaches resulted from the fact that he was himself

both homosexual and a transvestite and, in fact, he introduced the term *transvestite*. His contributions as a pioneer sex researcher cannot be denied (Bullough, 1994).

In the 20th century, major breakthroughs in the scientific understanding of sex came with the massive surveys of human sexual behavior in the United States conducted by Alfred Kinsey and his colleagues in the 1940s and with Masters and Johnson's investigations of sexual disorders and the physiology of sexual response. At about

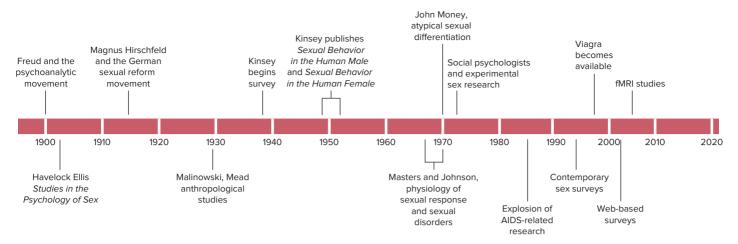


Figure 3 Milestones in the history of scientific research on sex.

the same time that the Kinsey research was being conducted, some anthropologists—most notably Margaret Mead and Bronislaw Malinowski—were beginning to collect data on sexual behavior in other cultures. Other, smaller investigations also provided important information. By the 1990s we had a rich array of sex research, including major national surveys (e.g., Laumann et al., 1994), detailed investigations of sexual disorders and sexual orientation, and studies of the biological processes underlying sexual response.

The scientific study of sex has not emerged as a separate, unified academic discipline like biology or psychology or sociology. Rather, it tends to be interdisciplinary—a joint effort by biologists, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and physicians (see Figure 3). This approach to understanding sexuality gives us a better view of humans in all their sexual complexity.

The Media

In terms of potency of influence, the mass media in America today may play the same role that religion did in previous centuries. In U.S. homes with children, 99 percent

Cultivation theory: In communications theory, the view that exposure to the mass media makes people think that what they see there represents the mainstream of what really occurs.

Framing theory: The theory that the media draw attention to certain topics and not to others, suggesting how we should think about or frame the issues.

Social cognitive theory: In communications theory, the idea that the media provide role models whom we imitate.

have a television and 86 percent have a computer (Lauricella et al., 2015). American adolescents spend 11 hours per day with some form of mass media (Rideout et al., 2010). According to the American Time Use Survey, television viewing occupies the most time of all leisure activities, at an average of 2.7 hours per day for those aged 15 and older (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017).

An analysis of 2,600 scenes from the 30 most-viewed television programs by 18- to 25-year-olds indicated that sexual talk and/or sexual behavior occurred in 20 percent of scenes (Carpentier et al., 2017). Twenty-five percent of scenes contained jokes about sexual organs. Only 7 percent of scenes mentioned any health consequences of sex, and most of those were about emotional heartache; only 1 of the 2,600 scenes mentioned sexually transmitted infections. And only 12 scenes (less than 1 percent) mentioned condoms or contraceptives. In short, the average American's views about sexuality are likely to be much more influenced by the mass media than by scientific findings. Communications theorists have formulated several theories about how the media can influence us (Valkenburg et al., 2016).

Cultivation theory focuses on the notion that people begin to think that what they see on television and in other media really represents the mainstream of what happens in real life in our culture (Gerbner et al., 2002). For example, an analysis of *Jersey Shore* indicated that on average one sexual instance occurred every minute; college students' reports of how often they viewed the show were positively correlated with permissive sexual attitudes, exactly as cultivation theory would predict (Bond & Drogos, 2014). In addition, the students' permissive sexual attitudes were correlated with their own sexual activity.

According to **framing theory**, the media draw attention to certain topics and not to others, suggesting how we should think about or frame the issues (Scheufele, 1999). For example, in 1998 the media chose to highlight the sexual dalliances of President Bill Clinton, suggesting to the public that these matters were important. In contrast, the illicit sexual activities of President John F. Kennedy were not revealed during his presidency. The media tell us what is important and what is not.

Social cognitive theory is a broad theory in psychology, and it is discussed in detail in the chapter "Theoretical Perspectives on Sexuality." Social cognitive theory applied

to the media analyzes how the media influence our behavior, thoughts, and affect (emotions) through processes such as modeling, imitation, and identification (Bandura, 2009). The example of *Jersey Shore* and how frequency of viewing correlated with permissive sexual attitudes is also consistent with social cognitive theory, which might say that viewers imitated the attitudes and behaviors they saw in the show.

Another important process in media theories is selectivity, which refers to the principle that people select and pay attention only to certain media and their messages, and not to others (Knobloch-Westerwick, 2015). Nick gets all of his TV news from Fox News and Olivia gets all of hers from CBS News. They get different information. Brandon watches Internet porn, and Lorewell does not. People can be affected only by media to which they are exposed. Moreover, people do not select media randomly. Generally, we select media content according to our own needs, and we seek information that is consistent with our own views.

According to **reinforcing spiral theory**, one's social identities and ideologies predict one's media use (consistent with selectivity) and, in turn, media use affects our identity and beliefs (Slater, 2015). It therefore recognizes the dynamic interplay, the back and forth, between individuals and the media they consume. For example, if I am Black and that identity is important to me, I will be likelier to watch a television network such as BET, which will in turn reinforce my Black identity and beliefs, which will keep me watching BET, and so the spiral goes.

According to the differential susceptibility model, not everyone reacts the same to the same media exposure (Valkenburg et al., 2016). For example, people high on the trait of aggressiveness are more susceptible to—more influenced by—violent media than are other people.

The Internet is a powerful mass media influence. Computer and Internet use is spreading more rapidly than any previous technology, and today 89 percent of U.S. adults use the Internet (98 percent for those between 18 and 29 years of age; Pew Research Center, 2018). Exposure to sex on the Internet is also growing rapidly. In one study, 28 percent of male adolescents reported looking at pictures of people having sex at least once a week, compared with 3 percent for female adolescents (Peter & Valkenburg, 2008). As we discuss in later chapters, the Internet has the potential for both positive and negative effects on sexual health. A number of sites, such as that for the American Sexual Health Association (www.iwannaknow.org), provide excellent information about sexuality and promote sexual health. At the same time, a repeated, well-sampled study of youth between the ages of 10 and 17 indicated that in 2000 19 percent had been sexually solicited on the Internet, but by 2010 the number had fallen to only 9 percent (Mitchell et al., 2013a). Most youth who received a solicitation responded

by removing themselves from the situation (blocking the solicitor, leaving the site) or by telling the solicitor to stop. Experts believe that there is greater online safety for youth today than in the past, for a number of reasons. One is that they receive more talks about online safety from teachers and police (Mitchell et al., 2013a).

In the chapters that follow, we examine the content of the media on numerous sexual issues, and we consider what the effects of exposure to this media content might have on viewers.

Let us now consider the perspectives on sexuality that are provided by scientific observations of humans in a wide variety of societies.

Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Sexuality

Humans are a cultural species (Heine & Norenzayan, 2006). Although some other species are capable of learning from others, humans are unique in the way

that cultural learning accumulates over time. Cultural psychologists define **culture** as the part of the environ-

Do they have sex in other cultures the same way we do in the United States?

ment created by humans, including the set of meanings that a group adopts; these meanings facilitate social coordination, clarify where boundaries between groups lie, and make life seem predictable (Oyserman, 2017).

Cultural psychologists have documented that cultures tend to have one of three main themes: individualism, collectivism, or honor (Oyserman, 2017). Individualistic cultures stress independence and autonomy and the individual rights of people. Collectivistic cultures emphasize interdependence and connections among people. In these cultures, the group is more important than the individual. The United States and Canada are highly individualistic cultures, whereas east Asian cultures such as Japan tend to be collectivistic. Honor cultures stress "face," that is, individuals' reputation and the respect or honor that people show toward others. In an

Selectivity: In media theories, the principle that people select and pay attention only to certain media and ignore others.

Reinforcing spiral theory: A theory that one's social identities and ideologies predict one's media use and, in turn, media use affects our identity and beliefs.

Differential susceptibility model:

Some people are more susceptible than others to certain types of media (e.g., violent media).

Culture: The part of the environment created by humans, including the set of meanings that a group adopts; these meanings facilitate social coordination and clarify where boundaries between groups lie.

Individualistic cultures: Those that stress independence and autonomy and the individual rights of people.

Collectivistic cultures: Those that emphasize interdependence and connections among people; the group is more important than the individual.

Honor cultures: Those that stress "face," that is, individuals' reputation and the respect or honor that people show toward others.



Figure 4 Margaret Mead, an anthropologist who contributed much to the early cross-cultural study of sexuality.

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honor culture, for example, it might seem reasonable to stone to death a woman who committed adultery, because of her profound violation of the honor valued in that culture. Honor cultures tend to be found in the Middle East, but also in the southern part of the United States.

Ethnocentrism tends to influence our understanding of human sexual behavior. Most of us have had experience with sexuality in only one culture—the United States, for example—and we tend to view our sexual behavior as the only pattern in existence, and certainly as the only "natural" pattern. But anthropologists have discovered that there are wide variations in sexual behavior and attitudes from one culture to the next (Figure 4). Considering these variations should help us to put our own sexual behavior in perspective.

The major generalization that emerges from crosscultural studies is that all societies regulate sexual behav-

Ethnocentrism: The tendency to regard one's own ethnic group and culture as superior to others and to believe that its customs and way of life are the standards by which other cultures should be judged.

Incest taboo: A societal regulation prohibiting sexual interaction between blood relatives, such as brother and

sister or father and daughter.

ior in some way, though the exact regulations vary greatly from one culture to the next (DeLamater, 1987). Apparently no society has seen fit to leave sexuality totally unregulated, perhaps fearful that social disruption would result. As an example, **incest taboos** are nearly universal: Sex is regulated in that intercourse between blood

relatives is prohibited (Gregersen, 1996). Most societies also condemn forced sexual relations such as rape.

Beyond this generalization, though, regulations vary greatly from one society to the next, and sexual behavior and attitudes vary correspondingly (see A Sexually Diverse World: Sexuality in Two Societies). Let's look at the ways in which various societies treat some key areas of human sexual behavior.

Variations in Sexual Techniques

Romantic sexual kissing might seem to be the most basic of sexual behaviors, but it is not found in all societies. Researchers surveyed anthropologists' records from 168 cultures around the world and discovered that the romantic sexual kiss was not present in 54 percent of them (Jankowiak et al., 2015). Romantic sexual kissing was absent in 87 percent of African cultures, but it was present in 100 percent of Middle Eastern cultures. When the Thonga of Africa first saw Europeans kissing, they laughed and said, "Look at them; they eat each other's saliva and dirt." There is also some variation in techniques of kissing. For example, among the Kwakiutl of Canada and the Trobriand Islanders, kissing consists of sucking the lips and tongue of the partner, permitting saliva to flow from one mouth to the other. Many Americans might find such a practice somewhat repulsive, but other peoples find it sexually arousing.

Cunnilingus (mouth stimulation of the female genitals) is fairly common in our society, and it occurs in a few other societies as well, especially in the South Pacific. A particularly interesting variation is reported on the island of Ponape; the man places a fish in the woman's vulva and then gradually licks it out prior to coitus.

Inflicting pain on the partner is also a part of the sexual technique in some societies. The Apinaye woman of the Brazilian highlands may bite off bits of her partner's eyebrows, noisily spitting them aside. Ponapean men usually tug at the woman's eyebrows, occasionally yanking out tufts of hair. People of various societies bite their partners to the point of drawing blood and leaving scars; most commonly, men and women mutually inflict pain on each other (Frayser, 1985).

The frequency of intercourse for married couples varies considerably from one culture to the next. The lowest frequency seems to be among the Irish natives of Inis Beag (discussed in A Sexually Diverse World: Sexuality in Two Societies), who engage in intercourse perhaps only once or twice a month; however, the anthropologists who studied them were unable to determine exactly how often couples did have sex because so much secrecy surrounds the act. At the opposite extreme, the Mangaians (also described in A Sexually Diverse World: Sexuality in Two Societies) have intercourse several times a night, at least among the young. The Santals of southern Asia copulate as often as five times per day every day early in

A Sexually Diverse World

Sexuality in Two Societies

Inis Beag

Inis Beag is a small island off the coast of Ireland. It is probably one of the most naive and sexually repressive societies in the world.

The people of Inis Beag seem to have no knowledge of a number of sexual activities such as French kissing, mouth stimulation of the breast, or hand stimulation of the partner's penis, much less oral sex or homosexuality. Sex education is virtually nonexistent; parents do not seem to be able to bring themselves to discuss such embarrassing matters with their children, and they simply trust that, after marriage, nature will take its course.

Menstruation and menopause are sources of fear for the island women because they have no idea of their physiological significance. It is commonly believed that menopause can produce insanity; in order to ward off this condition, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties, and a few have confined themselves to bed until death years later.

The men believe that intercourse is hard on one's health. They will desist from sex the night before they are to do a job that takes great energy. They do not approach women sexually during menstruation or for months after childbirth; a woman is considered dangerous to the man at these times.

The islanders abhor nudity. Only babies are allowed to bathe while nude. Adults wash only the parts of their bodies that extend beyond their clothing—face, neck, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. The fear of nudity has even cost lives. Sailors who never learned to swim because it involved wearing scanty clothing drowned when their ships sank.

Premarital sex is essentially unknown. In marital sex, foreplay is generally limited to kissing and rough fondling of the buttocks. The husband invariably initiates the activity. The male-on-top is the only position used, and both partners keep their underwear on during the activity. The man has an orgasm quickly and falls asleep immediately. Female orgasm either is believed not to exist or is considered deviant.

Mangaia

In distinct contrast to Inis Beag is Mangaia, an island in the South Pacific. For the Mangaians, sex—for pleasure and for procreation—is a principal interest.



The Mangaian boy first hears of masturbation when he is about 7, and he may begin to masturbate at age 8 or 9. At around age 13 he undergoes the superincision ritual (in which a slit is made on the top of the penis, along its entire length). This ritual initiates him into manhood; more important, however, the expert who performs the superincision gives him sexual instruction. He shows the boy how to perform oral sex, how to kiss and suck breasts, and how to bring his partner to orgasm several times before he has his own. About two weeks after the operation, the boy has intercourse with an experienced woman, which removes the superincision's scab. She provides him with practice in various acts and positions and trains him to hold back until he can have simultaneous orgasms with his partner.

After this, the Mangaian boy actively seeks out girls, or they seek him out; soon he has coitus every night. The girl, who has received sexual instruction from an older woman, expects demonstration of the boy's virility as proof of his desire for her. What is valued is the ability of the male to continue vigorously the in-and-out action of coitus over long periods of time while the female moves her hips "like a washing machine." Nothing is despised more than a "dead" partner who does not move. A good man is expected to continue his actions for 15 to 30 minutes or more.

The average "nice" girl will have three or four successive boyfriends between the ages of 13 and 20; the average boy may have 10 or more girlfriends. Mangaian parents encourage their daughters to have sexual experiences with several men. They want them to find marriage partners who are congenial.

At around age 18, the Mangaians typically have sex most nights of the week, with about three orgasms per night. By about age 48, they have sex two or three times per week, with one orgasm each time.

All women in Mangaia apparently learn to have orgasms. Bringing his partner to orgasm is one of the man's chief sources of sexual pleasure.

Sources: Marshall (1971); Messenger (1993).

marriage (Gregersen, 1996). Recent surveys of U.S. sexuality indicate that our frequency of intercourse is about in the middle compared with other societies (e.g., Herbenick et al., 2010a).

Very few societies encourage people to engage in sexual intercourse at particular times (Frayser, 1985). Instead, most groups have restrictions that forbid intercourse at certain times or in certain situations. For example, almost every society has a postpartum sex taboo—that is, a prohibition on sexual intercourse for a period of time after a woman has given birth, with the taboo lasting from a few days to more than a year (Gregersen, 1996).

Masturbation

Attitudes toward **masturbation**, or sexual self-stimulation of the genitals, vary widely across cultures. Some societies tolerate or even encourage masturbation during childhood and adolescence, whereas others condemn the practice at any age. Almost all human societies express some disapproval of adult masturbation, ranging from mild ridicule to severe punishment (Gregersen, 1996). However, at least some adults in all societies appear to practice it.

Female masturbation certainly occurs in other societies. The African Azande woman uses a phallus made of a wooden root; however, if her husband catches her masturbating, he may beat her severely. The following is a description of the Lesu of the South Pacific, one of the few societies that express no disapproval of adult female masturbation:

A woman will masturbate if she is sexually excited and there is no man to satisfy her. A couple may be having intercourse in the same house, or near enough for her to see them, and she may thus become aroused. She then sits down and bends her right leg so that her heel presses against her genitalia. Even young girls of about six years may do this quite casually as they sit on the ground. The women and men talk about it freely, and there is no shame attached to it. It is a customary position for women to take, and they learn it in childhood. They never use their hands for manipulation. (Powdermaker, 1933, pp. 276-277)

Premarital and Extramarital Sex

Societies differ considerably in their rules regarding premarital sex (Frayser, 1985). At one extreme are the Marquesans of eastern Polynesia. Both boys and girls in that culture have participated in a wide range of sexual experiences before puberty. Their first experience with intercourse occurs with a heterosexual partner who is 30 to 40 years old. Mothers are proud if their daughters have

many lovers. Only later does marriage occur. In contrast are the Siwans of Egypt. In this culture a girl's clitoris is removed at age 7 or

8 in order to decrease her potential for sexual excitement and intercourse. Premarital intercourse is believed to bring shame on the family (note the honor culture theme). Marriage usually occurs around the age of 12 or 13, shortening the premarital period and any temptations it might contain.

These two cultures are fairly typical of their regions. According to one study, 90 percent of Pacific Island societies permit premarital sex, as do 88 percent of African and 82 percent of Eurasian societies; however, 73 percent of Mediterranean societies prohibit premarital sex (Frayser, 1985).

Extramarital sex is complex and conflicted for most cultures. Extramarital sex ranks second only to incest as the most strictly prohibited type of sexual contact. One study found that it was forbidden for one or both partners in 74 percent of the cultures surveyed (Frayser, 1985). Even when extramarital sex is permitted, it is subjected to regulations; the most common pattern of restriction is to allow extramarital sex for husbands but not wives.

Sex with Same-Gender Partners

A wide range of attitudes toward same-gender sexual expression—what many in the United States call homosexuality—exists in various cultures (Murray, 2000). At one extreme are societies that strongly disapprove of same-gender sexual behavior for people of any age. In contrast, some societies tolerate the behavior for children but disapprove of it in adults. Still other societies actively encourage all their male members to engage in some same-gender sexual behavior, usually in conjunction with puberty rites (Herdt, 1984). A few societies have a formalized role for the adult gay man that gives him status and dignity.

Even across European nations, attitudes about homosexuality vary considerably (Lottes & Alkula, 2011). For example, people in Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden have the most positive attitudes. Positive attitudes are also found in a large group of countries including Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, and Spain. Attitudes are more negative in Belarus, Bulgaria, Estonia, and Russia; and the cluster of countries with the most negative attitudes includes Croatia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, and Ukraine.

There is wide variation in attitudes toward homosexuality and in same-gender sexual behavior, but two general rules do seem to emerge (Ford & Beach, 1951; Murray, 2000; Whitam, 1983): (1) No matter how a particular society treats homosexuality, the behavior always occurs in at least some individuals—that is, same-gender sexuality is found universally in all societies; and (2) same-gender sexual behavior is never the predominant form of sexual behavior for adults in any of the societies studied.

The first point, that same-gender sexual behavior is found universally in all cultures, is so well established that

Masturbation: Self-stimulation of the genitals to produce sexual arousal.

there was quite a stir in 2010 when a team of anthropologists reported on a group of people, the Aka foragers of the Central African Republic (Hewlett & Hewlett, 2010). The Aka were not aware of such practices and had no term for them. In fact, it was difficult for the anthropologists to convey what they meant. We may need to amend the earlier statement, to say that same-gender sexual behavior is *nearly* universal across societies.

In the United States and other Western nations, we hold an unquestioned assumption that people have a sexual identity, whether gay, lesbian, bisexual, or heterosexual. Yet sexual identity as an unvarying, lifelong characteristic of the self is unknown or rare in some cultures, such as Indonesia (Stevenson, 1995). In those cultures the self and individualism, so prominent in American culture, are downplayed. Instead, a person is defined in relation to others and behavior is seen as much more the product of the situation than of lifelong personality traits. In such a culture, having a "gay identity" just doesn't compute.

Sex with same-gender partners is discussed in detail in the chapter "Sexual Orientation: Gay, Straight, or Bi?"

Standards of Attractiveness

In all human societies physical characteristics are important in determining whom one chooses as a sex partner. What is considered attractive varies considerably, though (Figure 5). For example, the region of the body that is judged for attractiveness varies from one culture to the next. For some peoples, the shape and color of the eyes are especially significant. For others, the shape of the ears is most important. Some societies go directly to the heart of the matter and judge attractiveness by the appearance of the external genitals. In a few societies, elongated labia majora (the pads of fat on either side of the vaginal opening) are considered sexually attractive, and it is common practice for a woman to pull on hers to make them longer. Among the Nawa women of Africa, elongated labia majora are considered a mark of beauty and are quite prominent.

Our society's standards are in the minority in one way: In most cultures, a plump woman is considered more attractive than a thin one.

One standard does seem to be a general rule: A poor complexion is considered unattractive in the majority of human societies.

Research on sexual attraction is discussed in detail in the chapter "Attraction, Love, and Communication."

Social-Class and Ethnic-Group Variations in the United States

The discussion so far may seem to imply that there is one uniform standard of sexual behavior in the United States and that all Americans behave alike sexually. In fact, though, there are large variations in sexual behavior



(a



(b)

Figure 5 Cross-cultural differences, cross-cultural similarities. (a) Woman of West Africa. (b) North American beauty queen. The custom of female adornment is found in most cultures, although the exact definition of beauty varies from culture to culture.

(a) ©Nigel Pavitt/Getty Images; (b) ©Getty Images

within our culture. Some of these subcultural variations can be classified as social-class differences and some as ethnic differences.

Social Class and Sex

Table 1 shows data on some social-class variations in sexuality. Education is used as an indicator of social class. The more educated women are, the more likely they are

to use the pill for contraception.

Is sexual behavior similar in all social classes in the United States?

The differences are dramatic, with college graduates (22 percent) being more than twice as likely as high school

graduates (9 percent) to use the pill.

These findings raise the possibility that, especially for women, social class and sexuality exert a mutual influence on each other. That is, thus far we have assumed that one's social class affects one's sexual behaviors. But it may also be true that a person's sexuality influences their social class. In this case, choosing to use an effective method of contraception, the pill, may allow women to continue their education and graduate from college.

In the third line in the table, we can see that the percentage of first premarital cohabitations that transition to marriage is substantially higher for college graduates (53 percent) than it is for those who did not go beyond high school (39 percent). By first premarital cohabitation, we mean the first time a person lived together with a romantic partner, and then whether those two people went on to marry. College graduates have a better than 50 percent chance of that occurring. Those who only graduated from high school have a lower chance, which may mean that they do not go on to marry but continue to cohabit, or perhaps that they cohabit with a second or third partner before marrying.

Finally, there are some social-class similarities in Table 1. The percentage of first marriages for men that are still intact after 20 years hovers around 50 percent for those with less than high school, high school, and some college (although it is somewhat higher for college graduates).

In summary, some social-class variations in sexuality have been found. For example, the percentage of women who use the pill rises steadily with the level of education. At the same time, there are some social-class similarities.

Ethnicity and Sexuality in the United States

The U.S. population is composed of many ethnic groups, and there are some variations among these groups in sexual behavior. These variations are a result of having different cultural heritages, as well as of current economic and social conditions. Here we discuss the cultural heritages and their influence on sexuality of five groups: African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, American Indians, and Whites. A summary of some ethnic-group variations in sexuality is shown in Table 2.

In examining these data on ethnic-group variations in sexuality, it is important to keep in mind two points: (1) There are ethnic-group variations, but there are also ethnic-group similarities. The sexuality of these groups is not totally different. (2) Cultural context is the key. The sexuality of any particular group can be understood only by understanding the cultural heritage of that group as well as its current social and economic conditions (Figure 6). The sexuality of white Euro-Americans, for example, is influenced by the heritage of European cultures, such as the Victorian era in England. In the following sections, we briefly discuss the cultural contexts for African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and American Indians and examine how these cultural contexts are reflected in their sexuality.

African Americans. The sexuality of African Americans is influenced by many of the same factors influencing the sexuality of Euro-Americans, such as the legacies of the Victorian era and the influence of the Judeo-Christian tradition. In addition, at least three other factors act to make the sexuality of Blacks somewhat different from that of Whites (Kelly & Shelton, 2013): (1) the African heritage (Staples, 2006), (2) the forces that acted upon Blacks during slavery, and (3) current economic and social conditions. Compared with Whites, Black Americans are

Table 1 Social-Class Variations in Sexuality in the United States (education is used as an indicator of social class).

	Less than High School	High School Graduates	Some College	College Graduates
Women aged 15–44 using the pill	4%	9%	16%	22%
Women whose first union was cohabitation	70%	62%	59%	47%
First premarital cohabitations that transition to marriage	30%	39%	40%	53%
Percent of first marriages for men that are intact at 20 years	54%	47%	54%	65%

Sources: Daniels et al. (2014); Copen et al. (2013); Copen et al. (2012a).

Table 2 Comparison of the Sexuality of Whites, African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans

	Whites	African Americans	Latinos/ Latinas	Asian Americans
Gender ratio (number of males per 100 females),				
30- to 34-year-olds	100	84	104	101
Percentage of women 15–44 using the pill	19%	10%	11%	NA
Oral sex experience with the opposite sex among				
females 15–24 years old	69%	63%	59%	NA
Oral sex occurred before first vaginal intercourse, females	49%	27%	37%	NA
Percent who masturbated in the last year,				
18- to 24-year-olds				
Women		50%	56%	
Men		54%	89%	
Percent of first marriages intact after 10 years	68%	56%	73%	83%
Abortion rate*	7.6	25.3	16.1	NA

^{*}Abortion rate is the number of abortions per year per 1,000 women in the group (Pazol et al., 2014).

NA means not available.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census (2000a, 2000b); Daniels et al. (2014); Copen et al. (2012a, 2012b); Dodge et al. (2010).

significantly more likely to live in neighborhoods characterized by racial segregation, poverty, and unemployment (Bowleg et al., 2017).

Like other U.S. ethnic groups, Black Americans, who constitute 15 percent of the U.S. population (Rastogi et al., 2011), are not homogeneous. They vary in whether they are of Caribbean origin (Afro-Caribbeans) or are descendants of people brought to the United States as slaves (African Americans); in whether they are rural and southern or urban; and in social class. These variations

are reflected in sexual attitudes. Afro-Caribbeans emphasize sexual propriety and teach girls to be modest; this group tends to view African Americans as morally suspect and sexually undisciplined (Lewis & Kertzner, 2003; Reid & Bing, 2000).

Table 2 shows some data comparing the sexuality of African Americans with Whites, Latinos, and Asian Americans. In some cases, differences between Blacks and Whites are striking. For example, compared with Whites, Blacks are considerably less likely to engage in





Figure 6 The sexuality of members of different ethnic groups is profoundly shaped by their cultures. (*a*) Roman Catholicism has a powerful impact on Latinos. (*b*) There is strong emphasis on the family among American Indians.

 $(a) @Digital\ Vision/Getty\ Images; (b) @Hill\ Street\ Studios/Blend\ Images\ LLC$

oral sex before the first time they engage in vaginal intercourse. The differences, though, must be balanced against the similarities. For example, Black women are about as likely as White women to engage in oral sex.

The marriage rate is lower for African Americans than for other groups. This is due to a number of factors. First, there is not an equal gender ratio among Blacks. As shown in Table 2, the gender ratio is nearly equal among Whites, Asian Americans, and Latinos; that is, there are about 100 men for every 100 women. Among African Americans, however, there are only about 84 men for every 100 women. This creates lower marriage rates among African American women because there are simply not enough Black men to go around (in the United States, 87 percent of marriages are between two people of the same race [Goodwin et al., 2010]). Second, lower marriage rates among African American men are also due to the obstacles that they have encountered in seeking and maintaining the jobs necessary to support a family. Since World War II, the number of manufacturing jobs, which once were a major source of employment for working-class Black men, has declined dramatically. The result has been a decline in the Black working class and an expansion of the Black underclass.

In later chapters, we discuss other issues having to do with race/ethnicity and sexuality, always bearing in mind the cultural context that shapes and gives meaning to different sexual patterns.

Latinos. Latinos, who constitute 16 percent of the U.S. population (Humes et al., 2011), are people of Latin American heritage; therefore, the category includes many different cultural groups, such as Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans. Latinos can refer to the entire group or specifically to men; the term Latinas refers exclusively to women of Latin American origin. Some now prefer the term Latinx, to get away from the gender designations, while also including people outside the gender binary.

Latinx have a cultural heritage distinct from that of both African Americans and Anglos, although forces such as the Judeo-Christian religious tradition affect all three groups. In traditional Latin American cultures, gender roles are sharply defined (Melendez et al., 2013; Rafaelli & Ontai, 2004). Such roles are emphasized early in the

Latinos: People of Latin American heritage.

Latinx: A term for Latinos that gets around the gender designations of Latino and Latina and includes people outside the gender binary.

Familismo: Among Latinx, a strong cultural valuing of one's nuclear and extended family.

socialization process for children. Boys are given greater freedom and are encouraged in sexual exploits. Girls are expected to be passive, obedient, and weak. Latinx in the United States today have a cultural heritage that blends these traditional cultural values with the contemporary values of the dominant Anglo culture.

The gender roles of traditional Latinx culture are epitomized in the concepts of *machismo* and *marianismo* (Melendez et al., 2013). The term *machismo*, or *macho*, has come to be used loosely in American culture today. Literally, *machismo* means "maleness" or "virility." More generally, it refers to the "mystique of manliness" (Ruth, 1990). The cultural code of *machismo* among Latin Americans mandates that the man must be responsible for the well-being and honor of his family, but in extreme forms it also means tolerating men's sexual infidelities. *Marianismo*, the female counterpart of *machismo*, derives from Roman Catholic worship of Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus. Thus, motherhood is highly valued, whereas virginity until marriage is closely guarded.

Familismo is another important aspect of Latinx culture. This cultural value emphasizes the importance of family—nuclear and extended—in matters such as support, loyalty, solidarity, and family honor (Becker et al., 2014).

Asian Americans. The broad category of Asian Americans includes many different cultural groups, such as Japanese Americans, Chinese Americans, and Indian Americans, as well as the relative newcomer groups such as Vietnamese Americans and the Hmong. Asians constitute 6 percent of the U.S. population (Hoeffel et al., 2012). As discussed in A Sexually Diverse World: Sex in China, traditional Asian cultures, such as the Chinese, have been repressive about sexuality. Traditional Cambodian society, for instance, believed that a lack of information about sexuality would prevent the premarital sex that would tarnish a family's honor (Okazaki, 2002).

Several core Asian values persist in the United States and doubtless affect sexual expression. Among the core values that are relevant to sexuality are the following (Kim et al., 2005):

- 1. *Collectivism*. Others' needs, especially those of the family, should be considered before one's own. Open expression of some forms of sexuality would represent a threat to the highly interdependent social structure as well as to the family (Okazaki, 2002).
- Conformity to norms. The individual should conform
 to the expectations of the family and society. Shame
 and the threat of loss of face, which can apply both to
 the individual and to their family, are powerful forces
 shaping good behavior.
- Emotional control. Emotions should not be openly expressed. Emotions such as love or passion should be muted and controlled.

Given all these forces, it is not surprising that Asian Americans today tend to be the sexual conservatives of the various ethnic groups (Meston & Ahrold, 2010). For example, they have the lowest incidence of multiple sexual partners (Laumann et al., 1994; Meston & Ahrold, 2010).

American Indians. American Indians, like other U.S. ethnic groups, are diverse among themselves, as a result of the different heritages of more than 500 tribes, such as the Navajo, Hurons, Mohicans, and Cheyenne. In addition, there are distinctions between those who are city dwellers and those who live on reservations (Sarche et al., 2017: Weaver, 1999).

The popular media over the last century have portrayed American Indian men as noble savages who are both exotic and erotic (Bird, 1999). They have been shown nearly naked, emphasizing well-developed masculine bodies. In romance novels of the 1990s, American Indian males became cultural icons for vanishing standards of masculinity. They are handsome and virile, yet tender and vulnerable, and magnificent lovers for White women (Van Lent, 1996).

American Indian women have been less visible in the popular media. When present, they are stereotyped as princesses or squaws (Acoose, 2015; Bird, 1999). The princess is noble, beautiful, and erotic. The Disney animated film *Pocahontas* features such a voluptuous princess. The stereotypical squaw, in contrast, is unattractive, uninteresting, and ignored.

Although traditional American Indian cultures had strict courtship rules that regulated premarital sex, today there is great pressure in the youth culture to have sex (Hellerstedt et al., 2006). In one study of youth in a Northern Plains tribe, 9 percent had first intercourse before age 13, compared with national statistics of 5 percent (Kaufman et al., 2007).

Unfortunately, the major national sex surveys such as those from which Table 2 was drawn have had such small samples of American Indians that they have not been able to report reliable statistics for this group.

Biracial and Multiracial People. Although it is common to think of people falling into one of the four ethnic groups discussed here, there is increasing recognition that many people do not fit into these neat categories. Instead, they are biracial or multiracial, with ancestors from two or more races (Figure 7). Former president Barack Obama is a good example, having had a White American mother and a Black Kenyan father. Recognizing the fact that many people are multiracial, beginning in 2000 the U.S. Census allowed respondents to indicate more than one race for themselves. According to that census, roughly 2 percent of Americans are multiracial.

Racial Microaggressions. Old-fashioned, obvious, overt racism has become rare in the United States. It has been replaced by more subtle forms of prejudiced attitudes and behaviors. **Racial microaggressions** are subtle insults directed at people of color, often done nonconsciously (Sue et al., 2007; Sue, 2010). Members of ethnic minorities in the United States experience them frequently, and they can be a source of stress. Consider the following example.



Figure 7 Although most people like to think of individuals as falling into distinct race categories, there is increasing recognition that many Americans are biracial or multiracial. Meghan Markle, who married Britain's Prince Harry, has an African American mother and a White father.

©WPA Pool/Getty Images

Neil Henning, a White professor, had just finished a lecture on Greco-Roman contributions to the history of psychology. He asked for questions. An African American student raised his hand. The student seemed frustrated and said that the history of psychology was ethnocentric and Eurocentric, and that it left out contributions from African, Asian, and Latin American cultures and psychologies.

The professor responded, "Aidan, please calm down. We are studying American psychology. We will eventually address how it has influenced and been adapted to Asian and other societies." (adapted from Sue, 2010, p. 3)

Can you spot the microaggressions? Telling a person to calm down is often an expression of dominance that invalidates the legitimacy of the person's feelings. Then, the professor implied that American psychology was the norm and that it influenced other societies, with no consideration of the possibility that other societies might have developed psychological concepts and principles on their own. All of this was very subtle, though. Aidan undoubtedly felt dissatisfied with the interaction, but it would be difficult for him to say that the professor said something horrible. The subtlety and ambiguity of microaggressions make them even more difficult to deal with.

As we will see in later chapters, the concept of microaggressions also extends to gender microaggressions, sexual orientation microaggressions, and microaggressions against transgender persons.

Racial microaggressions: Subtle insults directed at people of color and often done nonconsciously.



A Sexually Diverse World

Sex in China

he first 4,000 years of recorded Chinese history were characterized by open, positive attitudes about human sexuality, including a rich erotic literature. Indeed, the oldest sex manuals in the world come from China, dating from approximately 200 B.C.E. The most recent 1,000 years, however, have been just the opposite, characterized by repression of sexuality and censorship.

A major philosophical concept in Chinese culture, yin and yang, originated around 300 B.C.E. and is found in important writings on Confucianism and Taoism. According to the yin-yang philosophy, all objects and events are the products of two elements: yin, which is negative, passive, weak, and destructive; and yang, which is positive, active, strong, and constructive. Yin is associated with the female, yang with the male. For several thousand years, the Chinese have used yin and yang in words dealing with sexuality. For example, *yin fu* (the door of yin) means "vulva," and *yang ju* (the organ of yang) means "penis." *Huo yin yang* (the union of yin and yang) is the term used for sexual intercourse. This philosophy holds that the harmonious interaction between the male and female principles is vital, creating positive cultural attitudes toward sexuality.

Of the three major religions of China—Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism—Taoism is the only truly indigenous one, dating from the writings of Chang Ling around 143 C.E. Taoism is one of the few religions to advocate the cultivation of sexual techniques for the benefit of the individual. To quote from a classic Taoist work, *The Canon of the Immaculate Girl*,

Said P'eng, "One achieves longevity by loving the essence, cultivating the spiritual, and partaking of many kinds of medicines. If you don't know the ways of intercourse, taking herbs is of no benefit. The producing of man and woman is like the begetting of Heaven and Earth. Heaven and Earth have attained the method of intercourse and, therefore, they lack the limitation of finality. Man loses the method of intercourse and therefore suffers the mortification of early death. If you can avoid mortification and injury and attain the arts of sex, you will have found the way of nondeath." (Ruan, 1991, p. 56)

The tradition of erotic literature and openness about sexuality began to change about 1,000 years ago, led by several famous neo-Confucianists, so that negative and repressive attitudes became dominant. In 1422 there was a ban on erotic literature, and a second major ban occurred in 1664. A commoner involved in printing a banned book could be beaten and exiled.

When the communist government founded the People's Republic of China in 1949, it imposed a strict ban on all sexually explicit materials. The policy was quite effective in the 1950s and 1960s. By the late 1960s, however, erotica was being produced much more in Western nations, and in China there was increased openness to the West. By the late 1970s, X-rated videotapes were being smuggled into China from Hong Kong and other countries, and they quickly became a fad. Small parties were organized around the viewing of these tapes. The government reacted harshly, promulgating a new antipornography law in 1985. According to the law, "Pornography is very harmful, poisoning people's minds, inducing crimes . . . and must be banned" (Ruan, 1991, p. 100). Publishing houses that issued pornography were given stiff fines, and by 1986, 217 illegal publishers had been arrested and 42 forced to close. In one incident, a Shanghai railway station employee was sentenced to death for having organized sex parties on nine different occasions, during which pornographic videotapes were viewed and he engaged in sexual activity with women.

Male homosexuality is recognized in historical writings in China as early as 2,000 years ago. Homosexuality was then so widespread among the upper classes that the period is known as the Golden Age of Homosexuality in China. One historical book on the Han dynasty contained a special section describing the emperors' male sexual partners. There were also tolerant attitudes toward lesbianism. But with the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, homosexuality, like all other sexuality, was severely repressed. Most Chinese in the 1980s claimed that they had never known a homosexual and argued that there must be very few in Chinese society.

In the early 1980s, China was characterized by a puritanism that probably far exceeded that observed by the original Puritans. It was considered scandalous for a married couple to hold hands in public. Prostitution, premarital sex, homosexuality, and variant sexual behaviors were all illegal, and the laws were enforced. Even sexuality in marriage was given little encouragement.

A moderate sexual liberation began in the 1980s and continues today, sparked in part by increased access to sexual media and in part by government policies demanding contraception, which open the door to premarital sex without the worry of pregnancy. Open displays of affection, such as holding hands in public, are now no longer treated as signs of promiscuity. High schools now include

sex education in the curriculum. The rationale is that a scientific understanding of sexual development is essential to the healthy development of young people and to the maintenance of high moral standards and well-controlled social order. Yet the Chinese international students in our classes tell us that sex education in reality is nearly non-existent in China.

Noted American sex researcher Edward Laumann has extended his surveys to China (Laumann & Parish, 2004; Parish et al., 2007; Table 3). The results indicate that the liberalizing trends are occurring mainly in the larger cities, whereas the majority of Chinese live in more rural areas that are still extremely conservative. In regard to premarital sex, only 16 percent of men and 5 percent of women from the older generation say that they engaged in it, compared with 31 percent of men and 14 percent of women today. These rates are still low compared with Western nations such as the United States. For extramarital sex, 4.5 percent of women engaged in it in the past 12 months, as had 11 percent of men in noncommercial and 5.5 percent of men in commercial sex (Zhang et al., 2012). These rates are similar to those reported in many other nations. It will be interesting to see whether liberalization continues or an eventual swing back to repression occurs.

A 2016 report, in cooperation with the United Nations, tells a less optimistic tale about the status of LGBT people in China ("Being LGBTI in China," 2016). The report documents repression and discrimination: "Sexual and gender minority people in China still live in the shadows, with only 5% of them willing to live their diversity openly." They continue to face marked discrimination, especially within the family, where they may be forced into heterosexual relationships. Yet, at the same time,

Table 3 Contemporary Data on Sex in China: A Liberalizing Trend

Older Cohort*	Current Cohort*
31%	52%
3	8
16	31
5	14
13	74
6	37
	31% 3 16 5

^{* &}quot;Older cohort" refers to those who turned 20 before 1980 and therefore grew up in the conservative culture of the time. "Current cohort" refers to those who turned 20 after 1980 and therefore grew up in the era of liberalization.

Source: Parish et al. (2007).

the general population is beginning to show attitudes that are less negative, but most are uninformed about LGBT people.

Sources: Evans (1995); Jeffreys (2006); Parish et al. (2007); Ruan (1991); Ruan & Lau (1998); Zhang et al. (2012); "Being LGBTI in China" (2016).

The Significance of Cross-Cultural Studies

What relevance do cross-cultural data have to an understanding of human sexuality? They are important for two basic reasons. First, they give us a notion of the enormous variation that exists in human sexual behavior, and they help us put our own standards and behavior in perspective. Second, these studies provide impressive evidence concerning the importance of culture and learning in the shaping of our sexual behavior; they show us that human sexual behavior is not completely determined by biology or drives or instincts. For example, a woman of Inis Beag and a woman of Mangaia presumably have vaginas that

are similarly constructed and clitorises that are approximately the same size and have the same nerve supply. But the woman of Inis Beag never has an orgasm, and all Mangaian women orgasm.³ Why? Their cultures are different, and they and their partners learned different things about sex as they were growing up. Culture is a major determinant of human sexual behavior.

³We like to use the word *orgasm* not only as a noun but also as a verb. The reason is that alternative expressions, such as "to *achieve* orgasm" and "to *reach* orgasm," reflect the tendency of Americans to make sex an achievement situation (an idea to be discussed further in the chapter "Sexual Arousal"). To avoid this, we use "to have an orgasm" or "to orgasm."

The point of studying sexuality in different cultures is *not* to teach that there are a lot of exotic people out there doing exotic things. Rather, the point is to remind ourselves that each group has its own culture, and this culture has a profound influence on the sexual expression of the people who grow up in it. We offer more examples in many of the chapters that follow.

Cross-Species Perspectives on Sexuality

Humans are just one of many animal species, and all of them display sexual behavior. To put our own sexual behavior in evolutionary perspective, it is helpful to explore the similarities and differences between our own sexuality and that of other species.

There is one other reason for this particular discussion. Some people classify sexual behaviors as "natural" or "unnat-

ural," depending on whether other

Is homosexuality found in other species?

species do or do not exhibit those behaviors. Sometimes, though, the data are twisted to suit the purposes of the per-

son making the argument, so there is a need for a less biased view. Let's see exactly what some other species do.

Masturbation

Humans are definitely not the only species that masturbates. Masturbation is found among many species of mammals, particularly among the primates (monkeys and apes). Male monkeys and apes in zoos can be observed masturbating, often to the horror of the proper folk who have come to see them. At one time it was thought that this behavior might be the result of the unnatural living conditions of zoos. However, observations of free-living primates indicate that they, too, masturbate. Techniques include hand stimulation of the genitals or rubbing the genitals against an object. In terms of technique, monkeys and nonhuman apes have one advantage over humans: Their bodies are so flexible that they can perform mouthgenital sex on themselves.

Female masturbation is also found among many species beside our own. The prize for the most inventive technique probably should go to the female porcupine. She holds one end of a stick in her paws and walks around while straddling the stick; as the stick bumps against the ground, it vibrates against her genitals (Ford & Beach, 1951). Human females are apparently not the only ones to enjoy vibrators.

Same-Gender Sexual Behavior

Same-gender behavior is found in many species beside our own (Bagemihl, 1999; Leca et al., 2014; Vasey, 2002; Figure 8a). Indeed, observations of other species indicate that our basic mammalian heritage is bisexual, composed of both heterosexual and homosexual elements (Bagemihl, 1999).

Males of many species will mount other males, and anal intercourse has been observed in some male primates (Wallen & Parsons, 1997). Among domestic sheep, 9 percent of adult males strongly prefer other males as sex partners (Ellis, 1996; Roselli et al., 2002). In a number of primate species, including bonobos and Japanese macaques, females mount other females (Leca et al., 2015; Vasey & Jiskoot, 2010).

Sexual Signaling

Female primates engage in sexual signaling to males, in effect, flirting (Dixson, 1990; Figure 8b). For example, females in one species of macaque engage in parading in front of males to signal their interest. Among baboons, spider monkeys, and orangutans, the female makes eye contact with the male. The female patas monkey puffs out her cheeks and drools. The parading and eye contact sound very familiar—they could easily be observed among women at a singles bar. The puffing and drooling probably wouldn't play as well, though.

Human Uniqueness

Are humans in any ways unique in their sexual behavior? The general trend, as we move from lower species such as fish or rodents to higher ones such as primates, is for sexual behavior to be more hormonally (instinctively) controlled among the lower species and to be controlled more by the brain (and therefore by learning and social context) in the higher species (Beach, 1947; Wallen, 2001). Thus, environmental influences are much more important in shaping primate—especially human—sexual behavior than they are in shaping the sexual behavior of other species.

An illustration of this fact is provided by studies of the adult sexual behavior of animals raised in deprived environments. If mice are reared in isolation, their adult sexual behavior will nonetheless be normal (Scott, 1964). But if rhesus monkeys are reared in isolation, their adult sexual behavior is severely disturbed, to the point where they may be incapable of reproducing (Harlow et al., 1963). Thus, environmental experiences are crucial in shaping the sexual behavior of higher species, particularly humans; for us, sexual behavior is a lot more than just "doin' what comes naturally."

Female sexuality provides a particularly good illustration of the shift in hormonal control from lower to higher species. Throughout most of the animal kingdom, female sexual behavior is strongly controlled by hormones. In





Figure 8 (a) Same-gender sexuality in animals: Two male giraffes "necking." They rub necks and become aroused. (b) The sexual behavior of primates: Females have various ways of expressing choice. Here a female Barbary macaque presents her sexual swelling to a male. He seems to be interested.

(a) ©Thomas Michael Corcoran/PhotoEdit; (b) ©Meredith F. Small

virtually all mammals, females do not engage in sexual behavior at all except when they are in "heat" (estrus), which is a particular hormonal state. In contrast, human females are capable of engaging in sexual behavior—and actually do engage in it—during any phase of their hormonal (menstrual) cycle. Thus, the sexual behavior of human females is not nearly as much under hormonal control as that of females of other species.

Traditionally it was thought that female orgasm is unique to humans and does not exist in other species. Then some studies found evidence of orgasm in rhesus macaques (monkeys), as indicated by the same physiological responses indicative of orgasm in human females—specifically, increased heart rate and uterine contractions (Burton, 1970; Goldfoot et al., 1980; Zumpe & Michael, 1968). Humans can no longer claim to have a corner on the female orgasm market. This fact has interesting implications for understanding the evolution of sexuality. Perhaps the higher species, in which the females are not driven to sexual activity by their hormones, have the pleasure of orgasm as an incentive.

In summary, there is little in human sexuality that is completely unique to humans, except for elaborate, complex cultural influences. In other respects, we are on a continuum with other species.

The Nonsexual Uses of Sexual Behavior

Two male baboons are locked in combat. One begins to emerge as the victor. The other "presents" (the "female"

sexual posture, in which the rump is directed toward the other and is elevated).

Two male monkeys are members of the same troop. Long ago they established which one is dominant and which subordinate. The dominant one mounts (the "male" sexual behavior) the subordinate one.

These are examples of animals sometimes using sexual behavior for nonsexual purposes (Small, 1993; Wallen & Zehr, 2004). Commonly such behavior signals the end of a fight, as in the first example. The loser indicates his surrender by presenting, and the winner signals victory by mounting. Sexual behaviors can also symbolize an animal's rank in a dominance hierarchy. Dominant animals mount subordinate ones. As another example, male squirrel monkeys sometimes use an exhibitionist display of their erect penis as part of an aggressive display against another male in a phenomenon called *phallic aggression* (Wickler, 1973).

All this is perfectly obvious when we observe it in monkeys. But do humans ever use sexual behavior for nonsexual purposes? Consider the rapist, who uses sex as an expression of aggression against and power over a woman (Zurbriggen, 2010), or over another man in the case of same-gender rape. Another example is the exhibitionist, who uses the display of his erect penis to shock and frighten women, much as the male squirrel monkey uses such a display to shock and frighten his opponent. Humans also use sex for economic purposes; the best examples are male and female prostitutes.

There are also less extreme examples. Consider the couple who have a fight and then make love to signal an end to the hostilities.⁴ Or consider the woman who goes to bed with an influential—though unattractive—politician because this gives her a vicarious sense of power.

You can probably think of other examples of the nonsexual use of sexual behavior. Humans, just like members of other species, can use sex for a variety of nonsexual purposes.

The Sexual Health Perspective

The important new concepts of sexual health and sexual rights provide yet another broad and thought-provoking perspective on sexuality. Sexual health is a social and political movement that is gaining momentum worldwide. Although many discussions of sexual health are about sexual disease, such as HIV infection, sexual health is a much broader concept that involves a vision of positive sexual health (Edwards & Coleman, 2004; Parker et al., 2004). The World Health Organization (WHO) definition is as follows:

Sexual health: A state of physical, emotional, mental, and social wellbeing in relation to sexuality.

Sexual rights: Basic, inalienable rights regarding sexuality, both positive and negative, such as rights to reproductive self-determination and sexual self-expression and freedom from sexual abuse and violence.

Sexual health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of

⁴It has been our observation that this practice may not always mean the same thing to the man and the woman. To the man it can mean that everything is fine again, but the woman can be left feeling dissatisfied and not at all convinced that the issues are resolved. Thus, this situation can be a source of miscommunication between the two.

coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled. (World Health Organization, 2006)

Notice that this definition includes not only sexual physical health but also sexual mental health and positive sexual relationships. Therefore, public health efforts to prevent HIV or chlamydia infection, programs to enhance romantic relationships, and activism to end discrimination and violence against gays and lesbians all fall under the umbrella of sexual health. Notice also that the definition includes both negative and positive rights. Negative rights are freedoms *from*—for example, freedom from sexual violence. Positive rights are freedoms *to*—for example, freedom to experience sexual pleasure or to express one's sexuality with same-gender partners.

With the growth of the sexual health movement, the concept of sexual rights has also come to center stage; in fact, the term is used in the WHO definition. The idea here is that all human beings have certain basic, inalienable rights regarding sexuality, just as in America's Declaration of Independence the writers asserted that all people have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness (that last one is interesting in the context of sexuality, wouldn't you say?). The question then is, What are humans' basic sexual rights? The principles are new and evolving, but they generally include elements such as a right to reproductive self-determination and freedom from sexual abuse and sexual violence, as well as the right to sexual self-expression (provided, of course, that it doesn't interfere with someone else's sexual rights) (Sandfort & Ehrhardt, 2004). Some would argue that same-sex marriage, in this context, is a basic sexual right, and these arguments are gaining momentum worldwide. Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, the Netherlands, Spain, and now the United States are among the nations offering a legally recognized relationship for both heterosexual and same-gender couples. And South Africa's constitution of 1996 bars discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (Parker et al., 2004).



In this and all other chapters in this textbook, you will find boxes labeled CRITICAL THINKING SKILL. Each of these boxes is designed to improve your critical thinking skills as applied to sexuality, but the skills you learn will be useful in many other areas of life.

According to Diane Halpern, an expert in critical thinking,

Critical thinking is the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increases the probability of a desirable outcome. It is purposeful, reasoned, and goal directed. It is the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions. . . . Critical thinking also involves evaluating the thinking process—the reasoning that went into the conclusion we have arrived at or the kinds of factors considered in making a decision. (Halpern, 2002, p. 93)

Critical thinking is logical, rational, and free of self-deception. Critical thinking is also an attitude that people carry with them into situations, a belief that can and should be used to make better decisions. Over time, those with excellent critical thinking skills should experience better outcomes (e.g., making a good career choice or making a good decision about where to live) compared with those who have poor critical thinking skills (Halpern, 1998).

For these reasons, colleges and universities believe that it is important for students to improve their critical thinking skills. Those skills are also increasingly important in the world of work, as our industrial, manufacturing economy has been replaced by a knowledge-based economy, and the ability to evaluate information carefully is a major asset.

In each chapter of this textbook, you will find boxes called CRITICAL THINKING SKILL. Each teaches a particular critical thinking skill with an application in sexuality, but each skill will have applications throughout your life. Here's to better critical thinking by all of us!



Understanding that other cultures think differently about some issues

One way to improve critical thinking skills is to understand that some cultures have different ideas about certain issues than we have in our culture. This cross-cultural view widens our perspective and helps us to think more rationally about unspoken assumptions in our culture. For example, in the Netherlands, the schools are expected to provide comprehensive sexuality education to children. One of their programs is Long Live Love, developed for 13- to 15-year-olds (Schutte et al., 2014). Moreover, the Netherlands has a low rate of teen pregnancy, much lower than in the United States. Many factors are involved in the low teen pregnancy rate in the Netherlands, and experts believe that an important one is the excellent sexuality education provided by the schools.

How does knowing about these practices apply to how we do things in the United States? For example, some religious groups and some parents object to sexuality education in the schools. How would that debate change if we looked at how things are done in the Netherlands?

SUMMARY

Sex and Gender

Sexual behavior is activity that produces arousal and increases the chance of orgasm. Sex (sexual behavior and anatomy) is distinct from gender (being male or female or some other gender such as genderqueer).

The History of Understanding Sexuality: Religion and Science

Historically, the main sources of sexual information were religion and, beginning in the late 1800s, science. Important early sex researchers were Sigmund Freud, Havelock Ellis, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, and Magnus Hirschfeld, all emerging from the rigid Victorian era. By the 1990s, major, well-conducted sex surveys were available.

The Media

Today, the mass media—whether television, magazines, or the Internet—carry extensive portrayals of sexuality and are a powerful influence on most people's understanding of sexuality. The mass media may have an influence through cultivation, framing, social learning, and reinforcing spirals.

Cross-Cultural Perspectives on **Sexuality**

Studies of various human cultures around the world provide evidence of enormous variations in human sexual behavior. Frequency of intercourse may vary from once a week in some cultures to three or four times a night in others. Attitudes regarding premarital and extramarital sex, masturbation, same-gender sexual behavior, and gender roles vary considerably across cultures. Within the United States, sexual behavior varies with social class and ethnic group. These great variations provide evidence of the importance of learning and culture in shaping sexual behavior. Yet all societies regulate sexual behavior in some way.

Cross-Species Perspectives on Sexuality

Studies of sexual behavior in various animal species show that masturbation, mouth-genital stimulation, and same-gender sexual behavior are by no means limited to humans. In many species, sexual behavior may be used for nonsexual purposes, such as expressing dominance.

The Sexual Health Perspective

A new international movement focuses on sexual health and the principles of sexual rights.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Bagemihl, Bruce. (1999). *Biological exuberance: Animal homosexuality and natural diversity.* New York:

St. Martin's. The author documents the blindness of scientists to the same-gender sexual behavior they observed and at the same time catalogs the extensiveness of same-gender behaviors in hundreds of species.

Gregersen, Edgar. (1996). *The world of human sexuality*. New York: Irvington. Gregersen, an anthropologist, has compiled a vast amount of information about sexuality in cultures around the world. The book also includes a treasure trove of fascinating illustrations.

Lutz, Deborah. (2011). *Pleasure bound: Victorian sex rebels and the new eroticism.* New York: Norton.

Historian Lutz documents Victorian antisex norms, as well as those who rebelled against them.

Staples, Robert. (2006). *Exploring Black sexuality*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield. Staples, considered the dean of Black family studies, writes authoritatively about topics such as the myth of Black sexual superiority.

Zuk, Marlene. (2002). Sexual selections: What we can and can't learn about sex from animals. Berkeley: University of California Press. Zuk, a biologist, carefully analyzes what can be inferred from studies of the sexual behavior of animals.

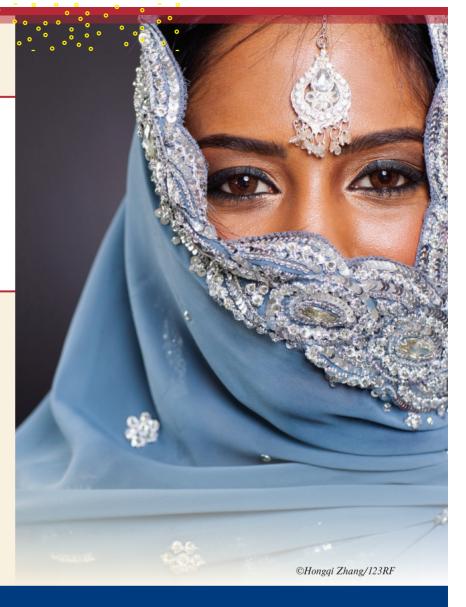
Design Elements: A Sexually Diverse World icon (hands): ©Shutterstock/Dragon Images; First Person icon (people with arms crossed): ©Image Source/Getty Images; Milestones in Sex Research icon (survey): ©Ravi Tahilramani/Getty Images



- 1. Is the heterosexual male preference for the "hourglass" female figure universal?
- 2. What theory accounts for how the smell of perfume or cologne becomes sexually arousing?
- 3. Why do most sexual interactions in our society follow the same patterns?

Read this chapter to find out.





Theoretical Perspectives on Sexuality

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

Evolutionary Theories

Sociobiology Evolutionary Psychology Gender-Neutral Evolutionary Theory

Psychological Theories

Psychoanalytic Theory Learning Theory Social Exchange Theory Cognitive Theories

Critical Theories

Feminist Theory Queer Theory

Sociological Perspectives

Symbolic Interaction Theory Sexual Scripts Social Institutions



ne of the discoveries of psychoanalysis consists in the assertion that impulses, which can only be described as sexual in both the narrower and the wider sense, play a peculiarly large part, never before sufficiently appreciated, in the causation of nervous and mental disorders. Nay, more, that these sexual impulses have contributed invaluably to the highest cultural, artistic, and social achievements of the human mind.*

From an evolutionary perspective, no single decision is more important than the choice of a mate. That single fork in the road determines one's ultimate reproductive fate.

Imagine, for a moment, that you are sitting in a bedroom, watching two people making love. Imagine, too, that sitting with you in the room, thinking your same thoughts, are Sigmund Freud (creator of psychoanalytic theory), E. O. Wilson (a leading sociobiologist), Albert Bandura (a prominent social learning theorist), and John Gagnon (a proponent of script theory). The scene you are imagining may evoke arousal and nothing more in you, but your imaginary companions would have a rich set of additional thoughts as they viewed the scene through the specially colored lenses of their own theoretical perspectives. Freud might be marveling at how the biological sex drive, the libido, expresses itself so strongly and directly in this couple. Wilson, the sociobiologist, would be thinking how mating behavior in humans is similar to such behavior in other species of animals and how it is clearly the product of evolutionary selection for behaviors that lead to successful reproduction. Bandura might be thinking how sexual arousal and orgasm act as powerful positive reinforcers that will lead the couple to repeat the act frequently and how they are imitating a technique of neck nibbling that they saw in a film last week. Finally, Gagnon's thoughts might be about the social scripting of sexuality; this couple begins with kissing, moves on to

Sociobiology: The application of evolutionary biology to understanding the social behavior of animals, including humans.

Evolution: A theory that all living things have acquired their present forms through gradual changes in their genetic endowment over successive generations.

Natural selection: A process in nature resulting in greater rates of survival of those plants and animals that are best adapted to their environment. petting, and finishes up with intercourse, following a script written by society.

Some of the major theories in the social sciences have had many—and different—things to say about sexuality, and it is these theories that we consider in this chapter. Theories provide us with answers to the question "why?" We often wonder why others do or do not engage in particular sexual behaviors and relationships. We sometimes ask the "why" question

about our own sexuality. Given the diversity in human sexuality, we need a range of theories to understand it.

Evolutionary Theories

Sociobiology

Sociobiology is defined as the application of evolutionary biology to understanding the social behavior of animals, including humans (Barash, 1982). Sexual behavior is, of course, a form of social behavior, and so the sociobiologists try, often through observations of other species, to understand why certain patterns of sexual behavior have evolved in humans.

In terms of **evolution**, what counts is producing lots of healthy, viable offspring who will carry on one's genes. Evolution occurs via **natural selection**, the process by which the animals that are best adapted to their environment are more likely to survive, reproduce, and pass on their genes to the next generation.

How do humans choose mates? One major criterion is the physical attractiveness of the person (see the chapter "Attraction, Love, and Communication"). The sociobiologist argues that many of the characteristics we evaluate in judging attractiveness-for example, physique and complexion-are indicative of the health and vigor of the individual. These in turn are probably related to the person's reproductive potential; the unhealthy are less likely to produce many vigorous offspring. Natural selection would favor individuals preferring mates who would have maximum reproductive success. Thus, perhaps our concern with physical attractiveness is a product of evolution and natural selection. (See Barash, 1982, for an extended discussion of this point and the ones that follow.) We choose an attractive, healthy mate who will help us produce many offspring. Can you guess why it is that the

^{*}Sigmund Freud. (1924). A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis. New York: Permabooks, 1953. (Boni & Liveright edition, 1924). pp. 26–27.

[†]Buss (2000), p. 10.

sociobiologist thinks most men are attracted to women with large breasts?

If attractiveness is an indicator of health, it should be more important in mate selection in societies where more people are unhealthy. An online survey obtained ratings of the attractiveness of images of male faces from women ages 21 to 40 from 30 countries. Facial masculinity, manipulated by computer, had more impact on attractiveness ratings in countries with poorer health, as measured by mortality, life expectancy, and communicable disease (DeBruine et al., 2010).

From this viewpoint, dating, playing sports, getting engaged, and similar customs are much like the courtship rituals of other species (see Figure 1). For example, many falcons and eagles have a flying courtship in which objects are exchanged between the pair in midair. The sociobiologist views this courtship as an opportunity for each member of the prospective couple to assess the other's fitness. For example, any lack of speed or coordination would be apparent during the airborne acrobatics. Evolution would favor courtship patterns that permitted individuals to choose mates who would increase their reproductive success. Perhaps that is exactly what we are doing in our human courtship rituals. The expenditure of money by men on dates indicates their ability to support a family. Dancing permits the assessment of physical prowess, and so on.



Sociobiologists have an explanation for why the family structure of a man, a woman, and their offspring is found in every society. Once a man and a woman mate, there are several obstacles to reproductive success, two being infant vulnerability and maternal death. Infant vulnerability is greatly reduced if the mother provides continuing physical care, including breast-feeding. It is further reduced if the father provides resources and security from attack for mother and infant. Two mechanisms that facilitate these conditions are a pair-bond between mother and father and attachment between infant and parent (Miller & Fishkin, 1997). Thus, an offspring's chances of survival are greatly increased if the parents bond emotionally, that is, love each other, and if the parents have a propensity for attachment. Further, an emotional bond might lead to more frequent sexual interaction; the pleasure of sex in turn will reinforce the bond. Research with small mammals, including mice and moles, demonstrates the advantages of biparental care of offspring and the critical role of bonding (Morell, 1998).

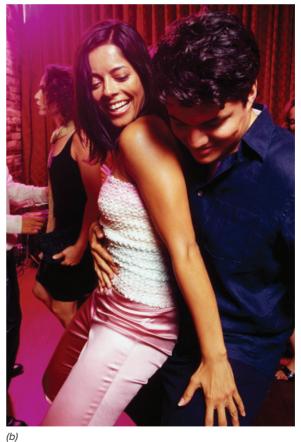


Figure 1 (a) The courtship rituals of great egrets. (b) Dancing is a human dating custom. According to sociobiologists, human customs of dating and becoming engaged are biologically produced and serve the same functions as courtship rituals in other species: They allow potential mates to assess each other's fitness.

According to this theory, parents are most interested in the survival and reproductive success of their genetic offspring. Parental investment refers to behaviors or other resources invested in the offspring by the parent that increase the offspring's chance of survival. Because of the high rates of divorce and remarriage in the United States, many men have both biological children and stepchildren. This situation leads to the prediction that men will tend to invest more in their genetic children than in their stepchildren. Research indicates that fathers invest the most money on the genetic children of their current union and the least money on stepchildren from a past relationship. However, they spend an equal amount on their genetic children and the stepchildren of their current relationship, perhaps to cement the pair-bond with their current partner (Anderson et al., 2001).

In addition to natural selection, Darwin also proposed a mechanism that is not as much a household word, sexual selection (Buss, 2009; Gangestad & Thornhill, 1997). Sexual selection is selection that creates differences between males and females. It consists of two processes: (1) competition among members of one gender (usually males) for mating access to members of the other gender, and (2) preferential choice by members of one gender (usually females) for certain members of the other gender. In other words, in many-though not all (Clutton-Brock, 2007)-species, males compete among themselves for the right to mate with females; and females, for their part, prefer certain males and mate with them while refusing to mate with other males. Researchers have tested with humans some of the predictions that come from the theory of sexual selection. For example, the theory predicts that men should compete with each other in ways that involve displaying material resources that should be attractive to women, and men should engage in these displays more than women do (Buss, 1988). Examples might be giving impressive gifts to potential mates, flashy showing of possessions (e.g., cars), or displaying personality characteristics that are likely to lead to the acquisition of resources (e.g., ambition). Research shows that men engage in these behaviors significantly more than women do, and that both men and women believe these tactics are effective (Buss, 1988).

Many criticisms of sociobiology have been made. Some critics object to the biological determinism that it

Parental investment: In evolutionary theories, behaviors or other investments in the offspring by the parent that increase the offspring's chance of survival.

Sexual selection: A specific type of selection that creates differences between males and females.

Evolutionary psychology: The study of psychological mechanisms that have been shaped by evolution.

implies. Also, sociobiology has been criticized for resting on an outmoded version of evolutionary theory that modern biologists consider naive (Gould, 1987). For example, sociobiology has focused mainly on the individual's struggle for survival and efforts to reproduce; modern biologists focus on more complex issues such as the survival of the group and the

species. Furthermore, sociobiologists

assume that the central function of sex is reproduction; this may have been true historically but is not true today

Is the heterosexual male preference for the "hourglass" female figure universal?

(Meston & Buss, 2007). Recent

research does not support some of the evidence that is widely cited in support of the theory. One sociobiologist reported that the winners of the Miss America contest and *Playboy*'s centerfold models have consistently had a waist-to-hip ratio of .7, arguing that this reflects a universal standard related to reproductive fitness (Singh, 1993). A closer look at the data shows that the average for Miss America winners has steadily declined since 1921, from .78 to .64 in 1986, contradicting the claim that a preference for .70 was hardwired by evolution thousands of years ago (Freese & Meland, 2002). Research analyzing waist-to-hip ratios across a large number of cultures, Western and non-Western, finds that the .7 ratio is most common in societies where women are economically dependent on men (not all cultures, as the theory asserts) (Cashdan, 2008).

Evolutionary Psychology

A somewhat different approach is taken by **evolutionary psychology**, which focuses on psychological mechanisms that have been shaped by evolution (Buss, 1991). If behaviors evolved in response to selection pressures, it is plausible to argue that cognitive or emotional structures evolved in the same way. Thus, a man who accurately judged whether a woman was healthy and fertile would be more successful in reproducing. If his offspring exhibited the same ability to judge accurately, they in turn would have a competitive advantage.

One line of research has concentrated on *sexual strategies* (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). According to this theory, women and men face different adaptive problems in short-term, or casual, mating and in long-term mating and reproduction. These differences lead to different strategies, or behaviors, designed to solve these problems. In short-term mating, a woman may choose a partner who offers her immediate resources, such as food or money. In long-term mating, a woman may choose a partner who appears able and willing to provide resources for the indefinite future. A man may choose a sexually available woman for a short-term liaison but avoid such women when looking for a long-term mate.

According to the theory, females engage in intrasexual competition for access to males. Women pursuing a long-term strategy should respond negatively to women who make sex easily available to men (a "slut"?). An experimental study found that undergraduate women reacted negatively to a female confederate dressed sexily (cleavage, very short skirt), but not to the same person PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES 27

engaging in the same behavior dressed in a loose shirt and jeans (Vaillancourt & Aanchai, 2011). On the other hand, females pursuing a short-term strategy want to appear sexy. Women at ovulation chose sexier and more revealing clothing from an online catalog than they did 3 or more days before or 7 days after ovulation (Durante et al., 2011).

Buss (1994) and others have reported data that support a number of specific predictions based on this theory. However, other research using the same measures with both men and women, and controlling for confounding effects, finds that men and women are very similar in their stated mating preferences. Both prefer long-term strategies and few or no short-term partners (Pedersen et al., 2002). Another criticism of evolutionary psychology is that it assumes that every characteristic that we observe must have some adaptive significance, but in fact some human traits may be simply "design flaws" (de Waal, 2002).

Evolutionary psychology is based on assumptions about what the ancestral environment was like. Although we can't study it directly, we can study very traditional societies such as the Ache and Mayan. Research on male sexual strategies in these two societies finds that male strategies are not constant but change in response to personal characteristics and environmental contingencies (Waynforth et al., 1998).

Critics also question the data used to support much of the research. These theories claim that the processes and behaviors are the result of human evolution, and therefore universal, but most of the data testing them comes from WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic) societies (Henrich et al., 2010). We don't know whether these results can be applied to people in other societies. Further, tests of sexual strategies theory rely heavily on data from undergraduates at four-year colleges and universities; note this criticism applies to research testing other theories as well.

Gender-Neutral Evolutionary Theory

Evolutionary biologist Patricia Gowaty of UCLA has proposed a gender-neutral evolutionary theory that offers an alternative to sociobiology and evolutionary psychology (Gowaty, 2018; Gowaty & Hubbell, 2009). Gowaty is critical of sociobiology's and evolutionary psychology's argument that biology is destiny—that evolution over millions of years has determined our behavior and, in particular, has determined gender differences in behavior. Gowaty notes that the environments in which humans—and other species—find themselves vary enormously, both across geographical spaces and across an individual's lifetime. It is therefore not in the least adaptive for humans to display fixed behaviors determined by evolution. Neither should there be fixed gender differences in behavior.

Instead, it is most adaptive for individuals to be flexible in their behaviors, and that is exactly what evolution has selected for—flexibility and adaptability. An individual may behave in ways that are more male-typical in some situations and more female-typical in others because different behaviors are adaptive in those different situations. Likewise, a fixed mating strategy for females (or males) would not be adaptive across numerous environments. Instead, a flexible mating strategy would be most successful.

The evidence for this theory, at least so far, is based on mathematical modeling and proofs that show that individuals who can and do change their mating behaviors in adaptive ways depending on the environment have the best reproductive fitness—are the most likely to mate successfully. Beyond that, the theory is too new to be able to evaluate it thoroughly. Notice, though, that it is a theory that can accommodate transgender individuals because the theory does not insist on fixed male and female behaviors.

Psychological Theories

Four of the major theories in psychology are relevant to sexuality: psychoanalytic theory, learning theory, social exchange theory, and cognitive theory.

Psychoanalytic Theory

Sigmund Freud's **psychoanalytic theory** has been one of the most influential of all psychological theories. Because Freud saw sex as one of the key forces in human life, his theory has much to say about human sexuality.

Freud termed the sex drive or sex energy **libido**, which he saw as one of the two major forces motivating human behavior (the other being *thanatos*, or the death instinct).

Id, Ego, and Superego

Freud described the human personality as being divided into three major parts: the id, the ego, and the superego. The **id** is the basic part of personality and is present at birth. It is the reservoir of psychic

energy (including libido), and it operates on the *pleasure principle*.

Whereas the id operates only on the pleasure principle and can thus be pretty irrational, the **ego** operates on the *reality principle* and tries to keep the id in line. The ego functions to make the person have realistic, rational interactions with others.

Finally, the **superego** is the conscience. It contains the values and ideals of society that we learn, and it operates on *idealism*. Thus, its

Psychoanalytic theory: A psychological theory originated by Sigmund Freud; it contains a basic assumption that part of human personality is unconscious.

Libido (lih-BEE-doh): In psychoanalytic theory, the term for the sex energy or sex drive.

Id: According to Freud, the part of the personality containing the libido.
Ego: According to Freud, the part of the personality that helps the person have realistic, rational interactions.
Superego: According to Freud, the part of the personality containing the conscience.

aim is to inhibit the impulses of the id and to persuade the ego to strive for moral goals rather than just realistic ones.

To illustrate the operation of these three components of the personality in a sexual situation, consider the case of the CEO of a corporation who is at a meeting of the board of directors; the meeting is also attended by her handsome, buff colleague, Mr. Hunk. She looks at Mr. Hunk, and her id says, "I want to throw him on the table and make love to him immediately. Let's do it!" The ego intervenes and says, "We can't do it now because the other members of the board are also here. Let's wait until 5 P.M., when they're all gone, and then do it." The superego says, "I shouldn't make love to Mr. Hunk at all because I'm a married woman." What actually happens? It depends on the relative strengths of this woman's id, ego, and superego.

The id, ego, and superego develop sequentially. The id contains the set of instincts present at birth. The ego develops later, as the child learns how to interact realistically with their environment and the people in it. The superego develops last, as the child learns moral values.

Erogenous Zones

Freud saw the libido as being focused in various regions of the body known as erogenous zones. An erogenous zone is a part of the skin or mucous membrane that is extremely sensitive to stimulation; touching it in certain ways produces feelings of pleasure. The lips and mouth are one such erogenous zone, the genitals a second, and the rectum and anus a third.

Stages of Psychosexual Development

Freud believed that the child passes through a series of stages of development. In each of these stages a different erogenous zone is the focus.

The first stage, lasting from birth to about 1 year of age, is the oral stage. The child's chief pleasure is derived from sucking and otherwise stimulating the lips and mouth. Anyone who has observed children of this age knows how they delight in putting anything they can into their mouths. The second stage, which occurs during approximately the second year of life, is the anal stage.

During this stage, the child's interest is focused on elimination.

The third stage of development, lasting from age 3 to perhaps age 5 or 6, is the phallic stage. The boy's interest is focused on his phallus (penis), and he derives great pleasure from masturbating. Perhaps the most important occurrence

Erogenous (eh-RAH-jen-us) zones:

Areas of the body that are particularly sensitive to sexual stimulation.

Oedipus (EH-di-pus) complex:

According to Freud, the sexual attraction of a little boy for his mother. Electra (eh-LEK-tra) complex:

According to Freud, the sexual attraction of a little girl for her father.

> ¹Masturbation to orgasm is physiologically possible at this age, although males are not capable of ejaculation until they reach puberty (see the chapter, "Sex Hormones, Sexual Differentiation, and the Menstrual Cycle").

in this stage is the development of the Oedipus complex, which derives its name from the Greek story of Oedipus, who unknowingly killed his father and married his mother. In the Oedipus complex, the boy loves his mother and desires her sexually. He hates his father, whom he sees as a rival for the mother's affection. The boy's hostility toward his father grows, but eventually he comes to fear that his father will retaliate by castrating him-cutting off his prized penis. Thus, the boy feels *castration anxiety*. Eventually the castration anxiety becomes so great that he stops desiring his mother and shifts to identifying with his father, taking on the father's gender role and acquiring the characteristics expected of males by society. Freud considered the Oedipus complex and its resolution to be one of the key factors in human personality development.

As might be expected from the name of this stage, the girl will have a considerably different, and much more difficult, time passing through it. For a girl, the phallic stage begins with her traumatic realization that she has no penis, perhaps after observing that of her father or a brother. She feels envious and cheated, and she suffers from penis envy, wishing that she too had a wonderful wand. (Presumably she thinks her own clitoris is totally inadequate, or she is not even aware that she has it.) She begins to desire her father, forming her version of the Oedipus complex, sometimes called the Electra complex. In part, her incestuous desires for her father result from a desire to be impregnated by him, to substitute for the unobtainable penis. Unlike the boy, the girl does not have a strong motive of castration anxiety for resolving the Oedipus complex; she has already lost her penis. Thus, the girl's resolution of the Electra complex is not so complete as the boy's resolution of the Oedipus complex, and for the rest of her life she remains somewhat immature compared with men.

Freud said that following the resolution of the Oedipus or Electra complex, children pass into a prolonged stage known as latency, which lasts until adolescence. During this stage, the sexual impulses are repressed or are in a quiescent state, and so nothing much happens sexually. The postulation of this stage is one of the weaker parts of Freudian theory, because it is clear from the data of modern sex researchers that children do continue to engage in behavior with sexual components during this period.

With puberty, sexual urges reawaken, and the child moves into the genital stage. During this stage, sexual urges become more specifically genital, and the oral, anal, and genital urges all fuse together to promote the biological function of reproduction.

According to Freud, people do not always mature from one stage to the next as they should. A person might remain permanently fixated, for example, at the oral stage; symptoms of such a situation would include incessant cigarette smoking and fingernail biting, which gratify oral urges. Most adults have at least traces of earlier stages remaining in their personalities.

PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES 29



Figure 2 What does magnetic resonance imaging have to do with psychoanalytic theory? The answer is that by studying patterns of brain activity, we can test some of Freud's ideas about the unconscious.

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Evaluation of Psychoanalytic Theory

From a scientific point of view, one of the major problems with psychoanalytic theory is that most of its concepts cannot be evaluated scientifically to see whether they are accurate. Freud postulated that many of the most important forces in personality are unconscious, and thus they could not be studied using the scientific techniques common to the 20th century.

Recent advances in our ability to image brain activity, for example, using fMRI technology (described in the chapter "Sex Research"), have opened the possibility of testing some of Freud's ideas (Figure 2). Research in the developing area of neuropsychoanalysis suggests, for example, that what Freud termed the unconscious is represented by widespread neural networks in the brain that are humming in the background while the conscious mind is busy with other things (Ginot, 2017).

Another criticism is that Freud derived his data almost exclusively from his work with patients who sought therapy from him. Thus, his theory may provide a view not so much of the human personality as of *disturbances* in the human personality.

Feminists have also been critical of Freudian theory as a male-centered theory that may cause harm to women (Lerman, 1986). They object to Freud's assumption that because women do not have a penis they are biologically inferior to men. One could just as easily argue that men have a powerful envy of women's reproductive capacity, which is just what psychoanalyst Karen Horney (1926/1973) did when she coined the concept womb envy, although this notion is equally open to criticism.

Feminists also criticize the distinction Freud made between *vaginal orgasm* (obtained through heterosexual intercourse with the penis stimulating the vagina) and *clitoral orgasm* (obtained through clitoral stimulation) in women. Research by Masters and Johnson has shown there is no physiological difference between orgasms resulting from clitoral stimulation and those resulting from heterosexual intercourse. Further, Freud's assertion that vaginal orgasm is more mature is not supported by findings that most adult women experience orgasms as a result of clitoral stimulation.

Finally, many modern psychologists feel that Freud overemphasized the biological determinants of behavior and instincts and that he gave insufficient recognition to the importance of the environment and learning.

Nonetheless, Freud did make some important contributions to our understanding of human behavior. He managed to rise above the sexually repressive Victorian era of which he was a member and teach that the libido is an important part of personality (although he may have overestimated its importance). Perhaps most important from the perspective of this text, Freud took sex out of the closet, brought it to the attention of the general public, and suggested that we could talk about it and that it was an appropriate topic for scientific research.

Learning Theory

While psychoanalytic and sociobiological theories are based on the notion that much of human sexual behavior is biologically controlled, it is also quite apparent that much of it is learned. Some of the best evidence for this point comes from studies of sexual behavior across different human societies, which are considered in the chapter "Sexuality in Perspective." Here the various principles of modern learning theory will be reviewed, because they can help us understand our own sexuality (for more detailed discussions, see Hoffman, 2017; Hogben & Byrne, 1998).

Classical Conditioning

Classical conditioning is a concept usually associated with the work of the Russian scientist Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936). Think of the following situations: You salivate in response to the sight or smell of food, you blink in response to someone poking a finger in your eye, or you experience sexual arousal in response to stroking

the inner part of your thigh. In all these cases, an unconditioned stimulus (US; for example, appealing food) automatically, reflexively elicits an unconditioned response (UR; for example, salivation). The process of learning that occurs in classical conditioning takes place when a new stimulus,

Classical conditioning: The learning process in which a previously neutral stimulus (conditioned stimulus) is repeatedly paired with an unconditioned stimulus that reflexively elicits an unconditioned response. Eventually the conditioned stimulus itself will evoke the response.

the conditioned stimulus (CS; for example, the sound of a bell) repeatedly occurs paired with the original unconditioned stimulus (food). After this happens many times, the conditioned stimulus (the ringing bell) can eventually be presented without the unconditioned stimulus (food) and will evoke the original response, now called the conditioned response (CR, salivation).

As an example, suppose that Nadia's first serious boyfriend in high school always wears Erotik cologne when they go out. As they advance in their sexual intimacy,

What theory accounts for how the smell of perfume or cologne becomes sexually arousing?

they have many pleasant times, where he strokes her thighs and other sexually responsive parts of her body and she feels highly aroused, always with

the aroma of Erotik in her nostrils. One day she enters an elevator full of strangers in her office building and someone is wearing Erotik. Nadia instantly feels sexually aroused, although she is not engaged in any sexual activity. From the point of view of classical conditioning, this makes perfect sense, although Nadia may wonder why she is feeling so aroused in the elevator. The thigh-stroking and sexy touching were the US. Her arousal was the UR. The aroma of the cologne, the CS, was repeatedly paired with the US. Eventually, the aroma occurred by itself, evoking arousal, the CR.

Classical conditioning of sexual arousal has been demonstrated in an experiment with men (Lalumiere & Quinsey, 1998). Participants in the conditioning group were exposed to multiple pairings of a photo of a moderately attractive, partially nude woman (the CS) paired with a highly erotic video of heterosexual sexual interactions (the US). Participants in the control group were shown the photo multiple times but not with the erotic video. Arousal was measured with a penile strain gauge, which measures erection of the penis (both the UR and CR). When the men in the conditioning group were then shown just the photo of the woman (with no video), they showed an increase in arousal compared with their response to her photo before conditioning. This finding demonstrates classical conditioning of sexual arousal. Men in the control group actually showed a decrease in arousal, probably due to the process known as habituation. We return to the issue of habituation in the chap-

Operant (OP-ur-unt) conditioning:

The process of changing the frequency of a behavior (the operant) by following it with positive reinforcement (which will make the behavior more frequent in the future) or punishment (which should make the behavior less frequent in the future).

ter "Sexuality and the Life Cycle: Adulthood," in a discussion of sex in long-term marriages. Subsequent research demonstrated classical conditioning of sexual arousal in women (Hoffmann et al., 2004; Hoffman, 2017).

Classical conditioning is useful in explaining a number of

phenomena in sexuality. One example is fetishes, the attachment of great erotic significance to some object other than a human being (see the chapter "Variations in Sexual Behavior").

Operant Conditioning

Operant conditioning, a concept that is often associated with the psychologist B. F. Skinner, refers to the following process. A person performs a particular behavior (the operant). That behavior may be followed by either a reward (positive reinforcement) or a punishment. If a reward follows, the person will be likely to repeat the behavior again in the future; if a punishment follows, the person will be less likely to repeat the behavior. Thus, if a behavior is repeatedly rewarded, it may become very frequent, and if it is repeatedly punished, it may become very infrequent or even be eliminated.

Some rewards are considered to be primary reinforcers; that is, there is something intrinsically rewarding about them. Food is one such primary reinforcer; sex another. Rats, for example, can be trained to learn a maze if they find a willing sex partner at the end of it. Thus, sexual behavior plays dual roles in learning theory: It can itself be a positive reinforcer, but it can also be the behavior that is rewarded or punished.

Simple principles of operant conditioning can help explain some aspects of sex (McGuire et al., 1965). For example, if a woman repeatedly experiences pain when she has intercourse (perhaps because she has a vaginal infection), she will probably want to have sex infrequently or not at all. In operant conditioning terms, sexual intercourse has repeatedly been associated with a punishment (pain), and so the behavior becomes less frequent.

Another principle of operant conditioning that is useful in understanding sexual behavior holds that consequences, whether reinforcement or punishment, are most effective in shaping behavior when they occur immediately after the behavior. The longer they are delayed after the behavior has occurred, the less effective they become. As an example, consider a young man who has had gonorrhea three times yet continues to have unprotected sexual intercourse. The pain associated with gonorrhea is certainly punishing, so why does he persist in having sex without a condom? The delay principle suggests the following explanation: Each time he engages in intercourse, he finds it highly rewarding; this immediate reward maintains the behavior; the punishment, the pain of gonorrhea, does not occur until several days later and so is not effective in eliminating that behavior.

A third principle that has emerged in operant conditioning studies is that, compared with rewards, punishments are not as effective in shaping behavior. Often, as in the case of the child who is punished for taking an illicit cookie, punishments do not eliminate a behavior but rather teach the person to be sneaky and engage in

PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES 31

it without being caught. As an example, some parents, as many commonly did in earlier times in our culture, punish children for masturbating; yet most of those children continue to masturbate, perhaps learning instead to do it under circumstances (such as in a bathroom with the door locked) in which they are not likely to be caught.

One important difference between psychoanalytic theory and learning theory should be noticed. Psychoanalytic theorists believe that the determinants of human sexual behavior occur in early childhood, particularly during the Oedipal complex period. Learning theorists, in contrast, believe that sexual behavior can be learned and changed at any time in one's life span—in childhood, in adolescence, in young adulthood, or later. When we try to understand what causes certain sexual behaviors and how to treat people with sex problems, this distinction between the theories will have important implications.

Behavior Modification

Behavior modification involves a set of techniques, based on principles of classical or operant conditioning, that are used to change (or modify) human behavior. These techniques have been used to modify everything from problem behaviors of children in the classroom to the behavior of schizophrenics. In particular, these methods can be used to modify problematic sexual behaviors-that is, sexual disorders such as orgasm problems or problematic sexual behavior such as child molesting. Behavior modification methods differ from more traditional methods of psychotherapy such as psychoanalysis in that the behavioral therapist considers only the problem behavior and how to modify it using learning-theory principles; the therapist does not worry about detailed analysis of the person's personality to see, for example, what unconscious forces might be motivating the behavior.

One example of a technique used in modifying sexual behavior is olfactory aversion therapy (Abel et al., 1992). In aversion therapy, the problematic behavior is punished using an aversive stimulus. Repeated pairing of the behavior and the aversive stimulus should produce a decline in the frequency of the behavior. In olfactory aversion therapy, the problematic sexual behavior is punished using an unpleasant odor, such as the odor of spirits of ammonia, as the aversive stimulus. With the help of a therapist, the patient first identifies the behavior chain or sequence that leads up to the problem behavior. Then the patient imagines one event in the chain and is simultaneously exposed to the odor. The odor can be administered by the patient, using a breakable inhaler. This form of therapy not only punishes the behavior but also creates the perception in the patient that the behavior is under their control.

Social Learning

Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; Bandura & Walters, 1963) is a somewhat more complex form of learning



Figure 3 According to social learning theory, children learn about sex and gender in part by imitation. These children may be imitating their parents or a scene they have watched on TV.

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theory. It is based on principles of operant conditioning, but it also recognizes other processes at work: imitation and observational learning (Figure 3). Imitation is useful in explaining how children acquire gender-stereotyped behavior. For example, a little girl may get into a dress and her mother's high heels after observing her mother getting ready to go to a party. Also, various forms of sexuality may be learned through imitation. In high school, for example, the sexiest girl in the senior class may find that other girls are imitating her behaviors and the way she dresses. Or a boy might see a movie in which the hero's technique seems to "turn women on"; then he tries to use this technique with his own dates. The latter example points to the importance of mass media as a source of images of sexuality that young people imitate (in the chapter "Sexuality and the Life Cycle: Childhood and Adolescence," see Milestones in Sex Research: The Impact of Media on Adolescent Sexuality).

Once a behavior is learned, the likelihood of its being performed depends on its consequences. The young man who imitates actor Brad Pitt's romantic technique may not succeed in arousing his companion. If the behavior is not reinforced, he will stop performing it. If it is reinforced, he will repeat it.

A later version of social learning is cognitive social learning theory or social cognitive theory (Bandura,

1986). It keeps social learning theory and adds cognitive processes, such as self-efficacy, to it. Successful experiences with an activity

Behavior modification: A set of operant conditioning techniques used to modify human behavior.

over time create a sense of competence, or **self-efficacy** (Bandura, 1982), at performing the activity. If a woman feels efficacious at using the female condom, she will expend more effort (going to the drugstore to buy one) and will show greater persistence in the face of difficulty (continuing to adjust it until it fits properly) than she did before. The concept of self-efficacy has been widely used in designing health intervention programs such as those that encourage individuals to use condoms to prevent transmission of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV infection (e.g., DeLamater et al., 2000). These programs provide opportunities for participants to practice the behaviors that are being promoted and be successful.

Social Exchange Theory

An important process based on the principle of reinforcement is social exchange. Social exchange theory (Cook et al., 2013) uses the concept of reinforcement to explain stability and change in relationships between people. The theory assumes that we have freedom of choice and often face choices among alternative actions. Every action provides some rewards and entails certain costs. There are many kinds of rewards—money, goods, services, sexual gratification, approval by others—and costs—time, effort, money, embarrassment. The theory states that we are hedonistic, that we try to maximize rewards and minimize costs when we act. Thus, we choose actions that produce profits (profits equaling rewards minus costs) and avoid actions that produce losses.

As its name indicates, social exchange theory views social relationships primarily as exchanges of goods and services among persons. People participate in relationships only if they find that the relationships provide profitable outcomes. An individual judges the attractiveness of a relationship by comparing the profits it provides against the profits available in alternative relationships. The level of outcomes in the best alternative relationship is called the comparison level for alternatives (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). These ideas have been applied to personal relationships. Studies of heterosexual couples in long-term dating relationships have found that the concepts of rewards and costs can explain whether people stay in or exit from such relationships (Rusbult, 1983; Rusbult et al., 1986). Individuals are more likely to stay in when the partner is physically and personally attractive, when the relationship does not entail undue costs (such as high monetary com-

Self-efficacy: A sense of competence at performing an activity.

Social exchange theory: A theory, based on the principle of reinforcement, that assumes that people will choose actions that maximize

rewards and minimize costs.

mitments, broken promises, or arguments), and when romantic relationships with others are not available. In other words, they are more likely to stay in a relationship when its rewards are high, its costs are low, and the comparison level for alternatives is low.

Social exchange theory also predicts the conditions under which people try to change their relationships. A central concept is *equity* (Walster [Hatfield] et al., 1978). A state of equity exists when participants in a relationship believe that the rewards they receive from it are proportional to the costs they bear. If a participant feels that the allocation of rewards and costs is inequitable, then the relationship is unstable. People find inequity unpleasant and may feel cheated or angry. As we will see in the chapter "Sexuality and the Life Cycle: Adulthood," a married person experiencing inequity may cheat on the spouse as a result.

This perspective leads to the *matching hypothesis* (see the chapter "Attraction, Love, and Communication"), which predicts that men and women will choose as mates people who match them on physical and social characteristics. People who match will provide each other with similar rewards on dimensions such as attractiveness, social status, and wealth. We noted earlier that sociobiologists predict that we will choose attractive mates—if true, men would fight for the most attractive woman in the area and unattractive women would not have partners. In fact, people at all levels of attractiveness find partners, reflecting the operation of matching.

Social exchange theories have been criticized for applying ideas of rewards and costs to romantic relationships. Some people believe that love is not and should not be about what one can get out of a relationship (i.e., its rewards). A related criticism is that social exchange theories downplay other motivations. Because of the emphasis on rewards and costs, such theories cannot explain, for example, selfless behaviors such as altruism.

Cognitive Theories

In the 1980s and 1990s, a "cognitive revolution" swept through psychology. In contrast to the older behaviorist tradition (which insisted that psychologists should study only behaviors that could be directly observed), cognitive psychologists believe that it is very important to study people's thoughts—that is, the way people perceive and think.

Cognition and Sexuality

Cognitive psychology can readily explain some aspects of human sexuality (Walen & Roth, 1987). A basic assumption is that what we think influences what we feel. If we think happy, positive thoughts, we will tend to feel better than if we think negative ones. Therapists using a cognitive approach believe that psychological distress is often a result of unpleasant thoughts that are usually not tuned to reality and include misconceptions, distortions, exaggerations of problems, and unreasonably negative evaluations of events.

To the cognitive psychologist, how we perceive and evaluate a sexual event makes all the difference in the