Introduction: History and Context

The Anthropological Perspective

In one ruling by the Supreme Court, sex has been declared as "a great and mysterious motive force in human life [that] has indisputably been a subject of absorbing interest" (in Demar 1988:41). As children we have heard our parents speak euphemistically about the "birds and the bees" and as adolescents we may have shared late night discussions with our friends about the "secrets" of intimacy. As adult Americans our concerns are expressed in an array of new self-help books on the subject flooding the market every year. We even have two new disorders of human sexuality that have captured the imagination of the news media: sexual addictions and inhibited sexual desire (lack of interest in sex). Obviously the subject enthralls more than Masters and Johnson (1966) or Dr. Ruth.

Our intent is to offer a unique way of understanding ourselves as sexual beings through the perspective of anthropology. Some of our readers may not be familiar with what anthropology is and might be wondering what exactly "Raiders of the Lost Ark" has to do with sex. For those of you unfamiliar with anthropology, we welcome you to an exciting new viewpoint. For those of you majoring or minoring in anthropology, we hope that our text inspires you to conduct further research on the subject of human sexuality.

Sex as Biology

Confusion about what anthropology is stems from the interdisciplinary nature of the field. An anthropological approach is one that incorporates an understanding of humankind as biological, as well as cultural beings. We use the term bio-cultural to describe our perspective. While bio-cultural approaches in anthropology may
not be appropriate for all the subjects anthropologists might research, for a number of topics such a view lends a fuller and more complete understanding. Bio-cultural perspectives are widespread in fields such as medical anthropology, biological anthropology, and the anthropology of sex and gender to name just a few of our many specializations.

The interweaving of biology and culture into a bio-cultural perspective is the distinguishing feature of this textbook and the theme that unifies the multiplicity of anthropological studies of human sexuality. We are not suggesting that these are the only two dimensions for interpreting sex; indeed, sex has a very important psychological component as well. As anthropologists, we regard the psychological component as part and parcel of culture that shapes our personalities in characteristic ways, yet also allows for the diversity of individuals as unique genetic entities.

The term "sex" has many meanings. Sex is part of our biology. It is a behavior that involves a choreography of endocrine functions, muscles, and stages of physical change. It is expressed through the "biological sex" of people classified as male or female (Rachtadourian 1979). Despite this physiological component, the act of sex cannot be separated from the cultural context in which it occurs incorporating meanings, symbols, myths, ideals, and values. Sex expresses variation across and within cultures.

An anthropological definition of sex is necessarily a broad one that includes the cultural as well as biological aspects of sex. We shall offer you a definition of sex, but urge you to remember that defining sex is far more complex than our definition suggests. For example, our definition cannot limit sex to only those behaviors resulting in penile-vaginal intercourse, for by doing that we would eliminate a variety of homossexual, bisexual, and heterosexual behaviors that are obviously sexual but not coital. Therefore, we shall define sex as those behaviors, sentiments, emotions, and perceptions related to and resulting in sexual arousal as defined by the society or culture in which it occurs. We qualified our definition by referring to cultural definitions of sexual behaviors since these differ a great deal among ethnic groups and among different cultures. For example, petting as we know it in western society is not universal, that is, it is not necessarily considered a form of arousal among all other peoples of the world. As you read this text, you will begin to broaden your horizons of understanding yourself, your own society and the multicultural world in which we live.

History and Content

Anthropological Perspectives on Human Sexuality

The study of human sexuality is a cross-disciplinary one. Six major perspectives dominate the study of human sexuality. Included are: the biological with a focus on physiology; the psychosocial with an emphasis on the developmental aspects of sexuality and the interaction of cognitive and affective states with social variables; the behavioral that stresses behavior over cognitive and emotional states; the clinical with a concern with sexual disorders and dysfunctions; the sociological, with a focus on social structures and the impact of institutions and socioeconomic status factors on sexual behavior; and the anthropological which includes evolutionary and cultural approaches with emphases on sexual meanings and behaviors within the cultural context. By culture we mean: the skills, attitudes, beliefs, and values underlying behavior. These are learned by observation, imitation, and social learning.

In today's global community it is increasingly important for us to incorporate multicultural perspectives in our knowledge base. Since this approach is at the heart of anthropology, we offer a brief historical overview of some of the more well-known cultural anthropologists who have shaped the study of human sexuality. The contributions of anthropologists studying the evolution of human sexuality are discussed in chapter 3.

Anthropology as a discipline developed in the nineteenth century. From its inception, anthropologists have been interested in the role of human sexuality in evolution and the organization of culture. Darwin, most well known for the biological theory of evolution (see chapter 2 for definition and chapter 3 for discussion), also formulated theories on culture that included ideas on human sexuality. These were presented in The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex (1874, orig. 1871). Darwin argued that human sexuality is an adaptation that separates humans from animals. In his theory of morality, Darwin regarded the regulation of sexuality as essential to its development. According to Darwin, marriage was the means for controlling sexual jealousy and competition among males. In the course of moral evolution, restrictions of sexuality were first required of married females, then later all females and finally males restricted their own sexuality to monogamy. Darwin’s approach incorporated notions of male sexuality and assertiveness, and female asexuality. These views reflected Darwin’s own cultural beliefs about sex and gender (Martin and Voorhies 1975:147-149).
Other nineteenth century anthropologists also produced theories of social evolution that included the regulation of sexuality. John McLennan (1865), John Lubbock (1870) and Louis Henry Morgan (1870) conceived of societies as having evolved through stages. These stages represented increasing restrictions on sexuality as societies progressed from primitive stages of promiscuity to modern civilization characterized by monogamy and patriarchy. Martin and Voorhies (1975:150). These theories were flawed by thinking that esteemed western European culture was superior and viewed social evolution as an unwarining linear trend of progress.

The twentieth century brought new approaches to the study of human sexuality as anthropology shifted from grand evolutionary schemes with little rigorous empirical orientation. This led to a new methodology which anthropology has gained acclaim. Bronislaw Malinowski is the acknowledged parent of this anthropological research method known as ethnography. Ethnography is the research method of participant observation in which the anthropologist becomes immersed in the lives observed. The ethnographic method serves as the basis for an ethnography, the detailed study of the culture of a particular group of people. Malinowski is known for his analysis of sex as part of the ethnographic context. His groundbreaking work is entitled *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia: An Ethnographic Account of Courtship, Marriage and Family Life Among the Natives of the Trobriand Islands, British New Guinea* first published in 1929.

While others were writing in the 1920s on the subject of indigenous peoples and their sexuality, unlike Malinowski theirs was not based on firsthand research but rather on terra incognita and travelers' reports or short-term field projects (Weiner 1987:322-34). Malinowski's two-year long living with the Malayan Trubrid Islanders and his scientific and systematic methods of data collection left an important legacy for the field of anthropology and the study of human sexuality.

Malinowski was interested in the relationship of institutions to cultural customs including sexual behaviors. His perspective stressed the importance of the cultural context and emphasized how social rules ordered sexuality among the Trubrid Islanders. What appeared to Europeans as unbridled sexuality were in fact highly structured premarital sex rules and taboos based on kinship classification (Weiner 1987:xvii). Malinowski seriously challenged the dominant nineteenth century cultural evolutionism held by Lubbock and Morgan. He rejected the notion that early human life was represented by sexual promiscuity. The Trubrid Islanders illustrated that even the most non-technologically complex peoples regulated their desires through systems of kinship. Rather than promiscuity as a prior condition, Malinowski focused on the ordering of sexual relations in creating the family (Weiner 1987:xxv-xxvi).

Malinowski was also influenced by another trend impacting anthropology: that of psychoanalysis. He was impressed with the psychoanalytic openness to the study of sex, but was critical of Sigmund Freud's theory of the incest taboo and the Oedipus complex. In a nutshell, Freud's argument is that unconsciously little boys experience a desire to marry/have sex with their mothers and murder their fathers. (See chapter 9 for further discussion). In *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (1927), Malinowski "...argued that Freud's theory of the universality of the Oedipus complex had to be revised because it was culturally biased. Freud based his theory on the emotional dynamics within the patriarchal western family" (Weiner 1987:xxi). This resulted in a heated debate with psychoanalyst Ernest Jones. Malinowski again argued that the Oedipus complex was a result of the western patriarchal family complex. The Trobrianders presented quite a different picture from the western nuclear family because the Trobriand culture is a matrilineal one; that is, people trace descent through their mother's family. This produced different family dynamics so that Malinowski concluded that the Trobrianders were free of the Oedipus complex. Unfortunately his work did not influence the psychoanalytic position to any great degree.

Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead loom large in the history of anthropology and in their respective contributions to the study of sex. Both were students of Franz Boas, the parent of American anthropology. Benedict's contribution continued to be felt today. Her perspective, in revised form, is embedded in contemporary anthropology in the concepts of ethos (the "approved style of life") and world view (the "assumed structure of reality") (Geertz 1973:126-141). Benedict's *Patterns of Culture*, published in 1934, offered an approach in which cultures were regarded as analogous to personalities. She stressed how each culture produced a unique and integrated configuration. This was known as the configurational approach (Benedict 1934:42-43).

That Benedict was light years ahead of her time was demonstrated in her concluding chapter where she reiterated points from her paper "Anthropology and the Abnormal" (1934). She was concerned with individuals whose temperaments were not matched to
their cultural configuration and the psychic costs to those such as homosexuals who were "not supported by the institutions of their civilization" (1946:238 in Bock 1985:52). She proposed that "abnormality" was not constant but is rather culturally constituted. She suggested what, at that time, was a radical view: tolerance for non-normative sexual practices such as homosexuality. Implicit in her view is that sexuality is no different than any other social behavior, it was culturally patterned. Benedict argued that "... in a society that values truce, as in India, they will have supernormal experience. In a society that institutionalizes homosexuality, they will be homosexual" (1934:196 in Singer 1981:25). Benedict challenged prevailing notions of homosexuality as pathology. In 1939, in her "Sex in Primitive Society," she concluded that homosexuality was primarily social in nature, shaped by the meanings of gender and sex roles (Dickerman 1990:7).

For the study of human sexuality, Benedict's major contribution was that sex, which is a part of culture, is patterned, fitting into the larger society, the cultural whole or the gestalt. The configurational approach was certainly not without flaws and anthropology has moved well beyond regarding cultures as personalities. But, Benedict has left an important legacy for anthropology in her emphasis on patterning and cultural holism. For the field of sexology, Benedict was bold and unafraid in her perspective on sexual variation.

Margaret Mead was also an important and powerful figure in anthropology and sexology. Before her death in 1978 she was more widely recognized for her work than any other anthropologist in the world. In numerous books and articles, Mead addressed the subject of sex and gender. While her contributions are many, we shall focus on her first book Coming of Age in Samoa (originally 1928) investigated when she was not yet 24 years old.

Mead was a proponent of cultural explanations for understanding human behavior. She explained this approach by saying:

> It was simple—a very simple point—to which our materials were organized in the 1920's, merely the documentation over and over of the fact that human nature is not rigid and unyielding, not an unadaptable plant which insists on flowering or becoming stunted after its own fashion, responding only quantitatively to the social environment, but that it is extraordinarily adaptable, that cultural rhythms are strong and more compelling than the physiological rhythms which they overlay and distort... We had to present evidence that human character is built upon a biological base which is capable of enormous diversification in terms of social conditions.

In Coming of Age in Samoa, her commentary addressed female adolescence in Samoa as well as in the United States. She proposed that the turbulence of the American girls' adolescence was not typical of adolescence throughout the world. Mead was responding to a popular biological theory of adolescent stress and storm believed to be caused by the changes in hormones during puberty. Her study of Samoan adolescence provided a very different picture. Unlike American adolescence, for the Samoan youth, this was not a period of turbulence and high emotion. Based on evidence of a carefree Samoan adolescence, Mead reasoned that the conflict experienced by the American teenagers was due to culture rather than hormones. The latter part of Coming of Age in Samoa explained the strife of American adolescence as a cultural phenomenon. Mead offered cultural explanations. For example, she identified the importance of rapid social change in American society as contributing to the adolescent unrest.

In contrast, the Samoan girls' adolescence was conflict free. This was due to Samoan culture which was relatively homogeneous and casual. So casual that according to Mead the young woman:

> deems marriage through as many years of casual love-making as possible... The adolescent girls total interest is expended on clandestine sex adventures... to live with as many lovers as possible and then to marry into one's village... (Mead 1961:167).

Samoan society was one in which extremes in emotion were culturally discouraged. It was characterized by casualness in a number of spheres including sexuality, parenting, and responsibility. In contrast to western culture, the young Samoan woman's sexuality was experienced without guilt. She concluded that the foundation of this casual approach to sex and painless adolescence could be explained by the following: 1) a lack of deep feeling between relatives and peers, 2) a liberal attitude toward sex and education for life, 3) a lack of conflicting alternatives and 4) a lack of emphasis on individuality. In this work, she established the importance of the study of women when little information was available (Howard 1983:69). She also challenged notions of biological reductionism that even today are all too often used to support status quo politics.

While the approaches of Malinowski, Benedict, and Mead contributed to the creation of the ethnographic study of sexuality with an emphasis on the cultural, Cullon S. Ford and Frank A. Beach, Patterns of Sexual Behavior deserves credit in 1951 for offering the first synthetic study that incorporated biological, cross-cultural, and
evolutionary considerations. Their work is distinctive for its inclusion of homosexual and lesbian data, a trend continued in Gregson's 1994 The World of Human Sexuality: Behaviors, Customs and Beliefs. According to Miracle and Suggs (1993:3), Ford and Beach's book is "the single most important and provocative work on sexuality to date....it also provided the intellectual—if not the methodological—foundation for the subsequent work of Masters and Johnson." (See chapter 11 for discussion of Masters and Johnson: Patterns of Sexual Behavior) integrated information from 190 different cultures as well as provided comparative data on different species with an emphasis on the primates (humans, apes, and monkeys). Their work includes an encyclopedic collection of sexual behavior cross-culturally. For example, Ford and Beach offer discussion and information on sexual positions, length (time) of intercourse, locations for intercourse, orgasm experiences, types of foreplay, courting behaviors, frequencies of intercourse, methods of attracting a partner, among numerous other topics.

Ford and Beach's study of human sexuality employed the cross-cultural correlational method. This is a statistical method for comparing attributes (variables) in large samples of cultures (Cohen and Eames 1982:419). This approach is valuable for testing hypotheses about human sexuality, establishing patterns and trends, and formulating generalizations. Their study relied on ethnocraphic data that is collected and coded in the HRAF files (the Human Relations Area Files). HRAF is a rigorous classification scheme for information on the world's societies. Categories of information for over 1,000 societies are now coded and available to researchers.

The cross-cultural correlational statistical method was subsequently used by Martin and Voorhies in Female of the Species (1975). Like Ford and Beach, Martin and Voorhies included evolutionary and biological issues. Their focus was broader in that they were interested in the relationship of human sexuality to gender status roles, social organization, and type of subsistence (how people make a living). Martin and Voorhies tested hypotheses to arrive at generalizations about the relationships of these factors. In a sample of 51 foraging societies Martin and Voorhies found that 30% of them allowed premarital sexual experimentation (1975:188-189). This pattern was related to matrilineality (where descent is traced through the mother's side of the family) and matrilocality (where the couple resides in the village of the wife's mother). Their studies of horticultural groups also revealed a statistical correlation between matrilineal societies and sexual permissiveness toward premarital sex while patrilineal (descent tracing through the father's side) societies tended to control female premarital sexual behavior (1975:246-247).

There are many research applications for this methodological approach to sexology research. For example, Schlegel and Barry in Adolescence: An Anthropological Inquiry (1991) report that premarital restrictions occur in societies in which a dowry is given (wealth from the bride's family is included in the marriage transaction). They conclude that "(families guard their daughters' chastity in dowry-giving societies in order to protect their property (dowry) against would-be social climbers and to ensure that they can use their daughters' dowries to attract the most desirable sons-in-law" (Schlegel and Barry 1991:116). Chastity rules guard against a lower status man impregnating a higher status woman and thereby making claim on her dowry and inheritance by trapping her into marriage. In this way property exchange and status considerations are factors in restricting premarital sexuality (Schlegel and Barry 1991:117-119). Davis and Whitten report that the general pattern found in HRAF studies such as these is that sexual restrictions tend to be associated with complex societies (1987:74).

Frayer's Varieties of Sexual Experience (1985) is in the tradition spawned by Ford and Beach incorporating the cross-cultural correlational approach with biological and evolutionary concerns. Frayer presents an integrated model in which human sexuality is regarded as "...a system in its own right, related to but not subsumed by social, cultural, psychological, and biological factors" (in Frayer and Whitby 1987:351). For Frayer, although the cross-cultural record reveals an almost infinite variety in sexual expression, there is continuity with our evolutionary past. In regard to evolution, Frayer examines cross-species sexuality, particularly that of our close relatives, the non-human primates. For example, she points out that human sexuality is distinguished by unique sexual and reproductive attributes; these include the ability for sexual arousal that is not limited to estrus ("heat"), and the evolution of the female orgasm. These capabilities are present in our relative to a limited extent, but emerge full blown in humans and may be linked to extraordinary amounts of non-reproductive sexual behavior among humans in contrast to other animals.

Frayer has distinguished the social and cultural aspects of human sexuality in terms of the social system defined as patterns of interactions. The social system is contrasted to the culture system which is defined as the patterned beliefs and meaning that influence sexual expression (Frayer 1986:7). This model is one in which the biological, the social, and the cultural system
converge to influence the sexual system. It is a valuable approach for understanding sexual patterning and for recording the continuities and heterogeneity within and between cultures.

Sex as Culture

The regulation of human sexual expression as to when, where, how, and who—may serve diverse socio-cultural goals. George Peter Murdock’s pioneering study, *Social Structure* (1949), offers us a classic approach to the different ways that the regulation of sexuality contributes to the organization of cultures. In all societies sexual access among members of a society is regulated. The most obvious example of this is the incest taboo. With an almost universal prevalence, the incest taboo prohibits sexual access between siblings and between siblings and their parents. But, even those societies which have allowed incest have regulations surrounding it that are integrated in the wider social organization and belief system. The exceptions include Hawaiian royalty, kings and queens of ancient Egypt, and Inca emperors. These elites were regarded as so powerful and sacred that only their very close relatives had the equivalent status to qualify as a mate and to perpetuate the lineage. Such sexual unions and marriages were not allowed, however, for the population at large (Murdock 1949:13).

Rules for sexual access also extend beyond the immediate nuclear family. *Exogamy* is a rule requiring that people marry outside their group, while *endogamy* specifies marriage within the group (not the immediate family). These rules create kin groups through different kinds of restrictions on sexual access. Rules of exogamy and endogamy are defined by reference to marriage. This illustrates how sexual ideologies are integrated in the social organization of kin groups. One should, however, not make the error that sex and marriage are always equated. This is a mistake often found in the literature on human sexuality, but one seldom made by the people involved in extramarital affairs. *Marriage* is a publicly recognized union between two or more people that creates economic rights and obligations within the group...and guarantees their offspring rights of inheritance" (Crapo 1987:148). It is regarded as an enduring relationship and includes sexual rights (Ember and Ember 1988:13). Murdock (1949:8) offers clarification:

Sexual unions without economic co-operation are common, and there are relationships between men and women involving a division of labor without sexual gratification, e.g., between brother and sister, master and maidservant, or employer and secretary, but marriage exists only when the economic and the sexual are united in one relationship, and this combination occurs only in marriage.

Ford and Beach’s pioneering *Patterns of Sexual Behavior* (1951) proposed that sexual partnerships consist of two types: *mateships* defined in the same way as marriages; and *liaisons* “...less stable partnerships in which the relationship is more exclusively sexual” (1951:106). Sexologists and anthropologists generally subdivide human liaisons on the basis of their premarital or extramarital character (Ford and Beach 1951:106).

The regulation of sexual partnerships makes it possible to define kin groups. The importance of kinship is socially recognized through marriage as an institution with sexual rights and obligations. But, it should be kept in mind that there is a great deal of sexual activity that occurs prior to and outside marriage, and this includes sexual activities between people of the same gender, ritual and ceremonial sex as well.

Societies differ as to their tolerance of premarital and extramarital affairs, and the conditions under which it is acceptable and/or prohibited. According to Brode and Groome’s (1976) survey of the cross-cultural record, in 69% of the societies studied, men “commonly” participated in extra-marital sex while in 57% of the societies women did so as well. This leads us to another thorny issue for sex researchers, the contrast between *ideal* and *real* culture. The ideal culture or normative expectation is that in 54% of the societies extra-marital sex is allowed only for men, while only 11% of men allow it for women. But the data suggests that many more people actually violate this ideal, particularly in the case of women.

In summary, human sexuality is a central force in the origin of kin groups. In Murdock’s words: “All societies have faced the problem of reconciling the need of controlling sex with that of giving it adequate expression” (1949:261). The regulation of sexual
relations is the basis for descent and inheritance, critical factors for human societies in the maintenance of social groups. Yet, sex and marriage do not necessarily "go together" like a horse and carriage. Sex is not the central factor in the bonding of two individuals through marriage. To think so is to engage in a bias shaped by recent modern U.S. views of marriage. Sex is indeed critical for kin groups and their perpetuation; and while sex is a right and an obligation in marriage, it is not necessarily the basis upon which marriages are made. Economic cooperation emerges as an important factor in marriage both in evolutionary terms and in the cross-cultural record. This will become more evident in our discussion of "The Patterning of Human Sexuality."

The Patterning of Human Sexuality: The Bio-Cultural Perspective

Human sexuality has a foundation in human biology which provides us with certain inherited potentialities. "... The inherited aspects of sex seem to be nearly formless." It is only through culture that sex assumes form and meaning (Davenport 1976:161).

Our human biological wiring is very different from what we think of as animal instincts. For example, the drive for food that allows us to survive is fulfilled through learning how to get food; so in some ways culturespeople look for their food, some fish and yet others like us go to the grocery store. The drive for sex is also shaped by culture and is very unlike a mating instinct. When a female animal comes into heat, she automatically (through hormonal mechanisms) becomes sexually responsive and follows her mating instinct. Humans, however, may ignore their drives; for example, Catholic priests and nuns deny their sexuality in order to live in celibacy (Scupin and DeCorse 1992:164). Others delay or until marriage which may not occur until their twenties or later.

Human biological predispositions are not "... rigidly determined ... They may orient us in particular directions in pursuing certain goals, but they do not determine our behavior in a mechanical fashion without learned experiences" (Scupin and DeCorse 1992:164). This biological underpinning to our sexuality and other behaviors is part of what is called an open biogram, "an extremely flexible genetic program that is shaped by learning experiences" (Scupin and DeCorse 1992:164). Through socialization humans acquire their culture. This capacity to learn and to adapt to one's environment is a part of our unique cultural evolution as humans. We can say that our biology sustains us as cultural beings by providing us with an unusual capacity to learn.

Sexual behavior is culturally patterned; it is not accidental or random but is integrated within the broader context of culture and is intertwined in a web of other cultural features as we have seen in our discussion of sex, marriage, and kinship. A number of cultural characteristics are associated with patterns of human sexuality. These may include: the level of technology, population size, religion, economics, political organization, medical practices, kinship structure, degree of acculturation and culture change, gender roles, power and privilege (stratification). Consequently, larger cultural patterns are important in shaping reproductive and nonreproductive sexual behaviors and values in a society. Sexuality is patterned across cultures in relation to these variables as well as within a culture. Davenport suggests that sex is molded by the "internal logic and consistency of the total culture. As one sector of culture changes, all other sectors that articulate must undergo adjustments" (1976:162).

Cultures are integrated systems that exist within particular environmental and historical contexts. We have discussed the biological basis of human sexuality, we offer now an overview of the cultural basis of human sexuality. To comprehend how sexuality is embedded in culture necessitates an understanding of the culture concept. We can think of culture in terms of architecture (see figure 1.1). The basement represents our biology as humans, including our evolution and physiology. The floor in figure 1.1 is the foundation for understanding that cultural variation lies in how people have adapted to their environments. This includes how people make a living, their technologies, and economics. There are a number of ways people have found to survive in the world. Anthropologists have classified societies in terms of: foraging, horticulture, agriculture, pastoralism (herding), industrial, and post-industrial adaptations.

Adaptation to the environment impacts the social system including social organization and social structures which may be likened to the frame of a house. The social system is the means that people adapt to one another. It includes social organization and its elements including kinship and marriage, various institutions and structures such as religion and political organization. The social system is influenced by how people make a living through demographics, the relations of work such as age, gender, and kinship; who controls the means of production and the power relations of society. Societies have been classified in terms of their social systems as bands, tribes, chiefdoms, pre-industrial states, and industrial states.
observe that a particular culture has very few restrictions on premarital sex. This culture may regard premarital sex among adolescents as an amusement (Schlegel and Barry 1991:21), as part of an experiential kind of sex education, or perhaps as a way to find a marriage partner. In short, there are numerous meanings and beliefs around premarital permissiveness among cultures which allow and encourage its practice.

In order to see how the meanings behind premarital sex are part of the “internal consistency and logic” of a culture, we will want to investigate how premarital sex relates to the social system. As we saw earlier, Martin and Voorhies (1975) found a correlation between matrilineal social organization and premarital permissiveness, while patrilineal organizations restricted female premarital sexuality. From this information explanations may be proposed.

To be even more rigorous in our investigation of premarital sexual permissiveness requires an analysis of the foundation of culture, adaptation to the environment. For example, agricultural systems are associated with higher populations, stratification, and generally greater complexity. Earlier we noted in the work of Davis and Whitten (1987:74) that the greater the socio-cultural complexity, the more likely there are to be premarital restrictions on sexuality. Since subsistence type is associated with complexity, it has been proposed that foragers and matrilineal horticulturists are more likely to be permissive (Martin and Voorhies 1975).

Our analysis could go even further and include the biological. For example, research into premarital permissiveness among foragers will reveal that adolescent sterility may be a variable to be considered (see chapter 11). Adolescent sterility is a period of infertility among young females after the onset of menarche. They are not fertile until their late teens or early twenties. If premarital sex is allowed in societies in which this occurs, young people may explore their sexuality without the consequences of pregnancy and responsibilities of parenthood.

We offer this architectural approach to culture and sex to illustrate that culture is a complex whole in which the parts are interrelated. One can begin anywhere in our bio-cultural architecture and explore human sexuality. Some researchers prefer limiting their research to one area; for example, Masters and Johnson's investigations of human sexual response have focused on the biological. Others, such as the anthropologists cited, may be more interested in the relationship between beliefs and premarital sex practices and how these are related to social organization. Even others may
want a bigger picture and explore how premarital sex norms are related to the types of subsistence adaptation.

These are the kinds of opportunities for understanding human sexuality offered by a bio-cultural perspective. We hope this approach will allow our students a greater awareness of themselves as sexual beings, a greater understanding of themselves as cultural creatures, and an appreciation of our evolutionary past and biological heritage.

Summary

Chapter 1: Introduction: History and Context
1. Human sexuality is a bio-cultural experience and phenomenon.
2. Human sexuality is a means used by human groups to achieve socio-cultural goals such as the creation of kin groups.
3. A variety of anthropological perspectives were introduced including Malinowski, Benedict, Mead, Ford and Beach, Martin and Voorhies, and Frayser.
4. We concluded that human sexuality has two components, one in human biology which provides us with certain potentials and limitations, and the other in culture, wherein our sexuality is learned and integrated in the broader cultural context.

OVERVIEW

Chapter 2

Anthropological and Sexological Views

This chapter:
2. Presents anthropological concepts, terms, and definitions. Specific examples from the fields of physical anthropology and cultural anthropology that are relevant to our understanding of sexology are offered.
3. Provides a definition and discusses the scope of human sexuality.
4. Offers the importance of a relativistic perspective of human sexual expression.
Chapter 2

Anthropological and Sexological Views

This chapter presents an in-depth discussion of the anthropological perspective. Anthropology is contrasted with other disciplines in order to highlight its unique contribution to the study of human sexuality. In addition, key sexological terms and definitions are presented.

Anthropological Perspectives in Contrast

Because of its interdisciplinary nature, the anthropological approach incorporates psychological, sociological, and biological views but is not limited to any one. It is precisely because of anthropology's interdisciplinary nature as well as its interest in spanning great periods of time and vast distances, that it includes, yet may be contrasted with biological, sociological, and psychological approaches to human sexuality.

Biological

The biological perspective focuses on the physiological basis of sexual behavior. Biological perspectives on human sexuality stress essentialist views of human sexuality. These views look at instinct as an "essential" attribute of sexuality and regard reproduction as the core of that instinct. Katchadourian and Lunde (1975:2-3) have challenged this perspective of human sexuality and counter that:

The incentive is in the act itself, rather than in its possible consequences [reproduction]. Sexual behavior in this sense arises from a psychological "drive," associated with sensory pleasure, and its
reproductive consequences are a by-product (though a vital one)
... Our sexual behavior involves certain physical "givens," in-
cluding sex organs, hormones, intricate networks of nerves, and
brain centers.

To reduce human sexuality to an instinct to reproduce ignores
the importance of the symbolic and the affective in motivating sexual
behaviors. In addition, such a perspective ignores the role of the
group and shared cultural meanings in the survival of the species.
The biological view, however, is important for our understand-
ing of human sexuality. The "physiological givens" serve as the
basis for our discussion of human physiology and sex, but even
they must be placed in a cultural context. For example, we might
ask if the sexual cycle of Americans, which is believed to peak in
males at about 18 or 19 years of age and in females between the
ages 35 and 40, is not shaped by cultural factors. Evidence sug-
gests that this is the case (see Hyde 1982:343, 353). The perspec-
tive of anthropology is one that regards biology and culture as
tandem developments in human history. Anthropology emphasizes
the importance of social systems and learning as central features
in human evolution.

Sociological

The sociological tradition in sex research is characterized by
research that focuses on contemporary western sexuality. It looks
at the importance of "social learning, social rules and role playing"
in the expression of human sexuality (Musaph 1979:94) and stresses
patterns of social interaction. The survey method remains the most
popular sociological research technique for collecting sexological
data (Katchadourian 1985:11). Sociological research has provided a
valuable contribution to sexology by its attention to the intersect-
ion of class, status group, and the sexual experience. This ap-
proach is evident in such works as Komarovsky's Blue Collar

Anthropology and sociology are very compatible perspectives.
There are, in fact, a number of anthropologists whose sexological
interests are primarily on U.S. culture. The anthropologist, in con-
trast to the sociologist, is trained to maintain a comparative and
bio-cultural view with reference to the cross-cultural record regard-
less of the research topic; whether it is studying childbirth or middle-
While the sociological perspective tends to focus on the importance
of social structure and patterns of interaction, the anthropological
one additionally integrates the significance of beliefs in understand-
ing human behavior. This is essential in order to move beyond our
own western cultural biases around sex which can creep into re-
search. It is therefore useful in the study of U.S. sexology to sus-
tain a broader frame of reference including structure, meaning,
and cultural variation internally and cross-culturally. For the an-
thropologist this may also include an evolutionary understanding
as well. However, generally speaking, anthropology and sociology
are very closely related disciplines and it is often impossible to
distinguish between the works of anthropologists and sociologists.

Psychological

The psychological perspective, while acknowledging the role of
the neurophysiology of emotion, tends to emphasize the importance
of the mental and the affective in relation to behaviors in the
expression of human sexuality (Katchadourian and Lunde 1975:3).
There is perhaps no one psychological perspective, but several dif-
ferent thrusts in a general concern with cognitive and emotional
components of human sexuality.

From the Freudian perspective, the sex instinct termed libido,
was regarded along with the death instinct, as a driving force in
human behavior (Hyde 1982:6). Biology was regarded at the root of
the individual's psychosexuality. Developmental aspects of sexual-
ity were considered part of our physiological inheritance. As the
individual developed, s/he encountered various stages in which
sexuality and conflict were characteristic.

In contrast, psychological social learning theories acknowledge
the significance of the environment in learning one's sexuality and
in shaping its expression (Katchadourian and Lunde 1975:3). For
example, developmental psychologists are interested in how sexual-
ity unfolds in the child, while clinical psychologists typically deal
with sexual dysfunctions and "pathologies" (Katchadourian 1985:10-
11). The scope of psychological studies covers extensive areas in-
cluding sexual motivation, familial and peer influence, self-esteem
issues, and a number of other subjects as far ranging as gender
identity and gender differences in sexual response.

While the topics may vary, the approach is usually focused on
the psychology of the individual and family dynamics in the
development of sexuality. The general trend in psychology is to
ward a far smaller or micro-level of analysis than that under-
taken by anthropologists. While psychological anthropologists
may be interested in the mental and emotional structures behind

Anthropological and Sexological Views

23
the expression of human sexuality in individuals, the cultural context remains an important feature for analysis. Anthropologists are more likely to be interested in the impact of culture on family dynamics or perhaps the cultural patterning of sexual dysfunction within society. For example, the psychological perspective locates dysfunction within the individual and the family milieu, in contrast to an anthropological one which locates its source in society. In addition, like psychology, anthropology emphasizes the role of learning, but unlike anthropology it does not usually consider it within an evolutionary framework or a cross-cultural one (Kachadorian 1985:11).

Anthropological Concepts Defined with Examples

Having discussed the anthropological perspective in comparison and contrasted with biological, sociological, and psychological ones, we would like to introduce you to several concepts from anthropology necessary for understanding human sexuality in a biocultural context. We have taken as key terms: evolution, the culture concept, ethnocentrism, and cultural relativism. Other anthropological terms are offered in the glossary. Anthropological terms and concepts are discussed in greater depth than other terms because of their importance. The anthropological terms of particular relevance to understanding the biocultural perspective are: society, primates, bonding, ethnological, ethnographic, comparative, cross-cultural, hellsen, enic, etc., and genetic fitness. The interested student should look these up in the glossary.

Evolution

The modern theory of evolution challenged the prevailing view of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that all species were separate and divine creations. Through his famous travels on the HMS Beagle, Darwin formulated his theory of natural selection. At this same time, naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace independently arrived at a similar conclusion: species are not separate creations but have evolved through a process of natural selection. In 1858 Darwin and Wallace together rocked the meetings of the Linnaean Society of London, and in 1859 Darwin published The Origin of Species, documenting and detailing the theory of natural selection (Ember and Ember 1990:14–17).

The central tenants of natural selection are straightforward. Natural selection is a mechanism of evolution whereby those individuals who are better adapted to their environment over long periods of time will be more likely to reproduce offspring who will survive than those who are not. Those individuals who reproduce themselves are more likely to pass on the traits they possess than those who are not so well adapted to their environments. This has been referred to as survival of the fittest and is calculated in terms of reproduction, not lifespan of the individual. Since environments do not remain stable over time, different characteristics may emerge as more adaptive so that what was adaptive in one environment at one time is no longer adaptive at another time. Adaptation is defined as "a process by which organisms achieve a beneficial adjustment to an available environment, and the results of that process" (Havlík 1989:59).

While Darwin knew that traits were inherited, he could not explain how new variation in populations occurred. It was the Austrian monk, Gregor Mendel, who pioneered the study of genetics. His findings were incorporated in the theories of the scientific community in the early 1900s. Studies of genetics are now an essential component in the study of evolution (Ember and Ember 1990:18–20).

The Culture Concept

The culture concept was developed by the end of the nineteenth century. The first clear definition was proposed by Sir Edward Barnett Tylor, who is considered the parent of anthropology. In 1871 he defined culture as "... that complex whole which includes the knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man [and woman]... as a member of society." By 1952 Kroeber and Kluckhoff, in reviewing the anthropological literature, found 164 different definitions of culture (Lett 1987:54–55).

We offer the following definition: "... information—skills, attitudes, beliefs, values—capable of affecting an individual's behavior, which they acquire from others by teaching, imitation, and other forms of social learning." by Boyd and Richerson (1989:28). We have selected this definition because of its thrust on culture as cognitive, i.e., what an individual knows about her or his culture. This aspect, borrowing from a linguistic model of language in anthropology, may be thought of as competence. It is all the rules you need to know to act like a native of "X" group. Spradley (1987:17) calls this "cultural knowledge" and notes that it has two dimensions explicit and tacit. Explicit culture is the knowledge we can easily communicate about, for example, knowing what our genealogies are or that we practice monogamy, albeit serial, in our marriages.
systems. Tacit culture is what is "outside our awareness." Hall's work on non-verbal communication, The Hidden Dimension (1966) has described a number of spatially oriented rules about how close to stand next to someone and when to touch or not touch that are examples of tacit culture. We tend to be aware of these rules only when they are violated (Spradley 1967:22–24) as in the case of when someone "violates your space" or "gets in your face."

But culture is not just floating around in our heads; culture is behavior too. It includes performance, our socially acquired lifeways and our patterned interactions; the things humans do and make. For the most part, it can be observed. This is what makes sex research so difficult. Human sex, except in certain cases of public and ritualized religious events, is private and not readily observable. In order to understand observable patterns of behavior or performance we need to know about competence, the values and beliefs underlying the behaviors.

Culture has certain characteristics that anthropologists have delineated. 1) Culture is shared in that it is composed of a group of people who share a common culture although they need not share all the attributes of the culture. 2) Culture is learned and transmitted. The process of learning one's culture in a society is "enculturation" (Ember and Ember 1990:171–172). 3) Culture is symbolic. Thus, culture can be seen as the meaning of meaning is arbitrarily assigned to behaviors, events, and the world in general.

Ethnocentrism

According to Bernstein (1983:183), ethnocentrism is "unreflectively imposing alien standards of judgment and thereby missing the point of the meaning of a practice." It is "the attitude that other societies' customs and ideas can be judged in the context of one's own culture" (Ember and Ember 1990:510) and "...that one's own culture is superior in every way to all others" (Haviland 1989:296). As a discipline, anthropology has reacted against this view as a result of the method of participant-observation in which anthropologists early on came to know that "savages" were as human as western peoples and that their behavior could only be understood as part of their culture (Haviland 1989:296). To fully comprehend the meaning and dangers of ethnocentrism, it is important to adopt the anthropological stance of cultural relativism.

Cultural Relativism

According to Ember and Ember (1990:510), relativism is "the attitude that a society's customs and ideas should be viewed within the context of that society's problems and opportunities." Thus, "...there is no single scale of values applicable to all societies" (Winick 1970:454). For anthropologists it is crucial to remain relativistic in order to describe and explain objectively and to discover meaning without western bias. For example, it is obvious that western cultural biases against homosexuality could impact a scientific understanding of the subject. Herdt (1988, 1987, 1981) and Williams (1986) have written about nonwestern male homosexual practices and Blackwood (1984) on nonwestern lesbian behavior. They offer a relativistic and non-judgmental view of the subject. It is evident from their writings that even the terms we use like homosexual and lesbian are so loaded and culturally specific that they cannot be directly translated into the meaning given to, for example, ritualized homosexuality among Sambas of Highland New Guinea (Herdt 1987). The homosexuality of these peoples is simply not commensurable with our western conception of what appears superficially to be a similar behavior.

At some point in adopting a culturally relativistic perspective, you might be faced with a clash of values. How far can you take your cultural relativism and where do you draw the line are questions often asked by students. It is one that concerns anthropologists as well. In fact, Ethos, the Journal of the Society for Psychological Anthropology, devoted an entire issue to the question of moral relativism (1990:131–223). The introduction begins with:

What sort of theory of human values can be devised which encompasses and accords legitimacy to the obvious cultural and historical diversity in moral systems, without being so open that "anything goes"? That is a core problem of moral (ethical) relativism... (Fiske and Mason 1990:131).

These issues are significant particularly around topics directly affecting the lives of our students. Often it is easier to be relativistic regarding behavior or beliefs of people in a far and distant land. We, your authors, maintain it is more difficult to be relativistic within one's own culture when certain behaviors clash with the views of dominant society. For example, homosexuality is one of several options for sexuality, yet in several southern states such sexual practices are considered illegal and people are currently prosecuted under such ethnocentric and inhuman laws.

But what about incest, rape, or abortion? Are you asked to find these acceptable with cultural relativism? No, you are not. Bu
gender, and/or as a cross-gender role. Nevertheless, it may generally be described as a position in society in which a person takes on some or all of the tasks, dress, and behaviors of the other gender. Rather than just two genders as in the western case, the Mohave recognized four genders: woman, huami (female Berdache), man and alya (male Berdache). The Chucchee reported seven genders, three female and four male (Jacobs and Roberts 1989:439-440; Martin and Voorhis 1975:96-99; 102-104). Martin and Voorhis refer to these alternative genders as supernumerary genders (1975:94). Jacobs and Roberts (1989:439) have proposed that: "If one uses the criteria of linguistic markers alone, it suggests that people in most English-speaking countries also recognize four genders: woman, lesbian (or gay female), man, and gay male."

The other biological definition of sex focuses on the physiology of sexual arousal and coitus, and on the reproductive biology of humans. This includes changes in the human cycle in both reproductive physiology as well as human sexual response. But as Jacobs and Roberts (1989:441) so eloquently point out "[r]eproduction and sexuality are independent variables in the human life cycle. But sex and sexuality are much more complex than linking them with reproduction."

Behavioral, Cognitive, Affective, and Symbolic Definitions and Dimensions

Behavioral definitions of human sexuality focus on behaviors and consequences that can be observed and measured. This approach adds a valuable dimension to our understanding of human sexuality by elaborating on the biological.

The work of Kinsey and his colleagues represents one of the most well-known behavioral studies of human sexuality: Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (1948) and Sexual Behavior in the Human Female (1953). The Kinsey Reports focused on six sexual outlets leading to orgasm (masturbation, sex dreams, petting, coitus, homosexuality, and sex with animals). They were based on interviews with 5,300 males and 5,940 females. Kinsey was central in the creation of the scientific study of sex. He exemplified how such an emotionally charged subject could be studied with scientific rigor. The Kinsey Reports opened a forum for the public discussion of human sexuality. Gagnon (1978:93) believes that the public furor created by this work ushered in "...a major increase in the publicly sexual character of society that occurred in the late 1960's and early 1970's."

The behaviorist definition of sexuality is concerned with the scientifically measurable, i.e., external states. Kinsey was critical of sex research done through the single case method or the method of ethnographic sexology. He advocated the sociological method of the survey of large populations with concern for representativeness and the "statistical sense" without which one was "no scientist" (Gagnon 1978:93).

Behaviorism may be contrasted with the Freudian psychoanalytic perspective with its interest in the internal and the unconscious, the affective and the symbolic. The psychoanalytic approach is less amenable to measurement by conventional scientific techniques based on the natural sciences model of scientific inquiry. For Freud, infant and childhood sexuality was regarded as part of a broader phenomenon of seeking pleasure. Sexual desires were interpreted as potentially in conflict with the demands of civilization, thereby necessitating inhibition and suppression. Actually Kinsey agreed with this view, but felt that "...cultural values that oppose biological facts are social errors" (in Gagnon 1978:93).

Socio-Cultural Definitions and Dimensions

As we have seen, biological definitions of human sexuality focus on anatomy and physiology, physical development, and changes in human sexual response throughout the life cycle with an emphasis on the reproductive. Biological definitions of human sexuality also include behavioral dimensions. In contrast, socio-cultural definitions accent the role of customs in shaping human behavior and tend to take a relativistic stance. This position opposes the biological and behavioral definitions that look to physiology to explain alleged sex differences in human response. Socio-cultural definitions regard sexual behavior as culturally constituted and created (Gagnon 1978:95). Gender is a socio-cultural construct in which meanings are assigned to biology. The sex-gender system is defined as "the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity" (Rubin 1975:159 in Vance 1983:372).

Socio-cultural studies have gradually evolved from an early interest in sex as reproduction, e.g., Martin and Voorhis’ Female of the Species (1975), to studies of sex as institutional, e.g., marriage systems, and finally to sexuality itself (Jacobs and Roberts 1989:439). This approach is amply represented throughout this text, especially in chapters 7–14.

Sex, Gender, Masculinity, and Femininity
In this section, we present a list of terms related to the concept of gender. It is important to define gender early in the discussion of masculinity and femininity. In the 1970's research, the terms sex and gender were collapsed and mixed together, although by the early 1980's, successful efforts were made at separation and redefinition (Jacobs and Roberts 1989:439). Jacobs and Oberta (1989:439) offer an excellent definition:

**Gender** is the sociocultural designation of biobehavioral and psychosocial qualities of the sexes; for example, women (female), men (male), aborigines (e.g., berdache). Notions of gender are culturally specific and depend on the ways in which cultures define and differentiate human (and other) potentials and possibilities.

Essler and McKenna's (1978:7-16) definitions also serve us well. "While it is conventional to define sex as the biological aspects of male or female, and to define gender as the "psychological, social, and cultural aspects of maleness and femaleness," Kessler and McCann argue that even the concept of two biological sexes is a sociocultural construction (1978:7).

In summary, for purposes of clarity, sex will be used to refer to qualities related to sexual pleasure, arousal, and intercourse, whether recreational or for reproduction (Jacobs and Roberts 1989:440). Gender will refer more broadly to the cultural aspects of being male or female. Elsewhere, specific usages such as chromosomal, hormonal, or morphological sex will be presented, even though these biological characteristics are always interpreted through a cultural lens (cf. Kessler and McCann 1978:7).

Through an understanding of the "attribution process," how people assign gender to others, we can gain insight into the social construction of femininity and masculinity. Western femininity and masculinity are integrated in a gender scheme whose central tenants are that there are only two sexes, male and female, and that these are appropriately associated with the two social statuses of gender: men and women, boys and girls. Whatever a woman does will somehow have the stamp of femininity on it, while whatever a man does will likewise bear the imprint of masculinity" (Devoir 1987:21). Therefore, masculinity and femininity are associated with sex roles. Our western **gender schema** is a shared belief system about sex and gender. It regards biological sex as the basis for gender status which is then the basis for gender role. The actual process whereby people attribute gender to another actually occurs in the reverse to our gender schema; a person's display of masculinity or femininity (gender role) indicates gender which is followed by the presumption of appropriate genitalia which are not readily visible (Kessler and McKenna 1978:1-7, 112-141; Devoir 1989:149). Without our portable gene scanners and x-ray vision, daily life consists of encounters in which the biological is clearly mediated by cultural expectation in the attribution process. We do not really see genitals and sex, but gender presentations of feminine and masculine beings.

In summary, masculinity and femininity may be defined as components of gender roles which include cultural expectations about behaviors and appearances associated with the status of man or woman in the western bi-polar model of the sexes. For our purposes the following definition for gender role is provided:

Everything that a person says and does, to indicate to others or to herself the degree in which one is male or female or ambivalent. It includes but is not restricted to sexual arousal and response. Gender role is the public expression of gender identity, and gender identity is the private experience of gender role... Gender identity...is...the sameness, unity, and persistence of one's individuality as male or female (or ambivalent), in greater or lesser degree, especially as it is experienced in self-awareness and behavior (Money and Ehrhardt 1972:204).

Because of the attribution process, gender roles are often confused with sex and biology. Gender role stereotypes include ideas that differences in gender are the result of biology, for example, women are more nurturant, men are more aggressive, women are emotional while men are rational. These differences are rather the result of learned behaviors. Stereotypes such as these are classified by sociologists as **expressive** and **instrumental** gender roles. Boys are socialized into instrumental roles that are associated with acting or achieving while girls are socialized into relationship oriented or expressive roles (Eshleman, Cashion and Basirico 1988:189). That these roles are cultural and not natural, is amply demonstrated in the cross-cultural record in which a diversity of behaviors and expectations are recorded. Mead's study of the Arapesh, the Mundugumor, and the Tchambuli (they call themselves the Chambrli) in Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies (1963, 1935 original) offers a classic account of gender role variation in counterpoint to our western conceptions. Among the Mundugumor, both men and women were aggressive and non-emotional, while among the Arapesh, both sexes were cooperative and nurturant. The Tchambuli (Chambrli) expressed the reverse of our western gender roles with cooperative caring men and assertive women as the behavioral norm.
Biology and Sex: Political Aspects

We conclude with the interface of biological, behavioral, and sociocultural definitions of sex with political ends. "Whether the boundaries of women's place in society were erected with the bricks of theology or the cement of genetic determinism, the intention is that the barriers shall remain strong and sturdy" (Burnham 1978:51). This quote serves as a good introduction for our discussion of the politics of biology and sex. Biological/sexual functions have been used to serve larger political purposes in societies and ours is no exception. For example, women's roles in reproduction has been interpreted to justify conceptions of female inferiority which support ideologies of gender inequality.

Nineteenth century physicians maintained the view that for medical reasons it was unhealthy for women to be educated. This was thought to be detrimental to the intellectual development of men. Men felt it was a reproductive one, feeding her brain through education was seen as jeopardizing her reproductive capabilities (Burnham 1978:51–52).

Other researchers have described the historical relations of sexuality to changes based on the development of industrial capitalism in Western societies, thereby providing a political-economic interpretation (Ross and Rapp 1983:51–73). Ross and Rapp (1983:51) note that "the personal is political" reflecting our point that what one may think of as private is also public in the sense that it is linked with broader institutions of the Western political-economic. These institutions are patriarchal and perpetuate beliefs about the differences between the sexes and their respective sexualities. Such ideologies are then supported by a sexuality in which androcentric (male biased) views are legitimized as science, aided and abetted by biological reductionism.

Sanday's study of rape-prone societies clearly shows the relationship between male dominance and political power. Rape-prone societies were found to glorify strength, power, and violence. In these societies women have no voice in the political sphere or in religious life and are generally regarded as "owned" by men (Benderly 1987:187). In this way sexual behavior is defined as violent and as natural for men. Rape-free societies, however, challenge this view of brutal men. Rape-free societies are associated with resource stability, the absence of competition, and egalitarian social structures for men and women. Rather than a belief in a male supreme being, rape-free societies acknowledged a male and

female deity or a "universal womb" (Benderly 1987:187–188). These are societies where rape does not occur.

In conclusion this chapter has presented terms and concepts necessary for understanding human sexuality from an anthropological perspective. We have elaborated the importance of culture in shaping our human sexuality.

Summary

Chapter 2: Topics in Anthropological and Sexological Views

1. Psychology, sociology, and biology offer useful perspectives for the understanding of human sexuality. These viewpoints are incorporated to various degrees by anthropological approaches.

2. To understand the bio-cultural perspective, it is necessary to define our terms. These include concepts and constructs such as evolution, the culture concept, ethnocentrism, and relativism. Other terms are also discussed.

3. Definitions of human sexuality have varied temporally and spatially.

4. Definitions of human sexuality include areas such as anatomy and physiology, the sexual life cycle, and human sexual response.

5. Sex has many components. These include behavioral, cognitive, affective, and symbolic dimensions.

6. Sex and gender are compared and contrasted.

7. Sex has been used to serve larger cultural ends in societies. We examine sex in the context of power and politics.
Chapter 10

Puberty and Adolescence

Puberty and Adolescence: A Bio-Cultural Phenomenon

Americans are known for regarding adolescence as a tumultuous time and distinct phase in the life course (Mead 1961). In fact, it is this western based view of adolescence as a life crisis that inspired researchers such as Margaret Mead in the now classic Coming of Age in Samoa (1961, orig. 1928) to explore the cross-cultural record to search for the causes of teenage trauma.

It should come as no surprise to learn that the ethnographic spectrum challenges this view of adolescence. Adolescence is not only not universally regarded as a stressful period, but not all peoples regard it as a distinct phase in the life course. For purposes of linguistic convenience, we shall use the term "adolescent" to refer to the teenage years, bearing in mind it is not a cultural universal. While people in the U.S. have a scheme that divides the life course into the five phases of infancy, childhood, adolescence, youth, and adulthood, other peoples have far different views. According to Oswalt (1986:99): "[a]laboriginal peoples usually recognized few formal age grades, and by the time children were eight years old, they were working for or with same sex adults." Although non-industrial peoples do not elaborate the adolescent stage as do we, most peoples of the world recognize that the period of sexual maturation as one in which readiness for adulthood occurs.

Before continuing, it is appropriate here for us to define our terms since adolescence is often confused with puberty. Puberty is generally defined biologically. It is the period in life when secondary sexual characteristics develop and a person is in the process of becoming capable of reproduction (Offir 1982:521; Kelly 1990:512).
Puberty usually takes from two to four years. In girls, the ages for the onset of puberty are nine to sixteen, and in boys, from twelve to sixteen. A detailed discussion of the physiology of puberty has been described in chapter 5: Modern Human Male Anatomy and Physiology, chapter 6: Modern Human Female Anatomy and Physiology, and chapter 7: Fertility, Conception, and Embryology. The physical changes characterizing puberty include development of pubic hair and body hair, deepening of the voice, breast development in the female, widening of hips in the female and shoulders in the male, maturation of genitalia and capacity for reproduction (Ford and Beach 1951:170–171). In females, menarche occurs at the same time as a widening of hips and about a year or two subsequent to the development of breasts. Girls in the U.S. on the average reach menarche around twelve years old, although the age at which this occurs is a matter of variation (Speck 1985:495). The cross-cultural evidence suggests that nonwestern females are generally not fertile following menarche (Ford and Beach 1951:172; Schlegel and Barry 1991). In addition, there is an increased interest in sex as a result of the physiological changes that happen with puberty (Byer and Shainberg 1991:375). However, it must be remembered that interest in sex is extremely variable in individuals (Kelly 1990:167). How one experiences the biological baseline of puberty is shaped by social structure, subcultures, technologies, stratification, kinship and descent, cultural values such as conservative or liberal attitudes of parents, religious orientations, and a number of other factors (Schlegel and Barry 1991).

Menarche is one of the more obvious indicators of puberty. The onset of menstruation has followed a historical trend of occurring at an increasingly younger age. In western countries, menarche is now reached two years earlier than it was in 1900 and four years earlier than in 1840 (Moore 1980:138–139). In nonwestern countries, the pattern for menarche occurs at a younger age in urban areas than in rural ones. Economic variables are also important. In higher economic strata menarche begins earlier than in lower classes of the same population (Eveleth and Tanner 1976 in Moore 1980:140). Better nutrition and overall body fat seem to partly account for this change "although additional cultural and genetic influences also contribute to this phenomenon..." (Eveleth and Tanner 1976 in Moore 1980:140).

While puberty is identified by a series of physical changes, adolescence is a cultural construct defined as a "period of emotional, social and physical transition from childhood to adulthood" (Kelly 1990:505). Adolescence is the time of life that spans puberty and ends with adulthood. It is not limited to the teenage years. Robert Francoeur (1991a:41) notes that as a period of psychosocial maturation it may even extend into the late twenties in some societies such as the United States and Ireland. If it is recognized as a distinct stage, how and when it begins as well as what it means differs a great deal throughout the ethnographic spectrum. In the West, adolescence as a distinct phase has varied historically as well.

Adolescence did not appear in the West until the nineteenth century. It was not until the 1800s that adolescence also came to be regarded as a time of conflict, especially among the upper classes. Prior to that time, youth was regarded as a period of preparation for adulthood that covered a long time span with gradually increasing responsibilities. There were various symbolic markers for the transformation of youth into adulthood. This was related to the economic situation in which working class children at 10 or 12 years old entered occupations as apprentices, in the case of boys, or perhaps as domestic servants for girls. These decisions were made by their parents (Sommerville 1990:211–212). Having entered upon their calling children were playing parts in the adult world and had a recognized status there, even though they were not yet considered adults. Rights and responsibilities came gradually, with a number of milestones on the way to maturity. In some respects they were still considered children for years afterward. But the adult world was not a foreign and unknown territory to them (Sommerville 1990:213).

Other options varied by class for girls and boys. Upper and middle class boys were also involved with training for their profession by the latter part of their teenage years. During this period, the age of marriage was around fifteen years old; and puberty did not happen until much later, around 18 or 20 years old (Francoeur 1990:114).

The Industrial Revolution changed the nature of work and consequently the apprenticeship as a vehicle for integration of youth into society was lost. As the population grew so did employment opportunities for the middle and upper classes. The aristocrats sought positions in the military and government which, in turn, had to be expanded to accommodate their need for employment. At the same time, education for the upper and middle classes also kept youngsters in the home under their parents' guidance. The results of these trends were the creation of adolescence as a separate phase in western youths' lives characterized by their separation from the world of work and adults (Sommerville 1980:216).
Along with this trend, the age of puberty also gradually dropped from the late teens and early twenties to what it is today (Aries 1962).

Turning to the cross-cultural data, we find that the most elemental ways that peoples categorize and define themselves are based on two criteria: age and gender. Adolescence is an example of an age-grade which is a grouping of individuals who share a certain age range. "Responsibilities, rights, and obligations of individuals change as they progress through different age-grades" (Cohen and Eames 1982:411). In many societies one's age grade is a significant part of one's life and place in society. This is particularly true in societies in which other ways of identifying and categorizing individuals such as on the basis of power, wealth, and status are absent. Age grading is related to age sets. An age set is "a nonkin assoication in which individuals of the same age group interact throughout their lives" (Oswalt 1986:432). One of the consequences of initiation ceremonies is to foster age sets among initiates.

**Puberty Rituals: Initiation Ceremonies as Rites of Passage**

In many societies there is "cleremonial recognition of a major change in social status, one that will permanently alter a person's relationship with members of the greater community" (Oswalt 1986:437). Such ceremonies are called rites of passage or a passage ceremony. It should be remembered that not every society marks the transition from childhood to adulthood with elaborate ceremonies. We are an example of a society that does not.

It has been proposed that the absence of rites of passage ritual is the cause of much trauma in our status transitions (Shapiro 1979:283). Rites of passage often include initiation ceremonies in which a child acquires the new status of adult. In 1909, Arnold Van Gennep devised the rites of passage model as a tripartite scheme and explained the functions of these ceremonies. According to Van Gennep (1960:3):

> Rites of passage have three distinct phases: separation, transition, and incorporation (Van Gennep 1960:12). In separation an individual is removed from his/her previous world or place in society. Transition, or liminalty, are "threshold" rites that ready an individual "for his or her reunion with society." This is the phase in which the initiates undergo training for their new position and learning new information important to their anticipated status. As part of this, they are likely to experience some sort of ordeal or testing. Incorporation rites integrate individuals back into their group. This includes a return to the community after the initiate has been socially and perhaps even spatially removed. It is the public recognition of the person's new status in society (Van Gennep 1960:2, 46, 67).

In the case of the pubescent, rites of passage function to ease the journey from the status of child to that of adult. According to Chapple and Coon (1942), changes of status are disturbing for personal and social relations within the group. Initiation ceremonies, like other rites of passage, help ease and facilitate the transition to adulthood. They do this for the novice who must experience an identity shift as she takes on a new position, as well as for the broader social group who must now accept the youth as an adult.

Initiation rites are often stressful and include rigorous tests, hazing, isolation from previous associates, and/or painful ordeals. These attributes provide symbolic referents for learning about what the new status as adults includes. Adolescent rites of passage provide an opportunity to practice and gain knowledge about adulthood. According to Chapple and Coon (1942:484-485), these ceremonies restore equilibrium to the individual as well as the community. In addition, the dramatic, painful, and stressful elements may help prepare the youth for the "stresses" of adulthood as well as function to enhance group solidarity (Oswalt 1986:106).

The rites of transition are particularly important as a period in which the novice is liminal, "betwixt and between status" according to Victor Turner (1967). By occupying this liminal status, the pubescent individual will be in a unique position to unlearn their position as a child and take on their new responsibilities as adults.

There are gender differences in rites of passage that may be related to differential socialization. Chodorow (1974) has argued that female and male socialization are contrasted in terms of continuity and discontinuity. She believes that this is based on the universality of women as caregivers of children. Therefore, the majority of children experience a female during their early years, but each gender experiences this female differently. Male socialization is discontinuous, in
that they must eventually experience a separation from the domestic worlds of their mothers, while females do not. Young females learn to identify with their mothers and other women as association- nal role models and need not learn a new identification as they mature. In contrast, the boy's association with women during childhood prevents him from making an easy masculine role identification (Chodorow 1974:54). The boy's role model is a cross-sex one, in contrast to the associational one of little girls. The model is based on notions of the traditional nuclear family in which father is the breadwinner and mother works in the home.

Chodorow's argument is related to theories about why initiation ceremonies are often so much more elaborate and at times more severe for males than females, although female ceremonies are more prevalent. There are a number of ideas on this subject. Burton and Whiting's (1961) cross-sex identity hypothesis suggests that young men in polygynous and patrilineal households are likely, for a variety of reasons, to assume a feminine identity. In order to switch their cross-sex identification with their mothers to that of men, a severe initiation ceremony is mandated. It is designed to impress upon the boys that the world of men is more important and valued than that of women. According to this theory, severe practices such as circumcision or genital mutilation are guaranteed to catch the young man's attention and to reverse the cross-sex identity. An important facet of these ceremonies is a mockery or "put down" of women which contributes to the masculine self-definition as not feminine. This argument has been criticized because the cross-sex identity is not demonstrated by the researchers but only speculated.

Other psychodynamically focused theories include Young's socio-cultural interpretation of initiation ceremonies.

Young's (1965) study of rites of passage found that male initiation ceremonies were designed to incorporate men into the entire community, while female initiations integrated women into domestic groups. Young postulated that this was related to the differential roles and tasks that each sex was assigned in society: women a domestic one and men a public role. For Young, male solidarity was an important feature overlooked by the psychoanalytic approaches of researchers such as Burton and Whiting (1961 in Bock 1988:117). Solidarity was also an salient feature for the female household as well. Young explained that female initiations were less elaborate because the domestic sphere is more private and less extensive as opposed to the public world of males (1965:106). The domestic arena is also continuous and familiar in that females are born into it and exposed to information about their role as they are growing up. This was suggested in Chodorow's (1974) approach as well.

Female initiation ceremonies will often ritually mark menarche. This event is regarded as a very important one in many cultures. How a society responds to menarche is related to the broader cultural context such as attitudes toward women in general, women's positioning in society, forms of social organization, and beliefs about menstrual blood. For example, New Guinea highland groups are well known for their view of menstrual blood as polluting. Menarche rituals are as varied as there are cultures. In some groups, like the Gussii, clitoridectomy may be part of the ceremony. In others such as the Tingit, a girl was confined for at least a year with a series of proscriptions around her behavior, e.g., she must not gaze at the sky or must scratch an itch only with a stone (Oswalt 1986:108-109). Among Andaman Islanders (Service 1976:60-61 in Moore et al. 1980:140):

Once menarche is attained, a girl in this society is secluded in a hut for several days. Her behavior is closely regulated by prescriptions concerning bathing, posture, speaking, eating, and sleeping. The personal name used during childhood is replaced by one taken from a plant in bloom during the ceremony and is retained until the next rite of passage (marriage). A boy reaching puberty does not experience physical isolation but is singled out by the occasion of an all-night dance held in his honor. Scarification of his back and chest further emphasizes his coming change in status. Dietary restrictions are enforced for a period of a year or more at the end of which time the boy is given a new name.

Schlegel and Barry (1980:696-715), in a study of 186 societies, found that societies that emphasized female initiation ceremonies were more likely to be gatherers and hunters. They suggested this was because reproduction is important for foraging groups who have a lower population density. Such ceremonies emphasize the importance of the life-giving attributes of women. In contrast, initiation rites in small scale plant cultivators (like non-intensive horticulturists) emphasize equally both girls and boys. However, rigid separation of the sexes during the rites of passage is enforced. This accords the cultural importance of gender differentiation in such societies (Schlegel and Barry 1980:712). In fact, this characteristic is not uncommon in puberty rites in general. Despite variation in social organization, a general feature of female initiations is that they are centered on fertility while male's are focused on responsibility. In horticultural societies with both male and female initiation ceremonies, same sex bonding is an important function of
the initiation ceremonies where homosocial relations (same gender) are an integral part of such cultures (Schlegel and Barry 1989:712).

Case Study of Rites of Passage: The Sambia

Gilbert Herdt's study, The Sambia: Ritual and Gender in New Guinea (1987), describes the rites of passage of Sambia male adolescents as they pursue adulthood. What makes the Sambia of particular interest is that their initiation into manhood involves an extended period of institutionalized homosexuality. All males among the Sambia will have experienced the roles of fellator and fellatee with other men during the course of their initiation and journey into manhood (see also Herdt 1981, 1988).

The Sambia are a highland Papua New Guinea group characterized by warfare and male privilege. As is typical in groups like this, there is great disparity in the status of men and women, with men being privileged and dominant. At a prepubescent age boys go to live in all male clubhouses, where for the next seven years they will ejaculate the older males (teenagers and men in their early twenties) who share the clubhouse with them. It is only by swallowing the ejaculate of the older boys that a young boy can hope to grow into manhood. Manhood is defined by semen, which is regarded as a very powerful substance. Boys are believed to be without semen. So it is important that a boy consume as much as possible in order to have an ample supply of it. The obvious way to get this is by fellatio, or oral insemination. Semen has a power known as jerungdu (Herdt 1987:101).

Like sexuality in general, there are rules and practices regulating homosexual behavior. When a young man reaches about twenty-five years old, he is married. However, he must remain attentive to preserving his supply of sacred fluids, lest his spouse, who is regarded as potentially dangerous and polluting, sap him of his strength and use up his semen during intercourse. Societies like the Sambia are noted for female pollution avoidance rituals, which dramatize women's social inequality to men. Female pollution avoidance rituals may restrict menstruating women by confining them to a special structure, e.g., a menstrual house. These rituals are based on beliefs that females are impure. Avoidance of women and concepts of female impurity associated with the female menstrual cycle contribute to status inequalities and disparities between the sexes (Herdt 1987). Such rituals do not occur in societies in which women share power with men, but tend to be found in patrilineal societies and societies in which women have low prestige (Zelmar 1977:714-733).

The purpose of initiation among the Sambia is to make men out of boys. Little boys inhabit the world of women and are dangerously contaminated by it. As a result of this, they are not quite masculine. Masculinity is not something that is seen as "naturally" occurring. jerungdu must be acquired as the source of masculinity. In addition to the feminization of young boys that is a result of their association with their mothers, there is the problem that males cannot manufacture their own semen. To make matters worse they can lose jerungdu through ejaculation. The Sambia ritualized homosexual initiation resolves this dilemma of manhood. Fellatio is the means to acquiring an initial supply of semen. The proof of the power of the initiation among the Sambia is that young boys provide evidence that it works by becoming bigger, physically strong, and assertive. In the end, "... the idealized masculine behaviors of initiation have remade the boy into the image of a warrior" (Herdt 1987:104). Through the course of initiation the boys have learned the cultural values associated with masculinity and with it the secrets of manhood hidden from Sambian women. For example, heterosexual copulation is particularly dangerous for men since through it they can lose their power. The initiates must learn how to drink white tree sap to replenish their source of power, once they are past the stage of ingesting semen through fellatio (Herdt 1987:164).

The Sambia are a provocative example to contrast with our own western concepts of manhood and sexuality. During most of the initiation cycle the initiate is not permitted any heterosexual activity. In the early stages, the boys act as the fellators and ingestors of semen, which contains the power to make them grow into manhood. The initiates are prohibited from masturbation or anal sex as well. In other words, they have no sexual outlets other than wet dreams. But from about fifteen years of age through eighteen, the boys enter the third stage of initiation when they become bachelors and inserters rather than fellators. Their ability in the "inseminator" role proves:

...that they are strong and have jerungdu, because their bodies are sexually mature and have semen to "feed" to younger boys. They feel more masculine than at any previous time in their lives. So the bachelors go through a phase of intense sexual activity, a period of vigorous homoerotic activity and contacts, having one relationship after another with boys. Their sexual behavior is primarily promiscuous, for the initiates are concerned mostly with
It is interesting that cultural practices help ease the male into his change of lifestyle. The newlywed bride resembles the young initiates in appearance. The bride covers her breasts and wears a noseplug similar to that of the young males that are the fellatees. In addition, the wives perform fellatio on their husbands. "The bride's similarity to boys and the fellatio, thus help to provide an erotic bridge between the homosexual and heterosexual roles" (Herdt 1987:165). Herdt's research on the Sambia challenges clinical theories that: early homosexual experiences lead to later adult homosexuality (Schlegel and Barry 1991:109).

The Sambia are a fascinating example of nonwestern sexuality as it is experienced in adolescence and into young adulthood. Male-female relations are part of a well-reported phenomenon of sex antagonism in this particular area of New Guinea. Women are regarded as potentially dangerous because of their ability to pollute and deplete men of their semen. Wives are acquired by politically motivated and arranged marriages. Because they come from outside the group (euxamgy), they can never be completely trusted. While the arranged marriages may help create alliances, they are also potentially disruptive because at any time the bride's family might become enemies. Warfare plays an integral part of Sambia homosexual as well as heterosexual behaviors (Herdt and Stoller 1989:32). It must be kept in mind that our concepts of homosexual, bisexual, and heterosexual are in the context of our western experience. The Sambia do not have categories analogous to ours. Their heterosexual, homoerotic, and bisexual behavior is obviously vastly different from the western one and cannot be translated into our western clinical and homophobic perspective (Herdt and Stoller 1989:31-34).

Turning now to our more general topic of pubescent and adolescent sexuality, nonwestern and western, we need to point out that male and female adolescent sexuality may occur at different times. For example, among the Tiwi, adolescent women have sex with post-adolescent men, not men of their own ages (Hart, Pilling, and Geodale 1988). Age of marriage is an important variable to consider since sex may occur in the context of premarital, marital, and/or extramarital sexual behavior. In countries in which individuals marry late, for example Singapore, where women marry at 24.4 years old, the premarital sex period may extend into the twenties. Many of the studies of premarital sex in developing nations target students as the research population so the ages may span both teens as well as the early twenties. Conversely, marital sex may also include the pubescent age groups since in many societies
people who marry in their teens may be regarded as adults. Marriage in most traditional societies ends adolescence as a cultural stage (Schlegel and Barry 1991:109). In 74% of forty societies, males marry at eighteen years or older and in 69% of forty-five societies females marry at seventeen or younger. The modal age of male marriage is eighteen to twenty-one years old and for females it is twelve to fifteen years old. Men tend to be older than their wives at first marriage, and hence experience premartial rules for a longer time. However, it is important to remember that males generally have greater access to a double standard that allows them more premartial sexual freedom (Frayser 1985:208).

It is important to remember for our discussion of pubescent and adolescent sexuality that the meaning premartial sex has for westerners is not necessarily convergent with that in other societies. In addition, sexual behaviors westerners include in a repertoire of premartial sex also varies. In some cases cross-culturally, data from the Human Relations Area Files biases the definition of premartial sex by focusing on heterosexual penile-vaginal intercourse. The degree to which premartial sex among youths is approved of, disapproved of, and even condemned will vary cross-culturally as well. Despite the diversity, all cultures have rules regarding sex relations with appropriate partners. A variety of factors interact and are related to rules relating to premartial sex. Martin and Voorhees (1975) have found that sociocultural aspects of premartial sex is related to the type of social organization, population density, subsistence and resource patterns, all of which are directly related to the status of women. Relevant also to this discussion is the role of adolescent fertility and cultural attitudes toward children conceived nonmaritally.

Ford and Beach's (1951) codification of cultures as restrictive and permissive based on a massive review of 190 different societies provides us with a useful approach in describing adolescent sexuality. This approach has been refined and continues to be an important source for understanding how and why adolescent sexuality is structured. Most notable is the work of Barry and Schlegel (1991) discussed later in this chapter. Again, this model of ideal types represents what in actuality is a continuum. Ford and Beach recorded fourteen very restrictive societies in which children are prevented from sexual expression and acquiring sexual knowledge. However, sex with the onset of puberty is allowed for girls in ten restrictive societies, and for boys in one; the Haitians. "For the most part these peoples seem particularly concerned with the prepubescent girl, believing that intercourse before menarche may be injurious to her" (Ford and Beach 1951:18). In most of the African societies studied by Ford and Beach, boys were预防ed from having sex before their initiation ceremonies. In some societies rules against sex after puberty may remain restricted or may actually be intensified. To restrict premartial sex among young people, societies will 1) separate the sexes, 2) chaperone females, and/or 3) negatively sanction premartial sex (Ford and Beach 1951:182). Of these measures the first is the most successful, while the second has not proven to be a deterrent to the highly motivated youngster (Ford and Beach 1951:185-184). One of the means restrictive societies use to ensure control of youngsters' sexuality is by placing a value on virginity. Some may even have tests of this virginity through demonstrations of bloodied cloth or defloration ceremonies (Ford and Beach 1951:186).

In semirestrictive societies, there may be formal proscriptions directed at teenage premartial sex, but these are not regarded as serious offenses. Prohibitions against premartial sex for females specifically occur in twelve societies, for older children in two, while sanctions against both sexes are found in thirty-four societies (Ford and Beach 1951:187). There are three permissive societies that allow coitus for adolescent boys; the Crow, Siriano and Tongans; one society that allows premartial permissiveness for girls only, the Thong; and one that limits permissiveness to the commoner class, the Nauruans. There are forty-three permissive societies in which there are no gender specific restrictions. The only restrictions are those around incest, which would be expected (Ford and Beach 1951:190).

By the time of puberty in most of these societies expressions of sexuality on the part of older children consist predominantly of the accepted adult form of heterosexual intercourse, the pattern which they will continue to follow throughout their sexually active years of life (Ford and Beach 1951:190).

While Ford and Beach documented the variation in adolescent sexuality, other anthropologists have been interested in explanation, asking questions such as how social structure influences premartial sex norms. Schlegel and Barry's Adolescence: An Anthropological Inquiry (1991) provides valuable insight in this regard. A summary of some of their findings and review of the research is presented below to show how sociocultural features pattern sexual behavior (Schlegel and Barry 1991:109-121).

1. For both sexes, adolescent permissiveness is related to the absence of a double standard.
2. Adult adultery for women and men is frequent in societies that are permissive for adolescent sexuality.

3. Premarital sexual permissiveness for females is associated with simpler subsistence technologies, absence of stratification, smaller communities, matrilineal descent, matrilocal residence, absence of belief in high gods, absence of bride’s wealth, high female economic contribution, little or no property exchange at marriage, and ascribed rather than achieved status, an evaluation of girls as equal or higher than boys.

Recently, concern for AIDS has resulted in an increase in research on the subject of sex, including sexual behavior among youths in countries such as Thailand, Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Japan, Malaysia, Micronesia, and Melanesia (Sittitrat 1990:173-190). These are known as Pattern III countries reflecting the transmission of AIDS from other areas through immigration and tourism (see chapter 14: HIV Infection and AIDS for a more detailed discussion). Unfortunately, our western heteroerotic bias has focused primarily on male populations and heterosexual behavior. In the majority of Pattern III countries studied, about 20% to 50% of the adolescents report having engaged in premarital sex. Yet, these same countries also place a value on female virginity (Sittitrat 1990:177). There are some studies available of adolescent sexuality that include homosexual and/or bisexual behaviors. Most of the studies of homosexuality cross-culturally do not focus on the specifics of heteroerotic sex practices among youth. However, a Japanese study reported 7% of the male and 4% of the female research population experienced some male or female homosexual behavior such as kissing, petting, and/or mutual masturbation. These researchers did note that the age of the first same-sex experience was 15–17 years old with partners usually older (Sittitrat 1990:178). This kind of specific data is essential for understanding adolescent sexuality so important in regard to HIV transmission. A great deal of research remains to be done in this area. Schlegel and Barry (1991) have made a substantial contribution in this regard. Using the cross-cultural correlational approach, they compared homosexual behavior among pubescent boys and girls in 24 societies. They found “In virtually all cases, if homosexual relations are tolerated or permitted for one sex they are for the other as well.” In addition, their research indicates that cross-culturally, homosexuality in adolescence tends to be transient and “...appears to be a substa-
and demand for physical gratification (Hyde 1985:290). Simon and Gagnon (1973) refer to this as a relational ideology in comparison to a recreational ideology (in Delameter 1989:46). Sex is a developmental process in western society and over the course of time female sexuality develops a genital component while male sexuality may mature into "more complex, diffuse sensuous experience" much like that of the adolescent female (Hyde 1985:290). In this manner, as people age in western society, their sexuality becomes more alike than different.

Adolescent sexuality in the west includes masturbation as a component, as it does cross-culturally. A male's first ejaculation is usually experienced during masturbation. In five percent of the cases, it occurred during homosexual activity, and in 12 percent as a wet dream according to Kinsey et al. 1948 research. Generally, the rate of female masturbation is somewhat lower than males as is their sexual activity in general, both homosexual and heterosexual (Kinsey et al. 1953). Fifty-eight percent of adolescent boys and 39% of adolescent girls reported masturbating at least once in more recent research (Sorensen 1973). In a study by Gagnon et al. (1970) of high school students, 77% of the males and 17% of the females self-reported masturbating twice a week or more. It is difficult to acquire reliable information about masturbation rates.

Adolescent sexual experimentation also includes the custom of making out, enhanced by the car culture of the 1950s and 1960s. Making out usually refers to kissing, but it also may escalate into petting. Petting includes everything up to and short of vaginal intercourse, including oral and manual practices. Through petting, adolescents learn to negotiate cultural rules against vaginal intercourse by discovering alternatives that lead to orgasm. For example, in a study by Newcomer and Udry (1985), 25% of the males and 15% of females in a population who had no previous experience with heterosexual coitus engaged in oral-genital practices.

Adolescents also engage in homosexual and heterosexual intercourse. Kinsey's statistics, although dated (1948 and 1953), are revealing considering the time frame. Sixty percent of the males and 33% of the females reported at least one homosexual or bisexual experience by fifteen years old. This data again support the highly flexible nature of our sexuality and the distinction between behavior and orientation.

The following statistics provide some evidence of heterosexual behavior:

### Table 10.1 Age of Sexual Intercourse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 15</td>
<td>6-17%</td>
<td>19-38%</td>
<td>Gordon and Gilpin 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by 19</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>New Woman Sex Report 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by 19</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>Zelnik and Kanter 1989</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A recent study of women aged 15-44 (n = 8000) by the Alan Guttmacher Institute found that female teen sexual activity, especially that of Caucasian middle and upper classes, is on the increase in the 1980s. They cite the following findings (in "Teen Sexual Activity Rises" 1991:25):

The percentage of girls aged 15-19 who reported engaging in sexual activities increased from 47.1% in 1982 to 53.2% in 1988.

The percentage of sexually active girls in the 15 to 17-year-old age bracket rose from 32.6% to 38.4% in the same period.

In 1986, 58% of sexually active teenage girls reported having had two or more sex partners.

In 1986, 48% of the sexually active girls aged 15 to 19 reported that contraceptives were used in their first sexual intercourse. In 1986, 65% of the girls 15 to 19 reported that contraceptives, mostly condoms, were used in their first sexual intercourse.

The U.S. Center for Disease Control reports that 72 percent of American youths have had sexual intercourse by the time they graduate, and forty percent have had sexual intercourse by the ninth grade.

The evidence suggests that sex education (which includes AIDS education) must have some impact because 58 percent of 15-19 year old males also used a condom during their first intercourse (Sonenstein and Pleck 1989 in Kelly 1990:171). It is possible to become pregnant during first intercourse and it is also possible to contract the HIV virus as well. We cannot assume that American adolescents are using contraceptives regularly. According to Wallis (1985), it is not until adolescents have been having sex for a year that they initiate contraception. Using contraception is difficult for adolescents since it is loaded with symbolic meaning about oneself as a sexual being. By using contraception the adolescent must acknowledge engaging in premeditated sex. This may lead to conflicting feelings regarding values and sense of self as a "moral" being. With western adolescence, then, comes a number of questions for the individual concerning sexuality and contraception.
Adolescent Sterility/Fertility

The decision to engage in sex is not without risks. AIDS and other STIs are endemic in this culture as are the consequences of an unwanted pregnancy. Teen pregnancy is a particular problem in United States. Why is the U.S. adolescent pregnancy rate higher than in other countries? What factors influence teen pregnancy from a socio-cultural perspective? One possible contributing factor is a phenomenon known as adolescent sterility. This is presented in greater depth in our discussion of birth control in chapter 11: Topics in Adult Sexuality: Human Sexual Response and Birth Control. Adolescent sterility (or subfertility) refers to a period between the age of menarche and reproductive maturity, about twenty-three years old. Despite the onset of puberty, intercourse is less likely to result in pregnancy than in a reproductively mature woman (Ford and Beach 1951:172–173). In a number of societies, adolescent females are permitted premarital sex, yet pregnancies are unlikely to result (Ford and Beach 1951). These are the societies that Ford and Beach (1951:190) list as permissive, that is, there are no sexual restrictions on adolescent sex activity short of incest regulations. The list is too long to reproduce here, but examples include the Ainu, Aymara, Trobrianders, and Yarapa.

Adolescent sterility allows teenagers and youth to experience their sexuality as well as learn and grow as individuals. It provides for an extended period of practice and discovery about oneself as a sexual being without the burden and the additional concern and responsibility of parenthood. Sexual experimentation in these societies allows for a far easier transition to marital sex than in societies which prohibit sexual experimentation during adolescence, and then expect that the couple will be able to reverse their attitudes about sex after marriage (Ford and Beach 1951:195). Adolescent subfertility in combination with permissive cultural attitudes also allows for an important period of learning without the status changes that accompany childbirth. In most societies, childbirth provides men and women special status, sometimes it may confer adulthood while in others adulthood may occur prior to parenthood. Regardless, having a child is viewed as an important status marker.

As we suggest in chapter 11 in our discussion of birth control, adolescent sterility does not seem operative in U.S. populations. Based on the critical fat hypothesis (Frisch 1978), it is believed that ovulation occurs only when certain levels of fat have been reached. This is directly related to the requirements for successful reproduction and lactation. Lancaster (1985:18) attributes the loss of adolescent sterility in adolescent girls in contemporary societies to:

[setention combined with high levels of caloric intake (that) lead to early deposition of body fat in young girls and “fool” the body into early biological maturation long before cognitive and social maturity are reached (Lancaster 1985:18).]

Without adolescent sterility as a damper on fertility in combination with adolescent sexuality without contraception, the result is a very high adolescent pregnancy rate in the United States. For every 1,000 females, 110 aged fifteen through nineteen become pregnant (Henshaw et al. 1999). This differentially impacts adolescent African American females where adolescent pregnancy is twice as high as Caucasian females in this age group.

What is interesting is that in comparison with 37 other countries, the U.S. pregnancy rate is “... higher than that of almost any other developed country. While American adolescents are no more sexually active than young people in other industrialized countries, they are much more likely to become pregnant” (Byer and Shainberg 1991:386). Unfortunately, these statistics compare Caucasian American adolescent females, not African Americans or other minorities. Nevertheless, these differences may be accounted for in part because we do not have comprehensive sex education programming, readily available birth control, and a sex positive attitude in this culture in contrast to other industrialized societies (Watson 1990).

What is the price of adolescent pregnancy? Girls who are under 18 years of age who give birth are “half as likely to graduate from high school as those 20 years old or older” (The Tragedy of Parental Involvement Laws” 1990:5). In addition, recent Minnesota study found that 80% of the seventeen-year-old mothers in their research population never graduated from high school. Other problems prevail. There is a high mortality rate among children of teenage mothers due in part to low birth weight and associated illnesses. In addition, teenage mother heads of household are two times more likely to be poor and need public assistance ("The Tragedy of Parental Involvement Laws” 1990:5).
quarters are shared provide an opportunity for children to become aware of the sexual activities of their parents and/or siblings. Sex in these situations is undertaken with discretion, and we know of no cultures in which children and youths are allowed to watch openly. For example, among the Mauka, a sex-positive Polynesian culture in which premarital sex is the norm, parents do not discuss sex with their young children. But because Mauka live in one-room houses, the opportunity for discreet observation does occur. However, the specifics and details of sex and reproduction are learned outside the home, not unlike in the U.S. (Marshall 1971:109).

Without rites of passage to help them make the transition to adulthood and also to provide avenues for learning about sexuality, where do western adolescents learn about sexuality? Research suggests that it isn’t from parents, but rather from peers. This is not to suggest that parents have no influence on their children’s sexual behavior. In fact, according to Fisher (1987:484):

A few studies have examined the issue of family relationships and their influence on sexual/contraceptive behavior, leading to the general conclusion that premarital sexual activity is less likely when the families relations are good. Lewis (1973) reported... several family relationship variables were related to sexual behavior in females. For example, sex activity is in a historical niche where it is now regarded as an important and very natural component of one’s life. This view is also related to trends in which sex and procreation were separated resulting in a greater emphasis on sex for pleasure. These patterns are in their incipient stages and just beginning to be felt in sex education which is still suffering from conservative paradigms of fear and abstinence.

The evidence in regard to abstinence models is intriguing. Apparently sex education programs do not impact the likelihood of sexual activity one way or another, but rather may actually increase the likelihood of contraception and hence affect pregnancy and STD transmission including HIV infection (Kirby 1985; Zelnik and Kim 1982 in Kelly 1991:337–340). This is expressed in the contrast between European sex education programs and those in the United States. According to Robert Fraincer (1991:126), European programs take for granted that adolescents are having sex and their approach consequently focuses on the issues of how to combat STDs and pregnancy. “Americans are mainly concerned with keeping teenagers from being sexually active and enjoying it” (Francec 1991:125).
Comparison and Contrast: Preparation for and Transition to Adulthood

Adolescence is a culturally constituted phase associated with puberty. As we have discussed, whether a culture even acknowledges a period of adolescence differs, as does the length of time allocated to such a stage. Therefore, adulthood and the age at which we reach it also differs considerably. Despite the variability of how and when children reach adulthood, cultures provide mechanisms for the change of status. As we have seen, this occurs through rites of passage.

As we introduced earlier, Mead’s study of Samoan girls’ adolescence challenged our western conceptions of adolescence as a period of strife due to the pubescent surge of hormones. Mead’s study refuted this view in a controversial analysis that revealed a harmonious adolescence for Samoan girls. Mead was as interested in American adolescence as she was in Samoan adolescence and has provided some clues about the western adolescent experience at the time. Some of her ideas still ring true since the publication of her book, Coming of Age in Samoa in 1928, although parts of her conclusions are dated. For example, her frustration hypothesis with its obvious Freudian dimension is a questionable explanation. Mead’s interpretation of why adolescence was such a torturous time for American youths rested on the idea that urges for sex were frustrated and suppressed by norms against teenage sex. This ignores other dimensions of adolescence as a period of growth. In the U.S. these norms were associated with the age of marriage which is ideally delayed until after graduation from high school. Mead felt that teenage sexual norms that allowed making out and petting just flamed a libidinal inferno that must ultimately be repressed. Teens expressed their frustration with this through rebellion and revolt (Davis nd.3). From this view, American culture emerged as a repressive one and Samoan culture was regarded as permissive because these sexual urges were not frustrated.

Like Mead, Spock (1965) has also accepted rebelliousness as a given for adolescents. He states: “It isn’t often realized that the rebelliousness of adolescents is mainly an expression of rebelliousness with parents, particularly the rivalry of son with father and girl with mother...” (Spock 1965:503). In contrast to Mead, Spock regards rebelliousness as a powerful and positive force leading to the establishment of autonomy in the individual and ultimately to creative change in society. While the question of U.S. adolescent strife is interesting, there is danger in perspectives such as Mead’s and Spock’s when applied to a complex society such as ours. Dora Davis’(n.d.4) comment here applies equally as well to Spock, although it addresses Mead.

This... comparison of types... not only stereotyped sexual behaviors in non-Western societies, it stereotyped adolescent sexual behavior in our society. Researchers ignored the social complexities of sexual styles among adolescents as well as the many and various ways in which young people negotiate the rules of their culture to achieve sexual satisfaction.

While there is a widespread belief that adolescence is a period of turmoil for American teens, we must be careful not to overgeneralize. It is important to bear in mind the importance of ethnicity and socio-economic-status as factors effecting how adolescence is experienced and expressed. This is not to say that we cannot describe some of the patterns among American adolescents, but that we must remember these represent trends of usually the white middle class, and by so doing gloss over the variety of expressions of U.S. adolescence by different ethnic groups.

Many societies provide rites of passage for adolescents to help facilitate the transformation from the status of child to that of adult. As we have seen, the transition to a new position in society may be marked by new sets of rights and obligations as well as relations with people, including kin and non-kin. It may include new expectations and changes in the individual’s identity as well. In preparation for this transformation, rights of passage participants undergo a journey through three characteristic phases: separation, transition or liminality, and integration. The phases of transition facilitate new learning and the development of identity components necessary for the new status. Ritual activities demarcate and actually facilitate the transformation of the individual’s identity. They impress upon the novice the importance of the new status and what it means to be an adult man or woman (or perhaps some other option) in that society. By being separated socially and/or even geographically from their families, novitiates are given an opportunity to develop themselves as future adults. In addition, their families and others who have previously related to them as children may now regard them in their new status as they are reintegrated.
into society as adults. In such a way it is clear to the neo-adult what their position and place in society will be.

Let us contrast this with the experience of the U.S. teenager. Again, this description does not refer to the various indigenous and ethnic peoples in the United States that may have very rich rites of passage. For example, many Native American peoples maintain their traditional rites of passage for young females and males including the vision quest, and the Jewish bat/bar mitzvahs also provide critical recognition of life passage changes. As the western child undergoes puberty with its accompanying physical signs, are there any rituals or rites of passage that publicly recognize these changes on a cultural level? While individual parents may celebrate their daughters' first menstruation when that occurs, but often it is treated with secrecy and embarrassment. With the growth of male body hair and deepening of the voice, a father may acknowledge this with "You're a man now, son!" But what does that mean? The meaning is not spelled out nor are the markers of adulthood evident. Where are the ritual referents to know when adolescence is over and adulthood starts? How does an adolescent know when this is going to happen?

In the United States, generally the transition to adulthood is a diffuse one unmarked ritually. We live in a ritually poor society. While the symbolic aspects of adulthood are few, there are several societal markers that give an individual the legal status of adult as opposed to that of minor. This is known as reaching the age of majority and includes issues such as: the age at which one is considered a consenting adult, the age at which an individual may be married, and the age one may be tried in court as an adult. These vary state by state. Other events that may contribute to adult status include economic independence, marriage, and the birth of a child. But none is sufficient in and of itself as a clearly defined event that identifies the individual as an adult. In short, adulthood for many Americans occurs in an unregulated way, in contrast to U.S. ethnic groups and non-western societies in which distinct symbolic referents for adulthood are expressed ritually or ceremonially. The western adolescent finds her/himself no longer a child, but certainly not an adult. They are betwixt and between youth and adulthood in a society that provides very little in the way of well-defined status markers. In fact, they often receive conflicting messages from society about their positioning in the stages from childhood to adulthood.

While initiation ceremonies are well known for their ritual ordeals, the novices know that at the end of these tests that they will be unequivocally declared adults. In contrast, U.S. adolescents generally have no tests or tasks that once accomplished will identify them unequivocally as women and men. Without rituals of transition to guide the adolescent on a journey into adulthood, social adaptation and transition to adulthood may breed areas of conflict and tension (cf. Shapiro 1979:283). One of these is in the area of sexuality. In fact, Miller and Simon (1980:153) have described adolescent sexuality as "behavior in search of meaning."

The American teenager is kept in a liminal status of no longer a child but not yet an adult despite their biological maturity. In our society, adulthood is associated with sexual rights and until that time teenagers do not "own" their own bodies—they do not have the freedom to experience their sexuality until they are adults. This is buttressed as well by the legal system. Thus, U.S. teenagers may be fully functioning sexual beings, but they are not regarded as having rights to that sexuality. In this regard they are still children. Their sexual desires are not regarded as legitimate as adult ones.

This situation stems from a variety of sources, including a western sex-negative or sex-ambiguous worldview, a dogma that confounds sex with romantic love, definitions of adulthood, and conflicting attitudes about contraception and abortion. Adolescent sexuality is a complex issue, one dominant perspective regards teenagers as too immature psychologically to handle the sexual experience, although we have seen this is not the case in many societies that are not sexually restrictive. We must however, pay attention to the cultural context of the adolescent experience in America. The western view of sex is that it is not to be taken casually (Clement 1990:58). However, there is a double standard that allows males more leeway in this regard than females. With this in mind, Reiss (1967) has described the American standard as one of "permissiveness with affection." This standard is one which stems from the equation of love and marriage, only it is expanded to also include premarital couples. As a result sex is problematic for many American adolescents. We would like to note in conclusion, that research in the area of ethnicity and class is needed to create a fuller picture of the transition to American adulthood and the sexual issues encountered. We believe that the cultural factors in the construction of adolescence must also be included. Unfortunately with few exceptions, the majority of research in this area is limited to the white middle class (see Schmidt 1977).
Summary

Chapter 10: Puberty and Adolescence

1. Puberty is a physiological phenomenon, while adolescence is a cultural one that may or may not be coterminous with puberty.

2. Rites of passage are introduced as rituals that facilitate the transition from childhood to adulthood.

3. Rites of passage have three phases and distinct functions in non-industrial societies.

4. Theories of rites of passage are addressed. Female ceremonies are more common, but male ceremonies are more elaborate and severe.

5. The Sambia are discussed as an example of a rite of passage in which homosexuality is institutionalized as a phase.

6. Nonwestern sexual behavior among adolescents is presented in non-industrial as well as third world countries.

7. Western, particularly U.S. teenage sexuality, is reviewed.

8. The role of adolescent sterility and its relationship to sexual practices is described.

9. Sex education in the United States is analyzed.

10. The transition to adulthood in North America is contrasted with the transition in societies that have rites of passage.

OVERVIEW

Chapter 11

Topics in Adult Sexuality: Human Sexual Response and Birth Control

This chapter:

1. Discusses human sexuality in the cultural context.

2. Introduces the topic of nonwestern sexuality by examination of the Tantric model of human sexuality.

3. Presents western theories of sexuality.

4. Outlines major issues in sexual dysfunction and its cultural implications.

5. Places birth control practices in a bio-cultural context.

6. Examines western approaches to birth control.

7. Examines nonwestern approaches to birth control.