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University of Nevada, Reno

Sexual Selection and Its Consequences

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Dual Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Sociology and the Honors Program

by

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Abstract

This paper reviews the history of philosophies of gender including feminist and masculist perspectives on gender relations. A functional contextualist behaviorist model is examined and recommended as a superior alternative for analyzing and solving problems of gender. Specific theoretical applications are proposed for socio-sexual problems, such as sexual assault, trauma recovery, and loneliness.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
Literature Review.....	1
Chauvinism.....	2
Feminism.....	3
First Wave Feminism.....	3
Second Wave/Structural Feminism.....	6
Radical Feminism.....	8
Third Wave/Post-Modern Feminism.....	12
Addressing Feminist Concerns.....	14
Masculism.....	17
Esther Vilar.....	18
Warren Farrell.....	19
Robert Bly.....	22
Toward Functional Theories of Sexuality.....	24
The Inevitability of Dissatisfaction with Political Interventions.....	26
The Temptation toward Structuralizing Social Problems.....	27
The Gender Studies Focus on Dysfunctional Behaviors.....	28
Sexuality Defined.....	29
The Limits of Relative Social Construction.....	30
The Problem with Deductive Theories of Sexuality.....	32
Criteria for a Useful Theory.....	33
Understanding and Applying the Sexual Knowledge Base.....	35
The Evolutionary View of Sexuality.....	35
Empirical Assumptions about Human Relationships.....	36
Why Treatment Necessarily Varies by Gender.....	38
Social Frustration.....	40
Treatment Considerations for Men.....	41
Treatment Considerations for Women.....	43
Sex Therapy.....	44
The Inevitability of Separation.....	45
In Response to the Fluidity of Gender.....	46
Conclusion.....	46
References.....	48

Introduction

In any science, research serves two purposes: generating theories and developing applications. To date, the field of gender studies has not succeeded in helping people overcome their difficulties with regards to gender due to an overreliance on theoretical analysis. In place of solutions, the feminist-identified study of gender has formulated a slew of fascinating theories of gender: gender maximalists, gender minimalists, radical feminism, socialist feminism, 1st wave, 3rd wave, and the list continues (e.g., Showden, 2009). Opposite to the feminist analysis, masculist theory has remained mostly unexamined in gender studies. To remedy this imbalance, this thesis will review both feminist and masculist theoretical positions. However, balanced or not, these perspectives arguing over differences in semantics merely constitute diverging academic theories of gender and divergent guesses for how to help people. Whether one adopts a feminist or masculist position, describing a problem does not uncover the root of a problem and no prescribed solution can suffice without operational definitions and quantitative data to demonstrate its efficacy.

Literature Review

Traditionally, gender studies has followed three streams of reductionist thought: the male chauvinist perspective of early psychologies in which sexual and social differences owe mostly to biological endowment; the feminist revision, which attributes sexual and social differences mostly to social construction; and the politicized men's movement, which variously adopts social or biological reductionism depending on political persuasion. All three perspectives fail to offer any reliable solutions to gender based aversive contingencies. For the sake of brevity, and to maintain a focus on

philosophical assumptions, the next sections will include examples from writers who clearly demonstrate the assumptions and goals of their gendered movements.

Chauvinism

The chauvinist perspective predominated in Victorian western society due to the emerging acceptance of Social Darwinism, which attempted to apply normative qualities to evolutionary traits. Early psychologists such as Freud (Lundin, 1996) formulated a reductionist biological approach to the origin of sexual behavior which made no delineation between contingencies of sexuality and verbal contingencies. All human behavior became reduced to sexual traits and desires. His work “is pervaded by a subtly expressed superior evaluation of the man and the granting of great privileges to him with a consequent inferior evaluation and belittling of the woman” (Krausz, 1994). Such devaluation led Freud to conceive of “penis envy,” or the notorious assumption that females’ jealousy of the male sex organ has a determining role in their behavior (Freud, 1961). The assumption of female physiological inferiority has neither physiological support, as humans begin conception as default females until the introduction of fetal androgens, nor psychological support, as women do not commonly express regret about a lack of male genitals. Consequently, “penis envy” does not usefully describe the antecedents of most female behaviors. The male chauvinism expressed by Freud exists as a common attribute of patriarchal societies generally in which women’s behavior faces such control that women do not engage in valued activities and consequently do not have opportunities to receive reinforcement for certain culturally significant behaviors. However, despite the existence of social control that could be described as ‘chauvinist,’ including increasingly rare modern instances of explicit gender based prejudice toward

women coworkers and colleagues, male chauvinism has rarely appeared as an explicit political movement.

Male chauvinism has always existed as more of a concept than an organized group with specified goals. Whereas a man could engage in behaviors labeled post hoc as ‘male chauvinist,’ a woman could hardly engage in behaviors exclusively deemed ‘feminist.’ ‘Chauvinism’ and ‘misogyny’ originally referred to the undesirable behaviors of certain men, such as spousal abuse or blatant discriminatory hiring practices. After the politicization of women’s movements, chauvinism and misogyny took hold as summary terms to describe vague social ‘forces’ responsible for violence and oppression towards women.

Feminism

Feminism as a perspective claims to represent many divergent sets of interests, with one unifying theme: the socially valued subjectivity, health, and well being of women. While many have defined feminism as gender equality, this definition does not describe the goals of every feminist movement. To overcome the ideological shifts that historically pervade women’s movements, feminists refer to conflicting or generational women’s movements as ‘waves’ of feminism.

First Wave Feminism

The first wave included the liberal feminists of early suffragette, temperance, and property rights movements, who sought equal access to social institutions, means of self sufficiency, female control over birth planning, and countercontrol against spousal abuse by legally banning consumption of alcohol, which was, and is, an important factor behind domestic violence (Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, 2007). These movements were functional in

the sense that women's problems stemmed from observable, measurable causes that could be politically addressed. Feminists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton advocated for marital reform granting greater rights for women in matters of property, employment, and divorce. She writes,

“So long as women marry for money, home, position, and men for the physique alone, we shall have bribery and corruption in the state, the church, and the home; we shall have the calendars of our courts crowded with divorce cases, and our journals with reports of elopements, rape, seduction, infanticide, because our social life is poisoned at the very fountain until the union of the sexes is based on moral and spiritual attraction; and it is to this end that I so earnestly press the full development and independence of women” (Stanton, 1870, p. 347).

Stanton, herself a married woman, sought to improve marriages rather than attacking heterosexual relationships generally through legislative efforts. Such early feminists assumedly preferred to maximize the reinforcing contingencies of marriage, such as the economic and emotional benefits of caring, working husbands, while minimizing the aversive contingencies of inescapable mistreatment and financial dependence. Her list of social ills, including “divorce cases” and “elopements” would likely surprise a modern feminist. It would take later radical feminists to philosophically demonize heterosexual relationships *themselves* as the root of gendered problems.

One stalwart campaigner for women's rights in 1920's Scotland stated in her sex manual, *Married Love*:

“In the following pages I speak to those – and in spite of all our neurotic literature and plays, they are in the great majority – who are normal, and who are married or

about to be married, and hope, but do not know how, to make their marriages happy and successful” (Stopes, 1918, pg. 11).

Thus, she declares happy marriage her goal rather than the total dissolution of the marital institution. Whether this endorsement benefitted men to the same extent as women of the time is not considered. In fact, she implies that men ought to financially support their sex partners and reflects the idea that marriage should optimally serve women’s financial security after pregnancy. She states,

“It often happens, now-a-days, that dreading the expense and the physical strain of child-bearing for his wife, the husband practices what is called *coitus interruptus*: that is, he withdraws just before the ejaculation, but when he is already so stimulated that the ejaculation has become involuntary. In this way the semen is spent, but, as it does not enter the wife's body, fertilization and consequently procreation cannot take place. This practice, while it may have saved the woman the anguish of bearing unwanted children, is yet very harmful to her, and is to be deprecated. It tends to leave the woman in "mid-air" as it were; to leave her stimulated and unsatisfied, and therefore it has a very bad effect on her nerves and general health, particularly if it is done frequently. The woman, too, loses the advantage (and I am convinced that it is difficult to overstate the physiological advantage) of the partial absorption of the man's secretions, which must take place through the large tract of internal epithelium with which they come in contact” (Stopes, 1918, pg. 78).

In a curious twist of ill informed physiologizing, Stopes declares coitus interruptus to be an affront against women. She denounces the possibility that a man of the time might

receive sexual pleasure without a high risk of familial responsibility; hardly a denouncement of the family. If anything, men of the time stood to sacrifice much of their income in long term marriages with children. It was in the interest of first wave feminism to advocate that men enter into marriage to support the high likelihood of children before the widespread use of birth control.

Second Wave/Structural Feminism

The second wave feminist movement could be described as structural feminism, or socialist/Marxist feminism. Emerging as a legitimate movement in the civil rights era of the 1960's, it concerned itself with the fairness and equity of social institutions and social relationships more broadly. It began with activists such as Betty Friedan who were said to raise women's consciousness of their social position by deducing the topography of the "problem with no name," or female dissatisfaction with the roles of wife and mother (Friedan, 1963). Rather than pursuing institutional equality of access like their forebears, this later variant sought equality of results in the form of economic, political, and personal empowerment of women. Further than de jure inequality, this movement sought to abolish de facto inequality while inferring the cause of such disparity in terms of social structures, or unobservable constructs. Economically, structuralists concocted new terms of describing existing blockades to female advancement in social institutions, such as 'glass ceilings' which are said to hold qualified applicants back from positions of influence and 'glass cliffs' which are said to put discriminated applicants in a position of easily losing their advancement over small mistakes. These terms emerged necessarily from the structural bias of the second wave movement; a bias that also continues to plague the men's movement.

While the first wave took its classical influence from the liberalism of the British empiricists and the American founders, the second wave challenged the basis of representative government with the ideas of socialists, especially Marx, who claimed that equal representation cannot exist in a society of unequally distributed resources. Because human beings naturally produce economic products from raw resources due to a vaguely formulated humanistic 'drive,' human beings must naturally own the products of their labor or have natural rights to them. In the state of capitalism, workers sell their labor power, or productive capacity, to capitalists, who extract a profit, or surplus value, from the transaction. Because this state of affairs does not benefit both parties equally, it is unfair. Marx predicted this inequality would result in an untenable dialectic between workers and owners of the means of production stemming from worldwide market saturation of unsellable surplus value that would culminate in a worldwide worker revolt, which would presumably restructure institutions in such a way that workers could reclaim the products of their naturally occurring labor (Simon, 1994). The same concepts of material dialectics and class inequality informed the political goals of second wave feminism by impressing the importance of equality in material conditions. Empowerment and economic equality became synonymous terms describing female upward mobility in the workforce and the changing social expectations of women, who changed their social roles from dependent wives to self sufficient career women who were free to choose their life situations. Presumably, the question of men's freedom did not concern this movement.

Friedan reflects the humanist perspective in her rhetorical questioning of women's possibilities:

“Who knows what women can be when they are finally free to become themselves?... It has barely begun, the search of women for themselves. But the time is at hand when the voices of the feminine mystique can no longer drown out the inner voice that is driving women on to become complete” (Friedan, 1963, pg. 381).

Friedan promotes the view that women require more personal fulfillments separate from the family to overcome ennui. She resorts to Maslow’s humanist psychology and Freudian theories of psychosocial development to formulate her argument. She goes as far as to equate wives with concentration camp prisoners and to imply that homosexuality occurs as a result of codependent mothering. Friedan arrives at these claims through guesswork, interviews with select women, and analysis of popular media. She ultimately does not devote any effort to analyzing contented women, as this would not support her cause. *The Feminine Mystique* and structural feminist theory arguably spearheaded later feminist preoccupation with metaphor and hypothetical solutions for hypothetical problems.

Radical Feminism

The most militant second wavers extrapolated the irreconcilable conflict dialectic from the bourgeoisie to men in general to create the concept of systemic male oppression, or patriarchy, which became the primary bugbear of radical feminism. These feminists kept all the structural reductionist biases of their forebears while discounting the importance of objective evidence by claiming that knowledge gained through subjective experience rivaled or exceeded the validity of knowledge gained through a scientific causal analysis. By interpolating systemic structural notions to interpersonal

relationships, radical feminism began a zany crusade against concepts. Radical feminists, such as Valerie Solanas and Andrea Dworkin, set to work subverting dominant narratives, rediscovering their sexual 'freedom,' challenging 'roles,' opposing 'ideological hegemony,' and organizing against one aversive concept or another, all of which featured the patriarchy as a kind of omnipotent bourgeoisie equivalent, functioning as both a description and circular explanation of women's oppression.

Valerie Solanas, the woman who shot Andy Warhol for unknown reasons, wrote the S.C.U.M. Manifesto, a possibly satirical hyperbole, or possible amplification, of how one radical feminist viewed gender relations. Concerning the use of men in a reformed society, she states:

“Prior to the institution of automation, to the replacement of males by machines, the male should be of use to the female, wait on her, cater to her slightest whim, obey her every command, be totally subservient to her, exist in perfect obedience to her will, as opposed to the completely warped, degenerate situation we have now of men, not only not existing at all, cluttering up the world with their ignominious presence, but being pandered to and groveled before by the mass of females, millions of women piously worshiping the Golden Calf, the dog leading the master on a leash, when in fact the male, short of being a drag queen, is least miserable when his dogginess is recognized -- no unrealistic emotional demands are made of him and the completely together female is calling the shots. Rational men want to be squashed, stepped on, crushed and crunched, treated as the curs, the filth that they are, have their repulsiveness confirmed” (Solanas, 1971).

Like naïve socialism, this exaggerated version of structural feminism personifies systemic oppression in terms of stereotyped classes of people, except in this case, men have assumed the role of a bumbling bourgeoisie. After the presumably bloody revolution, the author projects that a society managed entirely by feminists will instate a technocracy of “groovy” females ‘free’ from the evil of men’s sexual advances (Solanas, 1971). Men will return to their rightful place as useful lifelong subjects to women who, in exchange, will allow each individual man to electronically “tune into any specific female he wants to and follow in detail her every movement. The females will kindly obligingly consent to this, as it won’t hurt them in the slightest and it is a marvelously kind and humane way to treat their unfortunate, handicapped fellow beings” (Solanas, 1971). This prophetic solution to the ‘problem’ of male sexual desire anticipated the arrival of internet pornography by at least 30 years. Even today, many third wave feminists gladly consent to a society of porn addicted men living separately from entirely independent women. In that sense, Solanas might be vindicated by history. Her possibly satirical call to gradually eliminate the entire male gender could seem hateful to some, or just redundant, considering that men in most societies already act as the expendable gender, as clearly evidenced by any of the mass democides throughout history, from the trenches of World War I to the deadly cleanup following Chernobyl’s nuclear fallout, in which socially indoctrinated men gladly died first and most brutally for the safety of women and children back home.

Another activist, Andrea Dworkin, wrote extensively on pornography and rape as social problems. She primarily sought the symbolic and artistic reclamation of sexuality

as an intimate act, rather than an act of possession or violence. In referring to rape, she asks of men,

“Even in wars, there are days of truce. Go and organize a truce. Stop your side for one day. I want a twenty-four-hour truce during which there is no rape... I leave you here to do that for me and for the women whom you say you love”
(Dworkin, 1984, pg. 8).

Dworkin equates individual acts of rape with acts of collective war against women by the entire population of men. This metaphor does not consider the majority of men who do not rape women, unless Dworkin intends to frame sexual advance itself as an act of coercion, in which case every sexual species is necessarily composed of rapists and victims.

In metaphorically framing rape as an act of organized aggression, Dworkin implies that men have collective responsibility to end every single instance of rape. She also holds accountable every man who has ever cared for a rape victim as equally complicit in their assault. Such men do not need more reasons for guilt, and shaming well intentioned men will never end rape as a social problem. A more useful direction of analysis might examine the conditions that precipitate the monstrous behavior of rape in order to reduce the likelihood of the act occurring in the first place. The vengeance agenda of radical feminism which seeks to broaden the definition of rape while forever branding convicted sex offenders has not been empirically demonstrated to prevent future offences and might actually encourage recidivism (Bonnar-Kidd, 2010). The mere existence of rape does not implicate all men as perpetrators.

Recently, even men have published work devaluing the entire male gender. Steve Jones, a biologist, wrote *Y: The Descent of Men* (2003) as a normative explanation of the Y chromosome in human evolutionary history. His work directly reverses the assumptions of the traditional chauvinist perspective by lauding the superior evolutionary qualities of females while devaluing male contributions to the gene pool and society. He makes this conclusion with a scientific tone of authority, as expressed in his declaration that, “Expensive as [males] are, once evolved such creatures are impossible to get rid of. A certain group of tiny freshwater animals managed to do away with males a hundred million years ago, but for all others a burst of masculinity is needed now and again” (Jones, 2003, pg. 2-3). Perhaps unwittingly, Jones echoes the idea that males have no place in human society; that they exist as a vestigial folly of evolution. He fails to acknowledge the contradiction of an evolutionarily selected useless trait. If males indeed served no purpose to the survival of the human race, surely they would have died out. If males seem “impossible to get rid of,” it must owe to their survival through evolutionary time, or else they would not exist (Jones, 2003). Therefore, the theory of the male gender as a band of unfit rejects pushed forward by feminist ideologues of either gender is not internally consistent with the principle of natural selection. Both human genders have remained and will remain so long as the environment continues to select them.

Third Wave/Post-Modern Feminism

Third wave feminism of the 1990’s emerged as an individualist political fashion of Generation X feminists. They differ from other waves in their concerns, namely: 1. Dissatisfaction with earlier feminism, 2. The multiple nature of personal identity, 3. The joy of embracing traditional feminine appearance and attributes, 4. The centrality of

sexual pleasure and sexual self awareness, 5. The obstacles to economic self empowerment, and 6. The social and cultural impact of media and technology (Crawford, 2007, pg. 7). Sexually, this movement complicates gender relations by telling women they will not contact aversive contingencies for unrestrained sexual behavior. Similar to college libertarians, who gladly support a political ideology that celebrates their right to consume drugs without informing them of the potential consequences, the third wave feminist announces their right to have sex with anyone, at any time and escape from all the social and personal consequences of such behavior, which exemplifies “the centrality of sexual pleasure and sexual self-awareness” as an absolute mandate (Crawford, 2007). To say this perspective does no harm to men is to objectify men as suckers, who must sheepishly consent to partner infidelity and open relationships, or as sexual workhorses, who only have use as temporary, interchangeable glorified dildos. The same objectification impacts women, who appear to suffer more emotional dissatisfaction than men following brief sexual trysts (Campbell, 2008). In short, the third wave variant of feminism has neither political nor psychological relevance in helping women and men improve their relationships. With regards to sexual relations in particular, it might as well retool itself as some earlier, better established useless philosophy, like egoism or vulgar hedonism.

Laura Kipnis’ recent *Against Love: A Polemic* (2003) shows an example of the third wave preoccupation with postmodern deconstruction:

“Note that ‘against’ is one of a few words—like ‘cleave,’ another—that can mean both itself and its opposite. It flirts with paradox. (As perhaps, does anyone who loves.) To cleave is to *split* or *sever*; but to cleave is also to *cling to*, or *remain*

faithful. As with ‘against.’ To be against means to be *opposed*: resistant and defiant. It also means *next to*: beside or near. Which leaves the problem of a phrase like ‘up against’ which is indeterminate, bivalent—it can play both sides of the street. ‘Up against love’: you would need to know the context to figure out what it means. Or alter the context—here’s an idea to flirt with—which could make it mean something else entirely” (Kipnis, 2003, p. 201).

The author does not mention in her exposition that it is people who flirt, not concepts. To study the phenomenon of flirting, one must observe behaviors, not the cultural origins of arbitrary words. Though the passage has artistically underscored the potential punishment and reinforcement achievable through infidelity, it has not aided anyone in understanding the factors responsible for infidelity and how to reduce its likelihood. She merely mentions the importance of context and drops the issue entirely, concluding her book about love without ever addressing the behaviors the verbal community calls love. Rather, her work extends the structuralist focus into the analysis of lingual grammar structures. If this diatribe against the concept of love serves any purpose, it supports the author’s individual advocacy of infidelity as a coping mechanism while her symbolic treatment of sexual politics exemplifies the symbolic goals of the third wave.

Addressing Feminist Concerns

In the intellectual furor over systems of oppression, sexual selection itself, the most gendered of behaviors, often gets left entirely out of analysis. The structuralist feminist philosophy often overlooks the antecedents of sexual relations entirely in its insistence on hypothetical constructs to explain sexual relationships. For instance, Naomi

Wolf, in reference to other feminist writers, notes, “Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon have pointed out that sexism limits women to such a degree that it’s questionable whether the decision to live with a man can ever truly be free” (Wolf, 1992, pg. 29). This statement implies that women ‘left alone’ would ‘freely’ choose mates through some mentalist mechanism of the will and furthermore, that ‘sexism’ determines whether women choose to live with one man versus another or with any man at all. This assumes that the removal of sexism, a nonoperational variable, would usher in a new freedom for women, or similar utopian hypothetical vision. In response to the question of what women want in men, Wolf states, “[Men We Love] understand that they know that we know much about their world but they but little of ours” (Wolf, 1992, pg. 30). Wolf does not define the matter of which a ‘woman’s world’ consists, why it should be less knowable to men, or by what mechanism the ‘woman’s world’ closes out men. Furthermore, she implies that her sort of man understands he should never question her decisions, analyze her behaviors, or in any way attempt to question her control over their relationship, a typical perspective of women with emotional dysregulation, colloquially known as ‘emotional vampires.’ In reference to the behavior of men, she politicizes the issue, stating, “I meet many young men who are brought to feminism by love for a woman who has been raped, or by watching their single mothers struggle against great odds, or by simple common sense. Their most frequent question is ‘What can I do to help’... Imagine a rear battalion of committed ‘Men Against Violence Against Women’ (or ‘Men For Choice’, or what have you)—of all races, ages, and classes” (Wolf, 1992, pg. 32). To rephrase, she believes that men can stop other men from committing violent or coercive behavior by marching against violence or coercion as a concept. In a society

where cultural conditioning solely dictated behavior, she could have a point. In a scientific causal analysis however, Wolf has only offered an invalid cultural reductionism. Rape as a social problem can be prevented or even eliminated, but not through any amount of symbolic marching.

Gendered violence, another focus of feminist activists, will never end without an inductive understanding of the context in which it tends to occur. In their zeal for an internally consistent theory of gender violence, many feminists pinned the blame on patriarchy and surrendered critical analysis of the problem. Erin Pizzey, the founder of the women's shelter movement in the United Kingdom faced feminist backlash after refusing to attribute the cause of domestic violence to men alone. She wrote with Jeff Shapiro:

“It was with members of the National Organization of Women that we had the best dialogues - at seminars and meetings where people wanted to share a sense of bewilderment arising from the fact that now that there were established refuges, so many women seemed to be merely using them like revolving doors. They would come to the refuges when the level of violence got too much, only to return to their violent men for another few weeks, and then come back to the refuges again for help.

Some of the refuges dealt with this problem by allowing such women three visits only. As they explained to me, this rule meant that the staff could concentrate their efforts on the women who *genuinely* wanted to get out of violent relationships. But they knew, just as we did, that if you wanted to do effective work in a

refuge, the problems attached to women who seemed unable to stay away from violence would have to be fully explored sooner or later” (Pizzey & Shapiro, 1982, p. 10).

In most psychological perspectives, the claim that a man or woman’s pattern of abusive relationships could predispose him or her to seek more abusive relationships is not a ridiculous proposal. Only the politically motivated stand to gain from denigrating psychological treatment as a potential tool for ending gendered violence. Those who persist in denying that domestic problems have reciprocal causes have shown greater allegiance to their political allies than to those who suffer from gendered violence. Furthermore, assuming that gender somehow operates according to different processes than behavior in general implies dualism and reductionism, both of which nullify the goal of a science of behavior: prediction and control of behavior to enhance the well being of clients. Pizzey might not subscribe to a behavioral paradigm, but she conveys the important observation that problems between the genders owe to the behaviors of both men and women.

Masculism

Masculism emerged as the obstinate counterpart to the feminist movement, sometimes supportive of feminist policy aims and at other times stubbornly opposed. In much the same way as domestic violence and gender discrimination under the law created the aversive conditions responsible for feminist movements of countercontrol, paternity suits, child support, emotional manipulation, and alimony created the aversive

conditions by which a small segment of men associated themselves with the masculist movement.

Esther Vilar

Initially, masculism represented a direct opposition to the philosophical assumptions of feminism. Esther Vilar, a female German doctor, wrote the *Manipulated Man* as a response to the rise of second wave feminism. That work outlined a basic philosophical foundation for later masculism that blended psychoanalysis, the concept of oppression by a vaguely defined class of people, and biological reductionism. In criticizing the psychoanalytic construct of ‘penis envy,’ she states, “[Freud] confused cause and effect: a woman only *says* she is worth less than a man. She doesn’t really *think* it. If anyone ought to feel a sense of envy, it is men. They should be jealous of women’s power. But... they never are, for they glory in their powerlessness” (Vilar, 1972, p. 85). Vilar does not bother to operationally define how exactly a man goes about ‘glorying in powerlessness,’ suffice to say, she describes women as power holders over men, reversing the feminist doctrine of patriarchy. By such a framing of her perspective, she infers a uniform cause for social dissatisfaction: female manipulation of men. To Vilar, when a woman says, “I must be able to look up to a man,” she actually means, “To be a possible candidate as a husband, he must be more intelligent, responsible, courageous, industrious, and stronger than I am. Otherwise, what purpose would he serve?” (Vilar, 1972, p. 67). Here, she broaches the subject of sexual selection with the deduction that human females sexually select by judging the productive capacity of male suitors. Though it only constitutes one more theory, or guess, concerning sexuality, she succeeds in addressing sexual selection as a salient factor in male/female relations.

Consequently, she returns the causal root of intergender conflict to interpersonal interactions rather than appealing to hypothetical social structures for an explanation. In explaining why men collude in their so-called oppression under women, she states, "...Man exists, as it were, in a state of constant antagonistic competition with other men. It is one of the reasons why he loses no time in getting his own private panegyrist, one whose praise will be his exclusive right, someone who will always be at home waiting to tell him when he has been good and just how good he has been" (Vilar, 1972, p. 55). Male competition for sexual and productive resources acts as a way of explaining the kind of social stresses that might increase the reinforcing effectiveness of female companionship as a motivating operation, but her conclusion in this regard remains hypothetical. Most importantly, whether her answer adequately addresses the root cause of male selection of voluntary relationships or not, she has at least questioned why men and women interact in the first place. This question has immense relevance for a science of human social behavior. Her hypothesized cause of male competition as a motivation for monogamous relationships is likely false, but it meets the criterion of a falsifiable hypothesis nonetheless.

Warren Farrell

The perspective of what might be called the moderate strain of masculism grew in response to the increasing prevalence of child custody battles, the normalization of divorce, and the widespread acceptability of denigrating masculinity. This strain of masculism concerns itself with men's health and the problem of male expendability.

Warren Farrell (1993) states:

“Nowhere in history has there been a ruling class working to afford diamonds they could give to the oppressed in hopes the oppressed would love them more... No oppressed group has ever had a net worth higher than the oppressor... It would be hard to find a single example in history in which a group that cast more than 50 percent of the vote got away with calling itself the victim” (Farrell, 1993, p. 39-40).

He challenges the concept of patriarchy without necessarily implying female power over men. Rather, he views men and women as fulfilling specific roles in response to environmental pressures. He even offers his own definition of power: “having control over one’s own life” (Farrell, 1993, p. 30). He conceptualizes power in this way to point out that while women have gained options in whether they work or stay at home supported by a partner’s income, men have continued to fulfill the same role as full time worker, regardless of circumstances. He hypothesizes that this lack of control shortens men’s lives through stress and increases their risk of successfully committing suicide. Consequently, according to Farrell’s definition of power as control over one’s life, or self determination, men have less power than women, though women as a group have not intentionally denied them that power.

“Never has there been a slave class that has spent a lot of time dreaming about being a slave and purchasing books and magazines that told them ‘How to Get a Slavemaster to Commit.’ Either marriage is something different from slavery for women or feminists are suggesting that women are not very intelligent” (Farrell, 1993, p. 40).

Farrell points out that both men and women idealize marriage as a positive institution due to its compromises between the needs of partners. He distinguishes between what he calls Stage 1 roles, or survival roles of men and women, and Stage 2 goals, or idealized relationship goals of men and women. In stage 1 roles, relationships occur unconditionally due to the economic necessity of maintaining marriages. Neither gender has power of self determination in this phase of development. Following women's liberation and technological progress, Phase 2 fulfillment in marriage becomes possible, leading to more conditional relationships that stress partner compatibility and correspondingly increase the fragility of the marriage bond by replacing inflexible economic ties with tenuous emotional ties. In explaining the rising trend in divorce, Farrell states that "the very qualities that led to success at work often led to failure at home" (Farrell, 1993, p. 46). Whereas a Stage 1 husband who works hard as an uncompromising lawyer could expect to keep a marriage more or less easily so long as his career remains stable, a Stage 2 lawyer husband must be successful as both a career man and an emotional partner (Farrell, 1993). As a result, the female role changes in such a way that women gain new options for how to structure their lives while men gain only new demands, creating a society of women unhappy with men who chronically fall short of newly inflated expectations.

Farrell's characterization of gender relations, though comprehensive, remains structural at best. Despite his in depth description of marriage and other social institutions, he does not analyze particular behaviors, their antecedents, and their consequences. Additionally, he resorts to mentalism in addressing possible solutions by simply endorsing more 'freedom' for men to 'choose' their life circumstances.

Simultaneously, he endorses resocialization as a cure for unintentional sexual assault, which would require training of role reversals for men and women with untested, hypothetical results. Rather than offering any particular advice, he coins the concept of “relationship language” or the typical pattern of interactions shared between acquaintances, which, despite addressing the necessity of behavioral changes in men and women, does not focus on individual behaviors in context (Farrell, 1993). As a result, he contributes another structural perspective on sexual relations and another one-size-fits-all solution.

Robert Bly

Similar to the focus of radical feminism on reclaiming subjectivity, and in approximately the same temporal order from presumptive theory to futile practice, some masculinists sought to ‘recover’ a supposedly lost masculinity taken away by a ‘soft,’ feminine culture. Robert Bly, the guru of the mystical mythopoetic men’s movement, sought to rediscover this collective ‘lost masculinity,’ stating,

“It is in the old myths that we hear, for example, of Zeus energy, that positive leadership energy in men, which popular culture constantly declares does not exist; from King Arthur we learn the value of the male mentor in the lives of young men; we hear from the Iron John story the importance of moving from the mother’s realm to the father’s realm; and from all initiation stories we learn how essential it is to leave our parental expectations entirely and find a second father or ‘second King’” (Bly, 1992).

In the style of a true psychoanalyst, Bly reduces all human behavior to psychosexual unconscious tensions and prescribes no specific answer to his richly imagined crisis of

masculinity. Metaphorical perspectives of this sort devolve the sophistication of gendered analysis incalculably. This flowery style likely fits well with the mythopoetic emphasis on men's 'emotional' rebirth, an aim that recapitulates the radical feminist rediscovery of the true feminine/erotic self or the pseudoscience of psychoanalytic implanted memories of bizarre abuse at the hands of male relatives, to name a couple examples.

Both masculism and feminism borrow their share of mentalist psychology, but few, it seems, have endorsed any contemporary theory of the past 50 years, with the possible dubious exception of cognitive schema theory as another circular explanation of systemic discrimination. As an example: Why do people discriminate? Because they have a discriminative schema. How does one know they have a discriminative schema? Because they discriminate. This line of questioning leads in endless circles without ever establishing causation. If these perspectives spent more time advocating a behavioral approach, they might stress the importance of operational independent variables, baseline measurement, and quantifiable progress toward target behaviors. A more useful analysis might proceed as follows: Why does a single person exhibit a fear or anger response to a group of people? Because they had an aversive encounter with a person of a particular makeup and their fear response generalized to all people of the same makeup. How does one abolish this fear response? By exposing this person to reinforcing encounters with members of that group, thus training discrimination between the person of that makeup who caused them harm and the majority of people of that makeup who do not cause them harm. This solution can apply to racists, sexists, and any other person who has generalized their specific aversive experiences to all people who share a trait.

Toward Functional Theories of Sexuality

Due to the ubiquitous nature of social theories, one might easily mistake all social science as social theory and, therefore, dismiss the social sciences as ‘soft sciences’ without rigorous standards of research and practice. However, in contrast to this view, the behavior analytic movement has challenged the deductive theorizing of the social sciences since the work of Skinner, which fundamentally challenges the dualism of body and mind, and by extension, criticizes the usefulness of hypothetical constructs in behavioral science (Skinner, 1976). Rather than basing its validity on academic popularity, political relevance, fascinating insight, or any other irrelevant criterion, behavior analysis bases its validity on a long track record of quantifiable successes in behavior modification with many species including human beings.

Behavior analytic criticisms of social science begin at the level of philosophical supposition. The science of behavior often adopts a functional contextualist stance, or the view that truth is an objectively verifiable construct based on usefulness. Usefulness is directly testable through the prediction and control of phenomena, two irreducible criteria for determining whether a tested concept is useful or not in an environment. Therefore, if a phenomenon is true in its observable, measurable consequences, it is, by its usefulness, objectively true (Hayes & Brownstein, 1986). This perspective has implications for solvable social problems of every sort, but has not gained prominence in the gender studies community.

The physical sciences already utilize prediction and control as standard practice for experimental protocols. The reason prediction and control have caused such a furor in the social sciences involves an academic squeamishness about treating people as

organisms with behaviors. Modification of human behavior appears to strip something away from human identity. Indeed, it strips away the notion that human identity separates humans from the environment, nature, or the physical universe. In the place of operational variables, some social scientists prefer vague concepts that mysticize and aggrandize the limitations of human existence by pledging “the exceptional freedom of the human mind” (Hauser, 2009). Though such vague formulations cause much fascination within the academy, they have no place in a scientific treatment of human suffering and its cures.

Any gender or social theory, be it masculist, feminist, capitalist, or socialist, cannot hope to actually affect the origins of social problems without a corresponding belief that social problems have controllable origins. Without manipulable independent variables, no change, political or otherwise can ever occur. Not content to merely remain useless, some critics even undermine scientific causal investigation by confusing the desire for scientific control with the desire for totalitarian aversive control. Ayn Rand (1982) characterizes the motive behind Skinner’s 1971 book, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (2002), as “hatred of man's mind and virtue (with everything they entail: reason, achievement, independence, enjoyment, moral pride, self-esteem) - so intense and consuming a hatred that it consumes itself” and the desire to force individuals to “accept totalitarian control” (Rand, 1982, pg. 182). In actuality, behavioral science does not directly control *behavior* at all. It controls the *independent variables* that control behavior. Consequently, the behavior of individuals is wholly determined by environmental events, not free will, the agentic mind, exploitation, male oppression, invisible hands, economic animal spirits, dignity, freedom, or any other metaphysical

construct that cannot by definition be observed and measured. Unless causal determinism of operational variables guides research as a fundamental supposition, gender and social studies can only offer fascination with hypothetical social structures instead of functionally demonstrable solutions. In the context of human sexuality, operational variables include verbal and physical behaviors that occur between individuals who copulate. In addition to the behaviors themselves, social discriminative stimuli exist in environments where sexual partners are likely to be selected, and sex results in reinforcing physiological states, which include the facilitating roles of oxytocin, vasopressin, dopamine, and other neurochemical states, to name a few. By controlling such variables, a behavioral or neurological scientist does not control the *sexuality* of women or men, but the *stimuli* that control the sexuality of women or men.

The Inevitability of Dissatisfaction with Political Interventions

Due to apathy or ignorance toward existing behavioral approaches, both feminist and masculist perspectives suffer from a unique case of political change blindness in which they cannot assess progress made toward their goals. This unfortunate concept illustrates a sociological resignation which must necessarily emerge in consequence. Feminists do not operationally identify target behaviors they would like men to exhibit or stop exhibiting. In similar form, masculists do not clearly specify which behaviors they find reinforcing or punishing from women. Without means of control, these movements constitute perpetual social experiments toward invisible ideals rather than temporary movements working toward clearly specified behavioral goals.

Behavior analysis already spearheads the successful treatment of dysfunctional behavior patterns. If social problems between individuals indeed stem from patterns of

dysfunctional behavior with environmental causes, no other scientific approach can claim expertise in treating the problem. Rather, any attempt to solve a behavioral problem solely through guess work and uniform treatments will almost certainly show poor results compared to a rigorous functional analysis of individual relationships.

The Temptation toward Structuralizing Social Problems

In similar form to mentalist psychology, social science begins its search for answers to problems ‘inside of’ and ‘in between’ human interactions: society itself becomes an intervening variable between environmental antecedents and behavior. While psychology invented the ‘mind’ inside of people to explain behavior, sociology invented the ‘social system’, which allowed social theorists to imagine hypothetical social structures that might suffer from metaphorical “social malaise.” This perspective began with thinkers like Emile Durkheim (Farganis, 2008), the first so-called ‘functionalist’ who pioneered the organismal model of society, in which institutions work together to sustain society’s functionality. His work began with a correlational study of suicide, in which rates of suicide fluctuated between urban and rural regions of France. Even though his method could not prove directional causality between suicide and population density, he linked the incidence of suicide to “anomie,” or normlessness. Therefore, suicide and all social problems by extension became linked to distance from the orderly norms of the social organism (Farganis, 2008). Later incarnations of social theory, such as the previously discussed Marxist/Conflict Theory, Max Weber’s Bureaucratic Theory, Rational ‘Choice’ Theory, and Symbolic Interactionism, all retained the basic assumption that society consists of structures that interrelate (Farganis, 2008). At no point do these theories directly analyze the functional relationship between

environmental stimuli and behaviors, preferring instead to hypothesize structural causes, much like psychologists who cling to the concept of the dysfunctional mind as the inferred cause of personal difficulties.

The Gender Studies Focus on Dysfunctional Behaviors

In analyzing sexual relationships, gender studies has a problematic tendency of focusing study on exploitative or non-mutually reinforcing forms of human interaction. For instance, one women's studies text, *Women's Lives*, dedicates only one chapter to human sexuality and twelve other chapters to wage disparity, violence against women, objectification, class inequality, and other non-mutually reinforcing social situations (e.g., Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, 2007). Because the feminist analysis of gender preoccupies itself with problematic interactions, such as abusive relationships and exploitation of women, not enough attention is paid to the antecedents of mutually reinforcing relationships and what environmental conditions maintain them. As a result, 'gender sensitive' psychological practitioners can only rehash information of non-normative aversive relationships that necessarily constitute a minority of sexual relationships. This focus of treatment offers nothing of use to people who already struggle with social difficulties. Sufferers of psychological and social pathologies already have impairments in normal social interaction. Valid treatment should help socially maladjusted clients reintegrate functionally in social interactions to regain 'normalcy.' Mutually reinforcing emotional and sexual relationships play a significant role in improving these clients' health and well being. Merely offering these same clients a deeper understanding of sexual discrimination or presenting them examples of other nonnormative groups with social difficulties does not help them find or maintain mutually reinforcing relationships of any

kind. If anything, the structural analysis assigns their suffering a hypothetical cause. Any time a client feels socially frustrated, they can simply attribute their difficulties to patriarchy, capitalism, existential despair, or any other metaphorical construct rather than undergo the exhausting, painful work of rehabilitation. The role of psychological practitioner requires that clients receive aid in their struggles, not more excuses to withdraw from the verbal community.

Sexuality Defined

In staying consistent to a foundation of operational definitions, this thesis defines sexuality as any behavior with respect to another human being resulting in sexual pleasure, defined as the set of coordinated physiological responses that occur during arousal, including smooth muscle contractions, excretion of sex specific fluids, and neurochemical changes, all of which reinforce further sexual behavior. Functionally, sexual behavior resembles social behavior as an observable pattern of behavior between individuals that consists of a series of behavioral exchanges made more or less likely by past reinforcement or punishment. Metaphysical debate, inferred significance, and metaphor aside, sexual behavior is an observable, controllable set of interactions that exists universally in every human society. The majority of human beings will engage in sexual activity at some point as a response to physiological arousal towards environmental features of potential partners combined with social discriminative stimuli that occasion sexual responses. With equal frequency, almost every society evidences exclusive mutually reinforcing relations between sexually active men and women, sometimes referred to as relationships or family institutions, which can take the form of monogamy, polygamy, or some other varied form of relationship.

However, not all people share a common history of reinforcement with respect to verbal antecedents of sexual behavior, so not all people have an equal likelihood of finding and maintaining mutually reinforcing relationships. Verbal behavior that acts as a discriminative stimulus for female receptivity to one heterosexual male might occasion avoidance behavior from a similar male who experienced a history of punishment with respect to women. Men or women who are unable to respond effectively to the verbal behavior of sexually aroused partners are functionally impotent and cannot attain mutually reinforcing relationships. This behavioral problem is best treated with functional methods aimed at developing a useful social repertoire in sufferers. Unfortunately, psychological perspectives of sexual behavior have maintained a structural bias with regards to sexual difficulty. The cultural overreliance on physiological treatments of sexual dysfunction with pills, creams, chemical castration, and orthotics has obscured the functional antecedents of sexual relationships and implies that sexual relationships simply happen, without any solution for those who cannot find a willing partner in the first place. Consequently, no reliable procedure exists for how to direct clients of any particular gender or orientation toward mutually reinforcing sexual relationships.

The Limits of Relative Social Construction

Gender studies have the irksome tendency of assuming that sexual selection operates according to identical mechanisms in either gender. At best, this theory stands on assumption. At worst, existing data contradict it entirely where inductive biology has discovered the opposite tendency in mammalian sexuality. In the prairie vole, for instance, only female pregnancy causes a monogamous response from males, which react

more readily to oxytocin and vasopressin than females (Curtis, 2010; Cho & Devries, 1999). Therefore, at least one species of mammal facilitates sexual behaviors according to varying neurochemical mechanisms across genders. One could easily study whether similar predispositions might influence the gender specific behaviors of sexuality in humans. Furthermore, evolutionary logic would dictate that certain patterns of sexuality and relationships offer a better chance of offspring and parental survival and well being than others in a given context. This reality opposes the ubiquitous relativism of the gender studies analysis, which assumes on faith that all relationship models are equally functional. In evolutionary terms, dysfunctional patterns of relationships cannot exist for long. Over time, maladaptive relationships provide more punishment than reinforcement or lower survivability of offspring causing an inevitable decline in their prevalence. As a species, human beings have had many thousands of years to try every conceivable arrangement of sexual bonding with two or more partners. Across every continent, monogamy has persisted as a near-universal relationship model due to its stability for raising offspring, its lowered risk of sexual disease, and its consistency in reinforcing involved partners. At the risk of sounding heretical, infidelity in emotional relationships *does* cause demonstrable emotional pain in humans and monogamous sexual relationships constitute the majority of human sexual relationships generally. Any other interpretation of sexuality contradicts basic empirical observation of how most humans mate and live together. Consequently, the gender studies analysis might have a place in literary criticism, social philosophy, or politics, but its relativistic false standard serves no use to a science of human sexuality seeking to help people attract and maintain mutually reinforcing relationships that offer a greater likelihood of long term need satisfaction.

To further extrapolate, dysfunctional relationship patterns often occur in a dysfunctional social context. Due to modeling of relationships through various forms of media, people become more likely to imitate certain patterns of relationship behavior, even if they prove dysfunctional. This situation, rather than implying some sort of relative social construction, offers an opportunity to study objectively which relationships provide the most functional outcomes for a given society, operationalized by physiological indicators of suffering and health as well as behavioral indicators of escape from aversive contingencies. By abandoning relativism and hypothetical constructs, social science could begin to study actual solutions for actual people by objectively comparing different relationship styles and their consequences in a cross cultural analysis to discover the most reinforcing sorts of relationships and the conditions that allow them to persist.

The Problem with Deductive Theories of Sexuality

The deductive theorizing of the gender studies analysis would be innocuous if it was not used to recklessly *guess* the causes and solutions of real social difficulties. For instance, the broad consensus in gender studies is that men and women act in certain stereotypic ways due to divine command by socialization, an umbrella term encompassing media, education, developmental influences, and norms, all of which constitute umbrella terms for behavior. Unfortunately, these umbrella terms only describe gender stereotyping; they do not allow prediction or control of the phenomenon. A reconstructed theory with operational variables might read: men and women tend to sexually select one another based on certain qualities and these qualities have a tendency to occur more often in those who are sexually selected. This theory of human gendered

behavior may or may not prove correct, but it can be falsified and tested, making it operationally valid. Furthermore, the theory does not assume an ontogenic or phylogenic root for the observed differences in behavior. The differences simply exist. The variables of sensory and verbal sexually selected qualities could be observed and measured, and sexual selection could ultimately be predicted and controlled, within ethical constraints. This perspective could offer a new account of male aggression, female passivity, and other personality variables previously assumed to result entirely from 'socialization.' With the proper method and an inductive theoretical underpinning, studying the role of sexual selection in maintaining certain behavioral patterns becomes possible.

Criteria for a Useful Theory

Those with the means to study human sexuality must implement the right tools to arrive at useful answers. The following will attempt to explicate what tools work best, such as inductive, controlled experimentation and theories based on such experimentation, and what answers seem most workable, such as operational independent and dependent variables examined experimentally through prediction and control. Once basic principles have been established, such as the principle of evolution or the principle of reinforcement, these principles can function as assumptions for theories grounded in the real behavior of human beings. By founding theories on an inductive knowledge base, social science can surpass the inherent limitations of theories that rely on vague assumptions about idealized human behavior.

To study gender, variables must first reduce to observable phenomena, namely behaviors or physiological states. Colloquially, discussions of sexual selection

implement mentalist language in describing 'attraction' to other people as a cause of sexual selection, which presents the phenomenon of sexual selection as an internal possession, leaving the occurrence of sexual behavior to the 'human agency' of the organism. The mentalist perspective assumes that couples relate to one another as a matter of choice; they feel 'attraction' for one another as though they form a pair of complimentary magnets. In the verbal community, the magnet metaphor is common, but one might guess the results if the same language were applied to research of other mammals. One would scarcely endorse the conclusion of a researcher who attributes patterns of rat mating to the intervening variable of 'rat agency,' and attempts to show that a rat 'couple' shares a 'magnetic' sexual bond. The language of choice has no place in determining causal variables that control behavior. Some will protest that human beings certainly differ from rats, and they are correct, but the capability differential between humans and rats in operational terms consists only of verbal behavior and a capacity to respond to arbitrary stimulus relations, or verbal concepts. Those qualities do not necessarily imply a nonphysical dimension that precludes study of human beings as organisms. Therefore, 'sexual selection' is a more useful term indicating behavior in any species. A human is sexually selected when they elicit a physiological arousal response in another human followed by verbal discriminative stimuli for sexual contact and physical sexual behaviors. Any other mentalist definition serves only to obscure what actually happens before, during, and after sexual behavior.

Defining human sexuality in operational terms allows for the development of principles of sexual selection arrived at by inductive observation. In humans, selection is facilitated by only two observable processes: physiological arousal and verbal behavior.

Verbal behavior is the only observable element of human sexuality that delineates it from mammal sexuality generally. Verbal behavior can indicate a likelihood of reinforcement from another human being. It follows that productive research could focus on physiological states and observable patterns of communicative behavior. However, some studies mistakenly use self report as a sole indicator for attraction, such as a British study that concludes women tend to sexually select men with higher status automobiles on the basis of self report (Dunn & Searle, 2010). Because the study uses self report as its criterion for sexual selection, the results may indicate a female acceptance or preference for men with higher status without necessarily indicating a likelihood of sexual selection. Consequently, the researchers may have wrongly inferred that the dependent variable of favorable rating equates to a likelihood of sexual selection. Human beings do not possess the capability to describe *why* they find a certain food or person appetitive or aversive. Preferences occur as a consequence of inaccessible ontogenic and phylogenic histories the organism cannot fully recall. Consequently, only sexual behavior itself can suffice as a dependent variable while verbal behavior can only function as antecedent behavior.

Understanding and Applying the Sexual Knowledge Base

The Evolutionary View of Sexuality

Evolutionary science studies the phylogenic antecedents of a species. Environmental selection of adaptive traits is the core process by which a species tends to exhibit certain features. The emergence of functional behavioral analysis has demonstrated that behavioral reinforcement operates analogously: certain behaviors become more likely after reinforcement and less likely after punishment. Humans are a primate mammal species. Because of this heritage, certain phylogenic predispositions

have been inherited such as easily produced male gametes that exist plentifully and more expensively produced female gametes that exist rarely by comparison. Females who gave birth to viable offspring would have been younger, receptive to healthy men who could provide the greatest material offerings, had bodily proportions conducive to survival and birth, and would have had structural and behavioral predispositions conducive to effectively raising young. Males who have generated the most viable offspring would have been reinforced by sexual contact with a wide variety of females and would have inherited predispositions and structural characteristics for facilitating the survival of themselves and others.

From these suppositions follow the conclusions that men would tend to be less discriminate in mate selection in order to distribute a large amount of cheap male gametes to as many partners as possible to maximize chances of producing viable offspring while women would tend to minutely discriminate men's characteristics that correlate with improved chances of siring viable offspring.

Empirical Assumptions about Human Relationships

To avoid the tendency toward reductionism in human sexuality research, social behaviors in general must remain the primary focus of study. Some of these patterns could fit the label of sexuality, depending on whether copulatory behaviors occur. Relationships, or prolonged patterns of social interaction, consist of three phases: an initial interaction that reinforces further interactions, a series of intermediate reinforcing interactions, and extinction of one type or all types of reinforcing contact between the two partners, for example, the cessation of sexual receptivity by the female or the cessation of sexual pursuit behaviors by the male with or without cessation of verbal

interactions in both instances. All relationships, sexual or otherwise, follow these phases. When someone has 'social adjustment difficulties' they fail to behave in such a way that they provide initial reinforcement to new acquaintances, they do not contact reinforcement from acquaintances, or they behave in such a way that relationships end quickly due to behaviors that punish their partner's social behaviors. An inductive perspective must also acknowledge that every last relationship must cease, either by death of a partner or any cessation of mutual reinforcement. As a result, a common aversive emotional state involves the 'loss' of a relationship, or the ending of a pattern of reinforcing behavioral exchanges.

To develop any useful answers for those who have difficulty establishing, maintaining, or ending relationships, behavioral science must determine which stimuli tend to reinforce further social interactions between acquaintances. Rather than restricting focus upon the endless diversity of specific behavioral differences encountered across cultures, behavior science should focus on functional similarities between topographically different social stimuli. For instance, both 'hello' and 'merhaba' share the function of a greeting, even though one is used by English speakers and the other by Turkish speakers. In equal form, male aggression displays or female displays of sexual interest might assume different forms across cultures, even though the functions of such diverse behavioral topographies remain the same. Discovering which behaviors serve specific functions can enable practitioners to give advice founded on inductive research. Through the functional analysis of antecedents and consequences of social behaviors within a community, behavior science can enable clients to reconnect with the verbal

community and contact reinforcement much faster than an approach informed by theoretical guesswork.

At first consideration, it might seem that all abusive relationships must be punishing, but a relationship cannot fit an operational definition of punishment without consequent escape behavior. Even if a partner suffers the most horrible of abuses, they have not been punished if they do not exhibit escape behaviors. In past societies in which marriage locked women or men into legal bonds of matrimony, abusive relationships might have been maintained through learned helplessness: escape behaviors were not effective. In the modern age of liberal divorce laws and domestic abuse protections, the same explanation does not as readily apply. Abused partners do not always immediately leave their offending partners. Their fidelity is intermittently reinforced by verbal or physical intimate contact that keeps them around until the next episode of abuse. This process occurs during physical and emotional abuse toward both men and women. In the aftermath of these relationships, clients need assistance in avoiding social contact with their abusers and self managing their emotions to avoid depression following the cessation of social reinforcement. Abused males in particular need this assistance due to their rarity in most populations and a lack of social support.

Why Treatment Necessarily Varies by Gender

Psychological treatment varies by gender because the environmental stressors responsible for pathology vary by gender. Many social stressors originate from the process of sexual selection itself. Males in most mammalian species initiate sexual contact and humans do not largely break this rule. Even after feminism, women do not prefer to approach men to initiate sexual contact. Rather, most typical females bolster

their attractiveness and select among approaching suitors. Out of the great number of men who might approach a woman in the course of a year, only a relative few are sexually selected. Even when a man is selected, a woman does not benefit from revealing her interest, lest she appear 'easy' or lower valued as a sexual partner. Men take the role of the perpetual pursuers who must balance assertiveness, or a high likelihood of approach behavior, with responsiveness to women's rejection and acceptance behaviors. These roles do not emerge solely from social norms or any other untestable assumption about causation. These roles are functional byproducts of human evolution and ontogenic behavioral selection wherein the environment selects males who act assertively and females who act discriminately. It follows that women who do not discriminate between the qualities of low and high value partners as minutely are not as likely to bear viable offspring as women who discriminate minutely among traits, and men who do not approach are simply not as likely to pursue women for sex in the first place.

From these observations follow two gender specific contingencies: 1. the most common aversive contingency experienced specifically by men is rejection. 2. the most common aversive contingency experienced specifically by women is unwanted sexual advance. Most women cannot possibly sympathize with the stresses of constant rejection just as most men cannot sympathize with the stresses of constant sexual advances by low value suitors. If psychology does not recognize these facts, it might fail to address the adaptive difficulties of male or female clients. Whitewashing over gender will never help clients cope with the omnipresent social contingencies of sexual selection.

Treatment should thereby emphasize behavioral activation appropriate to these stresses. Males must learn coping skills for dealing with constant rejection and exhibiting behaviors that reinforce female acceptance. Women must learn coping skills to more effectively reject and grant consent to males. Some might also need help in extinguishing anxiety responses in the presence of men following traumatic histories with respect to men. However, these skills are merely prerequisites for sexual functionality in a social context. To thrive and find mates, clients need better information as to what particular behaviors tend to occur before sexual selection.

Social Frustration

The inadequate term 'sexual frustration' implies that sexuality differs in its antecedent conditions from social interactions generally. 'Social frustration' more adequately describes the contingencies responsible for loneliness in men and women. Social frustration refers simply to when behaviors are not reinforced by the responses of others. This reinforcement could range from sexual intercourse to simply evoking a laugh. Like any extinction contingency, extinction of social reinforcement tends to generate emotional and novel behaviors from individuals as well as corresponding increases in physiological stress responses. Under this functional conceptualization, sexual intercourse is just one more behavior in a series of socially reinforced behaviors that start from an initial contact with another person. Sex cannot occur consensually if the involved parties have not already reinforced one another's behaviors in past interactions. Consequently, no lonely person can ever contact social reinforcement of any sort until they exhibit the proper behaviors to evoke a series of reinforcing responses from others. In a treatment setting, reintegrating a client involves the identification of

behavioral deficits and excesses and how they relate to a likelihood of social reinforcement in certain contexts.

Treatment Considerations for Men

Men who exhibit the behaviors referred to as ‘unconfident’ have slim odds of successfully attracting a mate. In women, problems with mate attraction rarely occur as a result of low assertiveness. Rather, many women conceptualize confidence as confidence in one’s bodily attractiveness, “body esteem,” or anticipated likelihood of contacting social reinforcement from attention by straight, or even gay, males (Bartlett, Patterson, & VanderLaan, 2009). Men, on the other hand, express ‘confidence’ by approaching novel social situations without escape behavior. For men, a simple deficit in approach behavior has consequences ranging from long term loneliness to an increased likelihood of offending sexually, a behavior that might constitute a novel dysfunctional extinction burst in its own right following rejection (Marshall, 2010).

When men prefer to escape from sexual selection pressures their behaviors take the form of either living alone or remaining in sexual relationships that insufficiently meet their needs. If a man becomes jealous because an ex-partner has found a new suitor, it is caused solely by the fact that he has no other potential mate available at that time. In other words, his ex-partner’s monogamous affections previously reinforced escape behavior from sexual selection pressure, or the situation in which desired members of the opposite sex respond or do not respond with sexual interest to a male’s social behaviors or appearance. Men who find this process of sexual selection aversive could benefit from the advance of behavioral science into the realm of dating, or the study of ‘seduction’ behaviors that tend to result in success. That solution represents the functional aspect of

sexual pathology. However, popular treatments continue to emphasize structural solutions to men's sexual difficulties, by focusing on either bodily states or mentalistic summary terms that purportedly cause men's difficulties, such as possessing an 'avoidant personality.'

If men cannot access functional means of satisfying sexual motivating operations, they have a few popular options for structural modification, or functional castration. They can masturbate with or without pornographic aids to cause orgasm, which positively reinforces nonsocial sexual behavior, or alternatively, escape from aversive sexual lust negatively reinforces nonsocial sexual behavior. Indeed, the degree to which orgasm is positively or negatively reinforcing to sexual behavior might provide a possible indicator for 'sexual health.' Men who have sex to enjoy the experience tend to contact more long term reinforcing social consequences than lonely men who have sex exclusively to satisfy a state of deficiency without responding to whether their partners' sexual behaviors contact reinforcement. Another option beyond masturbation that could help men cope with day to day lust is outright chemical castration, a viable option that needs further research. Conceivably, men could begin taking drugs that block neurochemicals responsible for facilitating sexual attraction and the obsessive verbal behavior known as love. That would constitute one desperate measure for addressing the dialectic between chronically rejected men and unwillingly pursued women: unconfident men could simply stop wanting to pursue in the first place. Currently, this occurs with the administration of Depo-Provera or a similar antiandrogen drug which has the effect of returning testosterone to prepubescent levels in sexually mature males, reducing sexual desire even in high risk sex offenders, despite some unfortunate side effects, such as

bodily feminization, liver disease, kidney stones, and depression (Harrison, 2007). If drug technology for chemical castration advanced to the point that only neural receptors facilitating love behaviors could be blocked, love might never trouble lonely men or besieged young women ever again. Of course, one would not need to stop at drugs when surgical removal of aspects of the pituitary gland could emotionally castrate men just as effectively. If the most radical of feminists had their way, pituitary modifications could become the most common surgery in male infants right after circumcision, another ubiquitous surgery historically intended to reduce men's and boy's sexual sensitivity and appetites (Zampieri, Pianezzola, & Zampieri, 2008). Obviously, these extreme solutions would cost more, yield inferior results, and would not address the functional antecedents of sexual behavior. The behavioral analysis of sexuality could save many men from resorting to harmful structural measures to manage their sexuality by offering them effective behaviors that would improve their lives and the lives of those with which they interact.

Treatment Considerations for Women

For women, the treatments for sexual aversion or dysfunction have varied from overt medication to psychoanalytic trauma therapy (e.g., Ohl, 2007). Behavioral methods have not yet received popular support in helping women regain sexual functionality and enjoyment. In place of functional models, therapy has often stressed past experiences rather than present circumstances, leading to a situation wherein a woman's efforts to 'free' herself from the punishing verbal specter of a past abusive partner or similar aversive situation requires even more verbal recitation about the original abuse. Empowering women with the skills to attract better partners, establish adaptive criteria

for selecting mates, teach assertiveness, and extinguish fear of males will help women to improve their lives much more effectively than a therapy centered around further reinforcement of rumination on past events.

Sex Therapy

So far, practitioners of sex therapy have proposed framing sexuality according to environmentalist assumptions that sex results solely from social learning (Masters & Johnson, 1970), integrating sex therapy into existing psychoanalytic frameworks, thereby deconstructing its status as a standalone therapy (Binik & Meana, 2009), or further developing sex therapy as an independent psychological application (Bancroft, 2009). This whole debate seems baseless, considering that if psychology is the study of human behavior, sexuality merely constitutes one variety of observable behavior, complete with antecedents and measurable consequences. Masters & Johnson (1970) correctly inferred that environmental processes help shape sexuality, but they theorized as reductionists in ignoring the equally important role of phylogenically evolved traits. Binik & Meana (2009) correctly identify the similarity of sexuality to other social behaviors, but they then deconstruct attempts to study the phenomenon. Bancroft (2009) studies the phenomenon but without sufficient empirical data to demonstrate the efficacy of his psychoanalytic methods. A nonreductionist behavioral method could reinvigorate the field of sexual research by providing real, functional results in place of yet more academic squabbling. Scientific debates tend to conclude through empirical data of efficacy, not rhetoric.

Sex therapy should help clients address the foremost goal of sexual intercourse: mutual reinforcement between partners. Human sexual responses vary dramatically

across situations, so partners should be taught patience for the changing responses of their partner's bodies. Not all men will maintain erections during every encounter and not all women will be able to comfortably lubricate themselves or easily facilitate penetration. As a result, sex therapists should encourage alternative behaviors to use in the event of suboptimal sexual performance to help each partner's behaviors contact as much reinforcement as their bodies can facilitate during a given sexual encounter. This will ensure that specific instances of sexual dysfunction do not endanger a relationship by conditioning sex as an aversive event that causes guilt, but as an event that causes mutual reinforcement, even during dysfunction. Additionally, this approach to treatment does not structuralize the issue by blaming sexual dysfunction on specific body parts. Rather, sex therapy should treat dysfunction as an inadequate context for sex to occur and offer replacement behaviors for coping with the context in existence at the time by maintaining mutual reinforcement between partners.

The Inevitability of Separation

'Break ups' and death will always end relationships. The myth of eternal love does not help clients find new relationships or effectively cope with concluded relationships. Both breaking up and death result in the same outcome in the sense that continued social and sexual behaviors are no longer reinforced by the former partner. In order to 'fill the gap' left by a former partner, or 'move forward,' a client must engage in specific behaviors to increase their likelihood of achieving mutually reinforcing interactions with future partners, all of whom will also leave the client through breaking up or death. Teaching clients coping skills for these situations can only result in more

satisfying, stable relationships that begin, develop, and conclude with a maximum of reinforcing contingencies and a minimum of punishing contingencies.

In Response to the Fluidity of Gender

With valid inductive analysis of the above solutions, gendered problems originally thought difficult or even unfixable could find pragmatic solutions. Critics of this approach will ask whether these contingencies will work given the rigidity or fluidity of gender roles, but this analysis does not place the root of problems in people's sexual physiology or in social conditioning, but in the observable environmental stresses they encounter as men or women. Whether the tendencies toward male assertiveness and female selectivity stem from social learning or genetic predisposition such patterns exist nonetheless. Rejection and unwanted advances cause discomfort for many people, and these two forms of suffering in particular seem gender segregated. If the feminist movement could create a situation wherein women became the sole pursuers of sexual reinforcement and men became the pursued, behavioral treatment would simply invert. In this hypothetical scenario, men would need to grant more assertive rejection and consent in addition to evoking attention from desired partners while women would need to constantly manage rejection while augmenting their attractiveness. Because behavioral solutions are functional, they can help very different individuals who grapple with the same situation, across genders and sexual orientations.

Conclusion

This thesis has covered a range of gender theories, from feminist and masculist sources and critically examined their philosophical elements through a pragmatic, functional perspective. Rather than attempting to find the structural root of gendered

problems, this thesis has attempted to provide a more productive set of assumptions for psychologically treating the aversive contingencies associated with gender as experienced in context. Functional behavior analysis has been recommended as a tool of examination and treatment of individuals relationships. Theories founded on inductive principles have been recommended while deductive theories founded on assumptions have been discouraged. Structuralizing social issues, or affixing them with a descriptive label, has been criticized throughout as a nonproductive practice in gender studies. These stances have been offered in the hope that by using the right tools, behavior analysis could offer immediate solutions to gender specific problems.

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