

Anthropology 2240
Biology Versus Culture
Lecture Outline for Weeks 3-5

1. Thesis

- Gender and sexuality are constrained by biology but not determined by it

2. Primatology as a Basis for Understanding Male and Female Human Differences

- i) What Do Primate Studies Tell Us?
- ii) Background: Evolutionary Science
- iii) Examples of from Non-Human Primates
- iv) Strengths and Weaknesses of Analogy Research

3. Turning to Men and Women

- i) Sexual Dimorphism
- ii) Hunting or Gathering?

4. Summary Comments

5. Evolutionary Hypotheses Regarding Tendency for Women to be Subordinated to Men

- i) Male Strength Hypothesis
- ii) Male Aggression Hypothesis
- iii) Male Bonding Hypothesis
- iv) Women's Childbearing Hypothesis

6. Cultural Perspectives

- Thesis: Gender is a social idea with some biological constraints
- i) Culture and Personality Research
 - ii) Human Life Cycles – Experience the Same Way Everywhere?
 - iii) Margaret Mead's Question: Is Adolescence Always a Terrible Time?
 - iv) Debating Margaret Mead

7. Film: Coming of Age

8. Marriage and the Family

9. Discussion Groups

10. Midterm I

The notion that biology, particularly evolutionary biology, can explain much about gender differences in humans raises hackles in many people. The fear is that science will be used to justify sexism, so that men are ‘**naturally**’ dominant and women submissive, men **naturally** philanderers and women **naturally** included to stop them from straying. These stereotypes are often said to arise from the animal kingdom, apparently leaving us with no other choices than to accept our evolutionary heritage and resign ourselves to a life of oppression, or reject the idea that biology has any relevance to explaining gender in modern day humans.

(Marlene Zuk; emphases added)¹

... [primatology] has been about the construction of the self from the raw material of the other, the appropriation of nature in the production of culture, the ripening of the human from the soil of the animal.

(Donna Haraway)²

¹ Zuk, Marlene 2005 Animal Models and Gender. *In Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Caroline B. Brettell and Carolyn F. Sargent, eds. Pp. 7-15. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

² Haraway, Donna 1989 *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. New York: Routledge.