

**Anthropology 2240
Biology Or Culture?
Lecture Outline**

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) Background: Sexual Selection
- ii) Examples of and from Non-Human Primates

3. Film Excerpt: Among the Wild Chimpanzees

4. 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

5. Research By Analogy: Strengths and Weaknesses

6. Cultural Perspectives

- Thesis: Gender is a social construction (by individuals and society) with some biological constraints
 - i) Culture and Personality Research
 - ii) Margaret Mead's Question: Is Adolescence Always a Terrible Time?
 - iii) Debating Margaret Mead

7. Discussion Groups

8. Marriage, Love and Incest

9. Film: A World Without Husbands or Fathers

10. Discussion Groups

12. 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** inclined 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.