Genes, Culture, and Gender

Chapter 5

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Overview

- Human Nature and Cultural Diversity
- Gender Similarities and Differences
- Evolution and Gender
- Culture and Gender
- Conclusions
Genes, Evolution, and Behavior – all humans have a biological and genetic similarity

- Evolutionary perspectives focus on our similarities
- Darwin’s Natural Selection Process – nature selects traits that help organisms survive and reproduce
- Evolutionary Psychology – applies natural selection theory to psychological traits and social behaviors
Culture – the shared behaviors, ideas, attitudes, and traditions of large groups that are passed on

- **Cultural Diversity** – diversity indicates many behaviors and traits are socially acquired
- **Cultural Similarity** – despite our differences we are more similar than not
- **Norms** – cultural standards for behavior
Culture and Behavior

![Graph showing the percentage of smiles in different conditions between US and Japan. The graph indicates that the percentage of smiles increases from the 'Avoid' condition to the 'Glance' condition and then further increases to the 'Look & Smile' condition. The graph suggests that in Japan, the percentage of smiles is higher compared to the US.]
Gender Similarities & Differences

- **Gender** - the biological and social characteristics associated with males and females
  - Males and females have similar psychological and physical traits and patterns of development
  - Often differences were equated with deficiencies or deviance
Are there gender differences in close friendships?

- Yes!
- Differences develop in childhood and continue in adulthood
- Empathy – women are better at understanding and experiencing others emotions
- Women are more skilled at detecting and expressing emotion
Gender: Social Dominance & Aggression

- **Social Dominance** - in almost all societies men hold most high power and status positions
- **Aggression** - research shows men exhibit and admit to more aggression
  - Gender differences are reduced under provocations and with verbal attacks
  - Hormones may influence gender differences
Sexuality - research has found gender differences in both sexual attitudes and behaviors.

- Males are more accepting of casual sex.
- Males tend to be the initiators and are less selective than females.

![Graph showing gender differences in sexual behaviors](image-url)
Is biology or society responsible for gender differences in sexuality?

Sexual Double Standard

Gender and Mating Preferences – men are genetically predisposed to reproduce widely and women wisely (Coolidge Effect)
Evolution and Attraction — male advertise status and power, women advertise youth and fertility

• Jealousy – sex or intimacy?
Evolutionary theory falls prey to the hindsight bias.

- Difficult to predict future events using evolutionary theory
Culture and Gender - culture has powerful shaping influences on behaviors and attitudes

Gender Roles – expectation or norms for females and males

- We adapt our behaviors to fit in with those expectations
- Violations may result in rejection
How are our gender roles socialized?

- Media Influences: Hasbro Toys Target Change
- Peer-transmitted culture – peer influence accounts for a large part of our attitudes and behaviors
Socialized Gender

Analysis of 32 toy commercials for boys and girls ages 6-8
Culturally Constructed Gender

- Gender Roles Vary across Cultures
- Gender Roles Vary over Time – suggesting that evolution and biology don’t fix gender
Interaction of Biology and Culture

- **Interactionism** – combined influence of cultural and biology on behaviors and attitudes
- **Coevolution** – natural selection and culture both produce advantageous attitudes and behaviors
Power of the situation and person – being aware of the power of the situation gives us the ability to chose and create our own situations.
The good wife's guide

- Have dinner ready. Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal ready, on time for his return. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about him and are concerned about his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospect of a good meal (especially his favourite dish) is part of the warm welcome needed.

- Prepare yourself. Take 15 minutes to rest so you'll be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make-up, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh-looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people.

- Be a little gay and a little more interesting for him. His boring day may need a lift and one of your duties is to provide it.

- Clear away the clutter. Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives.

- Gather up schoolbooks, toys, paper etc and then run a dustcloth over the tables.

- Over the cooler months of the year you should prepare and light a fire for him to unwind by. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift too. After all, catering for his comfort will provide you with immense personal satisfaction.

- Prepare the children. Take a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces (if they are small), comb their hair and, if necessary, change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part. Minimise all noise. At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise of the washer, dryer or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet.

- Be happy to see him.

- Greet him with a warm smile and show sincerity in your desire to please him.

- Listen to him. You may have a dozen important things to tell him, but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first – remember, his topics of conversation are more important than yours.

- Make the evening his. Never complain if he comes home late or goes out to dinner, or other places of entertainment without you. Instead, try to understand his world of strain and pressure and his very real need to be at home and relax.

- Your goal: Try to make sure your home is a place of peace, order and tranquility where your husband can renew himself in body and spirit.

- Don't greet him with complaints and problems.

- Don't complain if he's late home for dinner or even if he stays out all night. Count this as minor compared to what he might have gone through that day.

- Make him comfortable. Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or have him lie down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him.

- Arrange his pillow and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soothing and pleasant voice.

- Don't ask him questions about his actions or question his judgment or integrity. Remember, he is the master of the house and as such will always exercise his will with fairness and truthfulness. You have no right to question him.

- A good wife always knows her place.