

Soc 1

Lecture 9

Tuesday, November 19, 2009

Fall 2009

“The Institutional Construction of the Gendered Self”

I. Announcements:

Getting Credit for the Email Survey Project

Roger's Lecture

Paper is Due next Tuesday. Hardcopy due in class and also an email copy (see website).

Questions?

II. Gender: Individual vs. Institutional Centered Approaches

1. What Differences Exist?
2. How do we explain the differences?

III. Differences in Status, Power, & Role

A. Differences in Occupations

Male Occ's

Engineers 8%Women
Dentist 10%Women
Police 14%Women
Elect. Tech 14%Women
Architect 17%Women
Lawyers/Judges 19%W.
Physicians 20%Women

Female Occ's

Secretaries 99%Women
Receptionist 97% Women
Nurses 95%Women
Bank Teller 90%Women
Teacher-Elem 86%Women
Librarians 83%Women
Waiter/ess 82%Women

B. Difference in Leadership Positions?

- Fortune 500 Senior Managers 5% Women.
- 4,012 Top Officers Corp.
19 Women (1/2 %)
- 6 U.S. Senators (6%)
- 48 U.S. Reps. (11%)

C. Differences Power, Status, Roles, Cross-Culturally

- 3/4 human societies are polygamous.
- 75% Human Societies Patrilocal
10% Matrilocal.
- 5:1 Patrilineal/Matrilineal.
- Males (Almost) Always Have Formal Power (Authority).

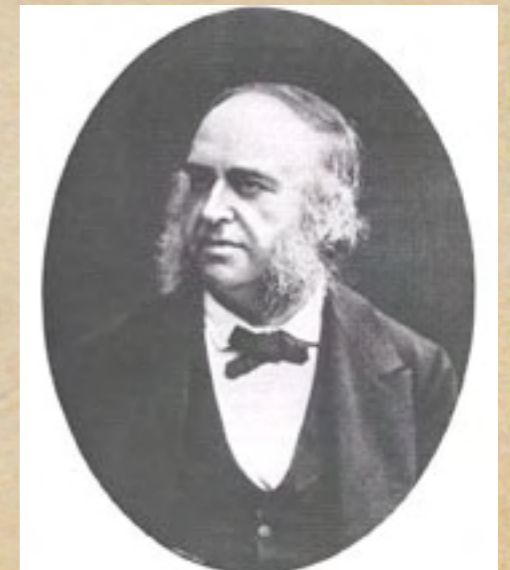
Why?

IV. Individual Centered Explanations.

1. 19th Century explanation emphasized Biological Differences (mental/bodily):

A. Paul Broca (1824-1880):
Cranometry (measure of heads)

(Stephen Jay Gould,
The Panda's Thumb)



Broca: Craniometry.

Part of "Anthropometry" =df Measurement of Human Body.

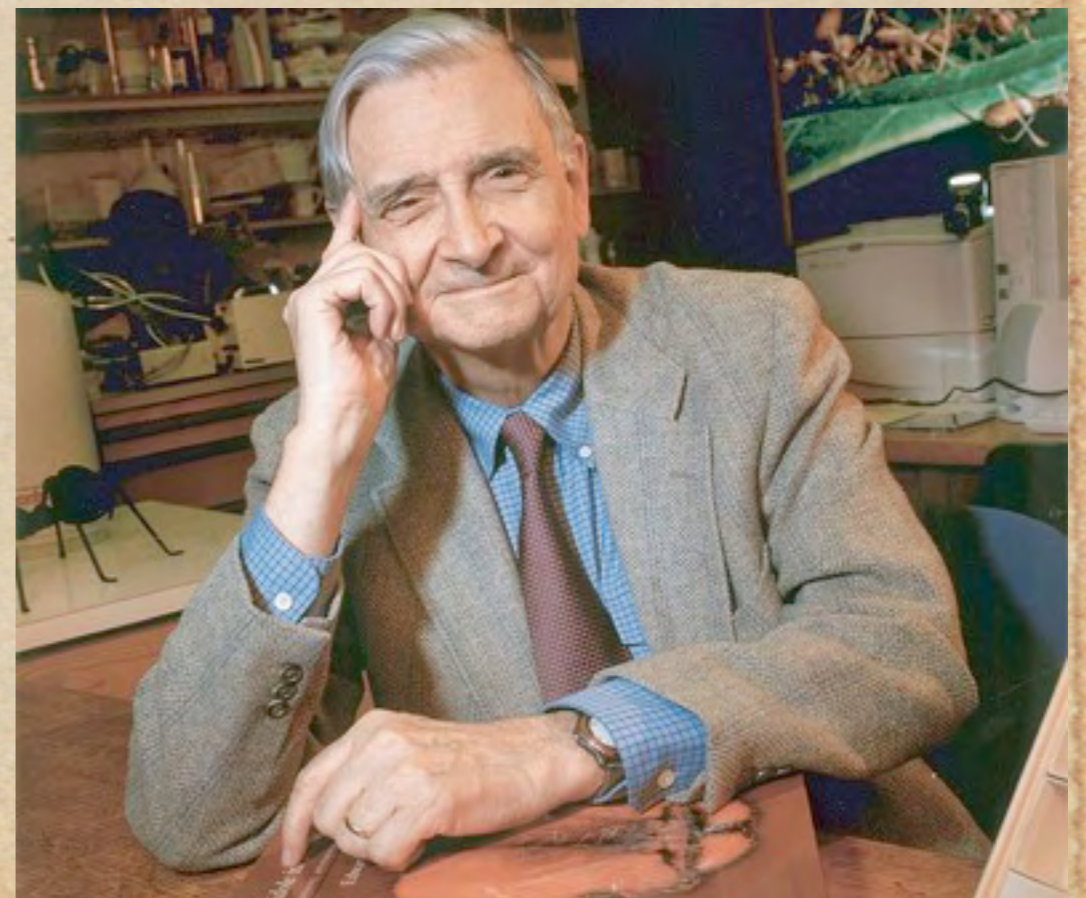
- Skull Size = Intelligence.
- 292 Men 1,325 grams (avg.)
 140 Women 1,144 grams (avg.) (Gorilla size)
- (Again) Gould used modern statistics to show height/
weight corrections perfectly explain variance

2. E. O. Wilson (1929-) (Evol. Biologist)

A. Biological Differences in Character (Not Intelligence).

- Women are Nurturant, Passive, Emotional, Commitment Oriented.
- Men are Aggressive, Combative, Competitive, Fickle.

These Differences Explain varied power, status, role positions



B. What Explains This Character Difference?

Different Genetic Strategies.

- Both have basic Genetic Goal: Pass on those Genes!!!
- But, Biological Functions Differ & this leads to Different Character Traits.

C. Females \approx 20 opportunities (max!).

- (in Mating) Females Need to Be Coy, Choosy, Highly Selective, Patient, Cautious, Smart ...

- (Partnered) Faithful, Dedicated, Submissive.
- (Parenting) Self-Sacrificing, Nurturant, Dedicated, Giving of Self to Others Needs.

D. Males? (No such constraint)

- (Mating): Males Need to Be Dominating, Aggressive, Macho, Opportunistic, Sly, Fickle, & Non-Selective.
- (Partnered): Polygamous, Unfaithful, Opportunistic, Sly, Fickle...

E. Wilson's Proof?

1. Animals (Similar Mating Functions, See Similar Traits).
 - Baboon Troops, etc. (Males Have Authority).

E. Wilson's Proof?

2. Children's Behavior.

- Boys Play Rougher, more aggressive.
- Girls Smile More, more social, less oriented toward hierarchy.

V. Institutional Centered Explanations.

A. Judith Lorber: “Night to his Day”

1. Why individual-centered explanations so prevalent?

- First, Because biological differences are obvious (and salient) we presume biology must explain other differences as well.
- Second: Like fish in water, so prevalent and all encompassing, we assume its natural.

2. Lorber emphasizes the difference between:
Sex (which *is* biological) vs.
Gender (which is Institutional)
An institution then.....1,2,3,4...

Gender is a “social construction”

- Names, Clothes, Toys, how people interact w/ baby boys/girls, expectations for “appropriate behavior,” etc.

3. Gender, like other institutions, has to be done and re-done by us (every day).

- “Doing Gender” (interactional) (Candace West & Don Zimmerman)
- When we interact, its a key part of how we do so (babies, etc.).
- Disorienting — to not know gender.

4. Western Society: Two Genders (M/F)

- Others have a third “Male Women” (Berdaches, Hijras, Xaniths) biol.males behave, dress and socially regarded as Women (Amer Indian, India, Oman).
- Others have a third “Manly-hearted Women” biological females who work, marry, and parent as men (African & American Indian cultures).

4. Western Society:

- Homosexuality: about sexuality not about Gender.
- Transvestites (their biology different than their gender).
- Transsexuals (change their gender & their biology).
- Just goes to show the power of gender constructions (keeps boundaries).

5. Tertiary Sexual Characteristics

(Ray Birdwhistell):

- Weakly dimorphic species (genitalia are main sex markers)
- Therefore humans have to work at accentuating the differences.
- Body language is key
- Clothing hides the sex, but displays the gender.
- West Point (skirts for women) & Marines (make-up for women) required.

IV. Institutional Centered Explanations.

B. Margaret Mead (1930's) New Guinea.

- Sex & “temperament” varied unexpected ways.
- “Mountain Arapesh”: Little differences in temperament by sex. Both sexes nurturant, gentle, non-aggressive, involved in parenting



- “Mundugumor”: Little differences in temperament by sex. Both sexes aggressive, assertive, independent, un-nurturant, sexuality is like combat.
- “Tchambuli”: There are sharp gender differences, but a reversal from what we know. Women are dominant, responsible, independent, aggressive. Men are “Skittish”, into adornment, passive, focused on art.

	Nuturant, Dependent	Aggressive, Responsible
Arapesh	Men Women	--
Mundugumor	--	Men Women
Tchambuli	Men	Women
Us	Women	Men

C. “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?” (Sherry Ortner).

1. Continuing debate. Much evidence of stark variations in dispositions, character, psychology across cultures (that vary by gender).

2. Ortner argues: Still, across many different examples, a universal difference in status (women 2d status everywhere).



B. Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture? (Sherry Ortner).

3. Examine those cultures that seem to have gender equity, (its complicated), but still, women's secondary status a universal condition.

4. Why this status difference?

- Not determined by biology (too much other gender variation).
- The Key: Another universal, the presumed relationship between Nature & Culture
- Culture represents humanity, its accomplishments, its ability to rise above that which is other, Nature.

Women are identified with Nature,
something every culture devalues, as
being a lower order of existence than
itself and that is why women in every
culture have a lower status.

Three ways this happens.

1. Woman's body & its Functions are more involved with "species life", place her closer to nature (Simone De Beauvoir):
 - Women's bodies serve others (breasts, pregnancy, menstruation...)
 - Because women's bodies greater involvement with reproduction, she is seen as being closer to nature than men.

2. Woman's social roles put her closer to nature:

- Children (esp. infants) are closer to nature. Unsocialized, behaving in animal ways.
- Many cultures mark this e.g., no funeral for small children, but need an initiation rite to become fully human.

2. Woman's social roles put her closer to nature:

- Lactation means women and children are seen as “belonging together”
- Natural also link this with socialization duties (initially, not later).
- Women linked to the household, men are linked to larger social organization & thus w/ all that is cultural & abstract

3. Woman's psychic structure put her closer to nature (Nancy Chodorow):

- Girls and boys are raised by mother. Girls stay in that role but boys eventually have to make a break w/ that.
- Boys psyche than geared toward culture (girls can stay in subjective, natural, primary relations).

4. Thus If Female to Male as Nature is to Culture.”

- Then women will have lower status just as nature has lower status.