

Communication and Sexual Desire

Sandra Metts and Susan Sprecher

*Illinois State University
Normal, Illinois*

Pamela C. Regan

*California State University—Los Angeles
Los Angeles, California*

For most people, particularly in Western societies, the phenomenological experience of sexual desire is inextricably linked to a complex array of emotions and communicative expression. Popular music, fiction, television, and film provide depictions of sexually passionate and emotionally volatile romantic relationships, popular magazines provide instructions for achieving and sustaining sexual satisfaction, and advice columns provide forums for sanctioning sexual infidelity and/or for coping with sexual moral dilemmas. The drive to reproduce may be innate, but the evolution of social systems that regulate procreation has infused both the experience and expression of sexual desire with values, norms, constraints, contingencies, and secondary emotions that make it as much a symbolic, interpersonal, and social construction as a physiological fact.

As might be expected, scholarship investigating the associations among sexual desire, emotion, and communication reflects a diversity of perspectives, distinguished largely on the basis of how sexual desire and emotion are defined. The central focus of this chapter is the elaboration of two prominent approaches, which we have termed the *biological or reproductive perspective* and the *relational perspective*. The former is characterized by an orientation to sexual desire as a biological drive with a corresponding view of emotion as a finite set of innate, primary affects that func-

tion both as signals to coordinate sexual behavior and as response patterns that promote pair bonding. The latter perspective is characterized by a view of sexual desire as a subjective psychological state influenced as much by interpersonal and social influences as by perceptions of physiological arousal. The corresponding view of emotion is a complex psychological state, generated from interpretations of situational cues, and manifested as behaviors that are consistent with this interpretation. Communication assumes a more central position, not only as the means of expressing sexual desire and complicated emotional states, but also as the mechanism for negotiating the relational implications of sexual activity and emotional meanings.

In order to frame the perspectives discussed in this chapter, we begin by providing a working definition of sexual desire. We then consider briefly the complicated question of whether sexual desire is an emotion.

CONCEPTUALIZING SEXUAL DESIRE

What Is Sexual Desire?

Traditional approaches to sexual desire tend to limit the concept to its physiological component, viewing it simply as a state of arousal or a biological drive that is reduced through such instrumental actions as masturbation or intercourse (e.g., Teevan & Smith, 1967). Although neurochemical/genital arousal is generally considered one aspect of sexual desire, it is no longer thought to be sufficient for, nor isomorphic with, this sexual experience. Rather, sexual desire is considered to be a multifaceted construct, experienced as a unitary subjective state, but varying in intensity and quality as a result of the interaction of intrapsychic, interpersonal, and situational influences.

Illustrative of this more integrated view of sexual desire is the description offered by Levine (1984, 1987). He defines sexual desire as a "propensity to behave sexually" resulting from the interaction among biological *drive*, cognitions that generate the *wish* to behave sexually, and psychological processes that yield a *willingness* (motivation) to behave sexually. Changes in any of these three aspects influence the likelihood that sexual desire will be experienced and the intensity with which it will be felt. Thus, the spontaneous manifestations of genital excitement associated with sexual drive can be diminished by such factors as age, grief, illness, or medication. The wish to behave sexually (even in the absence of drive) can be stimulated by the motivation to feel loved or valued, to feel masculine or feminine, to please one's partner, and so forth. The wish not to have sex (even in the presence of drive) may stem from the conviction that it would be morally wrong, or from the fear of pregnancy or disease. Finally, although the willingness to have sex can be induced by such factors as one's own sexual drive, the verbal and nonverbal behavior of a partner, voyeuristic experiences, and attraction, these inducements are subject to mod-

ification from the broader interpersonal contexts in which they are embedded. According to Levine, these contexts might include the quality of the nonsexual relationship, the reasons for engaging in sexual episodes (self-regulating or partner-regulating), and transference from past attachments that can increase or diminish sexual motivation.

Defining sexual desire as a subjective psychological state not only distinguishes it from the physiological state of sexual arousal but also from the behaviors of sexual activity. Research indicates that young adult men and women report having engaged in sexual activity without feeling sexual desire (e.g., Beck, Bozman, & Qualtrough, 1991). Indeed, people may engage in sexual activity for a number of reasons other than for the satiation of their own desire. They may do so to avoid rejecting their partner's advances and hurting their partner's feelings, to prove that they care for their partner and find him or her attractive, to assure themselves of their own virility or attractiveness, to conceive offspring, or to express feelings of closeness, warmth, commitment, and intimacy. Conversely, the absence of sexual activity does not necessarily reflect a lack of sexual desire, even among romantically involved couples. For example, fatigue, travel schedules, and the demands of children may diminish sexual activity. Some relationship partners may abstain from sexual intercourse during times of menstruation or pregnancy due more to cultural proscriptions than to personal inclinations (e.g., Kenny, 1973).

In sum, sexual desire is considered by most contemporary sex researchers to be a psychological, subjective state. It is considered to be distinct from physiological/genital arousal, subjective sexual arousal (i.e., the awareness that one is genitally and physiologically aroused), and sexual activity, although in actual practice sexual desire usually precedes, sometimes accompanies, and may even follow, sexual arousal and activity. Sexual desire is experienced as an interest in sexual objects or activities, and/or as a wish, intention, or willingness to seek out sexual partners and/or to engage in sexual activities (e.g., Bancroft, 1988; Kaplan, 1979; Regan & Berscheid, 1995). When directed toward a specific other person, desire is manifested as sexual attraction.

Interestingly, common interpretations of the term *sexual desire* among young adults are quite consistent with the current scholarly discussion. When Regan and Berscheid (1996) asked college students to define sexual desire in open-ended responses, very few defined it in terms of psychological arousal (4.4%) or sexual activity (2.2%). Most (86.8%) referred to sexual desire as a motivational state (e.g., longing, urge, need, or attraction). In addition, many respondents (28.6%) referred to it specifically as an emotional state (e.g., emotional attraction, or a feeling) or as part of an emotional syndrome (love or passion).

It appears, then, that the notion of sexual desire, both in current scholarship and in the phenomenological experiences of men and women, is a much broader construct than the physiological arousal or sexual activity associated with reproduction. Whether it is, strictly speaking, an emotional state or not depends upon how one defines emotion.

Is Sexual Desire an Emotion?

Emotion is perhaps one of the most difficult constructs to define (Metts & Bowers, 1994). Definitions are shaped not only by the disciplinary lens of the scholars investigating it, but also by the cultural and historic assumptions that prevail during any particular period of analysis (Averill, 1992; Solomon, 1993; Stearns, 1993). Therefore, we should not be surprised to find that some scholars consider sexual desire to be an emotion whereas others do not.

For scholars who consider psychological motivational states to be emotions, sexual desire constitutes an emotion (Everaerd, 1988). For example, the sex researcher Bertocci (1988) coined the term "lust-sex" to represent "the emotion experienced by a person as a qualitative impetus whose meaning-objective is usually a member of the opposite sex deemed attractive in ways that facilitate sexual advances and intercourse" (p. 222). Similarly, DeLamater (1991) classified sexual desire as an emotion based on three features that it shares with classical definitions of emotion: (a) the presence of characteristic patterns of physiological arousal, (b) the interpretation of this arousal as sexual, and (c) the activation of cognitive schema that contain learned response tendencies (typically sexual actions when the situation allows).

By contrast, conservative views of emotion tend to exclude sexual desire, more or less explicitly. For example, scholars who distinguish between the drive and affect systems consider sexual desire to be among the biological drives (e.g., Izard, 1990, 1993) rather than among the affects. Likewise, scholars who distinguish between motivational states (i.e., goal-directed intentions) and the consequences or outcomes of motivational states, consider sexual desire to be the antecedent condition of emotion rather than an emotion *per se*. By implication, if the motivation to seek sexual activity were satisfied, positive emotions would result; if not satisfied, negative emotions would result (Harris, 1993; McIntosh & Martin, 1992; see also Lazarus, Coyne, & Folkman, 1984; Roseman, 1984, for a discussion of motivation and affect). The various definitions of emotion known collectively as appraisal theories would also probably not consider sexual desire to be an emotion because no particular pattern of appraisal has been found to generate the experience of sexual desire (Frijda, Kuipers, & ter Schure, 1989). On the other hand, it is not inconsistent with appraisal theory to speculate that if arousal in the presence of another person were attended to (attentional activity), perceived to be a pleasant stimulus (valence), and considered relevant to an individual's goals (relevance appraisal), the state of sexual attraction or lust might be considered a positive emotional state (Ellsworth & Smith, 1989; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985).

Finally, for scholars who take the position that emotions are essentially social constructions (Epstein, 1984; Oatley, 1993), sexual desire might be considered an emotion in any culture that recognizes it as such. In contemporary Western society, although sexual desire is typically considered to be an emotional state, attitudes toward its legitimacy are complicated by the fact that sexual meanings are deeply em-

bedded within relational interpretive frames. Thus, to feel sexual desire for another person in the absence of other emotions renders it base (e.g., "merely lust"), whereas to feel sexual desire as part of the romantic love complex renders it transformative and almost spiritual. In fact, although sexual desire exists independently of romantic or passionate love, these affective states, at least in contemporary Western society, take their very character from the presence of sexual desire (see Aron & Aron, 1991; Hatfield & Rapson, 1993 for reviews). As Oatley (1993) states: "What we see when we or an acquaintance falls in love, what we imagine in such circumstances, or what we resonate to when read a love story is a complex of parts, including sexual desire, the aesthetic attraction to the other, and the altruism" (p. 346). In a similar vein is the now famous quote by Berscheid (1988), who remarked that if forced to define romantic love by "a firing squad who would shoot if not given the correct answer," she would have to say, "It's about 90 percent sexual desire as yet not sated" (p. 373).

Empirical support for the association between sexual desire and love is evident in the prototypical analyses of emotion terms conducted by Shaver and his colleagues (Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Connor, 1987; Shaver, Wu, & Schwartz, 1992). In both Italian and American samples, Shaver et al. (1992) found that the love prototype contained some element of sexual desire, expressed variously as arousal, lust, passion, desire, infatuation, and longing. It should be no surprise that the presence of sexual desire for another person is often experienced as romantic love. Nor should it be a surprise that retrospective accounts often recast the very same emotional experience as nothing more than lust in the wake of a failed relationship (Harvey, Weber, & Orbuch, 1990; White, Fishbein, & Rutstein, 1981).

For the purposes of this chapter, it is not necessary to resolve the definitional question of whether sexual desire is or is not an emotion. In reality, there are probably occasions when sexual desire is experienced as a diffuse, unfocused sense of longing for sexual contact that is no more emotional than a fantasy or a daydream. On other occasions, sexual desire may be intense, focused, and experienced as a passion that most people would consider emotional, and that some would label lust and some would label love. Indeed, there may be individual differences in intensity of subjective arousal and responses to feelings of sexual desire (Christopher & Roosa, 1991; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991) as well as in the tendency to orient to sexual desire as the defining parameter of love as is evident in individual differences in love styles (see Taraban, Hendrick & Hendrick, Chapter 12, this volume).

For the purposes here, it is simply important to acknowledge that any perspective on the association among sexual desire, emotion, and communication is strongly influenced by definitional assumptions. For that reason, we have divided the remainder of this chapter into two general sections. The first is a summary of approaches to sexual desire, emotion, and communication that coalesce under the general rubric of reproduction. The second, and more elaborated, section is a summary of approaches to sexual desire that recognize the psychological quality of sexual desire and situate it within sociological, relational, and communicative systems.

BIOLOGICAL OR REPRODUCTIVE PERSPECTIVES

The recognition that sexual desire, emotion, and communication are functionally interdependent is not new. However, traditional biological discussions tend to view reproduction as the nexus where interest in all three constructs converge. In particular, sexual desire is viewed as a biological drive or state of arousal that may lead to some form of sexual expression (e.g., sexual intercourse). Emotion and communication are incorporated into the discussion by virtue of their role in coordinating mating and facilitating pair bonding.

Coordinating Mating

One long-standing conceptualization of emotion is as patterned states of physiological arousal manifested in universally recognized facial expressions (e.g., Ekman, 1984; Ekman, Levenson, & Friesen, 1983). Although there is continued dispute over whether emotional states correspond to distinctive patterns of arousal in the visceral system (i.e., internal organs) (Buck, 1980, 1984) or to patterns of change in neural firing (i.e., suddenness and intensity) (Tomkins, 1984), there is agreement that arousal is experienced as a component of the primary emotions (e.g., interest, fear, anger, disgust, sadness, happiness, and surprise). Emotion is presumed to occur without the need for cognitive appraisal and therefore is considered to be one of the earliest and most fundamental forms of communication through facial displays. As Ekman (1984) argues, "If there is no distinctive universal facial expression associated with a given state, which functions as a signal, I propose that we not call that state an emotion" (p. 330).

In this characterization, emotions are linked to human reproduction by virtue of their communicative potential. For example, Buck (1984) argues that, unlike the mating of rudimentary organisms that was accomplished without the need for social organization, human mating required extended coordination. Emotional expression facilitated this goal by providing visible manifestations of internal states and intentions. Although humans eventually evolved a number of socially regulative emotions (e.g., jealousy, shame, guilt) and higher levels of symbolic communication (e.g., verbal language), Buck maintained that "perhaps the most basic motivational/emotional system that went beyond a solitary, virtually automatic process involved sexual reproduction" (p. 31). Thus, sexual contact was facilitated by visible expressions of interest and positive affect that signaled the desire to approach as well as to be approached.

Buck (1984) notes that the legacy of this fundamental signaling function is still evident in modern-day flirtation rituals. Despite cultural variation in display rules, he contends that across cultures, flirtation rituals still function to indicate sexual readiness, or alternatively, to indicate sexual nonavailability. Observations of female nonverbal solicitation cues conducted by Moore and her colleagues (Moore, 1985;

Moore & Butler, 1989) provide support for this contention. Not only was Moore able to categorize types of nonverbal behaviors most likely to precede the approach of a male to a female in a bar setting, but she also demonstrated that these behaviors were largely absent in settings where men were absent (e.g., a library and a women's club). Moore concludes that although men appear to initiate courtship because they make the first overt approach, women actually trigger the advance through nonverbal displays of readiness, such as extended eye gaze, smiling, and open posture.

Facilitating Pair Bonding

Other theorists have argued that the function of emotion displays to signal reproductive intentions may have facilitated sexual contact, but it does not explain the evolution of pair bonding. For these theorists (e.g., Izard, 1990; Plutchik, 1984; Tomkins, 1980, 1984), the drive system (including sexual desire) functions like the cognitive, behavioral, and perceptual systems do—as a source of survival-relevant information for the affect system. The affect system then provides the impetus for adaptive action. According to Tomkins (1984), the drives are inert without the amplification of the affects, whereas "the affects are sufficient motivators in the absence of drives" (p. 165). In terms of reproduction, the biological drive to copulate provided humans with the motivation to engage in sexual activity, but provided no "instructions" for the pair-bonding behavior necessary for the survival of the offspring. Only when framed by the behavioral response patterns associated with the positive emotions of joy and affection could sexual pleasure lead to intimacy behaviors between partners and caregiving behaviors toward offspring. As described by Izard (1993):

The joy experience is different from sensory pleasure, but the latter often leads to the former, as when the culmination of sexual or postprandial pleasure increases intimacy and leads to enjoyable social interaction. Openness is often heightened in such situations, and openness can contribute to the strengthening of social bonds. Social bonds and the social support they provide contribute a highly adaptive mechanism that can easily be conceived as an advantage in evolution and development. (p. 634)

Although this characterization tends to be advanced by emotion theorists, it is consistent with discussions of human sexuality in other fields. For example, in his sociological theory of human sexuality, Reiss (1986, 1989) contends that the importance placed on sexuality across cultures is due less to its reproductive function than to its role in facilitating pleasure and self-disclosure. Pleasure and self-disclosure are integrally related in sexual experience: "Experiencing intense physical pleasure in the presence of another person reveals parts of oneself which are not generally known even by one's close friends. Sexual partners thus reveal their emotions and responses in their sexual interactions and thereby learn more about each other" (1989, p. 10). Reiss maintains that, all things being equal, such disclosure is like-

ly to lead to additional revelation in other aspects of one's life. The result is the development and strengthening of intimate pair bonds.

In sum, traditional biological approaches to linking sexual desire, emotion, and communication as they relate to reproductive advantages and cultural universals tend to emphasize emotion's communicative function in signaling interest and coordinating mating, and emotion's facilitative function in stimulating intimate communication, self-disclosure, and ultimately the attachment patterns of pair bonding. Relational approaches are not necessarily incompatible with this perspective, but are more sensitive to the systemic nature of sexual desire, emerging as it does at the vortex of psychological, relational, and sociological forces. The contingent and emergent quality of sexual desire that is characteristic of this perspective necessarily means a more complicated role for communication.

RELATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

The diverse body of research referred to here as relational perspectives share a view of sexual desire as a psychological subjective state, reflecting not simply arousal, but also the desire to have sex, the willingness to have sex, and the motivation to seek out sexual activity, whether or not such activity occurs. Implicit in this definition is the argument that the experience of sexual desire, its recognition, meaning, and consequences are largely constructed by individuals in response to situational cues. In this respect, it shares much in common with a constructionist view of emotions.

The constructionist view broadens the definition of emotion beyond a small set of universal primary emotions to include complex secondary emotions that are manifested through socially determined patterns of action and interpretation (e.g., Averill, 1980, 1992). These complex structures, also called syndromes, prototypes, and transitory social roles, have their distant origin in the fundamental response patterns present at birth, but are qualitatively different phenomena as a result of socialization and learning (Saarni, 1993). For these theorists, the experience and expression of emotion are social constructions both because knowledge of what makes a situation "emotional" is socially determined and because the enactment of emotional sequences is mediated by social norms and feeling rules understood at an intuitive level (Averill, 1992; Hochschild, 1979, 1983).

According to Leventhal (1979, 1980, 1984), the construction process begins at birth when the primary emotions experienced directly by the infant's "perceptual motor system" are contextualized through interactions with caregivers. As infants experience the sequences of responses likely to follow their emotional displays, they learn when their displays are encouraged or discouraged, as well as the reactions they are expected to display in response to others' emotion actions. Thus, emotions take on an episodic quality as they become embedded within situations and eventually become organized and differentiated along situational dimensions. This process yields relatively coherent knowledge structures or prototypes called "emo-

tional schemata" which can then be categorized according to ordinary language labels (see Guerrero, Andersen, & Trost, Chapter 1, this volume, for a discussion of prototypes). Like all schemata, emotional schemata are perceptual templates that organize social information, direct attention to salient situational cues, and provide a model of potential responses. However, the automatic responses of the schemata system are subject to control and direction from the "conceptual system" that contains the cognitions that people hold about their emotional states, their understandings of causes and consequences, and their knowledge of social rules. Because this level includes a language component to represent emotional experience to oneself and to others and a performance component to enact emotion behaviors, it is more sequential and volitional than the schemata.

Although adults do occasionally react from the schemata level, the more typical response is one mediated by the conceptual system. Indeed, it is impossible to explain the so-called social emotions (e.g., guilt, embarrassment, shame) without recourse to socially derived cognitive structures. And, in fact, other than unmediated responses to a startling noise, a sudden pain, and so forth, even the primary emotions are to some degree social constructions (see Andersen & Guerrero, Chapter 3, this volume). As Averill (1980) explains,

I may be angry at John for insulting me, when in actuality John was only trying to be helpful by correctly pointing out a mistake I had made. John's insult is based on my appraisal of the situation; it is as much a part of my anger as is my feeling of hurt. (p. 310)

Thus, in the constructivist account of emotion situations are not simply appraised for the degree to which they are beneficial or harmful, goal promoting or inhibiting. They are appraised for their meaning in the broadest sense and for instructions as to how to experience and enact that meaning within the constraints established by one's culture.

Similar themes are evident in the writings of scholars interested in the social construction of sexuality. For example, Blumstein and Schwartz (1990) argued that "fundamental categorical desire may not even exist. Rather, it is culture that creates understandings about how people are sexual" (p. 373). The implications of this view for the study of sexual desire are significant. Culture is fundamentally and inevitably an historical juncture, and the values, attitudes, rituals, and norms that constitute a culture are negotiated agreements. Despite the apparent inherence, timelessness, and rightness of a culture's sexual and emotional mandates, they are, in fact and in practice, social contracts that are subject to negotiation and change.

As noted previously, in contemporary Western society sexual desire is a construct linked closely with the romantic love complex (e.g., see Aron & Aron, 1994). So familiar is this association that its relatively recent appearance is forgotten. However, emotion historians are quick to point out that sexual desire, sexual activity, and romantic love have been "packaged" together only in fairly recent history. Stearns (1993), for example, describes the consequence of the shift away from arranged marriages in Europe during the 18th century:

The 18th century decline of arranged marriages cut into the group-oriented experience of premarital excitement; this shift soon led to an unprecedented association of love with privacy and with one-on-one intensity. Finally, expressions of love pulled away from a traditional range of vigorous bodily manifestations. Suitors in Wales stopped urinating on their fiancées' robes as a sign of affection; kissing became gentler, biting far less common. The relationship of love and the body, in other words, changed substantially. (p. 21)

In contemporary American society, the relationship between love and sex is facilitated by the popular media and social structures. Sex and love are frequent fare in the media, although the association is often depicted paradoxically, as both inevitable and yet separable. That is, people in the media who are in love (although not typically married, or married to each other) have sex, and people who have sex are not necessarily in love, although they are inevitably highly aroused (Metts & Cupach, 1989). One-on-one privacy is easily achieved (e.g., young adults maintain their own apartments and automobiles provide mobility, independence, and privacy), and sex outside of marriage is no longer culturally condemned or tightly regulated, although it may be condemned by religious institutions and avoided by individuals as a matter of choice. Finally, as the period of adolescent dating is extended through initiation at younger ages and marriage at later ages, the association between the subjective state of sexual desire and sexual activity becomes further removed from the traditional stage of premarital courtship (Reed & Weinberg, 1984). Thus, it falls to each couple to negotiate the meaning of sexual desire in a particular relationship at a particular point in time. Hence, communication becomes extremely important for expressing sexual desire, interpreting its meaning, and negotiating the appropriateness of various sexual behaviors in a given relationship.

This process of expression, interpretation, and negotiation is guided by a set of norms and expectations known as sexual scripts (Gagnon, 1990; Gagnon & Simon, 1973; Laws & Schwartz, 1977; Reed & Weinberg, 1984; Simon & Gagnon, 1986, 1987). For example, Simon and Gagnon (1986, 1987) argue that what may appear to be a spontaneous sexual episode is actually the manifestation of three levels of "scripted" behaviors. The *intrapsychic sexual script* is a person's understanding of what creates and sustains her or his own sexual arousal and maximizes her or his sexual satisfaction. The *interpersonal sexual script* is a person's understanding of the behaviors, expectations, and interpretations that facilitate the fulfillment of the intrapsychic level script with another person. Importantly, both of these scripts are derived from the meanings, images, and messages conveyed by the larger *cultural sexual script*.

The suggestion that sexual desire is experienced and expressed within the constraints of larger cultural scripts does not exclude the possibility of interpersonal adaptation of the cultural script. Indeed, this is the heart of the argument that sexual desire is a socially constructed emotion. For example, the prevailing sex role expectations for men to seek sex and women to resist, and for men to be sexually experienced and women to be sexually naive, are influenced by the level of relationship involvement and the presence or absence of love. Women may inhibit

feelings and expressions of sexual desire in a noncommitted relationship for fear of impugning their reputation; in a committed relationship or when feeling overcome by the power of love, however, they may more freely experience and express sexual desire without the fear of negative consequences (McCabe & Collins, 1984; O'Sullivan & Byers, 1993; Roche, 1986). Nevertheless, without some coordination in the early phases of relational and sexual involvement, couples are not likely to reach more advanced stages. Sexual scripts help coordinate the early stages when uncertainty is high and idiosyncratic practices have not yet emerged. We turn now to a discussion of these initial, socially scripted phases of sexual negotiation. We set the stage for this discussion by first exploring the association between sex role expectations and the experience and expression of sexual desire.

Sex Role Expectations and Sexual Desire

The notion that men have stronger and more frequent sexual desires than women has been a pervasive theme in contemporary Western culture (see Richgels, 1992; Tolman, 1991), and at least two relatively recent surveys of high school and college students indicate that men report experiencing sexual desire with greater frequency than women (Beck et al., 1991; Useche, Villegas, & Alzate, 1990). However, this finding may reflect the greater willingness of men to report sexual feelings on a self-report instrument. In addition, women may be less likely than men to label particular experiences or feelings as sexual desire. For example, in an early study of sexual desire and the menstrual cycle, Cavanagh (1969) found it necessary to teach his female participants how to recognize sexual desire and how to make the connection between that term and specific subjective sexual feelings they could expect to experience. Finally, the assumption that men experience more sexual desire than women may stem from the common practice of using college samples in research. Sprague and Quadagno (1989) found in a sample of adults between the ages of 22 and 57 that as women get older they are more likely to report physical arousal and less likely to report love as their motivation for sexual intercourse, whereas the reverse pattern was true for men.

Robust gender differences do, however, appear to exist with respect to *perceptions and beliefs* about sexual desire: Men generally perceive people to be more interested in sex, and impute more sexual meaning to female behavior during heterosexual interactions, than do women (e.g., Abbey & Melby, 1986; Koeppl, Montagne-Miller, O'Hair, & Cody, 1993; Shotland & Craig, 1988). In addition, Beck et al. (1991) investigated the indices college students use to gauge their level of sexual desire, and reported that significantly more men than women indicated that they used cognitive events (e.g., dreams with sexual content, sexual fantasies) to index their level of sexual desire, and significantly more women than men said that they used behavioral or physiological events (e.g., frequency of intercourse, genital arousal). Similarly, Knoth, Boyd, and Singer (1988) found that males were more likely than

females to find visual stimuli arousing, whereas females were more likely than males to find romantic/relational stimuli arousing.

More recently, Regan and Berscheid (1995) asked young adults to answer a series of free-response questions exploring their beliefs about the causes of male and female sexual desire. The majority of both men and women agreed that male and female desire have different causes. In addition, both viewed female sexual desire as heavily dependent upon relationship factors (e.g., love) and romantic environmental factors (e.g., romantic settings):

From a male respondent: Thoughts of love and romance. Women tend to be more romantic . . . Women do have sexual desires brought on by suggestive surroundings but not to the extent of men. Quiet, romantic surroundings and events seem to play a large role in sexual desire.

From a female respondent: Often the words "I love you" will cause sexual desire in a woman. I think that if a man showers positive attention on a woman and makes her feel desirable that causes sexual desire.

Men and women both believed that male sexual desire is strongly influenced by intraindividual (e.g., "maleness," hormones, fantasies) and erotic environmental factors (e.g., pornographic or erotic media):

From a male respondent: Men have what I call a "defective gene" on their DNA ladder. This "defective gene" causes sexual desire in men. I label it as defective because it sometimes interferes with a man's way of thinking and decision making. It seems that from my experience and listening to friends that guys constantly strive for their sexual desires. These same desires don't seem to be in women, thus, my conclusion that it has something to do with our DNA structure.

From a female respondent: I'm not exactly sure what causes sexual desire in a man. I would say just about anything does . . . In general, any man romantically involved or not tends to always have a sexual desire (or just about always). Anything seems to be able to set men off.

Although these respondents are providing anecdotal evidence from their own experience, their observations are consistent with research findings from the evolutionary perspective. Greer and Buss (1994), for example, summarize the results of their study on tactics used by college students to promote sexual encounters as follows: "Women often need to do nothing to promote a sexual encounter. Simply existing in time and space and being naked under their clothes is often enough to trigger approach attempts by men" (p. 197). More will be said about tactics for expressing sexual desire and promoting sexual involvement in the next section.

Expressing Sexual Desire in Developing Relationships

Before discussing the manifestation of sexual desire in sexual episodes, it is important to underscore the fact that sexual desire may be felt and may be communicat-

ed to a partner, but may not necessarily result in sexual involvement or intercourse. As Levine (1984, 1987) noted, the presence of sexual desire is not a sufficient index to determine a person's response to a sexually evocative situation. In a study of college virgins, Sprecher and Regan (1996a) found that "lack of sexual desire" was not a reason male and female virgins gave for their virginity. Most were abstaining because they had not experienced enough love for someone or because of fear of negative outcomes (e.g., pregnancy, AIDS). Similarly, research on premarital sexual standards indicates that many young adults, especially females, believe sexual expression should not begin until there is a certain level of emotional commitment in the relationship (Sprecher, 1989; Sprecher, McKinney, Walsh, & Anderson, 1988). As a consequence, couples vary considerably in the stage of relationship development where they engage in sexual activity. According to Christopher and Cate (1985), some couples are *rapid involvement couples* who begin sexual expression early in the relationship, often on their first date, and are strongly influenced by feelings of physical arousal. Other couples are *gradual involvement couples* who increase their sexual expression gradually over the four stages of dating (i.e., first date, casually dating, becoming a couple, and established as a couple). *Delayed involvement couples* delay sexual expression until they consider themselves to have become a couple. Finally, *low involvement couples* do not engage in sexual expression during courtship and usually wait until marriage. Similarly, Peplau, Rubin, and Hill (1977) distinguished among "early-sex" couples, "late sex" couples, and "abstaining" couples.

In those instances where sexual involvement does occur, how might the interaction unfold? Several reviews of the scholarly literature on sexuality and communication (e.g., Cupach & Metts, 1991; Edgar & Fitzpatrick, 1990; Metts & Cupach, 1989; Metts & Spitzberg, 1996) point to communicative patterns that characterize initial sexual involvement in developing relationships. Although most of the research in the area does not distinguish among sexual attraction, sexual interest, sexual intent, and sexual desire as the affective motivator, we can infer that at least much of the time, the sequence is prompted or promoted by sexual desire.

This research suggests that men are more likely than women to make the overt moves that initiate the sexual episode, perhaps because they have more sexual desire or perhaps because they are less inhibited by social norms from expressing their desire, are more sensitive to their own subjective arousal, or simply are responding to the prevailing interpersonal script that casts them as the initiator (see Taraban et al., Chapter 12, this volume, for a discussion of loving behaviors commonly initiated by men). In summarizing the features of sexual initiation among American heterosexual couples drawn from several decades of research, Metts and Spitzberg (1996) list a number of general conclusions. Among these are the following: (a) Despite an extensive potential repertoire of sexual pursuit tactics, only a relatively small subset is considered highly normative; (b) men are inclined to engage in the more direct forms of these tactics, and may have a larger repertoire of such direct tactics; (c) when women do employ such tactics, they are inclined to use the more indirect

forms of these tactics; (d) any tactics employed by women are perceived to be effective, given men's proclivities to pursue sex; and (e) for better or worse, men are cast in the role of proactive initiator and pursuer of sex, and women are cast in the role of reactive regulator and sexual gatekeeper.

Studies also suggest that when women offer refusals, the refusals tend to be verbal and relatively direct. When female refusals are not complied with by males, stronger more direct refusals are offered, but most refusals are respected by males (Byers, 1988; Murnen, Perot, & Byrne, 1989). However, evidence from college women's descriptions of how they would reject unwanted sexual advances from a man indicate that nonverbal actions are also used. Perper and Weis (1987) content analyzed women's essays describing sexual influence episodes. Rejection themes included such techniques as simple rejection, avoiding proceptivity, avoiding intimate situations, creating distractions, making excuses, physical resistance, departure, hinting, express disapproval of man, arguments to delay, and so forth. These indirect strategies, while less face threatening, tend to invite the unfortunate attribution from men that a woman's refusal is merely "token resistance" (Muehlenhard, 1988), when it is in fact legitimate refusal (see Metts & Spitzberg, 1996, for an extended discussion of token resistance). Clearly, communicative competence in both sending refusal messages and interpreting refusal messages is critical in the negotiation of sexual involvement, regardless of intensity of sexual desire.

Communicative competence continues to be important in more developed sexual relationships as well. Not only is it necessary for negotiating the frequency and extent of sexual involvement, but also for maintaining the quality of sexual relations in the face of habituation over time and stress in other areas of the relationship. We turn now to these issues.

Expressing Sexual Desire in Established Relationships

Research on sexual initiation and refusal in long-term, heterosexual relationships (cohabiting and married) suggests that although women may initiate somewhat more often after marriage than before (e.g., Brown & Auerback, 1981), men generally continue to initiate sex more often than women and women continue to regulate the frequency of sexual intercourse (e.g., Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983). However, disagreements over whether to have sex or not tend to be resolved simply by agreeing to have sex at some other time (Byers & Heinlein, 1989). Long-term sexual partners also seem willing to engage in sex for a variety of reasons even if they do not initially feel sexual desire (Levine, 1984).

Whether initiation and refusal patterns, engaging in sexual activity in the absence of sexual desire, and related sexual circumstances influence satisfaction with the sexual relationship depends in large measure on the communicative skill of the partners. As D'Augelli and D'Augelli (1985) described in some detail, sexual partners need to have skill in two types of communication: expressive and receptive.

That is, people need to be able to express their needs and desires, describe activities that increase or inhibit their arousal, and indicate to their partner when those behaviors are being successfully enacted. People also need to be able to solicit and accept without defensiveness the same type of information from their partners. This level of talk is, in a very real sense, self-disclosure. As such, its occurrence and its effects depend on high levels of trust and acceptance. Apparently, the benefits are worth the effort, given the strong association between satisfaction with communication about sex and relationship satisfaction in general (Cupach & Comstock, 1990).

Research suggests that couples do express some aspects of their sexual feelings. The item "my feelings about our sexual relationship" was included in the self-disclosure scale completed by the 231 college dating couples in the Boston Dating Couples Study (Rubin, Hill, Peplau, & Dunkel-Schetter, 1980). The majority of the respondents (74% of the women and 73% of the men) indicated they had "full" disclosure on this topic, and most of the others reported "some" disclosure. In a study of emotion expression in relationships, Sprecher and Sedikides (1993) found that members of dating, cohabiting, and newly married couples reported expressing sexual excitement, through "display" or "disclosure," frequently within the past month. Men reported expressing sexual excitement to a greater degree than the women. This is noteworthy because only one other emotion—ambivalence—was expressed more by men than women (out of 25 positive and negative emotions measured), whereas women reported expressing 11 emotions to a greater degree than men.

Whether couples are as open about specific sexual preferences and needs is less clear. Despite the advice of clinicians and Dr. Ruth, couples may still find such personal disclosure uncomfortable. At present, little research is available on how frequently or in what manner partners communicate their preferences. What we do know is that verbal communication may be especially necessary in those circumstances where nonverbal sexual behaviors are perceived differently. Specifically, explicit communication may be needed when one person's assumption about the types of behavior most likely to arouse her or his partner are not accurate. Because men and women do not find the same sexual behaviors equally arousing (Geer & Broussard, 1990), communication between partners about what is arousing is critically important. According to research conducted by Masters and Johnson (1979; as described in Brehm, 1992), homosexual couples report greater satisfaction with their sexual experiences than do heterosexual couples in part because they find the same behaviors arousing but also because they talk more openly and easily about what they desire and what is pleasurable. Masters and Johnson (1979) described heterosexual couples as having a "persistent neglect of the vital communicative exchange" (p. 219).

We also know that if problems in communicating about sexual desire are not resolved, other aspects of the relationship are affected as well (Sprecher, Metts, Burleson, Hatfield, & Thompson, 1995). Reciprocally, problems in other areas of a

relationship can affect the frequency and intensity of sexual desire and/or a partner's willingness to communicate desire when experienced. Many sex therapy programs encourage couples to focus on relationship issues, including the development of communication skills (e.g., Kaplan, 1974; Masters, Johnson, & Kolodny, 1982). Thus, in the clinical literature, it is recognized that sexual desire and communication are reciprocally linked.

Fading of Sexual Desire and Sexual Expression over Time

Research on sexual frequency in marriage indicates that sexual activity declines over the duration of marriage and with the increase in spouses' ages. Evidence of decline has been found consistently across studies, including cross-sectional research (e.g., Call, Sprecher, & Schwartz, 1995; Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994), retrospective research (Greenblat, 1983), and longitudinal research (James, 1981; James, 1983; Udry, 1980). Decline has also been found in cohabiting, heterosexual couples and in gay and lesbian couples (e.g., Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983). The rate of decline may be greater early in the marriage than later. For example, James (1981) hypothesized that the rate declines by approximately one-half across the first year of marriage and then takes another 20 years to half again. The decline in the first year of marriage has been called "the honeymoon effect." As evidence of this decline, James (1981) analyzed diaries kept by newlyweds and found that the median frequency of sex in the first month of marriage was over 17 times, but declined to approximately eight times per month by the end of the first year. Evidence that sexual expression continues to decline after the first year of marriage was found in Greenblat's (1983) interview study with married respondents who were in their first five years of marriage. Greenblatt found that 69% of men and women married for more than a year reported that their current rate was lower than their first year rate (only 6% reported an increase).

The various explanations offered for the decline in sexual frequency do not generally make a distinction between factors affecting sexual desire and factors affecting the expression or enactment of sexual desire. The rapid drop in frequency of marital sex that occurs shortly after marriage is probably due to habituation or a decreased interest in sex with one's regular partner because of an increase in predictability. The arousal stemming from uncertainty and novelty that was experienced during early sexual exploration eventually subsides. To the extent that this generalized arousal amplified, or was perhaps experienced as, sexual desire, its decline would reduce the motivation to initiate sexual activity. Later in marriage, sexual expression can decline further because of increases in role and time demands due to children, employment, caring for elderly parents, and other obligations that may reduce the opportunity for the expression or enactment of sexual desire, even if the desire has not dissipated. Once sexual expression declines, couples are likely to modify their relationship's sexual script to include a lower level of sexual activity (Call et al., 1995). Finally, later in life, biological or health factors may decrease the ability

to express one's sexual desire. Furthermore, negative attitudes in society about sexuality among older adults can lead to decline in both sexual desire and sexual expression among the elderly (Riportella-Muller, 1989).

More subjective measures of desire have also shown a decline over time in marriages or other long-term relationships. Although passion (e.g., Hatfield & Rapson, 1987, 1990) is not synonymous with sexual desire, sexual desire does appear to be an important component of passion or passionate love. Subjective measures of passion and passionate love have been found to be negatively associated with length of relationship (Acker & Davis, 1992; Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986; Sprecher & Regan, 1996b; Tucker & Aron, 1993), which suggests that verbal and nonverbal expression of passion or subjective sexual desire would also decline over time.

Although sexual expression declines over time in most long-term relationships, considerable variation exists across couples in the rate of decline. Some couples remain at a high level of sexual desire and expression until late in life. Some couples are not sexually expressive even early in their marriage. Some couples replace genital-focused sex with nongenital touching. The degree to which sexual expression declines over time in a relationship is likely to depend on how satisfied the couple is and the degree to which they experience passionate love, which helps to fuel sexual excitement and desire (Aron & Henkemeyer, 1995; Hatfield & Rapson, 1987; Sprecher & Regan, 1996b).

To some degree, then, a couple might expect changes in their sexual desire and sexual activity over the course of their relationship, although the specifics of this change will vary across couples. In many cases, these changes are not salient to a couple and go largely unmarked, particularly when communication is open and other aspects of the relationship are satisfying. In other cases, however, these changes are noticed and problematized.

Problems in Sexual Desire and Other Aspects of the Relationship

In some long-term relationships, problems of low sexual desire and/or difficulty expressing sexual desire develop for one or both partners (Spector & Carey, 1990). Sometimes, the problem is a discrepancy in sexual desire; one partner wants sex less frequently or more frequently than the other. A problem in sexual desire and expression may be due to a number of nonrelational factors, including illness, anxiety, and a history of sexual assault. However, in many cases, diminished sexual desire or unwillingness to express sexual desire may be indicative of other relationship problems (Stuart, Hammond, & Pett, 1987). For example, relationship conflict and arguments can dampen sexual desire and expression, particularly for women (e.g., Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983). Indeed, "emotional conflict with partner" was cited as the most common cause of inhibited sexual desire among married men and women in a survey of 400 physicians (Pietropinto, 1986). Moreover, even when relational climate is not overtly hostile, if it is not conducive to open communication,

sexual desire may be affected. In a longitudinal study of married and cohabiting women, Hallstrom and Samuelsson (1990) found that those who reported a decrease over time in sexual desire tended to perceive insufficient emotional support and lack of a confiding relationship with their spouse. Likewise, couples who believe their relationships to be inequitable are less likely to want to have sex (Hatfield, Greenberger, Traupmann, & Lambert, 1982; Traupmann, Hatfield, & Wexler, 1983). It is no surprise that many clinicians now focus on the dynamic of the couple's relationship in seeking to treat sexual desire disorders (e.g., Regas & Sprengle, 1984; Trudel, 1991).

Importantly, even in couples with relatively healthy sexual relationships, sexual desire and sexual expression are related to the quality of other aspects of the relationship. In general, frequency and intimacy of sexual expression are positively associated with relationship satisfaction (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Call et al., 1995; Sprecher et al., 1995). Couples who are happy have more sex, presumably because they have more sexual desire for each other. However, clinical studies and case reports suggest that marital partners often use sexual desire as a "thermometer" to overall relationship adjustment. Specifically, a marked decrease or absence of sexual desire experienced by one or both partners is interpreted as a "problem" that requires correction, usually through some form of therapeutic intervention (e.g., Kaplan, 1979; Leiblum & Rosen, 1988; Levine, 1987; Talmadge & Talmadge, 1986). In addition, some clinicians posit that sexual desire may serve to regulate emotional distance between a couple; that is, sexual desire may increase or decrease as an individual's need to be close to the partner waxes and wanes (e.g., Verhulst & Heiman, 1979; Zilbergeld & Ellison, 1980).

In sum, the association between sexual desire and other relationship properties appears to be systemic. What occurs in the couple's bedroom is likely to be affected by what happens in the rest of their relationship; conversely, the activity (or lack of) in the bedroom is likely to affect the rest of the relationship. No doubt some couples may be able to punctuate the cycle by pointing to sexual problems as the cause and relationship problems as the effect, or vice versa. In reality, isolating the direction of causality is very difficult to do. As Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) describe the dilemma:

It is hard to know whether an unsatisfactory relationship leads to less frequent sexual activity and reduced sexual pleasure or whether the problems begin in the bedroom and eventually corrode the entire relationship. From our vantage point it looks as if other problems come into the bedroom and make it less likely that the couple will want to have sex together. The low frequency then becomes a source of dissatisfaction in and of itself. (p. 201)

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the complex associations among communication, emotion, and sexual desire. Two views evident in the scholarly literature were discussed.

The biological or reproductive view tends to characterize sexual desire as a biological drive that is signaled through emotion displays, thereby facilitating mating; or is manifested through copulation that leads to emotional responses, which in turn lead to intimate communication and pair bonding. This view is not incompatible with the relational view, though it is more linear than systemic. The relational view tends to characterize sexual desire more broadly, noting that, although it is experienced as a unitary psychological state, it is in fact composed of several features: biological drive, cognitions that generate the wish or desire to behave sexually, and psychological processes that yield a willingness to behave sexually. This characterization places cognition (though perhaps not conscious processing) as the mediating factor between physiological arousal and sexual activity. Communication then enters the model as the vehicle to stimulate arousal, express cognitions relevant to arousal (i.e., the desire to behave sexually and the willingness to behave sexually), and to process sexual meanings and intentions with partner. Emotion may or may not be the defining feature of sexual episodes. We might speculate that for persons who construct emotions from social situations according to prevailing Western stereotypes (particularly those that define gender expectations), the presence of sexual desire is probably experienced as various shadings of the romantic love complex (e.g., infatuation, attraction, love, affection). For many people, when no relationship potential exists or when relationship affection has dissipated, sexual desire might be constructed simply as sexual need, horniness, or lust. Perhaps the distinction lies in the solitary nature of the latter situation. As several emotion theorists have noted (e.g., de Rivera, 1984), emotions are essentially social responses—the self interacting with the social environment. In the absence of any concern beyond self, arousal might be perceived as no more emotional than a state of hunger or fatigue.

In our discussion of the relational perspective, we touched on several important issues that merit additional research. Because sexual desire is often experienced and expressed within emotionally close relationships, sexual desire is related to many other relationship phenomena, including satisfaction, love, equity, and relationship duration. Unfortunately, however, there has been a dearth of research that considers both the experience and expression of sexual desire within a relational context. Other emotions related to sexuality, such as sexual satisfaction, have received more empirical and theoretical attention. More research is needed on how sexual desire and its communication are related to other sexual feelings (sexual satisfaction, sexual guilt), to sexual behaviors (frequency of sexual activity, likelihood of engaging in extradyadic sex), and to aspects of the larger relationship (e.g., satisfaction).

In particular, research needs to be directed toward understanding how sexual desire changes over time in a relationship and how its association with other relationship phenomena (e.g., relationship quality) change as well. Western culture has so imbued romantic love with sexual overtones that distinguishing the two emotions in everyday life is difficult. Couples who read the arousal of sexual desire as the arousal of romantic love, may use communication to celebrate and maintain the mystery rather than to understand each other. Consequently, decreases in arousal

are likely to be perceived as relational decline unless partners are able to voice their concerns and negotiate new relational meanings. Research focused on these processes in dating and married couples and in homosexual couples is essential, not only for scholars but for clinicians as well. In sum, the centrality of sexual desire to how couples define and enact their relationships necessitates further research, especially with longitudinal designs and creative methodologies.

REFERENCES

- Abbey, A., & Melby, C. (1986). The effects of nonverbal cues on gender differences in perceptions of sexual intent. *Sex Roles, 15*, 283-298.
- Acker, M., & Davis, M. H. (1992). Intimacy, passion, and commitment in adult romantic relationships: A test of the triangular theory of love. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 9*, 21-50.
- Aron, A., & Aron, E. N. (1991). Love and sexuality. In K. McKinney & S. Sprecher (Eds.), *Sexuality in close relationships* (pp. 25-48). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Aron, A., & Aron, E. N. (1994). Love. In A. L. Weber & J. H. Harvey (Eds.), *Perspectives on close relationships* (pp. 131-152). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Aron, A., & Henkemeyer, L. (1995). Marital satisfaction and passionate love. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 12*, 139-146.
- Averill, J. R. (1980). A constructivist view of emotion. In R. Plutchik & H. Kellerman (Eds.), *Emotion: Theory, research, and experience* (pp. 305-339). New York: Academic Press.
- Averill, J. R. (1992). The structural bases of emotional behavior: A metatheoretical analysis. In M. S. Clark (Ed.), *Emotion* (pp. 1-24). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Bancroft, J. (1988). Sexual desire and the brain. *Sexual and Marital Therapy, 3*, 11-27.
- Beck, J. G., Bozman, A. W., & Qualtrough, T. (1991). The experience of sexual desire: Psychological correlates in a college sample. *The Journal of Sex Research, 28*, 443-456.
- Berscheid, E. (1988). Some comments on love's anatomy: Or, whatever happened to old-fashioned lust? In J. Sternberg & M. Barnes (Eds.), *The psychology of love* (pp. 359-374). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Berscheid, E., & Walster, E. (1974). A little bit about love. In T. L. Huston (Ed.), *Foundations of interpersonal attraction* (pp. 355-381). New York: Academic Press.
- Bertocci, P. A. (1988). *The person and primary emotions*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Blumstein, P., & Schwartz, P. (1983). *American couples*. New York: Morrow.
- Blumstein, P., & Schwartz, P. (1990). Intimate relationships and the creation of sexuality. In D. P. McWhirter, S. A. Sanders, & J. M. Reinisch (Eds.), *Homosexuality/heterosexuality: Concepts of sexual orientation*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brehm, S. S. (1992). *Intimate relationships* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Brown, M., & Auerback, A. (1981). Communication patterns in initiation of marital sex. *Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality, 15*, 105-117.
- Buck, R. (1980). Nonverbal behavior and the theory of emotion: The facial feedback hypothesis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 38*, 811-824.
- Buck, R. (1984). *The communication of emotion*. New York: Guilford.
- Byers, E. S. (1988). Effects of sexual arousal on men's and women's behavior in sexual disagreement situations. *Journal of Sex Research, 25*, 235-254.
- Byers, E. S., & Heinlein, L. (1989). Predicting initiations and refusals of sexual activities in married and cohabiting heterosexual couples. *Journal of Sex Research, 26*, 210-231.
- Call, V., Sprecher, S., & Schwartz, P. (1995). The incidence and frequency of marital sex in a national sample. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 57*, 639-652.
- Cavanagh, J. R. (1969). Rhythm of sexual desire in women. *Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality, 3*, 29-39.
- Christopher, F. S., & Cate, R. M. (1985). Premarital sexual pathways and relationship development. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 2*, 271-288.
- Christopher, F. S., & Roosa, M. W. (1991). Factors affecting sexual decisions in the premarital relationships of adolescents and young adults. In K. McKinney & S. Sprecher (Eds.), *Sexuality in close relationships* (pp. 111-133). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Cupach, W. R., & Comstock, J. (1990). Satisfaction with sexual communication in marriage: Links to sexual satisfaction and dyadic adjustment. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 7*, 179-186.
- Cupach, W. R., & Metts, S. (1991). Sexuality and communication in close relationships. In K. McKinney & S. Sprecher (Eds.), *Sexuality in close relationships* (pp. 93-107). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- D'Augelli, A., & D'Augelli, J. F. (1985). The enhancement of sexual skills and competence: Promoting lifelong sexual unfolding. In L. L'Abate & M. A. Milan (Eds.), *Handbook of social skills training and research* (pp. 170-191). New York: Wiley.
- DeLamater, J. (1991). Emotions and sexuality. In K. McKinney & S. Sprecher (Eds.), *Sexuality in close relationships* (pp. 49-70). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- DeLamater, J. (1989). The social control of human sexuality. In K. McKinney, & S. Sprecher (Eds.), *Human sexuality: The societal and interpersonal context* (pp. 30-62). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- de Rivera, J. (1984). Development and the full range of emotional experience. In C. Z. Malatesta & C. E. Izard (Eds.), *Emotion in adult development* (pp. 45-63). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Edgar, T., & Fitzpatrick, M. A. (1990). Communicating sexual desire: Message tactics for having and avoiding intercourse. In J. P. Dillard (Ed.), *Seeking compliance: The production of interpersonal influence messages* (pp. 107-122). Scottsdale, AZ: Gorsuch Scarisbrick.
- Ekman, P. (1984). Expression and the nature of emotion. In K. R. Scherer & P. Ekman (Eds.), *Approaches to emotion* (pp. 319-344). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Ekman, P., Levenson, R. W., & Friesen, W. V. (1983). Autonomic nervous system activity distinguishes among emotions. *Science, 221*, 1208-1210.
- Ellsworth, P. C., & Smith, C. A. (1989). From appraisal to emotion: Differences among unpleasant feelings. *Motivation and Emotion, 12*, 271-302.
- Epstein, S. (1984). Controversial issues in emotion theory. In P. Shaver (Ed.), *Review of personality and social psychology: Emotions, relationships, and health* (pp. 64-88). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Everaerd, W. (1988). Commentary on sex research: Sex as an emotion. *Journal of Psychology and Human Sexuality, 1*, 3-15.
- Frijda, N. H., Kuipers, P., & ter Schure, E. (1989). Relations between emotion, appraisal, and emotional action readiness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57*, 212-228.
- Gagnon, J. H. (1990). The explicit and implicit use of the scripting perspective in sex research. In J. Bancroft (Ed.), *Annual review of sex research* (Vol. 1, pp. 1-44). Lake Mills, IA: Society for the Scientific Study of Sex.
- Gagnon, J. H., & Simon, W. (1973). *Sexual conduct: The social sources of human sexuality*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Geer, J. H., & Broussard, D. B. (1990). Scaling heterosexual behavior and arousal: Consistency and sex differences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 58*, 664-671.
- Greenblat, C. S. (1983). The salience of sexuality in the early years of marriage. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 45*, 289-299.
- Greer, A. E., & Buss, D. M. (1994). Tactics for promoting sexual encounters. *Journal of Sex Research, 31*, 185-201.
- Hallstrom, T., & Samuelsson, S. (1990). Changes in women's sexual desire in middle life: The longitudinal study of women in Gothenburg. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 19*, 259-268.
- Harris, P. L. (1993). Understanding emotion. In M. Lewis & J. M. Haviland (Eds.), *Handbook of emotion* (pp. 237-246). New York: Guilford.
- Harvey, J. H., Weber, A. L., & Orbach, T. L. (1990). *Interpersonal accounts: A social psychological perspective*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, Inc.

- Hatfield, E., Greenberger, D., Traupmann, J., & Lambert, P. (1982). Equity and sexual satisfaction in recently married couples. *Journal of Sex Research, 18*, 18–32.
- Hatfield, E., & Rapson, R. (1987). Passionate love/sexual desire: Can the same paradigm explain both? *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 16*, 259–278.
- Hatfield, E., & Rapson, R. L. (1990). Passionate love in intimate relationships. In B. S. Moore & A. Isen (Eds.), *Affect and social behavior* (pp. 126–152). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Hatfield, E., & Rapson, R. (1993). Love and attachment processes. In M. Lewis & J. M. Haviland (Eds.), *Handbook of emotion* (pp. 595–604). New York: Guilford.
- Hatfield, E., & Sprecher, S. (1986). Measuring passionate love in intimate relations. *Journal of Adolescence, 9*, 383–410.
- Hochschild, A. (1979). Emotion work, feeling rules and social structure. *American Journal of Sociology, 75*, 551–575.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The managed heart*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Izard, C. E. (1990). Facial expressions and the regulation of emotions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 58*, 87–498.
- Izard, C. E. (1993). Organizational and motivational functions of discrete emotions. In M. Lewis & J. M. Haviland (Eds.), *Handbook of emotion* (pp. 631–642). New York: Guilford.
- James, W. H. (1981). The honeymoon effect on marital coitus. *The Journal of Sex Research, 17*, 114–123.
- James, W. H. (1983). Decline in coital rates with spouses' ages and duration of marriage. *Journal of Bioscience, 15*, 83–87.
- Kaplan, H. S. (1974). *The new sex therapy: Active treatment of sexual dysfunction*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Kaplan, H. S. (1977). Hypoactive sexual desire. *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy, 3*, 3–9.
- Kaplan, H. S. (1979). *Disorders of sexual desire and other new concepts and techniques in sex therapy*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Kenny, J. A. (1973). Sexuality of pregnant and breastfeeding women. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 2*, 215–229.
- Knoth, R., Boyd, K., & Singer, B. (1988). Empirical tests of sexual selection theory: Predictions of sex differences in onset, intensity, and time course of sexual arousal. *Journal of Sex Research, 24*, 73–89.
- Koeppl, L. B., Montagne-Miller, Y., O'Hair, D., & Cody, M. J. (1993). Friendly? Flirting? Wrong? In P. J. Kalbfleisch (Ed.), *Interpersonal communication: Evolving interpersonal relationships* (pp. 13–32). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Laumann, E. O., Gagnon, J. H., Michael, R. T., & Michaels, S. (1994). *The social organization of sexuality: Sexual practices in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Laws, J. L., & Schwartz, P. (1977). *Sexual scripts: The social construction of female sexuality*. Hinsdale, IL: Dryden.
- Lazarus, R. S., Coyne, J. C., & Folkman, S. (1984). Cognition, emotion and motivation: The doctoring of Humpty-Dumpty. In K. R. Scherer & P. Ekman (Eds.), *Approaches to emotion* (pp. 221–238). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Leiblum, S. R., & Rosen, R. C. (1988). Introduction: Changing perspectives on sexual desire. In S. R. Leiblum & R. C. Rosen (Eds.), *Sexual desire disorders* (pp. 1–17). New York: Guilford Press.
- Leventhal, H. (1979). A perceptual motor processing model of emotion. In P. Pliner, K. R. Blankstein, & I. M. Spigel (Eds.), *Perception of emotion in self and others: Advances in the study of communication and affect, Vol. 5* (pp. 1–46). New York: Plenum.
- Leventhal, H. (1980). Toward a comprehensive theory of emotion. In L. Berkowitz (Eds.), *Advances in experimental social psychology, Vol. 13* (pp. 139–207). New York: Academic Press.
- Leventhal, H. (1984). A perceptual motor theory of emotion. In K. R. Scherer & P. Ekman (Eds.), *Approaches to emotion* (pp. 271–292). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Levine, S. B. (1984). An essay on the nature of sexual desire. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy, 10*, 83–96.
- Levine, S. B. (1987). More on the nature of sexual desire. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy, 13*, 35–44.
- Masters, W. H., & Johnson, V. (1979). *Homosexuality in perspective*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Masters, W. H., Johnson, V. E., & Kolodny, R. C. (1982). *Human sexuality*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company.
- McCabe, M. P., & Collins, J. K. (1984). Measurement of depth of desired and experienced sexual involvement at different stages of dating. *Journal of Sex Research, 20*, 377–390.
- McIntosh, W. D., & Martin, L. L. (1992). The cybernetics of happiness: The relation of goal attainment, rumination, and affect. In M. S. Clark (Ed.), *Emotion and social behavior* (pp. 222–246). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Metts, S., & Bowers, J. W. (1994). Emotion in interpersonal communication. In M. L. Knapp & G. R. Miller (Eds.), *Handbook of interpersonal communication* (second edition) (pp. 508–541). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Metts, S., & Cupach, W. R. (1989). The role of communication in human sexuality. In K. McKinney & S. Sprecher (Eds.), *Human sexuality: The societal and interpersonal context* (pp. 193–161). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Metts, S., & Spitzberg, B. H. (1996). Sexual communication in interpersonal contexts: A script-based approach. In B. R. Burleson (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 19* (pp. 49–92). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Moore, M. M. (1985). Nonverbal courtship patterns in women: Context and consequences. *Ethology and Sociobiology, 6*, 237–247.
- Moore, M. M., & Butler, D. L. (1989). Predictive aspects of nonverbal courtship behavior in women. *Semiotica, 76*, 205–215.
- Muehlenhard, C. L. (1988). "Nice women" don't say yes and "real men" don't say no: How miscommunication and the double standard can cause sexual problems. *Women and Therapy, 7*, 96–108.
- Murnen, S. K., Perot, A., & Byrne, D. (1989). Coping with unwanted sexual activity: Normative responses, situational determinants, and individual differences. *The Journal of Sex Research, 26*, 85–106.
- Oatley, K. (1993). Social construction in emotion. In M. Lewis & J. M. Haviland (Ed.), *Handbook of emotions* (pp. 341–352). New York: Guilford.
- O'Sullivan, L. F., & Byers, E. S. (1993). Eroding stereotypes: College women's attempts to influence reluctant male sexual partners. *The Journal of Sex Research, 30*, 270–282.
- Peplau, L. A., Rubin, Z., & Hill, C. T. (1977). Sexual intimacy in dating relationships. *Journal of Social Issues, 33*, 86–109.
- Perper, T., & Weis, D. L. (1987). Proceptive and rejective strategies of U.S. and Canadian college women. *Journal of Sex Research, 23*, 455–480.
- Pietropinto, A. (1986). Inhibited sexual desire. *Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality, 20*(10), 46–49.
- Plutchik, R. (1984). Emotions: A general psychoevolutionary theory. In K. R. Scherer & P. Ekman (Eds.), *Approaches to emotion* (pp. 197–219). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Reed, D., & Weinberg, M. S. (1984). Premarital coitus: Developing and established sexual scripts. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 47*, 129–138.
- Regan, P. C., & Berscheid, E. (1995). Gender differences in beliefs about the causes of male and female sexual desire. *Personal Relationships, 2*, 345–358.
- Regan, P. C., & Berscheid, E. (1996). Beliefs about the state, goals, and objects of sexual desire. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy, 22*, 110–120.
- Regas, S. J., & Sprenkle, D. H. (1984). Functional family therapy and the treatment of inhibited sexual desire. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 10*, 63–72.
- Reiss, I. L. (1986). *Journey into sexuality: An exploratory voyage*. New York: Prentice-Hall.
- Reiss, I. L. (1989). Society and sexuality: A sociological explanation. In K. McKinney & S. Sprecher (Eds.), *Human sexuality: The societal and interpersonal context* (pp. 3–29). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Richgels, P. B. (1992). Hypoactive sexual desire in heterosexual women: A feminist analysis. *Women and Therapy, 12*, 123–135.
- Riportella-Muller, R. (1989). Sexuality in the elderly: A review. In K. McKinney & S. Sprecher (Eds.), *Human sexuality: The societal and interpersonal context* (pp. 210–236). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Roche, J. P. (1986). Premarital sex: Attitudes and behavior by dating stage. *Adolescence, 21*, 107–121.
- Roseman, I. J. (1984). Cognitive determinants of emotion: A structural theory. In P. Shaver (Ed.), *Re-*

- view of personality and social psychology: Emotions, relationships, and health (pp. 11–36). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Rubin, Z., Hill, C. T., Peplau, L. A., Dunkel-Schetter, C. (1980). Self-disclosure in dating couples: Sex roles and the ethic of openness. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 42, 305–317.
- Sarni, C. (1993). Socialization of emotion. In M. Lewis & J. M. Haviland (Eds.), *Handbook of emotion* (pp. 435–446). New York: Guilford.
- Shaver, P. R., Schwartz, J. C., Kirson, D., & O'Connor, C. (1987). Emotion knowledge: Further explorations of a prototype approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52, 1061–1086.
- Shaver, P. R., Wu, S., & Schwartz, J. C. (1992). Cross-cultural similarities and differences in emotion and its representation: A prototype approach. In M. S. Clark (Ed.), *Emotion* (pp. 175–212). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Shotland, R. L., & Craig, J. M. (1988). Can men and women differentiate between friendly and sexually interested behavior? *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 51, 66–73.
- Simon, W., & Gagnon, J. H. (1986). Sexual scripts: Permanence and change. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 15, 97–120.
- Simon, W., & Gagnon, J. H. (1987). A sexual scripts approach. In J. H. Geer & W. O'Donohue (Eds.), *Theories of human sexuality* (pp. 363–383). New York: Plenum.
- Simpson, J. A., & Gangestad, S. W. (1991). Personality and sexuality: Empirical relations and an integrative theoretical model. In K. McKinney & S. Sprecher (Eds.), *Sexuality in close relationships* (pp. 71–92). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Smith, C. A., & Ellsworth, P. C. (1985). Patterns of cognitive appraisal in emotion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 48, 813–838.
- Solomon, R. C. (1993). The philosophy of emotions. In M. Lewis & J. M. Haviland (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions* (pp. 3–16). New York: Guilford.
- Spector, I. P., & Carey, M. P. (1990). Incidence and prevalence of the sexual dysfunctions: A critical review of the empirical literature. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 19, 389–408.
- Sprague, J., & Quadagno, D. (1989). Gender and sexual motivation: An exploration of two assumptions. *Journal of Psychology and Human Sexuality*, 2, 57–76.
- Sprecher, S. (1989). Premarital sexual standards for different categories of individuals. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 26, 232–248.
- Sprecher, S., McKinney, K., Walsh, R., & Anderson, C. (1988). A revision of the Reiss premarital sexual permissiveness scale. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 50, 821–828.
- Sprecher, S., Metts, S., Burleson, B., Hatfield, E., & Thompson, A. (1995). Domains of expressive interaction in intimate relationships: Associations with satisfaction and commitment. *Family Relations*, 44, 203–210.
- Sprecher, S., & Regan, P. C. (1996a). College virgins: How men and women perceive their sexual status. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 33, 3–15.
- Sprecher, S., & Regan, P. C. (1996b). *Passionate love vs. companionate love: Are there any differences?* Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Sprecher, S., & Sedikides, C. (1993). Gender differences in perceptions of emotionality: The case of close heterosexual relationships. *Sex Roles*, 28, 511–530.
- Stearns, P. N. (1993). History of emotions: The issue of change. In M. Lewis & J. M. Haviland (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions* (pp. 17–28). New York: Guilford.
- Stuart, F. M., Hammond, D. C., & Pett, M. A. (1987). Inhibited sexual desire in women. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 16, 91–106.
- Talmdage, L. D., & Talmdage, W. C. (1986). Relational sexuality: An understanding of low sexual desire. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 12, 3–21.
- Teevan, R. C., & Smith, B. D. (1967). *Motivation*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Tolman, D. L. (1991). Adolescent girls, women and sexuality: Discerning dilemmas of desire. *Women and Therapy*, 14, 55–60.
- Tomkins, S. S. (1980). Affect as amplification: Some modifications in theory. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 18, 119–158.
- Tomkins, S. S. (1984). Affect theory. In K. R. Scherer & P. Ekman (Eds.), *Approaches to emotion* (pp. 163–196). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Traupmann, J., Hatfield, E., & Wexler, P. (1983). Equity and sexual satisfaction in dating couples. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 22, 33–40.
- Trudel, G. (1991). Review of psychological factors in low sexual desire. *Sexual and Marital Therapy*, 6, 261–272.
- Tucker, P., & Aron, A. (1993). Passionate love and marital satisfaction at key transition points in the family life cycle. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 12, 135–147.
- Udry, J. R. (1980). Changes in the frequency of marital intercourse from panel data. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 9, 319–325.
- Useche, B., Villegas, M., & Alzate, H. (1990). Sexual behavior of Colombian high school students. *Adolescence*, 25, 291–304.
- Verhulst, J., & Heiman, J. R. (1979). An interactional approach to sexual dysfunctions. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 7, 19–36.
- White, G. L., Fishbein, S., & Rutstein, J. (1981). Passionate love and the misattribution of arousal. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 41, 56–62.
- Zilbergeld, B., & Ellison, C. R. (1980). Desire discrepancies and arousal problems in sex therapy. In S. R. Leiblum & L. A. Pervin (Eds.), *Principles and practice of sex therapy* (pp. 65–101). New York: Guilford.