

## Object of Desire Self-Consciousness Theory

Anthony F. Bogaert

*Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada*

Lori A. Brotto

*University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada*

In this article, the authors discuss the construct of *object of desire self-consciousness*, the perception that one is romantically and sexually desirable in another's eyes. The authors discuss the nature of the construct, variations in its expression, and how it may function as part of a self-schemata or script related to romance and sexuality. The authors suggest that object of desire self-consciousness may be an adaptive, evolved psychological mechanism allowing sexual and romantic tactics suitable to one's mate value. The authors also suggest that it can act as a signal that one has high mate value in the sexual marketplace. The authors then review literature (e.g., on fantasies, on sexual activity preferences, on sexual dysfunctions, on language) suggesting that object of desire self-consciousness plays a particularly important role in heterosexual women's sexual/romantic functioning and desires.

“ . . . It is better to be looked over, than overlooked.”

—*Mae West (Good Reads, n.d.)*

There is usually an initiator to any social activity with romantic and sexual content. In the initiator's eye (or mind's eye), someone in his or her range of view becomes an object of desire. Whether the object of desire reciprocates by, for example, returning an interested gaze and even ultimately becoming a willing romantic/sexual partner is another question. Most of these social/sexual exchanges never amount to more than a fleeting look even if the initiator's glance becomes a glare. However, in all these exchanges, there is usually a traceable pattern of initiation and response: i.e., a viewer finds and holds in his or her mind a potential partner as an object of desire, while the partner acknowledges (if he or she perceived the initiation) that his or her role in these exchanges has been to be that viewer's object of desire. Object of desire self-consciousness (ODSC), the perception that one is romantically and sexually desirable in another's eyes, is the focus of the present article.

Although similar observations and concepts can be found in the academic literature (e.g., Berger, 1972; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Meana, 2010; Money & Ehrhardt, 1972; Symons, 1987), we present ODSC as an integrative construct related to sexuality, romance and body image. We also review literature from a variety of fields and disciplines that converge on the idea

that this construct is a core facet of human's—particularly heterosexual women's—romantic and sociosexual functioning.

ODSC entails the perception that one is attractive in the eyes of another (or others). Thus, there would need to be another person(s), or an implied other person(s), in one's awareness of one's own attractiveness or beauty. In self-talk, this perception of being an object of desire would reflect phrases like “He desires me,” “He thinks I am sexy,” and “I am turning him on.” Of course, this level of conscious self-talk is not a requirement for ODSC to occur, but such phrases capture the (explicit or implicit) cognitions and meanings underlying it. Also note that, as ODSC is a perception, it does not imply accuracy in perceiving oneself as an object of desire in another's eyes.

Before proceeding, it is important to make a distinction between two elements of mating, courtship, and relationship formation: romance versus sex. Diamond (2003) described romantic love as “feelings of infatuation and emotional attachment. . . .” associated with pair-bonding (p. 173). In contrast, *sexual desire* can be defined as follows: “. . . a wish, need, drive to seek out sexual objects or sexual activities . . .” (Regan & Berscheid, 1995, p. 346; cf. Kaplan, 1979). Recently, some theorists have suggested that romantic and sexual processes are potentially independent, governed by different brain systems, and evolved from different processes (Fisher, 1998; Fisher, Aron, Mashek, Li, & Brown, 2002; cf. Diamond, 2003). Key aspects of romantic functioning (e.g., affectional bonding) may have evolved relatively recently in our evolutionary history from the attachment system (e.g., Hazan & Shaver, 1987) whereas sexual desire/attraction processes may have evolved from the mating and sexual attraction systems, much older phylogenetic systems than the attachment system. Yet, theorists have also made the point that romantic and sexual scripts are often tightly woven, particularly in women (Diamond, 2003; Regan & Berscheid, 1995). For example, romantic attachments can often cause sexual arousal and desire, and vice versa, in women (see Diamond, 2003, for a review). Given the close linkage between romantic and sexual activities, it should be noted that we believe ODSC is relevant to both types of functioning, even though many of the examples in this article are primarily sexual in nature.

ODSC is also associated with body image and related concerns. Whether a woman perceives her body as full-breasted, tall, or big-hipped (i.e., body image) and whether she evaluates her body negatively as too heavy, skinny, or flabby (i.e., body image concerns/dissatisfaction) are important and related constructs in that these body image cognitions and emotions influence whether someone is able to perceive themselves as an object of desire. Also, like ODSC, body image and related concerns have schematic properties (e.g., Altabe & Thompson, 1996). However, perceiving and evaluating one's body is only part of the thought process that is required in perceiving oneself as an object of desire. Additional elements are the “other” person, and that she perceives (implicitly or explicitly) that this “other” finds her attractive as a potential romantic/sexual partner. This “other” and perception of the other's evaluation is the main emphasis of the construct that separates it from general body image awareness. Thus, ODSC is a concept that concentrates on others' view (or our perception of others' view) and is essentially a type of “reflected appraisal” or a perception of how we think others see/view us.

As ODSC is a reflected appraisal of one's attractiveness, and body image emerges partly out of this type of appraisal process, ODSC likely plays an important role in body image development. Consider as an example a woman who thinks that only thin women are objects of desire in men's eyes. This can emphasize to her that she is heavier than most seemingly desirable women, and

thus she may begin to construe herself as “fat and ugly” (a negative body image). For most women, the reason why body image and related concerns/dissatisfaction (e.g., “I am fat,” “too small breasted”) is so important and can lead to undesirable consequences is because it does indeed reflect their perception of how they are viewed by others, particularly those others (e.g., potential mates) who they are trying to impress. Thus body image concerns are often driven by and emerge out of object of desire motives. If a woman considers herself to be “fat and ugly” (and is distressed about it), it is likely because she does not perceive her heavier-set body as the object of desire in other’s eyes.

ODSC also relates to another important psychological phenomenon: body self-objectification. This is the process where one might “adopt the observer’s perspective of their physical selves” (Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998, p. 269; see also Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Body self-objectification theory partly emerges out of observations made by feminist scholars (e.g., de Beauvoir, 1952), psychologists (e.g., Kaschak, 1992), sociologists (Cooley, 1902/1990; Goffman, 1979), and media observers (e.g., Berger, 1972; Mulvey, 1975). Fredrickson and colleagues (1998) argued that such self-objectification occurs in women as a result of the repeated exposure to “sexual objectification,” which entails the presentation of women as mere bodies (or body parts) whose function is solely to give pleasure to others. Repeated exposure to sexual objectification “. . . socializes girls and women to treat themselves as objects to be evaluated on the basis of their appearance” (p. 270). Thus, they internalize these objectifying evaluations and begin to see their bodies through the eyes of others. The third person’s perspective, rather than one’s own view of one’s body, then, becomes the focus of their thoughts (e.g., “How do I appear to him?”). This is the essence of a self-objectification process. Fredrickson and colleagues (1998) argued that these body self-objectifications have largely negative consequences for women, focusing their thoughts and attentions away from their internal qualities, along with reducing their ability to handle demanding tasks that the environment may present them. Similarly, McKinley and colleagues (Lindberg, Hyde, & McKinley, 2006; McKinley, 1999; McKinley & Hyde, 1996) argue that girls and women develop an objectified body consciousness (OBC)—“the tendency to view oneself as an object to be looked at and evaluated by others” (Lindberg et al., 2006, p. 65)—and that it has largely negative consequences for social and sexual functioning, such as disordered eating.

ODSC and its link to women’s sexuality would partly involve this process of self-objectification and OBC—seeing one’s body through the eyes of others (a reflected appraisal)—because an evaluation of oneself as an object of desire, particularly for women, is heavily focused on one’s body and the cognitive focus is on the other’s view of one’s body. However, ODSC is not only concentrated on the body as the object of desire (as OBC is); other elements—e.g., one’s behavior or inner qualities—may make a woman perceive herself as an object of desire.

ODSC is, in a different sense, also narrower than body self-objectification. It takes as its core element the perception of the other’s view of one’s body, similar to OBC, but it also restricts it to one’s perception that one is beautiful, sexy, and so forth, in others’ eyes. Thus it is not a general belief that one is evaluated in the eyes of other people, but that one has achieved a level of attractiveness in the eyes of others to be worthy of romantic/sexual relations. ODSC can be seen, then, typically, as a highly valued mental state that is partly the product of the body self-objectification or OBC (and other related) processes. Body self-objectification and OBC help to develop ODSC throughout one’s life, and to prime it in daily life. OBC is likely an

important process (and may cause problems, such as disorder eating) in part because object of desire awareness at the right time and in the right context is a very desirable (but often hard to attain) mental state.

From an evolutionary perspective, ODSC and its relation to sexuality can be construed as part of the process of recognizing one's mate value. Thus it is knowledge that one is a desirable mate and it is part of a host of mating mechanisms that serve to increase the likelihood of successful reproduction. There are a number of specialized mating mechanisms that animals and humans use to recognize and direct themselves toward appropriate mates (e.g., Bakker, 2003; Ritchie, 2000). Some of these basic mechanisms likely direct us toward members of the same species. Others are more specific, within-species mechanisms, directing animals toward specific members of their own species. Sexual orientation can be construed as one of these within-species mechanisms, in that it directs humans toward a specific category of sex within our species. As such, most people have a basic sexual/romantic attraction orientation toward, for example, members of the other sex (cf. Chivers, Seto, & Blanchard, 2007; Diamond, 2003). Sexual orientation (and the processes underlying it), then, is a mating mechanism that people use to solve the problem of with whom to mate within our own species. Conversely, it is plausible that we should also have a mechanism (or mechanisms) that allows us to detect that others are attracted to us; that is, a recognition that others find us sexually and romantically desirable (Ellis, 1992; Symons, 1987). An ODSC is argued here to be part of that mechanism. It, along with other cognitive/evaluative processes such as social comparison (Gilbert, Price, & Allen, 1995) and OBC (e.g., Frederickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998; McKinley & Hyde, 1996), allows us to know (and potentially be tactical about) one's mate or sexual stimulus value vis-a-vis others (cf. Buss & Shackelford, 2008; Ellis, 1992; Schmitt & Buss, 1996).

How does ODSC relate to social/cognitive processing? Although we believe ODSC can occur as a perception that is relatively independent of existing cognitive structures, we expect it operates, at least partially, in schematic ways, linking it cognitively to both body image and sexuality. In particular, ODSC may be best construed as a (potentially) key element of an event self-schemata related to romance and sexuality. Thus, for some people, it forms a main element of romance/sexual scripts (e.g., Abelson, 1981; Metts & Spitzberg, 1996; Schank & Abelson, 1977; Simon & Gagnon, 1986). Scripts are cognitive generalizations about the "appropriate sequence of events in a particular context" (Schank & Abelson, 1977, p. 41). Also, like all schemata (or knowledge structures), scripts comprise a series of self-relevant information, cognitions, and behavioral potentials that are interconnected and which are activated when the (event) schemata is primed. Schemata also imply a level of automaticity and implicit processing, such that interrelated cognitions and themes comprising the event schemata (unconsciously) activate one another. We expect ODSC is a particularly key element in women's romantic/sexual scripts, forming an important part of their sexual and romantic self-concept.

Here is an example to illustrate how ODSC might operate in a schematic (or script-like) fashion in women. A man notices a woman and looks attentively at her. The woman is aware of his appreciative look, and it raises her ODSC. It then activates a series of linked cognitive and behavioral responses (i.e., a knowledge network) related to attraction, romance and sexuality that form the beginning of her sexual/romance script. One of these early behavioral responses might be the tendency to engage in a "hair flip," arguably one of a woman's signals or displays that she is interested in romantic/sexual attention and may find the man (or men) with whom she is interacting attractive (e.g., Givens, 1978; Kolaric & Galambos, 1995; Moore, 1985).

If ODSC acts as part of a romantic/sexual script for women, it should not only be activated in response to naturalistic situations, such as in the example above of an attentive gaze from a man, but also be capable of being experimentally induced to operate in a similar way. Thus women who have ODSC as a key element of their sexual/romantic scripts and who are supraliminally or subliminally primed with concepts, such as “He thinks I’m beautiful,” “Men think I’m sexy,” or “I am a turn on,” should have relevant event self-schemata activated and therefore engage in more sexual/romantic behavior than women who have ODSC and do not have these event self-schemata primed. They may act, for example, in a more flirtatious manner toward a potential male suitor (e.g., more hair flips, eye contact) than women who have not had or did not have these object-of-desire themes in their sexual self-schemata primed. This prediction, however, has never been tested.

Women who have ODSC should also become sexually excited and have other positive emotional responses when exposed to such object-of-desire primes. This type of priming effect is expected to occur because sexual arousal (and related emotions) should also be linked to women’s romantic/sexual scripts. Thus, ODSC, aside from acting merely in a cognitive way, should also operate in and be strongly linked to “hot” or affective (e.g., arousal, desire, excitement, joy, pleasure) processes. Such bidirectional linkages of ODSC to sexual response is consistent with sexuality being, of course, a large source of pleasure and arousal in many people’s lives. It is also consistent with recent views of cognitive processing, including schemata, operating in multifaceted ways, including in response to affective primes and being tied to emotion (e.g., motivated cognition; e.g., Dunning, 1999; Kruglanski, 1996; Kunda, 1990).

Given that ODSC is hypothesized to function as part of self-schemata related to sexuality and romance, it also differs, at least partially, from the self-report of subjective attractiveness. Consider a teenage girl who is romantically and sexually schematic for ODSC but who does not perceive herself as physically attractive; hence, she would score low on subjective attractiveness. Yet, ODSC would still be a very relevant construct to her sociosexual functioning: She may be very preoccupied with her looks, is very conscious of men’s looks toward her, and regularly imagines herself being a beautiful object of desire in both her romantic and sexual fantasies. She may also be obsessed with models in fashion magazines and on TV. She views these women as ideals, wishes she could look like them, and regularly fantasizes about being them, projecting herself onto these models as they pose for (and are seemingly admired by) others.

### Gender Differences in ODSC

Men too may experience situations of ODSC (e.g., Janssen, McBride, Yarber, Hill, & Butler, 2008), but we expect this is not to the same depth and intensity to which they arise in women. We hypothesize that it is also not as linked directly to their sexual and romantic functioning. This difference in ODSC between men and women may occur for a number of interrelated reasons. First, men’s sexual desirability/attractiveness (*vis-a-vis* women) is less related to their physical appearance, and more linked to their behavior (e.g., dominance) and resources (e.g., Buss, 1989; Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Cunningham, Druen, & Barbee, 1997; Landolt, Lalumière, & Quinsey, 1995; Maner, DeWall, & Gailliot, 2008; Schmitt & Buss, 1996; Symons, 1979), so ODSC is not likely to develop as intricately or be part of their self-concept. Second, men’s sexuality/arousal, relative to women’s, is more proceptive (or initiating; e.g., Basson, 2002; Meana, 2010; Wallen, 1995), more objectifying (Money & Erhardt, 1972), less self-focused (Meana, 2010), and more

visually oriented (Symons, 1979) than women. Thus, boys and men are more likely to initiate any sexual/romantic activities than are girls and women, and are more likely to gaze and stare at girls/women in sexually interested/suggestive ways. Such attention, whether wanted or not, likely internalizes for an adolescent girl or young woman that romantic/sexual attention from men often begins with (or includes) her being the sexual object of his desire. In addition, a woman's sexual self-concept (e.g., sexual scripts) will become defined partly by how others (i.e., boys and men) view her as an object of desire. A girl's own emerging desire to initiate sexual activity and see boys and men as sexual objects may be overwhelmed by the persistent gazes and attentions that dictate to her that sexuality is linked to her being an object of desire. Third, and relatedly, men are more "category-" or "target-" specific in their choice of sexual objects (e.g., Chivers, Rieger, Latty, & Bailey, 2004; Suschinsky, Lalumière, & Chivers, 2009). Thus, ODSC, if it does emerge, is not as likely to be linked to their sexuality (or part of their sexual self-concept and form an enduring self-schemata) because other stimuli—such as the sight of nude women for heterosexual men—are more important in eliciting their arousal.

The importance of gender differences in ODSC also emerges from a sexual economics perspective. Baumeister and Vohs (2004) argued that sex can be construed as a commodity, and that the rules of economics (e.g., supply and demand) can help elucidate men and women's sexual behavior. They argue that, on average, men trade resources for sex, and that women trade sex for men's resources. This is in part because men, on average, desire sex more than women do (Baumeister, Cantenese, & Vohs, 2001). If so, it is to a woman's advantage to stimulate as much sexual desire as possible from potential male suitors because this "demand" for her (as a sexual partner) raises her "price" in the sexual marketplace and ultimately determines what she can expect from men (in terms of resources) in return. ODSC can be construed, then, as an important "signal" that one has stimulated high demand from a potential suitor(s). ODSC is a valuable, self-regulatory tool allowing women to demand an optimally high price for her sexual resource (cf. Buss & Shackelford, 2008). That many women, on average, devote considerable time and money to maintaining or enhancing their beauty and sexual appeal speaks to the importance of achieving ODSC, and its regulation, in the sexual marketplace.

## Evidence for ODSC Schemata and Their Linkage to Sexuality in Women

### *Fantasies*

Perhaps the best evidence for the role of ODSC in women's lives and its link to their sexuality (as, for example, part of a sexual script) comes from sexual fantasies. Sexual fantasies are important within this context, perhaps more so than actual behaviors, because behavior, particularly partnered behavior, is the compromise of the individuals comprising the dyad. Fantasies do not reflect this compromise: they usually only reflect the desires of the individual herself (Ellis & Symons, 1990; Leitenberg & Henning, 1995). Compared to women with low desire, women with higher levels of sexual desire reported that hearing a partner tell them that he fantasized about them was a strong trigger for sexual desire (McCall & Meston, 2006).

Maltz and Boss (1997) reviewed sexual fantasies of women they interviewed, and found evidence that they often contain themes of being an "object of desire." For example, of the women's seven most common scripted sexual fantasies, Maltz and Boss (1997) indicated that the most common can be called "the pretty maiden" script. Here, the authors argued, women directly

view themselves as (innocent and passive) objects of desires and derive sexual pleasure from this theme. The women who create these pretty maiden scripts fantasize that they are very beautiful and sexy, the object of desire of a powerful and more experienced man, who sweeps them off their feet and seduces them in a romantic and/or torridly sexual haze. Maltz and Boss (1997) argued that these pretty maiden themes are also very prevalent in fairy tales, film, literature, and particularly “romance novels” (cf. Assiter, 1988; Salmon & Symons, 2003). These novels are enormously popular and are almost exclusively read by women (Danford, 2005). These novels likely function as fantasy material, and have been argued to be a type of erotica, a female counterpoint to male-oriented pornography (Assiter, 1998; Salmon & Symons, 2003; Shepher & Reisman, 1985; Stoller, 1968). The content and popularity of these novels also reinforce the idea, suggested earlier (e.g., Regan & Berscheid, 1995), that sexual and romantic elements are often intertwined in women’s fantasies and lives.

Another common fantasy script is the “victim,” which usually entails some form of victimization and coercion. In these scripts, again consistent with the object of desire themes, there seems to be the presentation of the woman as an inviting sexual object, along with heightened levels of arousal on the part of men watching or viewing the woman before the sexual coercion occurs. For example, in the fantasy chosen by Maltz and Boss (1997) to represent this script, a woman writes:

I am alone in a fortress-like setting, with heavy drapes blocking out all sunlight. As I smooth oil on my body and dress in a flimsy costume that shows off my breasts, the phone rings . . . When the two men arrive . . . the guest pulls me across his lap . . . I can feel his penis getting hard. “She’s hot, huh?” my boyfriend says to the guest. When I hear this, I know that I have done my job well . . . (p. 28)

Note the elements of ODSC here, including the woman dressing in a provocative way, arousing a man, and hearing a man’s description of her as “hot.” However, a “victim” sexual narrative may, in and of itself, be a reflection of an object of desire theme, in particular, an “irresistibility” theme. A man’s use of force toward her can be seen (implicitly) by some women, at least within the context of their fantasies, as an inevitable consequence of their irresistible beauty (see also Bond & Mosher, 1986; Hariton, 1973; cf. Hawley & Hensley, 2009). Thus, perceiving a man’s need to use force may serve to reinforce or validate a woman’s fantasy that she is an irresistible object of desire because his lust is “out of control” in the presence of her beauty. Perhaps this is why these coercive themes are surprisingly frequent in women’s fantasies (Leitenberg & Henning, 1995), because they partly reflect an extreme irresistibility theme and thus are likely to prime ODSC.

Another element in many women’s fantasies, scripted or not, that may reflect object of desire needs is exposure themes (e.g., exposing or flashing one’s body or genitals). For example, “exposing yourself” is one item on the Wilson Sex Frequency Questionnaire (Wilson, 1978), a widely used measure of sexual fantasies. Women exceed men in endorsing this item (Gur-Arie, Tal & Alfonso, 2006), representing, perhaps, the only type of “illegal” sexual fantasy in which women exceed men in its frequency of occurrence. In all other fantasy sexual behaviors that contain illegality—such as forcing someone to do something, having sex with minors—men exceed women in their frequency of endorsing such behaviors (Wilson & Lang, 1981). Exposure fantasies may be popular in women for a number of reasons (e.g., exciting forbidden quality), but an important one related to the present discussion is that women may be presenting their bodies as an object of desire to men, something they want men to view and be turned on by.

In response to viewing films of male and female protagonists masturbating, men were most aroused to female masturbation; women reported less subjective arousal overall than men, but were aroused to both male and female masturbation (Abramson & Mosher, 1979; Mosher & Abramson, 1977). Afterward, participants were asked to create fantasies using these stimuli as a guide. When using female masturbation as the guide, the women created fantasies that demonstrated “positive projective identification” (Abramson & Mosher, 1979, p. 35). In other words, they were able to “project” themselves onto the female protagonist, i.e., presumably able to identify with her as a stimulus, potentially turning on and having sexual intercourse with a man (see Money & Ehrhardt, 1972; cf. Janssen, Carpenter & Graham, 2003; Schmidt, 1975). Thus, in support of the arguments put forth in this article, these findings may reflect the priming of ODSC in these women. In contrast, when using male masturbation as a guide, the men created fantasies that had much less erotic elaboration, reflecting little identification (i.e., negative projective identification) with the male character (Abramson & Mosher, 1979).

Recently, Bogaert, Pozzebun, Visser and Orlowski (2009) have found direct evidence that object of desire themes are linked more to women’s sexual fantasies than they are to men. Approximately 200 men and women reported on arousing themes in sexual fantasies using three methodologies: endorsement of items on a sexual fantasy questionnaire, sentence completion of sexually charged scenarios, and open-ended sexual fantasies. Composite scales reflecting object of desire themes were constructed on the three measures of sexual fantasies. For example, in the sentence completion task in the sexually charged scenarios, an object of desire theme linked to arousal occurred when a participant completed the following sentence: “I’m becoming increasingly turned on” with “the desire I am arousing in my partner.” On all three fantasy composites, women exhibited more object of desire themes than did men (all  $ps < .005$ ).

### *Response to and Consumption of the Media*

Additional evidence for ODSC comes from women’s arousal responses to explicit sexual media (i.e., pornography). Although women are not as aroused to this material as are men (Murnon & Stockton, 1997), there is evidence that women’s arousal largely derives from their identification with female actors in such media (Janssen et al., 2003). For example, women’s arousal to various explicit materials (both male and female selected) was only related to “imagining herself as a participant,” whereas men’s arousal was related to various aspects, including “watching as an observer,” “imagining himself as a participant” and the “attractiveness of the female arousal.” Thus, similar to the findings mentioned above for masturbation fantasies, women’s sexual responses to pornography may reflect their identification with a female character(s) turning on a man (i.e., positive projective identification; Money & Ehrhardt, 1972; Symons, 1987; cf. Schmidt, 1975).

The general media also give evidence for gender differences in ODSC. Images in women’s magazines in particular revel in what has been termed by media observers as the “male gaze.” For example, Berger (1972) noted these media images often present female models as if they were “aware of being seen by a [male] spectator” (p. 49). Others have made similar points (Fowles, 1996; Goffman, 1979; Messaris, 1997; Mulvey, 1975). For example, Messaris (1997) wrote: “When women look at these ads [in these magazines], they are actually seeing themselves as a man might see them” (p. 41). In short, the models presented are to be the embodiment of the perfect object of desire, and the models’ poses and facial expressions often reflect a

self-conscious knowledge of such. Of course, it is hard to disentangle whether such portrayals contribute to ODSC in women directly or whether they merely reflect inherent differences in the interests of men and women to view such imagery. Thus, the causal nature is up for debate, but the main point is that such portrayals are not gender neutral, portray large gender differences in ODSC imagery, and are directed at and largely consumed by women.

### *Sexual Activity and Preferences*

Another aspect of women's sexuality that gives evidence for the importance of ODSC is their reported preferences before and during sexual activities with a partner. Preferences, like fantasies and unlike actual behavior, are unencumbered or compromised by a partner's wishes and thus may reflect the true state of someone's desires or mating psychology (e.g., Symons, 1979). Graham, Sanders, Milhausen, and McBride (2004) used a qualitative study of a diverse sample to assess factors in women's arousal, including their preferences ("turn-ons") for sexual interactions. Certain themes emerged as being particularly arousing. One important theme was that women's bodies needed to feel attractive to them. One woman said: "If I'm feeling unattractive, like I've gained weight or something . . . but if I've lost 5 pounds . . . I'm just like wanting to take my clothes off a lot . . ." (p. 532). Another woman said: ". . . My hair is just right and everything is working and it's much easier for me to feel aroused . . ." (p. 532). Beyond their own perception of their body, however, knowing specifically that one was a "desired" object was also an important theme. One woman indicated: "It is very arousing to me to have someone verbally and physically appreciate my body" (p. 533). Graham and colleagues (2004) also stated that women's arousal was often enhanced when their partners gave signs to them that they (e.g., their body) were particularly appealing or special, relative to other women. One woman indicated: "when they're attracted to you and it's like they just have to touch you and they can't do enough for you" (p. 534).

It is interesting that Graham and colleagues (2004) did not report that women have a preference for, or are particularly turned on by, seeing their partner's body (see also Symons, 1979, for a discussion). Thus viewing a man's bodily features (e.g., his genitals) may have limited appeal for a woman during a sexual episode. There is evidence that women may direct as much visual attention to, and be as physically aroused by, the sight of (nude) women's bodies as men's (e.g., Chivers et al., 2004; Rupp & Wallen, 2007). However, seeing a man's erection may have some sex appeal to a woman indirectly, because it shows her that he is aroused (to her). Thus the "turn on" may derive from her ODSC and its link to sexuality (e.g., within a sexual script), in that it shows that her body and the activities she might engage in are effective as objects of desire. In short, the context of the erection ("He is turned on by me") may be more important than viewing the erect penis in and of itself. In contrast, men's interest/arousal in women's bodies (e.g., breasts, buttocks) while engaging in sexual activity (or not) are likely much more independent of the context in which those displays of body parts are occurring: they are turn-ons in and of themselves (e.g., Symons, 1979). The finding that sexual dynamics and relationship function is disrupted among some couples who adjusted to a man's erectile dysfunction but for whom sexual intercourse now became the sole focus following use of an erection-enhancing drug (e.g., Viagra; Perelman, 2007) implies that object of desire mechanisms might mediate that disruption. Specifically, erectogenic drugs may not reinforce a woman's ODSC because they may compete with or replace a woman's attractiveness to arouse a man, and as such, the use of these drugs might be met with ambivalence.

Hence a woman may perceive this type of erection as less appealing/arousing because the context that produces it (i.e., taking a pill) is not as rewarding to her as the context in which an erection occurs in response to her own sexual attractiveness.

Object of desire themes can also be observed in *sexual teasing*, defined as “a form of sexual provocation characterized by the promise of sexual contact followed by withdrawal” (Meston & O’Sullivan, 2007, p. 230). Although not universal, it is a relatively common form of manipulative behavior more prevalent in women (64% incidence) than in men (43% incidence), and a major motive for its use seems to be to increase a women’s attractiveness in their male partner’s eyes. For example, 68% of the women using this tactic said that they did this to their partner because “I wanted to make him/her want me sexually” (vs. 58.1% of men). Similarly, 51.8% of the women reported they did this to their partner because “I wanted to make myself feel attractive or desirable” (vs. 27.4% of men). Thus motives arising from object of desire issues seem to be important in these tease activities.

### *Sexual Dysfunctions*

Object of desire issues are also evident in women’s sexual dysfunctions. Sexual theorists and clinicians interested in women’s sexual dysfunctions have noted that a woman’s perception of her own attractiveness is an important factor for eliciting a woman’s sexual desire and arousal generally, and that this has implications for women’s sexual dysfunctions. For example, Basson (2002) wrote in the context of sexual dysfunctions that a woman’s sexual desire emerges under a number of circumstances, including her own “... heightened sense of attraction and attractiveness” (p. 18). She argues this within the context of a circular model of women’s responsive sexual desire, and that sexual difficulties can arise if she does not, among other factors, perceive herself as attractive. In a qualitative study that probed the triggers for women’s sexual desire among a mid-life aged group of women with and without sexual dysfunctions, the notion that a woman’s sexual desire was greatly enhanced if she perceived her partner’s desire for her was present throughout the interviews (Brotto, Heiman, & Tolman, 2009). Moreover, women with and without sexual dysfunctions did not differ on the importance of this trigger. Several women discussed perceiving their partner’s erectile difficulties or depression as a sign that he did not find her desirable, and this, in turn, diminished her own sexual desire. Another qualitative study of women in long-term partnerships found that the lack of external validation from other men (i.e., not their husbands) was a significant contributor to their waning desire (Sims & Meana, 2010). These findings suggest that a potential mode of treatment for women with sexual difficulties may be to enhance her ODSC, either directly by cognitively challenging myths about her lack of attraction, or indirectly by encouraging her to take note of signs that her partner (and others) find her sexually desirable.

There is also a vast literature on body image issues and health related to women’s sexuality. For example, research suggests that women’s sexuality can be dampened when their health (e.g., breast or gynecologic cancer) alters their body and affects body image (e.g., Avis, Crawford, & Manuel, 2004; Henson, 2002). Sexual difficulties among women with a history of sexual abuse are also mediated by negative sexual self-schema (Meston, Rellini, & Heiman, 2006). Specifically, women with a sexual abuse history were less able to view themselves as being romantic or passionate. Moreover, there is evidence that some women’s sexual interests may decline because of negative body image as a result of the aging process (e.g., Crose, 2002), and that aging is

associated with less physical sexual satisfaction (Carpenter, Nathanson, & Kim, 2009). In each of these cases (i.e., in health, sexual abuse, and aging), women's ODSC may be less likely to be primed and, thus, activation of sexual schemata (e.g., cognitions and behaviors within her sexual script) are less likely to occur.

Similarly, negative body image can detract from sexual performance because it relates to the Masters and Johnson's (1970) construct of "spectatoring," where one is cognitively self-absorbed about one's sexual performance and/or a (negative) perception of one's body during sexual acts. Faith and Schare (1993) found that (negative) body image cognitions dampen women's sexual arousal more than men's (see also Purdon & Holdaway, 2006; cf. Frederickson & Roberts, 1997; Weiderman, 2000). That "spectatoring" about negative body image can detract from sexual performance raises the possibility that spectatoring on (i.e., attending to) very positive body self images (e.g., "My body is really turning him on!") may also enhance the sexual experience for some women. Earlier, we discussed the finding that experimentally induced positive sexual schemas in a laboratory setting, with instructions that specifically primed women's positive sense of their bodies, led to enhanced physiological, subjective, and emotional sexual arousal (Kuffel & Heiman, 2006). In a subsequent replication, women with sexual dysfunction underwent the same positive sexual self-schemata manipulation, and experienced a similar enhancement of physiological and subjective sexual arousal as well as positive affect (Middleton, Kuffel, & Heiman, 2008). Moreover, women's extent of physiological and subjective sexual arousal was directly correlated with their ability to adopt the positive sexual schema induction. These findings suggest that, to the extent to which such sexual self schema induction elicits ODSC, the latter may be a highly valued state with implications for the treatment of sexual difficulties in women.

### *Language*

Phrases and linguistic elements are often co-opted by subgroups of people and/or become familiar in language because they serve a common purpose, have many environmental cues or a common habitat that makes them memorable, and/or they capture a common psychological understanding of a phenomenon (e.g., Berger & Heath, 2005; Norenzayan & Atran, 2004; Sperber, 1996). If so, we expect that object of desire themes, because they too reflect a common psychological understanding of a phenomenon in women's sexuality, to be observed by the language we use to describe women's (versus men's) sexuality, including their arousal. The phrase "I feel sexy" implies that this person has experienced ODSC. This is because *sexy* is an adjective describing the quality of a person or situation to arouse sexual feelings. Thus, to say that one "feels sexy" implies that one experiences/feels that one has aroused (or has the capacity to arouse) sexual feelings in others. Moreover, we believe this phrase also often implies that a person's own sexual interest is heightened and derives from his or her own state of attractiveness and ability to turn on others. When a person says, "I am feeling sexy," it is often as if he or she is saying "I am feeling sexually attractive, and am therefore feeling sexual." They perceive themselves as a (potential) sexual object of desire in other's eyes, and this is a turn-on. It is interesting that this phrase indicates more than just knowledge that one is/can arouse sex feelings in others. It is now a true sensation or a feeling.

Given that such phrases capture ODSC themes, we expect them to be used more by women than by men, particularly women schematic for ODSC. Recently, we have found confirmatory evidence that object of desire themes are more embedded in women's language of sexuality and

desire than they are in men's, particularly the phrase "feeling sexy" (Bogaert & Benson, 2010; Bogaert, Visser, Pozzebon, & Wanless, 2011). English is a flexible language and evolves easily to accommodate new (implicit or explicit) commonalities of understanding of phenomena (e.g., Dent, 2004). Thus, it may be unusual in having been adapted to incorporate ODSC themes into contemporary parlance. It would be interesting to examine (putative) distinctions in descriptions between women's and men's arousal in languages other than contemporary English.

In summary, a variety of domains of women's sexuality—such as fantasies, preference for sexual activities with a partner, dysfunctions, and language—suggest that many women have ODSC, and that it is linked to their sexuality (e.g., forms part of a romantic/sexual script).

### GENERAL SUMMARY

In this article, we introduced the concept of ODSC and suggested that it is a facet of human's sociosexual functioning. We presented evidence that ODSC operates partly in schematic ways (e.g., as an important element of a sexual/romantic script). We stated that ODSC is, along with related processes, an adaptive, evolved psychological mechanism allowing sexual and romantic tactics suitable to one's mate value. We also suggested that gender differences in ODSC occur, such that women are more likely to be schematic than are men. Women's elevated ODSC is likely driven by a number of gender differences in sexuality. These differences include the fact that women's sexual desirability is more related to physical appearance and that they are less proceptive in their sexuality, along with the importance, from the sexual economics perspective, of women stimulating as much sexual desire as possible from potential male suitors. Last, we presented evidence that a high level of object of desire themes exist in various domains of women's romantic/sexual lives (e.g., fantasies, sexual behavior preferences, sexual dysfunctions, sexual language).

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors thank Janette Bramley, Meredith Chivers, Carolyn Hafer, Luanne K. Jamieson, and Malvina Skorska for comments on an earlier draft of this article.

### REFERENCES

- Abelson, R. P. (1981). Psychological status of the script concept. *American Psychologist*, *36*, 715–729.
- Abramson, P. R., & Mosher, D. L. (1979). An empirical investigation of experimentally induced masturbation fantasies. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *8*, 27–39.
- Altabe, M., & Thompson, J. K. (1996). Body image: A cognitive self-schema construct? *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, *20*, 171–193.
- Assiter, A. (1988). Romance fiction: Pornography for women. In G. Day & C. Bloom (Eds.), *Perspectives on pornography, sexuality in film and literature* (pp. 101–112). London, England: Macmillan.
- Avis, N. E., Crawford, S., & Manuel, J. (2004). Psychosocial problems among younger women with breast cancer. *Psycho-Oncology*, *13*, 295–308.
- Bakker, J. (2003). Sexual differentiation of the neuroendocrine mechanisms regulating mate recognition in mammals. *Journal of Neuroendocrinology*, *15*, 615–621.

- Basson, R. (2002). Women's sexual desire—Disordered or misunderstood? *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*, 28, 17–28.
- Baumeister, R. F., Catanese, K. R., & Vohs, K. D. (2001). Is there a gender difference in strength of sex drive? Theoretical views, conceptual distinctions, and a review of relevant evidence. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 5, 242–273.
- Baumeister, R. F., & Vohs, K. D. (2004). Sexual economics: Sex as female resource for social exchange in heterosexual interactions. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 8, 339–363.
- Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of seeing*. London, England: British Broadcasting Corporation.
- Berger, J. A., & Heath, C. (2005). Idea habitats: How the prevalence of environmental cues influences the success of ideas. *Cognitive Science*, 29, 195–221.
- Bogaert, A. F., Pozzebon, J. A., Visser, B. A., & Orlowski, K. J. (2009, August). *Object of desire self-consciousness and sexual fantasies*. Paper presented at the International Academy of Sex Research, San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- Bogaert, A. F., & Benson, L. (2010). *Are you "feeling sexy"? The role of object of desire self-consciousness in women's language of desire*. Unpublished data, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada.
- Bogaert, A. F., Visser, B. A., Pozzebon, J., & Wanless, J. (2011, April). *Women's fantasies and their language of love: The role of object of desire self-consciousness*. Presented at SSSS (Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality, Western Division), San Francisco, CA.
- Bond, S. B., & Mosher, D. L. (1986). Guided imagery of rape: Fantasy, reality, and willing victim myth. *Journal of Sex Research*, 22, 162–183.
- Brotto, L. A., Heiman, J. R., & Tolman, D. (2009). Narratives of desire in mid-age women with and without arousal difficulties. *Journal of Sex Research*, 46, 387–398.
- Buss, D. M. (1989). Sex differences in human mate preferences: Evolutionary hypotheses tested in 37 cultures. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 12, 1–49.
- Buss, D. M., & Schmitt, D. P. (1993). Sexual strategies theory: An evolutionary perspective on human mating. *Psychological Review*, 100, 204–232.
- Buss, D.M., & Shackelford, T. K. (2008). Attractive women want it all: Good genes, economic investment, parenting proclivities, and emotional commitment. *Evolutionary Psychology*, 6, 134–146.
- Carpenter, L. M., Nathanson, C. A., & Kim, Y. J. (2009). Physical women, emotional men: Gender and sexual satisfaction in midlife. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 38, 87–107.
- Chivers, M. L., Rieger, G., Latty, E., & Bailey, J. M. (2004). A sex difference in the specificity of sexual arousal. *Psychological Science*, 11, 736–744.
- Chivers, M. L., Seto, M. C., & Blanchard, R. (2007). Gender and sexual orientation differences in sexual response to sexual activities versus gender in sexual films. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93, 1108–1121.
- Cooley, C. H. (1990). Human nature and the social order. In A. G. Haberstadt & S. L. Ellyson (Eds.), *Social psychology readings: A century of research* (pp. 61–67). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. (Original work published 1902).
- Croze, R. G. (2002). A woman's aging body: Friend or foe? In F. K. Trotman & C. M. Brody (Eds.), *(Psychotherapy and counseling with older women: Cross-cultural, family, and end-of-life issues* (pp. 17–40). New York, NY: Springer.
- Cunningham, M. R., Druen, P. B., & Barbee, A. P. (1997). Angels, mentors, and friends: Trade-offs among evolutionary, social, and individual variables in physical appearance. In J. A. Simpson & D. T. Kenrick (Eds.), *Evolutionary social psychology* (pp. 109–140). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Danford, N. (2005). *Embraced by romance*. Retrieved from <http://www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA6284835.html>
- de Beauvoir, S. (1952). *The second sex* (H. M. Parshley, Trans.). New York, NY: Knopf.
- Dent, S. (2004). *Larpers and shroomers: The language report*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Diamond, L. M. (2003). What does sexual orientation orient? A biobehavioral model distinguishing romantic love and sexual desire. *Psychological Review*, 110, 173–192.
- Dunning, D. (1999). A newer look: Motivated social cognition and the schematic representation of social concepts. *Psychological Inquiry*, 10, 1–11.
- Ellis, B. J. (1992). The evolution of sexual attraction: Evaluative mechanisms in women. In J. H. Barkow, L. Cosmides, & J. Tooby (Eds.), *The adapted mind: Evolutionary and psychology, and the generation of culture* (pp. 267–288). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, B. J., & Symons, D. (1990). Sex differences in sexual fantasy: An evolutionary psychological approach. *Journal of Sex Research*, 27, 527–555.
- Faith, M. S., & Schare, M. L. (1993). The role of body image in sexually avoidant behavior. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 22, 345–356.

- Fisher, H. E. (1998). Lust, attraction, and attachment in mammalian reproduction. *Human Nature*, 9, 23–52.
- Fisher, H. E., Aron, A., Mashek, D., Li, H., & Brown, L. L. (2002). Defining the brain systems of lust, romantic attraction, and attachment. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 31, 413–419.
- Fowles, J. (1996). *Advertising and popular culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fredrickson, B. L., & Roberts, T. A. (1997). Objectification theory: Toward understanding women's lived experiences and mental health risks. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 21, 173–206.
- Fredrickson, B. L., Roberts, T. A., Noll, S. M., Quinn, D. M., & Twenge, J. M. (1998). That swimsuit becomes you: Sex differences in self-objectification, restrained eating, and math performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75, 269–284.
- Gilbert, P., Price, J. S., & Allen, S. (1995). Social comparison, social attractiveness and evolution: How might they be related. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 13, 149–169.
- Givens, D. (1978). The nonverbal basis of attraction: Flirtation, courtship, and seduction. *Psychiatry*, 41, 346–359.
- Goffman, E. (1979). *Gender advertisements*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Good Reads (n.d.). Mae West quotes. Retrieved from <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/12824-it-is-better-to-be-looked-over-than-overlooked>
- Graham, C. A., Sanders, S. A., Milhausen, R. R., & McBride, K. R. (2004). Turning on and turning off: A focus group study of the factors that affect women's sexual arousal. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 33, 527–538.
- Gur-Arie, S., Tal, A., & Alfonso, V. C. (2006, May). *Human sexuality: Its association with relationship myths and satisfaction in life domains*. Poster session presented at the annual meeting of American Psychological Society, New York, NY.
- Hariton, E. B. (1973, March). The sexual fantasies of women. *Psychology Today*, 6, 39–44.
- Hawley, P. H., & Hensley, IV, W. A. (2009). Social dominance and forceful submission fantasies: Feminine pathology or power. *Journal of Sex Research*, 46, 568–585.
- Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1987). Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52, 511–524.
- Henson, H. K. (2002). Breast cancer and sexuality. *Sexuality and Disability*, 20, 261–275.
- Janssen, E., Carpenter, D., & Graham, C. A. (2003). Selecting films for sex research: Gender differences in erotic film preference. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 32, 243–251.
- Janssen, E., McBride, K. R., Yarber, W., Hill, B. J., & Butler, S. M. (2008). Factors that influence sexual arousal in men: A focus group study. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 37, 252–265.
- Kaplan, H. S. (1979). *Disorders of sexual desire and other new concepts and techniques in sex therapy*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Kaschak, E. (1992). *Engendered lives: A new psychology of women's experience*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Kolaric, G. C., & Galambos, N. L. (1995). Face-to-face interactions in unacquainted female-male adolescent dyads: How do girls and boys behave? *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 15, 363–382.
- Kruglanski, A. W. (1996). Motivated social cognition: Principles at the interface. In E. T. Higgins & A. W. Kruglanski (Eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles* (pp. 493–520). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Kuffel, S. W., & Heiman, J. R. (2006). Effects of depressive symptoms and experimentally adopted schemas on sexual arousal and affect in sexually healthy women. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 35, 163–177.
- Kunda, Z. (1990). The case for motivated reasoning. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108, 480–498.
- Landolt, M. A., Lalumière, M. L., & Quinsey, V. L. (1995). Sex differences in intra-sex variations in human mating tactics: An evolutionary approach. *Ethology and Sociobiology*, 16, 3–23.
- Leitenberg, H., & Henning, K. (1995). Sexual fantasy. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 469–496.
- Lindberg, S. M., Hyde, J. S., & McKinley, N. M. (2006). A measure of objectified body consciousness for preadolescent and adolescent youth. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 30, 65–76.
- Maltz, W., & Boss, S. (1997). *In the garden of desire: The intimate world of women's sexual fantasies*. New York, NY: Broadway Books.
- Maner, J. K., DeWall, N. C., & Gailliot, M. T. (2008). Selective attention to signs of success: Social dominance and early stage interpersonal perception. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 34, 488–501.
- Masters, W. H., & Johnson, V. E. (1970). *Human sexual inadequacy*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Co.
- McCall, K., & Meston, C. (2006). Cues resulting in desire for sexual activity in women. *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 3, 838–852.

- McKinley, N. M. (1999). Women and objectified body consciousness: Mothers' and daughters' body experience in cultural, developmental and familial context. *Developmental Psychology, 35*, 760–769.
- McKinley, N. M., & Hyde, J. S. (1996). The objectified body consciousness scale: Development and validation. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 20*, 181–215.
- Meana, M. (2010). Elucidating women's (hetero)sexual desire: Definitional challenges and content expansion. *Journal of Sex Research, 47*, 104–122 doi: 10.1080/00224490903402546
- Messaris, P. (1997). *Visual persuasion: The role of images in advertising*. London, England: Sage.
- Meston, C. M., Rellini, A. H., & Heiman, J. R. (2006). Women's history of sexual abuse, their sexuality, and sexual self-schemas. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 74*, 229–236.
- Meston, C. M., & O'Sullivan, L. F. (2007). Such a tease: Intentional sexual provocation within heterosexual interactions. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 36*, 530–543.
- Metts, S., & Spitzberg, B. H. (1996). Sexual communication in interpersonal contexts: A script-based approach. In B. R. Burleson (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 19. Communication yearbook* (pp. 49–91). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Middleton, L. S., Kuffel, S. W., & Heiman, J. R. (2008). Effects of experimentally adopted sexual schemas on vaginal response and subjective sexual arousal: A comparison between women with sexual arousal disorder and sexually healthy women. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 37*, 950–961.
- Money, J. & Ehrhardt, A. A. (1972). *Man and woman, boy and girl*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Moore, M. M. (1985). Nonverbal courtship patterns in women: Context and consequences. *Ethology and Sociobiology, 6*, 237–247.
- Mosher, D. L., & Abramson, P. R. (1977). Subjective sexual arousal to films of masturbation. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 45*, 796–807.
- Mulvey, L. (1975). Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. *Screen, 16*, 6–18.
- Murnon, S. K., & Stockton, M. (1997). Gender and self-reported sexual arousal in response to sexual stimuli: A meta-analytic review. *Sex Roles, 37*, 135–154.
- Norenzayan, A., & Atran, S. (2004). Cultural transmission of natural and nonnatural beliefs. In M. Schaller & C. Crandall (Eds.), *The psychological foundations of culture* (pp. 149–169). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Perelman, M. A. (2007). The impact of relationship variables on the etiology, diagnosis and treatment of erectile dysfunction. *Advances in Primary Care Medicine: Clinical Update, 3*, 3–6.
- Purdon, C., & Holdaway, L. (2006). Non-erotic thoughts: Content and relation to sexual functioning and sexual satisfaction. *Journal of Sex Research, 43*, 154–162.
- Regan, P. C., & Berscheid, E. (1995). Gender differences in beliefs about the causes of male and female sexual desire. *Personal Relationships, 5*, 139–157.
- Ritchie, M. G. (2000). The inheritance of female preference functions in a mate recognition system. *Proceedings of Biological Sciences, 267*, 327–332.
- Rupp, H. A., & Wallen, K. (2007). Sex differences in viewing sexual stimuli: An eye-tracking study in men and women. *Hormones and Behavior, 51*, 524–533.
- Salmon, C., & Symons, D. (2003). *Warrior lovers: Erotic fiction, evolution and female sexuality*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Schank, R. C., & Abelson, R. P. (1977). *Scripts, plans, goals, and understanding*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Schmidt, G. (1975). Male-female differences in sexual arousal and behavior during and after exposure to sexually explicit stimuli. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 4*, 353–365.
- Schmitt, D. P., & Buss, D. M. (1996). Strategic self-promotion and competitor derogation: Sex and context effects on the perceived effectiveness of mate attraction tactics. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology, 70*, 1185–1204. doi: 10.1037//0022-3514.70.6.1185.
- Shepher, J., & Reisman, J. (1985). Pornography: A sociobiological attempt at understanding. *Ethology & Sociobiology, 6*, 103–114.
- Simon, W., & Gagnon, J. H. (1986). Sexual scripts: Permanence and change. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 15*, 97–120.
- Sims, K. E., & Meana, M. (2010). Why did passion wane? A qualitative study of married women's attributions for declines in sexual desire. *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy, 36*, 360–380.
- Sperber, D. (1996). *Explaining culture: A naturalistic approach*. Oxford, England: Blackwell.
- Stoller, R. J. (1968). *Sex and gender: On the development of masculinity and femininity*. New York, NY: Science House.
- Suschinsky, K. D., Lalumière, M. L., & Chivers, M. L. (2009). Sex differences in patterns of genital sexual arousal: Measurement artifacts or true phenomena? *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 38*, 559–573.

- Symons, D. (1979). *The evolution of human sexuality*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Symons, D. (1987). An evolutionary approach: Can Darwin's view of life shed light on human sexuality? In J. H. Geer & W. T. O'Donohue (Eds.), *Theories of human sexuality* (pp. 91–125). New York, NY: Plenum.
- Wallen, K. (1995). The evolution of female sexual desire. In P. R. Abramson & S. D. Pinkerton (Eds.), *Sexual nature/sexual culture* (pp. 57–79). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Weiderman, M. W. (2000). Women's body image self-consciousness during physical intimacy with a partner. *Journal of Sex Research*, 37, 60–68.
- Wilson, G. D. (1978). *The secrets of sexual fantasy*. London, England: J. M. Dent & Sons.
- Wilson, G. D., & Lang, R. J. (1981). Sex differences in sexual fantasy patterns. *Personality & Individual Differences*, 2, 343–346.