

Men and Sex

Men and Sex provides a comprehensive yet accessible account of male sexuality by using the theoretical concept of the 'sexual script' to illuminate different aspects of men's sexual behaviour. Graham begins by discussing different theories of sexuality before providing a more detailed description of sexual script theory. This proposes how male sexual behaviour can be explained as a result of cultural influences modified by individual experience and personality as well as by interaction with others. Individual chapters detail the development of sexual scripts in childhood and adolescence, masturbation, cultural influences on sexuality, heterosexual behaviour, variations and problems in sexual functioning, homosexual behaviour, transsexualism, procreative sex, coercive sexual behaviour, the impact of physical and mental health problems on sexuality and sexuality and pornography. The concluding chapter looks at the future of male sexuality. The book makes a valuable contribution to the burgeoning literature on masculinity studies.

Philip Graham is Emeritus Professor of Child Psychiatry at the Institute of Child Health, University College London. He has published more than 150 articles and several books on a wide range of subjects, including the social construction of adolescence.

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A Sexual Script Approach

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This book is dedicated to the memory of
John Gagnon

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Preface

Knowledge has advanced rapidly from the time when, in 1974, John Gagnon and William Simon first put forward sexual script theory as a basis for explaining sexual behaviour. The aim of this book is to illustrate how this theory can, nevertheless, still be deployed as a comprehensive tool to illuminate how male sexuality ‘works’ in many of its manifestations. These include the development of sexual scripts in childhood and adolescence, masturbation, sexual preference, casual and committed sexual relationships both in men who have sex with women and men who have sex with men, transgender, sex for procreation, coercive sexuality, links between sexuality and various types of physical and mental impairment, and the viewing of pornography. Findings from a range of different disciplines, not only social and psychological but also medical and psychiatric, are brought to bear on these topics in a manner that has not so far been attempted.

The approach here rests less heavily on sociology and more on psychology than the original formulation proposed by Gagnon and Simon, now both deceased. Indeed, when I described what I proposed to write on this topic to John Gagnon before his death, he wryly commented that I couldn’t rid myself of the psychologist in me. That is quite true. My background in psychology and psychiatry makes this inevitable, and I do not regret it. Further, my approach incorporates the biological contribution to sexual desire and takes into account the results of quantitative research findings in a way that the original and many subsequent formulations of sexual script theory have failed to do. Again, my medical training and experience carrying out epidemiological as well as behavioural genetic studies meant this was inevitable. Nevertheless, the modified script theory proposed here owes an enormous amount to John Gagnon’s influence.

The past fifty years have seen gender studies established as an academic field. Initially most gender study texts focused on the disadvantaged status of women and took a feminist stance. During the past 25 years, however, the field has diversified considerably, with much more attention

given to male gender issues. Academics such as Michael Kimmel in the United States and Ken Plummer and Jeffrey Weeks in Britain have made a distinctive contribution to the field in this respect. New journals have been launched, including *Men and Masculinities*, *Psychology of Men and Masculinities* and *The Journal of Men's Studies*. The establishment in 2014 of the journal *New Male Studies: An International Journal* is evidence of growing academic interest. Greater awareness of transgender issues has led to a marked increase in academic interest in this topic with the establishment of other new scientific journals, such as *Transgender Studies Quarterly* and the *Journal of LGBT Youth*. Survey data on which to base academically sound arguments relating to general populations have increasingly become available, for example from the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles in Britain (NATSAL) and the National Health and Social Life Survey (NHSL) in the United States.

A word about my own background. Conducting research, doing clinical work and teaching as an academic child and adolescent psychiatrist at the Institute of Child Health, London, provided me with experience in the application of developmental approaches to all fields of human behaviour. The department in which I worked carried out pioneering work in child sexual abuse, mainly perpetrated by men. My interest in sexual behaviour was, however, stimulated during research for a book on adolescence. A significant amount of other work has also turned out to be relevant to the content of the present book. Thus my textbook of child psychiatry, published several years ago, covers sexual development and the development of hetero- and homosexual preferences in childhood and adolescence. Meanwhile, over some years, I sat on the Appeals Panel of the British Board of Film Classification, adjudicating with others on the panel whether pornographic videos could be given an 18+ certificate, could be sold in sex shops or should be banned altogether from public sale. This gave me some insight into the difficulties of defining obscenity and predicting whether harm might be caused by exposure to pornographic images. More recently, researching for a biography of Susan Isaacs, a very early member of the British psychoanalytic establishment (*Susan Isaacs: Freeing the Minds of Children*, 2011), I studied the way the psychoanalytic formulations of Sigmund and Anna Freud as well as Melanie Klein had shaped twentieth-century understanding of the psychology of male sexuality and the way their ideas were angrily and indeed appropriately rejected by early feminists. Finally, my dissertation for a master's degree in the history of ideas, published as an article in the *Journal of Gender Studies*, was on the connection between late Victorian and Edwardian

feminism and the second-wave feminism of the 1960s and 1970s. Thus, although I have approached the field of male sexuality somewhat as an outsider, my previous experience has proved more relevant than I might have imagined when I began to write on this topic.

I hope this book will be found useful by all those studying gender and sexuality at both the postgraduate and undergraduate levels, including psychologists, sociologists, psychiatrists, social workers, psychotherapists and specialists in sexual health. It may also be of interest to some members of the general public who, I hope, will find the content accessible even though they may lack specialist knowledge.

Many colleagues and friends have been helpful in providing advice, reading earlier drafts and in other ways. They include the late John Gagnon, John Bancroft, Michael Burawoy, Robert Cassen, Danya Glaser, Anna Graham, Cathy Greenblat, Michael Lefevre, Nick Midgley, Janet and John Murphy, Liam Murray, Ken Plummer, Steve Reicher, Stephen Scott, Mary Shurman, James Warner, Jeffrey Weeks, Kaye Wellings and Susan Woollacott. My thanks to them and apologies to others I may have forgotten. Various anonymous reviewers made useful points. Vicky Russell read and made comments on the entire manuscript, and I owe a particular debt of gratitude to her. My wife, Nori, has shown great patience and provided constant encouragement and support.