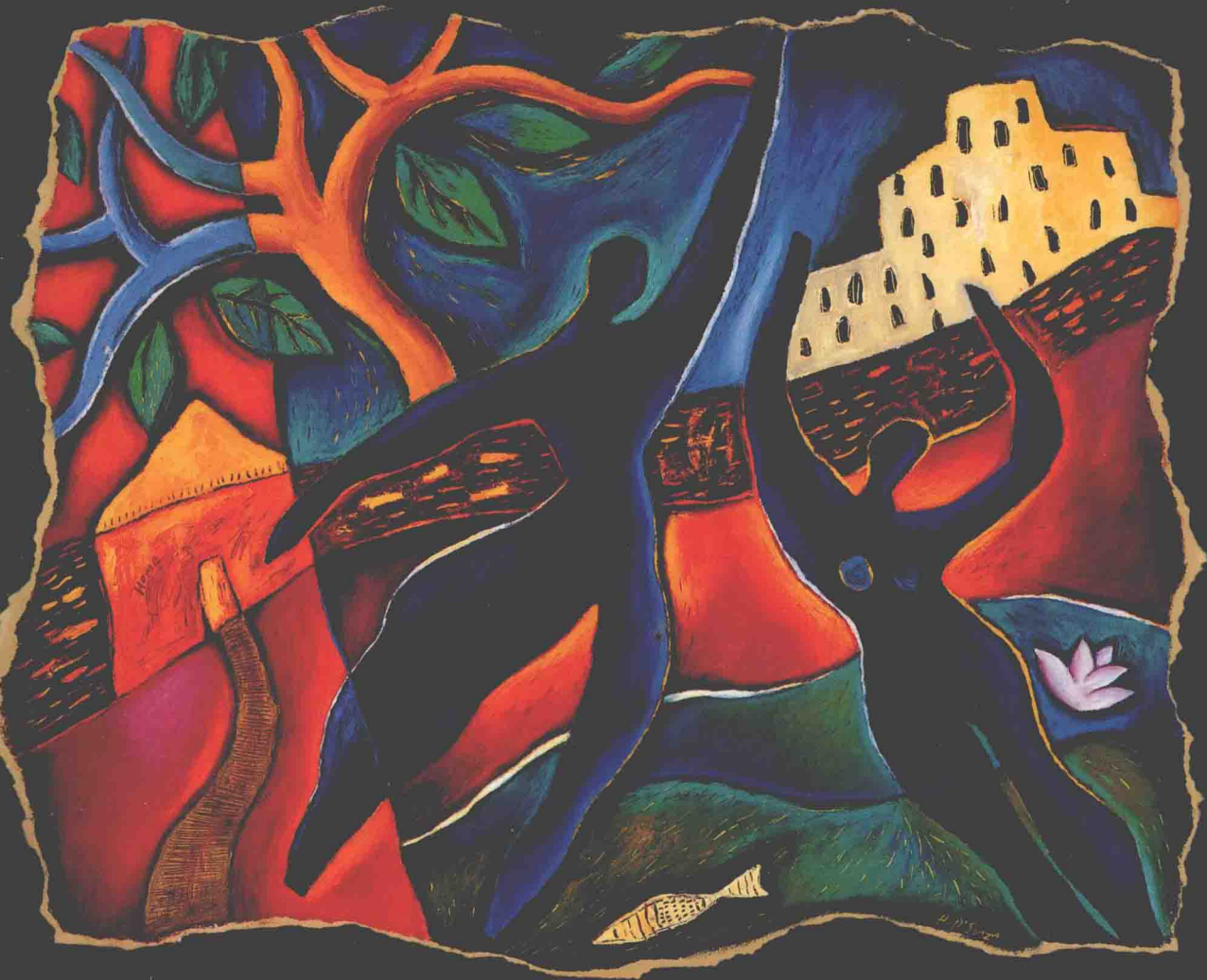


Women, Men, and Society

FOURTH EDITION



Claire M. Renzetti ■ Daniel J. Curran

FOURTH EDITION

Women, Men, and Society

Claire M. Renzetti

St. Joseph's University

Daniel J. Curran

St. Joseph's University

Allyn and Bacon

Boston ■ London ■ Toronto ■ Sydney ■ Tokyo ■ Singapore

*In memory of Joseph P. Renzetti and Daniel J. Curran, Sr.
and with thanks to our mothers, Clara Renzetti and Nancy Curran.*

Series Editor: *Sarah L. Kelbaugh*
Series Editorial Assistant: *Julianne Cancio*
Editor-in-Chief, Social Sciences: *Karen Hanson*
Marketing Manager: *Brooke Stoner*
Sr. Editorial Production Administrator: *Susan McIntyre*
Editorial Production Service: *Kathy Smith*
Composition Buyer: *Linda Cox*
Manufacturing Buyer: *Megan Cochran*
Cover Administrator: *Linda Knowles*
Electronic Composition: *Omegatype Typography, Inc.*



Copyright © 1999, 1995, 1992, 1989 by Allyn & Bacon
A Viacom Company
160 Gould Street
Needham Heights, MA 02494

Internet: www.abacon.com

All rights reserved. No part of the material protected by this copyright notice may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the copyright owner.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Renzetti, Claire M.

Women, men, and society / Claire M. Renzetti, Daniel J. Curran
— 4th ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-205-26562-6

1. Sex role—United States. 2. Sexism—United States.
3. Women—Socialization—United States. 4. Women—United
States—Social conditions. I. Curran, Daniel J.

HQ1075.5.U6 R46 1998
305.3—ddc21

98-45175
CIP

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 04 03 02 01 00 99 98

Photo credits appear on page 450, which constitutes an extension of the copyright page.

PREFACE

This edition of *Women, Men, and Society* is a year overdue. We have received many phone calls and e-mail messages from colleagues and even some students and former students, asking when the fourth edition would be ready. We'd like to take this opportunity to offer an apology for the delay, along with an explanation.

Early in 1996, Joe Renzetti, our father/father-in-law became sick and spent most of that year in the hospital. At the start of 1997, although he appeared to be getting stronger, he experienced heart failure and went into the hospital for the last time. He lived for three and a half months, usually conscious but unable to speak, communicating only by squeezing our hands, blinking his eyes, and sometimes nodding his head. Dad was a man who never let work interfere with family life, and he taught us to cherish that value as well. During his long illness, many projects were delayed—including this one—so we could be with him, Mom, and our extended family.

To those of you who have sent messages of support and sympathy, please know that we were touched by and are grateful for your kindness, understanding, and patience. We are grateful, too, to our “family” at Allyn and Bacon, who generously extended deadlines and did all they could to ensure that we had time to spend with Dad during his illness and time to grieve after his death.

When we finally got back to the business of revising this book, we looked to reviewers' suggestions for guidance. In response to these reviews, readers of this edition will find some significant changes. First, the text has been shortened somewhat, but this has been accomplished without sacrificing the thorough coverage of essential topics that reviewers praised. Chapters 3 and 13 have been eliminated; much of the material in Chapter 3 has been integrated into other chapters throughout the text, while the discussion of feminism, social movements, and social change has been moved to Chapter 1. All the statistics and citations, of course, have been updated, but more data on the intersection of gender with race and ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, age, and ability/disability have been added whenever possible. We have also expanded our discussions of men and masculinities. Readers will also find some new, timely topics covered in this edition, such as pornography on the Internet, sex tourism and the sexual exploitation of children, welfare reform, women and economic development, and heterosexism in health care.

Despite these changes, we didn't make change simply for change's sake. We listened to reviewers, who basically said, “If it's not broke, don't fix it.” We remain true to the goals we set for ourselves when we wrote the first edition of *Women, Men, and Society*. Our first goal continues to be to assist students in connecting a central element of their personal lives—their gendered experiences—with the social and political world in which they live. To do so, we present a broad, but thorough sampling of the wealth of recent scholarship on gender and gender-related issues. Most of this research is sociological, but we have also drawn on the work of biologists, psychologists, anthropologists, economists, historians, and others. This material often affirms students' observations that women and men *are* different in many ways, although perhaps less so than students

might suppose. Clearly, women and men are treated differently in most societies, and much of the research we examine addresses this differential treatment and its significance in the everyday lives of women and men within the context of particular structural or institutional arrangements.

Our second goal is closely intertwined with the first. Specifically, we seek to persuade students to look beyond the boundaries of their own lives so as to understand the complexity and diversity of gendered experiences in terms of race and ethnicity, cultural context, social class, sexual orientation, age, and physical ability/disability. Although our primary focus is a critical assessment of gender inequality, we emphasize in every chapter the interdependence of multiple inequalities. We want students to understand how the constraints imposed on women and men by specific social constructions of gender may be tightened when combined with a devalued racial/ethnic status, sexual orientation, age, economic status, or physical challenge. Moreover, while the book is written from a feminist perspective, we expose students to the diversity that makes up contemporary feminism, turning the analytic lens so that they see an issue from various feminist *perspectives*.

Finally, we hope to accomplish these first two goals by presenting the material in a way that students find stimulating, clear, and highly readable. Together, we have brought to this project fifteen years of textbook writing experience and more than thirty-five years of experience teaching the sociology of gender, women's studies, feminist theory, marriage and family, and similar courses. During our years in the classroom, we have observed that students who take such courses often come from diverse academic backgrounds. Although most are juniors and seniors, many have had only one or two introductory-level social science courses. With this in mind, we have incorporated into the text a number of useful pedagogical tools. For instance, key terms or concepts are emphasized in boldface within each chapter, allowing students to study them in the context in which they are introduced. These key terms are also grouped at the end of each chapter, where they appear with a brief definition. At the end of the book, all of the concepts are alphabetized and defined in a glossary. Each chapter also concludes with a brief list of suggested readings. An instructor's manual for the text is also available. The manual contains a test bank, film and video suggestions, classroom exercises, and resources available in print form and through the Internet, including a list of helpful Web sites and listservs. In response to reviewers' suggestions, the instructor's manual, and in particular the test bank, have been expanded considerably.

As with previous editions of this book, we have been fortunate to have colleagues who are generous with both their time and their resources. We wish to thank those who reviewed all or part of the third edition and this manuscript, offered insightful comments and criticisms, suggested additional references, shared journals and other publications, and passed along other relevant information that crossed their desks. In particular, we wish to thank Betty A. Dobratz, Iowa State University; Clinton J. Jesser, Northern Illinois University; Rebecca F. Guy, The University of Memphis; Sheila Macrine, St. Joseph's University; Mark McMinn, Wheaton College; Ken Pope, private practice, Connecticut; and Richard Warren, St. Joseph's University. Thanks also to the librarians at St. Joseph's University, especially Chris Dixon; our graduate assistants, Karen McDonough and Carlyn Prisk; and our secretaries, Denise Shaw and Jane Downey.

During the course of our long association with Allyn and Bacon, we have had the good fortune of working with Karen Hanson, Editor-in-Chief, Social Sciences. Karen guided this book through three editions before turning that responsibility over to Series Editor Sarah Kelbaugh. Sarah has met the challenge with the kind of expert editorial skills and good humor that most authors only wish for. We have also been blessed with Kathy Smith, whose editorial production service is surpassed only by her warmth and camaraderie.

While we were working on this preface, our son, Sean, inquired about what we were doing. We explained that we were revising one of our books. "*Again?*" he asked. But instead of walking away in exasperation, he sat down with us and actually offered some advice about what we were writing. He was soon joined by his brother, Aidan, and before long, we were reduced to laughter by their outrageous suggestions. There are not enough words to thank our children for the sustenance they provide us, not only in our work, but in every aspect of our daily lives. They are our anchors, and we are forever grateful.

CONTENTS

Preface xi

PART ONE Women and Men: What's the Difference?

1 Studying Gender: An Overview 1

Sociological Perspectives on Gender 3

Structural Functionalism 4

A Paradigm Revolution 8

A Feminist Sociology of Gender 10

Feminism in Historical Perspective 13

The First Wave of Feminism 13

■ BOX 1.1 Early Feminists 16

The Second Wave of Feminism 19

■ BOX 1.2 Feminism in Great Britain and Western Europe 20

Contemporary Feminisms 22

■ BOX 1.3 Men and Liberation 24

The Future of Feminism: Young Women and Women of Color 25

■ BOX 1.4 Feminism in Developing and Undeveloped Countries 26

The Perspective of This Text 29

Key Terms 29

Suggested Readings 30

Notes 30

2 Biology, Sex, and Gender: The Interaction of Nature and Environment 31

The Sex Chromosomes and Sexual Differentiation 33

Chromosomal Abnormalities and Gender 34

Prenatal Hormones and Gender 38

Prenatal Mishaps: What Can They Teach Us about Gender? 41

The Case for His and Hers Brains	43
■ BOX 2.1 Sexual Orientation and the Brain	41
“My Hormones Made Me Do It”	46
Testosterone and Gender	47
Women, Hormones, and Behavior	49
■ BOX 2.2 Postpartum Depression Syndrome	51
The Interaction of Biology and Culture	54
Key Terms	55
Suggested Readings	56
Notes	56

PART TWO Teaching Us to Know Our Respective Places

3 Early Childhood Gender Socialization 57

Learning Gender	58
Psychoanalytic Theories	59
Social Learning Theories	62
Cognitive Developmental Theories	63
Growing Up Feminine or Masculine	69
■ BOX 3.1 Where Have All the Young Women Gone?	
Sex Preference and Gendercide	70
Parent-Child Interactions	71
Toys and Gender Socialization	73
Gendered Images in Children’s Literature	75
Early Peer Group Socialization	77
By the Time a Child Is Five	78
Key Terms	79
Suggested Readings	79
Notes	80

4 Schools and Gender 81

An Historical Overview of Women and Men in Education	82
Women and Men in Education during the Twentieth Century	85

Educating Girls and Boys: The Elementary Schools	88
■ B O X 4 . 1 Gender and Special Education	89
Educating Teenage Girls and Boys: The Secondary Schools	94
■ B O X 4 . 2 The High School Experiences of Lesbian and Gay Youth	96
■ B O X 4 . 3 Gender, Mathematics, and Computers	99
Educating Women and Men: Colleges and Graduate Schools	101
Women Faculty and Administrators: Still Too Few	105
Sexual Harassment	109
Structuring More Positive Learning Environments	112
Gender, Education, and Power	116
Key Terms	117
Suggested Readings	117
Notes	117

5 The Great Communicators: Language and the Media 119

Sexism and Language: What's in a Word?	120
■ B O X 5 . 1 Sexism and Language	121
Do Women and Men Speak Different Languages?	123
■ B O X 5 . 2 Recognizing and Correcting Linguistic Sexism	124
Gender and the Media	126
The Written Word: Gender Messages in Newspapers and Magazines	127
Television: The Ubiquitous Media Socializer	134
Gender Messages in Advertisements: Does Sexism Sell?	138
Images of Gender in the Media: What Are Their Effects?	141
■ B O X 5 . 3 Violence and the Media	142
Language and Media as Shapers of Gender	145
■ B O X 5 . 4 Are Computers Becoming the Communication Medium of Choice for Women?	146
Key Terms	146
Suggested Readings	146
Notes	147

PART THREE Keeping Us in Our Respective Places

6 Gender and Intimate Relationships 149

Sociology Constructs *the* Family 151

Evaluating the Functionalist Perspective of the Family 152

Contemporary Families: Diversity and Change 153

Sexuality and Reproductive Freedom 155

Teen Pregnancy and Childbearing 156

Reproductive Freedom 157

New Reproductive Technologies 160

Varieties of Intimate Relationships 162

Heterosexual Marriages 162

Single-Parent Families 168

Singles and Domestic Partnerships 173

■ B O X 6 . 1 Gender Differences in Adjusting
to Widowhood 174

■ B O X 6 . 2 The Gay and Lesbian Rights Movement 180

Violence in Families and Intimate Relationships 182

Partner Abuse in Heterosexual Relationships 182

Partner Abuse in Gay and Lesbian Relationships 185

Child Abuse 186

■ B O X 6 . 3 The Sexual Exploitation of Children:
Child Prostitution 187

Elder Abuse 187

Families and Other Intimates: The Ideal and the Real Revisited 188

Key Terms 189

Suggested Readings 190

Notes 190

7 Gender, Employment, and the Economy 191

U.S. Working Women and Men in Historical Perspective 192

Sex Segregation in the Workplace 196

Consequences of Occupational Sex Segregation 203

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace 204

The Male/Female Earnings Gap	207
The Earnings Gap, Poverty, and Welfare Policy	209
■ BOX 7.1 Gender and Homelessness	213
Explaining the Wage Gap	214
■ BOX 7.2 The Child Care Dilemma	217
The Work World: Ideology and the Role of Law	221
Gender Stereotypes at Work	221
■ BOX 7.3 The Gendered Division of Labor in the Global Marketplace	223
Legislation for Equality in the Workplace	226
The Intersection of Home and the Work World	230
Key Terms	231
Suggested Readings	232
Notes	232

8 Gender, Crime, and Justice 234

Women and Men as Offenders	235
■ BOX 8.1 Drugs, Crime, and Gender	239
With Justice for All?	242
The Administration of Justice	242
Do the Punishments Fit the Crimes?	247
Gender and Corrections	251
Criminal Victimization: Gender, Power, and Violence	256
■ BOX 8.2 Hate Crimes	258
Rape	259
Pornography	265
Institutionalized Violence against Women: Custom or Crime?	267
■ BOX 8.3 Pornography and the Internet	268
■ BOX 8.4 Violence against Women as Human Rights Violations	269
Power, Crime, and Justice	273
Key Terms	274
Suggested Readings	274
Notes	274

9 Gender, Politics, Government, and the Military 276

The Gender Gap: Political Attitudes and Activities 277

Gender and Political Activities 282

Gender and Public Office 284

Women and Men in State and Local Government 289

Women and Men in the Federal Government 290

Women and Men in the Military 295

■ **BOX 9.1** “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”: Homosexuals
in the Military 302

The Politics of Gender 303

Key Terms 304

Suggested Readings 304

Notes 305

10 Gender and Spirituality 307

Gender and Religiosity 308

Goddesses and Witches 311

■ **BOX 10.1** Imaging God 312

Traditional Religious Teachings on Gender 315

Judaism 316

Christianity 321

Islam 326

Religion, Politics, and Social Change 329

Christian Fundamentalism and the Politics
of Gender and Sexual Orientation 330

Minority Churches: Resistance and Liberation 331

Challenges to Religious Patriarchy: Feminist Spirituality 333

■ **BOX 10.2** Ecofeminism 334

Key Terms 336

Suggested Readings 336

Notes 337

11 Gender and Health 339

Gender and Mortality 341

- B O X 11.1 Sex and Life Expectancy in Economically Undeveloped Countries 342
- Heart Disease 345
- Cancer 348
- Occupational Hazards to Male and Female Workers 348
- Other Causes of Death 350
- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) 352
- B O X 11.2 AIDS Prevention 353
- Women, Men, and Morbidity 354

Sexism in Health Care 355

- The Patriarchal Hierarchy of Health Care Work 360
- B O X 11.3 Heterosexist Health Care 361
- Feminist Health Care 364

Gender, Sport, and Fitness 365

The Politics of Mental Health and Mental Illness 369

- The Double Standard of Mental Health 370
- Sexism and Mental Health Services 384
- B O X 11.4 Beauty Norms 385
- Feminist Therapy 387

Toward a Healthy Future 388

Key Terms 389

Suggested Readings 389

Notes 389

Glossary 391

References 395

Name Index 433

Subject Index 443

CHAPTER

1

Studying Gender:
An Overview



We describe ourselves in many different ways. One of the most fundamental ways is to say, “I am a man” or “I am a woman”—that is, to describe ourselves in terms of our sex. However, the information conveyed by these simple phrases goes beyond mere anatomical description. It also conjures up a configuration of personality traits and behavior patterns. Without ever having seen you, others are likely to draw conclusions about you—about the clothes you wear, the way you express yourself, and the various activities you pursue.

If you are a woman, for example, people would not be surprised to see you wearing slacks, but they might expect, and even be pleased, to see you in a dress. Most also expect you to be rather passive and dependent, emotional and given to crying easily. They will think of you as nurturing, preoccupied with romance and your appearance, and inept with things mechanical.

If you are a man, though, people will expect to see you wearing slacks, and they would be shocked, maybe even frightened, to see you in a dress. Most also expect you to be assertive and independent, always in control of your emotions. They will think of you as ambitious and competitive; preoccupied with your studies, work, or sports; and mechanically inclined.

In other words, a biological given, **sex** (i.e., maleness or femaleness) is used as the basis for constructing a social category that we call **gender** (i.e., masculinity or femininity). It may be that few of the socially defined characteristics of your gender describe you accurately, but this is perhaps less important than the fact that people believe these assumptions to be true or appropriate and that they act on their beliefs, treating women and men differently, even as opposites. Many people use gender stereotypes to guide their interactions with others. A *stereotype* is an oversimplified summary description of a group of people. There are positive and negative stereotypes, and virtually every group in our society has been stereotyped at one time or another; women and men are not exceptions. **Gender stereotypes**, then, are simplistic descriptions of the supposedly “masculine male” or “feminine female.” Most people conceive of these stereotypes in bipolar terms; that is, a normal male supposedly lacks any feminine traits, and a normal female lacks masculine traits (Deaux & Kite, 1987). Thus, gender stereotypes are all-inclusive; every member of each sex is thought to share the characteristics that constitute their respective gender stereotypes. The reality, as we will learn throughout this book, is that many members of each sex do not conform to their stereotyped images. Sometimes this may be looked upon favorably by others, but often the nonconformist is labeled deviant, abnormal, or bad and is treated as such.

Significantly, this kind of differentiation occurs not only on an interpersonal level between individuals, but also on a structural level within a given society. Every society prescribes traits, behaviors, and patterns of social interaction for its members on the basis of sex. These prescriptions are embedded in the institutions of the society—in its economy, political system, educational system, religions, family forms, and so on. This institutionalized pattern of gender differentiation is referred to as a society’s **sex/gender system**. An examination of sex/gender systems, as well as their consequences for women and men, forms the major focus of this book.

We will learn that sex/gender systems vary historically and cross-culturally. However, each system includes at least three interrelated components:

1. the social construction of gender categories on the basis of biological sex;
2. a sexual division of labor in which specific tasks are allocated on the basis of sex; and
3. the social regulation of sexuality, in which particular forms of sexual expression are positively or negatively sanctioned (Rubin, 1975; Thorne, 1982).

Of special concern to us will be the ways in which a sex/gender system functions as a system of *social stratification*; that is, the extent to which women and men, and the traits and behaviors respectively associated with them, are valued unequally in a society.

Given that social institutions are imbued with the power to reward and punish—to bestow privileges as well as to impose obligations and restrictions—a sex/gender system has a profound impact on the lives and life chances of women and men. Consider, for example, that in most countries throughout the world, during the last two decades, women have entered the paid labor force in dramatic numbers, yet across countries, economic sectors, occupations, and educational levels, women's wages are significantly lower than men's wages, and women continue to shoulder primary responsibility for traditional household chores (United Nations, 1997). These startling observations reflect the fact that most women and men worldwide live in societies with patriarchal sex/gender systems. A **patriarchy** is a sex/gender system in which men dominate women, and what is considered masculine is more highly valued than what is considered feminine. However, as we will learn in this text, patriarchy is by no means universal. Thus, one of our tasks here will be to examine alternative, more egalitarian sex/gender systems. We will also find that patriarchy does not benefit all groups of men equally, just as it disadvantages some groups of women more than others.

Before we undertake our analysis of gender and sex/gender systems, though, we should realize that not all sociologists agree on how to study gender or on what aspects of sex/gender systems are most important to study. Why the disagreement? To understand it better, let's look at some of the research on gender and the various theoretical perspectives that have informed it.

Sociological Perspectives on Gender

Broadly defined, **sociology** is the scientific study of human societies and cultures, and of social behavior. Not all sociologists undertake this work in the same way, however. Rather, a single social phenomenon—gender, for instance—may be researched and explained differently by different sociologists. This may be a bit puzzling, since it is commonly assumed that all sociologists by virtue of being sociologists share the same perspective. Certainly, the traditional image of science itself is one of a cumulative enterprise. That is, each scientist, whatever his or her specific field, supposedly works to solve the problems that the members of the discipline have agreed are most important. Each scientist's work progressively builds on that of others until the answer or

truth is attained. The fact of the matter is, though, that scientists, including sociologists, conduct their research within the framework of a particular *paradigm*.

What is a paradigm? A **paradigm** is a school of thought that guides the scientist in choosing the problems to be studied, in selecting the methods for studying them, and in explaining what is found. This implies that research carried out within a specific framework is, to some degree, predetermined. The paradigm, in focusing researchers' attention on certain issues, simultaneously blinds them to the significance of other issues and also colors their view of the social world. This is not to say that there is no objective social reality or that sociology is simply what our favorite paradigm tells us it is. Instead, we can see that it indicates that sociological research, like all scientific research, is subjective as well as objective. This is an important point, and we will return to it shortly.

Sociology is a multiple-paradigm science; that is, it is made up of a number of different—and some would say, competing—paradigms (Ritzer, 1980). This observation solves our earlier puzzle of how a single social phenomenon can be researched and explained differently by different sociologists. At any given time, however, one paradigm tends to dominate the discipline. This does not mean that other paradigms are ignored, but rather that one paradigm seems to better explain current social conditions. Consequently, the majority of sociologists at that time will carry out their work within the framework of the dominant paradigm.

For much of sociology's recent past—especially from the 1940s to the 1960s—the dominant paradigm was structural functionalism. The structural functionalist perspective has been particularly influential in the study of gender, so it is important for us to examine it carefully.

Structural Functionalism

The **structural functionalist paradigm** depicts society as a stable, orderly system in which the majority of members share a common set of values, beliefs, and behavioral expectations that may be referred to collectively as *societal consensus*. The social system itself is composed of interrelated parts that operate together to keep the society balanced or, as a functionalist would say, in equilibrium. Each element of the society functions in some way to maintain social order. Change, then, must come about slowly, in an evolutionary way; rapid social change in any element would likely be disruptive and, therefore, dysfunctional for the system as a whole.

In their analysis of gender, structural functionalists begin with the observation that women and men are physically different. Of special significance are the facts that men tend to be bigger and stronger than women and that women bear and nurse children. According to functionalists, these biological differences have led to the emergence of different *gender roles*. More specifically, a social role, not unlike a theatrical role, includes a set of behavioral requirements expected of the person occupying the role. The concept of **gender roles** refers to the behaviors that are prescribed for a society's members, depending on their sex.

Functionalists maintain that for much of human history, women's reproductive role has dictated that their gender role be a domestic one. Given that women bear and