



WOMEN AND GENDER

A Feminist Psychology

THIRD EDITION

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WOMEN AND GENDER:
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About the Authors

MARY CRAWFORD is Professor of Psychology and Director of the Women's Studies Program at the University of Connecticut. She has taught the psychology of women and gender for twenty-five years, most of that time at West Chester University of Pennsylvania, where she earned the Trustees' Achievement Award for lifetime professional accomplishment. She has also held the Jane W. Irwin Chair in Women's Studies at Hamilton College, served as Distinguished Visiting Teacher-Scholar at the College of New Jersey, and directed the graduate program in women's studies at the University of South Carolina. Professor Crawford received her Ph.D. in experimental psychology from the University of Delaware. She is a consulting editor of *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, an associate editor of *Feminism and Psychology*, and a Fellow of both the American Psychological Society and the American Psychological Association. Mary Crawford has spoken and written about women's issues for audiences as diverse as the British Psychological Society, Ms. Magazine, and the Oprah Winfrey show. Works she has authored or edited include *Gender and Thought: Psychological Perspectives* (1989); *Talking Difference: On Gender and Language* (1995); *Gender Differences in Human Cognition* (1997); *In Our Own Words* (1997); *Coming Into Her Own: Education Successes in Girls and Women* (1999); and a special double issue of *Psychology of Women Quarterly* (1999) on innovative methods for feminist research.

RHODA UNGER is Professor Emerita of Psychology at Montclair State University and Resident Scholar in Women's Studies at Brandeis University. She received her Ph.D. in experimental psychology from Harvard University. Professor Unger was the first recipient of the Carolyn Wood Sherif Award from the Division of the Psychology of Women of the American Psychological Association. She is also the recipient of two distinguished publication awards and a distinguished career award from the Association for Women in Psychology. She has been the president of the Division of the Psychology of Women and, more recently, president of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. She has lectured extensively in the United States and abroad as a Fulbright scholar in Israel, a distinguished lecturer at the University of British Columbia, and as a visiting fellow of the British Psychological Society. She is currently the book review editor of the international journal *Feminism and Psychology* and is editing a handbook on psychology and gender. Professor Unger is the author or editor of seven previous books, including *Resisting Gender: Twenty-five Years of Feminist Psychology*; *Representations: Social Constructions of Gender*; *Women, Gender, and Social Psychology*; and *Female and Male*.

About the Cover

A COLORED POSTCARD, by Patricia Susan Brown. Patricia Susan Brown (b. Patricia Rundgren, Chicago, 1950) earned her B.A. in Studio Arts from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1984. She writes of her work, "Through painting I am able to freely explore and express the full range of intuitive emotional responses to life situations . . . I embrace abstract expressionism as an opportunity to paint intuitively—not starting with an idea in mind but with the act of painting itself." Though she sometimes feels that her artwork is ignored because she is a woman, Brown says that this fact only causes her to work even harder to gain recognition in the art world. And she is receiving that recognition. Her work has garnered numerous awards, including the 1994 Grumbacher Medal. Patricia Brown lives in Florida where she continues to exhibit her work individually and as a member of the Florida Artists Group.

*To our husbands
Roger Chaffin and Burt Unger
for always being there
and to our children:
Mary, Mark, and Ben
Laurel and Rachel
who represent our hopes
for the future.*

Preface

We wrote this book to share our excitement about the psychology of women and gender. At the millennium, psychology is in the midst of a transformation into a more balanced and inclusive body of theory, research, and practice. Contemporary feminism has provided psychology with a wealth of new theoretical frameworks and scholarship. In turn, psychological research is being used to further social change to benefit girls and women. This is an exciting time for students to begin their study of women and gender, and an exciting time to be teaching in this dynamic field.

As *Women and Gender* enters its third edition, we feel more confident than ever that it is a thought-provoking and informative text that is also a great read. Through an ongoing process of dialogue with students and teachers who used the earlier editions, we have created a new edition that speaks to today's students without sacrificing the depth and nuance that instructors expect from us.

We believe in introducing students to a variety of perspectives. We try not to oversimplify research findings and social issues. Rather, we respect the intelligence of our student readers. Although many will be new to feminist concepts and psychological methods, all are capable of reasoned analysis. And we have found, along with other instructors who have used the earlier editions, that students appreciate a text that does not talk down to them. The issues are too important, and too complex, to be presented superficially.

We take up the issues students want to know about: media images, women and leadership, transgender activism, male-female differences, relationships, career success, sexuality, date rape, and eating disorders. Students are eager to discuss and debate these topics. We relate the most current and comprehensive research on each. Sometimes, we leave an issue open and unresolved, so the reader may use informed judgment to make up her or his own mind. Feminism has nothing to fear from critical thinking!

Even more than in the earlier editions, *Women and Gender* is grounded in a social constructionist perspective. In other words, we view gender not as an attribute of individuals but as a system of meanings in which we are all immersed. Furthermore, we regard psychology not as an abstract, decontextual-

ized search for truth but a human enterprise shaped by culture. The social constructionist stance opens the way to critical analysis of popular culture, mass media, and everyday understandings of women and men. It also encourages critical analysis of why psychology chooses favored research topics, how it views women as objects of analysis, and how it has treated women in the profession, both historically and in the present.

The consistent social constructionist approach in this text makes it far more than just a compendium of research on sex differences or women's experiences. We draw on a huge variety of research using methods that range from case studies to surveys and experiments, and on theoretical perspectives from anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies, as well as psychology. Our social constructionist perspective organizes this wide-ranging knowledge and fosters the analysis of women and gender in their social, cultural, and historical context.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

Four themes organize this book:

- *Gender is more than just sex.* Gender is a system of meanings related to power and status. It operates at individual, interactional, and cultural levels to structure people's lives. We examine phenomena from each of these levels—individual, internalized aspects such as gender identity and gender typing; interactional aspects such as stereotypes, attributions, and self-fulfilling prophecies; and cultural aspects such as media representations, laws, and religious teachings.
- *Language and naming are sources of power.* Aspects of reality that are named become more visible. Regaining for women the power to name is the first step in personal and social change. We analyze gender bias in naming and language use, both in ordinary language (e.g., the "generic he") and in the specialized language of psychological constructs (e.g., "premenstrual syndrome"). We also show how ongoing language change is making women's experiences more visible. Thinking critically about language can increase understanding of how the gender system works and how it can be changed.
- *Women are not all alike.* Feminist scholars have become increasingly sensitive to the differences among women—in social class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, and culture. Integrating diversity throughout each chapter of the book, we explore how these differences affect women's experiences, including gender socialization, adult relationships, and psychological distress and disorder.

We also make use of a great deal of cross-cultural data, reflecting the transformation of psychological knowledge from its formerly white, North American, middle-class perspective. In discussing cultural differences, we avoid the ethnocentric view that presents other societies as exotic or less developed. Instead we contextualize practices that may seem strange to North American students. This depth of interpretation is especially important when discussing controversial issues such as female genital

surgery. Moreover, cross-cultural data provide powerful examples of our first theme, that gender is more than just biological sex. Even phenomena thought to have a strong biological base, such as menarche and menopause, are shaped by culture.

- *Psychological research can foster social change.* Students want more than just information about the problems confronting girls and women. They want to know what is being done to resolve them, and what might be done in the future. Without an emphasis on change, studying the psychology of women and gender could promote a sense of helplessness and pessimism. In every chapter of this text, there are powerful examples of people who have been agents of change.

Many of the problems that confront girls and women today are the result of social structures that disadvantage them. While changes in individual attitudes and behaviors, traditionally a focus of psychological research and practice, are necessary, they must be linked with changes in societies as a whole. Psychological research and theory can point the way to progressive social change.

NEW IN THIS EDITION

- *Student friendliness.* Written by two active researchers, *Women and Gender* has always been notable for its scholarship. In this edition we have made it more student-friendly while sacrificing none of the authoritative research base that made the earlier editions so popular with instructors.
- *More effective text and chapter organization.* One result of our dual focus on student interest and scholarly depth is that we have developed a new order and organization of chapters. In previous editions, the first three chapters were largely theoretical, and students reported that they found it difficult to connect with the material until well into the book. Moreover, given the changing priorities of feminist psychology, we re-thought the amount of space we had devoted to traditional personality and trait theories. In this edition, the introductory chapter is more student-oriented, and it is immediately followed by a chapter on images of women, then by one on gender processes in social interaction, issues of direct and immediate importance to today's students. Theoretical approaches to personality are integrated into other chapters where relevant.
- *Emphasis on social change.* A third major revision in this edition is the increased emphasis on personal and social change. Although the use of psychological research to foster change has always been a theme of the book, we now make the connections between research and social policy more visible, and we highlight women and men who are agents of change. Each chapter contains a boxed feature, "Making a Difference," which describes one person's efforts to bring about social justice. These features, researched and written by Mykol Hamilton, Associate Professor of Psychology and Psychobiology at Centre College, are an exciting and unique addition to *Women and Gender*, providing models of feminist activism for the new millennium.

- *New and empowering final chapter.* The potential for feminist psychology to foster progressive social change is the focus of an all-new closing chapter. Earlier editions ended with the rather depressing topics of violence against women and psychological disorders, followed only by a short epilogue. The third edition ends by returning the focus to solutions. Chapter 15, “Making a Difference: Toward a Better Future for Women” shows students how psychology can be used outside the classroom and encourages them to become personally empowered to speak out for gender equality.
- *Expanded multicultural coverage.* The new edition expands the multicultural perspective of the previous editions by adding new findings about the interactions of ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and social class in women’s lives.
- *More coverage of women’s health.* Throughout the book there is much greater attention to women’s health issues, reflecting the recent increase in research in this area. Rather than isolating health issues in a single chapter, we chose to stress the interaction of physical and psychological well-being, and their sociocultural specificity, by discussing health issues in context. For example, typical and atypical development of the female body is discussed in chapters 5, 7, and 12; reproductive health issues in Chapters 5, 7, 8, and 12; the physical and psychological effects of culturally sanctioned violence against girls and women in Chapters 8 and 13; eating disorders in Chapters 2 and 14; and the social construction of mental health and illness in Chapters 8, 10, 12, and 14.

This edition retains and expands successful features from earlier versions. Each of the four themes is woven throughout the book; each chapter ends with a summary of how the four themes are played out in that particular chapter. This allows students to trace the themes throughout the book and see their relevance across a wide range of topics. In Chapter 15, the themes are summarized and contextualized.

Every page has been revised and updated. There are nearly 600 new references to recent research. The text has more (and livelier) illustrations, boxes, and cartoons. And we have reduced the number of chapters to fifteen for a better fit to semester calendars.

NEW COVERAGE IN EACH CHAPTER

Instructors are invited to take a look at the complete table of contents to see how comprehensive our coverage is. Here, we would just like to point out a few new areas of emphasis in each chapter.

Chapter 1. With its focus on issues relevant to diverse students, Chapter 1 is an engaging introduction to the field. New is expanded coverage of a variety of feminist perspectives, which are contrasted to conservative perspectives on women and gender.

Chapter 2, *Images of Women and Men*, has always been a student favorite. In this new edition issues of high salience to students—gender stereotypes in the mass media, the problematic aspects of women’s quest for beauty and their conformity to impossible standards of weight, and new forms of sexism such as covert and ambivalent sexism—are presented earlier, sparking student

involvement from the start. New topics include how images of women are nuanced by race and class and how perceptions of being objectified influence women's behavior. Many new illustrations and thought-provoking cartoons are included.

Chapter 3, *Doing Gender*, unique to our text, shows how the belief that women and men are (and should be) fundamentally different is created and sustained in ordinary interaction through such processes as selective attention, selective memory, and self-fulfilling prophecies. In this edition, we look at new studies on perceptions of entitlement, leadership, and legitimacy and how to move beyond the "double bind."

Chapter 4, *The Meanings of Difference*, is new to this edition, replacing Chapter 3 of the earlier editions, which focused on gender differences in cognitive abilities. Students found the earlier chapter too detailed, and we came to agree that the topic no longer warranted the amount of coverage we had given it. Instead, the new chapter asks more general questions about gender differences and similarities and answers them in terms of contrasting feminist perspectives. The debate over gender differences in cognition and personality is connected to current societal issues such as women's under-representation in math and science careers.

Chapter 5, *Biological Bases of Sex*, is the most sophisticated and nuanced discussion of this topic available to students. In this new edition, we critically review recent studies suggesting a genetic basis for sexual orientation as well as new research on the many biological factors that influence human sex. Intersex and transgendered individuals are discussed from ethical as well as scientific perspectives. Finally, there is an increased emphasis on the contribution of culture in determining how sex leads to gender.

Chapter 6, *Becoming Gendered: Childhood*, now includes a synthesis of theoretical and empirical work on the social construction of gender before birth and throughout childhood. New material examines tomboys as examples of gender nonconformity and little girls who participate in beauty pageants as examples of hyperfemininity. New topics include the gendering of emotion, the antecedents of gender flexibility, and how gender segregation in children contributes to the development of male dominance. This chapter integrates cutting edge information on cognitive processes and social interaction.

Chapter 7, *Becoming a Woman: Puberty and Adolescence*, includes new material on the experience of adolescent girls as they encounter their changing bodies and boys' and men's response to their sexual maturation. We focus on how ethnicity and class interact with situational context to influence girls' response to puberty. New topics include schools and social power, the role of peer culture, and the silencing of young women. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the factors that impede gender equality.

Chapter 8, *Sex, Love, and Romance*, formerly Chapter 9, is another student favorite, with in-depth coverage of the cultural construction of sexual desire, romance, and norms for sexual behavior. New to this edition is coverage of adolescent sexuality, including factors influencing the initiation of sexual activity; safe sex, contraception, and STDs among teens; and the silencing of female desire. Also new is a discussion of female genital surgery in cross-cultural perspective. As in earlier editions, there is comprehensive coverage of lesbian and bisexual women's issues.

Chapter 9, *Commitments: Women and Long-Term Relationships*, updates its survey of heterosexual marriage, cohabitation, divorce, lesbian relationships, and other life patterns for women. Current statistics on these life paths in our own and other societies, as well as new and emerging relationship types such as egalitarian marriage, are presented.

Chapter 10, *Mothering*, expands its analysis of the diverse experiences of women who mother with new sections on teen mothers and single mothers. Another new section, "Is Fathering a Feminist Issue?" discusses the role of fathers in children's development and the changes in social policy needed to encourage responsible fatherhood.

Chapter 11, *Work and Achievement*, reflects the rapid change in women's work roles. The unpaid work of women in their homes is acknowledged, and the domain of employment is analyzed for gender inequality as well as opportunity. A new section, "Leadership: Do Women Do It Differently?" discusses recent research on factors affecting leadership style and effectiveness. The chapter ends with a synthesis of the costs and benefits of juggling work, relationships, and family.

Chapter 12, *Midlife and Beyond*, continues to emphasize the social construction of age and aging. It contains new material on the cultural context and complexity of midlife transitions and how structural factors (past and present) keep many older women in poverty. The chapter concludes with a positive focus on psychological well-being in later life, with new information on sexuality, friendship and social support, and activism and feminism among older women.

Chapter 13, *Violence Against Women*, written especially for this book by Jacquelyn White, Barrie Bondurant, and Patricia Donat, is organized around a model that identifies the commonalities among the various forms of violence against women: child sexual abuse, dating violence, sexual assault, and wife abuse. Its developmental contextual perspective views violence against women as occurring in a sociocultural context that supports male control of women. New to this edition is a discussion of sexual harassment in varied settings. The controversial topics miscommunication and date rape and false memory syndrome are addressed. Most important, there is a wealth of information on what is being done to stop violence against girls and women.

Chapter 14, *Mental and Physical Health*, has a new emphasis on the relationship between physical and psychological health. The section on eating disorders has been expanded to include prejudice and discrimination against overweight women and an examination of the ethnic and class distribution of various eating disorders. An expanded section on feminist therapy discusses the feminist critique of traditional treatment methods, the difference between nonsexist and feminist therapy, issues in therapy with marginalized populations, and the role of culture in the way distress is expressed.

Chapter 15, *Making a Difference: Toward a Better Future for Women*, is new to this edition. Feedback from students and instructors, and our own experience of teaching from the earlier editions, convinced us of the importance of ending a course in the psychology of women and gender with a positive synthesis of the gains that feminist psychology has brought. The new chapter speaks to students about both personal and social change as a result of their involvement in feminist psychology.

At the personal level, Chapter 15 encourages students to continue learning and to expand their knowledge of the psychology of women. It discusses research on the personal changes that occur in students' attitudes toward women, self-esteem, and feminist identity as a result of studying the psychology of women. It acknowledges and encourages increased personal empowerment for students.

At the societal level, Chapter 15 shows students how psychology can be used outside the classroom. It ties together the "Making a Difference" features from earlier chapters and discusses third wave feminism—the work of today's young activists. With examples of successful activism, it demonstrates how much society has changed in response to the first two waves of the women's movement. We are excited about this all-new synthesis and eager to hear feedback about it from our next generation of students and instructors.

USING THIS BOOK

Women and Gender contains a great deal of information and a sophisticated analysis of the field. However, as the wide adoption of the earlier editions at very diverse institutions shows, it is an approachable book. The third edition is even more user-friendly. It can be read by people who have the equivalent of one course in psychology and no previous exposure to women's studies. Students find the wealth of women's own accounts of their experiences compelling. And they like the touches of humor that lighten serious issues.

The book can be used in either a chronological developmental sequence, in social/clinical clusters, or in groupings of topical issues. Each chapter can stand as a unit by itself, allowing maximum flexibility in combining them. Chapters 5–7, 9–10, and 12 have a developmental approach that covers the life span. Chapters 2, 3, and 11 are social psychologically oriented, and Chapters 4, 8, and 14 form a clinical/personality cluster.

SUPPLEMENTS

In our own teaching, we also use *In Our Own Words*, (McGraw-Hill, 1997), a reader we developed specifically to connect the psychological research and theory in textbooks like our own with the voices and experiences of diverse girls and women. *In Our Own Words* is a collection of short (2–20 pages) essays, each with a distinctive personal voice. Some are humorous (Gloria Steinem's "If Men Could Menstruate"), some are poignant (Anna Quindlen's "Birthday Girl"), and all are memorable.

In Our Own Words is organized into six sections: *Making Our Voices Heard*; *The Making of a Woman: Bodies, Power, and Society*; *Making Meaning*; *Making a Living: Women, Work, and Achievement*; *Making Connections*; and *Making Our Lifepaths*. A section of 5–7 readings and their associated two-page introduction can be read along with a textbook chapter. For example, the section on bodies, power, and society nicely complements the *Women and Gender* chapters on Images of Women or Sex, Love, and Romance. Or, students can write brief reaction papers on selections of their choice. *In Our Own Words* provides a stimulus for student interest and class discussion and an experiential counterpoint to research.

The Instructor's Manual for the new edition, prepared by Mykol Hamilton with Michelle Broaddus, continues our tradition of providing the best teaching resources in the field. It features test items (multiple choice, short-answer, and essay), current video listings, classroom demonstrations and other techniques for stimulating active involvement, sample syllabi, suggestions for using worldwide web resources, course evaluation forms, ideas for integrating additional readings, and much more. Contact your McGraw-Hill representative for further information about supplements that accompany this text.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Like the previous editions, this book came about with the help of colleagues and friends. Jackie White, Barrie Bondurant, and Patricia Donat contributed a compelling chapter on violence against girls and women to each edition. We are grateful to have their expertise on this vitally important topic. Mykol Hamilton contributed not only the Instructor's Manual but the "Making a Difference" feature. We are grateful to Mykol for taking on these sizable tasks. Her superb work will make teaching easier and more rewarding for instructors who choose our book.

We thank Nicole Dolat, of the University of Connecticut Psychology Department staff, and Chris Luberto, Women's Studies staff, for cheerful and skilled help with manuscript preparation; graduate students Julie Konik, Miriam Liss, Jessica Suckle, and Angela Walker and undergraduate intern Anne Levin, for help with library research. Special thanks go to our editors at McGraw-Hill: Jane Vaicunas, Beth Kaufman, and Terri Wise, along with project manager Jayne Klein and photo editor Connie Gardner.

We wish to thank all the instructors and students around the U.S., the U.K., and Canada who so generously gave us feedback on the first two editions. We thank, too, the reviewers for the third edition: Melanie Williams, Humboldt State University; Renee Saris, Ball State University; Ellen G. Friedman, The College of New Jersey; Joan C. Chrisler, Connecticut College; Cindy Ann Hall, The University of Otago; Stephanie Riger, University of Illinois at Chicago; Judi Addelston, Rollins College; Millie Whalen, East Stroudsburg University; Nita McKinley, Allegheny College; Eva Clark, Old Dominion University; and Chieh-Chen Bowen, Cleveland State University.

We consider this book to be truly a collaborative effort. Our respective partners, Roger Chaffin and Burt Unger, have by now put in decades of effort in support of our research and writing, ranging from diaper-changing to computer problem-solving. Their belief in the value of our work and their tangible support has sustained us through the tough spots. Our children, colleagues, students and friends, too, should know that this book would not exist without your cooperation. We are grateful for the network of support that makes our work possible.

Mary Crawford
Rhoda Unger

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