

Taking **SIDES**

**Clashing Views on
Controversial Issues in
Human Sexuality**

Fourth Edition

Robert T. Francoeur



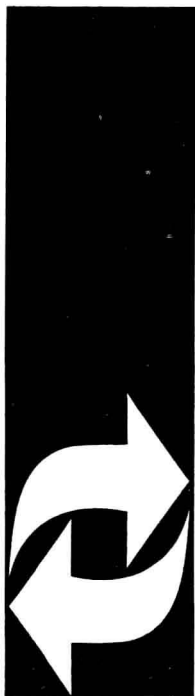
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Edited, Selected, and with Introductions by

Robert T. Francoeur
Fairleigh Dickinson University



The Dushkin Publishing Group, Inc.

For my wife and daughters, Anna, Nicole, and Danielle, and other special friends who continually force me to ask new questions.

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PREFACE

In few areas of American society today are clashing views more evident than in the area of human sexual behavior. Almost daily, in the news media, in congressional hearings, and on the streets, we hear about Americans of all ages taking completely opposite positions on such issues as abortion, contraception, homosexuality, surrogate motherhood, teenage sexuality, and the like. Given the highly personal, emotional, and sensitive nature of these issues, sorting out the meaning of these controversies and fashioning a coherent position on them can be a difficult proposition. The purpose of this book, therefore, is to encourage meaningful critical thinking about current issues related to human sexuality, and the debates are designed to assist you in the task of clarifying your own personal values and identifying what society's are or should be in this area.

For this fourth edition of *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Human Sexuality*, I have gathered 34 lively and thoughtful statements by articulate advocates on opposite sides of a variety of sexuality-related questions. For the questions debated in this volume, it is vital that you understand and appreciate the different positions other people take on these issues, as well as your own. You should respect other people's philosophical biases and religious beliefs and attempt to articulate your own. Democracies are strongest when they respect the rights and privileges of all citizens, be they conservative, liberal, or middle-of-the-road, religious or humanistic, of the majority or in the minority. Although you may disagree with one or even both of the arguments offered for each issue, it is important that you read each statement carefully and critically. Since this book is a tool to encourage critical thinking, you should not feel confined to the views expressed in the articles. You may see important points on both sides of an issue and may construct for yourself a new and creative approach, which may incorporate the best of both sides or provide an entirely new vantage point for understanding.

To assist you as you pursue the issues debated here, each issue has an issue *introduction*, which sets the stage for the debate, tells you something about each of the authors, and provides some historical background to the debate. Each issue concludes with a *postscript* that briefly ties the readings together and gives a detailed list of *suggested readings*, if you would like to further explore a topic.

Changes to this edition For this edition, I have made some significant changes. More than half the issues are new. The 10 new issues are as follows: *Are Gender Differences Rooted in the Brain?* (Issue 1); *Does Sexual Infidelity Destroy a Relationship?* (Issue 4); *Should RU 486 Be Legalized?* (Issue 6); *Should Schools Distribute Condoms?* (Issue 7); *Is There a Date Rape Crisis on College*

Campuses? (Issue 10); *Do Parental Notification Laws Benefit Minors Seeking Abortions?* (Issue 12); *Should the Policy Banning Gays from the Military Be Lifted?* (Issue 13); *Should Society Recognize Gay Marriages?* (Issue 15); *Is Sexual Harassment a Pervasive Problem?* (Issue 16); and *Has the Federal Government Spent Enough on AIDS Research?* (Issue 17). In addition, the NO article has been changed in the issue on fetal personhood (Issue 9) in order to bring a fresh perspective to the debate. In all, there are 21 new selections in this edition. I have also revised and updated the issue introductions and postscripts where necessary.

A word to the instructor An *Instructor's Manual With Test Questions* (multiple-choice and essay) is available through the publisher for the instructor using *Taking Sides* in the classroom, and a general guidebook, *Using Taking Sides in the Classroom*, which discusses methods and techniques for integrating the pro/con approach into any classroom setting, is also available.

Acknowledgments The task of tracking down the best essays for inclusion in this collection is not easy, and I appreciate the useful suggestions from the many users of *Taking Sides* across the United States and Canada who communicated with my publisher. Special thanks go to those who responded with specific suggestions for the fourth edition:

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Benjamin Franklin once remarked that democracies are built on compromises. But you cannot have healthy compromises unless people talk with each other and try to understand, appreciate, and respect their different ways of reasoning, their values, and their goals. Open and frank discussions of controversial issues is what this book is all about. Without healthy controversy and open exchange of different views, intolerance and bigotry could easily increase to the point where our democratic system could no longer function. Democracy thrives on controversy.

Robert T. Francoeur
Madison, NJ

INTRODUCTION

Sexual Attitudes in Perspective

Robert T. Francoeur

How do we develop our attitudes, values, and stereotypes about what is proper and expected behavior for men and women? Where do we get our ideas and beliefs about the purposes of sexual intercourse, sexual behavior, the role and position of the child in the family, the role of the family in society, and countless other sexual issues?

In part, the newborn infant learns about gender roles and what is right or wrong in sexual relations through conditioning by his or her parents and by society. Sociologists call this conditioning process socialization, or social scripting. They study the processes whereby each newborn infant is introduced to the values and attitudes of his or her social group; sociologists start their examination with the family and branch out to include the broader community as well. Psychologists talk about the process of psychological conditioning and learned responses. Anthropologists speak of the process of enculturation and study how the infant becomes a person who can function within a particular culture, more or less adopting the values and attitudes characteristic of that culture. Educators talk about value-oriented education and values clarification. Religious leaders speak of divine revelations, commandments, and indoctrination with moral principles and values. Each of these perspectives gives us some clues as to how we develop as individuals with different sets of values and attitudes about sexuality and other aspects of human life.

Before we explore the contrasting views on specific controversial human sexuality issues contained in this volume, we should try to understand our own views, and those of others who take positions that are different from ours, by reviewing some key insights into our development as thinking persons. We can start with the insights of three developmental psychologists. Working from that base, we can move to a cultural perspective and consider some socioeconomic and ethnic factors that help shape our attitudes about sex. To fill out our picture, we can briefly examine two religious perspectives that play a major role in the attitudes and values we adopt and come to defend with both tenacity and emotion.

THE INSIGHTS OF DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Jean Piaget

According to the theories of Jean Piaget (1896–1980), the famous Swiss developmental psychologist, we begin life as completely amoral, totally self-

centered beings. For the first two years of life, we are only concerned with our basic survival needs. The need for food, comfort, and security make us oblivious to the values of our parents. We do not understand nor do we care about what our families or culture have to say about our future roles as males or females and the kinds of relations and behaviors we might engage in. However, our parents are already conditioning and scripting us for our future roles. Parents and other adults generally treat boy and girl infants differently.

By age two, the child enters a stage of development Piaget calls the *egocentric stage*. For the next five years or so, the child has only a very general idea of what the rules are. As the child becomes aware of these rules, he or she tries to change them to accommodate personal needs and wants. A child's world is centered on itself. The child manipulates the world outside, then adjusts to the demands and expectations of parents and others.

By age seven, the child is ready to enter a new stage of development, which Piaget calls the *heteronomous stage*. In this stage, morality and what we see as right and wrong is based on outside authorities and a morality based on rules and laws. Guided by parents and other authority figures, the child begins to assert some degree of logical and moral control over his or her behavior. Between the ages of 7 and 12, the child begins to distinguish between valid and invalid ideas. Authority becomes a dominant concern, regardless of whether it is a parent, teacher, or older child who exerts it. The child often accepts an idea, attitude, or value without question, and issues tend to be seen in terms of black and white. There is little understanding of what is moral because of the total acceptance of the morality imposed by others.

As a young person enters the early teen years, he or she begins to comprehend values and apply them in original ways. This marks a transition, a turning point before one accepts full moral responsibility for one's life.

Finally, usually sometime after age 12, the young person starts moving into what Piaget calls an *autonomous stage*. At this level of moral development, we start thinking and acting as adults. We accept personal responsibility. We think in terms of cooperation rather than constraint. Peer interactions, discussions, criticisms, a sense of equality, and a respect for others help us develop this sense of morality and values. We begin to see other perspectives on moral and ethical issues. We may question and struggle to verify rules and ideas. If we find a rule morally acceptable, we internalize it, making it an integral part of our values.

Lawrence Kohlberg

Lawrence Kohlberg, another influential developmental psychologist, built on Piaget's model of moral development and expanded it with further insights. Instead of Piaget's egocentric, heteronomous, and autonomous

stages, Kohlberg speaks of preconventional, conventional, and postconventional stages. He then divides each of these stages into two substages.

On the level of *preconventional morality*, the child responds to cultural rules and the labels of good and bad. This level is divided into two stages: (1) punishment and obedience orientation and (2) instrumental relativist orientation. At this level, the child expresses a total respect for the authority figure and has only a very primitive sense of morality. On the second level of preconventional morality, the child is concerned with satisfying its own needs rather than the needs of others or of society.

When we reach the level of *conventional morality*, our sense of values is characterized by conformity to and maintenance of the moral conventions that are expected by one's family, group, or nation (stage 3)—regardless of the consequences. When we first begin to think in terms of social conventions, we are labeled a good boy or nice girl if we conform our behavior to familial and societal norms. As we reach stage 4, our understanding of conventional morality matures, and we develop a sense of law and order, focusing on fixed rules and upholding the social order. On this level, moral behavior consists of respecting authority and maintaining the social order so that society can function smoothly.

Finally, Kohlberg describes a *postconventional morality*, which is very similar to Piaget's autonomous stage. At this stage, an individual tries to define his or her own morality apart from that of authoritative figures. Stage 5, the social contract stage, is reached when an individual puts an emphasis on what is legally binding, but realizes that laws may change to meet social demands. The last stage of moral development is the level of universal ethical principle orientation. At this level, a person's conscience serves as the judge for moral dilemmas. Abstract qualities such as justice, human rights, respect for the dignity of human life, and equality become important in making decisions. For some people, adherence to an inner conscience may require them to break a law for a higher purpose.

While Kohlberg's theory is more detailed, it overlaps in many ways with Piaget's model. In a revision of his work, Kohlberg implies that a higher stage, such as stage 5 or 6, is not necessarily better than a lower stage, and that most people do not reach the sixth stage. In fact, Kohlberg's research suggests that most people seem to get "stuck" in stage 4, where law and order is the overriding orientation. What connections, if any, can you see between these two models of moral development and the value systems based on either a fixed or process world view?

Carol Gilligan

In 1982 Carol Gilligan, a Harvard psychologist, criticized Kohlberg's theory and its conclusions, and by implication the model suggested by Piaget. She suggests that these theories break down when applied to the ways in which women deal with moral issues. Studies have shown that when female solutions to hypothetical moral dilemmas are evaluated using Kohlberg's

scheme, women appear to be "stuck" at the second level, that of conventional morality, where moral decisions are made in terms of pleasing and helping others. Gilligan rejects this conclusion. She contends that women are not deficient or immature in their moral development but that the standard against which they are measured is biased. Kohlberg's model was derived from a 20-year study of moral development in 84 boys and no girls, although the model has been generalized and applied to the moral sensitivity of both men and women.

As a result of some pilot studies of moral reasoning in women, Gilligan suggests that there is another, equally valid, moral perspective besides Kohlberg's "justice and rights" framework. She calls this second perspective the "care" perspective because it emphasizes relationships and connections between people rather than an abstract hierarchy of rules and rights. This framework stresses nurturance and responsibility to and for others. For Gilligan, the justice and the care perspectives of morality are different, but neither is superior to the other. Neither is more or less mature. Both are necessary for human survival.

Gilligan points out that the two moral frameworks are gender related, but not gender specific. For the most part, women seem to be more comfortable within the care perspective, and men within the justice and rights perspective. However, in some instances, women reason from a justice/rights view and men from a care view.

SOCIAL AND ETHNIC FACTORS IN OUR VALUES

In our personal development, socioeconomic and ethnic factors play a major role in the sexual values and attitudes we incorporate into our lives.

The kinds of values and attitudes toward sex which we adopt in growing up are very much affected by our family's income level and general socioeconomic status. Studies have shown that, in general, there is more mutuality and sharing between men and women in the middle class than in the blue-collar working class. Working-class males are more reluctant to share in household duties and are more apt to segregate themselves from women at social functions. Working-class women tend toward passivity and nurturing and are more emotionally volatile than their middle-class counterparts. Studies have also indicated that one's occupation, educational level, and income are closely related to values his or her attitudes, role conceptions, child-rearing practices, and sexual identity.

Our values and attitudes about sex are also influenced by whether we are brought up in a rural, suburban, or large urban environment. Our ethnic background can be an important, if subtle, influence on our values and attitudes. In contrast to the vehement debates among white middle-class Americans about pornography, for instance, Robert Staples, a professor of sociology at the University of California, San Francisco, says that among American blacks, pornography is a trivial issue. "Blacks," Staples explains,

"have traditionally had a more naturalistic attitude toward human sexuality, seeing it as the normal expression of sexual attraction between men and women. . . . Rather than seeing the depiction of heterosexual intercourse or nudity as an inherent debasement of women, as a fringe group of [white] feminists claims, the black community would see women as having equal rights to the enjoyment of sexual stimuli. . . . Since the double [moral] standard has never attracted many American blacks, the claim that women are exploited by exhibiting their nude bodies or engaging in heterosexual intercourse lacks credibility." (Quoted in Nobile and Nadler, *United States of America vs. Sex* [Minobaur Press, 1986].) While middle-class whites may be very concerned about pornography promoting sexual promiscuity, most black Americans are much more concerned about issues related to poverty and employment opportunities.

Similarly, attitudes toward homosexuality vary among white, black, and Latino cultures. In the macho tradition of Latin America, homosexual behavior is a sign that one cannot find a woman and have sexual relationships like a "real" man. In lower socioeconomic black cultures, this same judgment prevails in its own way. Understanding this ethnic value becomes very important in appreciating the ways in which blacks and Latinos respond to the crisis of AIDS and the presence of males with AIDS in their families. Often, the family will deny a son or husband has AIDS until the very end because others might interpret this admission as a confession that the son is homosexual.

Another example of differing ethnic values is the issue of single motherhood. In ethnic groups with a strong tradition of extended matrilineal families, the concept of an "illegitimate" or "illegal" child born "out-of-wedlock" may not even exist. Unmarried mothers in these cultures do not carry the same stigma often associated with single mothers in other, less-matrilineal cultures. When "outsiders" who do not share the particular ethnic values of a culture enter into such a subculture, they often cannot understand why birth control and family life educational programs do not produce any substantial change in attitudes. They overlook the basic social scripting that has already taken place.

Gender roles also vary from culture to culture. Muslim men and women who grow up in the Middle East and then emigrate to the United States have to adapt to the much greater freedom women have in the States. Similarly, American men and women who served in the armed forces in Saudi Arabia during the 1990 Gulf War found they had to adapt to a very different Muslim culture, one that put many restrictions on the movement and dress of women, including Americans.

A boy who grows up among the East Bay Melanesians in the Southwestern Pacific is taught to avoid any social contact with girls from the age of three or four, even though he may run around naked and masturbate in public. Adolescent Melanesian boys and girls are not allowed to have sex, but boys are expected to have sex both with an older male and with a boy of

his own age. Their first heterosexual experiences come with marriage. In the Cook Islands, Mangaian boys are expected to have sex with many girls after an older woman teaches them about the art of sexual play. Mangaian also accept and expect both premarital and extramarital sex.

But one doesn't have to look to exotic anthropological studies to find evidence of the importance of ethnic values. Even within the United States, one can find subtle but important differences in sexual attitudes and values among people of French, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Scandinavian, Irish, and English descent.

RELIGIOUS FACTORS IN OUR ATTITUDES TOWARD SEX

In the Middle Ages, Christian theologians divided sexual behaviors into two categories: behaviors that were "natural" and those that were "unnatural." Since they believed that the natural function and goal of all sexual behavior and relations was reproduction, masturbation was unnatural because it frustrated the natural goal of conception and continuance of the species. Rape certainly was considered illicit because it was not within the marital bond, but since it was procreative, rape was considered a natural use of sex. The same system of distinction was applied to other sexual relations and behaviors. Premarital sex, adultery, and incest were natural uses of sexuality, while oral sex, anal sex, and contraception were unnatural. Homosexual relations, of course, were both illicit and unnatural. These religious values were based on the view that God created man and woman at the beginning of time and laid down certain rules and guidelines for sexual behavior and relations. This view is still very influential in our culture, even for those who are not active in any religious tradition.

In recent years, several analysts have highlighted two philosophical or religious perspectives that appear throughout Judeo-Christian tradition and Western civilization.¹ Understanding these two perspectives is important in any attempt to debate controversial issues in human sexuality.

Let me introduce these two distinct world views by drawing on a non-Western example from history, the Islamic or Muslim world of the Middle East and the politics of Iran and Egypt. On one side of the spectrum are Muslims who see the world as a process, an ever-changing scene in which they must struggle to reinterpret and apply the basic principles of the Koran to new situations. On the opposing side of the spectrum are fundamentalist Muslims who, years ago, overthrew the shah of Iran and then tried to return Iran and the Muslim world to the authentic faith of Muhammed and the Koran. This meant purging Iran's Islamic society of all the Western and modern customs the shah had encouraged. Anwar Sadat, the late president of Egypt, was assassinated by Muslim fundamentalists who opposed his tolerance of Muslim women being employed outside the home and wearing Western dress instead of the traditional black, neck-to-ankle chador. These fundamentalists also were repulsed by the suggestion made by Sadat's wife

that Muslim women should have the right to seek divorce and alimony. Nowadays, Muslim women do have the right to divorce their husbands, but new issues that raise conflicts between the two world views continually arise in the Middle East, such as the 1993 election of Tansu Ciller as Turkey's first female prime minister.

These same two world views are equally obvious in the ongoing history of American culture. Religious fundamentalists, New Right politicians, and the various members of the American Family Association, the Family Research Council of America, Focus on the Family, and the Eagle Forum believe that we need to return to traditional values. These distinct groups often share a conviction that the sexual revolution, changing attitudes toward masturbation and homosexuality, a tolerance of premarital and extramarital sex, sex education in the schools instead of in the homes, and the legality of abortion are contributing to a cultural decline and must be rejected.

At the same time, other Americans argue for legalized abortion, civil rights for homosexuals, decriminalization of prostitution, androgynous sex roles in child-rearing practices, and the abolition of all laws restricting the right to privacy for sexually active, consenting adults.

Recent efforts to analyze the dogma behind the fundamentalist and the "changing-world" value systems have revealed two distinct world views or philosophies tenuously coexisting for centuries within the Judaic, Christian, and Islamic traditions. When Ernst Mayr, a biologist at Harvard University, traced the history of biological theories, he concluded that no greater revolution has occurred in the history of human thought than the radical shift from a fixed world view of cosmology rooted in unchanging archetypes to a dynamic, evolving cosmogenic world view based on populations and individuals. While the process or evolutionary world view may have gained dominance in Western cultures and religious traditions, the influences felt by such groups as the Moral Majority and religious New Right in the United States, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Iran and the Near East, and the growing vitality of orthodox Judaism provide ample evidence that the fixed world view still has clear influence in moderating human behavior.

These two world views characteristically permeate and color the way we look at and see everything in our lives. One or the other view colors the way each of us approaches a particular political, economic, or moral issue, as well as the way we reach decisions about sexual issues and relationships. However, one must keep in mind that no one is ever fully and always on one or the other end of the spectrum. The spectrum of beliefs, attitudes, and values proposed here is an intellectual abstraction. Real life is not that simple. Still, it is a useful model that can help us understand each other's positions on controversial issues provided we realize that the fixed and process world views are at the two ends of a continuum that includes a wide range of approaches to moral and sexual issues. While individuals often take a fixed position on one issue and a process position on a second issue, they generally tend to adopt one or the other approach and maintain a fairly

consistent set of intertwined religious values and attitudes with respect to sexuality.

Either we view the world as a completely finished universe in which human nature was perfectly and completely created by some supreme being, unchanging in essence from the beginning, or we picture the world involved in continual change with human nature constantly evolving as it struggles to reach its fuller potential, or what is called "to become by the deity." Either one believes that the first human beings were created by God as unchanging archetypes, thus determining standards of human behavior for all time, including our fixed roles as males and females, or one believes that human nature, behavior, and moral standards have been evolving since the beginning of the human race. In the former view, a supreme being created an unchanging human nature. In the latter view, the deity created human nature, then let it transform under human influences.

Coming out of these two views of the world and human nature, one finds two distinct views of the origins of evil and sexuality. If one believes that human nature and the nature of sexual relations were established in the beginning, then one also finds it congenial to believe that evil results from some original sin, a primeval fall of the first humans from a state of perfection and grace. If, on the other hand, one believes in an evolving human nature, then physical and moral evils are viewed as inevitable, natural growth pains that come as humans struggle toward the fullness of their creation.

The Work of James W. Prescott

One paradigm in particular is worth mentioning here to emphasize the importance of the two ways people view the world and their sexual attitudes, beliefs, and values. This model resulted from years of analyzing cross-cultural data, surveys of college students' attitudes, and voting patterns in state and federal governments. James W. Prescott, a noted neuropsychologist, began by examining the effects of the lack of nurturance and somatosensory stimulation on infant monkeys raised and studied by psychologists Harry and Margaret Harlow. In the Harlow studies, some monkeys were taken from their mothers immediately after birth and raised with only a wire mesh and a nursing bottle serving as a surrogate mother. Control infants remained with their natural mothers. Without the normal touching and cuddling of a parent, the test infants quickly became antisocial, withdrawn, and often autistic in their behavior. They were terrified at the approach of other monkeys and at the possibility of being touched. Infant monkeys nurtured and cuddled by a natural mother were peaceful and socially well adjusted when they grew up. Prescott then began to wonder whether or not these effects would be consistent with human child-rearing practices.²

From these varied biological, developmental, and cross-cultural studies, Prescott derived a behavioral/attitudinal pattern that links somatosensory

affectional deprivation or positive nurturance in infancy and childhood with adult behaviors and attitudes. His statistical analysis reveals a causal connection between parental attitudes, child-rearing values, and the subsequent social adaptation, or lack of it, in the children when they grow up. In societies or families that encourage body pleasuring and somatosensory nurturance, parents commonly share a wide variety of nonviolent values, attitudes, and behavioral patterns for which their children are neurologically scripted by a high level of nurturing touch during infancy, childhood, and adolescence.

In subsequent statistical analyses using both contemporary American, Canadian, and European data, Prescott correlated the lack of childhood nurturance with negative attitudes toward gun control laws, nudity, sexual pleasure, masturbation, premarital and extramarital sex, breast-feeding, and women. Other values consistently associated with this perspective include a glorification of war and the frequent use of alcohol and drugs. Societal factors that were correlated with a high nurturance of infants include a lack of strong social stratification, prolonged breast-feeding, a strong sense of humor, an acceptance of abortion, premarital sex, and extramarital sex, low anxiety about sex, little sexual dysfunction, a negative view of war, and satisfying peer relationships between men and women.

Religious beliefs undoubtedly affect the child-rearing practices of our parents, which in turn color the way each of us views our sexuality and our attitudes toward different sexual behaviors and relationships. These same religious beliefs affect and color our social scripting and enculturation as we grow up and move through the stages of moral development outlined by Piaget, Kohlberg, and Gilligan. Along the way, we pick up values and attitudes that are peculiar to our ethnic and socioeconomic background.

APPROACHING THE ISSUES IN THIS VOLUME

As you think over the controversial issues in this volume of *Taking Sides*, think of how your parents, family, friends, and associates have helped mold your opinions on specific issues. Try to be sensitive to how religious, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic factors in your own background may affect the positions you take on different issues. At the same time, try to appreciate how these same factors may have influenced the people whose opinions clash with your own.

NOTES

1. Details of the perspectives offered in this introductory essay can be found in the author's chapter on "Religious Reactions to Alternative Lifestyles" in E. D. Macklin and R. H. Rubin, eds. *Contemporary Families and Alternative Lifestyles: A Handbook on Research and Theory* (Sage Publications, 1983). In that chapter, I summarize and give a complete comparison of seven models developed by researchers working independently in quite distinct disciplines. Included are: a behavioral model based on a comparison of chimpanzee, baboon, and human social behavior by the British primatologist Michael Chance; a cultural/moral model based on an

analysis of British and French arts, fashions, politics, life-styles, and social structures proposed by British science writer and philosopher Gordon Rattray Taylor; a cross-cultural comparison based on child-rearing nurturance patterns and adult life-styles by neuropsychologist James W. Prescott; a model relating life-styles and values with technological and economic structures by economist/engineer Mario Kamenetzky; a model of open and closed marriages created by George and Nena O'Neill, authors of the 1970s best-seller *Open Marriage*; and my own model of "Hot and Cool Sexual Values," which I adapted from an insight by Marshall McLuhan and George B. Leonard.

2. J. W. Prescott, "Body Pleasure and the Origins of Violence," *The Futurist* (vol. 9, no. 2, 1975), pp. 64-74.

CONTENTS IN BRIEF

PART 1 BIOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR 1

- Issue 1. Are Gender Differences Rooted in the Brain? 2
- Issue 2. Can Sex Be an Addiction? 24
- Issue 3. Is Rape Motivated by Aggression Instead of Sex? 42
- Issue 4. Does Sexual Infidelity Destroy a Relationship? 62
- Issue 5. Is Pornography Harmful? 78

PART 2 ISSUES IN REPRODUCTION AND HEALTH 99

- Issue 6. Should RU 486 Be Legalized? 100
- Issue 7. Should Schools Distribute Condoms? 110
- Issue 8. Should Surrogate Motherhood Be Outlawed? 126
- Issue 9. Abortion and the "Pro-Life" v. "Pro-Choice" Debate:
Should the Human Fetus Be Considered a
Person? 142

PART 3 LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES 157

- Issue 10. Is There a Date Rape Crisis on College
Campuses? 158
- Issue 11. Does Government Have a Constitutional Right to
Prohibit Certain Kinds of Sexual Conduct? 176
- Issue 12. Do Parental Notification Laws Benefit Minors Seeking
Abortions? 188
- Issue 13. Should the Policy Banning Gays from the Military Be
Lifted? 208
- Issue 14. Should Prostitution Be Decriminalized? 220
- Issue 15. Should Society Recognize Gay Marriages? 234
- Issue 16. Is Sexual Harassment a Pervasive Problem? 248
- Issue 17. Has the Federal Government Spent Enough on AIDS
Research? 262