Chapter 9

Sex, Marriage and Family

Trobianders

- To attract lovers, young Trobriand men and woman must look as attractive and seductive as possible.
- This woman’s beauty has been enhanced by face painting and adornments given by her father.

Sexual Relations

- Among primates, the human female is unusual in her ability to engage in sexual activity whether she is fertile or not.
- Every society has rules that govern sexual access.
Male affection?

In parts of the United States, public displays of same-sex affection between men are often looked upon as distasteful. One exception is the football field, where rough-and-tumble masculine behavior makes it possible for players to pat each other on the behind, exchange hugs, and leap into each other’s arms without bringing their sexual orientation into question.

Marriage and Family

- All cultures recognize some people as family
- All cultures have rules on marriage and family

Groups Defined

- Kin group – people who view themselves as related.
- Domestic group – small group who live together in the same household on a regular basis
Household

- Basic residential unit in which economic production, consumption, inheritance, child rearing, and shelter are organized and carried out.

Family

- Two or more people related by blood, marriage, or adoption.
- The family may take many forms, ranging from a single parent with one or more children, to a married couple or polygamous spouses with offspring, to several generations of parents and their children.

Forms of the Family

- **Conjugal family**
  - A family consisting of one (or more) man (who may be a female) married to one (or more) woman (who may be a male), and their offspring.

- **Consanguineal family**
  - Related women, their brothers, and the women’s offspring.
Forms of the Family

- Nuclear family
  - A group consisting of one or more parents and dependent offspring, which may include a stepparent, stepsiblings, and adopted children.
- Extended family
  - A collection of nuclear families, related by ties of blood, that live in one household.

Nuclear Families and the Inuit

Among Inuit people in Canada who still hunt for much of their food, nuclear families are typical. Their isolation from other relatives is usually temporary. Much of the time they are found in groups of at least a few related families.

Extended Family

In the Maya communities of Central America and Mexico, sons bring their wives to live in houses built on the edges of a small open plaza, on one edge of which their father’s house already stands. All members of the family work together for the common good and deal with outsiders as a single unit.
Household Types in the United States in 2000

Marriage Described

- Love is not the basis for all marriages in all societies
- Men and women may not always live together in the same household
- Not always a private matter between the bride and groom
- Can change status
- Marriage is affected by many things, not just sex

Marriage

- A relationship between one or more men (male or female) and one or more women (female or male) who are recognized by society as having a continuing claim to the right of sexual access to one another.
Family Groups/Kin Relations

- Conjugal (Affinal) – main family unit based on marriage
- Consanguine – family unit based on blood not marriage ties
  - South India

Incest Taboo

- The prohibition of sexual relations between specified individuals, usually parent-child and sibling relations at a minimum.

Endogamy and Exogamy

- Endogamy
  - Marriage within a particular group or category of individuals.
- Exogamy
  - Marriage outside the group.
Distinction Between Marriage and Mating

- All animals, including humans, mate—some for life and some not, some with a single individual and some with several.
- Mates are secured and held solely through personal effort and mutual consent.
- Marriage is a culturally recognized right and is backed by social, political, and ideological factors that regulate.

Forms of Marriage

- Monogamy – one spouse
  - Serial monogamy
- Polygamy – more than one spouse
  - Polygyny – more than one wife
  - Polyandry – more than one husband
- Leviorate – widow marries dead husband's brother
- Sororate – widower marries dead wife's sister
- Group marriage - Marriage in which several men and women have sexual access to one another.

Fictive Marriage

- Marriage by proxy to the symbols of someone not physically present to establish the social status of a spouse and heirs.
Cousin Marriage

- In some societies, certain cousins are the preferred marriage partners in others.
- A parallel cousin is the child of a father’s brother or a mother’s sister.
- In some societies, the preferred spouse for a man is his father’s brother’s daughter, known as patrilateral parallel-cousin marriage.
- Some societies favor matrilateral cross-cousin marriage—marriage of a man to his mother’s brother’s daughter, or a woman to her father’s sister’s son.

Reasons for Marriage

- Monogamy is the most common form of marriage, primarily for economic reasons.
- In most of the world, marriage is not based on romantic love, but on economic considerations.

Marriage Exchanges

- Bride-price
  - Payment of money from the groom’s to the bride’s kin.
- Bride service
  - The groom is expected to work for a period for the bride’s family.
- Dowry
  - Payment of a woman’s inheritance at the time of marriage to her or her husband.
Dowry

In some societies when a woman marries, she receives her share of the family inheritance which she brings to her new family. Shown here are Slovakian women carrying the objects of a woman’s dowry.

Divorce

Factors contributing to divorce:
- Many marriages are based on ideals of romantic love or the idealization of youth.
- Establishing an intimate bond in a society in which people are taught to seek individual gratification is difficult.

Five Basic Residence Patterns

- Patrilocal
- Matrilocal
- Ambilocal
- Neolocal
- Avunculocal
Residence Patterns

- **Patrilocal residence**: A residence pattern in which a married couple lives in the locality associated with the husband’s father’s relatives.

- **Matrilocal residence**: A residence pattern in which a married couple lives in the locality associated with the wife’s relatives.

Residence Patterns

- **Ambilocal residence**: A pattern in which a married couple may choose either matrilocal or patrilocal residence.

- **Neolocal residence**: A pattern in which a married couple may establish their household in a location apart from either the husband’s or the wife’s relatives.

Residence Patterns

- **Avunculocal residence**: Residence of a married couple with the husband’s mother’s brother.
Sexual and Marriage Practices among the Nayar

- The Nayar are one of many examples of sexually permissive cultures.
- A landowning warrior caste, their estates are held by corporations made up of kinsmen related in the female line.
- These relatives live together in a household, with the eldest male serving as manager.
- Traditionally, Nayar boys began military training around age of 7, and were away from home for significant stretches of time.

The Nayar: Three Traditional Transactions

1. Ritual Husband
   - Shortly before a girl experienced her first menstruation there was a ceremony that joined her with a "ritual husband" in a temporary union which did not necessarily involve sexual relations.

2. Visiting Husband
   - When a young Nayar woman entered into a continuing sexual liaison with a man approved by her family, it became a formal relationship that required the man to present her with gifts three times each year until the relationship was terminated.
   - The man could spend the nights with her, but had no obligation to support her economically.
   - The woman may have had such an arrangement with more than one man at the same time.
The Nayar: Three Traditional Transactions

3. Acknowledging Paternity
   - When the woman became pregnant, one of the men with whom she has a relationship must acknowledge paternity by making gifts to the woman and the midwife.

Arguments Against Same Sex Marriage

- Marriage has always been between males and females.
- Same-sex marriages have been documented for a number of societies in Africa but in other parts of the world as well.
- Same-sex unions legitimize gays and lesbians, whose sexual orientations have been widely regarded as unnatural.
- Neither cross-cultural studies nor studies of other animal species suggest that homosexual behavior is unnatural.

Arguments Against Same Sex Marriage

- The function of marriage is to produce children.
- Marriage involves economic, political, and legal considerations.
- It is increasingly common for same-sex partners to have children through adoption or reproductive technologies.