Arina Pismenny, "Sin or Synecdoche: Taxonomies of Lust"

Abstract: What is lust? Its classification depends on where we look for its essence. Physiologically, it may appear as an appetite, urge, or drive; phenomenologically, as a desire or emotion; morally, as a sin or a life-affirming force. This chapter argues that the act of classifying lust is itself a normative choice, revealing what we take to matter in human life, whether survival and reproduction, pleasure and freedom, identity and self-expression, or social and moral order. By examining lust as drive, desire, emotion, and social construction, I show how each framework highlights certain dimensions of human experience while obscuring others. The chapter also traces the tension between lust's biological function and its subjective phenomenology: while rooted in reproduction, lust is often pursued for pleasure alone. Whether condemned as a sin or reclaimed as vitality, lust reflects the values through which we understand desire, the body, and human flourishing.

Key words: appetite, drive, desire, emotion, normativity, evolutionary psychology, social construction

I. Introduction: Why Classify Lust?

What is lust?[1] The question is deceptively simple. Some answers point to lust's grounding in biology: an appetite, an urge, a drive shaped by evolutionary pressures and reproductive imperatives. Others highlight its psychological character, describing lust as a kind of desire, a yearning, or a fleeting affective state. Still others turn to its moral valence, construing lust as either a dangerous excess or a vital spark, condemned as sin or celebrated as a life-affirming force. Across religious, philosophical, psychological, and cultural discourses, lust has been vilified, medicalized, moralized, romanticized, and commodified. So, which of these descriptions gets it right?

This chapter begins from the premise that the very act of classifying lust, whether as a physiological drive, a phenomenological state, a moral failing, or a social construct, is not a neutral exercise. Rather, it is a normative project, one that reveals our broader commitments about what matters in human life. The way we categorize lust reflects what we prioritize: survival and reproduction, pleasure and connection, identity and self-expression, or morality and social cohesion. Our taxonomy of lust is never only about lust; it is a synecdoche[2] for how we understand the human condition.

Rather than offering a definitive account of what lust is, this chapter explores what is at stake in the different ways we *frame* it. I argue that the tensions among biological, phenomenological, moral, and social conceptions of lust are not merely theoretical. They shape how we experience lust, how we regulate it, and how we make sense of its place in our lives. In examining these taxonomies, I aim to show how each approach foregrounds certain aspects of lust while obscuring others, thereby constructing different ethical and existential landscapes.

I proceed as follows. In Section II, I examine lust as a drive, an, urge, and an appetite. Each of these categories affords a different kind of explanation of the nature of lust. Yet these seemingly neutral categories have been used to condemn lust as a vile side of human nature or to extol it as the species' will to life. Section III examines lust as a desire, focusing on its intentional and teleological structure, and analyzing whether its aim is pleasure, reciprocity, or something else. Section IV considers lust as an emotion, exploring its evaluative content and the problem of aptness cashed out in terms of reproductive fitness, cultural trends, and personal preference. Section V turns to social construction, showing how religious, moral,

and political discourses have shaped the concept of lust itself and how contemporary feminist and queer re-imaginings recover its potential for emancipation.

By examining lust through these categories, this chapter aims to clarify what is at stake in treating it one way rather than another. To understand lust, then, is to negotiate the boundaries between nature and culture, pleasure and virtue, sin and freedom.

II. Lust as a Drive, Urge, or Appetite

Philosophical, psychological, and biological accounts often describe lust as a drive, an urge, or an appetite. At first glance these may seem interchangeable, yet they mark different explanatory levels and highlight different aspects of what is at stake in sexual experience. Attending to their contrasts shows what each model illuminates, and no less what each leaves in the dark.

To call lust a *drive* is to situate it at the most structural and functional level of explanation. A biological drive is a relatively stable physiological mechanism that produces recurring states of tension and organizes characteristic patterns of behavior, such as eating, drinking, or mating, that typically serve survival or reproduction. On this account, lust is the sexual drive. It is part of the human organism's basic motivational system, whose role is to secure reproductive activity and thereby ensure the continuation of the species.

One way the sexual drive can present itself is as an *appetite*. Appetites are bodily cravings that arise from recurring physiological cycles, such as hunger for food or thirst for water. They register as needs that can be postponed for a time but grow more insistent until

they are satisfied, at which point they diminish before returning again.[3] If lust is treated as an appetite, it appears as a periodic bodily demand for sexual release.

The analogy with hunger, however, quickly breaks down. First, lust differs in its relation to survival. Hunger and thirst are necessary for the individual's preservation, whereas lust, though tied to reproduction, is not required for individual survival. It resembles these appetites in its cyclical and bodily character but diverges from them in purpose.

Second, the link between appetite and biological function is less transparent in the case of lust. Hunger straightforwardly serves nourishment; what one wants when hungry is food. By contrast, lust's supposed reproductive function is rarely part of the subject's experience. One may feel intense sexual desire without any awareness of, or concern for, reproduction (de Sousa 2003, 96).

Thus, while the appetite model captures lust's bodily and need-like aspects, it fails to explain its distinctive phenomenology and distance from biological necessity. Lust resists assimilation to other appetites.

At a more immediate level, lust appears as an *urge*. Unlike appetites, which emphasize recurring cycles of bodily needs, an urge is a sudden impulse that arises in response to particular situations. An urge is an abrupt, pressing push toward action, felt as a compulsion that grips attention and seeks instant expression—like the sudden impulse to scratch an itch or to laugh at an inopportune moment. Lust in this form is explained at the experiential and behavioral level: it is not about the species-level function of reproduction, or the recurring bodily cycle. It is an intense momentary impulse.

In sum, "drive," "appetite," and "urge" belong to different levels of explanation. Sigmund Freud's theory of sexuality makes a similar distinction between two levels of explanation: what appears phenomenologically as appetite or urge is, at bottom, the manifestation of a deeper *Trieb*. He notes that

> [T]wo views, seemingly equally well-founded, may be taken of the relation between the ego and sexuality. On one view, the individual is the principal thing, sexuality is one of its activities, and satisfaction one of its needs; while on the other view the individual is a temporary and transient appendage to the quasi-immortal germ plasm, which is entrusted to him by the process of generation (Freud 1957, 123).

On the first view, lust is chiefly a *psychological* phenomenon: it is an individual experience that aims at satisfaction. On the second view, lust is the *biological* mechanism for gene perpetuation, and the individual exists only as its vehicle. Each correctly captures different aspects of lust's functions.

A similar idea is found in Arthur Schopenhauer, who also recognized both of these, but lumps them together, as he insisted that love and lust's *true* nature is the species' will to perpetuate itself, disguised as personal longing. In the "Metaphysics of Sexual Love", he claims that "…[A]ll amorousness is rooted in the sexual impulse alone…"[4] and that its real importance is "not a question of individual weal and woe, as in all other matters, but of the existence and special constitution of the human race in times to come" (Schopenhauer 1958, 534). Given our misrepresentation of their true aims, Schopenhauer condemns love and lust as profound psychological illusions.

The classification of lust as an appetite has led Immanuel Kant to ascribe to it a negative value because this appetite treats other human beings as its object. He says, "sexual love makes of the loved person an Object of appetite; as soon as that appetite has been stilled, the person is cast aside as one casts away a lemon which has been sucked dry" (Kant 1980, 163). For Kant, sexual appetite is intrinsically objectifying: it reduces the other person to a means of gratification and, in doing so, reveals lust as psychologically primitive and morally troubling. Lust also has a compulsive quality: it seizes individuals, and overrides rational autonomy. As he puts it, "human nature is thereby sacrificed to sex… [men and women] make of humanity an instrument for the satisfaction of their lusts and inclinations, and dishonour it by placing it on a level with animal nature" (Kant 1980, 164). On Kant's account, then, lust is an appetite that degrades human nature by subordinating it to animal sexuality.

While the categories of "drive," "appetite," and "urge" may appear value-neutral, philosophers have rarely treated them as purely descriptive. Freud's theory remains the most descriptive: he presents sexuality as a basic drive, indispensable for psychic life, neither to be condemned nor celebrated but to be understood as a source of both satisfaction and conflict. Schopenhauer, though more pessimistic, does not fault lust itself; rather, he situates it within the *Wille zum Leben*, the blind striving of the will to live. Sexual passion, for him, is the ruse by which the will of the species perpetuates itself, deceiving individuals into believing they are pursuing their own happiness while in truth serving reproduction. Kant, by contrast, makes the evaluative turn explicit. By classifying lust as an appetite, he concludes that it is intrinsically objectifying, reducing the other person to no

more than a consumable good. Thus, in most cases, what is offered as an attempt to classify the phenomenon amounts to a judgment of value, a verdict entailing that it is to be accepted or condemned.

III. Lust as a Desire

Having considered lust at the level of drive, appetite, and urge, we can now approach it at a different explanatory register: as a desire. Whereas drives and appetites emphasize the biological and motivational underpinnings of lust, desire foregrounds its intentional, evaluative, and phenomenological dimensions.

Desires are typically characterized by three features: they exhibit a world-to-mind direction of fit, present their object as good in some respect, and aim at their own satisfaction (Lauria and Deonna 2017).

To say that lust has a world-to-mind direction of fit is to mean that the lusting person wants reality to change in such a way that the aim of lust is satisfied. The world must change in accordance with desire, rather than desire reshaping itself to fit the world as it already is.

Lust presents its object as "good"[5], that is as sexually attractive. While there is an immense diversity of things different people find sexually desirable, in each case lust involves an evaluative orientation: it singles out an object as sexually desirable. At the same time, the objects at which one's lust is directed may be fungible: as Plato famously noted, one beautiful boy may be just as beautiful, and therefore, as desirable as another.

Like other desires, lust is directed at its own fulfillment. But what precisely constitutes the fulfillment of lust? Before answering this question, let's distinguish desire

from arousal and attraction. *Attraction* is the evaluative orientation of finding someone or something sexually appealing. *Arousal*, by contrast, is a psychophysiological state involving bodily responses, such as genital swelling or lubrication, which can also include heightened mental excitement. *Desire* goes further: it is an intentional motivational state aimed at securing sexual pleasure through engagement with its object (Pismenny 2023, 7). These three phenomena often co-occur, but they can also come apart. One may feel attracted to someone without being aroused, as when attraction is acknowledged but not accompanied by bodily response; one may experience arousal without desire, as in cases of involuntary physiological reactions; and one may experience desire without current arousal, as in diffuse longing or fantasy. Desire thus integrates but also exceeds attraction and arousal: its teleology is not simply to register sex appeal or to undergo physiological excitement, but to pursue sexual pleasure by acting on them. Of course, desire does not necessitate action of pursuing sexual pleasure as it can be overridden by other desires and concerns. Just because Jules desires Jim sexually doesn't mean that Jules will pursue Jim if Jim is clearly uninterested. Sexual desire motivates the pursuit of pleasure, but just like any other desires, it can be checked, inhibited, or redirected in light of competing values, social norms, or practical considerations.

There have been two general approaches to understanding the teleology of sexual desire: reductionist and intentionalist (Morgan 2003). On the reductionist side, Alan Goldman (1977) offers his "plain sex" view, according to which sexual desire is the desire for physical contact with another's body for the sake of the pleasure it produces. A common objection is that this makes the account too narrow, excluding solitary and imaginative

sexual phenomena such as masturbation, voyeurism, or fantasy. Igor Primoratz (1999) and Alan Soble (2022) propose to construe sexual desire more generally as the desire for certain pleasurable bodily sensations. Their formulations capture a wider range of sexual activities without tying desire too tightly to interpersonal bodily contact.

Intentionalist theories reject reductionist accounts that construe sexual desire as a mere desire for pleasure, insisting instead that its aim is essentially relational and meaningful. Thomas Nagel (1969) famously describes sexual desire as a "complex system of superimposed mutual perceptions,"[6] where arousal deepens through reflexive awareness of being desired by the other, making reciprocity central to desire's fulfillment. Robert Solomon (1974), in turn, characterizes sex as a form of "body language," claiming that its true end lies in interpersonal communication rather than pleasure or orgasm. Janice Moulton (1976) builds on and critiques these views, arguing that Nagel and Solomon capture only the dynamics of flirtation and seduction, where uncertainty and anticipation of a new encounter are paramount, but miss the features of sexual relationships sustained over time, where satisfaction comes from trust, intimacy, and shared familiarity. Taken together, these intentionalist accounts shift the function of sexual desire away from bodily gratification and toward the creation and expression of meaning between persons.

While one may doubt the specific intentional structure of sexual desire that Nagel and Solomon insist upon, it is clear that lust as desire displays a striking variability in its mental content. As Seiriol Morgan (2003) illustrates, desire is essentially "open to significance" and can be inflected in countless ways: it may take the form of arousal at the symbolic transgression of a policewoman's uniform ("fuck the police!"), the affective charge

of reconciliation in makeup sex, or the allure of anonymity and mystery in the atmosphere of a gay bathhouse.[7] These examples show that sexual desire almost never aims at bare sensation; it is typically mediated, shaped, and intensified by the meanings through which its object is imaginatively represented.

Morgan's continuum model helps explain why sexual desire cannot be captured by a single structure or reduced to a pursuit of bare pleasure. Yet even if desire is essentially open to significance, it still has a determinate teleology: it seeks fulfillment in sexual pleasure, albeit transformed by the meanings through which its object is apprehended (Halwani 2020).

Desire itself can become an object of pleasure. Such an experience may be characterized as erotic (de Sousa and Pismenny 2018). Its value lies in savoring the state of desire itself, whether or not that desire is ever consummated. This is what distinguishes erotic art from pornography: whereas pornography seeks to provoke arousal in order to secure sexual gratification, erotica invites us to linger in the space of desire without resolution. The erotic thus displaces the function of desire satisfaction to an aesthetic mode, where significance and imagination are enjoyed for their own sake.

The category of "desire" affords explanation at the psychological level, where lust is understood as an intentional state that presents its object as sexually desirable, with content ranging from the generic to the highly fine-grained, and whose teleology lies in the pursuit of sexual pleasure. This categorization might guide our inquiry into the various philosophical domains, including further spelling out its evaluating function, further clarifying what it means for lust to represent its object as sexually desirable, elucidating lust's epistemic dimension, explicating its link to motivation and action. It might further

invite us to examine its ethical status: whether certain desires may be morally corrupt or objectionable in themselves, irrespective of consent or consequence.

However, when examining the normativity of desire in general, and with lust in particular, we must be careful to distinguish between its intrinsic normative nature, and the extrinsic norms to which desire and lust can be subjected.

Goldman's "plain sex" account rejects all means-to-an-end analyses of the teleology of sexual desire, whether reproduction, the expression of love, or some higher moral or spiritual good. Instead, he insists that sexual desire is best understood as a natural desire for bodily pleasure. By defining sexual desire in purely hedonic and bodily terms, Goldman reduces its evaluative dimension to the bare minimum implied by its world-to-mind direction of fit. Moral and other evaluations are not intrinsic to sexual desire, but are imposed on it extrinsically through ethical, social, and cultural principles such as consent, reciprocity, and the avoidance of harm.

Contrary to this minimalist approach, some intentionalist accounts build stronger normativity requirements into the very structure of sexual desire. For Nagel, reflexivity[8] is essential, such that failures of mutual awareness of sexual desire amount to perversions (1969, 13-15). For Solomon, sex functions as embodied communication, so insincerity or dishonesty in expressing one's attitudes through sexual interaction counts as a semantic perversion (1974, 345). Both Nagel and Solomon deny that perverted sex is necessarily bad qua sex, or immoral. But it is clear that by aiming to make sense of and preserve "perversion" as a concept, they are placing additional normative requirements on sexual desire and activity for sexual desire to count as having been properly realized.

Lust as desire is a psychological phenomenon with intentional, evaluative, and teleological features. The dispute about lust's normative structure is rooted in how best to understand its teleology. As Morgan has shown, desire is always open to meanings that shape how its aim is conceived and how it is valued. Yet, paradigmatically, the aim of desire remains sexual pleasure understood not simply as raw sensation, but also as enjoyment shaped by arousal, meaning, and context (Halwani 2020). Thus, lust is best understood as a pursuit of pleasure transformed by the meanings through which its object is represented.

IV. Lust as an Emotion

If lust can be illuminatingly categorized as a desire, we might ask whether it can also be fruitfully understood as an emotion. Desire and emotion are closely related categories in our psychological repertoire: both are intentional states that evaluate their objects, and both can motivate action. Yet they are typically distinguished by their direction of fit: desires are world-to-mind, whereas emotions are mind-to-world. Whereas desires evaluate with the aim of bringing about a change in the world, emotions evaluate how an organism is doing in relation to its environment (Prinz 2004).

I take the following features to be characteristic of emotions. They are felt evaluations that make relevant features of a situation salient (de Sousa 1987; Deonna and Teroni 2012). The felt character of an emotion—its phenomenology—informs the subject of how it is faring in the world. Emotions typically have characteristic action tendencies that prepare the organism to respond appropriately to its context (Frijda 1987; Scarantino 2017). This is their motivational component.

The intentionality of emotion has two objects. First, an emotion is directed at a particular object or target. Second, it represents its target as instantiating a particular evaluative property—its *formal object* (Kenny 1963; de Sousa 1987). Because of this structure, emotions admit of aptness, or correctness conditions. An emotion is apt when it accurately presents its target as possessing the relevant evaluative property, grounded in the target's features. For example, your anger at Pam is apt if she has intentionally insulted you, because the *wrong* or the *offensive* is the formal object of anger. But if Pam makes an innocuous remark and you take offense only because you are sleep-deprived, your anger misfires: it is not fitting.

Thus, emotions' primary functions include informing the organism of how it is faring by correctly tracking the evaluative properties of the relevant target, and to prepare it for appropriate action.[9] Given the discussion of the teleology of desire in the previous section, the motivational aspect of lust as an emotion would move us to pursue sexual pleasure by engaging with the object of our lust.[10] However, the evaluative component of lust as an emotion requires significant elaboration. I now turn to it.

The emotion of lust represents its target as *lust-worthy* (the formal object), that is, as sexually desirable or attractive.[11] Since the formal object of the emotion necessitates correctness conditions that specify when an emotion accurately tracks the value-property it ascribes to the target, it is important to explain what these conditions are for lust.[12] When does lust correctly represent the *lust-worthy*, and when does it misfire? To answer these questions, I consider several different contenders for the formal object of lust.

One possibility is that lust is tracking reproductive fitness.[13] The *lust-worthy* supervenes on the properties that represent or signal fitness such as fecundity, health, or genetic viability. On this view, the aptness conditions of lust are met when its target instantiates traits that ancestrally correlated with reproductive success. According to Sexual Strategies Theory (SST), humans evolved a repertoire of mating strategies, short-term and long-term, that are activated depending on environmental conditions, life stage, and individual goals (Buss and Schmitt 2019). Short-term mating aims at immediate sexual access or genetic benefits, and lust is apt here when it tracks cues of fertility and genetic quality (*ibid*, 81–83). Given lower obligatory parental investment, men tend to prioritize youth, physical attractiveness, and sexual receptivity, while women, who face higher reproductive costs, focus more on genetic benefits such as physiological symmetry or dominance (*ibid*, 89, 83). Long-term mating aims at reliable partnership, resource provision, and parental investment, and lust is apt when it tracks cues of stability and commitment: women place greater weight on ambition, status, and resources, whereas men continue to value fertility but also prize fidelity and loyalty (*ibid*, 93-96). Thus, the formal object of lust is attractiveness specified by strategy- and sex-dependent indicators of reproductive success.

Although this is the dominant view in evolutionary psychology, there are reasons to be skeptical about the picture it paints in relation to gender differences, as well as its adequacy as an account of the formal object of lust. First, in relation to gender differences, Buss and Schmitt appeal to the so-called *gender-equality paradox*, according to which sex differences in mate preferences sometimes increase, rather than diminish, in more gender-egalitarian societies (Stoet and Geary 2018). Analyzing gender distribution in STEM careers,

they interpret this as evidence that evolved preferences are robust, surfacing most clearly when cultural constraints are minimized. However, this interpretation has been strongly contested. Sarah Richardson and colleagues (2020) argue that the paradox is largely an artifact of flawed measurement: Stoet and Geary's operationalization of women's participation in STEM through a "propensity" ratio distorts actual levels of representation, and their reliance on the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) misuses a benchmarking tool that was never designed to explain causal relationships between gender equality and educational outcomes. When more appropriate measures are substituted, the paradox disappears. Similarly, Marco Balducci (2023) argues that cross-national correlations of this kind are methodologically fragile and conceptually misleading, obscuring the complex and context-specific factors that shape gendered career patterns. Far from revealing stable, biologically rooted preferences, such analyses risk reifying essentialist accounts of gender differences on the basis of thin and unstable data.

Second, they completely fail to address homosexual attraction. Can SST account for homosexual desire and specify the features that make same-sex partners embody the *lust-worthy* property? Are homosexual men and women looking for youth or long-term stability? Can homosexual attraction be understood in terms of reproductive fitness? To answer these questions, let us take a look at the evolutionary explanations of homosexuality.

According to the *kin selection* or "gay uncle" hypothesis (Wilson 1975), homosexuality may persist because individuals who do not reproduce themselves enhance the reproductive success of close kin, thereby passing on shared genes indirectly. The *sexually antagonistic selection* model alternatively proposes that genetic factors

contributing to same-sex attraction in one sex could persist if they confer a reproductive advantage when expressed in the other, such as increasing female fecundity (Camperio-Ciani et al. 2008). The *alliance-formation hypothesis* suggests that same-sex sexual behavior evolved to facilitate cooperation and reciprocal altruism by strengthening male–male alliances and enhancing social cohesion within competitive hierarchies (Kirkpatrick 2000; Adriaens and De Block 2006).[14]

Despite their differences, these evolutionary models face a common problem: none is strongly supported by empirical evidence. As a result, while they offer distinct accounts about the adaptive significance of same-sex attraction, they remain largely speculative. Yet, each of them albeit in a different way, shift the explanatory focus from reproduction to social bonding. Can this fact shed light onto the *lust-worthy*? Does this mean that homosexuals are attracted to qualities that help form long-term bonds such as dependability and trustworthiness? Empirical work on mate preferences offers a useful test of this idea. Studies comparing homosexual and heterosexual participants across cultures have found that sex, rather than sexual orientation, is the strongest predictor of what people find desirable in a partner (Lippa 2007; Ha et al. 2012). Men, whether heterosexual or homosexual, tend to prioritize physical attractiveness, whereas women, across orientations, emphasize dependability and relational stability. Because these patterns persist even where reproduction is not at stake, they may be better explained by social and cultural norms that define gendered ways of valuing than by biological mechanisms evolved specifically for reproduction.

What is more, the standards of physical attractiveness vary with time and place. For instance, in African cultures, full-bodied women are considered to be more attractive than slim-bodied ones (Cunningham et al., 1995). Similarly, heavier bodies are prized in resource-scarce environments like rural Malaysia, whereas thinness is idealized in modern Japan as a marker of discipline and conformity (Furnham et al. 2002, Swami et al. 2006). In Western cultures, beauty ideals have continued to evolve from the fleshy nudes of Rubens to the sleek minimalism of Twiggy, from the "heroin-chic" thinness of the 1990s to the curvy-athletic aesthetic popularized in the 2010s by figures such as Beyoncé and Kim Kardashian, the latter reflecting the hybrid influence of fitness culture, media globalization, and racialized beauty politics (Ringrose et al. 2019). While it might be tempting to interpret these shifting ideals as reflecting underlying cues to reproductive fitness, their variability across cultures and historical periods suggests that standards of attractiveness are mediated by social meanings and cultural norms rather than fixed biological imperatives. What counts as *lust-worthy*, in other words, depends to a large extent on the interpretive norms through which bodies acquire meaning as objects of desire.

We must pause here to take stock of the discussion so far. The view that *lust-worthy* supervenes on reproductive fitness is problematic since it cannot adequately account for same-sax attraction, whose aim is not reproduction. It, however, faces another problem. The reproductive fitness model fails to capture the phenomenology and motivational aspect of lust since the lusting rarely experience their lust as the desire to reproduce. On the contrary, in the majority of cases people take steps to avoid it. As should be clear from the discussion of lust as desire in the previous section, the aim of sexual desire is sexual pleasure, not

reproduction. While the proximate link of the motivational part of the emotion can be explained by the distal goal of reproduction, the intentional content of the emotion like that of desire is highly varied and individualized. For this reason, it seems implausible to say that lust is apt when it correctly tacks reproductive fitness, and inapt when it is experienced for someone (or something) that does not embody these properties.

On the socio-cultural model, the *lust-worthy* supervenes on gendered qualities defined by social and cultural trends. While this model may explain general patterns of sexual attraction by specifying the kinds of bodies, personalities, and social positions that are deemed sexually desirable, it loses its explanatory rigor once we recognize the great variety of trends that can be found within a given social fabric. Consider, for instance, the normative standard of sexual appeal for heterosexual, cisgender women: tall, blond, with an accentuated hourglass figure. Or for a heterosexual, cisgender man: tall, physically fit, assertive, economically successful, and white. They are also able-bodied, middle-class, educated, and Christian: standards of hegemonic femininity and hegemonic masculinity that endow those who approximate them with significant social capital while marginalizing those who do not or cannot conform. At the same time, numerous subcultures and communities celebrate alternative traits and embodiments: the sexual appeal of fuller figures within many Black and Latinx communities; the Bears, Twinks, and Pups of gay male subcultures; butch, stud, femme, and androgynous presentations in lesbian and queer contexts; the aestheticization of androgyny and nonbinary expression in certain fashion and art circles; and the appreciation of aged or disabled bodies within body-positivity and kink communities. These counter-normative worlds reveal that what counts as sexually desirable

is neither fixed nor universal, but mediated by intersecting cultural, racial, and political logics of value.

This diversity underscores a central tension within the socio-cultural model. If the *lust-worthy* varies so widely across intersecting social contexts, then it cannot be grounded in any single set of properties or traits. Rather, lust's intentional object appears to be mediated through shifting social meanings and cultural scripts that determine what counts as sexually desirable. While this plurality captures the social embeddedness of lust, it also makes it difficult to articulate the emotion's aptness conditions, since those conditions seem as variable as the cultural contexts that generate them.

Even if one primarily belongs to a particular culture or subculture in which standards of sexual desirability are clearly defined, it is not obvious what would make one's lust inapt. To say that a person's lust is unfitting because their object fails to meet locally accepted standards of attractiveness would amount to reducing aptness conditions to social and cultural norms. But if this is all there is to aptness[15], then all it can tell us is how (mis)aligned our sexual preferences are with current trends.

Furthermore, while it is possible for these norms to be represented in lust's content (e.g. "I am having sex with the hottest girl in school!"; "this nonbinary person is so deliciously masc!"), lust does not always mirror prevailing standards. People routinely experience attraction that diverges from, or even conflicts with dominant cultural expectations. Personal history, affective associations, and idiosyncratic fantasies shape what one finds sexually compelling in ways that resist generalization. At this level of individual variation, lust no longer tracks socially shared properties but expresses the singular constellation of

meanings through which a person's erotic imagination has been formed. This is evident in the diversity of sexual interests and practices, from kinky play organized around power or sensation, to foot fetish, to zoophilia, and necrophilia. These preferences reveal how lust can attach to objects and scenarios that fall outside the bounds of social acceptability or reproductive function. The diversity of these preferences suggests that what unifies them cannot be found in the nature of their objects, but rather in the kind of response they elicit and the value they represent for the subject.[16]

If this is right, the relation between lust and the *lust-worthy* is fundamentally causal rather than evaluative. What makes something *lust-worthy* is not that it possesses an independent property, but that it in fact elicits lust in the subject. Lust tracks whatever reliably produces it. On this view, the formal object of lust is its eliciting condition rather than an evaluative property represented as good. Lust thus retains intentionality and phenomenology, but lacks the normative correctness conditions characteristic of paradigmatic emotions such as anger or fear.

Attempts to identify the formal object of lust in terms of reproductive fitness or social and cultural ideals fail to capture the heterogeneity and immediacy of the phenomenon. Both approaches misconstrue lust as if it tracked a stable evaluative property, when in fact its intentionality appears to be grounded in whatever elicits arousal in a given subject. The diversity of its objects suggests that lust's relation to the *lust-worthy* is causal rather than normative. Lust remains an intentional and phenomenologically rich state, but unlike paradigmatic emotions such as fear or anger, it does not purport to register an independent

evaluative feature of the world. It is, rather, a kind of state that orients the subject toward sexual pleasure without claiming correctness.

V. Lust as a Social Construction

So far, I have examined lust in a variety of motivational categories such as drive, appetite, urge, desire, and emotion. We have seen that even with most basic categories such as urge and appetite there is a temptation to make an evaluative judgment about lust. In this last section I examine lust as a social construction. This characterization will shed light on why lust is so often deemed deficient or problematic.

A social constructionist approach, as Ian Hacking explains, asks not what a thing *is* but what is at stake in calling it socially constructed. To say that something is socially constructed is to challenge its inevitability and reveal it as the product of social and historical forces that could have been otherwise (Hacking 1999, 5-7). Thus, to say that lust is socially constructed is not to deny that it has biological or psychological bases, but to emphasize that what counts as lust, including its expression, meaning, and moral value, is shaped by cultural norms and social institutions. Constructionist analyses reveal that lust, like other emotions and desires, is historically variable, normatively loaded, and politically significant.

Nowhere is the social shaping of lust more visible than in its moralization as sin.[17] Within Christian thought, lust came to represent a corruption of both reason and virtue. As one of the seven deadly sins, it was regarded as an excess of desire that turns the soul away from God. Because lust was treated as a sin, it was subject to severe constraints. The Pauline

injunction that “it is better to marry than to burn”[18] authorized marriage as a partial remedy for lust, allowing sexual activity only insofar as it served procreation. All other forms of sex were proscribed as contrary to nature: nonprocreative acts, same-sex relations, and even masturbation were condemned as violations of divine order.

St. Augustine was central to this moralization. He regarded sexual desire as a consequence of the Fall, a sign of humanity’s rebellion against reason and divine order. In *The City of God*, he writes that involuntary erection is the penalty for original sin, a bodily reminder that the flesh no longer obeys the will.[19] Lust, for Augustine, exposes the disorder introduced by sin and binds the will in servitude [20]. Marriage, he maintained, could restrain this disobedient desire, but only when oriented toward procreation.[21] Aquinas later refined this account by framing lust as a vice opposed to temperance. For him, sexual pleasure detached from its natural end in reproduction distorts reason and undermines virtue.[22] Lust, on this view, is evil because it seeks pleasure apart from the good of generation.

The moral inheritance of Christianity underlies the social institutions that regulate sexuality in the modern West. The Christian valorization of chastity and the elevation of marriage to a sacrament helped establish monogamous, heterosexual marriage as the moral ideal and the foundation of the nuclear family (Henrich 2020). Through this institutionalization, religious doctrine, legal codes, and cultural norms came to define virginity as purity, sexual restraint as moral virtue, and the use of contraception as an act against nature. These strictures produced a gendered double standard that celebrated men’s sexual freedom while stigmatizing women’s, branding them promiscuous or sluts. It

also condemned same-sex attractions as an abomination, leading to social ostracism and, at times, capital punishment for those who engaged in it (Jordan 1997).

The broader consequences of this moral order extended well beyond theology, shaping not only institutions but emotional life. By equating lust with sin and confining sex to procreation within marriage, Christianity fostered a pervasive culture of moral anxiety and aversion surrounding sexual desire. Even in modern secular contexts, echoes of these attitudes persist. When Jimmy Carter confessed to having "committed adultery in his heart," he invoked a framework in which the mere experience of lust, independent of action, counts as moral failure. The condemnation of lust thus penetrates deep into the psyche, coloring sexual experience with enduring feelings of shame, guilt, and disgust.

In contrast to the Christian WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) moral order, many Indigenous societies upheld radically different ethics of sex and gender. As Kim TallBear (2018) shows, Indigenous relationalities often embraced nonmonogamy, gender diversity, and erotic freedom for all genders as forms of kin-making rather than moral transgression.[23] Given these cultural variations, it is clear that cultural narratives and meta-attitudes make lust out as a depravity, a necessary evil, or a human good. De-colonizing lust therefore requires reimagining desire beyond colonial and patriarchal moral frameworks, recovering its potential as a source of relation, vitality, and freedom.

Given lust's oppressive history, it is important to examine how patriarchal institutions have weaponized it to police women and other sexual and gender minorities. Sexual practices have not only reflected but also reproduced social hierarchies of power and

domination. In response, some feminist thinkers, most notably Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, advanced an anti-sex position, arguing that sex as we know it is the eroticization of gender inequality and therefore incompatible with women's liberation (MacKinnon 1989; Dworkin 1987). From this perspective, heterosexual intercourse under patriarchy cannot be disentangled from coercion as it makes women the passive objects of male desire, further subordinating them. This critique prompted a range of responses, from rejecting sex altogether as something women have endured to appease men, to embracing lesbianism as an act of political resistance against sexual and gender oppression.[24]

Others, on the other hand, recognized that the feminist anti-sex view is also oppressive to women as it wrongly assumes that women cannot enjoy sex or have sexual interests and agency (Willis 2012).[25] Undoubtedly, it is difficult to peel off the layers of patriarchal ideology and narratives to uncover authentic lust for people of all genders and sexualities. However, since the liberation movements of the 1960's, great efforts have been made in empowering sexual autonomy of marginalized individuals through reclaiming slur terms, body image, and sexual pleasure itself. Queer, kink, and disability activists have been especially crucial in this work, challenging normative ideas of desirability, ability, and pleasure, and insisting that all bodies and forms of intimacy are capable of erotic value (Kafer 2013). As adrienne maree brown argues, reclaiming pleasure is not indulgence but resistance: a practice of freedom that challenges the moral economies of shame, guilt, and control inherited from patriarchal and colonial regimes (brown 2019). In this way, we can reimagine lust as freedom rather than sin or subjugation.

These movements to reclaim pleasure from systems of shame and control echo what Audre Lorde so memorably called “the erotic as power”, a deep well of feeling through which we come to know freedom. For Lorde, “the erotic is a resource within each of us that lies in a deeply female and spiritual plane, firmly rooted in the power of our unexpressed or unrecognized feeling” (Lorde 2007, 61).[26] When freed from patriarchal distortion, the erotic becomes “a well of replenishing and provocative force” that enables integrity, creativity, and joy. In this sense, lust may be understood as one expression of the erotic, a mode of embodied vitality that resists domination and affirms connection. Like the erotic, lust can function as a synecdoche for life itself. It stands for the fullness of our embodied capacities, sexual, emotional, and spiritual, that make freedom possible. To recognize the erotic, and lust within it, as power is to recover sexual desire as the vital energy of freedom.

In tracing the moral, political, and cultural constructions of lust, we see that its meaning is neither fixed nor inevitable. From sin to subjugation to freedom, lust has served as a mirror of our deepest social anxieties and aspirations. To understand lust as socially constructed, then, is not to diminish it, but to recognize its capacity to reflect and reshape the moral worlds we inhabit.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined lust through multiple taxonomies: biological, psychological, emotional, and social. It shows that the project of classifying lust is never merely descriptive. Each framework brings certain features of lust into focus while concealing others, revealing that our conceptions of lust reflect our moral and conceptual priorities. When treated as a

drive or appetite, lust appears as a bodily mechanism oriented toward reproduction; as desire, it becomes a pursuit of pleasure mediated by meaning; as emotion, it raises questions about correctness conditions of lust and the value it tracks; and as a social construction, it discloses the historical and political forces that have moralized and regulated sexuality. Considered together, these accounts reveal that lust cannot be reduced to biology, psychology, or culture alone. It is a phenomenon that exposes the tensions between natural function, lived experience, and moral evaluation. What finally comes into view is not a single essence of lust, but the plurality of human attempts to make sense of it.

Notes

[1] The title of this anthology, *The Moral Psychology of Sexual Passion*, emerged after much debate among contributors and editors. I had originally favored *The Moral Psychology of Lust* for its provocative precision and conceptual richness. Unlike "attraction" or "desire," which are typically understood as directed states, "lust" can be diffuse, ambient, and unruly, making it an especially fruitful term for moral-psychological analysis. Yet, for some, the term carried excessive cultural baggage, prompting concerns about its evaluative overtones. After a tie vote and a publisher's veto, we arrived at a more palatable (if less evocative) compromise. I retain the original framing in this chapter, not to be contrarian, but because I believe that lust, despite, or perhaps because of, its semantic volatility, remains an essential site of philosophical investigation.

[2] A *synecdoche* is a figure of speech in which a part stands for the whole or the whole stands for a part. Here, the study of lust serves as a lens for grasping something broader about human life.

[3] For an in-depth discussion of needs see David Wiggins (2002). For Wiggins, needs are objective, non-optional requirements for human survival and flourishing, such as food, water, and shelter. They exist

regardless of whether or not one feels them and carry normative weight because their satisfaction is necessary for the individual's survival. Appetites, by contrast, are the subjective, felt states like hunger or thirst that register when a need is unmet, functioning as bodily signals that motivate action toward fulfilling those objective needs.

[4] Schopenhauer, Arthur. 1958. "The Metaphysics of Sexual Love." In *The World as a Will and Representation*, translated by E.F.J. Payne, II. Dover Publications. p. 533.

[5] Alternative accounts of the formal object of desire have been defended. See for instance Lauria, Federico. 2017. "The 'Guise of the Ought-to-Be': A Deontic View of the Intentionality of Desire." In *The Nature of Desire*, edited by Federico Lauria and Julien A. Deonna, 139-164. Oxford University Press; Massin, Olivier. 2017. "Desires, Values and Norms." In *The Nature of Desire*, edited by Federico Lauria and Julien A. Deonna, 165-200. Oxford University Press. For our purposes here each of the two views of desire's formal object are equivalent.

[6] Nagel, Thomas. 1969. "Sexual Perversion." *The Journal of Philosophy* 66 (1): 5–17. https://doi.org/10.2307/2024152. p. 10.

[7] Morgan, Seiriol. 2003. "Sex in the Head." *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 20 (1): 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5930.00231. pp. 7-9.

[8] Nagel's use of "reflexivity" departs from its standard logical meaning, denoting instead a form of higher-order intentionality, which he describes as "reflexive mutual recognition" (1969, 12).

[9] Emotions also serve communicative functions by way of facial expressions and body language that accompany many emotional experiences, as well as triggering emotional responses in others who observe or learn about the subject's emotional response. Though not central here, these aspects are especially relevant to Nagel's, Solomon's, and Moulton's accounts of sexual desire and activity.

[10] I come back to this point later.

[11] For an in-depth analysis of the formal object and aptness conditions of lust see Larry Herzberg chapter in this volume.

[12] Some have argued against the idea of the fittingness of emotions. See for instance Shargel, Daniel, and Jesse Prinz. 2017. "An Enactivist Theory of Emotional Content." In *The Ontology of Emotions*, edited by Hichem Naar and Fabrice Teroni. Cambridge University Press.

[13] Larry Herzberg discusses and rejects this option as a possible relational theme of the emotion of lust (Herzberg 2019, 292).

[14] See also Barron, Andrew B., and Brian Hare. 2020. "Prosociality and a Sociosexual Hypothesis for the Evolution of Same-Sex Attraction in Humans." *Frontiers in Psychology* 10: 2955. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02955.

[15] This view of aptness is captured by the social and cultural constructionists of emotion. See for instance Barrett, Lisa Feldman. 2009. "Variety Is the Spice of Life: A Psychological Construction Approach to Understanding Variability in Emotion." *Cognition and Emotion* 23 (7): 1284–306; Mesquita, Batja. 2024. *Between Us: How Culture Creates Emotions*. W.W. Norton & Company.

[16] One might object that even if lust lacks evaluative correctness conditions, it nevertheless represents its object as *capable* of producing sexual pleasure, in which case its intentional structure would remain anticipatory or predictive rather than purely causal. On this view the *lust-worthy* is the *sexually-enjoyable* value property. However, the phenomenology of lust suggests that this "representation" is minimal at best. Lust feels immediate, not inferential: its intentional link to the *lust-worthy* seems grounded in arousal rather than in the cognition of pleasure potential. Thus, whether the relation between lust and the *lust-worthy* is anticipatory (representing pleasure) or purely causal (elicited by arousal) may be a distinction without much phenomenological difference. In either case, lust's intentionality does not seem to carry evaluative content of the sort that could render it apt or inapt.

[17] For an excellent in-depth discussion of lust as a sin see Blackburn, Simon. 2004. *Lust: The Seven Deadly Sins*. Oxford University Press.

[18] 1 Corinthians 7:9.

[19] Augustine, *The City of God*, XIV.15, XIV.23–24.

[20] Augustine, *Confessions*, VIII.5, VIII.11.

[21] Augustine, *On Marriage and Concupiscence*, I.17.15, I.27.29.

[22] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II–II, q.153, a.2–3; q.154, a.11–12.

[23] See also Graeber, David, and David Wengrow. 2021. *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

[24] It is ironic that MacKinnon and Dworkin, radical feminists opposed to patriarchal power, found themselves in an unholy alliance with religious conservatives through their shared sexual conservatism.

[25] For an in-depth analysis see Srinivasan, Amia. 2021. *The Right to Sex*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

[26] Note that Lorde's use of "erotic" is different from de Sousa and Pismenny's (2018) use of this term.

Bibliography

Adriaens, Pieter R., and Andreas de Block. 2006. "The Evolution of a Social Construction: The Case of Male Homosexuality." *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 49 (4): 570–85. https://doi.org/10.1353/pbm.2006.0051.

Aquinas, Thomas. 2017. *Summa Theologica*. Edited by Kevin Knight. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. New Advent. https://www.newadvent.org/summa/.

Augustine. 1887a. *On Marriage and Concupiscence*. Edited by Philip Schaff. Translated by Peter Holmes and Robert Ernest Wallis. Vol. 5. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series. Christian Literature Publishing Co. http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1507.htm.

Augustine. 1887b. *The City of God*. Edited by Philip Schaff. Translated by Marcus Dods. Vol. 2. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series. Christian Literature Publishing Co. https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1201.htm.

Augustine. 2001. *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*. Edited by Robert S. Munday. Translated by Edward Bouverie Pusey. The Project Gutenberg. https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3296/3296-h/3296-h.htm.

Balducci, Marco. 2023. “Linking Gender Differences with Gender Equality: A Systematic-Narrative Literature Review of Basic Skills and Personality.” *Frontiers in Psychology* 14. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1105234.

Barrett, Lisa Feldman. 2009. “Variety Is the Spice of Life: A Psychological Construction Approach to Understanding Variability in Emotion.” *Cognition and Emotion* 23 (7): 1284–306.

Barron, Andrew B., and Brian Hare. 2020. “Prosociality and a Sociosexual Hypothesis for the Evolution of Same-Sex Attraction in Humans.” *Frontiers in Psychology* 10: 2955. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02955.

Blackburn, Simon. 2004. *Lust: The Seven Deadly Sins*. Oxford University Press.

brown, adrienne maree. 2019. *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good*. AK Press.

Buss, David M., and David P. Schmitt. 2019. “Mate Preferences and Their Behavioral Manifestations.” *Annual Review of Psychology* 70 (1): 77–110. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010418-103408.

Camperio Ciani, Andrea, Paolo Cermelli, and Giovanni Zanzotto. 2008. “Sexually Antagonistic Selection in Human Male Homosexuality.” *PLoS ONE* 3 (6): e2282. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0002282.

Cunningham, Michael R., Alan R. Roberts, Anita P. Barbee, Perri B. Druen, and Cheng-Huan Wu. 1995. “‘Their Ideas of Beauty Are, on the Whole, the Same as Ours’: Consistency and Variability in the Cross-Cultural Perception of Female Physical Attractiveness.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 68 (2): 261–79.

Deonna, Julien, and Fabrice Teroni. 2012. *The Emotions: A Philosophical Introduction*. Routledge.

Dworkin, Andrea. 1987. *Intercourse*. Basic Books.

Freud, Sigmund. 1957. “Instincts and Their Vicissitudes.” In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, edited and translated by James Strachey, vol. 14. Hogarth Press.

Frijda, Nico H. 1987. “Emotion, Cognitive Structure, and Action Tendency.” *Cognition and Emotion* 1 (2): 115–43.

Furnham, Adrian, Joanna Moutafi, and Peter Baguma. 2002. “A Cross-Cultural Study on the Role of Weight and Waist-to-Hip Ratio on Female Attractiveness.” *Personality and Individual Differences* 32 (4): 729–45. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(01)00073-3.

Goldman, Alan H. 1977. “Plain Sex.” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 6 (3): 267–87.

Graeber, David, and David Wengrow. 2021. *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Ha, Thao, Judith E. M. van den Berg, Rutger C. M. E. Engels, and Anna Lichtwarck-Aschoff. 2012. “Effects of Attractiveness and Status in Dating Desire in Homosexual and Heterosexual Men and Women.” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 41 (3): 673–82.

Hacking, Ian. 1999. *The Social Construction of What?* Harvard University Press.

Halwani, Raja. 2020. “The Sexual Pleasure View of Sexual Desire.” *Philosophical Papers* 49 (1): 107–35. https://doi.org/10.1080/05568641.2019.1610334.

Henrich, Joseph. 2020. *The WEIRDest People in the World: How the West Became Psychologically Peculiar and Particularly Prosperous*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Herzberg, Larry A. 2019. “On Sexual Lust as an Emotion.” *Humana.Mente Journal of Philosophical Studies* 35: 271–302.

Jordan, Mark D. 1997. *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology*. University of Chicago Press.

Kafer, Alison. 2013. *Feminist, Queer, Crip*. Indiana University Press.

Kant, Immanuel. 1980. *Lectures on Ethics*. Translated by Louis Infield. Hackett Publishing Company.

Kenny, Anthony. 1963. *Action, Emotion and Will*. Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Kirkpatrick, R C. 2000. “The Evolution of Human Homosexual Behavior.” *Current Anthropology* 41 (3): 385–413.

Lauria, Federico. 2017. “The ‘Guise of the Ought-to-Be’: A Deontic View of the Intentionality of Desire.” In *The Nature of Desire*, edited by Federico Lauria and Julien A. Deonna. Oxford University Press.

Lauria, Federico, and Julien A. Deonna, eds. 2017. *The Nature of Desire*. Oxford University Press.

Lippa, Richard A. 2007. “The Preferred Traits of Mates in a Cross-National Study of Heterosexual and Homosexual Men and Women: An Examination of Biological and Cultural Influences.” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* (New York, Netherlands) 36 (2): 193–208. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-006-9151-2.

Lorde, Audre. 2007. “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power.” In *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Crossing Press.

MacKinnon, Catherine A. 1989. “Sexuality, Pornography, and Method: "Pleasure under Patriarchy.” *Ethics* 99 (2): 314–46.

Massin, Olivier. 2017. “Desires, Values and Norms.” In *The Nature of Desire*, edited by Federico Lauria and Julien A. Deonna. Oxford University Press.

Mesquita, Batja. 2024. *Between Us: How Culture Creates Emotions*. W.W. Norton & Company.

Morgan, Seiriol. 2003. “Sex in the Head.” *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 20 (1): 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5930.00231.

Moulton, Janice. 1976. “Sexual Behavior: Another Position.” *The Journal of Philosophy* 73 (16): 537–46. https://doi.org/10.2307/2025718.

Nagel, Thomas. 1969. “Sexual Perversion.” *The Journal of Philosophy* 66 (1): 5–17. https://doi.org/10.2307/2024152.

Pismenny, Arina. 2023. “Pansexuality: A Closer Look at Sexual Orientation.” *Philosophies* 8 (4): 60. https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies8040060.

Primoraz, Igor. 1999. *Ethics and Sex*. Routledge.

Prinz, Jesse. 2004. *Gut Reactions: A Perceptual Theory of Emotion*. Oxford University Press.

Richardson, Sarah S., Meredith W. Reiches, Joe Bruch, Marion Boulicault, Nicole E. Noll, and Heather Shattuck-Heidorn. 2020. “Is There a Gender-Equality Paradox in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)? Commentary on the Study by Stoet and Geary (2018).” *Psychological Science* 31 (3): 338–41. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797619872762.

Ringrose, Jessica, Deborah Tolman, and Marisa Ragonese. 2019. “Hot Right Now: Diverse Girls Navigating Technologies of Racialized Sexy Femininity.” *Feminism & Psychology* 29 (1): 76–95. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353518806324.

Scarantino, Andrea. 2017. “Do Emotions Cause Actions, and If So How?” *Emotion Review* 9 (4): 326–34. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073916679005.

Schopenhauer, Arthur. 1958. “The Metaphysics of Sexual Love.” In *The World as a Will and Representation*, translated by E.F.J. Payne, II. Dover Publications.

Shargel, Daniel, and Jesse Prinz. 2017. “An Enactivist Theory of Emotional Content.” In *The Ontology of Emotions*, edited by Hichem Naar and Fabrice Teroni. Cambridge University Press.

Soble, Alan. 2022. “Masturbation and the Continuum of Sexual Activities.” In *The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings*, 8th ed., edited by Raja Halwani, Jacob M. Held, Natasha McKeever, and Alan Soble. Rowman & Littlefield.

Solomon, Robert C. 1974. “Sexual Paradigms.” *The Journal of Philosophy* 71 (11): 336–45. https://doi.org/10.2307/2024875.

Sousa, Ronald de. 1987. *The Rationality of Emotion*. MIT Press.

Sousa, Ronald de. 2003. “Perversion and Death.” *The Monist* 86 (1): 90–114.

Sousa, Ronald de, and Arina Pismenny. 2018. “L’erotisme.” In *Petit Traité des valeurs*, edited by Julien Deonna and Emma Tieffenbach. Editions d’Ithaque.

Srinivasan, Amia. 2021. *The Right to Sex*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Stoet, Gijsbert, and David C. Geary. 2018. “The Gender-Equality Paradox in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education.” *Psychological Science* 29 (4): 581–93. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797617741719.

Swami, Viren, Carolina Caprario, Martin J. Tovée, and Adrian Furnham. 2006. “Female Physical Attractiveness in Britain and Japan: A Cross-Cultural Study.” *European Journal of Personality* 20 (1): 69–81. https://doi.org/10.1002/per.568.

TallBear, Kim. 2018. “Making Love and Relations: Beyond Settler Sex and Family.” In *Making Kin Not Population*, edited by Adele Clarke and Donna Haraway. Prickly Paradigm Press.

Wiggins, David. 2002. *Needs, Values, Truth: Essays in the Philosophy of Value*. 3rd ed. Oxford University Press.

Willis, Ellen. 2012. “Lust Horizons: Is the Women’s Movement Pro-Sex?” In *No More Nice Girls: Countercultural Essays*. University of Minnesota Press.

Wilson, Edward O. 1975. *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*. Harvard University Press.