8 Sex differences in mate selectivity. College men differ from college women in the minimum intelligence that they say they would require in a casual sexual partner. However, men and women have similar standards with respect to the minimum intelligence they would require in a marriage partner. Source: Kenrick et al. [640].

The lower standards of males, at least when it comes to casual sex, are evident in the responses of college students when asked about their absolute minimum requirements vis-a-vis the intelligence of persons with whom they would have different kinds of sexual relationships. Men, but not women, were prepared to have sex with partners of far below average intelligence, provided that the encounter carried no commitment (Figure 8) [640].

The enthusiasm of males for low-cost sexual opportunities has also been documented by two social psychologists who sent confederates, an attractive young man and an attractive young woman, on the following mission. They were to approach strangers of the opposite sex on a college campus, asking some of them “Would you go to bed with me tonight?” Not one woman agreed to the proposition, but 75 percent of the men said, “Yes.” Remember that these gentlemen had met the woman in question all of a minute before [199].

Now it is possible that all the women in this study who said “No” did so because they sensibly feared becoming pregnant or did not wish to risk injury in a sexual encounter with a male stranger. If so, then homosexual women should have no such inhibitions about casual sex, since sexual interactions between two women cannot result in pregnancy and are very unlikely to lead to physical assault. But homosexual women are no more interested in having multiple partners than are heterosexual females [40].

Coercive Sex
The greater eagerness of males for sex in general is also apparent in the readiness of some to engage in coercive sex, including criminal rape. Although rapists are often severely punished, rape occurs in every culture studied to date [899].
Many persons have tried to explain the phenomenon, including Susan Brownmiller, in her favorably reviewed and still influential book Against Our Will [155]. In her view, rapists act on behalf of all men to instill fear into all women, the better to intimidate and control them, thus keeping them “in their place.”

This intimidation hypothesis implies that some males are willing to take the risks associated with rape, which is a capital crime in many cultures, in order to provide a benefit for the rest of male society. This argument suffers from all the logical problems inherent in “for-the-good-of-the-group” hypotheses (with the added difficulty that groups composed of only one sex cannot be the focus of any realistic sort of group selection), but we can test it anyway. If the evolved function of the trait is to subjugate all women, then the rapist element in male society can be predicted to target older, dominant women (or young women who aspire to positions of power) to demonstrate the penalty that comes from stepping outside the traditional subordinate role. This prediction is not met. Most rape victims are young, poor women [1184]. The intimidation hypothesis, therefore, cannot be correct.

An alternative evolutionary hypothesis proposed by Randy and Nancy Thornhill is that rape is an optional tactic in a conditional sexual strategy [1184]. According to the Thornhills, sexual selection has favored males with the capacity to commit rape under some conditions as a means of fertilizing eggs and leaving descendants. In this view, rape in humans is analogous to forced copulation in Panorpa scorpionflies (see Chapter 12), in which males unable to offer nuptial gifts in return for matings use the low-gain, last-chance tactic of trying to force females to copulate with them. According to the rape as adaptive tactic hypothesis, human males unable to attract willing sexual partners might also rape as a reproductive option of last resort.

The idea that rape might serve a sexual function has angered persons who feel that such a claim excuses rapists [e.g., 381], but the hypothesis is an attempt at explanation, not a justification, for the behavior. Others have dismissed such hypotheses on the grounds that rapists are motivated by a desire to attack, injure, or humiliate women. But this is a proximate hypothesis, not a true alternative to the ultimate hypothesis that rape has evolutionary consequences. At the proximate level, some rapists might well be driven by a desire to attack women violently, but if this behavior sometimes resulted in the fertilization of their victims, one could legitimately discuss its ultimate reproductive function—again, without approving of the rapist’s actions. And raped women do sometimes become pregnant [900, 1184], even in modern societies in which many women employ chemical birth control technology. In the past, when reliable birth control pills and abortion procedures were not available, rapists would have had a higher probability of fathering children through forced sex.

Another ultimate hypothesis to account for rape proposes that the behavior is a maladaptice by-product of those well-documented elements of the male psyche that lead to quick sexual arousal, a desire for variety in sexual partners, and an interest in impersonal sex. The plausibility of this hypothesis is enhanced by the observation that males of many nonhuman animals engage in sexual activity that
Table 2 Alternative ultimate hypotheses on why some human males commit rape and some allied predictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Predictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rape is a nonsexual, purely violent act (proximate hypothesis) designed to subjugate all women for the benefit of all men (ultimate hypothesis)</td>
<td>The populations of rapists and their victims will be similar to populations of criminals and victims in other violent crimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rapists will target women in positions of power or those who aspire to these positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape is an adaptive component of a conditional male sexual strategy</td>
<td>Victims of rape will tend to be young and fertile, and will sometimes become pregnant as a result of the rape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rapists are likely to be unmarried, poor men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape is an incidental by-product of an otherwise adaptive male sexual strategy</td>
<td>Victims of rape will tend to be young and fertile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rapists will have unusually high sex drive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

cannot possibly result in offspring, such as the copulatory mounting of weaned pups by male elephant seals [1015]. As applied to humans, the rape as by-product hypothesis requires that the motivating systems regulating male sexuality have a net positive effect on fitness, even though coercive copulation usually reduces the fitness of its practitioners [900].

Discriminating between the rape as by-product and rape as adaptive tactic hypotheses is difficult, given that they generate many of the same predictions (Table 2) [900, 1185]. For example, both hypotheses produce the prediction that rape victims will be young, relatively fertile women with a relatively high probability of becoming pregnant. This prediction is apparently correct (Figure 9), but does not enable us to discriminate between the two hypotheses.

The rape as adaptive tactic hypothesis predicts that young, poor men will commit rape at a disproportionately high frequency. Although many apprehended rapists are indeed young, poor, unmarried men [1184], men of this sort are more likely to be arrested and prosecuted for any criminal act than are men of high social rank. If rape by married men of power and prestige is underreported, then we cannot rely entirely on official crime statistics to test the adaptive tactic hypothesis.

The rape as by-product hypothesis produces the prediction that rapists will have unusually high levels of sexual activity with consenting as well as nonconsenting partners, contrary to the adaptive tactic hypothesis. Some evidence supporting this prediction exists [693, 900], but as is true of many issues in human sociobiology, the results of testing competing hypotheses on coercive sex is not conclusive.
Female Control of Paternity

Males do not always behave in ways that advance the fitness of their sexual partners, rapists being an extreme example. However, since fertilization is internal, females retain considerable control over the paternity of their offspring, which they can influence in a variety of ways. In particular, women can actively solicit sperm from more than one male, engaging in the human equivalent of the extra-pair copulations for which female birds have become famous (see Chapter 13). If their husbands or primary partners then care for offspring fathered by other males, these women impose a heavy fitness penalty on the men they have cuckolded, given the costly nature of parental care.

Sociobiological hypotheses abound on why women might sometimes cheat on their primary partners. The fitness gains could include the receipt of extra resources or superior protection for their offspring from the other man; alternatively, mating with more than one male may eventually enable the woman to exchange an inferior primary partner for a superior one (from her perspective). Thus, we would expect women involved in extramarital affairs to choose wealthier or more emotionally committed partners than their current spouses, whom they may subsequently divorce [1167].

Given that women sometimes are sexually involved with more than one male, can they bias fertilization of their eggs in favor of the individual who would be the superior father? One possibility is that females use copulatory orgasms to control