

and avoids being attacked. A subordinate male may use a similar device. Young male monkeys frequently adopt female sexual invitation postures and are then mounted by dominant males that would otherwise have attacked them. Dominant females may also mount subordinate females in the same way. This utilisation of sexual patterns in non-sexual situations has become a common feature of the primate social scene and has proved extremely valuable in helping to maintain group harmony and organisation. Because these other species of primates do not undergo a process of intense pair-bond formation, it does not lead to difficulties in the shape of long-term homosexual pairings. It simply solves immediate dominance problems, but does not have long-term sexual relationship consequences.

Homosexual behaviour is also seen in situations where the ideal sexual object (a member of the opposite sex) is unavailable. This applies in many groups of animals: a member of the same sex is used as a substitute object 'the next best thing' for sexual activity. In total isolation animals are often driven to more extreme measures and will attempt to copulate with inanimate objects, or will masturbate. In captivity, for example, certain carnivores have been known to copulate with their food containers. Monkeys frequently develop masturbatory patterns and this has even been recorded in the case of lions. Also, animals housed with the wrong species may attempt to mate with them. But these activities typically disappear when the biologically correct stimulus—a member of the opposite sex—appears on the scene.

Similar situations occur with high frequency in our own species and the response is much the same. If either males or females cannot for some reason obtain sexual access to their opposite numbers, they will find sexual outlets in other ways. They may use other members of their own sex, or they may even use members of other species, or they may masturbate. The detailed American studies of sexual behaviour revealed that in that culture 13 per cent of females and 37 per cent of males have indulged in homosexual contacts to the point of orgasm by the age of 45. Sexual contacts with