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Procreation vs. Recreation: When Necessity Begets Excess

Bonnie Crafton

In nature, ecosystems have a variety of methods of maintaining balance. Many of these relate to population control. The ruling factor here is carrying capacity—a combination of food availability, competition, and available habitat space that dictates how many organisms can live in a given area with a given population density. In the animal kingdom, the effects of this regulatory mechanism can be seen in infant mortality, abandonment, infanticide, starvation, or smaller litters/restrained breeding. For animals, sex takes place out of necessity—the need to procreate—and is curbed or limited when more young are unnecessary.

Some animals have even developed physiological mechanisms to assist in controlling where, when, and how many young they will have. Some are crude, such as horses, who can hold off labor until they feel completely safe to foal. This is dangerous, and sometimes results in the death of the foal if the mare waits too long. It also has limited use, as she can only wait for up to a few weeks. The armadillo has evolved to an even better system of delaying giving birth. It can delay fetal development for up to three years after conception if conditions are not to their favor.

Better still is the physiological “birth control” employed by rabbits. If living conditions are too crowded and the mother is too stressed, female rabbits actually have the ability to absorb most to all of her litter back into her body before they finish developing. While conditions must be harsh to elicit this abortion result, when the rabbit population is too great or food is too scarce, the rabbit has a better option than bringing more competition into being.

Yet this merely covers how animals can alter their sexual habits to maintain a stable population. If they fail to do this on their own, nature will take over by providing food shortages, increased competition for space and resources, and increased predation or disease.

Humans, on the other hand, have taken sex and changed it from a necessary act to perpetuate the species to a recreational activity to be done with whomever, whenever the urge strikes. Or worse yet, feel the need to have rabbit-sized litters for families due to cultural or sociological pressures. In addition, due to human meddling, we have created an artificial carrying capacity, not truly representative of what our Earth can maintain, but rather what we can force it (artificially) to uphold. The result is a ridiculously exploding population and a blind forward rush to inevitable biosphere collapse.

This population explosion as a result of a changed view of procreation manifests in different ways in different places. In some countries, the number of children you have is a status symbol. Other cultures have older generations falling back on younger ones when they become incapacitated, so more children is assured future care. And some places just flat out have no self-control, fraternizing right and left without practicing any of the variety of contraceptive systems available. Worse still are the places that misunderstand the idea of contraceptives and how they are supposed to function.

Much of our current problem stems from past trends. To start with, our population began its steep increase around the turn of the century. In the past, having large families was necessary to ensure the survival of both the parents and children. Until the development of antibiotics and vaccinations in the 1800’s, few children survived to adulthood due to the rampant spread of poxviruses, rheubella, measles, mumps, and other dangerous childhood diseases. The more children a single family could have, the better their chances of having one or two survive to marriageable age.

This can hardly be seen as irresponsible, but rather as working within the given constraints of the environment. However, with the advent of advancing medicine and preventative treatment, children’s chances of surviving to their teens drastically

increased. Yet in many places the number of offspring produced by the parents did not decrease to compensate for this rise in survival. The result was an increase in marriageable people who in turn would follow the trend set by their parents.

Other cultures see children as a sort of Health Care for the older generation. Up until the limits set on population in many of the oriental countries, parents would have many children so they would be cared for once they reached an age where they could no longer support themselves. The more children they had, the better the chance they and their families could care for the elderly generation. While this is not practiced so much anymore, in some underdeveloped nations where people still practice tribalism and lack many ideals of civilization, children can almost be a status symbol. For a man to produce many children is a sign of his virility and thus his strength and capacity. These types of places lack birth control practices or the education needed to properly implement them.

Many of the problem areas have been provided with contraceptives but the population is not properly educated in their usage. Some African countries, once provided with condoms, took to using them with gusto, but failed to heed the warning that condoms do not prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, nor are they a guarantee against pregnancy. The same goes for birth control pills—they work most of the time but not all of the time. Thus in an overly-promiscuous culture or one encouraged to sexual freedom because of the “protection” provided by contraceptives, birth control systems are not particularly useful.

The last factor contributing to our population problem is our artificial environment. As explained earlier, if the organisms within an environment fail to regulate themselves, nature will do it for them. However, we have removed nature from the picture. In most places, we never really run out of food because it is mass-produced and even genetically engineered, then shipped to wherever it is needed. We build up instead of out, making extreme usage of the limited amount of ground space available for living in. We stretch our natural resources to the breaking point, being willing to use them up rather than allow moderation to replenish them with time. Even disease is really no longer a way of negating a run-away population (though at the rate AIDS is

spreading, in the next 30 years it may apply). Every factor nature would normally utilize to stabilize a population's growth has been taken out of commission.

So the stage has been set—longer life expectancy, large families, poor application of birth control, and lack of environmental factors all combine to a potentially ugly population spike. The environment demonstrates two types of carrying capacities. An S-curve is seen when environmental factors help keep the population in check. It demonstrates an increase in population until it reaches the carrying capacity, at which point it levels off and fluctuates slightly about that line. A J-curve can be seen when environmental factors have been removed and a population can grow with most of the restraints gone. The population spikes to an incredible point, at which point the resources that population was using are gone and the population plummets to near extinction. If there are enough organisms left to make a comeback they may recover. On the other hand, if the resources are slow to replenish themselves, that population may go extinct.

The United Nations Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has projected three possible future populations based on current trends, one high, one medium, and one low. The low population projection decreases the world population in 2150 to fewer than 5 billion, probably as a result of widespread disease or drastic improvement on population control. The medium curve actually levels off at about 10 billion, perhaps as a result of better population maintenance and some environmental limiting factors.

The high curve shows a frightening similarity to a J-curve, as the population spikes from 2.5 billion in 1950 to almost 25 billion in 2150. Unless we've terre-formed other planets, I don't see how that many people can even live on this planet, never mind find the resources with which to feed everyone. The only place these people are springing up from is sexual activity, indicating a worldwide choice to ignore the consequences of irresponsible sexual actions. Cultural differences aside, for our population to grow that much people must be having three to five children each, in addition to an increased longevity. This type of population spike, like the J-curve, can result in only one thing—a complete collapse of the

population. If the Earth is that badly overpopulated, it is possible the resources would never renew either, leaving nothing for the human survivors to fall back on.

Overall, human habits are a far cry from the animal kingdom, whose environment and personal actions maintain procreation only by necessity. There are too many factors allowing for the uncontrolled growth of our population. Irresponsible procreation will hurt everyone in the long run. Perhaps it is the advent of a new culture in which free sex is a fine recreational activity and procreation is far from anyone's mind, but like most things, excess is dangerous. Sex can be a cultural recreation activity as long as people take steps to curtail the consequences, and remember that you do not need six children to ensure the survival of your species.

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Things to Know Before Having Sexual Relations:

How to Avoid Being Held in Bondage by the State

Katie Shadden

Since the beginning of society, mankind has implemented laws to keep order and peace, and to improve the standard of living. As the human species has evolved, some of our laws have not. Some remain ghosts of outdated beliefs that should have been left in dust, while others are forgotten edicts, still on the books, but not enforced by any sane person. These esoteric laws are remembered now as a source of amusement, and even more so when we consider that they were once serious, enforced rules.

We will begin our journey back in time with laws that must have been enforced because someone conducted themselves in a manner in which someone in power did not approve.

In Florida it is illegal to have sexual relations with a porcupine.

I don't know who ever thought of having sex with a porcupine, but they couldn't have been a very intelligent person. Porcupines have spines that are nearly a foot long and about a quarter inch in diameter. These quills are loosely attached, and bristle up when a porcupine is in danger. The porcupine will swing its tail when it is angry, trying to hit the animal attacking it, which allows it to imbed the largest quills up to an inch into the opponent's skin¹. It would seem that the *possibility* of getting a blast of porcupine quills in the genitals would be deterrent enough (*La Blue Girl*, anyone?). Did they really need a law?

On a side note, a group practicing dolphin lovin' has started to make headlines. Dolphin—human relationships have become a new rage with those

descendants of our porcupine lovers. These dolphin fanatics explain that a relationship with a dolphin can be as deep as that with another person. Their websites give details on how to properly make-love to your dolphin companion, and how to properly cuddle with your new special friend². The dolphin-lovers also warn not to try having relations with dolphins in animal parks or aquariums because they have security guards who will *arrest* you if you attempt to enter the tanks. A man was recently arrested for attempting to kill a male dolphin that had an affair with his wife! Swim away Flipper, swim far away!

In Maryland, it is illegal to sell condoms from vending machines with one exception — prophylactics may be dispensed from a vending machine only "in places where alcoholic beverages are sold for consumption on the premises."

This law makes half-sense. Apparently the writers believed that *only* persons in places where alcohol was sold would ever consider having sexual relations, and therefore would need a condom.

In Indiana, mustaches are illegal if the bearer has a "tendency to habitually kiss other humans."

The ultimate way to rid yourself of the awkward encounters you've been having lately with that over-friendly friend who always has food in their mustache and wants to kiss you. Knowing our luck, the friend will still not get the hint about being too friendly, so next we'll have to pass a law that says: "It is illegal for John Smith to habitually kiss other humans, except for those who have signed a consent form."

¹ Pundle, Tara. "About Porcupines..." NativeTech: Native American Technology and Art. <<http://www.nativetech.org/quill/porcupin.html>>. April 2004.

² For more information on how far these people will go, see: <http://jaronbs.com/dolphin.htm> (article) <http://www.dolphinsex.org/> (instructions)

An excerpt from Kentucky state legislation: "No female shall appear in a bathing suit on any highway within this state unless she be escorted by at least two officers or unless she be armed with a club."

This law actually makes sense. Apparently Kentucky was having problems with scantily-clad women being attacked by men while walking along the highway. I just want to know, why a club? They only do 1-6 damage. Granted they are free, but why not go with a nice heavy mace and increase your damage to 1-8? Besides, getting two officers to escort you is very difficult unless you fall into one of two categories. One, you are breaking the law, and then you don't want to be found with a weapon because you'll do hard time for (insert crime) plus a deadly weapon. Two, you must be at least 6th level, have leadership, and enough skills and money to spend on a decent armed escort.

These previous laws were written by people with at least half a brain for people with almost half a brain. The next set of laws seem to have been made by women, for women, giving us the power to enforce "the rules" that every married man should know (unless they want to habitually sleep on the couch).

The T'ang Dynasty Empress Wu Hu passed a special law concerning oral sex. She felt that a woman pleasuring a man represented the supremacy of the male over the female. Therefore, she insisted all visiting male dignitaries show their respect by pleasuring her orally when meeting. The empress would throw open her robe and her guest would kneel before her and kiss her genitals.

It's good to be the Empress. Hopefully she required all the visiting male dignitaries to bathe and brush their teeth before they held their audience.

This must have been the largest loop hole for men cheating on their wives. The men could come home smelling like another woman's perfume and say, "I was just visiting the Empress, and you can't say no to the Empress, dear." A wife can't argue with that logic, unless she doesn't mind being beheaded for speaking ill of the Empress.

In the quiet town of Connorsville, Wisconsin, it is illegal for a man to shoot off a gun when his female partner has an orgasm.

No man is allowed to make love to his wife with the smell of garlic, onions, or sardines on his breath in Alexandria, Minnesota. If his wife so requests, law mandates that he must brush his teeth.

Warn your hubby that after lovemaking in Ames, Iowa, he isn't allowed to take more than three gulps of beer while lying in bed with you—or holding you in his arms.

The above three laws are a god-send to women who have been trying, since the beginning of humanity, to force good manners on our barbaric men. Now all we need is a law that makes cuddling after sex mandatory for at least 10 minutes, and the guy must at least act like he enjoys it or he will be fined and hung from his toes.

Another set of esoteric sex laws include those written by stuffy politicians who want to make society conform to the boring norm. I imagine that these law makers have very unhappy and unsatisfied spouses. Also included are very odd laws that seem impossible to enforce on the basis of being completely illogical or completely uncontrollable. Can anyone say invasion of privacy?

As recently as 1990, these states had laws against the use of dildos: Idaho, Utah, Arizona, Oklahoma, Minnesota, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and the city of Washington D.C.

The original banning of dildos must have occurred after a politician's wife was found having more fun with her toy than she had ever had with her husband. What a huge blow to his ego! I wonder if, after they were banned, she divorced him for being so insecure. Apparently, the southeast and New England areas were once home to many sticks in the mud.

An Illinois state law prohibits a number of things—one of which is a public erection, another is nude dancing. The prohibition against the public erection has never been challenged in the Supreme Court, but the prohibition against nude dancing has.

I know many men who would look at this law, their jaw would drop, and they would ask, “How are you supposed to stop an erection, especially when the nude dancer is dancing?” This is cruelest to teenage boys, who tend to pop the woody multiple times during the day. Isn’t having to walk up to the chalkboard and answering a problem, hoping no one will notice your unexpected friend, punishment enough? Imagine getting arrested for it too!

In Oxford, Ohio, it's illegal for a woman to strip off her clothing while standing in front of a man's picture.

What?! She can strip in front of a man, but not the picture of man...how does that make sense? This must date back to the Salem Witch trials, when lawmakers thought that if the woman stripped in front of the picture of a man it might bewitch him. Now that I think about it, I think that’s how I ended up engaged.....

The only acceptable sexual position in Washington, D.C. is the missionary position. Any other sexual position is considered illegal.

How un-fun is that? Yes, it is the most comfortable position for having sex when you’re pregnant, but for non-expecting couples, we need a little spice in our lives, right? I would think that if mandatory sexual position was implemented, I would have guessed doggy-style since it seems to be the stereotypical male favorite.

The early Christian church forbade couples from having sex on Wednesdays, Fridays and of course, Sundays.

Apparently the Christian church had not yet started its “have as many children as possible” campaign. I guess that with this schedule couples could have sex one day and pray for forgiveness all the next day. Wash. Rinse. Repeat.

In the state of Washington there is a law against having sex with a virgin under any circumstances (including the wedding night).

How is this supposed to work? Either people jumped the border a lot in Washington, this law was never enforced, or there are a lot of native Washington virgins. I have a feeling that someone was a very overprotective parent.

Finally my favorite:

It is illegal for any member of the Nevada legislature to conduct official business wearing a penis costume while the legislature is in session.

I would love to see pictures of this meeting. Was it Halloween or was he just having a good time? I mean a penis with a gavel, how cute is that?

Human beings have made some strange laws since the beginning of written history. We have been conditioned to feel ashamed of the most fundamental instinct we have as animals—sex. People have created lists of sexual acts that are taboo and not discussed. These feelings are quickly changing, and the younger generations are proudly singing Bloodhound Gang’s “The Bad Touch,” while experimenting to find what makes us feel good (while most of us still put safety first).

We need to shed these puritanical cocoons and embrace the full enjoyment of life. It amazes me how our society shows graphic violence on the television every night, but how Janet Jackson’s breast created such uproar. We should revel in the beauty of the body, and come to a deeper understanding of ourselves instead of hiding it away like a condemning skeleton in our closet³.

³ The various laws were found on <<http://www.dribbleglass.com/subpages/strange/sexlaws.htm>> and then located on various web pages for confirmation.

The Normality of Sexual Fantasies

Kristin Miranda and Alisha Medeiros

Do you ever picture yourself in a hot tub surrounded with lit candles and through the door walks in the most gorgeous person that you have ever seen and they're butt naked? Or have you ever wished that those pants would fall off of that gorgeous person in front of you? Have you ever imagined yourself as an irresistible sex god whom could overtake the world with their superb sexual manner? Sexual fantasies are a normal, integral part of the daily lives of every man and woman.

Sexual fantasies are defined as, "any erotic or sexually arousing mental imagery that a person has while awake. It can be an elaborate story, or it can be a fleeting thought of some sexual activity" (Hicks and Leitenberg, 2001). Sexual fantasies are free from outside criticism, embarrassment, and/or scrutiny. They allow one to escape from their repressive sexual desires and allows for experiences to be had through imagery rather than through taboo societal actions. Types of sexual fantasies not only involve normal sexual partners, but can also involve strangers, people

of the same sex, group sex, violent sex, and even people of power. The thoughts are endless. "In fantasy, people are relatively free to indulge their primitive lusts and brutish impulses in ways that might be unacceptable in reality" (Wilson, 1997).

There are three primary types of fantasies outside of the normal, everyday scenarios of common partners and bedroom scenes. The first scenario deals with "forbidden imagery." This imagery includes unusual partners such as strangers and relatives and unusual positions. "Or as Dr. Seuss once asked (albeit in a somewhat different context): 'Would you, could you, in a boat? Could you, would you, with a goat?'" The second scenario is of sexual irresistibility. This deals with sheer animal magnetism, seductiveness, and multiple partners. The third scenario involves dominance and submission fantasies. These include power fantasies such as rape, bondage, etc. (Doskoch, 1995).

Research shows that men and women differ in how they sexually fantasize (Table 1).

Table 1: The "Tattle of the Sexes" shows the differences between men and women and how they think about sex (Doskoch, 1995).

	Men	Women
Think about sex 1 or more times a day	54%	19%
Have had imaginary sexual encounters with 1000 or more partners	32%	8%
Have fantasized during masturbation	86%	69%
Focus on visual imagery during sexual fantasy	81%	43%
Focus on feelings or emotions	19%	57%
Began fantasizing during intercourse the first time I had sex	36%	18%
First fantasy inspired by a relationship	6%	31%
First fantasy inspired by sexy older person like a teacher	27%	7%

According to Doskoch (1995), men fantasize or think about sex 7.2 times a day, while women tend to do so 4.5 times a day. A potential reason for this was proposed by Wilson (1997) and deals with the theory of evolution. Since women have far fewer eggs than men do sperm, women want to make their fantasies of quality, while men of quantity. This idea leads to the suggestion that women would be more inclined to have sexual fantasies of those who are genetically fit,

or of higher power/authority. This also suggests that men would be more inclined to have sexual fantasies of group sex or with multiple partners. According to Wilson's survey conducted in Britain, men were found to sexually fantasize about group sex much more than women, by a ratio of 4.2:1 or 42% of men reported it compared to 10% of women. Sex with strangers was also higher in men (33% men vs. 25% women). Although nearly equal amounts of men and

women reported having sexual fantasies with famous persons (16% men vs. 17% women), when this data was rearranged into total amounts of fantasies, it accounted for 16% of male fantasies and 27% of female fantasies. Homosexuality was also fantasized more often by women, 19% of women's total fantasies, but only 10% of men's total fantasies.

Sexual fantasies begin at an early age. They begin, for most people, between the ages of 11 and 13. In one study, 57% of boys and 42% of girls between the ages of 14 and 15 said that they had thought of sex within the five minutes prior to the survey. Only 19% of men and 12% of women thought of sex within the last five minutes if they were between the ages of 56 and 64 (Doskoch, 1995). The duration of sexual fantasies shows that it is a vital component of almost all human beings at every stage of life following puberty, but the frequency, not necessarily quality, seems to decline with age and possibly experience.

Wilson (1997) also considered how sexual fantasies were affected by age. Most types of sexual fantasies were consistently stable at ages 17 through 57. The greatest age difference seen was in group sex. In men, group sex fantasies peak at the ages of 28-37 and sharply decrease after that point. In women, there is a slow decrease in group sex fantasies throughout the age span, but a larger dive after the 38-47 year bracket. Fantasies of authoritative figures also declined as women got older, while interest in strangers and homosexual partners remained nearly constant regardless of age. One possible suggestion, is that the age differences in peaks and declines between men and women are due to hormonal changes.

According to recent studies (C.C., 2000), violent sexual fantasies are normal. These violent sexual fantasies can range from actions such as spanking to tying someone up. It is normal to have both positive and negative sexual thoughts, although most people admit to having positive sexual fantasies. Even though most people see their violent fantasies in a positive light, it strongly depends on whom the person is fantasizing about. For example, being spanked by Brad Pitt or Angelina Jolie could be seen as positive, whereas, being spanked by your less than interesting math professor could be seen as less

positive. While the violence is equivalent in both scenarios, the person makes the difference.

Most of our sexual fantasies are "ordinary, non-kinky intercourse with a past or current lover" (Doskoch, 1995). However, on occasion sexual fantasies can concern an outside person. According to a study conducted by Hicks and Leitenberg (2001), 98% of men and 80% of women had sexual fantasies about people other than their current partners in the two months prior to their study, regardless of marital status. It was also found that women who have cheated on their partners had a 50% increased chance of having fantasies about someone other than their partners. An increase in the number of past sexual partners correlates to an increase in fantasies about someone other than their partners in women, but the correlation does not prove true for men, who continue this behavior at a steady pace.

In an article featured in the Los Angeles Times, Carey (2003) looks at recent studies concerning the issues of marital affairs. Noted in this article, is that sexual fantasies are almost always the trigger that leads to an affair. This may cause some concern considering that over 20% of Americans and 10% of Canadians have marital affairs. Also noted was that women had affairs more often in their first five years of marriage, while men are more apt to have affairs at two peaks in their lifetimes: the first five years and after 20 years. It is not currently known whether more sexual fantasies occur during these years, but affairs have been tied to rebellion against marriage vows.

So how does society feel about sexual fantasies? A poll featured in the New York Times indicated that "48% of respondents did not think it was 'okay' to fantasize about having sex with someone else even if they were faithful to their partner" (Hicks and Leitenberg, 2001). The study conducted by Hicks and Leitenberg (2001) showed that 87% of people admitted to having sexual fantasies about people other than their sexual partners in the past two months. According to Leitenberg, "one in four people feel strong guilt about their fantasies." Most of this is due to fantasizing about people other than current partners. Even young college-age people feel guilty: 22% of college-aged women and 8% of men admit to repressing their fantastic desires. This repression or guilt can lead to an unhappy sex life,

regardless of the similarity of the fantasies to those who are guiltless (Doskoch, 1995).

Throughout history, there has been a suppression of revealing sexual fantasies in general and even more so those including someone other than current partners. Possibly, if people were more aware of the commonness of sexual fantasies, they may not be so quick to criticize. This may also help to open up sexual communication between partners in relationships. If partners can be open about their sexual fantasies and desires, it may help them to fulfill each others fantasies.

The topic of sexual fantasies was ignored nearly completely by the field of psychology for the first half of the twentieth century. Much of this ignorance was due to early psychological philosophy. In 1908, Freud “declared that ‘a happy person never fantasizes, only a dissatisfied one’.” This theme continued in psychology and became known as the deficiency theory, the idea that one fantasizes only if there is a deficiency in their lives (Doskoch, 1995). But according to Leitenberg and Henning, “frequent fantasizers are having more than their share of fun in bed. They have sex more often, engage in a wider variety of erotic activities, have more partners, and masturbate more often than infrequent fantasizers” (Doskoch, 1995). According to Doskoch (1995), “the association between fantasies and a healthy sex life are so strong, in fact, that it’s now considered pathological not to have sexual fantasies.”

Sexual fantasies aren’t always harmless though. The line is not always clear to where a fantasy ends. This is true of Graham Coutts of Northern Ireland who in 2003 fulfilled his sexual fantasy by strangling a special needs teacher. Coutts, a musician, strangled the teacher using a pair of tights and kept her body in a spot only known to him for 11 days. He then transferred the body to a storage unit, where he visited the body every few days. Once the body began to smell and attract attention, he lit it afire at a bird sanctuary. The trial continues today (Man, 2004).

According to Doskoch (1995), “the path from fantasy to deviance is anything but direct.” Sexual fantasies are not necessary for sexually offensive acts to occur. Only 22% of child molesters admitted to having sexual fantasies of minors prior to the offensive action. “Unusual fantasies are a concern

only when they become compulsive or exclusive, or for individuals ‘in whom the barrier between thought and behavior has been broken’” (Doskoch, 1995).

There is no doubt that sexual fantasies are an integral part of our society and of our personal lives. However, there is still much more to know about sexual fantasies. In the past century, we have come a long way in understanding these often hot, naughty and very private moments in one’s mind. What was once considered a neurotic activity, sexual fantasies are now considered a necessary, adamant, and normal component of our everyday lives. Sexual fantasies open a door to a heightened sexual nirvana, often not attained in reality.

As we have seen, through the above mentioned studies, men and women differ in their approaches to sexual fantasies, or at least in what they are willing to admit. Although different, the same psychological and physical purpose is achieved through sexual fantasy in both sexes. It is interesting to note the evolutionary importance of this idea. This evolutionary perspective may also help us in the future to understand more basic differences and commonalities between men and women.

It is important to note that although significant differences were observed between different age groups, this may possibly be attributed to different societal trends affecting the various age groups. For example, a 45 year old person born in the liberal 1960s may be more open to their sexuality, than an 80 year old person born in the conservative 1920s. All the above data reflects only what one is willing to admit.

Society still has strong feelings about sexual expression. People feel that they must repress their inner desires to satisfy societal barriers. This repression can often backfire and leads to unsatisfying sexual relationships and lives in general. Opening up is strongly encouraged as are sexual fantasies. Both can lead to better communication, therefore better relationships, self confidence and sexual pleasure.

Much of our repression may spawn from the fear that admission will lead others to think that we may cross the line between fantasy and behavior. No one wants to be considered a sexual offender. It is important to realize that violent fantasies are not abnormal for most people, only when they are no

longer fantasies or when the fantasy becomes the focus of one's life. Sexual fantasies alone do not cause violence. Certain psychological states must be present for violence to occur.

So, as a population let's strap on our sex harnesses. Let's dream up our Playboy Bunnies and Chip and Dale Dancers. Let's reach our Seventh Heaven. Let's spank our Brad Pitts and Angelina Jolies, or better yet, let's be spanked by them. Let's bring out the peaches and cream. Let's get naked and roll around in chocolate syrup. Let's get the whips ready, don't forget the leather, and hand-cuffs are a must. After all, studies show that this is a healthy lifestyle. So close your eyes, invite whom you wish, hop in the hot tub, no swim suits allowed and get busy.

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Sex Incognito: Disguising Adult Themes in Children's Entertainment

Thomas Oldham

According to B.A. Robinson, 63% of American youth age 14 – 21 are sexually active (Robinson). According to the Child Welfare League of America, one in three females 15 years of age are sexually active, and one in four boys of the same age are sexually active (Pregnant). What does this mean? It means that people are having sex at a young age, and in significant percentages. While teen sex rates and pregnancy rates in America have declined slightly over the last decade, they are still the highest among western industrialized societies (Fact). These statistics indicate that America's youth are experimenting with sex, and they are doing so at younger and younger ages. Why is this happening? There isn't a simple answer to that question, no one factor that can be singled out; rather, there are various elements at work within our society that contribute to a relaxed moral and sexual environment. Elements like television programming, video games, and children's toys/products are just a few that often have imagery and content that is sexually suggestive and adult in nature.

One of my favorite shows, *The Family Guy*, is an animated series that comes on The Cartoon Network. While this show is a cartoon, and comes on a network that is often considered a kid's network, it has very adult themes and language. Often sexual situations are presented or alluded to in some way. My daughter frequently watches the cartoon network, and I never thought that I needed to monitor her viewing on that particular channel. Come on, it's named the "Cartoon Network". I remember growing up that cartoons were funny, entertaining, and generally harmless forms of entertainment. That was then however. While many cartoons still fit this general sort of criteria, others are clearly intended for a more mature audience, as is the case with *The Family Guy*. Admittedly, this and some other shows come on during the network's "Adult Swim" hour, which is prefaced with a warning/disclaimer about the content of the programming; however, this same program,

and one other called *Futurama*, which is also intended for more mature audiences, can also be seen at other various times during the day.

It's not just the images that sometimes meet the criteria for being mature, it is also the elevated nature of the humor as well. I'll often watch some of the shows on The Cartoon Network with my daughter, and many times I notice images and themes that only a more mature viewer would get, at least on a conscious level. One of the characters on another of my daughter's favorite programs is named "Sara Bellum". To my daughter, that is nothing more than a name, but to someone a little older, this is a play on words. The cerebellum is part of the human brain. The name "Sara Bellum" infers something about this character. In this case the inference is positive, the character is intelligent, but when the character is taken in context with her situation, a different sort of message emerges. Sara Bellum is the secretary for the Mayor of Townsville, aptly named "Mayor". Mayor is an inept sort of character, and functions as more of a figurehead than anything else. All of the real problem solving within the government is done by Miss Bellum. She's the brains. This isn't a bad thing, right? Considering that Miss Bellum is clearly the brains of the operation, yet she is confined to a subservient role under an inept male figurehead, it's not entirely a good thing. You can be a smart woman, but you're only good for certain jobs and duties, and they don't include being in charge. This example may not be specifically sexual in nature, but it illustrates how mature ideas and themes can be easily presented under the disguise of the harmless cartoon. Furthermore, it should be clear that "harmless" cartoons can contain stereotypical images imbedded within them.

The previous examples illustrate how sexual messages and gender stereotypes are easily disguised in what is traditionally considered children's programming –cartoons-. Really though, do kids watch enough television to merit concern about these

issues? According to the American Academy of Pediatrics they do. American youth spend 21-22 hours per week in front of the tube, and American teens spend over 23 hours a week watching television as well. That's a whole day per week! By the time today's kids reach 70 they'll have spent 7-10 years of their lives in front of the TV (American). Do the math and it's apparent that kids are spending a significant portion of each day in front of their television sets, so the types of programs and messages they are experiencing have the potential exert a great amount of influence over the opinions they form about themselves and the activities they feel are acceptable and normal behavior, and this certainly includes ideas about sexual activity. However, television isn't the only medium through which kids are exposed to sexual imagery and suggestions.

My daughter has a Nintendo Gamecube, and I recently considered buying her a game called *Tony Hawk Pro Skater 4*. When I shared this idea with my fiancée, she was quick to point out to me that within the story of the game, women can be seen pole dancing and in other negatively stereotyped roles. I argued that it was only a game, but days later after reflection I had a slightly different opinion. Suppose the game had explicit nudity in it? Would it still be okay for my 7 year old daughter to play the game then? It would still be "just a game", because it comes wrapped in the package that is known as "game". Because our association with the idea of "game" is one of fun and play, it is easy for potentially harmful ideas and messages to slip by what would normally be considered good parents. So back to the question; would it be okay for my daughter to play the game if it had explicit nudity? Obviously not, so why then would it be okay for her to play a game that has women in scant clothing dancing in an obviously provocative manner? At first, I didn't even consider the games rating, or what type of images it might contain. I simply thought that it was a video game, a skateboarding video game. She has *Tony Hawk Pro Skater 1* on her Nintendo 64, and she likes that game a lot. We often play it together, so why should this new version be any different?

This is exactly the type of mindset that developers of games, TV shows, and toys use to

market and sell their products. "It's just a game. It's a cartoon. Come on, it's a toy." I consider myself above average in the intelligence department, but that's the exact same mindset I displayed myself concerning the game I wanted to buy for my daughter. Yet the fact of the matter is that the game does contain sexually suggestive images. Many new cartoons do have adult themes. Some toys do reinforce stereotypes, often negative. Miss Bellum can be smart and beautiful, as long as she's subservient to a man, even an inept man who is far less skilled or capable than she is.

Toys are another way in which negative stereotypes and sexual images can be transmitted to kids. For her 7th birthday, my daughter got a *Bratz* doll. This is a doll similar to a *Barbie* doll, but more contemporary, more hip and urban. *Bratz* dolls are dressed in hip clothes, which sometimes means more revealing than in years past, though that in itself isn't necessarily negative. Even *Barbie* can be seen sporting a bikini. What could be considered slightly more provocative however is the fact that these dolls, which are targeted at preteen girls, wear what some would consider excessive makeup and come packaged with their own "corner" to hang out on. Now perhaps hanging out on the corner has gained a more positive connotation than when I was a youth, and I'm simply not up to date, but when I was growing up if you were a girl that was said to be hanging out on the corner, that would have some negative inferences attached to it: you were a slut, a whore, or easy to have sex with. Whether or not this was true, it was the connotation that was attached to the idea of "hanging out on the corner." These dolls promote the idea of hanging out on the corner as being normal. This example may not be as bad as my interpretation suggests, but consider what is taking place: the toy is making a once negative social concept mainstream and cool. In this same fashion, TV shows, toys, and games can also promote formerly negative ideals, like promiscuity, as cool, hip, and socially acceptable.

I'm not trying to suggest that owning a *Bratz* doll, playing *Tony Hawk Pro Skater 4*, or watching *The Family Guy* will ultimately lead to a life of sexual promiscuity or lead children down a path of stereotyped doom. What I am suggesting is that a child's environment is full of images and objects that

in one way or another can work to reinforce negative gender ideals and promote the idea that sex is okay and that it's socially acceptable at any age, whether you're in a committed relationship or if it's just a one night stand. Even if the programming, game, or toy isn't explicitly sexually suggestive, or even moderately sexually suggestive, it can still contribute to a morally relaxed environment or mindset that can be a gateway into more promiscuous types of activity.

Take for example the recent public breakup of *Barbie* and *Ken*. For decades, *Barbie* and *Ken* have been together. Now, they're breaking up, but they're still going to be "friends". While there is no "official" reason being offered for the breakup by Mattel, the company that makes *Barbie*, it is suggested that a "single" *Barbie* is more marketable and will be better for sales, especially the new surfer style *Cali Barbie* (O'Connell). There is absolutely nothing wrong with being single. Promoting a single *Barbie* in and of itself isn't a bad thing. The danger here lies in the fact that *Barbie* and *Ken* have a longstanding relationship, 43 years to be exact. But because being single is better right now, the relationship is cast aside. Translation: If your relationship becomes an inconvenience, just get out of it. Commitments are fine, as long as they don't interfere with what **I** want. No need to compromise, no point in **working** at relationships, because they should be easy, and never require real commitment. I might be stretching this analogy a little here, but again I hope the message is clear. *Barbie* is an institution in American society. *Barbie* has been a model for social norms for several decades now. Girls play pretend with *Barbie*; they dress up as *Barbie* on Halloween. They emulate *Barbie*. My daughter still dresses up in her *Barbie Bride* costume she got for Halloween two years ago.

With all of the opinions above being said, it is important to make clear that *Barbie* is a toy; *The Family Guy* is a fictional, animated show; Miss Bellum is a fictional character in a fictional world; *Tony Hawk Pro Skater 4* is a game. These things are all fictional creations and are not the real world. They are however **representations** of the world that, to a young mind in the absence of proper guidance, could be perceived as accurate representations of the world around them, or at the least accurate

representations of how the world **should** be. Rational adults can make this distinction, or at least that is the hope. My seven year old daughter however, no matter how intelligent I think she is, could see any of these examples as reality if **I** don't take the time to show her the difference, and even then I need to do so constantly because the other factors in her world (TV, Games, and Toys) are constantly addressing her with their realities. Millions of children across the nation could take the images they see during their 2 to 4 hours of daily TV viewing as reality, whether they're really real or not. Keep in mind that all of the examples I've used are pretty tame and can be found in places that are often considered safe for kids. "It's a cartoon. It's just a game. It's a toy." There are far more examples of shows that are as easily available on other networks. Ever watch MTV's Spring Break Shows? They border on soft core pornography at times.

So how do we protect our children from these mediums that have the potential to reinforce negative stereotypes and relaxed sexual practices? By taking an active and **informed** role in their lives is how. I consider myself a pretty good parent, but I have to admit I am often guilty of not monitoring my child's viewing habits as closely as I should. My fiancée scolds me when I still allow my daughter to watch *The Family Guy* with me, as I have every episode now on DVD. In my defense I constantly remind my daughter that what we see on TV isn't real, and that seeing something on TV doesn't make it okay. I won't be buying *Tony Hawk Pro Skater 4*, and I will pay closer attention to video game ratings in the future. For parents concerned about their children's viewing habits, here are some suggestions. Most cable and dish services now come with easy to use parental controls. Parents can easily set a code that must be entered anytime a program with a certain rating comes on. Additionally, if you are concerned about the amount of time your child is spending in front of the TV, try TV Allowance. TV Allowance is a product that meters the amount of TV viewing each member is allowed. Each member of the household is given a PIN code which must be entered to access the television set. Time allotments can then be set for each corresponding PIN number. So if Mom only want little Billy to watch 8 hours of TV per week, then she allots little Billy's PIN number 8 hours of

TV time per week. When his 8 hours are up, the TV shuts off and won't come back on for little Billy until the next week begins (TV Allowance). The last and best line of defense is still a little common sense. Know what your kids are interested in, and know

what they are doing with their time. If we all followed that simple rule, we wouldn't need to have this discussion.

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The Family Guy, *Futurama*, and *The Powerpuff Girls* and all characters are property of

The Cartoon Network. .

Tony Hawk Pro Skater and *Tony Hawk Pro Skater 4* are the property of Activision.

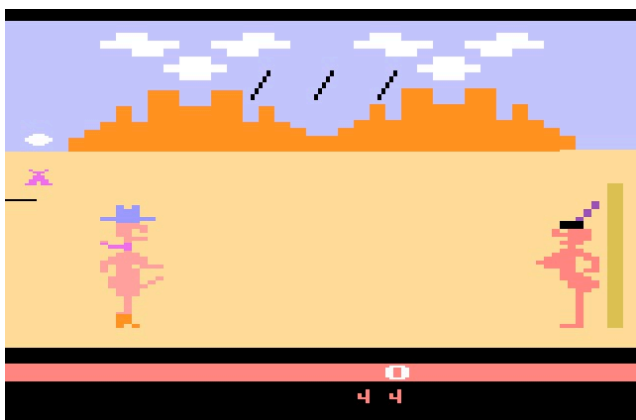
Sex Sells: An analysis of how sex *really* sells in video games.

Brad Seaberg

Measuring 34 - 24 - 35 and weighing 130 lb, is it any wonder the 5'9" brown eyed brunette is considered a goddess by many? Her sleek textured appearance, agile movements, adventurous appeal, and two big guns are highly attractive qualities. (If you hadn't already determined, I speak of Lara Croft.) Nearly everyone has heard of the star of the Tomb Raider series, but does anyone know who Steve Russell is? Or perhaps Nolan Bushnell and Al Alcom are more familiar. Russell was the man responsible for Spacewars, Bushnell for Atari and Alcom for Pong. The history of video games is not very well known, but memorable characters such as Lara Croft are quite famous. Currently, video games are most celebrated and recognized for their violence. Although violence dominates the pastime, sexual content is making a break through.

Whereas Bushnell and Atari did wonders for the video game industry, one company seems to be have pioneered sexual content in video games. That company was known as Mystique. Most note worthy of their games is Custer's Revenge, but two lesser known titles they released the same year were Bachelor Party and Beat 'em & Eat 'em. The year was 1982 and the premise of a video game rating system was nonexistent, yet Mystique labeled clearly "Adult Video Game" on their products.

Designed for the Atari 2600 each game had its own unique sexual game play. In Bachelor Party, the player moves a peg of Spanish Fly in a fashion similar to the platform in Breakout. The "ball" of this game is the man and the "bricks" are women. The purpose of the game is to score by ricocheting



the man of the Spanish Fly and into the women. It is somewhat difficult to see all this detail on an Atari 2600 game, but it is apparent that a phallic appendage grows larger before the man scores. In Beat 'em & Eat 'em the player controls two naked women who run back and forth at the base of a building trying to catch semen from a stranger who is masturbating off the roof; the manual claims this stranger "could have been a famous doctor or lawyer." After completing a level, the player is rewarded with the image of the naked women licking their lips. Finally, in Custer's Revenge we revisit the battle of Little Big Horn. However, there is no fighting. The player must simply dodge a hail of arrows to have sex with a naked woman tied to a cactus (seen below courtesy of Atari Age). Custer himself looks like a pinkish man with a phallic line jetting out. The maidens look somewhat like a pointy backwards capitol "P." The game itself offers high levels of difficulty mainly because of the slow reaction and seemingly random cactus obstacles. The manual to Custer's Revenge even offers advice should your children catch you playing, "If the kids catch you and should ask, tell them Custer and the maidens are dancing."

It often takes a great deal of creativity to make a video game. In the case of Bachelor party by Mystique, this seemed lacking. However, Beat 'em & Eat 'em is highly imaginative. After all, it is a well-known fact that no matter how much semen a woman should swallow she will not become pregnant with a lawyer or doctor. "I suppose we shouldn't expect the designers of a game about a penis with a head stroking itself to be geniuses, but what happens when they settle down with their Beat 'em and Eat 'em royalties and want to have children? 'You're still not pregnant, honey? Are you even eating the sperm I'm squirting off the roof?'" (SeanBaby). Custer's revenge on the other hand seems to be a satire of the infamous battle of Little Bighorn, and has often been thought of as a game where a white man rapes Indian women in the midst of battle. I am sure that was not the intent, however.

Now lets move to 1992, the year Night Trap was released for the Sega CD. This was very first game that used the FMV (full-motion video) technology with live actors. The game contained no nudity or particularly gory scenes, yet it was considered one of the first games to have mature content. The game follows a party of five girls at a lakeside house. Previously five girls disappeared from this house. It is the player's job to make sure these five do not die, and no one becomes aware of his presence. The house itself is home to several vampires who have set traps around the house to catch the women. The player must set the traps at the right time to catch the vampires. The game plays like an interactive movie, and ends immediately if the player fails and a girl is caught or makes his presence known. Although not initially popular, due to political controversies over violence and mature content (it was erroneously believed that the objective was to stalk, torture, rape and murder five women) in video games, this game is considered to be one of the great sleeper hits.

I have played Night Trap, and I found the game to be entertaining, if not aggravating and complicated. It is hard to keep track of each of the five girls all at once and to switch from one remote location to trigger a trap and then return to another to get necessary information in such a limited time frame. I didn't mind loosing, however. The cut scenes when the player fails normally involved a girl being caught by the vampires and then a team of Navy Seal-like soldiers breaking into the house to rescue everyone. I know I spent many hours on that game, though I never beat it.

1992 also saw the release of Cho Aniki (also know as Ch Eniki and Choaniki and developed by Global A Entertainment). This game was only released in Japan, and has seen a whole series develop that currently includes a Playstation 2 title. Cho Aniki was similar to Gradius, R-Type, and other side scrolling space shooters. However, there was an element of homoeroticism in this game. In the original the player is a flying man in a speedo that fires lasers out of his viking hat. He is then transported to an alternate dimension where he and his two naked assistants must fight hordes of chariots filled with naked men and giant erotic monstrosities.

In 1994, a self-regulatory body for the interactive entertainment software industry was established. Known then as the Interactive Digital Software

Association (IDSA), it has since become the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB). Before then video games were made and shipped with little or no information of the actual game content. Now the ESRB has a formal rating system (EC, E, T, M, AO), similar to the rating system used by the Motion Picture Association (MPA). All videogames are required to be submitted to the ESRB before they are available for purchase, so that they may be rated appropriately. No commercially licensed game to receive an AO (Adults Only) rating has been successful. On the other hand, some of the most popular games to date are rated M (Mature). The distinction is as follows:

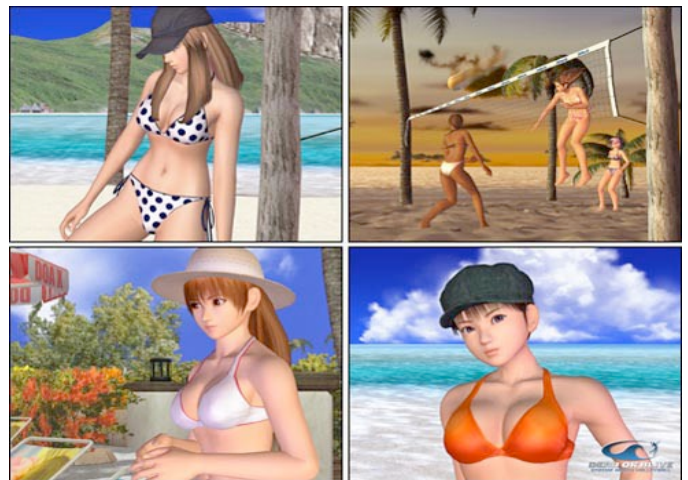
MATURE:

Titles rated **M - Mature** have content that may be suitable for persons ages 17 and older. Titles in this category may contain mature sexual themes, more intense violence and/or strong language

ADULTS ONLY:

Titles rated **AO - Adults Only** have content suitable only for adults. Titles in this category may include graphic depictions of sex and/or violence. Adult Only products are not intended for persons under the age of 18. (ESRB)

(Note: A full listing of content descriptors pertaining to these ratings can be found at the following website http://www.esrb.org/esrbratings_guide.asp.)



To put this distinction into perspective, let's look at one game series in particular: Leisure Suit Larry rated M. In this series, the player takes on the role of Larry, a virgin disco swinger, and attempts to have sex. The games were released for the computer, and contain carry severe sexual themes, but only brief nudity. If and when the player succeeds at his quest the player does see Larry have sex; however, the graphics are very poor and the game seems to merely imply the act than graphically depict it.

Shortly after the establishment of the ESRB, in 1994 another sex themed game was released on the 3DO. Plumbers Don't Wear Ties, published by Krinn Entertainment, carried the Adults Only rating and was virtually an interactive pornographic. Using full motion video similar to those in Night Trap, Plumbers Don't Wear Ties captivates its player by trying to improve the sex life of a plumber. The game was very graphic and short-lived.

Another shining example in recent years came during the third quarter of 2002. Dave Mira's BMX XXX and Dead or Alive Extreme Beach Volleyball were being previewed, and both caused quite the stir. So much so, in fact, that Dave Mira dropped off the label and Acclaim released a separate game for his franchise. BMX XXX was then released in the fourth quarter, as was DOA Extreme Beach Volleyball. BMX XXX was rated AO, while DOA was rated M. The latter is still a huge success. The premise behind both games is clear, sex and sports, but it is not quite that simple. In BMX XXX the player can play as a half naked woman (or select from several clothed characters) who performs bicycle tricks for points. These points can then be spent in strip clubs or to unlock special features. In DOA the player owns an island and invites many sexy co-eds to his tropical paradise for fun in the sun, namely volleyball. Similar to the digi-pet fad of the late nineties, the player raises one of the ladies to be the best volleyball player. The game is fairly involved for such a simple concept. However, the true appeal of the game is the stunning graphics, as evident in the image above, courtesy of Tecmogames.com.

There have also been many pleas for nude cheat codes, and game designers have given their audience what they want. Most notably was the Spice Girls video game Spice World (rated E)

released in 1998. This game was released with 6-10 year old girls as the target audience, but it also contained a cheat that allowed one to see all the Spice Girls naked on the title screen.

Similar to cheats are mods. Mods are patches that are installed over a computer game to change the game play. The Tomb Raider series, released exclusively for Playstation in 1996, quickly amassed a following. The game had excellent graphics for its time, very involved and puzzling game play, and Lara Croft. Lara Croft pioneered the sexy heroine role of video games. Fans wanted to see her naked, but Eidos said no. When the games were finally released for computer it did not take long for nude mods to be created by fans. Furthermore, there are nude mods for many older games that can be found as roms on the internet. (Roms are video game files that a program called an emulator can play on a computer).

Although I have never been a fan of the Tomb Raider Series, there has to be something said for Eidos, the company who created her. They have sold millions of games worldwide, spawned to feature films from the series, and one cannot visit a video game expo without seeing a Lara Croft model. She is as popular as Mario, and attractive as well.

It seems evident by such a history that sexual content in video games has an audience. From characters such as the extremely voluptuous and bouncy Mai, of the King of Fighter series, to the sexy and animated lesbian heroines of Fear Effect 2: Retro Helix, it is clear that there are developers who recognize this. Indeed, over recent years the demand has increased and many players have satisfied their desire by modifying the games for themselves. With the onset of the ESRB it is easy to understand how much sexual content is socially acceptable (recall the subtle difference between M and AO ratings), and such material can be limited to those who are mature enough to deal with such themes. If there is any true problem with sexual content in video games it lies similarly with violence: the lack of enforcement of video game ratings by both distributors and consumers.

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Kamasutra, Sex and Change: Have we learned any new moves in the last seven hundred years?

Rachelle VandePol

The Kamasutra has held the fascination of the masses since the 1800's. It is a sex book made in the third century, which still applies today! What a discovery! The book is set up as a dramatic play by Indian standards, but the content is a how-to book on all phases of a relationship. The different acts of the Kamasutra take the reader through a general life of an upper-caste male. A bachelor sets up his pad, becomes a connoisseur of the sexual act, learns how to court and bed a virgin, marries one or more wives and then tires of her (them), seduces other men's wives, tires of that activity and moves on to courtesans. The last act depicts what options an old man has when he is no longer able to hold an erection. It states different magic spells and aphrodisiacs that are available to him. Now, this may not be an ordinary life for people in the 21st century, but many of the same concepts apply. Men still deflower virgins; people have affairs. Old men buy Viagra! Do you know that the new medication can help maintain an erection for up to four hours? In any case, the average person might not follow all the steps of this book, but he or she will encounter a few. For this reason alone, the Kamasutra has remained the textbook of all textbooks about sex.

Countless versions and sex manuals have been based off this text since the 1960's. The first printing of the Kamasutra occurred in 1883. However, it was printed by Sir Francis Burton with the help of the Kama Shastra Society, a very exclusive and mysterious club that published erotica. There were extensive censorship laws in place in England during the Victoria era. Utmost caution and discretion were necessary to protect the individuals of the society from harm. For these reasons, while the book is considered to be "one of the most pirated books of the English language"¹ its content was not part of the common knowledge of the public. The 1960's provided an open and welcoming atmosphere for the

Kamasutra to become a topic of conversation for the masses. This spurred the many resulting versions of the text.

The Kamasutra was meant to be read by men and women. During the third century, only upper-caste men were allowed to read Sanskrit. However, texts dealing with punishments for women and lower-caste men who were caught reading have been documented. Therefore, we know that some women did know how to read during this time period. Scholars in the third century argued that women should not be able to read, since they would never be able to understand the information. It was beyond their capabilities! Vatsyayana, the author of the Kamasutra, argued though, that women understand the act of sex and should read his book or at least be given a synopsis or lecture on it. His reasoning was that if a woman has lost her husband and has no relatives to support her, the teachings of the Kamasutra would provide her with an edge in the only profession available to her - prostitution. Also, possessing knowledge of the Kamasutra's teachings will only augment a man's pleasure. What would it hurt for his wife or courtesan to learn a skill that would benefit him?

This is why Vatsyayana added parts to his book directed solely to women. For example, he gave women the information on how to fake an orgasm, in order to not injure the gentlemen's feelings of prowess. Information on how to seduce your husband, how to send signals of willingness to copulate, and how to behave if your husband cheated on you is all provided within the text. Also, he supplied information on how a woman can rid herself of a lover. The information is actually pertinent and applicable today. Here is an excerpt:

She does for him what he does not want, and does repeatedly what he has criticized. She curls her lip and stamps the ground with her foot. She talks about things he does not know about. She shows no amazement, but only

¹ Doniger, 27.

contempt, for the things he does know about. She criticizes men who have the same faults. She does not offer her mouth. She keeps him away from between her legs. When he tries to hug her, she repels him... her limbs remain motionless... she wants only to sleep... when she sees he is exhausted, she urges him on and laughs when he cannot do it...²

All of these actions women continue to do today. When she wants to make a man (lover) miserable, she can ignore him or insult and degrade him. She can withhold sex. If she does have sex with him, she can provide him with a limp body that gives no response. I think he will get the picture very fast! What is so amazing about this list is the applicability of the material today. It brings home to the reader how civilization has remarkably remained unchanged in the aspect of relationships.

The Kamasutra contains no male equivalent for how a man can rid himself of a lover. In this way, society has changed. Men can no longer simply toss a woman out of his house and life. Well, he can, but beware of an enraged woman! Most men now must have strategies themselves on how to properly “dump” a lover or girlfriend.

Vatsyayana spent a great deal of time on the proper technique and procedure to use on wooing a virgin wife. Remember in the Indian culture the wife is often completely a stranger to the husband upon marriage. In many cases they do not meet until the wedding day. For this reason, the bedding of the wife is a lengthy process that occurs in stages over a few days.

If you apply it to today’s equivalence of dating, there are some remarkable parallels. The first three days of marriage are spent sleeping on the floor together, but little interaction occurs. The wary strangers are essentially getting used to each other’s faces and habits. The next seven days are spent dining together, getting to know the relatives, listening to music and “decorating” each other. Our equivalent would be going on the first few dates where we learn about each other. Meeting the relatives shows that the relationship is getting serious. Decorating each other, I translated into

dressing each other. Hence, they are getting familiar with each other’s bodies and learning to become comfortable with the other person’s touch.

On the night of the tenth day, the man should find a “lonely” spot and speak soft words. He should be tender, loving and create confidence in the girl. He should embrace her in the chest region and in a dark secluded area. Also, he should urge her to talk about subjects he does not know about. If he does have some learning on the subject, he should pretend that he is ignorant about the subject. Today’s dating rituals can be pretty much the same. Dark areas make people feel more secure and confident. Talking while a man actually listens does make a woman feel valued. Her guard does come down with positive familiarity. If she despises a man, there is no hope for familiarity to breed willingness!

The eleventh and twelfth night is filled with full body caresses and kisses. He should stroke and shampoo her thighs, touch her private areas, but still not have sex. He should do this sporadically throughout the day to keep her always on edge! No translation in today’s language necessary. After the twelve nights he can begin teaching her all the different positions and consummate the marriage. He should also reassure her of his love and faithfulness. If all wooing is enacted correctly, the wife should be a devout, chaste woman who loves her husband and the marriage bed. She will willingly take care of his family, keep the house spotless, and create an appealing garden. The ultimate ideal for wives has not changed a great deal! The same stereotype of the appealing wife remains the same.

Society and perceived understandings about men and women have changed to some degree. During the third century, women were seen as weak and passive in the act of sex. A typical female behavior is described as “dress, chatter, grace, emotions, delicacy, timidity, innocence, frailty and bashfulness³.” Men were the strong, active leaders in

² Doniger, 21.

³ Doniger, 22.

all things. This is an interesting contradiction, because women are supposed to be passive, but also not a limp body in bed. They were discouraged to take charge, though, during sex. If women were on top during sex, they were playing the man's role. Other texts from the period state the position of a woman on top was perverse or reversed. One commentator on the book said that children produced from a liaison when a woman was on top have "reversed natures." This reversed nature is believed to have meant a change in behavior. Girls would act like men and vice versa. Some infer that homosexual children are the result.

This passage definitely shows how society has changed! Women are no longer looked on as the weaker sex, and have many varied personalities. Some women are the gentle, gracious lady. Others are the strong leader who dominates the relationship. Women are a mixture of strength and weakness. We have not changed, but are simply viewed differently. Instead of constraining all of our dominant leadership skills to the home, the take charge side of women is now expressed in public. Men are no longer perceived to always be the strong, take charge individuals, either. We have men who like to cook, sew, decorate and enjoy some of the so called "feminine" activities of life.

Homosexuality was even mentioned in the text. It was deemed as despicable in the eyes of

Vatsyayana, but an act that does occur. Interestingly, it was more accepted for men to be homosexual than women. Women had oral sex or used a dildo. This was only done if the women were in a harem and had no other recourse. If a man was available, they would prefer him to a dildo. Hence, according to Vatsyayana, women were not homosexual in the sense that they preferred women to men. They simply fulfilled their needs in whatever ways available. Of course, one should remember a man is writing this play. He would probably never admit that women would prefer a dildo to a man! Vatsyayana did mention, though, that the lesbian practices were deemed "Oriental" and part of the colonized part of the Gupta Empire only. Thus, there were very few lesbians in India, and they were all in one small area.

Men who followed homosexual practices were generally perceived to be bisexual. These men of the "third nature" were referred to in the feminine sense. Also, they "were bound to one another by discriminating affection rather than promiscuous passion⁴." The book seems to treat homosexual behavior as an act that men do to each other as a service. It was not to be a passionate encounter. They had oral sex and fellatio with a select few men who they trusted. However, these men did not refrain from enjoying the opposite sex. They were bisexual and enjoyed both types of sexual encounters.

As one can see, civilization has not changed to a great degree in relation to relationships and sex. Women are now given a more powerful role in relationships. Homosexuality has become more acceptable in the eyes of society. However, women still use the same tactics to discourage lovers. Men follow the same strategies on how to talk a woman into bed. We have courtships (of a sort), get married, have affairs, and struggle with impotency. Life continues to remain the same in some crucial areas. Is this comforting to know or not?

⁴ Doniger, 24

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Abstinence *and* Safe Sex in Schools

Mary Ewart

“Ok everyone,” the teacher calls as she hands out bananas, “today we are going to use these as a way to practice...” This sentence does not have to be finished in order for most of you, as readers, to think about sex, or more specifically, sex education. In many movies and skit, the condom and banana epitomizes the stereotypical sex education class. With this mindset, is sex education worth much of anything? We have future leaders to educate! Couldn't we be spending time teaching about Algebra, ancient history, the value of literature, rather than how to put on a condom? And, while we are talking about it, why do schools have to teach sex education, where are the parents of these students? Is it the schools' job to raise children? Unfortunately, this is not the perfect world we all wish we were residing in. There are children who are living in situations where their parents don't have the time, or are uncomfortable with discussing sex. Many children are learning all their information about sex from the constant bombardment of sex in video games, television shows, magazines, the internet, and the seemingly innocent school playground. While some of this information is likely to make a positive impact on children, at least that same amount is likely to make a negative impact, and without a place to ask questions, nobody can guarantee what a child is going to think about sex as they grow up. Sex education provides a forum for students to ask questions, learn about their bodies, and gain information they can use to make informed decisions about sex, at whatever age or point in their lives they are at when they decide. Isn't that the point of any type of education, to prepare people for their future decisions, careers and experiences?

Unfortunately, the debate regarding sex education does not end at whether or not it is necessary, it continues into the question of how to best teach it, and what is the best method to teach during it. This is where our government has decided to sink its teeth into the matter. Most will agree that sex education in some form or another is a worthwhile endeavor, especially since parents are

required to sign permission slips for their child/children to participate. This provides parents with an option, and it maintains the rights of the parents to have a say in how their children their children are educated about sex. However, the question then becomes, “how do you teach sex education in order to make the best impact?” The best impact is normally defined as reducing teenage pregnancies and the amount of teenagers who contract sexually transmitted diseases. There are two main theories on the way to achieve this goal. Theory one is teaching abstinence only, that is, the only way to be safe is to not have sex. Theory two is teaching abstinence first, but contraception otherwise, which is that abstinence is the best way, but if one is going to choose to have sex, there are ways to achieve pretty good protection from pregnancy and disease. Proponents of theory one believe that if you teach anything else, you are going to cause children to have sex, because it will arouse curiosity. They believe that sex should wait until marriage, and that young adults should not need any information on contraception, because they should not be using it. Proponents of theory two believe that obviously, the best way to avoid pregnancy and disease is to not have sex, or to remain abstinent. However, they are also realistic to the fact that junior high and high school students will not always make the very best decisions. For this reason, they support teaching how to correctly use contraception in order to stay as safe from pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases as possible. This debate has not remained a debate among parents, teachers, and administrators, it has found its way to congress, and recently, to the desk of the President himself. The Bush administration has recently proposed doubling the spending on abstinence-only programs that will not allow any discussion of birth control or condoms, unless to indicate how fallible they can be (O’Keeffe 26). Along with this proposal for spending, Bush has also proposed moving control over the program to the Health and Human Services Department, which sort of makes sense, until one realizes the same

department oversees religious-based programs and Bush's proposal to promote marriage ("Bush" 54). It is an interesting idea to put an educational program under the control of the department that oversees religious programs. However, that is not the main concern over the proposal, it is the increased spending for abstinence-only programs.

Currently, in the United States, funding for abstinence-only programs is already three times higher than funding for contraception campaigns (O'Keeffe 26). In addition, around 35 percent of the school districts in America have switched to an abstinence-only program (O'Keeffe 26). With this huge push towards abstinence-only education, an important question needs to be asked, "Is abstinence-only going to protect our children from the potential dangers of unmarried sex?" Unfortunately, the overwhelming answer to this question is NO. Abstinence is best, but not the only way to protect people, and this is the vast problem with an abstinence-only campaign.

Like any other debate, both sides have ample evidence to support their side. Abstinence-only is currently being supported by the President himself, who is saying that, "Abstinence for young people is the only certain way to avoid sexually transmitted diseases" ("Bush" 54). At this point, the proponents of this view are waiting for their studies to be finished in order to prove that abstinence-only is the best way to teach sex education. At the moment, the strongest argument is that teenagers are currently inundated with sex from every angle and that the only way to overcome all the talk about sex and prevent the consequences of sex out of wedlock is to encourage only abstinence ("Bush" 54). Bush's statement above is obviously correct, we all know the only way to be sure about your safety from sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy is to not have sex, but he does not really explain why it is the best way to teach sex education.

The contraception side typically feels that sex is something that is so inviting to young people that they will engage in it no matter what the consequences are. For this reason, they advocate teaching children how to best protect themselves from all the sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. This argument does have a realistic point. Education should be preparing students for the

rest of their lives. At some point, students will not be living in their parents' house, and they will have to make their own decisions. More than likely, at some point, the students will be making the decision to have sex, and there is a good chance that at least some of the students will be having sex outside of marriage. By educating students on contraception at a young age, they will have the knowledge to make the safest choices whenever they decide to have sex with someone. The flaw with this argument is that abstinence often gets ignored as the safest option because the educators want to sufficiently teach their students what the safest kinds of contraception are.

The most frustrating thing about proponents for both sides is that often they refuse to see that the best way to educate our youth about sex is to teach them about both abstinence and contraception. Realistically, there are going to be students who at some point choose to have sex out of marriage. There are also going to be some students who are going to see the merits of waiting to have sex until they get married. Without offering education and information on both sides, the students really have not received any sex education. There is ample evidence to support this compromise. It was found in a study in Minnesota that sexual activity doubled in junior high students who were participating in an abstinence-only program ("Bush" 54). The researchers in this study recommended that the school expand the program so that it includes information on contraception ("Bush" 54). In addition, the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention has concluded that sex education programs should focus on both abstinence and contraception ("Bush" 54). If this was not convincing enough, it has also been found that condoms do not prevent the spread of diseases such as the human papilloma virus which causes genital warts and some cancers (O'Keeffe 26). Unfortunately, teaching contraception only will not prevent diseases like this. Lastly, in Uganda, they have introduced a campaign called ABC, which stands for Abstain (from sex), Be Faithful (together), Condom Use (every time), and it has reduced the HIV rates more than 10% (O'Keeffe 28). This is yet another example of how encouraging abstinence, but providing information on contraception, produces positive change.

Regardless of your opinion on sex before marriage, it seems like most everyone would agree that avoiding sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies is a very good thing. In order to achieve this in our youngsters, we have to educate them on how to protect themselves. This is best achieved through sex education in the public school system, and it is also best achieved by teaching both abstinence and contraception as ways to be safe if participating in sexual activity.

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A Brief History of Western Homosexuality

Gayle Zive

Many people consider homosexuality to be a modern-day phenomenon. This could not be further from the truth. Homosexuality has been documented in Western society as far back as the Ancient Greeks. Virtually every civilization since has had some record of the presence of homosexuality, from Ancient Greece to Rome to Victorian England, right up to the present day. Because of the brevity required for this article, the focus will be on male homosexuality from Classical Greece to the late Medieval period.

"Homosexuality," Plato wrote, "is regarded as shameful by barbarians and by those who live under despotic governments just as philosophy is regarded as shameful by them, because it is apparently not in the interest of such rulers to have great ideas engendered in their subjects, or powerful friendships or passionate love-all of which homosexuality is particularly apt to produce."¹ The Ancient Greeks regarded homosexuality as a normal part of life, but only within certain parameters. The relationship was supposed to be between a 'beardless' youth and an older man. The elder was supposed to be the 'active' partner; it was shameful for him to be the 'passive' partner. The youth should not accept money from the man, nor was he supposed to enjoy the act of penetration. Once the youth reached adulthood and recognition as a citizen, the relationship was supposed to lose its sexual side.² Even the greatest of the gods, Zeus, is portrayed as pursuing homosexual as well as heterosexual romances.

In the later half of the first century BC, the Roman poet Propertius wrote, "May my enemies fall in love with women and my friends with boys...[for pederasty] is a gently flowing river, marked by no shipwrecks. What harm can one come to in such a

narrow channel?"³ In some ways, Roman tolerance for homosexuality paralleled earlier Greek attitudes: so long as it was practiced in an 'appropriate' manner, homosexuality was acceptable. In Rome, this meant pursuing a young slave. By law, free youths were set off-limits. The Romans - like the Greeks - deplored freemen taking the 'passive' role in sexuality, as stated by the philosopher Seneca: "To be *impudicus* (that is passive) is disgraceful for a free man."⁴ For slaves, however, "There is nothing shameful in doing whatever the master orders."⁵ It was considered disgusting to continue sexual relations with a slave who was old enough to have facial hair, but not illegal.

The introduction of Christianity into the Roman world brought the old Hebrew prejudice against homosexuality into the Empire. At first, it was tolerated - in fact, it was practiced by more than a few Roman Emperors. In the fourth century AD, a writer defended Constantine's continuation of the tax on homosexual prostitutes, saying that it allowed them to continue their practices with impunity. This tolerance, however, did not last.

In 533 AD, homosexuality became entirely illegal in Rome. Emperor Justinian was known to castrate those found guilty of homosexuality.⁶ The laws on the books actually proscribed death, but that punishment was generally not meted out.

After the collapse of the Roman Empire, the status of homosexuality changed yet again. In most areas, there were no laws against homosexuality. Sixth century Spain is the exception to the rule, where homosexuality was prohibited along with Judaism. The laws appear very close together in texts, suggesting that they were seen in similar contexts - perhaps as being offensive to God's order.

¹ Plato, quoted by John Boswell in "The Church and the Homosexual: An Historical Perspective, 1979 (Keynote address to the Fourth Biennial International Convention)"

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/pwh/1979boswell.html>

² Dover, Kenneth James, *Greek Homosexuality*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978) pp 91-109

³ Propertius, quoted in Veyne, Paul, "Homosexuality in ancient Rome," in *Western Sexuality*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1985), p 33

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 31

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 31

⁶ Bullough, Vern. *Homosexuality: A History* (New York: Garland Press, 1979) p33

In general, early medieval rulers generally did not attack homosexuality directly. Even Charlemagne did not legislate against homosexuality, despite the fact that he was greatly upset when he discovered that some of the monks in his kingdom were practicing it. From guides to penances distributed throughout Europe, it appears that homosexuality was viewed no more harshly than other types of extramarital sex.⁷ That is to say, the lack of persecution most certainly did *not* denote approval, as was seen in Greece and to a lesser extent in Rome. It was simply no worse than any other sex act committed outside of marriage.

The 12th century is regarded as a sort of ‘little Renaissance’. There was a sudden flourish in scholarship, and at the same time an increased tolerance for homosexuality. It is during this period that a series of poems about Ganymede – Zeus’s male lover – were written in Latin, the language of scholars and educated individuals. However, this increase in tolerance was short lived.

It is the late medieval philosopher Thomas Aquinas who brings homosexuality into the notoriety that persisted until very recently, and continues albeit

on a lesser level. In his writings, Aquinas described homosexuality as the worst of sexual sins. He argued that homosexual sex acts are the “greatest sin among the species of lust” because they are contrary to the natural order of things as ordained by God.⁸ For better or for worse, Thomas Aquinas’s position as a major Christian philosopher has caused this view to be assimilated into Western society. The Inquisition charged and tried people for sodomy – the medieval word for ‘unnatural’ or ‘unusual’ sex acts – along with its infamous trials for heresy. Homosexuality was held in such low regard that in Florence and other Italian cities, municipal brothels were opened to “[turn] men away from homosexual practices.”⁹ In 14th century Florence and Venice, men were put to death for sodomy.

This medieval heritage of intolerance continues to affect the West today. True, homosexuality is no longer a crime to be punished with death or castration. It has not, however, returned to the pre-Imperial Christian levels of acceptance, even in the United States.

⁷ Boswell, John *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) chapter 7

⁸ Aquinas, Thomas *Summa Theologica*, II-II

⁹ Karras, Ruth Mazzo, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 32

Sex, Desire and Language

William P. Gerardino

The following is a portion of a larger project that proposes to interpret Lacan's Graph of Desire for purposes of demonstration. This model is particularly significant in that it explores the creation of the Split Subject in relation to the signifying chain, two of Lacan's most significant psychoanalytic and linguistic concepts. What is the fundamental connection between sex, desire and language? How can we best determine its function and form? And finally, the most significant question of this paper, does the study of such a relationship that will clearly be based on cognition rather empiricism have any quantitative socially redeeming value. Or is this merely academic research exercise at best?

The first concept we must grasp is the universality and transfigurative nature of that which we use to consider such questions: language, desire and sex. Each of the terms considered in the course of this investigation is now and always will be non-static, in a constant state of evolution. There is a particular universal truth revealed in form and meaning that remains paradox because it dwells within the temporal and spatial sphere that is itself constantly expanding and contracting. Thus, any concept of the relationship of the key terms discussed in this paper are also expanding and contracting and in this concept lies the truth revealed and concealed. Thus what we study is an interpretation of an interpretation.

We understand through traces of our history, of our history of language. To the question of sex and desire: there is no singular relationship between the two and there is little reason for us to suppose that these terms refer merely to the consummation of the sexual act itself. It is for this reason that Lacan's Graph of Desire is so useful. It encompasses the concepts of Freud's desire, the transitive nature of language, and the problematic of coming to terms with the notion of what the Greeks thought of Being and Becoming.

We are our language, we are our desire, and we are born in language, desire and sex and so confront all the pros and cons of such conditions. To use a more popular term the subjects we choose to discuss have a unique stealth system created and fueled by a modern culture that fears becoming its own ghost in its own creation: technology.

The following is a discussion of these considerations and assumptions. Specifically, it is an endeavor to persuade the reader to examine the theories of Lacan and Freud more carefully. In a more general fashion it has the added benefit in showing that Sex is one the most primal forces of our being and as such dislikes the orderly not because it is some sort of aberration but quite the opposite: disorder properly studied is a misconception, a presumption of order such as that found in Lacan's split subject and his concept of the mirror stage, where — for the purposes of this discussion — subversion of the subject by the signifier begins.

It is (to use Henry James's title) one possible form of "The Beast in the Jungle" that will not be tamed nor chained to any one particular interpretation and understanding. And that, in an ironic Darwinian sense, is precisely as it should be. For on this view, our greatest fear reveals to us our greater pleasure, and many find such a concept disconcerting.

The mirror stage marks the point where the child begins a journey on the path towards that portion of the self that is called human sexuality. Looking at the right hand portion of his model the path leads upward but what drives that psyche on this path?

On this view, desire is conceptualized as a "drive" that is constantly shifting forms, fueled by desire as it is understood in Lacan's Mirror Stage. On this conception, desire is that which can never be fully satisfied, since a realization of complete satisfaction would entirely negate the function of desire as a repetitive and shifting phenomenon. Desire is infinite because, by definition, it is that which cannot be satisfied. The proposed satisfaction

of desire means its own demise. As our desires seem to doggedly follow us and manifest themselves prompted by an not so subtle media that taps into our most repressed contemplations, it seems as if desire is something of an entity unto itself. Therefore, the notion of a death drive, as it relates to desire, is not that which is satiated but rather faced with the fear of the lack.. Thus, the movement towards ideality or state of complete satisfaction that marked us in our earliest stages is not only improbable but impossible.

The graph of desire is linked to basic Freudian theory, as is a majority of Lacan's work. In this respect, when I speak of Lacan I also speak of Freud (albeit through Lacan's unique interpretation and understandings). The psychoanalytic approaches taken by Freud and Lacan — while not a complete inventory of such theories — clearly motivate one possible mode of interpretation and understanding. Note that even our desire to "understand" the modifications and shifts in our interpretation and understanding defies any static definition. In this sense, one must look at the graph of desire not as a single or unique event but as representing a constant shift of temporal moments that invite and require a continual redefinition of sex and desire. A detailed examination of the concepts reflected in this graph would reveal just this. It is the hope of this writer that some brave souls may venture forth into just such an effort. Such a study will almost always reveal the research not only as an academic but a praxis, a cognitive theory with very practical applications even into the impractical world of sexual identity as marked by the term desire. This praxis is a synthesis of psychoanalytic theory and practice. (For a more detailed discussion of this subject, one might turn to Bruce Fink's interpretation of Lacan's four discourses, which offers an intriguing look at the interrelations of academic study and psychoanalytic practice). The question of an ineffectual academic formalism is rendered inert with such consideration and so reveals sex not as object of research but a process or self-realization and growth.

We also assume that this is a human science, subject to cognition that is influenced to some degree by natural science. We must also understand here that there has been an ongoing debate about the effectiveness of a human science rooted in the natural sciences that has yet and will not be resolved.

The graph of desire reveals a psyche that is constantly in a state of evolution because of an intrinsic resistance to its ambiguous nature. We want to believe that there is a solution, a single statement that can define our feelings about sex. However, we are limited by the very fact this signified concept is beyond thought and language. There is no way of accurately predicting how a specific individual is going to respond to an erotic text.

Finally any model or discussion of desire as sex will have to make some basic assumptions that may or may not be agreeable to all. This is irrelevant in the sense that any attempt to circumscribe a given state of affairs about the sexual drive, what is contained in it, its interpretation and its cause and effect on the individual relies partially on intuition, gut feels based on experience that cannot be given complete voice. And it is also based on the individual's ability to lend that discussion some kind of form, albeit an incomplete one—given that desire is never static.

Thus the erotic novel is an expression of an unconscious desire which must be expressed. The child in his infant mirror stages does not experience this eroticism so much as a desire for understanding the other. Eventually, this desire gone unmet forms the basis of our sexual desires, a way or mode of expressing our needs or, as Freud might say, realizing the pleasure principle. What we eventually desire in regard to the expression of our desire we also dread because it is rooted in the unknown or the uncanny. Desire as physical eroticism is a displacement or a projection of our own unconscious desires. Again we see that the Graph of Desire cannot reveal any singular constant except that of change.

He also suggests that literature as a mode of language — the proper term is 'orthographic' — functions as a way of expressing the desire. In a sense, the erotic novel mirrors the unconscious in that it expresses that repressed desire as best it can in a kind of language that is constantly historically reinterpreted. It relies on memory or trace of the past with the present situations and the unconscious desires of the individual performing the action of writing. Turning towards the graph of desire reveals a double negative in that what is first expressed through a signifier inadequately expresses that which is signified. Following the path of desire in terms of

this double negative one understands that the subject is ultimately subverted by his or her inability to express in the signifier that which is signified.

Lacan follows Freud's example along with the influence of modern critical thought — structuralism among others — that suggests language can never express the thoughts and emotion of the psyche in a complete manner, the form will always reveal and conceal and so is characterized by the lack. Freud acknowledges the significance of the "lack" in language and—as importantly—recognized the significance of the uncomfortable pauses in the execution of language. Again returning to the graph one might see these moments when the signifying chain and the path of desire articulated earlier are a pause or interruption that reveals the depth and complexity of desire in its very lack.

Lacan amplified and extrapolated on this concept of the "lack" in language. Thus, the mirror stage discussed earlier causes an interruption in the young child who is suddenly—or at least appearing to be suddenly—the same as the other. His desire to consume the other -- not merely to identify with (the imaginary stage) but to actually become the other (the symbolic stage) -- has failed. But because desire is constantly driven (cf. Freud's 'Death Drive' and Hegel's 'Master and Slave' dialectic), it causes a split in the subject which ultimately translates into the constant subversion of the subject to desire—a constancy marked by an infinite number of particular moments in a unified whole.

The individual is not free to express his or her desire in a completely unedited way because of an institution moral order that dictates what is acceptable language and behavior and what is not. Where voice finds expression in the graph of desire is temporary and repetitive. If we follow the path of the signifying chain we come full circle. However, this circularity is not to mean a pure representation of a repeating signifying chain. Rather, this circle reflects historical and hermeneutic meaning where no two traces of the signified as signifier can ever be exactly the same. Again, the sign fails to depict that which it senses and it relies on basic cognitive powers to see this also as a lack. Indeed, the very attempt to put in words what the graph of desire represents is constantly reinterpreted precisely because of the historicity of the hermeneutic. The same applies for

our most latent desires. They may rise and fall but at all times taking familiar yet different forms.

Lacan's mode "Graph of Desire" provides one significant method of understanding, how desire operates, its true origins, and how it operates and functions within the day-to-dayness of our lives. We all begin from the same place, as a child who is virtually no experience save that of the birth process itself. From the moment our eyes begin to see shapes and forms we are observing and imitating those shapes already in a mode of exploration. We have not yet retained desire because all that is needed is provided to us: nourishment, shelter and affection. For the purposes of this article, the discussion will be limited to the Mirror stage as a point of origin for later and more in-depth discussions of the Graph of Desire. (See Figure One)

We literally live in what appears to be a utopian moment where desires are easily fulfilled. According to Lacan, desire starts in the mirror stage. The child sees himself in the mirror and imagines a separate object. He attempts to imitate this new object and he notes that as he moves so does the object. He has not quite made the connection that his gaze is directed towards an image of himself. The child observes his parents shake a hand, give a hug and speak: he observes non-linguistic and linguistic gestures such as those studied in Meade. Soon he begins to imitate these things. He begins the process of acquiring speech because he wishes to communicate and to be like that other. More to the point he wants to be that other. He wants power over that other.

Eventually the child grows and suddenly desires are not as easily met. But the child still lives in the memory of that satisfaction and so desires to return to that place. But he cannot and so he is faced with the uncomfortable notion that not all his desires are the other's top priority. Soon the child seeks entrance into the adult world by taking on and imitating the behavior of the adult including sexual activity. This and the simple biological realities of the human condition again propels him into a need for acceptance.

He wants to be part of the others, to participate in their activities and so learns to follow the rules of those groups. He has given a portion of his own voice over in the mistaken belief that he will somehow again have all his desires met. This act has

a history all its own but it never completely escapes the lack of desire in that first stage and so propels himself through his life in infinite regress: searching for unlimited satisfaction.

The graph plots out the beginnings of desire that are twice interrupted by what he calls the Signifying Chain. This consists of the signifier, the signified and the bar of resistance. The graph plots a path reflecting how that which is signified in the unconscious eventually comes to manifestation in the written or spoken word; in other words, we see how our desires manifest themselves in language. Below is a compellation of the three separate portions of the graph of desire. I trust this brief discussion will peek the interest of my readers and perhaps help them find their own path through this graph and so come to a better understanding of their own sense of moral appropriateness within the moral ambiguity of our sexual landscape.

Erectile 'Dis Function

Throughout history, mankind has struggled with the many great questions of our race. Epic investigations have been launched by the greatest minds of all time to discover the answers to our deepest concerns. Is Earth the center of the Universe? Is there intelligent life on other planets? What is DNA? What is thought? Is there a smallest particle into which all matter can be deconstructed? Can virtue be taught? Is there a theory of everything? What is our purpose? Does God exist?

These timeless questions have perplexed and amazed us for millennia, and we will continue to wrestle with them for eons to come. Fortunately, recent breakthroughs in the ever growing field of mathematics have led to a conclusive answer to one of the most important problems man has ever known. Finally, thousands of years of arithmetic, geometry, algebra, trigonometry, calculus, and the analysis of real-valued functions has led to this point. The community of applied mathematics is proud to announce its latest breakthrough to the world: Sexual intercourse is a pleasurable experience.

That's right. No more arguments; no debates. No qualifiers are necessary regarding interracial sex, same-sex sex, or BDSM. This is a conclusive mathematical proof that cannot be refuted, and we are proud to present it to you here, for the first time anywhere.

And now, without further ado, the proof.

(Warning: The following contains explicit mathematical content not suitable for those under the age of calculus two. Tutorial supervision is advised.)

In the following paper, we discuss the antiderivative of the exponential function e^x as it relates to sequences and power series. Before launching our investigation, we first note the relevant definitions and theorems.

Definitions:

(D1) A function F such that $F'(x) = f(x) \quad \forall x \in [a, b]$ is called an antiderivative of f on $[a, b]$. We shall denote the antiderivative of f by $\int f$

(D2) The n th Taylor polynomial for a function f at a is the polynomial

$$P_n = f(a) + \frac{f'(a)}{1!}(x-a) + \frac{f''(a)}{2!}(x-a)^2 + \dots + \frac{f^{(n)}(a)}{n!}(x-a)^n$$

If $a=0$, we call this the n th Maclaurin polynomial of f . For the n th Taylor or Maclaurin polynomial approximating f , there may be some error, or remainder, which we define by $R_n = f - P_n$. Clearly, the smaller R_n , the better the approximation of f .

(D3) The Taylor series of a function f at a is the series

$$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{f^{(n)}(a)}{n!}(x-a)^n = f(a) + \frac{f'(a)}{1!}(x-a) + \frac{f''(a)}{2!}(x-a)^2 + \dots$$

We see that the Taylor series is simply the limit as $n \rightarrow \infty$ of the sequence of Taylor polynomials. When $a=0$, this is called the Maclaurin series of f .

Theorems:

(T1) If $f = P_n + R_n$, where P_n is the n th Taylor polynomial of f at a and R_n is the n th remainder, and if $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} R_n = 0$ for $|x-a| < R$ (where R is some positive real number), then f is equal to the sum of its Taylor series on the interval $|x-a| < R$.

(T2) Taylor's Inequality: If $|f^{(n+1)}(x)| \leq M$ for $|x-a| \leq d$, then the remainder R_n of the Taylor series satisfies the inequality

$$|R_n(x)| \leq \frac{M}{(n+1)!} |x-a|^{n+1} \quad \text{for } |x-a| \leq d.$$

(T3) Squeeze Theorem: Suppose (x_n) , (y_n) , and (z_n) are sequences of real numbers such that $x_n \leq y_n \leq z_n \quad \forall n \in \mathbb{N}$, and that $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} (x_n) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} (z_n)$. Then (y_n) is convergent, and $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} (x_n) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} (y_n) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} (z_n)$.

(T4) $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{x^n}{n!} = 0$ for every real number x .

Now, we proceed with our discussion.

We know that the derivative of e^x is e^x , so that e^x is its own derivative and antiderivative. That is, the antiderivative of e^x is equal to e^x .

For any convergent sequence (x_n) , define $f(x_n) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} (x_n)$.

Now, for x a real number, let (u_n) be the sequence given by

$$(u_n) = (1, 1 + \frac{x}{1!}, 1 + \frac{x}{1!} + \frac{x^2}{2!}, 1 + \frac{x}{1!} + \frac{x^2}{2!} + \frac{x^3}{3!}, \dots)$$

$$\text{That is, } u_n = 1 + \frac{x}{1!} + \frac{x^2}{2!} + \dots + \frac{x^n}{n!}$$

Now let us look at the n th Maclaurin polynomial of e^x .

$$\begin{aligned} P_n &= e^0 + \frac{e^0}{1!}x + \frac{e^0}{2!}x^2 + \dots + \frac{e^0}{n!}x^n \\ &= 1 + \frac{x}{1!} + \frac{x^2}{2!} + \dots + \frac{x^n}{n!} \\ &= u_n \end{aligned}$$

We know that the Maclaurin series is the limit of the sequence of Maclaurin polynomials. So, the Maclaurin series for e^x is the limit of (u_n) , which is our function f applied to (u_n) .

We would like to determine whether e^x is actually equal to its Maclaurin series. We know that every derivative of e^x is e^x , and if d is any positive number with $|x| \leq d$, then $e^x \leq e^d$. So Taylor's Inequality (T2), with $a=0$ and $M=e^d$, says that

$$|R_n| \leq \frac{e^d}{(n+1)!} |x|^{n+1} \quad \text{for } |x| \leq d.$$

Using (T4), we have

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{e^d}{(n+1)!} |x|^{n+1} = e^d \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{|x|^{n+1}}{(n+1)!} = 0.$$

Thus, by the Squeeze Theorem (T3), $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} R_n = 0$

Since such a d exists for any real number x , this holds for all x in the real numbers.

So, by (T1), e^x is equal to its Maclaurin series.

Hence, the antiderivative of e^x is equal to the Maclaurin series for e^x .

Using the fact that this Maclaurin series is f applied to (u_n) , we have proved a fundamental fact:

$$\int e^x = f(u_n)$$

Strange Bedfellows

Giles Beilby

What is it that stimulates such uproar in relation to the question of gay marriage? What is it about marriage that makes it explicitly sexual rather than just another type of social arrangement, i.e. friendship, associate, roommate, etc.? Is this question not redundant? What then, is the status of the political recognition of marriage if not a sanctioning of sexual partnership? What is the difference, if any, between marriage, domestic partnerships, civil unions, common law marriages, etc.? What are the concerns of power in this question? These are the questions that will direct the following inquiry.

Gay marriage is on the forefront of the current media playlist, and produces argument and vitriol wherever the topic is introduced. Yet at the same time, the media has been touting its acceptance of (or tolerance of, or indifference to) homosexuality for years. To be gay is to be hip even. The prudish condemnation of homosexuality per se is passé. And yet, it is with a gleeful eye that news anchors have purveyed scenes of small children enthusiastically attending anti-gay marriage marches and the homophobic commentary of high profile political actors. What is it that can account for this apparent disparity? As I see it, the platforms from and on which the question of gay marriage is projected and discussed are the religious, the political, and the secular/social. On each there is a disagreement, and no front is wholly united, and neither are any of the different platforms uniform, but each appeals to and rebuts the others. Thus a complex picture emerges of inner turmoil, outer piety, inner conscience and outer resentment. While each deserves its full allotment of ink in which to wallow, it is only the political where a decision can or will be reached, the social and religious being less bound to immediate resolution, and so the political will have to serve as the reference point for the other discussions.

Let us begin where we are then; what are the rights given to homosexual couples? How are they different than/the same as those given to heterosexuals? In California, the Family Code, or those laws governing familial relations, gives gays

the right to a domestic partnership, which is “two adults who have chosen to share one another's lives in an intimate and committed relationship of mutual caring” (Family Code § 297.a, hereafter FC). This definition recognizes the social bond between two people, but avoids the question of their sexual activity¹. Gays are, however, explicitly banned from marriage: “Marriage is a personal relation arising out of a civil contract between a man and a woman. . . . Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California” (FC § 300, 308.5).

What is it about marriage then that is different from a domestic partnership? The rights and privileges are the same in each regarding familial duties, dissolution of the partnership, and responsibility as parents. Domestic partners are protected from discrimination in the same way as spouses, and even protected against a discrimination in relation to married couples: “No public agency in this state may discriminate against any person or couple on the ground that [they are] domestic partner[s] rather than spouses” (FC §297.5.h). Even referring to other areas of the law which deal with spouses, gender specific terms are to be substituted in the case of domestic partners! So I ask again: what is the difference between a domestic partnership and a marriage? First, there are a few technical but telling differences in the definitions of each. Marriage involves a “civil contract . . . to which the consent of the parties making that contract is necessary” (FC §300). Domestic partnership involves “an intimate and committed relationship of mutual caring” (FC §297.a). “Civil contract,” “intimate and committed relationship;” “consent,” “mutual caring.” What is it that the state of California finds necessary in mutual caring for gay couples² where heterosexuals merely

¹ “Intimate” in this context does not necessarily mean “carnal,” though we might be tempted to read that. “Intimate” here is in the sense one might say “an intimate friend,” or the oxymoronic “intimate acquaintance.”

² And geriatrics, § 297.b.6.B allows opposite sexes to form a civil union provided one of them is over the age of 62, but we will return to this.

need consent to a contract? If the rights and obligations under either arrangement are equivalent, why the difference in definitions?

Before answering this question, I think it necessary to introduce two key concepts from theories of Michel Foucault: power and normalization. Power is very much the power we talk about when we say “power corrupts,” or someone “wields power.” It is a nebulous arrangement of influence and manipulation, but always manifests itself as a drive. For Foucault power is not directed by one person’s will so much as that will exposes the current drive of power. Power always seeks to increase itself by any means possible.

Power must be understood . . . as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens or reverses them . . . as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, [and] in the various social hegemonies (Foucault 92).

Quite a mouthful, which means to say that power isn’t controlled by the state, but the state is a location (Foucault says “locus”) of power. Power deploys whatever means it has at its disposal to increase itself: the police, WMDs, culture, religion, language, and in this case, sex.

The second concept, normalization, is another big word for what we commonly call conformity. Except that in Foucault, this conformity is more than just tagging along with the latest fashion, it is something that forms our core values, determines our goals and our dreams, directs our activities, and undermines our freedom. Normalization is one of the tools power uses to increase itself. Essentially, it is the process where we measure our success, happiness, health, freedom, etc. in relation to a norm. This norm is one formulated by power so that the closer one is to the norm, the more they partake in power. Norms are inherently related in a capitalist system to productivity, and especially to productivity of the worker, which in terms of a norm is treated as

a body, One body is much the same as another, in that they all have the potential to perform a certain task, given the proper training and motivation. One of the most important qualities of a high productivity, low maintenance work force is docility and ease of control. Power is therefore concerned with providing for the health and satisfaction of the worker, and also with ensuring the rearing of “normal” children to replace a dying workforce. So normalization refers to the process of creating a docile, motivated, effective workforce in service of the increase of power.

This brings me back to the marriage question. What is the California legislature’s stake in defining marriage as between a man and a woman while at the same time, allowing the properties of the definition of marriage to slip into domestic partnership? In a word: children. Or to be more specific, the production of children. Over 2/3 of the Family code covering the rights and obligations of married couples³ is devoted to the relationship between parents and their children. Children are the assumed or desired product of a marriage bed. Power has deemed it most effective for a potentially productive couple to be bound together by a civil contract which requires them to raise a child in a certain way. Gay couples have no means of reproduction on their own. It is then, in the interests of power to promote as a norm the civil union of fertile couples where children (a replacement for the parent) are likely to be produced. A normal (read ‘preferential’) relationship in the eyes of the state is a relationship where docile parents go out to work, and come home to rear their replacements. A marriage.

But wait, domestic partners are bound by the same privileges and responsibilities regarding the children of either partner, as well as in the case of adopted children. Doesn’t this dethrone the productive value of marriage? Why then does power still (apparently) prefer married couples to partnered if both will have to raise their children in the same way? Won’t both couples replace themselves? Doesn’t a gay couple adopting a kid take some of the load off the welfare system and child services, allowing those agencies to utilize their power more effectively? What’s sex got to do, got to do with it?

³ Which are the same for gay couples regarding the child(ren) of either partner.

The legal equivalence of marriage and domestic partnership does in fact question their real difference, and this is where power confronts two divergent deployments of its means. The first deployment is that of human equality. In a democratic, free market economy, a primary motivation for worker participation and productivity is the recognition of the individual as possibility. “The American Dream.” “Land of Opportunity.” “Rags to Riches.” All of which are, in the vast majority of cases, false. The deployment of the individual requires that power acknowledge to value of *every* individual, and allow each to participate in the system of production equally. Here power cannot differentiate between individuals based on sex, color, creed, sexual orientation, etc., without discounting the productivity their recognition has allowed.

The second deployment is that of the Christian morality and work ethic. Due to the predominance of Christians in this country, it has been, and continues to be in the interest of power to recognize as legitimate those demands of the Christian culture which do not directly negate the self augmentation of power (i.e. poverty, humility, openness). Power has found the elements of chastity, (real or pretended), duty, and heterosexual monogamy to be in its interest, and has used them as means.

Power faces a quandary. It can explicitly devalue neither its celebration of the (docile) individual, nor its concessions to religious suggestions without jeopardizing the gains it has made through their utilization. At the same time, it still desires to regulate sexuality so as to encourage mating and progeny, as well as to limit the religious influences that run counter to efficient domestication and production. Homosexuality must be tolerated as a manifestation of individuality to the degree that it does not undermine power, and deference must be given to religion insofar as it complements the drive of power (religion, like government, is just another locus of power). This is precisely what all the hubbub is about. On one side, religious (or, more generally, moral) outrage concerns power’s consideration of revaluing marriage; on the other, liberal individualists cry out that heterosexual-only marriage violates the dignity of the individual.

The only ground on which the state power can reconcile its diametrically opposed obligations is on

the grounds of the *separation* of church and state. Marriage is, after all, a fundamentally religious institution. Whatever it has become as an institutionalized civil union, the primary recognition of marriage is its validation in a religious ceremony. It is for this reason that when the Family Code describes the solemnization of marriage, that is, its cultural, familial, and communal ceremony of recognition, there is no *particular* religion of preference⁴. Religion, as it relates to the state, is encompassed by the term “church.” As the law reads, the consent to marry as a man and a woman is “followed by the issuance of a license and solemnization” to be performed by “a priest, minister or rabbi of any religious denomination” or any of a series of judges or magistrates (FC §300, 400). At the same time, “no particular form for the ceremony of marriage is required for the solemnization,” nor shall any marriage “be invalidated for want of conformity to the requirements of any religious sect” (FC §420). As regards the solemnization of marriage, it may be performed under *any* religious guise. The religious tradition enforming a solemnization is, to the state, irrelevant. At the same time, of course, no religious denomination is obliged to solemnize the marriage of any particular couple; typically, the state solemnizes only those types of relations that fit its particular requirements. Thus the laws of a state are similarly irrelevant to the tradition and practices of a religion.

What then is the part of power, and the state, in a marriage? It seems to me that such power has two functions; the first is to issue licenses, which allows the state to screen applicants according to the interests of power (i.e. for venereal diseases, degree of relation, genetic disorders, etc.) and so attempt to ensure, e.g., a healthy population. The second function is related to the first in its economic orientation, though more explicitly. A married couple forms a unit of production in which stability and efficacy are a general expectation. Their combined economic input, along with their cohabitation, result in an economic plus. The state has a role and a stake in ensuring that those relationships with a significant economic balance contribute to and do not detract

⁴ And I think the demand for gay marriage is actually a demand for social recognition and validation rather than for a change in tax-filing status.

contribute to and do not detract from the overall economy of power. Thus it issues a license.

But what does this have to do with homosexual couples? Don't they, under the rules of a domestic partnership share the same economic burden as married couples? Aren't their rights and responsibilities to the state equivalent? Even in the question of children, a gay couple is indistinguishable from its hetero counterpart in the eyes of the law. While as far as power is concerned, we have already established that they cannot produce offspring, they can adopt and may have children from other relationships. In either case those children are treated without regard to the sex of the responsible adults. It would appear then, that sexuality, along with religion, is irrelevant in the concern of the state. It would also seem that the state, aside from mandating a solemnization ceremony, takes no other part in marriage than the issuance of a license. It follows then, that the only place where sexuality becomes a relevant issue is in the particular religious creed of the solemnizing party.

I hope I have established a few things with my argument: first, that domestic partnerships and marriages differ only in their definitions and eligibilities; second, that the state has no relevant interest in the sexual or religious orientation of couples under its control, but only an economic interest; and third, that power must decide the question of gay marriage on a political field marked by the separation of church and state. I also hope my argument serves to point toward a potential solution, namely the relegation of the term "marriage" to the religious realm, and its subsequent elimination from legal and political terminology. If at first this seems to avoid, rather than solve the problem, let me put it this way: the issue of sexuality is essentially a religious or moral issue rather than a political one. Rather than ask the legal and political arena to serve as polemical staging ground for a religious claim, power and the state ought to realize their interests lie elsewhere, and that through the separation of church and state, it may allow the various religious faiths to interpret homosexuality in their own way, and at the same time, reinforce power's celebration of the individual. In the political realm, homo and hetero sexuality are no more than indicators of individual variation. Gay marriage and

hetero marriage therefore ought to occupy the same place, as do black and white marriages,⁵ or interfaith marriages. "Marriage" bears no difference other than nominal to "domestic partnership." Domestic partnership, or civil union then is the proper realm of the politico-juridical, and marriage is properly religious. By explicitly separating the terms, marriage retains its standing as a socially validating relationship without great affront to religious claims, while power maintains its economic interest in the domestic lives of the citizens.

References:

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume 1*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Random House, 1990. 92-159.

California Family Code.

<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html>

⁵ Actually, I view this in very much the same way as the emergence of civil rights. Have the political declare neutrality, and the religious sector will sort itself out.

Sexcrime? I Paid for It (Coming of Age in a Consumerist Sexual Democracy)

Jim Tuedio 2/22/06 9:33 AM

Comment:

Robert A. Land

"Modern media argue for modern goods without regard for social consequences."
(J. W. Phelan, 1977)

"...Look in the mirror above the bed, start to wonder if you've been misled..."
(R. Price/D. Peverett, 1979)

"...money doesn't mean to me what it obviously means to you/ 'cause I would never steal from kids who don't have a clue."
(M. Herrera, 1998)

Pardon me if I sound like a prude [derived from Fr *prudefemme*, excellent woman--from proud --L *prodesse*, to be useful]; I do not want to preach morality, that would be useless. But, I have to address this issue of sex as a social issue from my perspective. So, as a practicing celibate, my views may be misconstrued as "illiberal." However, my choice to abstain is purely pragmatic, and not for everyone (even so, it is an option worth considering). That said, I'd like to turn away from any discussion of practice or preference; it's not my place to proscribe. What has me concerned and bewildered is what I perceive as an unhealthy obsessive and exploitative fascination with sex in our society, with particular (some would say, "biased") attention to the role mass-media play in promoting the commodification and debauchment of attitudes toward sexuality in society, and in the minds of our children.

In Chapter One of the book *Thinking About Sex and Love: A Philosophical Inquiry*, J. F. M. Hunter (1980) asks and answers the question that puts this issue into focus:

Does sex loom so large simply because it is so pleasant? Although it is uncommonly pleasant, it is not out of all proportion more delightful than having an amusing conversation with a friend, eating a well-cooked meal, or anything else we very much enjoy: and yet it not only interests most of us

more than any other of life's joys, but to be deprived of it bothers us to a degree unknown when we are deprived of other pleasures. Why is this? (pp. 11-12)

What follows is a "laundry list" of plausible reasons for our fascination with sex; from biology to spirituality, with a few stops at seedy hotels and psychologist's couches along the way.

The very last place Hunter visits before embarking upon another path is where I'd like to begin:

A rather different source of our interest in sex is the storybook quality it acquires from films, novels, advertising and everyday chit-chat, a quality accentuated by the aura of forbiddenness that enhances this remarkable pleasure. Even people who do not themselves think sex wicked may savor the idea of doing something so widely felt to be sinful. A love affair can seem like a journey into a magic world of romance and high adventure (p. 23).

I have nothing against romance, even as it is romanticized in the arts and popular culture. Storybook sex "evokes themes of care, responsibility, respect, and knowledge. They speak for a system of values in relationships which make individual autonomy possible while encouraging diversity to flourish (Weeks, 1995)." The sexual revolution of the 1960's and early 70's, for all its mis-steps and indulgences, was rooted in this ideology (Weeks, 1985; Janus & Janus, 1993). A democratization of sex had begun. "Free love" (as in "unbind") was the word of the day. Storybook sex, however, is not the prevailing, or most profitable mode of presentation in popular culture because sex has always been a commodity -- it has been, is, and probably always will be, an item for trade and a tool for attaining power. So, as with any commodity in a democratic atmosphere, privateers saw a profit to be made.

"Sex sells," or more precisely, the promise, or intimation of sex became a marketing mantra. But,

just like any other commodity, sex in its natural state soon turned out to have a slim profit-potential. Permit me to make an analogy -- much like produce, veggies are veggies. With a cornucopia of choice at hand for the consumer, a vendor must make his product desirable. The best way to do this is to inflate the benefits of partaking ("This is good for what ails you!"), or to "niche-market" ("I don't want just any old radicchio, I want baby radicchio imported from..."). Either way, one can increase the price. But this takes processing, packaging, and, above all, skillful advertising. Considering the diversity of sexual inclinations to prey upon, a boomtown virtually sprang into existence. Playing up every angle--"perfect sex," "ultimate sex," "extreme sex," "forbidden sex," etc.--sex became a multi-billion \$ industry, and it is still growing. As it grew, a new paradigm arose: offer increasingly explicit, fetishistic depictions of sex to produce and feed a habituated consumer. In short, "the more you show, the more they want."

A synopsis of the timeline, followed by a cognitive "sidestep," might best explicate this phenomenon. Bear with me a moment...

Post WWII, American attitudes relaxed -- Prohibition was seen to be ineffective in, if not antithetical to, ameliorating the inherent vices of society. So, a loosening of moral constraints was popularly embraced. The now iconic pinup girl quickly became *passé* in the 1950s and early '60s. Hugh Hefner founded an empire on what may now be considered as artful nudity. At the time, it was considered *risqué*. But all too soon, it was no longer enough to show a partially clad body. Full-frontal nudity, suggestive poses, and an inviting look trailed behind a "back-alley-black-bar-over-the-best-parts" mentality that wanted more. Along came a certain Mr. Flynt, publisher of *Hustler Magazine*, and others such as the Mitchell Bros. (opened first chain of adult theatres), and *Screw Magazine* (the first magazine to feature "full penetration"). These "sex" entrepreneurs made the "trench coat" crowd a powerful political-economic movement. Freedom of press/expression was put to the test, and became a bulwark for those who wished to profit from the exploitation of the basest part of human nature. The rest, I leave to your imagination... (Stop looking at me that way)

It didn't take long for "mainstream media to glom onto this newfound freedom.

Advertising [curiously -- the word 'advertise' is derived from Fr *advertir*, to warn] and commercial entertainment, at first, played upon suggestion and innuendo [is this perhaps Italian for "suppository"?] to increase their market-share. But this is perhaps a slippery slope. . .

Here are a few statistics to think about regarding sex and mass-media:

In the United States, young people spend 6 to 7 hours each day on average with some form of media. A national survey in 1999 found that one third of young children (2-7 years old) and two thirds of older children (8-18 years old) have a television in their own bedroom. Many of those televisions also are hooked up to cable and a VCR. (Roberts, 2000)

It is expected that by 2010 most U.S. homes with children will have access to the Internet. (Taylor, 1999)

Sexual talk and displays are increasingly frequent and explicit in this mediated world. One content analysis found that sexual content that ranged from flirting to sexual intercourse had increased from slightly more than half of television programs in 1997-1998 to more than two-thirds of the programs in the 1999-2000 season. Depiction of intercourse (suggestive or explicit) occurred in one of every 10 programs. (Kunkel, Cope-Farrar, Biely, Farinola, & Donnerstein, 2001)

One fifth to one half of music videos, depending on the music genre portray sexuality or eroticism (DuRant, et al., 1997)

Two thirds of Hollywood movies made each year are R-rated; most young people have seen these movies long before they are the required 16 years old. (Greenberg, et al., 1993)

The word sex is the most popular search term used on the Internet today. (CyberAtlas, 2001)

...of young people (10-17 years old) who regularly used the Internet, one out of four said he or she had encountered unwanted pornography in the past year, and one out of five

had been exposed to unwanted sexual solicitations or approaches. (Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Wolak, 2000)

These statistics highlight the prevalence of sexually-oriented material in mass-media, but do not address the deeper issue of content:

Despite increasing public concern about the potential health risks of early, unprotected sexual activity, most of the mass media rarely depict the three C's of responsible sexual behavior: Commitment, Contraceptives and consideration of the Consequences. (Note: The preceding statistics and quote are referenced under a blanket reference in Brown, J. D., 2002)

As if that weren't enough to raise a red flag, some of the most popular video games in the past few years depict scantily-clad, disproportionately-endowed females who inflict physical damage through contortionistic acts of violence. Another very popular video game (Grand Theft Auto) depicts the "protagonist" being rewarded for having sex with prostitutes and receiving extra rewards for killing the prostitute in lieu of payment.

Further compounding the problem of growing up in this day and age is the general message that mass media presents with regard to consumerism as individualism, and the equation of individualism to individuality. I find this highly offensive on so many levels. Suffice to say that individuality is not in any way, shape, or form the same as individualism. As far as consumerism as individualism is concerned, I think that social historian Stephanie Coontz (1992) highlights this shift in meaning when she states that "between 1870 and 1900, the volume of advertising multiplied more than tenfold.... The word consumption increasingly lost its earlier connotations of destroying, wasting, or using up, and came instead to refer in a positive way to the satisfying of human needs and desires (p. 170)." Previous to this era the word consumption was the layman's term for tuberculosis, a disease that caused a person's body to waste away. Webster's definition of consume reads -- 1 to destroy, as by fire; to do away with 2 a) to use up b) to spend wastefully; squander (time, energy, money, etc.) 3 to eat or drink up; devour 4 to absorb completely; engross or obsess [consumed with envy, a consuming interest]. That pretty much sums it up for me; how this obviously negative word came to equate with individuality must be a very convoluted story.

But, literal meaning aside, consumerism sends a message, but it's not much of an improvement on the previous meaning. Coontz writes:

Consumer culture insists that we can pick and choose from the "free market" of goods, emotions, images, relationships: If we are "smart shoppers" we can "have it all" and "still stand out from the crowd." . . . We have begun to believe that we can shop around not only for things but also for commitments, that we can play mix and match even with our personal identities and most intimate relations. Simultaneously, we experience a blurring of the distinction between illusion and reality, people and goods, image and identity, self and surroundings (p. 176).

The impact of this "blurring of distinction" is a general devaluation of life's most precious gifts; an emergent relativism that denies a certain *je ne sais quoi* of a serendipitous life. That is, when all things in life can be bought, no things in life are priceless. Jim and Ingrid Croce (1973) personalize the human cost of such a "trade" in life--"...I've traded love for pennies, sold my soul for less, lost my ideals down this long tunnel of time..."

This "loss of ideals" has a profound effect upon the "fabric of social life." The substitution of personal desires for human needs creates an adversarial atmosphere which supersedes a deeper connectedness that defines "the social basis of [their] identity.... (Coontz, p. 177; brackets mine)." Rather than "wanting what we have versus having what we want," we learn "to want what the other has," not because it is what we want. But, to possess it as well symbolically devalues that which we perceive to be "unfairly distributed." In other words, "If I can put a price on it, then it isn't so special after all." This sort of rationalization lies at the heart of a larger "depersonalization of human experience," one that serves to alleviate one's own sense of "worthlessness" by making all things worthless in and of themselves.

Consumerist philosophy argues that it is only by the accumulation and display of everything that we define our worth, not by the special appreciation and application of our unique gifts and limitations that make us who we are. The message of consumerism falsely places all of life's experiences on an even plane outside of a learning dimension that the uneven

distribution of experience, and the individual experience of life contribute to the special nature of social interaction. This special nature of social interaction refers to the fact that social progress is dependent upon a diversity of human experience within a common reality, not a universality of experience in a diversity of realities. We grow as people not by being more or less the same, but by being uniquely qualified to share what makes us special for a common good--If I have, or can acquire, all that you have, why should I care about you?

At this point, I'd like to return to the increasingly explicit portrayal of sexual behavior in mass media and its effect upon society, particularly upon those without the learned deliberative skills that accompany adult behavior. When considered against the background of consumerism, the world of pornography appears to be not so much a freeing of sexuality as it an endorsement of the enslavement of humanity. What was once a delicacy for some has become part of an "all you can eat" smorgasbord that invites not discrimination of taste, but a ravenous feeding frenzy of desire, indifferent to the ecological impacts of indiscriminate consumption.

Dolf Zillman and Jennings Bryant (1982) illustrate this indifference engendered by the commodification of sex in their hallmark study, *Pornography, Sexual Callousness, and the Trivialization of Rape*:

Specifically, it could be contended that students who were massively exposed to pornography may have inferred that such materials are harmless, because if they were not, the researchers would not have subjected them to these stimuli. Favorable evaluations of pornography, then, may have resulted from the fact that the researchers legitimized exposure. While this possibility cannot be ruled out, it should be noted that this form of legitimization closely parallels what happens outside the laboratory: pornography is culturally legitimized by the lack of censure. If the students inferred innocuousness from the researchers' tacit sanction, the so-called man in the street is likely to infer innocuousness from the fact that no one in any position of authority objects to people being liberally exposed to

pornography in public movie theatres and elsewhere.

The implication of this statement should not be under-estimated. Bearing in mind that the test group for this study consisted of "college-students," who by inference have greater deliberative skills than children or adolescents have, the effect of exposure equating acceptance should not be dismissed. The effect of sustained exposure to sexually explicit media is that "students in our study who viewed the most pornography can be said to have given a "pornography answer" to certain questions tapping perceptions of sexuality and dispositions toward sexual behaviors." (*ibid*) Through the tacit acceptance of sexually explicit material in society, a cumulative belief in the prevalence and acceptability of wanton sexuality emerges.

Another more disturbing result of Zillman's (1982, 1994 & 2000) research into exposure to sexually explicit material (whether depicted or merely suggested) indicated that both male and female moral sensitivity had been significantly reduced. Early research tested college students who were exposed to "tame" pornography (e.g. standard heterosexual intercourse: 1982). Later studies (1994, & 2000) tested the effects of "soap opera sex" (e.g. daytime/nighttime broadcast programming) upon 13 - 14 year olds. The results of each showed a clear decline in empathy for hypothetical "victims" of sexual impropriety. Specifically, marital infidelity was seen as more socially acceptable, and less damaging to the partner who had been cheated on. This finding has been linked to a decreased expectation of fidelity, and increased distrust in one's partner.

Beliefs about the frequency and types of sexual behaviors (e.g. one-night stands, multiple partners, sodomy, and other "less-traditional" sexual acts, etc.) were found to be increased, and deemed acceptable in test groups. These changes of belief are correlated with increased expectations for (and increasing disappointment with) one's own sex life.

But, the most disturbing result of these studies is the reported change in perception of women, particularly with regard to the rape myth. The rape myth is the belief that the victim wanted it, had it coming, and/or, once assaulted, enjoyed it (Zillman, & Bryant: 1982). The findings of this study were that

in groups that had massive exposure to pornographic material (4 hours and 48 minutes of exposure over a six week period), the recommended sentence for convicted rapists was nearly half that which was recommended by the control group which was shown equal time of non-erotic fare. This effect was found in both male and female participants. The effects of exposure also had a negative effect upon the experimental group's support for feminist issues.

Returning to the statistics cited earlier, it seems clear that the most prominent model for social behavior in the lives of children today is that which is portrayed in mass media. "In the absence of acceptable forms of sex education in the schools, the conventional media, now supplemented by the Internet, are de facto providing sex education for our children and adolescents (Zillman, 2000)." Some studies suggest that parents and peers have a substantial role in shaping one's view of the world (Yankelovich Partners, 1993). But, this begs the question, "Where are these "parents and peers" getting their values from?"

There's no doubt in my mind that the use and depiction of sex in the mass media is here to stay, and will only become more prominent and explicit. Placing these trends, and research results into the context of a society faced with such difficult issues as AIDS/HIV, STD's, unplanned/teen pregnancy, high rates of divorce, violence in the family, sexual predators, etc., it is clear that greater scrutiny should be given to the role that mass media play in cultivating attitudes and behaviors in the citizenry, particularly our children. More importantly, the need for educating our children to think for themselves becomes glaringly apparent. A realistic and socially responsible model of sexuality is just one part of this education; the development and implementation of a concentrated program of critical inquiry and deliberative civic education that addresses these and other current issues is an old idea whose time has come.

Final thought: Social constructs with regard to sex, particularly "trade in sex," did not come about arbitrarily; they had, and still have, important meaning with regard to the individual in society. To deconstruct these ideals just for the sake of deconstruction is reckless. To reconstruct meaning

without a socially responsible context, especially for the purpose of turning a profit, is *criminal*.

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