

SEXUAL FREEDOM VS SEXUAL NEMESIS: WHERE IS THE NEW MORALITY?

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SUMMARY

Sexual practice, attitudes to sex, gender roles and attitudes to power between the sexes are changing rapidly. Here a new free, indulgent, pleasure seeking sexuality, driven mainly by young women is emerging. This new order can be seen in conduct, but is graphically portrayed in popular music, film and the written word. It has travelled as fast as light in digital media, as if there was a new brain- not like the pheromonal brain of ants- but the digitalised brain of new humanity.

Across history, the control of sex has usually been located in religion or the state, they have dictated not only conduct, but defined deep rooted feelings about personal anatomy, and intimate activity. Women in particular have been influenced by feelings of shame with their genitalia, pride of virginity, and a high degree of secrecy of sexual arousal which has restricted their sexual exploration and satisfaction.

Now emerges a new permissive morality which has asserted its presence so rapidly, that few have had time to consider it, but rather have simply accepted it, with little attention to its impact on our society. Like many revolutions it has its own almost anarchic momentum. The freedom is grandiose and unreflective, arrogant and Hubristic. It brings great benefits, but also significant costs- which are far reaching and important, and should not be overlooked.

Love, intimacy and sexual relations, and the body that enables all of this are too precious, too delicate to be governed by pleasure alone! As institutional control diminishes, an appropriate set of ethical moral and medical guidelines, should be constructed and the individual encouraged to apply them. "I have the right to decide what I do with my body!" It is this project that is explored in this paper.

Key words: sexual freedom – liberation – morality – nemesis – female – humanity - religion

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The rise of the new female power

This review of heterosexual conduct in western Europe and the USA looks in particular at females- for it is they who seem to now be driving a new sexual order. Like many popular movements, including the female vote and the right to contraception and abortion, they have all been driven at a popular level in defiance of authorities. Modern women now have unparalleled freedoms, allowing self-expression, self-indulgence and pleasure, and more importantly, power in that pleasure.

Most organised societies regulate both reproduction and the pleasures of sexuality. These are vastly different across history and from country to country. (Ford & Beech 1951). In many societies, freedom for prepubescent children is common, while most societies impose control of some sort as puberty approaches, and later regulate sexual activity through marriage. But as the old religious and family controls disappear it will be argued that this is no time for anarchy, and that as moral creatures, women have the task of regulating and controlling their new freedom. If they do not who knows what despotism will crush their new found freedom? There will be no shortage of reactionaries, or motives.

Bertrand Russell (2001) once said that philosophy does not offer any easy answers, but it allows us to reframe important questions and look at them again. This paper offers a review, reflection and some provocation, but seeks no claim to truth.

A short history

The power of sexual desire, the importance of reproduction and the protection of vulnerable people within a society has meant that sexual pleasure and reproduction have been too important, simply to leave to personal choice. Throughout the history of civilised humanity, priesthoods, cults and wise women have explored, theorised, manipulated and governed female sexual practice, mainly through direct control of women and through the regulation and restriction of women to control men.

20,000 years ago women were the goddesses, and priests were at the core of theology. Many female goddesses of old carried the spirit of fertility and eroticism. For example, the Greek goddess Aphrodite represented not just love – but the three aspects of women – the virgin, the mother and the old Crone – withered and barren. Venus the Roman goddess too was complex, linking sexual ecstasy with spirituality or death (Baring & Cashford 1993). Eros, celebrated by his statue in Piccadilly, was one of the first of all the Gods – and he not only stood for bisexual erotic or sexual love – but also madness, and gave souls the strength to ascend to heaven after death. Indeed, sexual passion fired the life of the soul.

However, with the development of metal fighting instruments women's ability to make life and food was eclipsed by men and their military power.

Powerful men, rather like powerful apes, and that is not to suggest that this reference implies approval, seize control of a number of women, to optimise the conti-

nance (Fry 2017) of their genetic sequence and for sexual pleasure. Powerful Apes drive out the weaker males who live on the periphery as 'Batchelor bands'. In human society the Topkapi Palace, commonly known as the Harem, in Istanbul, once staffed 'eunuchs' deliberately castrated before puberty, as were certain choristers (Chaney 2006), The Harem represents a key form of female subjugation.

It mustn't be forgotten that women have also enjoyed the pleasure of exotic men – the rich women of Rome scratched their names on the walls of the gladiators changing rooms and it is said that Catherine the Great, had a pride of young lovers and even enjoyed a stallion! A harness was constructed for the beast so that she could take her pleasure from it. In addition, a piece of furniture has been found originally housed in the Rue Blondel Paris, the most famous of the Paris Brothels, which was designed to allow Queen Victoria's son, the Prince of Wales not be confused with the current Prince of Wales, to enjoy relations, not with a mare but with two women at once.

Men struggled to make sense of the beauty and sexual power which captivated them, sometimes enslaved them and sometimes drove them mad. There have been no shortage of pessimists. Kant (1996) and Freud (1989) were weary and purveyors of an influential brand of sexual doom. Henry Maudsley (1871) (Fry, 2015) generally abstinent, and like Dr Harvey Kellogg preached on the doom and destruction wrought by masturbation, shared with Hindu sages the idea that women sought to extract power from men, and that men were weakened by the sexual discharge and the loss of semen. In response to this threat, many devout Hindu's trained themselves not to ejaculate – Coitus Reservatus.

Embodied speaking beings, sexual and loving, we live discretely as individuals but eternally as a species. Sexuality facilitates the intricate pleasures of closeness and the creation of new humans - copies – the same, but minutely different.

Camillie Paglia (1990) has written a masterful history of Western Sexuality and believes that western ideals of beauty began with the cult of Apollo and its reverence for beautiful young boys, whose images still rival that of the eternally pubescent female beauties of today who are now held to symbolise and carry most of this mystery and power.

Medicine and Sexual Theories

Art is the valet of morality wrote Nietzsche (Griffin, 1994). The rise of medicine in the last 200 years has seen a rival moral system, in part has been driven by fear of disease, but also by a series of fantastical, fanciful medical theories. Of which includes the energy theory of sex, common in China and India, which have been transmuted in Europe and the USA to a variety of pseudo-scientific energy theories involving medical terminology.

Freud's libido theory (1989), is an exemplar, for with no scientific foundation whatsoever, a neurologist tur-

ned hypnotist created a vast new metaphysical system, in which blocked flows of energy known as libido was cited as the cause of neurotic disorders, which included: hysterical blindness, hysterical muteness, paralysed limbs, fits and faints.

Deep in the inaccessible unconscious mind, a second theatre of mind – the ubiquitous unconscious was to explain everything. Reshaping and freeing it through Psychoanalysis, described as "this tide of filth" by one British professor of psychiatry, was to cure neurotic disorders. These ideas were to emerge as a dominant force in psychiatry, sexual morality and sexual practice.

Freud's (1989) theory of penis envy derided by the feminists remains as particularly puzzling. Any man who has experienced female orgasm in his loved one or partner would know that usually female sexuality is not a slouching second to the male climax, but as a charging resplendent assertion of Venus power. Might it be that the Austrian inventor of Psychoanalysis who wrote of the clitoris as "her inconspicuous organ" didn't know very much about female sexual power? A little empiricism goes a long way!

Modern anatomists have discovered that the clitoris is in fact a large organ with a dense supply of sensory nerves, whilst modern women have rediscovered power and potency. 'The suppression of knowledge about the female orgasm is part of very long tradition of the suppression of women. The culture's denial of women's sexual needs mirrored the larger social system, in which women were given second class status. Orgasm is there for a metaphor for women's power in society.' (Hite, 2000). Might this discovery have been the dowry of Mitochondrial Eve (Ingman et al. 2000). Shall we ever know?

Wilhelm Reich (1968) - one of Freud's disciples who took Freud's libidos theory, transformed it into something rather more literal. He sought to cure women of various hysterical problems by standing them in a metal lined box called an Orgone box. He also encouraged them to masturbate and reported many cures. His first report cites a case of 'Hysterical hiccups' cured by masturbation. He is immortalised in the pop song 'Cloud busting' by Kate Bush.

With the emergence of Freud's ideas the reality of sexual practice, began to preoccupy anthropologists, (Mead, 1963; Ford & Beech, 1951) historians, theologians, philosophers (Plato, Cooper & Hutchinson, 1997; Foucault, 2012) and medical men (Krafft-Ebing, 1907; Kinsey et al., 1948). A recapitulation of the history of sexual regulation, morality and ethics is way beyond the scope of this short paper. However, some key themes are relevant here: the protection of children, fidelity, fertility and the sanctification of marriage; which have all been part of this intricate and difficult subject.

Pride not Shame

Pubescent boys and girls are shy and awkward about the rapid changes occurring in their bodies as puberty changes everything. But there is no need to make it all

more difficult with shame. The new morality should honour and respect equally the bodies of both men and women, taught from a young age, to have pride and not shame about their genitalia (Fry, 2017).

The Penis, visible as part of the shivalingham, in the village square of many Hindu villages. Once good luck charm in ancient Pompeii, or worn around children's necks as amulets symbolising protection (Pliny, 1997; Kellum, 1997), is now shameful and concealed. And Christian anatomists named female genitalia, 'Pudenda' – derived from Latin, meaning a 'thing to be ashamed of' – or commonly known to Ali G as 'Punani' (Cohen et al. 2002). Whilst the old Anglo Saxon word for the vagina - 'Cunt', is now a form of offensive abuse. Too often, perhaps as a result of this heritage, women regarded sexual indulgence as shameful, 'Lie back and think of England' (Shah, 1999) was the old joke, for many of the old school pleasing men was a patriotic and perhaps religious duty. For Muslim women the joke was 'Lie back and wait for morning prayers' (Muladhat, 2017).

But daring, brave, intellectual women have spoke out. 'Sex should be undefined. It should include clitoral stimulation to orgasm, of course, but further than that, we should un-define (or deconstruct) sex, to make it an individual vocabulary of ways to touch another person. Our feelings are much more subtle and interesting than the body vocabularies currently available to express them. We can invent new ones- in fact, we are already doing so (Hite, 2000). Simone de Beauvoir and Shulamith Firestone (2003) - or even Colette (Eisinger & McCarty, 1981) and Anais Nin (2012); these brave pioneers for female sexual autonomy have finally been heard and women are being set free. But all of the intellectual women, surely would support a responsible considerate, reflective sex freedom.

The new sexuality is shaped by girl power, shallow media pundits, glossy magazines, new wave aggressive anti-male popular music, feminists, progressive women doctors, educationalists, and the ageing white medical writer of this paper, and a whole variety of other assumed authorities. Now as a new movement asserts itself, there is no shortage of spokespersons. And so, this new sexuality, has to have boundaries- a new morality asks the protagonist to allow and even to cultivate a personal sense of right and wrong- and to ask about motive and choice and consent. Although schools are urged to include these subjects in the curriculum (Ofsted 2010) all too often they do not or they are ignored. With trivialisation and the advance of secularism, for many there is no morality at all. In addition, abuse of young women remains all too common, and often results in serious psychiatric sequelae, including pathological lying and illness fabrication (Fry & Gergle 2016).

Freedom yes, but with it should come the right, the power and the capacity to make choices. "...responsible sexual exchange and pleasure between free consenting persons can force for good, one that enables us to delight in the mind and character of other persons as well as in their flesh (Singer 1984).

Nemesis – Disease, Infidelity, Marital failure and lost young men

It's difficult to judge the costs of sexual freedom, but easy to appreciate how distasteful this indulgence will be to religious people who with sincere conviction, consider that the old morality is God's law and that law is being broke, perhaps at a terrible cost to society.

Sadly as the new empowered exercised freedom, all too often the banner reads 'Who cares about the consequences!' Alcohol and drugs loosen inhibitions. All this is strangely reminiscent of the sixties, where an amoral morality - "sex, drugs and rock and roll" was romanticised and seen as liberating, regardless of the addictions, psychoses, STD's and poverty that often resulted. Never forget Syd Barratt, Brian Jones Jimmy Hendrix, all of whom the author saw at speakeasy in London.

In exploring the costs to society, social and medical statistics contribute. There were 111,169 divorces in 2014, a decrease of 3.1% compared with 2013 and a decline of 27% from a recent peak in 2003 (Gov, 2014). Paternity is often in doubt, as one in ten children born in London may not be fathered by their putative father. However, biologically discrete infidelity is useful to women for it allows a firm faithful provider to give security to her and her offspring – which increasing genetic diversity through using sperm from a variety of males.

Sexual indulgence has always carried the risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). It would be expected that harm avoidance would restrict sexual activity although it seems to have little effect in deterring passion. Keats (2002) – physician and poet – in his famous poem 'La belle dame sans merci' (Beautiful without mercy) located the source of the disease in a female and surely men were just as likely to transmit these terrible infection. Syphilis ravaged the great and good including Delius and Beethoven, Baudelaire and perhaps Oscar Wilde.

At the height of Victorian power – around 1875 there were 250,000 sex workers out on the streets (Flanders, 2014). The third phase GPI – general paralysis of the insane, involves damage to the nervous system (Porter, 1997). The sufferers were housed in newly built asylums that surrounded the great Victorian cities. These were soon filled to overflowing, so what had started out as a humane venture to house the insane, mainly suffering with syphilis or schizophrenia, was soon to become a horror of overcrowding, sexual exploitation, degradation and lifelong deprivation of liberty (Wohl 1983).

There were drugs that slowed the progression of syphilis, but it was not until 1940 with the discovery of penicillin by Alexander Fleming (1929, 1944) who has to rank with Louis Pasteur (Pasteur & Lister 1996) as a genius, that control was gained over syphilis. Later however, syphilis and gonorrhoea began to develop resistance to antibiotics (Hayden 2003). Then a new

disease, HIV/AIDS (Stolteet al. 2004) began to ravage the promiscuous and the indulgent claiming many great creative men, especially in the homosexual community.

But sexual freedom carries risk, Public Health England (PHE, 2016) state cases of syphilis has increased by 76% between 2012 and 2015, and is at its highest level for 70 years and in many parts of the world, HIV is at almost epidemic levels. Also, cases of gonorrhoea have rose by 53%. Statistics show continuing high rates of STIs amongst gay men and young adults between 2015 and 2016 there has been a 12% increase which is the highest level in England since 1949, and young men are increasingly at risk of throat cancer from HPV. Only restraint and prudence can halt this progression.

What about the society of tomorrow? What about the children born to mothers, what about rates of disease of throat cancer of young men infected with HPV? What about the young women made sterile by chlamydia, infection, undetected for years and quietly living in their fallopian tubes.

Consent and personal responsibility as keys to the new morality

The shift from external control to personal control is a key feature of the emerging new morality. The individual has to exercise power and responsibility.

Consent to sexual activity is a right supported by law and imposing sexual activity on an unwilling partner is often a criminal offence. Sexual intimacy, should always be contractual. This should be at the foundation of a new morality. Equality of rights should be central to any negotiation about sexual interchange.

A contract has to be acknowledged and agreed by both parties. For example, "We agree that we may kiss and cuddle, or we agree we both seek orgasm – but without full intercourse." Each has to be brave enough & direct enough to talk about the anatomy of the sexual parts and limits that apply. For example, "You may touch my clitoris but not insert anything into my vagina."

There is nothing new about contracts nor limitations and restraints. In 13th century Europe, Amour Courtois (Courtly Love) offered a code of restraint – a set of rules that allowed for sexual intimacy with restraint often without penetration. Bundling was another form of restraint that allowed young engaged couples to share a bed without intercourse – a bolster separated them (Boase, 1977). Much more brutal were chastity belts, often padlocked or metal penis restraints.

Who is using which subterfuge – to seduce who? When does seduction become coercion? Most commonly it is men who coerce women into sexual activity. However, it should not be forgotten that in the modern world, women can lure men into sexual activity. Young men perhaps are unable to make informed consent or intimidated by a seductive peer or a powerful senior female, may find themselves engaging in sexual activity that they didn't want or understand.

A key component of any new sexual morality has to assert personal rights. I have the right to decide what I do with my body. This perhaps is an important departure from older ideas were religion and law sanctioned by the family, and the priest and society determined in particular what females could and could not do with their bodies.

Human sexuality involves 'desires and activities that involve the search for and attainment of sexual pleasure or satisfaction and, on the other hand, to the human desires and activities that involve the creation of new human beings' (Soble, 1998). At the foundation- intent and the genetic imperative- mixes bonding, attraction, which in part signals genetic potential (Dawkins, 2016; Lamarck, 1809).

Pairing is common in the animal kingdom and Marriage is the cultural acceptance of that. Yet in 2014 there were 2.0 million lone parents with dependent children in the UK. Women accounted for 91% of lone parents with dependent children (Office for National Statistics, 2015).

Evolution is driven in part by partner choice, which might lead to a fitter and more effective copy (Darwin & Bynum, 2009). Bonding and then intercourse create new life as nature seeks to maximise the survival of our race. So, love, attachment and reproduction are key matters in influencing sexual activity. Each should seek to preserve their ability to remain fertile.

All women should never forget that there is a uterus at the top of their vagina – it is there so a baby can grow. STD's often impair fertility but too many young women do not realise this and there is also a growing crisis around falling sperm counts – men surely should do what they can to preserve their fertility.

Conclusion

A new code of sexual practice has asserted itself at the start of the 21st century. To many it is offensive. It has been fiercely, but often ineffectively, resisted by many religions and governments worldwide.

Women in many countries have altered their conduct and values; demanding choice, self-expression and sexual fulfilment. As the old religious and family controls weaken, responsibility has to pass to the individual, who has to be taught to question shallow fashionable, often commercially driven trivialisation of sex and intimacy.

For many romantic love & family are all part of the intricate mysteries at the core of being human. For others sexual intimacy stands as an activity that is usually linked to affection and closeness but not necessarily to a long term romantic relationship.

Boys and girls, men and women have now to learn to make careful choices and exercise restraint. Men and women have sex for the purpose of procreation – we are all here because a seed, an ovum was fertilized by a sperm. But cultural freedoms and technology now modify that sexual facility as never before and allow its use in a variety of ways.

Both sexes are endowed with a great and wonderful power – it has to be valued and respected and guarded and this surely has to be the underlying premise of a new morality which is most surely needed. Informed personal choice, empowerment and personal responsibility are key to living with the new sexual freedom.

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