

THE NEW SEXUAL MYTHS OF THE 1970s

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The dictionary defines a myth as "a person or thing existing only in imagination." We are well aware that in the field of human sexuality there are many "things" or beliefs that exist only in imagination. Dr. James Leslie McCary wrote a book on the sexual myths of the past, many still existing in the present as well [*Sexual Myths and Fallacies*, Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1971]. We who are working in the sexual field can be proud that most of these myths are in the past, but my concern is that too often these have been supplanted, not by the truth, but by new myths. The major effect of a myth is to keep people from thinking. People are more willing now to test, to inquire, to experiment, and to communicate about sex. Still, being human, it is easier for us to accept new shibboleths, new myths, new stereotypes, than to think for ourselves. Some new vs. old myths are worth looking at afresh.

Myth: Sexual problems can be cured very easily.

In the past there was the myth that people with sexual problems simply had to live with them, or make a desperate search for some aphrodisiac to turn them on, or undergo prolonged psychoanalysis. Now one of the common myths is that sex problems can be cured very easily by a few mechanical tricks such as the "squeeze technique," "sensate focus," or "the bridge maneuver." As with so many questions of this type, the truth lies somewhere in between. It is certainly a myth that certain gimmicks will cure sexual problems because that is not the way it works. Before one becomes a sex therapist one must first be a general therapist, because sex problems involve changing people's attitudes and behavior.

Myth: "Liberated" women are causing increasing sexual problems in men.

From the myth that women were basically passive sexual creatures we are now confronted with the alleged emancipated woman of today. Her awareness of the sexual possibilities open to her, some say, has created a host of new sex problems for men. Is this new threat to men myth or fact? No

one really knows. There has been speculation that impotence and premature ejaculation are increasing. We have no data to substantiate this, although in my own practice I find that males are not becoming dysfunctional because women are expecting more. Of course, in individual cases anxiety is induced in men by partners who seem to demand sexual performance and this pressure to perform can result in male sexual difficulties. But, generally, these are women not genuinely emancipated in terms of being truly relaxed and secure about their own sexuality.

Myth: Masturbation is more satisfying than intercourse.

Previously, myths about masturbation held it to be immature and harmful to health. These days, masturbation is said to be more satisfying than intercourse. Myth or fact? Very definitely myth! Masters and Johnson did find that, based on objective measurements of physiologic—not emotional—response, masturbation induced a more intense reaction. But I cannot think of cases where masturbation is actually preferred to a sociosexual relationship. Even though people's orgasms might be more easily brought about this way, that's only a small part of sex. The relationship between two people having sexual contact is preferred to solitary masturbation.

Myth: Women's orgasms should all be "explosions and earthquakes."

With the increased awareness of women's capacity for orgasm as well as for multiple orgasms, are new expectations being created that are resulting in more sexual dissatisfaction than previously? Certainly, there are now more women than in the past who expect more out of sex, including orgasm and multiple orgasm. One of the problems we have in sex therapy is to try to make these expectations more realistic for people, particularly for women. Very often, challenging their expectations helps in the therapeutic process. For example, in a preorgasmic woman, if I ask her what she expects out of orgasm and she says she expects stars to

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SPEAKING OUT

. . . Ring in the new

Wardell Pomeroy's piece on the new myths that are taking the places of the old ones ends on the note that "the new myths are not as far from the truth as were the old myths" that they are replacing. The question is, as the new myths themselves become old ones to be rung out and replaced by new "new myths," will the gap between rational knowledge and nonrational mythology be constantly narrowing and attain zero? Probably not, and for the same reason that continuous bisection of a finite line and of its finite halves, and of *their* finite halves, etc., can never lead mathematically to a final point but only to infinity.

But to be this philosophical is to kid ourselves into slowing down the rate of progress in the field of sexuality. We *can* establish some bottom lines. For instance, stack up the relative amount of hard knowledge we have about sexuality as against what we had even fifteen years ago, and stack up the numbers of professional schools now dealing openly with sexuality on respectable academic levels against the following interchange that occurred in 1900.

At the meeting of the American Medical Association the previous year, a Chicago gynecologist called Denslow Lewis presented a paper, "The Gynecologic Considerations of the Sexual Act." In it, he described sexual responsiveness in women, including the role of the clitoris and multiple orgasms. He recommended strongly that girls and young women receive sexual education, and indeed was an advocate of the rights of women.

The editor of the journal of the AMA refused to publish this paper, and Lewis then brought up the matter at the next meeting of the AMA House of Delegates in 1900. Among the arguments presented was the following:

"With all due respect to Dr. Lewis, I am strongly opposed to dwelling on these elementary physiologic facts in a public audience. I am very sorry he has read the paper. I think we can sum up these matters very safely and be guided by our common sense and experience. The husband should show due respect to the wife, and the wife to the husband in consideration of this subject, and I do not believe in the current teaching of today. . . . I should be very sorry if in this country these matters became as freely talked about as they have been on the other side of the water. I do not believe mutual pleasure in the sexual act has any particular bearing on the happiness of life; that is the lowest possible view of happiness in married life. . . . I do hope we shall not have to go into details in discussing this subject; it is not necessary.

Its discussion is attended with more or less filth and we besmirch ourselves by discussing it in public."

These words were actually spoken by Dr. Howard Kelly, then gynecologist-in-chief at The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine!

The above quote of the opinions of one of the really great medical leaders of the time was used in an article by Hollender in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* in September 1970, and points up clearly Pomeroy's conviction that the swings of the pendulum become ever narrower as the boundaries of sexual knowledge increase. As Galileo remarked under his breath while recanting, to save his skin, his discovery that the earth moves around the sun, "Fppure si muove."

Mary S. Calderone, M.D.

SIECUS REPORT

Volume V, Number 6

July 1976

The *SIECUS Report* is published bi-monthly. Subscriptions are sold on a volume basis only, with volumes beginning in September.

Subscription rates: Individual, \$10.00 for one year; Canadian and foreign, £5. Institutional, \$18.00; Canadian and foreign, £9. Single copies of any issue, \$1.50.

Queries about subscriptions and delivery should be sent to Human Sciences Press, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011 (overseas office: 3 Henrietta Street, London, England WC2E 8LU). Editorial queries should be sent to SIECUS at the address below.

SIECUS Report is available on microfilm from University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

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Library of Congress catalog card number 72-627361

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BOOK REVIEWS

Familiar Faces, Hidden Lives. Howard Brown, M.D. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976 (246 pp.; \$8.95).

Reviewed by Leon Smith, Ed.D., Director, Services in Family Ministries, The United Methodist Church; and member, SIECUS Board.

This book impresses me as a very real, human document about what it means to be a homosexual male in our culture today. It was written by the late Howard Brown, M.D., just a few months before his sudden death at age 53 in February 1975.

For the most part, the book is an autobiographical account of the struggles he went through, first in denying his homosexuality—as most gay persons do—and then in going through two years of analysis trying to “find a cure.” Later he accepted his sexual orientation as a “given” and essential aspect of who he was. But still he felt he had to keep secret this knowledge about himself, and describes how he used much of his energy in doing this. Finally he made front-page news in the *New York Times* when he publicly “came out” in October 1973 and helped to found the National Gay Task Force for civil rights.

Subtitled “The Story of Homosexual Men in America Today,” the book also contains brief autobiographical accounts shared with Brown by other gay men across the country. These accounts are clustered around Brown’s report of his own struggles with being himself. They are grouped in chapters on “Parents,” “Homosexuals in Small Towns,” “Married Homosexuals,” and “Long-term Relationships.” His chapters on “Work,” “Religion,” “Psychiatry,” and “The Law” are both moving personal revelations and careful critiques of what our society is doing to homosexuals.

Brown is both critical and sympathetic with gay men in high places who refuse to declare their orientation for fear that “their careers would be blasted and the projects to which they have given their lives discredited.” At the same time, he is optimistic in expecting “society to rid itself of its prejudice against homosexuals” by the end of the century.

All in all, while the book presents a clearer understanding of what it means to be gay in our society today, it also points up the cultural changes necessary. For these reasons I highly recommend it both to professionals working with gay people and to all who are concerned with developing a society that affirms all people as persons of worth, without discrimination against those of homosexual orientation. **A, PR**

Women Talking: Explorations in Being Female. Justine Hill. Secaucus, N.J.: Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1976 (255 pp.; \$12.95).

Reviewed by Leah C. Schaefer, Ed.D., Psychotherapist, Private Practice, New York City; author; sex researcher; Supervisor, Community Sex Information.

When you put any group of people together with an opportunity to be honest and self-revealing enough to disclose themselves in an atmosphere of trust and intimacy, they are bound to reveal marvelous human insights, thoughts, and feelings. *Women Talking* by Justine Hill is the report of a series of taped conversations of 14 women who met together at the Center for Marital and Sexual Studies in Long Beach, California, to learn about their sexuality. In addition to the more expected areas, they also discuss myths and misconceptions of sex and sexuality, mas-

turbation, sexual cycles and biorhythms, female surgery, the earthiness of sex, the spirituality of sex, and types of orgasmic experience.

The women, who came from varying backgrounds, lifestyles, and ages (ranging from their twenties to their fifties), discuss their fears, joys, and insights. As the book threads its way through their experiences of physical closeness and contact, many touching and wise statements hit home. Some of the more interesting comments include one woman’s description of “what a turn-on it is to know that the man is really getting pleasure himself from giving me pleasure.” Another, Iris, has an interesting way of pointing out that men, too, are responsible for their own sexual feelings and orgasm. She says, “Men often consider it the woman’s job to turn them on. . . . I think it’s just as important for the man to turn himself on with his own body, or however he does it. He’s in charge of his body. I could stand on my head and everything else, but if he’s not going to do something for himself, he’s not going to be turned on.”

The women agreed that to “say no for now does not mean no forever.” As one woman explains: “If I feel passive today, that doesn’t mean that I won’t feel active or more aggressive tomorrow. There’s no right or wrong, no failure involved. It’s alright to say no and say it gracefully, or to say yes when we really mean yes. This knowledge often helps the relationship in other areas as well as sex.”

The women also spoke of their varied and various experiences with orgasm—and even without orgasm. One woman reports, “Sometimes I don’t even want an orgasm. I don’t want to go through the work of getting turned on. And sometimes it *is* work because that means I’ve got to get my mind in the right place . . . and some-

Audience Level Indicators: C—Children (elementary grades), ET—Early teens (junior high), LT—Late teens (senior high), A—College, general adult public, P—Parents, PR—Professionals.

times I don't want to put the effort out to get my mind to that right place." And as another woman describes, "When I get involved in an interesting stimulating conversation—a really fantastic conversation—I'll have orgasm. All of a sudden. It can be about anything . . . and doesn't even have to be about [actual] sex." (There was in fact quite a lot of descriptions "defining the enigmatic female orgasm"—which the writer reports was one of the focuses of the group.)

The women discuss a most important area about "how many couples are afraid to experiment unless the man has an erection instantly." They talk a good deal about how this is expected of men, who are also expected to know what the woman likes or wants—without even asking her. Valuable discussion follows in which some women describe their methods for "pleasuring a flaccid penis"—all very useful. Dr. Marilyn Fithian (identified simply as "Marilyn" throughout the book), associate director of the Center and moderator of the group, comments on the discussion, "We try to get across [the idea] 'Do your own thing. Whatever turns you on is going to be okay.'"

Dr. Fithian's observations, incidentally, are always interesting and informative. As an example, her insights on masturbation: "Often if the partners begin to masturbate together, they begin to get comfortable having orgasm with their partner present, as a step toward having orgasm in intercourse." She also points out the common psychological brainwashing that "masturbation is not *it*, that masturbation is very much second best to 'real' sex." In another section, she observes, "There's so much talk about aggressive women turning men off, yet it's rare to encounter a man who doesn't say, 'I wish my wife were more aggressive.'"

For me, by far the very best section is entitled "Female Surgery and Its Effects." So little has been reported about the effects of surgery on female sexuality or sexual functioning. Yet, as author Justine Hill makes clear, "it affects millions of women who have had breast removal, trim or implant, surgical or cosmetic repair, hysterectomy, or other operations related to their sexuality, self-image, or feelings about themselves as—women." The women spoke at length about the personal details and difficulties of their various surgeries (breast, tubal, hysterectomy),

and their pre- and postoperative feelings. One woman even reported her experience of having an artificial vagina created.

Near the conclusion of the book there is an interesting collection of myths against which the women tested their own beliefs. Some were long-held ideas, and some the results of inadequate education. Such items as "blacks are better lovers"; "women ejaculate"; "intercourse is painful after a hysterectomy, impossible during pregnancy"; "women over 40 are not interested in sex"; "women want to be raped"; "sexually deprived people are more creative"; "men are more creative because they can't have babies"; "gays can't have enduring relationships"; "incestuous relationships produce defective children"; "sexual behavior is innate—everybody knows how to function"—59 items, to be exact. The women discussed these myths and realized how pervasive they are, and were often dismayed at their own naiveté and lack of information. Some myths were dispelled only when Marilyn Fithian provided scientific and appropriate information.

The shortcoming of the book is that it's "too little and too late." Most of the topics have already been approached better, more deeply, and more scientifically. The results of this project dealt with too few women (about fourteen) and there was no depth of analysis. Seven or more years ago, personal comments from even that number of women would have been considered a great breakthrough. But today there is a plethora of such personal accounts, in many excellent how-to books that make this one at \$12.95 far less attractive for the money than, say, paperback copies of *The Hite Report*, *Human Sexual Response*, *Let Yourself Go*, or *My Secret Garden*.

Coming on the heels of these and other in-depth research contributions, without more scientific structuring in terms of a homogeneous grouping of women, and without any analysis of the investigation, the book simply lacks the content that leads to significant findings. In fact, there are no findings: the book merely reports the feelings of a very few women, and of a very smart group leader. This is not to say the book has no value whatever, because in my opinion any honest report of personal feelings and experiences is worthwhile. However, for the money,

it is overpriced in the context of today's literature. Not even the beautiful illustrations by Karen Florzak, which added to the cost rather than to the scientific merit of the book, can make up for the lack of depth. In fact, the illustrations present sex as somewhat idealized, and belie the struggles of the *Women Talking*. However, despite this, should it be the only one available to the reader, I'd say that it's a very good book. A

Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A. Jonathan Katz. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1976 (690 pp.; \$18.95 hardcover, \$9.95 paper).

Homosexuals in History: Ambivalence in Society, Literature and the Arts. A. L. Rowse. New York: Macmillan, 1977 (346 pp.; \$12.95).

Reviewed by Dennis Rubini, D.Phil. (Oxford), Fellow of the Royal Historical Society; College of Liberal Arts, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA.

Serious students of human sexuality owe a debt to Jonathan Katz for this very useful work which is less a book than a scrapbook or collection of documents pertaining largely to the history of homosexual behavior in America. Introductions to the six sections of documents are only a few pages long and individual documents are introduced by but a paragraph or so. Whether the brevity causes disappointment or happiness will very much depend upon the reader's own biases and sympathies. Katz is a strong partisan of feminism and of egalitarian forms of sexual behavior. The momentum for change has come from the black and women's movement, as well as from the pacifism accompanying the Vietnam war. While there is little mention of Russia, the Leninist decrees attempting to do away with the sexism inherent in Russian society—laws giving women legal equality, dropping penalties against homosexual behavior, and trying to replace the nuclear family—give support and faith to Katz and the gay Socialist Left. The failure of the experiments and the subsequent repression under Stalin coupled with the fact that the greatest advances for homosexuals are currently taking place

in advanced capitalist societies has perhaps given the work its modesty and caution. To view homosexuals as a minority in American history (an oppressed ethnic group of, say, 10 percent of the population) may also appear unacceptable to many, depending on the degree of presentism they expect in their history.

Forewarned, the reader may wish to take the introductions with a grain of salt and move swiftly into the documents. Any selection is due for some criticism and the book's limitations may be better understood through mention of the six sections, thus giving a fair indication of the contents: "Trouble: 1566-1966"; "Treatment: 1884-1974"; "Passing Women: 1782-1920"; "Native Americans/Gay Americans: 1528-1976"; "Resistance: 1859-1972"; and "Love: 1779-1932."

Lesbians are well and truly covered, and feminist symbols in the table of contents draw the attention of readers who are looking specifically for such material. At times one wonders, in the "Passing Women" section, for example, if Katz has not gone a bit far in trying to avoid charges of sexism. Many of the incidents cited appear to be women passing as men solely for status purposes rather than for erotic ones. While some might quibble that this makes them another sexual minority, "passing women" constitute a historical phenomenon of such importance as to be worth the space in any book regardless of the title. The section on the Indians, especially that dealing with hermaphrodite and berdache Indians, is most enlightening. Many of the individuals partook of the qualities of women only in the Amazonian sense and are seen as a hard-worked and exploited minority.

It is a shame that Katz has not been a bit more comprehensive in dealing with the other sexual minorities or aspects of the gay movement which have considerable social importance even if they do not form a part of Katz's gay dialectic. Gay religious groups certainly deserved at least mention in the resistance section. The sizeable gay (and straight) sado-masochistic subculture is seemingly thought of by Katz as too "low-conscious" to be worthy of mention. Indeed, the only times Katz mentions the words are in the "Treatment" section where the doctors are the sadists and the patients are the masochists.

Readers of the *SIECUS Report* may well be most interested in the section "Treatment: 1884-1976," although it is not a pleasant one in which to find one's professional forebearers. Some therapists, especially the first openly gay ones such as Magnus Hirschfeld, are lauded for their development of adjustment therapy. Generally, however, while the clinicians are thought to be a few steps ahead of society and the law, they are seen much as Dr. Thomas Szasz sees them: as the direct descendants of the inquisitors. It is grim reading, but if one accepts a certain morbid Charles Adams sense of humor, one can have quite a bit of fun in perusing the documents.

As Katz aptly notes, medical journals are among the finest sources of information about homosexuality in history. At the turn of the century many male and some female patients went like sheep to the gelder while some psychiatrists appear to have been developing some matchmaking skills by bringing their new eunuchs together! One medical journal, edited by Dr. Charles Hughes in 1914, relates the progressively sterner treatment for one otherwise well-functioning middle-class patient whose mild gay flirtatiousness was causing him embarrassment. There were a number of failures before arriving at a cure for his "unnatural propensity for erotophobic evil." "Tonic electricalizations from spine to genitalia," for example, were found to be woefully inadequate and the "tranquilizing brain electroscances" also failed. Then came the excision of the "dorsalis penis nerve," which also did not quite hit the mark, causing Hughes to make an editorial aside, displaying his awareness of the latest operation sweeping onto the stage from the right wing of the eugenics movement: "... vasectomy would have done better [as would] the obliteration of the other branches of the internal pubic nerve." Some doctors found that vasectomies created patients "of a more sunny disposition" (a fact which Indira Gandhi and other modern Indian politicians might dispute). As the patient did not have a doctor so enlightened as Hughes, it was only after having "excised the testes entire" that the patient was considered on his way to recovery. All the signs of a permanent return to respectable society were visible when the patient "showed a social inclination towards asexualized ladies." He sought

the doctor's help in introducing him to such a woman from among his Lesbian patients, or rather one "who had been oophorectomized for a similar *contraire sexual emphindung*." Castrations not only generally failed to be so effective, but often left patients chronically depressed—or so disturbed in one case as to be driven to capricious murder.

As Thorazine in an oil base is a comparatively recent arrival (it can turn people into walking zombies for weeks at a stretch), throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s lobotomies played a key role in containing "serious management problems for the hospital." In 1959, of a test group of 100 patients who had been lobotomized, a suspiciously high proportion of these "management problems" were not only homosexual before the operation, but two-thirds showed homoerotic behavior following the operation, an increase of a third over the prelobotomy group. Trying to explain the dramatic increase of homosexual activity, Drs. Zlotow and Paganini are seen in their report as trying to crawl out of the seemingly unavoidable conclusion that a lobotomy increases the likelihood of patients' displaying homosexual inclinations (they say there was a "masking of this [homosexual] behavior by the aggressive behavior of the patients before lobotomy and by lack of adequate supervision").

There is regrettably little information on the work on homosexuality of Kinsey's Institute for Sex Research, although perhaps the history provided in C. A. Tripp's *Homosexual Matrix* made this superfluous. The long history of "cruising" is interesting, but much of the "Love" section is disappointing. Some of the individuals long-thought to have a homosexual component are still in the shadows. Alexander Hamilton's letters to John Laurens, for example, might still be construed as being nonerotic in nature (although the case for homosexual behavior would now seem to be "unproven," to use the ambiguous Scottish legal phrase). The legal section is very weak. Perhaps enough has been said about the Loeb murder, but one would at least have expected it to be mentioned.

Katz's personal experiences in the modern movement make the "Resistance" section excellent reading, especially the entries dealing with the first gay organizations of the 1920s and

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DO YOU KNOW THAT . . .

National Family Sex Education Week

The third annual National Family Sex Education Week is scheduled this year from October 9–15. Sponsored by the Institute for Family Research and Education, at Syracuse University, this special week acknowledges that sex education is primarily the obligation—and privilege—of the parent, and many local organizations and institutions around the country schedule programs and workshops during this week to help parents become better sex educators in the home. For ideas on what you or your organization can do, write to Joseph Fanelli, Coordinator, National Family Sex Education Week, Institute for Family Research and Education, 760 Os-
trom Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13210.

Sex and the Law

The involvement of the body of American law with various aspects of human sexuality is not a new phenomenon, but society's current openness with regard to sexual matters has made legislative enactments, courtroom decisions, and administrative rulings concerning sexuality, particularly sexual behaviors, a matter of public knowledge and interest. And now there is a journal devoted to the latest information in this important and burgeoning field.

Sexual Law Reporter, produced by a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, not only reports on decisions in important sexual cases, state and federal legislative actions, and administrative rulings by various state and federal agencies, but each bi-monthly issue contains an in-depth report on an important happening in the world of sex and law or a study of the status of the law in one specific area. A recent example is a survey of attorneys-general in each state to determine what formal or informal opinions had been issued pertaining to sexual conduct, sexual orientation, marital status, and sex discrimination. Additionally, the publication cites law review articles of special interest relating to such topics as employment, illegitimacy, rape, transexualism, abortion, sterilization, gay rights, etc.

Annual subscription rates are \$10.00 for accredited students, \$15.00 for other individuals, and \$25.00 for libraries and institutions. Special rates are provided for prison inmates and/or groups. For information, write to: *Sexual Law Reporter*, 1800 North Highland Avenue, Suite 106, Los Angeles, CA 90028.

New Immigration Sexual Orientation Policy

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service has long equated homosexuality with "bad moral character," justifying exclusion of known homosexuals. Recently, however, it has announced a change in this policy: "The fact that a petitioner for naturalization is or has been a practicing homosexual during the relevant statutory period is not, in itself, a sufficient basis for a finding that he lacks a necessary

good moral character. However, where there has been a conviction of a homosexual act or the admission of the commission of such an act, in a jurisdiction in which it is a criminal offense or when the homosexual act involves minors, or the use of threat or fraud, or the act of solicitation thereof in a public place, the Service view is that a showing of good moral character is precluded." (Reported in *Sexual Law Reporter*.)

Gays and Child Custody

The Conference of Delegates of the California State Bar Association disapproved a resolution which recommended that a parent's marital status or sexual orientation should never be considered in child custody litigation. Meanwhile, in Washington, D.C., the American Psychological Association adopted the following resolution: "The sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation of natural or prospective adoptive or foster parents should not be the sole or *primary variable* considered in child custody or placement cases." (Reported in *Sexual Law Reporter*.)

European Forum on Sex Counseling for the Physically Disabled

The European Forum on Sex Counseling for the Physically Disabled will hold its next meeting in Belgium at the Brussels Hilton Hotel, August 2–4, 1977. Although it is close to the date of the meeting, there is still time to register to attend. For further information, write to Keness-Belgium Congress, Rue du Luxembourg 11, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium.

Resources to Write for . . .

MM (Mass Media), published twice monthly by Mass Media Ministries, is a newsletter reviewing films, filmstrip series, films for children, television programs and movies—all dealing with varied topics in human relations, including, from time to time, sex-related themes. The items chosen are picked and reviewed most sensitively, and individuals organizing or leading discussion groups with a wide variety of audiences may find the reviews helpful in developing discussion topics. For further information, write to Mass Media Ministries, Inc., 2116 North Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218.

The VD Book, by Joseph Chiappa and Joseph Forish, is a recent publication of the United States Alliance for the Eradication of Venereal Disease, which cooperates with a number of other important health organizations in disseminating V.D. information. Written in an easy-to-read question-and-answer format, the book includes such questions as "How can a minor get treated without getting hassled?" and "Does the 'minor consent' law really work, or

does the doctor insist on 'squealing' to the parents anyway?" Orders for *The VD Book* sent directly to USAEVD will be filled at prices somewhat below those of the publishers, especially if ordered in quantity (500 or more, \$1.00 each plus 5% for shipping). Write to the United States Alliance for the Eradication of Venereal Disease, 1213 Clover Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

Guide to Sexuality Handbooks, produced by the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, is a comprehensive guidebook listing the various college sexuality handbooks, non-campus booklets, "how to" handbooks describing various community programs, and directories. Many of the college handbooks were actually written by and for students, "often with assistance from outside family planning agencies and/or a sympathetic college physician or nurse." For information on obtaining copies of the *Guide*, write to Youth and Student Affairs Division, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 810 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019.

Films by and for women is the business of Serious Business Company, a distributor for independent film-makers and experimental and documentary work. It is woman-owned and -operated, and its extensive and profusely illustrated catalog contains a large number of titles, including some "underground" films, many of which would be difficult to find elsewhere. To obtain a copy of the catalog, send \$2.00 to Serious Business Company, 1609 Jaynes Street, Berkeley, CA 94703.

Obscenity Legislation in 22 States

The battle on censorship and First Amendment rights seems to be never-ending when it comes to obscenity, and the current year is no exception. At the federal level another code revision is being worked on; the U.S. Supreme Court now has five obscenity cases before it; in a number of city councils, ordinances on zoning and the access of minors to bookstores are proliferating.

The states which have active bills before their current legislative sessions are: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington. Residents of those states might well acquaint themselves with these bills, in the light not only of an effort to safeguard the right to publish and to teach, but also to safeguard the rights of those unwilling or inappropriate audiences whose privacy is encroached on by the increasing ubiquitousness of explicit sexual materials.

Male-Staffed Nursery School

The Nurtury, describing itself as "the first predominantly male-staffed family pre-school," has been established in California as a nonprofit, nonsectarian organization. The founders believe that a predominantly male staff is "particularly important to single-parent families where the mother is the custodial parent." They have also found experiences with nurturing males to be important for children of two-parent families as well, particularly as the project is designed to serve the entire family. It does this by providing programs for

both parents and children, and parent educational and support groups led by qualified professionals. Its directors include representatives from various religious and helping professions. For further information, write Robert Sayers, Educational Director, The Nurtury, Inc., 14401 Dickens, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423.

Two-Day Sexuality Workshops

The Akron Forum, Inc., Akron, Ohio, in association with the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality, of San Francisco, is presenting a series of National Sex Forum-authorized SAR (Sexual Attitude Restructuring) training programs in human sexuality and sex education.

SAR #101, Introductory Course in Human Sexuality, will be offered September 10-11, October 15-16, November 18-19, and December 17-18; SAR #201, Advanced Course, will be offered September 24-25; and SAR #561, Practical Skills Workshop, will be offered October 17-21. In addition, three Women's Day Programs are scheduled for August 20, November 12, and December 10.

For further information, write to Thomas Erwin Gertz, M.H.S., Administrative Director, Akron Forum, Inc., Suite 516, 111 Cascade Plaza, Akron, OH 44308 (telephone 216/253-4684).

Training Courses for Sex Therapists

Three organizations are conducting nine-month-long intensive coursework for postgraduate training in sex counseling and therapy during the next academic year. For information about the specific programs offered, dates, places, and tuition, write directly to the sponsoring organizations:

- American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors, and Therapists, in conjunction with the University of Maryland Medical School (AASECT), 5010 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20016.
- College of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Office of Continuing Education, P.O. Box 101-University Heights, Piscataway, NJ 08854.
- Institute for Advanced Study in Human Sexuality, 1523 Franklin Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.

Transsexual Information Service

Although the Erickson Educational Foundation, which for years carried on important work in the area of gender dysphoria, was obliged to close its doors in February 1977 from lack of funds, it is welcome news that the University of Texas Medical Branch has established a new information facility to replace part of its work. The Janus Information Facility will be a division of the gender clinic there, of which Paul Walker, Ph.D., is director. The facility will conduct research, distribute informational material, and provide professional referrals. They will endeavor to obtain support for their work on behalf of transsexuals through private funding and donation. It is also welcome news that Zelda R. Suplee will continue her work on behalf of transsexuals as director of the new facility. For information, write to Janus Information Facility, University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, TX 77550.

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1950s. Henry Herber, the secretary of the first chartered gay group, speaks of its problems and those of its publication *Friendship and Freedom*:

Two issues alas, were all we could publish. . . . It soon became apparent that my friends were illiterate and penniless. John, a preacher who earned his room and board by preaching brotherly love to a small group of Negroes; Al, an indigent laundry queen; and Ralph, whose job with the railroad was in jeopardy when his nature became known. These were the national officers of the Society for Individual Rights, Inc. . . . One of our greatest handicaps was the knowledge that homosexuals don't organize. Being thoroughly cowed, they seldom get together . . . any more than notorious bandits would join a thieves union.

The entry on Henry Hay and the revival of homosexual organizations in the 1950s is excellent. The troubles encountered by the threat of the House Un-American Activities Committee's investigations, which would indeed have linked a number of homosexuals to communism, caused a major gay organization to fold. The problems Alma Routsong (Isabel Miller) encountered in publishing the first lesbian historical novel, *Patience and Sarah*, are also very enlightening.

Scholars will appreciate the extensive footnotes, although not a few times Katz is content to take quotations from secondary sources without going to the originals. Some have noted that Katz fails to give sufficient credit to James Steakley, noted for his piercing study of the German homosexual rights movement. The extent of Steakley's aid has prompted some to assert that he deserves at least second place on the cover (rather than third place in the credits, which gets lost in the supporting case of a hundred). The greatest tribute comes from Katz's most grudging critics in the Gay Academic Union, who to a one admit that the collection taught them a lot that they did not know. This book is a provocative work which belongs on the shelves of every serious sex educator. **A, PR**

A. L. Rowse's *Homosexuals in History: Ambivalence in Society, Literature and the Arts* is a very different sort of work, as its title indicates. If Katz tried to keep close to the common folk and chose the low road to history, Rowse has taken the high road by staying near to the men (and, alas, only the men) of the court, aristocracy, and upper middle classes. A noted, well-published

eccentric Fellow of the renowned All Souls College, Oxford University, Rowse is also outrageously egocentric. Someone once asked the great man if he would care to add his name to a petition being sent to the American Historical Association relating to the right of historians to undertake research and teaching concerning sexual minorities. Rowse replied that "I never sign petitions, you know, for a letter with my name on it will usually suffice in and of itself." A note just as short will have to suffice too for any estimate as to the accuracy of Rowse's work, for while Katz has over a hundred pages of footnotes and bibliography, Rowse has not a one.

A generation or so older than Katz, Rowse nevertheless distills the college common room gossip for the benefit of his readers. Much might be speculation and personal feelings, but what speculation and what feelings! Enthralled and spellbound, one reads of the (primarily English) gay greats who walked the stage of history and learns the ways they adjusted, or failed to adjust, to being sexually different from others. Most of the old standbys are there, of course, but the style of writing is a challenge to the King James Bible. An Elizabethan scholar, Rowse is at his best in dealing with James I, Christopher Marlowe, and Francis Bacon, as well as the men who were at Oxford University in this twentieth century. The work seems like a collection of brilliantly written prize Oxford essays. It is a book which, if not quite needed in your study, clearly belongs by your fireplace for a delightful (and informative) night's reading. **A**

The Marriage Savers. Joanne Koch and Lew Koch. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc., 1976 (288 pp.; \$8.95).

Reviewed by Laura J. Singer, Ed.D., President, SAM (Save A Marriage); Past-President and Fellow, American Association of Marriage and Family Counselors; and member, SIECUS Advisory Panel.

Treatment strategies for marital and sexual dysfunctions have shifted greatly in the past fifteen years. Individual psychotherapy, which domi-

nated the field, has given way to treatment of couples conjointly, concurrently, and in couples' groups. Marital and sexual distress constitute a most complicated therapeutic arena requiring great skill and countertransference awareness on the part of the therapist. Many therapists who have successfully treated individual psychopathology find themselves unprepared for the complexities of marital and sexual therapy.

Since there are only six states with laws governing the practice of marriage counseling (California, Utah, Michigan, New Jersey, Nevada, and Georgia), finding a highly trained, ethical marriage counselor or sex therapist may be a confusing, expensive, and sometimes heartbreaking task for couples. In order to delineate the counseling services available in this country, Joanne and Lew Koch, a married couple who are writer and investigative journalist respectively, have written a readable and comprehensive consumer's guide to marital and sexual therapy.

The Kochs have researched well-known marriage counselors and sex therapists, here describing the techniques and methods which these counselors employ. Gestalt, Transactional Analysis, Bioenergetics, Psychodrama, Behavior Modification, Encounter Groups, Family Therapy, Marriage Encounter et al., are described, social service agencies are investigated, and the pioneering practitioners of many methods and schools have been interviewed. More than two hundred people who have tried to save their marriages through counseling or sex therapy are also interviewed.

Particularly informative are the discussions offered by both therapists and clients, often in dialogue form, concerning the nature of the counseling interaction. When the couples themselves speak—and they are delightfully articulate and explicit, speaking from a post-therapy position—we are given an insightful opportunity to learn about the client's expectations, fears, frustrations, disappointments, surprises, and growth experiences. The reader can readily feel empathic toward the people whom the Kochs interviewed.

"Therapists have no magic," they write. "What the best of them have is an ability born of natural empathy, learning, supervised training and—yes—faith in human possibilities to support your efforts to change your

life. What the worst of them have is a line, a *shtick*, a patter born of the belief that people are there to be used and taken." The authors advise potential clients to research for themselves what a particular theoretical approach is supposed to do, to find the method or modality best suited to them, and they offer specific suggestions as to how to go about this procedure properly. The last chapter includes a guide with addresses and price ranges.

Although the authors make a serious attempt to explore all approaches carefully, the fact that some are given greater consideration, and the cases used to illustrate them are more successful than the others included, indicates a very real, albeit unidentified bias. Despite this limitation, it is rare that one has the opportunity to read so comprehensive a survey of what is happening in today's marriage counseling and sex therapy offices and clinics.

A

Understanding Stages of Moral Development: A Programmed Learning Workbook. Susan Pagliuso. New York: Paulist Press, 1976 (151 pp.; \$5.95).

Reviewed by Carol Gilligan, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

[For descriptions of the research work on which this book is based, and a discussion of moral values in relation to human sexuality, the reader is referred to "Moral Stages and Sex Education" by Dr. Lawrence Kohlberg and "Sexual Dilemmas at the High School Level" by Dr. Gilligan, two chapters in *Sexuality and Human Values*, edited by Mary S. Calderone, M.D. (New York: Association Press, 1974). —Ed.]

In an age committed to the exploration of possibility, the marriage of Kohlberg and Skinner in a programmed instruction workbook on moral development provokes only momentary surprise. If pigeons can be taught to sort pills and scan radar screens, then presumably people can learn to discriminate between different stages of moral judgment. Upon this presumption, Susan Pagliuso sets out to take the reader through the substance of Lawrence Kohlberg's "system" of moral development, wedding Skinner's method

of small steps and immediate reinforcement to the closely reasoned logic of Kohlberg's six stages. In this, she is remarkably successful.

The workbook, recommended in Edmund Sullivan's preface as a guide for potential researchers, teachers, and school administrators, delineates the progression of moral judgment from initial strategies for survival in a world of remote and powerful authorities, through an identification with the norms and values of social groups, to the discovery of ethical principles whose application is universal. Using examples from interview responses to Kohlberg's hypothetical moral dilemmas, Pagliuso gives the reader a good sense of the variation found in such responses and the way in which these differences are ordered by Kohlberg into a stage sequence. While there is some slippage in the distinctions made and the answers at times rely more on wizardry than on deductive logic, the workbook is strikingly successful in explicating the structural unity of the stage conception, the interrelation at each stage between the constituent concepts of role-taking, exchange, governance, interpersonal relationships, etc., which compose the moral judgment. As long as one stays within the boundaries of the task at hand (learning to score moral judgments according to Kohlberg's stages), the workbook presents a complex set of ideas in a lucid and straight-forward manner.

The problems arise only when one abandons the role of pigeon, concerned only with response and reward, and begins instead, like the troublesome adolescents who exemplify "difficult and negative transition," to ask a few questions about the premises upon which the moral judgments are judged. Then one might wonder in what sense the logic of social systems (Stage 4) is better than that of interpersonal relationships (Stage 3), and how, in this century, it is possible to assume so blandly that the concept of "good citizen" represents a moral advance over that of "good friend." One also might question the cultural context which awards moral value to the concept of property and the underlying orientation which points the higher stages toward concepts of individual rights and social contract rather than toward concern with individual welfare and social responsibility.

More pragmatically, since this book is steered toward educators, it is easy to see how, despite the prefatory caveat, it could become yet another tool for tracking, grading, labeling, sorting, and classifying people, using the *imprimatur* of Harvard and the disclaimer of scientific research. Before proceeding as advised to "satisfy your curiosity as to your own stage of moral development" or going on to obtain "a general description of (another) person's level of development," the reader might well consider that Kohlberg's longitudinal sample from which his stages were derived was all male and largely adolescent, and that if the stage concept has validity, the ability to understand the structure of a moral judgment is contingent on the level of one's own understanding.

The workbook format together with the programmed instruction method, however, precludes inquiry and instead exudes a certainty about the rightness of answers which is at odds with the limitations of the research data, the constraints inherent in the scoring task, and the nature of the subject itself whose persisting fascination lies rather in the complication of its questions. In omitting these questions or any sense of questioning, in leaving out information which might suggest caution or qualification, in failing to address the implications and possible consequences of the activities it invites, this workbook, for all its usefulness, falls into a major category of sin. A, PR

Sex, Living Together, and the Law. Carmen Massey and Ralph Warner. Berkeley, Calif.: Nolo Press, 1974 (187 pp.; paperback, \$4.95).

Reviewed by Ralph Slovenko, LL.B., Ph.D., Professor of Law and Psychiatry, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI; author, Sexual Behavior and the Law, and Psychiatry and Law; member, SIECUS Advisory Panel.

"The movement of progressive societies has hitherto been a movement from status to contract," observed Sir Henry Maine in his classic study, *Ancient Law*, published in 1920. By this he meant, at least from his

perspective, that people were increasingly being judged on merit rather than by their class identity. Social mobility and political democracy, brought about by the rise of industrialism, a market economy, and the consequent decline of feudalism, made the individual the basic unit of legal action. Under the new system, individuals could privately agree about a broad range of their mutual obligations. The activity of the state in private matters was only to enforce whatever was agreed to.

The contract of marriage, on the other hand, was not one of those contracts. In the case of *Maynard v. Hill* (125 U.S. 190), the U.S. Supreme Court in 1888 stated:

Marriage, as creating the most important relation in life, as having more to do with the morals and civilization of a people than any other institution, has always been subject to the control of the Legislature. That body prescribes the age at which parties may contract to marry, the procedure or form essential to constitute marriage, the duties and obligations it creates, its effects upon the property rights of both, present and prospective, and the acts which may constitute grounds for its dissolution. . . .

It is . . . to be observed that, whilst marriage is often termed by text writers and in decisions of courts as a civil contract—generally to indicate that it must be founded upon the agreement of the parties, and does not require any religious ceremony for its solemnization—it is something more than a mere contract. The consent of the parties is of course essential to its existence; but when the contract to marry is executed by the marriage, a relation between the parties is created which they cannot change. Other contracts may be modified, restricted, or enlarged, or entirely released upon the consent of the parties. Not so with marriage. The relation once formed, the law steps in and holds the parties to various obligations and liabilities. It is an institution, in the maintenance of which in its purity the public is deeply interested, for it is the foundation of the family and of society, without which there would be neither civilization nor progress. This view is well expressed by the Supreme Court of Maine in *Adams v. Palmer*, 51 Me. 481, 483. Said that court, speaking by Chief Justice Appleton:

"When the contracting parties have entered into the married state, they have not so much entered into a contract as into a new relation, the rights, duties, and obligations of which rest not upon their agreement, but upon the general law of the State, statutory or common, which defines and prescribes those rights, duties, and obligations. They are of law, not of contract. It was a contract that the relation should be established, but, being established, the power of the parties as to its extent or duration is at an end. Their rights under it are determined by the will of the Sovereign, as evidenced by law. They can neither be modified nor changed by any agreement of parties. It is a

relation for life, and the parties cannot terminate it at any shorter period by virtue of any contract they can make. The reciprocal rights arising from this relation, so long as it continues, are such as the law determines from time to time, and none others." And again: "It is not, then, a contract within the meaning of the clause of the Constitution which prohibits the impairing the obligation of contracts. It is, rather, a social relation, like that of parent and child, the obligations of which arise not from the consent of concurring minds, but are the creation of the law itself, a relation the most important, as affecting the happiness of individuals, the first step from barbarism to incipient civilization, the purest tie of social life, and the true basis of human progress."

The old order is disintegrating. In the last thirty years in the United States, especially during the last ten, there have been a number of court decisions modifying the immutability of the marriage contract. A number of antenuptial agreements, for example, have been upheld. Notwithstanding, many people avoid marriage, at least in part, because of what they consider to be its legal complications, feeling that there will be fewer problems if they simply live together without ceremony. But, as the old song goes, "T'ain't necessarily so."

People need rules to live by. When the law does not provide them, they will have to provide them. To what extent will the courts enforce them? To what extent can people today by contract confer a legal status upon themselves, thereby obtaining the protection of that status? Can cheese be turned into a rose by calling it a rose? For example, many same-sex or gay people live together as "families" and seek to obtain the benefits that society and government confer on married couples and their children. May gay couples, unable to marry, provide by contract for benefits, such as support and alimony, that most states provide by law for married couples? Unable to marry, may they adopt one another in order to take advantage of benefits (and obligations) that are vested in families? These days, to achieve the best economic advantage there is a lot of wheeling and dealing among both the married and unmarried.

In yet another book for unmarried couples (and groups), attorneys Carmen Massey and Ralph Warner in this publication, *Sex, Living Together, and the Law*, present a legal guide on arranging for the division of accumulated property (when a separation occurs), on dealing with discrimination in housing, insurance, and credit, and obtain-

ing benefits from private and governmental agencies. It is designed as a practical guide, a reference book—apparently even for use by the second-grader. It has a definition of terms, called "gobbledy-gook defined," supposedly to demystify the mumbo-jumbo of the law. For those who didn't know, "spouse" means "either member of a married couple"; "seduce" means "to induce a person to surrender his or her chastity." The price of the book, we are told, is "cheaper than a marriage license."

Nora Lavori's *Living Together, Married or Single: Your Legal Rights* (reviewed in *SIECUS Report*, March 1977) is a more interesting study, though less practical. A

Sex Education For Today's Child: A Guide for Modern Parents. Arlene S. Uslander, Caroline Weiss, and Judith Telman. New York: Association Press, 1977 (214 pp.; \$6.95, paper).

Reviewed by Mary S. Calderone, M.D., President, *SIECUS*.

This book was frankly a disappointment. I picked it up in keen anticipation of the same kind of stimulating involvement that had been provided by the authors' previous book, *Their Universe: The Way Children Feel* (reviewed in *SIECUS Report*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1973). There the authors had invited me in to participate in a process, a very dynamic one in which first- to third-graders moved through several years of open discussions about anything under the sun they wanted to talk about—including sex questions. There I had been enabled to participate in the children's evolution as each session added not only to their sexual knowledge but also to their capacity for thinking as well as feeling about human relationships. If the authors had only been able to carry over the dynamics of that process for the parents to whom their present book is addressed, the result would have been an unusually valuable book, but it was a disappointment because it does not do this.

Instead, its static style provides information rather than light: it lists many questions asked by children and provides perfectly adequate answers that can be used as models by parents.

But there are many books that already do this very well, and this book has no edge on them.

One thing I missed particularly in the present book is a simple but powerful statement and elucidation of that statement—that children are sexual people, normally so, from the moment of birth; that the child's sexuality will normally express itself erotically; and that parents should feel comfortable and indeed happy about this for the simple reason that this manifestation presages the erotic joy that the child will feel when grown. Acceptance of childhood eroticism is a *sine qua non* of human life today.

The reading list suggested is not really adequate, whether for adults or younger or older children. In fact, several books that are really for younger children are listed as being for the older ages—and a couple of those listed are a vintage genuinely out of touch with the times.

We recommend the authors' previous book as unique in insightful and creative experiences, especially as it will present parents with no pat answers as the present book tries to do, but is more apt to stimulate them to seek for their own answers to sexual puzzlements in their child's upbringing. **A, P**

A New Bill of Sexual Rights and Responsibilities. Lester Kirkendall. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1976 (28 pp.; \$1.95 paperback).

Reviewed by Leon Smith, Ed.D., Director, Services in Family Ministries, United Methodist Church; member, SIECUS Board.

This brief booklet of fewer than twelve pages of copy is a statement, endorsed by thirty-seven outstanding humanist authors, which emphasizes both rights and responsibilities in the expression of human sexuality.

The document begins with the recognition that "sexuality has for too long been denied its proper place among other human activities" (p. 3), elaborates nine policy statements, and concludes with the belief that "freeing our sexual selves is vital if we are to reach the heights of our full humanity. But at the same time, we believe that we need

to activate and nourish a sense of our responsibilities to others" (p. 24).

No doubt most professionals in the sex field will find that the booklet contains nothing new or dramatic. Nevertheless, it does summarize nine position statements which, when adopted by persons and society, would go a long way toward enhancing sexuality as a vital part of one's full humanity.

These nine points are:

1. The boundaries of human sexuality need to be expanded.

2. Developing a sense of equity between the sexes is an essential feature of a sensible morality.

3. Repressive taboos should be replaced by a more balanced and objective view of sexuality based on a sensitive awareness of human behavior and needs.

4. Each person has both an obligation and a right to be fully informed about the various civic and community aspects of human sexuality.

5. Potential parents have both the right and the responsibility to plan the number and time of birth of their children, taking into account both social needs and their own desires.

6. Sexual morality should come from a sense of caring and respect for others; it cannot be legislated.

7. Physical pleasure has worth as a moral value.

8. Individuals are able to respond positively and affirmatively to sexuality throughout life; this must be acknowledged and accepted.

9. In all sexual encounters, commitment to human and humanistic values should be present. **A, PR**

Sex Education in Medicine. Harold L. Lief and Arno Karlen, eds. New York: Spectrum Publications, Inc., 1976 (155 pp.; \$12.95).

Reviewed by Robert C. Long, M.D., Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Director, Division of Human Sexuality, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY; member, SIECUS Advisory Panel.

This small but immensely valuable book is the result of a National Conference on Sex Education in Medicine held in April, 1974. Twenty-five sex educators, outstanding leaders in

medical school education, were assembled to address a variety of crucial topics, including viable directions for sex education in the future and strategies for setting these directions through the development of teaching skills and design of medical school curricula.

The recent acceptance of sex education in the curricula of medical schools throughout the country has brought about a rapid and uneven growth of programs. As a result, no really authoritative work on sex education in medicine has heretofore been published. This volume addresses the many aspects of this subject admirably. It is not only a scholarly piece of work but also an immensely practical one.

Such topics as sexual health (a new concept whose time has come), medical students' psychosexual backgrounds and life experiences, curricular models of various emphases, residency training in sex education, strategies in planning, finding, and maintaining courses, and continuing education of physicians are all addressed in this book.

In addition, this volume is organized in an orderly fashion which reflects the competency of the editors. It begins with an explanation of the need of medical students for sex education and then discusses medical students' life experiences and personalities. Sex education in U.S. medical schools as it has evolved in the past decade or so follows.

Against this background specific subjects are then addressed: curriculum, the training of residents in human sexuality and continuing education for physicians, standards in research, strategies, and future directions. There is an excellent bibliography and several really valuable appendices.

This book plows new ground. For the first time medical educators who wish either to initiate a course in sex education or to expand a limited curriculum have at their disposal a rich source of materials through which a rational curriculum in sex education may be developed.

The contributors and editors are to be congratulated for this excellent contribution to the field of sex education in medicine. It is this reviewer's opinion that this book will become the standard text for present and future expansion and/or development of programs in sex education in the medical schools. **PR**

DO YOU KNOW THAT...

National V.D. Hot Line

There is one help line that can be called toll-free from anywhere in the continental United States. It is Operation Venus, and is a youth-oriented V.D. information hot line. Now affiliated with the United States Alliance for the Eradication of Venereal Disease, it has hundreds of young people who have been specially trained to handle calls, to discuss and answer questions on V.D., and to refer worried callers to places where they can get free or low-cost examination and treatment. More and more doctors are now registering to accept Venus referrals either free of charge or at a low fee that most young people can afford. The number of the hot line is 800/523-1885 (in Pennsylvania: 800/462-4966).

SSSS 1978 Conference

The Society for the Scientific Study of Sex is organizing its Eastern Regional Conference for April 1978 at Atlantic City, New Jersey, at the Howard Johnson's Regency Motor Hotel. They are asking for suggestions of persons and/or organizations that should be invited to the conference, as well as suggestions for workshop leaders or speakers for the program. Please reply to Eastern Regional Chapter, P.O. Box 84, Leonia, NJ 07605.

SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR IN CANADA

patterns and problems
edited by Benjamin Schlesinger

This collection of papers, written by specialists in a variety of fields, offers a general view of sexual attitudes and current sex research in Canada as well as more specialized studies of sexuality and the life cycle, sexual behaviour among selected groups such as homosexuals and transsexuals, sexuality and the law, and education for sexuality. This volume is an important resource for teachers and students in medicine, nursing, social work, family life studies, sociology, psychology, and psychiatry. \$15.00 cloth, \$6.95 paper

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33 East Tupper Street, Buffalo, N.Y. 14203

New Sexual Myths, Continued from page 1

explode and bells to ring, then I point out that an orgasm simply isn't *that* earthshaking. Lowering her expectations, then, actually makes it easier for her to achieve the orgasm she is seeking.

Myth: Technique is more important than the partners' relationship in sexual satisfaction; and sex is primarily for pleasure anyway, not for love.

In the past, sex was considered an expression of romantic love. These days, however, emphasis on sexual techniques and variety of sexual acts gives many people the impression that these are the key to sexual pleasure. Is love extraneous to sexual pleasure? We get into definitional problems of what love really is, but essentially I think this is a new myth, that techniques are all-important. I don't believe they are. Sexual techniques certainly can be helpful, but in a minor way. Again, it is the relationship that is crucial; if you want to call it love, fine, but it's the quality of that interpersonal relationship that is going to determine the quality of the sex, not the techniques. Closely related to this was the conviction instilled in most people that sex is a very solemn expression of love and commitment, involving the deepest communication between two people. Today, the feeling being popularized in magazines is just the opposite, that sex is fun. So we are now living with the myth that there is no serious aspect to sex. I would certainly agree that we need to get more fun into sex. However, there can be solemn moments, serious moments, quiet moments, and meditative moments in sex. Sex for many also represents a profound bond and source of intimacy. For others, and even for the same people at different times, it is a recreational experience. Basically, sexual relations can encompass a full range—from exuberance and animal-like abandon to somber, thoughtful interchange.

Myth: There is no difference between "vaginal orgasm" and "clitoral orgasm."

Is it a myth that there is really no difference between vaginal and clitoral orgasm? An unfortunate myth that began with Freud is that there is a "mature" vaginal orgasm and an "immature" clitoral orgasm. It helps to clarify the issue by thinking in terms of the site of the stimulation vs. the site of the effect. If you are talking about the site of the effect, then all orgasms are in a real sense vaginal orgasms because, no matter where the stimulus is—the breasts, the lips, the clitoris, or sheer fantasy—it is the vagina and the structures around it that contract at the rate of a little less than once per second during orgasm. The clitoris does not ever contract. It is true that many women describe a different feeling effect for orgasm during coitus than from orgasm resulting from clitoral stimulation only. They say that intercourse provides a sensation of fullness and penetration which simple clitoral stimulation does not. Yet some research does indicate that more women today actually prefer extravaginal stimulation, although there is great variation in this.

Myth: Penis size is irrelevant to sexual satisfaction.

From the myth that a large penis is necessary to satisfy a woman we have come full circle to the belief that penis size is irrelevant to the woman's satisfaction. Where lies the truth?

Physiologic research has made it clear that the erotic-sensitive areas of the female genitalia are the clitoris, the labia, and the vaginal entrance, including the urethral opening, none of which requires deep penetration for adequate stimulation. In the case of the man who has a small penis, many women report that this is less satisfactory to them because they miss the feeling of fullness in their vaginas. On the other hand, a very large penis, unless the man is very careful, can create some pain and discomfort in the female. But within normal limits, the majority of women report that where they do perceive a difference it relates primarily to the circumference rather than the length of the penis, for it is this that creates the feeling of fullness. But there are many more overriding factors to affect the woman's degree of pleasure than the actual size of the penis. There is the psychologic effect: the visual attraction of a large penis in precoital play might be exciting to some women, just as some men react to large breasts with excitement, even though most women are not nearly as turned on to physical characteristics of the male as men are to the female anatomy. There are even many women who are intrigued by smaller penises, just as many men are intrigued by smaller breasts.

Myth: Sex is good for your health.

According to a recent popular article, sex is good for your health. Is this a new myth to replace the old one that sex is debilitating? I would want to turn it around and say that good health is better for sex. It's difficult to feel sexual when people are tired or in poor health. I think one can make a point that a person can relieve tension via sex and thus perhaps allay psychosomatic illness in some instances, or use ejaculation as a sedative to help in going to sleep. In such cases, sex can be helpful. Truer than claims that sex will increase your health is the statement that sex can help make you feel better even when your health is not good!

Myth: There is something wrong with people who have sex only within marriage.

What about the myth (unsupported by data) that sex reserved for marriage is not only "better" but makes for "better" marriages? Well, now we encounter the attitude that those who wait for marriage to have sex, and those who confine their sexual experiences to marriage, are somehow disturbed. Is this a new myth? I think that a man who has never ejaculated in any way until he gets married is inhibited and may very well have other problems. But to insist that he have intercourse before marriage as a prerequisite for mental health is, I think, nonsense. People can enjoy sex through petting, through masturbation, or in other ways. Again, if a couple confine their entire outlet to marital intercourse, and if that's what they both enjoy, fine. That doesn't mean they are inhibited or "sick."

Myth: Simultaneous orgasms are the best for a couple.

Is it still a widely held myth that simultaneous orgasms are a peak experience and something that one should strive for? Yes, though not as widely as it used to be. There has been a great deal written to point up that compulsiveness about this may actually inhibit peak experience, and that sometimes there are advantages in not having simultaneous orgasms. This is because sequential orgasms enable one better to enjoy the orgasm of one's partner vicariously, thus adding another dimension to the sexual experience. How-

ever, let us not create another myth or another goal to strive for by declaring sequential orgasms to be superior to simultaneous ones! The pressures created by all such goals can, and often do, detract from sexual pleasure.

Myth: Young people today have gone wild, sexually.

Another belief held by many adults is that young people today are just wild, sexually. Supposedly they have multiple partners and engage in every conceivable sexual act without inhibitions. Another myth? Definitely! People have always either had blinders on with regard to the sexuality of the young, hoping to wish it away, or else have vastly overestimated their sexual "wantonness." But with the increasing openness about sex, I think these speculations about the sexual habits of young people have run unrealistically rampant. In fact, there are many young people today who are restrained, conservative, not interested in intercourse, and a fairly high percentage who have not had intercourse before they married. Maybe there are fewer such young people today than twenty years ago, but the minority they represent is substantial.

Myth: Older people are as interested in sex as when they were young.

A myth has arisen that old people are as interested in sex as when they were young. There may be a few people who believe this as a counter to the previously pervasive myth that older people are sexless or uninterested in sex, which was tied up with the difficulty younger people have always had in acknowledging that their own parents are sexual beings. Running along with this myth is the mythical image of the child molester as a "dirty old man"—again, not true: there are actually more child molesters in their twenties than in their forties, fifties, or sixties. I haven't seen much evidence showing that younger people think that older people have just as much sex and enjoy it just as much. Professional writings have underscored the fact that we are sexual beings from birth to death. Older people who have an attractive and interesting partner do tend to remain sexually active. They do not engage in intercourse with the same frequency as in the past, and their sexual responses do evolve more slowly; so when an erection and response do not appear as readily as in the past, or when psychic stimulation alone is not sufficient, neither partner should consider this to be impotence—more tactile stimulation is necessary. Even though older people's sexuality is not identical to that of youngsters, their need for intimacy and sexual expression endures, and many are usually still quite capable of performing.

To conclude, I see our attitudes and beliefs about sex not as a pendulum swinging back and forth on a stationary clock, but more like a train that moves forward slowly, stops, backs up a bit, and then moves forward slowly again. Its progress is uneven but inexorable. It may get sidetracked or switched to a wrong track, but then it returns to the main line and goes forward again. Hence, the new myths, to my mind, are not as far from the truth as were the old myths, and so we are closer to the "right track" than we have ever been. However, to continue the metaphor, there is so much still to learn about sex that I am afraid we will never pull into the station and be all the way home. And that's as true of us as individuals as it is of society as a whole.

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