

Sexual essentialism and sex education

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ABSTRACT

Like any form of behaviour, sexuality could have its origins in any or all of three sources: the biology of human organisms; the psychology or intellect of individuals; and the environment, either physical, socio-cultural, or both. Which of these is identified as the primary source of sexual behaviour is linked with the way sexuality is defined and the way possibilities for controlling its expression are conceived. Few people presently believe that sexuality originates in individual psychology or intentions. Rather, most opinion is divided between two other, alternative views. The first holds that human sexual behaviour is produced by human biological nature. The second alternative asserts that sexuality is a product of the socio-cultural environment. Given the present state of our understanding of sexuality, it is not possible to proclaim either of these two opinions about the origins of sexual behaviour to be correct. I believe that there are good reasons for favouring the socio-cultural conception of sex. In this discussion, however, I wish only to emphasize the importance to proposals for sex education of the controversy over these two views, and to explore aspects of the socio-cultural view that are relevant to judging the educational legitimacy of current proposals for school-based sex instruction.

A

Sex education historically has been concerned predominantly with influencing human behaviour. While any use of schooling as an instrument of behavioural control can be challenged on ethical grounds, many sex education programmes and proposals for schools also face a different, conceptual problem. The nature and etiology of human sexual behaviour is the subject of dispute, both within society and in academic writing. Like any form of behaviour, sexuality could have its origins in any or all of three sources: the biology of human organisms; the psychology or intellect of individuals; and the environment, either physical, socio-cultural, or both.¹ Which of these is identified as the primary source of sexual behaviour is linked with the way sexuality is defined and the way possibilities for controlling its expression are conceived. One's view of what constitutes an appropriate form of sex education therefore will depend greatly upon one's beliefs about the etiology of sexual activity. Much recent sex education literature, however, reveals that many sex education proponents exhibit little awareness of the dispute over the nature of sex.²

Few people presently believe that sexuality originates in individual psychology or intentions. Rather, most opinion is divided between two other, alternative views. The first holds that human sexual behaviour is produced by human biological nature. This view, which has been accepted widely by socio biologists, claims that sexual behaviours, and many apparently gender-based

differences in non-sexual behaviour as well, can be traced etiologically to genetic variations in the brain structures and hormonal functions of male and female humans. The second alternative asserts that sexuality is a product of the socio-cultural environment.³ This latter alternative has been adopted by many feminist writers, who claim that an erroneous belief in the physical etiology of sexuality serves as a supporting pillar of sexist attitudes and practices. Because this dispute involves an argument over the role of sexuality in the differentiation of male and female behaviours beyond the range of what ordinarily are thought of as specifically sexual activities, it is significant not only for sex education, but also for the debate over whether our social structure is unnecessarily sexist.

Many people who accept the biological definition of sexuality would agree with feminists that contemporary social practices are sexist to a degree. Where biological and socio-cultural theorists differ, however, is in the extent to which they recognize human practices as culturally variable, and in the range of human behaviours and attitudes which they consider to be susceptible to sexist influence. One major issue concerning the widespread phenomenon of sex-role stereotyping is whether there are any natural limits to the kinds of human behaviours and attitudes which can be influenced in this way. Many elements in the clusters of behaviours and attitudes which are exhibited primarily by males or females can be accepted as the products of the differential socialization of boys and girls, men and women. What of those activities which we identify as specifically sexual, however? Should these be included within the set of socio-culturally influenced behaviours? Could sexual activities themselves be a part of the repertoire of sex-role stereotyped behaviours? Or is sexual behaviour completely free of the influence of socio-cultural gender stereotyping, regardless of how extensive that stereotyping might be in non-sexual domains of behaviour? These questions form the core of the controversy between biological and socio-cultural theorists of sex.

According to the biological view of sex, sexual behaviours occur in two gender-differentiated versions, and are controlled in two different directions for males and for females. It may not be only sexual behaviour which is subject to this kind of biological control, furthermore, for genetically-based differentiation may spill out into non-sexual areas of behaviour as well. The some gender-differentiated behaviour s--which anti-sexists assert to be the result of sex-role stereotyping--actually may be provoked by genetic differentiation of the internal structures and functions of male and female organisms. This is the heart of much socio-biological argument: that the cultural differentiation of male and female behaviour in both sexual and non-sexual areas of life is the result, not of contingent social forces, but of essential biological differences between men and women. In this view, sex-differentiated human culture is not at odds with a biologically undifferentiated form of human nature, but reflects the parallel biological differentiation of males and females.

How, for example, should we explain the apparently greater skills of mal over females in mathematical and in visual-spatial performances such as those involved in mechanical operations? One recent socio-biological account cites studies which suggest that men whose genitals have not developed normally, an whose testes produce smaller amounts of the male hormone testosterone than found in unimpaired men, have lesser visual-spatial abilities than their norm counterparts. They conclude that:

Visual-spatial abilities ... seem to depend upon a minimal level of testosterone. In males they seem to rely on the presence of the Y chromosome and the higher amount of testosterone produced by the male's testes. By this means the brain of an individual is shaped in a more or less male direction, to produce its speed of development and its characteristic skills ... The result may be ... a preponderance of males in professions like higher mathematics, physics and engineering, and perhaps, too, painting, architecture and town planning: all derived from man's history as a hunter-gatherer and the male need for visual-spatial skills.⁴

As a result of our evolutionary history, according to this account, our culture and biology have evolved together to produce many of the characteristic patterns of differentiated male and female behaviour which we find in society today. The differentiation of our biology into male and female

versions is the root not only of differences in male and female sexual behaviour but of a wide range of non-sexual behaviours as well.

Similarly Sara Stein, in a recent attack on attempts to promote non-sexist child rearing appeals to biological factors to explain the differences in the relationships which develop between infants of each sex and their parents. She argues that these differences are not just the social impositions of male and female stereotyped behaviours upon young children, but reflect gender differences which infants themselves bring to their relations with their parents. Baby boys are more active and less easily mollified when upset than are baby girls. Stein refers to the work of Howard Moss, who studied the interactions between male and female infants and their first-time mothers:

At three weeks, baby sons fussed more, cried more, and were more difficult to calm, while baby daughters were more often alert, more responsive to efforts to calm them, and slept an average of one hour longer every twenty-four hours. Mothers held their sons more at this age, moved and stimulated them more, and altogether spent more time attending to them ... By three months of age, however, boys were still more frequently dissatisfied and slept less than girls. But the more her three-month old son cried, the less his mother now attended to him. Attendance on daughters remained unchanged, so the net effect was that mothers held their daughters more than their sons by a few months of age ... In such a way small differences could modify the interaction between mother and child over time, shaping a pattern between them that does depend, however indirectly, on the baby's sex.⁵

These differences in parent-child-interactions depend ultimately on the physical gender of the child, not in the sense that mothers respond differently to children because they are male or female, but that they respond differently to children who exhibit gender-related differences in their levels of irritability. Furthermore, these differences themselves become components in the production of gender-variable patterns of behaviour and personal interaction on the part of older male and female children. Culture and biology work hand-in-hand to produce differentiated patterns of male and female activities and attitudes which largely are compatible with initial genetic variations between male and female organisms. Thus a great deal of non-sexual behaviour is assimilated to the same kind of biological control as supposedly is exercised over specifically sexual activity.

While the biological view of sex is not always based upon sophisticated physiological and genetic arguments such as those offered by sociobiologists, some form of it probably is accepted by a majority of people. This acceptance is not universal, however, and many people do not believe that sex is exclusively or even predominantly a matter of biology. These people consider at least some of the behaviours which we consider sexual, and which for the most part clearly are differentiated between females and males, to depend for their identification as sex not on biological but on socio-cultural criteria. On this view gender-differentiated sexual behaviours are not prompted by biological pressures or genetic factors, but are examples of sex-role stereotyped behaviours resulting from social conditioning. This approach to defining sex comes to a conclusion opposite to the biological view: rather than assimilating non-sexual behaviours to the same kinds of biological controls supposedly exercised over sexual activity, it asserts the predominance of socio-cultural influences and argues that sexual behaviours themselves are subject to these controls in the same way as other aspects of gender-stereotyped roles.

Given the present state of our understanding of sexuality, it is not possible to proclaim either of these two opinions about the origins of sexual behaviour to be correct. I believe that there are good reasons for favouring the socio-cultural conception of sex. In this discussion, however, I wish only to emphasize the importance to proposals for sex education of the controversy over these two views, and to explore aspects of the socio-cultural view that are relevant to judging the educational legitimacy of current proposals for school-based sex instruction.

B.

If sexual behaviour is sex-role stereotyped behaviour, then is it possible for socio-cultural forces to decree anything to be a sexual performance or are there limits to the range of potentially sexual actions that people can be socialized into performing? The most obvious form of sexual behaviour is heterosexual copulation. Are there behaviours other than copulation which, when carried on in a heterosexual context, also constitute sexual behaviour? Are there behaviours which can constitute sexual behaviour when engaged in a non-heterosexual context? How do we define the limits of these behaviours? Is copulation so widespread because people have been socialized into thinking that it is the only way in which they can engage in 'real' sex?

The term "sex" in our culture functions in several different ways. At first glance, it seems to be a descriptive term, referring to one of two concrete things: the gender of persons, or specific types of behaviour, especially copulation. "Sex" also has an appraisive function, however, for it is used to raise certain actions to a higher degree of importance, and to indicate that engaging in those actions is especially important and usually rewarding. Thus to say that one has "had sex" is to indicate not just what one has done, but usually to indicate also that something valuable and enjoyable has been performed. In common parlance to say that one has "had sex" with a particular person often is to indicate a triumph--to inform listeners that one has "scored".

According to the biological view, everyone except those who are sexually naive knows what kinds of behaviours are referred to by "sex", and the list of these behaviours is fixed: people learn what they are but they cannot change them, and if anyone wants to engage in sex they must perform some or all of the behaviours on the list. "Sex", in this view, is primarily a descriptive term its appraisive meaning derives from the physical gratification which results biologically from engaging in activities on the list of sexual performances. "Sex" refers descriptively to objectively identifiable activities, which also are objectively enjoyable to most people. To use the word "sex" is to refer to a precise group of activities which are inherently enjoyable, thus when the word is used most people immediately will know both what kinds of activities were involved and that those activities were physically gratifying. This assumption is so strong that it requires a special linguistic effort to convey the message that someone engaged in sex but did not enjoy it. We can explain this in terms of J. L. Austin's notion of the "standard case" of a verb. Discussing his dictum "no modification without aberration", Austin wrote that:

When it is stated that X did A, there is a temptation to suppose that given some, indeed perhaps any, expression modifying the verb we shall be entitled to insert either it or its opposite or negation in our statement: that is, we shall be entitled to ask, typically, 'Did X do A Mly or not Mly? ... and to answer one or the other. ... In the great majority of cases of the use of the great majority of verbs ... such suppositions are quite unjustified. The natural economy of languages dictates that for the standard case covered by any normal verb ... no modifying expression is required or even permissible. Only if we do the action named in some special way or circumstances, different from those in which such an act is naturally done ... is a modifying expression called for, or even in order.⁶

Austin's comments on standard performance are relevant to contemporary usage of "sex". If we say that "X engaged in sex", without modifying the expression, the way "sex" is understood in both a descriptive and an appraisive way will convey the message that X engaged in an activity of a particular sort which he or she enjoyed. Only if we say "X engaged in sex hut did not enjoy it", can this appraisively, positive, standard message be cancelled.

The socio-cultural view of sex acknowledges that there are physical sensations, not necessarily restricted to those centred in the genitals, which are likely to be enjoyable to most persons, but it denies that there is an inherently necessary or inescapably satisfying set of activities which are designated by our biological nature for producing these sensations. The appraisive function of "sex" is primary in this view. This function conventionally has been associated both with certain restricted sets of sensations, and with a restricted set of performances which are supposed to constitute the standard, biologically defined means of achieving those sensations. Thus as a result of conventional

socializing, individuals come to accord the positive evaluation of “sex” only to certain behaviours which their culture has identified as the proper and natural means of achieving commonly desired, enjoyable sensations. This socialization is so complete that the distinction between the descriptive and appraisive functions of “sex” largely has disappeared from view, and people commonly use the primarily appraisive word “sex” in what they take to be a purely descriptive fashion.

Many feminist writers, who criticise contemporary sexual practices as supports of patriarchal social structures and attitudes, address this unnoticed gap between the appraisive and descriptive functions of “sex”. As an appraisive term, “sex” does not naturally refer to any specific activities. We have come to think of sex as constituted by a limited set of performances, however, and anyone who does not engage in or does not enjoy those performances is excluded, more or less, from the enterprise of sexuality. Anyone who does not engage in or does not enjoy the performances which are seen as constituting biologically essential sex, loses the enjoyment which sex is supposed to introduce into life, and also is denied the social value which supposedly accrues to the ordinary, sexually active person. To be declared “sexually active” is to be appraised as well as described. Adults who are denied this appraisal generally fall into one of several, largely negative categories: those who are celibate, those who are naive, and those who are perverted. Members of the first category might be accorded an alternative positive appraisal if they are persons who would be sexually active in the ordinary way if it were not for some ‘higher’ calling which they follow, or some sacrifice which they have made. If sexual activity was not thought of in a value-positive way, then it would not be necessary to have something more valuable than “sex” to pursue as a justification for celibacy. The individual who remains celibate without a reason of this sort is likely to be thought a fool, to be designated as sexually naive, or to be considered sexually abnormal. These categories convey a negative value upon those who are placed within them, and such persons are not considered to be the equals of ordinary, sexually active individuals.

Heterosexual copulation is supposed to be the central sexual activity and the primary means of obtaining the enjoyable bodily sensations which are thought to constitute “sex”. Anyone who does not engage in this activity is likely to be thought not to be engaged in sex at all or, alternatively, to be engaged in some perverted abnormal or quasi-sexual activity. Such a person’s life is likely to be appraised negatively as a result. The desire to be seen to be engaged in the positively evaluated activity of sex, and the parallel desire to obtain the enjoyable and culturally significant physical sensations which sex provides, both are focused through socialization on heterosexual copulation. The result is that most persons learn to think of sex, both descriptively and appraisively, in terms of this activity. According to the socio-cultural conceptualization of sex, this focusing is reinforced by parallel beliefs that sex is a biologically defined phenomenon, and that most, if not all, individuals have a determining genetic structure which leads them towards copulation and prompts them to enjoy it. Evolutionary socio-biology holds that the human beings living today are the descendants of ancient human organisms who, because of their predispositions toward enjoying copulation, produced more, and reproductively more successful, offspring. Because of the genetic structure which we have inherited from our ancestors, therefore, we have a biologically based drive toward copulatory behaviour. This belief, which the socio-cultural view holds to be erroneous, itself is seen by that latter view to constitute part of the socially determined conception of sex which prevails in our society and which helps to focus individual attention on copulation. The result, in the eyes of socio-cultural theorists of sex, is a social institution which some feminist writers have referred to as “compulsory heterosexuality”.⁷

As a social institution, heterosexuality, and its central activity of copulation, can be seen as mainstays of patriarchy. “Heterosexual intercourse” according to one writer:

suggests (for sexist males) not loving reciprocity between two partners, but aggressive male penetration into a woman’s vagina and consequently provides a much used metaphor for domination in general.⁸

Numerous writers have noted the lack of symmetry between males and females in the activity of copulation. Heterosexual copulation requires an erection on the part of the male, and normally such copulation continues until the male ejaculates. Thus at least male genital arousal, and probably male orgasm, are essential aspects of copulation, but there is no parallel arousal or orgasm necessary on the part of the female. Without male arousal, intercourse cannot take place, but the same is not true of female arousal. As Janice Moulton has noted:

When sexual intercourse occurs, the male must be sexually aroused and regularly is orgasmic. If this activity included the same responses for the female, everything would be fine. But, as we know, it does not. The whole problem arises from trying to produce a female orgasm as a useful by-product of a process aimed at producing the male orgasm.⁹

While males and females may be said to be equally involved in the reproduction aspects of copulation, Moulton comments that "as an activity for producing pleasure, it is not an equal-opportunity experience."¹⁰

In order for the institution of heterosexual copulation to have achieved the nearly universal acceptance which it has, a range of supporting attitudes and beliefs on the part of both males and females has had to be promulgated in its support. A great deal of the literature of the women's movement has attempted to examine these supporting attitudes, and the institution of heterosexuality itself. According to Beatrix Campbell:

Women's Liberation was initially concerned to make heterosexuality problematic ... Feminism was concerned to scrutinize heterosexuality as a practice in which femininity itself was constructed.¹¹

The concept of femininity which was constructed through the practice of heterosexuality, and the activity of copulation in which male domination so often was taken for granted, were aspects of a universe of attitudes and behaviours in which female passivity in the face of male activity and "penetration" prevailed. The institution of heterosexuality, and the more pervasive patterning of male and female behaviours which that institution supported, was promoted by the belief that heterosexual copulation, the central behaviour in the whole structure, was the object of an essential biological urge in most persons. Feminist attacks on the male dominated structures of patriarchal society, and against the sex-role stereotyping of individuals to fit into these structures, thus were primed to question the biological essentiality of the copulative drive. As described by one writer:

the developing critique of the institutionalization of heterosexuality challenges the assumption of a natural sexual instinct and analyses the social configurations through which and as a result of which the apparatus of sexuality is constructed ... heterosexuality is itself a compulsory set of relations produced not at the level of the body, but at the level of discourse and social practice, a compulsory sexuality which enables male dominance and refuses autonomy or solidarity among women.¹²

In the same vein, Michelle Barrett has argued that "Sexual relations are political because they are socially constructed and therefore could be different".¹³

Feminism has concentrated its attention on the oppressive impact on women of the social institutionalization of heterosexuality. But if sex really is a socially constructed and oppressive phenomenon, then anyone whose interests or preferences in sex do not focus on orgasm through heterosexual copulation may suffer under its control. The feminist critique would substitute a much wider range of sexual practices for the singular domination of the enterprise of sexuality which heterosexual copulation has maintained. For example, it has been suggested that:

Perhaps penetration isn't the magic moment after all. Perhaps the vagina's welcome of the penis is only one of many sexual acts--which cannot be ranked in order of importance, nor mapped out in stages, like an assault course up a mountain side. If this is so, traditional notions about sexual desire and fulfilment cease to make any sense. Women's pleasure need not be seen as dependent on men's [nor, presumably, need men's pleasure be seen as dependent on women's]. And if

penetration does not “complete” the sex act, then physical relations which omit it cannot be dismissed as incomplete or immature.¹⁴

C.

We have noted that the biological view of sex tends to think of “sex” primarily as a descriptive term. Even if this were true, however, it would leave open the question of how we know to which actions or situations to apply the term. Unless we adopt a Platonic account of “sex” as referring inherently and objectively to specific behaviours, we must acknowledge that the determination of the range of actions or situations to which “sex” can refer a matter of convention. Does this mean that social and linguistic convention have a totally free hand and could identify anything as sex? Here it will be useful to consider an example which parallels that of “sex”. In a recent paper Quentin Skinner refers to a usage of “religious” which arose in the latter part of the sixteenth century in England. “Religious” was—and is—often used as a commendatory term, and merchants of Elizabethan England sought to apply that word to punctual, strict and conscientious forms of commercial behaviour, hoping thereby to share in the positive appraisal which was accorded to religiously pious activities and their agents.¹⁵ As Skinner describes the case:

one of the most important uses of evaluative language is that of legitimating as well as describing the activities and attitudes of dominant social groups. ... the entrepreneurs of Elizabethan England ... were anxious to persuade their contemporaries that, although their commercial enterprises might appear to be morally doubtful, they were in fact deserving of respect. One device they adopted was to argue ... that their characteristically punctual and conscientious behaviour could properly be seen as religious in character, and hence as motivated by pious and not merely self-seeking principles. Their underlying purpose was of course to legitimate their apparently untoward behaviour by insisting on the propriety of describing it in these highly commendatory terms.¹⁶

The Elizabethan merchants sought to redefine “religious” to include the commercial activities. They were unable to stretch the established meaning of “religious” to cover just any kind of actions, however. Rather, they could attempt to include under “religious” only actions for which a plausible case could be made in terms of a sharing of characteristics with other actions already commonly accepted as religious ones. Likewise, in the course of their attempts to be accepted as pious and morally worthy individuals, the merchants had to work not only to expand the accepted meaning of “religious”; they also had the shape their own behaviour to meet the existing criteria of religious activities as closely as possible. According to Skinner:

The merchant cannot hope to describe any action he may choose to perform as being ‘religious’ in character, but only those which can be claimed with some show of plausibility to meet such agreed criteria as there may be for the application of the term. It follows that if he is anxious to have his conduct appraised as that of a genuinely religious man, he will find himself restricted to the performance of only a certain range of actions. Thus the problem facing the merchant who wishes to be seen as pious rather than self-interested cannot simply be the instrumental one of tailoring his account of his principles in order to fit his projects; it must in part be the problem of tailoring his projects in order to make them answer to the pre-existing language of moral principles ... to recover the nature of the normative vocabulary available to an agent for the description and appraisal of his conduct is at the same time to indicate one of the constraints on his conduct itself.¹⁷

The usages of “religion” and “sex” are parallel as far as adherents of the socio-cultural conception of sex are concerned. Neither terms refer to invariant natural phenomena; the meaning of both are socially constructed; both convey an important appraisive meaning; and both consequently are subject to change in the range of things to which they can be taken to refer. And just as the Elizabethan merchants were not able to declare any activity in which they might engage a religious one, because conventional usage would not follow them in such a move and they would not reap the appraisive benefits which they sought, so also people today are unable to use the term “sex” to refer to just any activity at all.

But why would anyone want to use 'sex' to refer to something other than what the word most commonly is taken to mean? Because to a greater or lesser degree the appraisive benefits of "sex" do not accrue to those who do not engage in or who are known not to enjoy heterosexual copulation. And because people who wish to resist what they take to be the oppressive aspects of sexist social structures and practices, and who see these structures and practices reinforced by copulatory activities, are excluded thereby from engaging in what commonly is considered to count as sex. If "sex" means heterosexual copulation, and if copulation supports sexist oppression, then anyone who does not want to contribute to oppression must avoid sex. Unless, that is, they can succeed in stretching "sex" to cover other activities which do not reinforce oppression. They cannot stretch 'sex' to cover every possible activity, however, but must restrict their efforts to applying the word to actions which plausibly can be argued to share characteristics with accepted sexual activities. Likewise, if these persons wish to obtain the appraisive benefits of having the term "sex" applied to some of their activities, and to be able thereby to think positively of themselves as sexually active, they must direct their own activities partially in terms of the existing language of sex.

Just as Skinner noted with respect to "religious", the prevailing language of sex is one of the determinants of contemporary human "sexual" behaviour. This probably is one of the reasons why contemporary "sexual" behaviour focuses so predominantly upon genital sensations and responses. Copulation, as our culture's paradigmatic example of sexual behaviour, is constituted by heterosexual genital-to-genital contact, with an attendant orgasm experienced by at least one of the participants. Activities other than copulation which also involve direct stimulation of the genitals, and which are capable of producing orgasms for the participants, are the kinds of activities which most plausibly could be argued to constitute "sex" in a more expanded but currently acceptable meaning of this term. Just as the merchant in 16th century England engaged in activities of commercial "piety" in an attempt to gain for his behaviour some of the positive appraisal accorded to "religion", so also people can engage in masturbation, oral sex, same-gender contact involving direct genital stimulation and related activities as a means of obtaining for themselves and their actions some of the positive appraisal conveyed by "sex". They engage in these activities, rather than in infinite possible alternatives, because these are the ones which share some of the most obvious characteristics of activities conventionally accepted as "sex".

Many people still are unwilling to accept non-copulatory activities as full-scale "sex", however. This is made clear by Sheila Kitzinger, who wrote that:

One thing all words about sex have in common, the four-letter words, medical words and euphemisms, is that they include the idea of penetration of a vagina by a penis. You haven't really "made love" unless this has happened. Sex without penetration is considered to be "foreplay" or "petting". No matter how exciting sex is, or how many orgasms a woman has, the process is not complete without penetration. This use of language reflects and reinforces the idea that the goal of every mature sexual encounter should be penetration and orgasm. For example, some people find it difficult to imagine what lesbians can possibly do in bed without some kind of penis substitute.¹⁸

So "real sex" continues to be thought of as copulation, and those who engage in alternative activities and who try to stretch the word "sex" to cover what they do risk having their attempts fail and their activities negatively appraised either as not sex at all, or as some kind of perverted version of sex. It seems unlikely that most English-speaking persons would be prepared to expand the realm of the sexual as far as the following source suggests:

Notions of a feminist sexuality start from the clitoris, rather than the vagina-in-waiting, as the source and center of women's sexual pleasure. But what feminists also say is that the erotic is by no means exclusively located in the sphere of 'the genital'. It is more to do with taking pleasure and pride in the whole body.¹⁹

D.

If the meanings associated with the words we use influence both our thinking about the world and our behaviour within it, then language will be one of the media through which power is exercised over the lives of individuals. Language, while reflecting thought and action, simultaneously will control thought and action, and any group that can exercise control over language likewise can exert influence over persons. According to Dale Spender:

Given that language is such an influential force in shaping our world, it is obvious that those who have the power to make the symbols and their meanings are in a privileged and highly advantageous position. ... The group which has the power to ordain the structure of language, thought and reality has the potential to create a world in which they are the central figures, while those who are not of their group are peripheral and therefore may be exploited.²⁰

Spender argues that male supremacy has been furthered in our society by the control which males have exercised over language. Since the English language is one in which “female” things are relegated to an inferior or negative position, that language itself is a medium for promoting and maintaining sexist practices. Both males and females learn, through their acquisition of language, the inferior value and subordinate position of actions, attitudes and persons identified as “female”. Because of this sexist quality of the language, women who wish to find ways of positively appraising their own lives, activities and attitudes are faced with a difficult problem. They either must apply male notions, terms, and concepts to themselves, since most positive concepts of approval are male oriented, or they must do without the use of positively appraising language. As Spender notes:

For women who do not wish to be compared to men there is ‘nowhere to go’ in the language. This is one way of expressing the concept of negative semantic space for women.²¹

The idea of negative semantic space is significant, both for the position of women and for many other groups in parallel positions in society. The Elizabethan merchant faced the same problem of negative semantic space, for “commercial” was not an appraisively positive term. That merchant had nowhere to go in the language where he could be both “commercial” and “positive”, and this was why he tried to stretch “religious” to cover what he did. Much the same thing occurs with the use of “sex”. There is nowhere to go in our language where the person who does not want to engage in heterosexual copulation or who does not enjoy it both can engage in “sex” but not engage in copulation. The person who opts out of copulation is required, in the main, to opt out of “sex” and to forego the positive appraisal which is acquired by being identified as a normal, sexually active individual. Such a person might be identified by the surrounding culture as celibate, sick, or perverted, but he or she is not likely to be accepted as living a life in which sex plays a significant and legitimate part. As a result, it becomes difficult for such a person to view him or herself in this positive light.

Thus the person who seeks, as Rosalind Brunt suggested, to take “pleasure and pride in the whole body” and to consider that as their form of ‘sexual’ activity, but who does not also copulate, is likely to be considered either celibate or sexually naive. The habitual masturbator, likewise, will probably be considered immature, and the heterosexual practitioner of anal sex, together with the homosexual, is likely to be thought a pervert or even a criminal. Anyone who especially enjoys ‘foreplay’ might be condemned as physically or psychologically incapable of entering into ‘complete’ sex. The celibate, the naive or immature person, the pervert, the criminal, the person who engages in incomplete sexual acts, are all individuals whose activities and lives are devalued. In this way power is exercised over the lives of individuals, whose behaviour is directed toward heterosexual copulation and its closest analogues by the desire to share in the positive appraisal which being identified as normally sexually active confers.

Questions of the sort that we have been discussing arise only within the context of a socio-cultural conceptualization of sex. This conception raises the possibility that the learning by children of an understanding of sex based upon presumed biological foundations might contribute not to liberating them from sexual ignorance, but to enthralling them to potentially oppressive social

influences. Indeed, teaching young people, under the aegis of sex education programmes, a biological understanding of sex might constitute one of the media through which the prevailing but culturally-based conception of sexuality is transmitted. Sex education based upon an unquestioned biological model of sex might help to construct a particular understanding of “sex” and a particular pattern of “sexual” behaviour within the minds and bodies of young people. For this reason, it is important that sex education proponents attend to the dispute between advocates of the socio-cultural and the biological definitions of sex, and try to place their own proposals in the context of that dispute.

E.

The intensity of the controversy between advocates of biological and socio-cultural conceptions of sex is reflected in the way in which some parties on both sides of the dispute see their position as that of a minority bravely challenging a dominant point of view. Many feminist writers who are spokespersons for the socio-cultural view necessarily see themselves in a subordinate position protesting against the prevalent attitudes and practices of patriarchy. Similarly, many advocates of the biological perspective see feminist and other environmentalist definitions of sex as constituting the currently ruling orthodoxy which must be overthrown before true progress can be made in understanding sexuality. Thus one biological account, when discussing what it claims to be the etiological relation between genetically determined structures of male and female brains and gender-differentiated behaviour (including sexual behaviour), states that:

brain science is marching into the modern era, side by side with a new science of evolution. All the little backwaters of both these disciplines have begun to come together into a broad stream that is flooding the orthodoxy's defences and damaging beyond repair three of the 'scientific' ideas that currently dominate the way we think about ourselves as men and women: the idea of psychological states as products of mind, the idea of the separation of mind and body and the idea that gender is not inborn but is learned and can be changed.²²

Similarly, a recent philosophical discussion which argues on grounds of natural selection that homosexuality is a physically abnormal misuse of bodily parts, and thus is not just a form of behaviour which is at the disposal of sociocultural forces to promote or condemn at will, asserts that:

advocates of an unpopular position--as mine is, at least in intellectual circles--assume the burden of proof. My view is the one that needs defending, my presuppositions the ones riot widely shared.²³

Each side in this debate asserts that damage is being done to human life by the presumed predominance of the other. Feminists believe that the continued success of patriarchy, supported as they think it is by the biological view of sex, results in the mangling of countless lives. Socio-biologists, on the other hand, warn their readers of the considerable dangers lurking in accepting the supposedly mistaken perspectives of feminism in particular and of environmentalist definitions of sexuality in general. Thus Sara Stein, after noting that feminists believe that the only necessary difference between the sexes is anatomical and that they hold that any behavioural differences associated with different genders “are learned at the expense of each individual's full potential for self-fulfillment and contribution to society”,²⁴ warns that our society has been led by the triumphant forces of feminist doctrine to toy “with the traditional concepts of masculinity and femininity in an unnerving fashion”, and to engage in “unprecedented experimentation with the forms of family life and child care”.²⁵ Her book admonishes parents who accept feminist arguments that they might end up countermanding patterns of behaviour that have been genetically wired into their children, as biological boys and girls, and that gender differentiated patterns in child-rearing and in male and female behaviours and attitudes might be altered only at grave peril both to the children involved and to society as a whole. Seeing in the non-sexist child rearing proposals promoted by feminists a biologically perverse tendency to “feminize” the entire population Stein complains that “Most of us are particularly frightened of what we might do to our sons”.²⁶

Stein's book attempts to relate the controversies over the nature of sexuality, which are taken so seriously by the participants, directly to child-raising. This often is not true of works concerned primarily with sex education, however. Much recent sex education literature presupposes a biological definition of sexuality without reflecting the contemporary controversy over the nature of sex. While some of this literature expresses a concern to counteract the effects of sex-role stereotyping, and thereby shows some influence from feminist writing, it overlooks the possibility that sexual behaviour itself might constitute a form of stereotyped activity. Some sex education authors presume the presence of essential, biologically determined male and female identities underneath stereotyped masculine and feminine roles, thereby failing to take any account of the argument that sex-role stereotyping might extend into the domain of sexual behaviour itself. By relying implicitly on a biological model of sexuality, much sex education literature does not acknowledge the claim that our presentation of specifically sexual behaviour to young people as a biologically determined activity is a vehicle for the cultural shaping of sexuality and for the reproduction of social structures and attitudes which oppress many individuals.

F.

One recent book which exhibits these characteristics is Ronald and Juliette Goldman's *Children's Sexual Thinking*,²⁷ which has received considerable attention within New Zealand.²⁸) The Goldmans interviewed children between 5 and 15 years of age in Australia, North America, England and Sweden, in order to:

measure the extent of children's sexual knowledge, to discover if there were detectable sequences and stages in their sexual thinking and what processes of thought they used to describe the biological functions of their bodies.²⁹

The Goldmans have been identified as taking a 'liberal' stance in the sex education debate within New Zealand. They favour much greater provision of sex education to children at a much earlier age than presently is the case in this country. They reacted positively to the compulsory sex education programmes provided in Swedish schools, and they cite these programmes as the likely cause of the more accurate understanding of sexuality exhibited by Swedish children at an earlier age than children in other countries covered by their study.³⁰ While the Goldmans have been careful not to endorse the Swedish model as appropriate for all countries, they advocate the use of sex education programmes as means for lessening sex role differentiation between males and females. They urge a greater involvement by men in the activities of parenting, and assert that "society needs to reject the sex-typed individual and promote androgynous persons",³¹ Success in this promotion, they believe, is most likely to be successful:

with the younger generation, with continued sex education, continued government programmes, and a concerted effort on the part of adults to promote communities of androgynous persons.³²

The Goldmans also believe that sex education should try to promote heterosexual friendships among young children as a contribution to "lessening of social pressures to choose the same-sex friends", because exclusion of friendships with other-sex children can result in extending the "sex-war".³³ And they urge schools and parents to "inculcate healthier attitudes to the naked body as natural and normal".³⁴

These attitudes, particularly the desire to curtail sex role differentiation through education, indicate that the authors believe that many contemporary 'male' and 'female' behaviours are socially stereotyped and should be changed. But they also believe that these stereotyped behaviours have been inculcated into individuals who possess, independently of the stereotyping, objective male or female identities. These individuals engage naturally in certain kinds of "sexual" behaviours as a result of biological forces. Thus the sexual behaviours which are appropriate for a person given his or her gender identity have been specified objectively by biology, but on top of these specifications socio-cultural influences have built a variable superstructure of stereotyped

expectations in non-sexual behaviours. Socio-culturally based roles are taken to be legitimate objects of policy manipulation, but the physical behaviours of “sex”, as natural phenomena, cannot be changed in the same way.

The Goldmans’ commitment to this distinction is illustrated in their discussion of one of the major conceptual problems with which they had to contend at the outset of their research: the determination of what an investigation of children’s sexual thinking ought to be about. How were they to define “sexual thinking” so that children’s examples of it could be recognized and studied? “Sexual thinking”, they wrote:

is defined for the purposes of this research as thinking about that broad area of sex and sexuality which impinges upon the child’s world from birth: the sex identity of self, mother and father, siblings and friends; the sexual bond of marriage, the identity and roles of males and females generally, the child’s own sexual organs and the biological functions of their bodies; the origin and sudden appearance of babies and many other related matters. Sexual thinking is not confined narrowly to thinking about sexual intercourse but embraces a much broader universe of experience. In this sense a child is a sexual thinker from birth. Much of this sexual thinking is biologically based but much is socially induced in terms of gender roles. Hence, different cultures induct children into varying sex-typing behaviours and cognitive frameworks, so that comparative studies are important in investigating children’s sexual thinking.³⁵

Elsewhere in the book they state that “while sexuality is biologically determined, sexual behaviour is strongly influenced by cultural and social expectations”.³⁶ This distinction between “sexuality” and “sexual behaviour” parallels that made above between specifically sexual behaviour on the one hand, and non-sexual but gender stereotyped behaviours that are culturally assigned to males or females on the other. The first of each of these pairs, according to the Goldmans, is biologically determined, while the second can be subject to socio-cultural influences. There is little dissent from this view, the Goldmans tell us, in a claim that overlooks both the considerable body of feminist writing which challenges the biological view of sex and the work of other researchers who also have attacked the presumption that sex is essentially biological.³⁷

The Goldmans thus believe that there is a biological core to sexuality, and that while “sex” can refer to stereotyped behaviours and attitudes, it also has as its core reference objective and natural phenomena which are beyond the influence of socio-cultural forces. At the very outset of the book they tell us that “nothing in human life is more basic than sex. It was classified by earlier psychologists as one of the major fundamental human drives”.³⁸ Nowhere do they suggest that they do not share this view, for the sexuality that children in their research think about often is composed of a biologically defined, limited set of activities—primarily heterosexual copulation—which human beings are driven to engage in not by culture but by innate forces within their genetic constitution. Sex includes an objective domain which each individual must encounter and comprehend. They assert that:

children ... observe sex and sexuality in the world around them and seek to understand it, to integrate it into their scheme of things, and if satisfactory explanations or theories are not forthcoming they will invent intellectually satisfying ones for themselves.³⁹

For sex to be “observed” in this fashion, it must be part of the outside world; constant for most persons, and capable of being thought about and comprehended by children.

The Goldmans tell us that ideally it would have been valuable to have included questions on masturbation in their interviews with children, but that they refrained from doing so because “to have included such items would have gone beyond the limits set by social taboos in home, school and community”.⁴⁰ Their reasons for having identified masturbation as a practice relevant to their research is indicative of their overall attitude toward the nature of sex. “Data gathered on the topic of masturbation”, they wrote, “indicate it to be an almost universal practice of both sexes for the relief of sexual tension”.⁴¹ “Sexual tension” presumably is something which arises naturally within

the individual, which is obviously “sexual”, and which makes any practice carried out for its alleviation into a sexual practice.

Masturbation apparently is a sexual activity because it is a response to a natural, inherently sexual tension. Sexual tension ‘drives’ people to masturbate, and it is the inherently sexual nature of this biological tension which makes masturbation a sexual act. What the Goldmans do not consider, however, is what makes it possible to identify this tension as “sexual” in the first place. They seem to presume that both the tension which drives--if it does--an individual to masturbate, and masturbatory activities themselves, are self-evidently “sexual” and that everyone knows this automatically. They overlook the possibility that sex may be something which is constructed within children’s thinking by the culture in which they live, and that this gradually acquired, socially constructed conception of “sex” might be used by children and by adults in categorizing aspects of their own bodily processes and their surrounding environment as “sexual”. Thus the tension which the child feels in ‘his or her genitals and which supposedly drives him or her to seek relief through masturbation, might be given “sexual” meaning only as a result of culturally dependent learning of what the category of “sex” conventionally is accepted to include. Rather than learning about an objective biological reality which they perceive and identify for themselves as “sex”, children may be learning a socially defined notion of sex which has as one of its elements the idea that sex is an objective reality based on a series of biological drives or tensions.

G.

In their discussion of children’s perceptions of overt “sexual” differences between male and female parents, the Goldmans write that:

All primary and secondary sex characteristics were included in this category, where parts of the body are named, and it is at least inferred that the parent of the other sex does not possess this characteristic, such as ‘A mum’s got bosoms and a man hasn’t’ (Australian boy, 11 years); ‘their voices are different because they’re men and women’ (North American girl, 5 years); ‘the man’s got hair on his chest (Swedish boy, 5 years); 1 A man can grow a beard’ (English boy, 7 years) or ‘Dad has to shave (English girl, 3 years). The sex organ differences may be specified directly, ‘Fathers have joeys and others don’t’ (Australian boy, 9 years); ‘Mothers can have babies’ (Swedish girl, 9 years) or indirectly, ‘A man stands up when he goes to the toilet and a woman sits down’ (North American boy, 9 years).⁴²

These comments by children are noted in the context of a wider discussion of general differences between mothers and fathers, including physical differences between males and females which were of a non-sexual nature. “These [non-sexual] differences included height, colouring, hair, clothes, wearing spectacles, all of which were devoid of sexual significants”⁴³ This raises the question of whether the children themselves could make this distinction between sexual and non-sexual differences unaided by sociocultural criteria. The sexual nature of a physical difference between mother and father, as noticed by the child, is not a matter of direct perception, and it seems that this distinction could be made by the child only after he or she has learned something of the cultural content of “sex ... Children learn that the difference between having a penis or a vulva is not supposed to be the same kind of difference between persons as being tall or short, or wearing spectacles or not. Children do not perceive sexual differences; rather, they perceive differences, and they learn that some of these differences belong to the cultural category of “sex”. In this same context the Goldmans state that “the overt sexual differences would appear to be among the most obvious of all differences between fully developed men and women”.⁴⁴ In cultures where unisex clothing fashions often prevail, it is questionable whether this is true. If it is true, it may be so largely because certain bodily differences are emphasized by culture, whereas others, equally significant visually, are downplayed. The obviousness of “sexual” differences relative to other physical differences among people does not appear simply to be a matter of the uninfluenced perception of nature.

The Goldman's conception of sex presumes that the core of human sexual behaviour is a biological drive toward heterosexual copulation. Repeatedly throughout the book, they tie "sex" to heterosexual contexts and the physical acts of reproduction. The assumption that sex is a physical drive toward copulation provides one of the primary reasons why the Goldmans advocate early sex education for children in New Zealand and Australia. Human sexual activity is tied to the physical maturation of puberty, and since children are maturing physically at earlier ages than in the past they are potentially sexually active at an earlier age and thus in need of early sex education.⁴⁵ "The average age of the first menstruation of girls is from 12 to 13 years, the Goldmans report:

and the equivalent pubertal event in boys is between 13 and 14 years. This means that most girls and boys have the capacity to procreate, to engage in overt sexual activities and experience sexual urges at a much earlier age.⁴⁶

This quotation illustrates how the biological possibility to reproduce and the physical activities of copulation can dominate thinking about sexuality. Pubertal maturation is a physical necessity before children acquire reproductive capacities but are these capacities necessary before children can be said to be able to engage in "overt" sexual activities? If the answer to this is "yes", then the only thing which counts as an overt sexual activity is copulation between reproductively capable partners. This is the attitude toward the centrality of copulation which so much feminist literature rejects.

Similar things can be said about the relationship which the Goldmans presume to hold between pubertal maturation and the experiencing of "sexual urges". Their view presupposes that these urges are the physical result of menstruation and the build-up of seminal fluid. One need not deny that physical tensions can be generated by these bodily processes to question the assumption that these tensions are inherently "sexual" or that they necessarily constitute urges toward copulation. Is it not likely that the urges of which the Goldmans speak are the result at least in part of the surrounding culture, which elevates copulation and its preliminaries to an appraisively positive level and encourages people in numerous ways to engage in these activities? These urges then would not be dependent upon the physiological events of pubertal maturation.

The Goldmans appear to accept the view of sexual activity as a sequential hierarchy of performances leading to copulation--like the "assault course up a mountain side" about which Anna Coote and Beatrix Campbell complained. They refer to an American survey which discussed the degree of sexual activity among young people in terms of a progression from "holding hands" through "kissing", "light petting", "heavy petting", to "going all the way", and on to having coitus with more than one partner.⁴⁷ This progression of performances is presumed to take place naturally within a heterosexual context. The Goldmans' claim that the aversion to members of the opposite gender characteristically exhibited by pre-pubescent girls and boys recedes with the onset of puberty "as greater social maturity and biological needs begin to appear".⁴⁸ "Heterosexual longings" are assumed to be the result of physiological forces within the individual, rather than being conditioned by social and cultural forces.⁴⁹ Thus they assume that biology prompts young people toward both heterosexual contacts and the specific activities associated with copulation, and they do not indicate that there is any reason to query this point of view.

H.

The centrality which copulation and reproduction have in the Goldmans' thinking about sex is exemplified in their discussion of children's views on the origin of babies and on the purposes of sexual intercourse. One of the major foci of the development of children's sexual thinking, they make clear, involves coming to understand that "the origin of babies was the outcome of sex between a man and a woman".⁵⁰ Unless the concept of "sex" is broken down into a number of sub-categories, the implication is that "sex" is the kind of thing that could have a baby as its outcome. This puts any activity that does not have this possibility either outside the domain of "sex" or into

the netherworld of quasi-sex. In classifying the responses which children gave the authors to their questions about the origins of babies, the Goldmans ranked these responses as either “asexual”, “non-sexual”, or “overtly sexual”. Explanations falling into the last of these categories involved some understanding of and reference to “sexual intercourse”.⁵¹ While copulation does provide the correct, “sexual” explanation of the origin of babies, the exclusive use of the term “sexual” in this context reinforces the idea that “sexual” activities are only those performances which could result in babies. Non-capulatory behaviours, unless they are preliminaries to copulation, do not seem to be really sexual behaviours.

This conclusion is enhanced by a consideration of the Goldmans’ discussion of children’s opinions on possible non-reproductive functions for sexual activity in human life. They implicitly note the centrality of copulation in most people’s sexual behaviour. “Coitus is a private activity”, they assert:

especially where children are concerned, parents usually taking carefully thought-out measures to prevent children witnessing it, even by accident. It is not normally a matter to be discussed when the family is together and reference has already been made to the reluctance of children to recognize parents as sexually active adults.⁵²

The authors wished to discover whether children, after they had realised that coitus was a necessary factor in baby-making, thought there were any other reasons why people would want to engage in this activity. So they asked children:

‘Apart from wanting a baby, why do people want to make love (have sex, sexual intercourse, screw, hump)? ... this question ... was put to only those children who were aware of coitus and had made a direct reference to it already in the course of the interview. ... the question was framed in the child’s actual terminology, the interviewer using such words as ‘sexual intercourse’ only if the child had used them.⁵³

Here it should be noted that the centrality of copulation in the Goldmans’ thinking about sex apparently was reflected in that of the children they interviewed as well, though the authors did not attempt to find out directly whether their interview subjects thought of “sex” in wider terms than these. The most interesting thing about the answers which they received to this question is that the children most frequently said that “enjoyment”, or some parallel notion, was a reason for sex/coitus. Thus many children learn early that sex is supposed to be fun, but they also learn that sex is supposed to be copulation and its preliminaries.⁵⁴ People are expected to want sex both for babies and, perhaps more often, for enjoyment, but what they want when they want sex for enjoyment is supposed to be the same activities they would want if they wanted babies.

Given this context in which sex is seen as something which can be pursued for enjoyment as well as for having babies, it seemed reasonable to the Goldmans to move on to question children on their understanding of contraception. Children were asked “What do people do if they don’t want to have a baby?”⁵⁵ This presumes that the people referred to in the question are doing something, or want to do something, which has a risk of producing unwanted babies in the first place. Heterosexual copulation here occupies virtually all of the available space within the concept “sex”. If this were not so, a more specific question would need to have been asked, perhaps “What do copulating people do when they do not want to have a baby?”, or possibly “Why do sexually active people copulate when they do not want to have a baby?” It was not necessary to use such a more specific question, however, because both authors and children understood what was meant: “sex” could be pursued for enjoyment, “sex” entailed copulation, thus copulation could be pursued for sexual enjoyment when babies were not wanted and some method of preventing or curtailing pregnancy therefore was required. This outlook, which presupposes that “sex” refers descriptively to a biologically defined phenomenon that has copulation as its core, is precisely that which is challenged by much of the literature considered in Part I. The Goldmans do include children’s answers which referred in the context of contraception to masturbation or oral sex, but these are counted--as presumably they were offered by the children themselves--as things to do instead of

copulation when copulation was what was wanted but the fear of pregnancy intervened. One 15-year-old North American girl is quoted as replying:

Use contraceptives. These are methods to make sure the sperm won't enter the woman. Jellies kill it. Or you have oral sex called something beginning with c..., you use the tongue or mouth on the genital area. Or masturbating, self-induced when you have an orgasm. Someone could do it to you or you do it to yourself.⁵⁶

This response implies that masturbation and oral sex are actually forms of contraception; things people do to avoid getting pregnant when they want to have sex. Presumably, if they were not afraid of pregnancy, they would engage not in these alternatives but in ordinary copulation. Thus the concern to avoid pregnancy deflects the sexual urge and the pursuit of sexual enjoyment away from its standard performance of copulation and toward either some other form of behaviour or toward copulation carried out under the protection of contraceptive chemicals or devices. In Austin's terms, copulation constitutes the standard case of "sex", and this standard case is modified to an aberrant form under the influence of pregnancy fear. Thus the sexual thinking of both the Goldmans and their young respondents seems already to have been encapsulated within what many feminist writers consider to be the social institution of compulsory--copulative--heterosexuality.

Notes

1. See Marcel Mauss (1979) *Sociology and Psychology*, trans. Ben Brewster, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, esp. p.101.
2. For a discussion see J.A. Diorio (1985) "Contraception, Copulation Domination, and the Theoretical Barrenness of Sex Education Literature", *Educational Theory*, Vol. 35, No. 3, in press.
3. On these two views see Lionel Tiger (1975) "Somatic Factors and Social Behaviour", in *Biosocial Anthropology*, ed. by Robin Fox, London, Malaby Press.
4. Jo Durden-Smith and Diane de Simone (1983) *Sex and the Brain*, London & Sydney, Pan Books, p.72.
5. Sara Stein (1984) *Girls and Boys: The Limits of Non-Sexist Childrearing*, London, Chatto & Windus, pp. 56-67.
6. J.L. Austin (1970) *Philosophical Papers*, ed. by J.O. Urmson & G.J. Warnock, London, Oxford University Press, pp. 189-90.
7. See e.g., Adrienne Riel, (1980) "Compulsory heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence", *Signs*, Vol. 5, pp. 631-60.
8. Brian Easlea (1981) *Science and Sexual Oppression*, London, Weidenfield & Nicolson, p.257.
9. Janice Moulton (1975) "Sex and Reference", in *Philosophy and Sex*, ed. By Robert Baker and Frederick Elliston, Buffalo, N.Y., Prometheus Books, p.39.
10. *ibid.*, p.36.
11. Beatrix Campbell (1980) "A Feminist Sexual Politics: Now You See It, Now You Don't", Vol. 27, pp. 11-12.
12. Biddy Martin (1982) "Feminism, Criticism and Foucault", *New German Critique*, Vol. 27, pp. 11-12.
13. Michelle Barrett (1980) *Women's Oppression Today*, London, New Left Books, 43. See also Rosalind Brunt (1982), "'An Immense Verbosity': Permissive Sexual Advice in the 1970s", in *Feminism, Culture and Politics*, ed. by Rosalind Brunt and Caroline Rowan, London, Lawrence and Wishart, p. 168.
14. Anne Coote and Beatrix Campbell (1982) *Sweet Freedom: The Struggle For Women's Liberation*, London, Pan Books, p. 220. See also Jacqueline Fortunata (1980) "Masturbation and Women's Sexuality", in *The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings*, ed. by Alan Soble, Totowa, N.J., Rowman and Littlefield, p. 389; and E.M. Ettore (1980), *Lesbians, Women and Society*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, p.26.
15. Quentin Skinner (1979) "The idea of a Cultural Lexicon", *Essays in Criticism*, Vol. 29, pp. 214-15,

16. *ibid.*, p. 221.
17. *ibid.*, pp. 221-22.
18. Sheila Kitzinger (1983) *Woman's Experience of Sex*, Sydney & Auckland, Collins, p. 36.
19. Brunt (1982) *op. cit.*, p. 169.
20. Dale Spender (1980) *Man Made Language*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 142-43.
21. *ibid.*, p. 21.
22. Durden-Smith and de Simone (1983) *op. cit.*, p. 29.
23. Michael Levin (1984) "Why Homosexuality is Abnormal", *The Monist*, Vol. 67, p.252.
24. Stein (1984), *op. cit.*, p. 3.
25. *ibid.*, p. 7.
26. *ibid.*, p. 6.
27. Ronald and Juliette Goldman (1982) *Children's Sexual Thinking*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
28. See, e.g. the *New Zealand Listener*, February 2, 1985.
29. Ronald and Juliette Goldman (1982), *op. cit.*, p. 84.
30. *ibid.*, see Chap. 17, esp. p. 389.
31. *ibid.*, p. 168.
32. *ibid.*, p. 168 see also p. 384.
33. *ibid.*, pp. 384-85.
34. *ibid.*, p. 391.
35. *ibid.*, p. 23.
36. *ibid.*, p. 169.
37. See in particular Michel Foucault (1980) *The History of Sexuality*, trans. by Robert Hurley, New York, Vintage Books; also John H. Gagnon and William Simon (1973), *Sexual conduct: The Social Sources of Human Sexuality*, London, Hutchinson, & Jeffrey Weeks (1981), *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800*, London and New York, Longman.
38. Ronald and Juliette Goldman, *op. cit.*, xv.
39. *ibid.*, xvi. Emphasis added.
40. *ibid.*, p. 63.
41. *ibid.*, p. 62.
42. *ibid.*, p. 145.
43. *ibid.*, p. 142.
44. *ibid.*, p. 146.
45. See the *New Zealand Listener*, February 2, 1985, p. 17.
46. Ronald and Juliette Goldman, *op. cit.* p. 26.
47. *ibid.*, p. 30.
48. *ibid.*,p. 188.
49. *ibid.*,p. 183.
50. *ibid.* , p. 385.
51. *ibid.*, 225ff.
52. *ibid.*, p. 259.

53. *ibid.*, p. 260.

54. *ibid.*, see p. 262.

55. *ibid.*, p. 274.

56. *ibid.*, p. 276.