The Problem of the Body

How did our society arrive at the persistent conviction that bodily urges are debased?

By David A. Amdur

Part I. 1

Is today's mass media victimizing us with a barrage of sexuality? Does such licentiousness indicate we are on the road to perdition? Many tongues cluck over spectacles of "wardrobe malfunctions," "commando" attire, outlandish extremes of promiscuity, and sexual transgressions by hypocritical preachers and politicians. Other tongues parch with fear, anticipating a digital Last Judgment when detailed records of each and every online debauchery will be revealed. Are these assaults on decency? Or, are they signs that we are becoming liberated from the prudishness of the past? This is doubtful. How many of us would be able to speak about sex openly and without embarrassment with our parents, or our children, at work (if one didn't risk a charge of harassment), or at a place of worship? How many would not hesitate to engage in sexual activity before these audiences?

Do these very suggestions seem shocking and perverse? If you are experiencing such a vehement reaction, I suggest you consider that the evidence of history and anthropology prove that such compunctions are by no means universal—it would be myopic, if not bigoted, to pretend that current mainstream standards are normal and natural. To support this assertion, I must cite facts that will be familiar to many, but perhaps profoundly disturbing to others. However, my interest is not salacious; I merely wish to establish a broader vantage from which to observe current opinion.

In the cities of ancient Mesopotamia, the birthplace of civilization, public copulation was commonplace. Congress with a prostitute from the temple of Ishtar [earlier *Militta*] was considered a sacrament. The world's oldest epic poem, the Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh,* which was regarded as scripture for the better part of a millennium, relates that the savage hero Enkidu was made civilized through the agency of six days intercourse with a prostitute. Probably even more challenging to current standards would be the practices of the cult of Peor, also called the "celebration of the phallus," which was consecrated with public sex orgies that included bestial relations with a sacred ass. Such explicit spectacles have not been unique to this culture. In India, unabashed depictions of such acts have survived public scrutiny on the façades of sacred temples at Khajuraho and Alampur for over a thousand years.

Depiction of genitalia is virtually absent from today's public media—which is striking when one considers how common they are in actuality. In contrast, many ancient cultures throughout the world erected phallic monuments of grand scale, not just abstract plinths or towers, but more or less anatomically naturalistic facsimile. Examples survive in Egypt, Italy, Greece, Mexico, and Ireland, to name a few.

The annual Japanese fertility festival *Hounen Matsuri,* celebrated every March 15th in Komaki, north of Nagoya, is a living tradition believed to go back some 1500 years. Popularly known among foreign tourists as the *"Penis Festival,"* it features a parade of Shinto priests proffering a detailed, flesh colored, eight foot, six hundred and fifty pound facsimile that is rubbed for good luck by men, women and children.

However, there is no need to be exclusively phallocenteric in our survey—vulvas, also, had widespread exposure. One example is a stone figure of the goddess Baubôs from Ptolemaic Egypt, fashioned in a squatting position with her legs drawn up "frog style" to expose her sex. The Hindu Goddess *Lajja Gauri* is depicted in a similar pose. Comparable figures have also been found at ancient Roman and Greek sites, in Germany and France, and indeed in cultures ranging from the Pre-Columbian Americas, to Micronesia, and Japan. Particularly impressive are the numerous carvings of the grotesque figure called *Sheela Na Gig* that were installed above the windows and doors of churches and other public buildings throughout the British Isles during the Middle Ages. Her pose is similar to the other examples, however, it is more intensified as she tugs with both hands to stretch open her cavernous orifice.

In the ancient Roman towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum phallic imagery and other erotic subjects were ubiquitous. Such artifacts were preserved under the volcanic ash that erupted from Mt. Vesuvius in 79 CE, but, upon their excavation in the 18th century, most were removed by officials who found them pornographic. Ever since, access to these works has been more or less restricted. Today, many are secluded behind the black iron gates of the *Gabinetto Segretto* (or *Secret Cabinet*) at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples. In spite of the sentiment expressed on a wall text outside the chamber stating that these artifacts have caused "no little embarrassment," access to them has been granted since 2000. Of course, suppression of these works has been futile since the advent of the Internet in recent years has made photos of them easily accessible online.

Explicit imagery at Pompeii and Herculaneum was not limited to rustic graffiti in the streets or promotional illustrations at brothels. Upper class homes were furnished with fine erotic frescoes, mosaics, sculpture, and decorative charms. Bronze wind chimes fashioned in the form of multiple winged penises were hung in verandas and courtyards to bring luck and repulse evil. Small amulets depicting penises were suspended round the necks of women and children to protect them from evil curses. (These were known as *fascinum*; this is where we get the words "*fascinate"* and "*fascination*." They were used as late as the eighth century.) In the vestibule to the front door of the House of the Vettii (one of the most luxurious residences in Pompeii) a nearly life-size fresco depicts the fertility god Priapus using a balance scale to weigh his own enormous member. In a sculpture found at Herculaneum, an expression of remarkable

tenderness is articulated on the face of the satyr Pan as he woos a she goat while taking her in coital embrace.

Some nineteenth century theologians promulgated the notion that the conflagration suffered by these towns was divine retribution for an outlandish level of sin on par with Sodom and Gomorrah. However, the evidence is overwhelming that erotic decoration was not merely a local enthusiasm, but, in fact, was common throughout Europe and the Middle East during the Roman Empire. Ironically, it was the untimely interment of Pompeii and Herculaneum that allowed their erotic expressions to survive the cleansing hands of millennia of suppression. In result, what once was commonplace has become a rarified tourist attraction.

Repression, of course, continues today, and has profound impact on public health. In 1994, U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders was driven from her post for suggesting that masturbation may be safer for young people than other, riskier, activities. In contrast, the ancient Greek philosopher Diogenes, who was venerated by no less than Alexander the Great, masturbated publicly to demonstrate that there is no shame in gratifying one's urges by the simplest means. Today, federally funded "Abstinence-Only" sex education programs continue to censor life-saving information. Even more remarkably, some conservatives recently tried to hold back Food and Drug Administration approval of the vaccine against the sexually transmitted human papilloma virus—evidently they felt that the sacrifice to cancer of women that they judged to be immoral was justified as an example to deter others from similar "ruination." In another age such zealots would have scorned Qetesh, Phoenician Goddess of Love and Beauty, and instead worshiped Moloch, imagined by John Milton as "besmeared with blood/ Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears."

I. 2 • • •

[• Violence is more acceptable today than sexuality
• Survey reported 61 % of television programs contain violence. There has never been a comprehensive study of violence in movies, music videos, video games, or the Internet.
• Sex crimes regarded worse than violent crimes
• Stark consequences of public registries
• Pedophilia may be the most reviled crime
• Trend to criminalize *all* sexual activity below the age of consent
• Compare Greek pederasty; mores in Papua New Guinea: In their native cultures such practices have been seen as normal, natural, and sanctioned by religion. Perhaps one day, our descendants will look back at the sexual mores of our time and be horrified by the loneliness, alienation, confusion, frustration and violence that they have engendered.]

I. 3 • • •

While today's most severe taboos concern sexuality, many lesser proscriptions involve other bodily urges. Most of these involve processes of elimination such as belching, spitting, nose-picking, farting, urination, and defecation. Even though these acts may be messy or malodorous, their suppression is remarkable when one considers the universality and frequency of such urges, the discomfort that attends their deferral, and the gratification that rewards release from irritant pressure. Unlike sexuality, these taboos are not against the acts themselves—how could they be?—but against public acknowledgement their existence: we often suffer acute embarrassment when we fail to conceal them. Of course, libraries could be filled with psychoanalytic literature concerning the traumas of gaining acceptable control over these functions and the internalization of our aversion to them. While the forbidden fruit of sexuality is little more than a rumor for prepubescent children, admonitions over such matters fairly ring in their ears. Consequently, children often take particular delight in 'potty' humor. (I fondly remember a little girl named Robin in my first grade schoolroom—the cutest, most perfect, and best behaved. She took a liking to me and, as proof of her affection, passed me meticulously colored crayon drawings of people 'dropping number twos.')

It will probably come as no surprise that such pleasures do not seem to have shared the elevated stature that was extended to erotica in past cultures, but instead they were primarily objects of derisive satire. Nevertheless, it is significant that while scatological humor is today disparaged as puerile, in the past it was promulgated by such eminent authors such as Aristophanes, Petronius, Seneca, Scheherazade, Boccaccio, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Rabelais, Swift, Voltaire, Benjamin Franklin and Mark Twain, to name a few. The devout Martin Luther and his early followers used scatological references liberally. He wrote that he came to his fundamental conviction that faith was enough (*sola fide*) *en cloaca* (on the privy).

As with sexuality, standards for depiction of excretory functions are far more liberal in Europe than in the U.S. In some cases, this may be ascribed to the greater deference they pay to art and tradition. Masterpieces such as Titian's, *The Andrians* (1523-1525) and Peter Paul Rubens' *Bacchus* (1638-40) feature the droll spectacle of besotted toddlers relieving bladders filled from libations that they undoubtedly should not have been permitted. More sober, yet equally uninhibited, is the figure of *Manneken Pis* ('little-man piss'), an attraction in the public fountains of several cities and villages throughout Belgium. The earliest example seems to date from the 14th century, but the most famous, in Brussels, dates from 1619. Something of a national mascot, the boy leans back with swaggering pride as he lofts an inexhaustible stream before him. In a nod to gender equity, a squatting female counterpart, dubbed *Jeanneke Pis,* was dedicated in a nearby fountain in 1985. A barometer (or hydrometer?) of our cultural difference *vis-à-vis* the Old World is the story of a Belgian waffle-maker in a shopping mall in Orlando, Florida, who in 2002 put up a replica of the little fellow as an emblem of the cultural origin of his product. Mall officials were immediately overrun with formal complaints from indignant patrons; they in turn informed the shop owner that he risked eviction if the sculpture was not immediately removed.

The nearest equivalent that can seen in our country is a popular drawing by Bill Watterson of the cartoon character *Calvin*, shown turned away from the viewer with his trousers dropped around his knees, a fluid arc jetting from the unseen spout he clutches before him, his head turned over his shoulder to flash a wicked grin of knowing defiance. Perhaps this image is more acceptable in our country than its Belgian counterpart because it is less explicit and more stylized. But perhaps it says something about our national character that while little *Manneken Pis* projects a feeling of naïve innocence, Calvin's self-conscious vulgarity has made him a proud emblem for pissed-off rednecks.

Another folk hero defined by bodily function is found in the Catalonian region of Spain. It is a figurine that is traditionally included in Christmas Nativity crèches, just outside of the manger. He can be spotted by a floppy, bright red cap of a kind long used by peasants from this region. He squats with his pants down, in the act of dropping a brown turd onto the earth. As Robert Hughes has written: "… nature calls even as the Messiah arrives. Nothing can distract him from the archetypal task of giving back to the soil the nourishment it supplied to him." Known as the *Caganer* ("Shitter"), sculptures of him go back as far as the 16th century, but like *Manneken Pis,* nothing definitive can be said about his origins. In what may be seen as a remarkable reversal of the controversy over *Manneken Pis* in Florida, the city council of Barcelona stirred public uproar in 2005 by commissioning a Nativity scene which *did not* include a Caganer. Many citizens saw this as an assault on regional traditions. Following a vociferous campaign and extensive criticism in the media, the government was forced to add the Caganer to the crèche in following year.

Scatological references are common in Catalan custom; one popular declaration before sharing a meal is: "Eat well, shit strong and don't be afraid of death!" Nevertheless, traditional figures similar to the Caganer exist throughout Europe. In French he is known as Père la Colique, Choleramännchen or Hinterlader in German, and the Kakker or Schijterke in Dutch and Flemish.

As with sexuality, the historical record shows that excretory expression was often more public in former times. Returning to ancient Rome for example, interruption of dinner parties was avoided by making urine pots available to guests at table (Guerrand, 1997: 14, cited in Engels-Schwarzpaul: 63). A sixteenth century document from Nuremberg relates that during a visit from the emperor to the city, citizens were admonished to desist from the common practice of defecating in the street and instead use public latrines (Stewart, cited in Persels: 135). A 1558 treatise on manners by Archbishop Giovanni della Casa advised: "[it] does not befit a modest, honorable man to prepare to relieve nature in the presence of other people" (Elias, 1994: 111). But this prescription was not unequivocal. Della Casa wrote elsewhere that such things "are not done except among people before one is not ashamed" (117). During the seventeenth century, it was quite permissible for a Parisian nobleman walking hand-in-hand in the street with a gentlewoman to pause to relieve his bladder (Engels-Schwarzpaul: 63). In the French court of Louis XIV, it was considered a privilege to appear before the "sovereign holding court on his pierced chair." Courtiers "bow[ed] and kneel[ed] in pursuit of a royal turd" (Laporte, 2000: 12).

[• Expectoration]

The Nineteenth century is generally thought of as the most prim and repressive of eras, but even so, the fin de siécle saw a performance career that could not be imagined today. I refer to that of Joseph Pujol, known as *Le Petomane* ("the fart maniac"). His astounding feats of controlled flatulence packed the Moulin Rouge in Paris in 1890s and made him the highest paid performer in France. He could draw as much as two quarts of air into his anal cavity (as measured by one Dr. Marcel Baudouin in 1892). He wowed audiences by "singing" popular tunes, snatches from operas, and *La Marseillaise*. He blew out candles from yards away and, using a tube, he would play various wind instruments, and then, pause for a cigarette. His comic impressions of the farts of various animals (from a mouse to a elephant), different sorts of personalities (little girls, mothers-in-law or bombastic fathers), and well known public figures including the president of the Republic, had audiences rolling in the aisles. His fans included composers Ravel and Faure, painters Renoir and Matisse, Sigmund Freud, Edward Prince of Wales, and Leopold II, King of the Belgians. His memory was revered by Salvador Dalí and Jean-Paul Sartre. Certainly Pujol's accomplishments far exceeded natural impulse, but his admirers must have felt something analogous to what a prisoner feels when viewing a bird that turns arabesques outside his cell.

[• Taboos against Gluttony, obesity]

[• The regimentation of SLEEP]

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PART II.1

The foregoing survey, while far from comprehensive, is sufficient to demonstrate that the standards we take for granted have never been universal. On the contrary, our culture stands out as uncommonly and profoundly ashamed by our bodily urges; acknowledgement of them is seen as perverse and suppression is seen as natural. While this affliction runs deeper in some of us than others, it is questionable whether any of us are free of it. What are the reasons for this alienation?

We may be tempted to explain these attitudes as the legacy of Victorianism, or our Puritan heritage, or rooted in Christianity itself. But, merely identifying this pedigree does not explain how these dispositions originated in the first place, how they developed over time, and why they persist. Any adequate explanation must consider physiological, psychological, sociological, philosophical, and theological determinants.

First, we must recognize that some sense of estrangement from the body has probably been a feature of our species since the earliest development of language first permitted self-conscious thought. We identify our

"selves"—our "egos"—with our voluble minds; we tend to see our bodies as dumb servants or mere vehicles.

Sigmund Freud speculated that the mind/body dichotomy began even earlier, at the stage when our primordial ancestors first stood upright. He reasoned that the horizontal orientation of animals' bodies leave the sense organs of their faces at the same level as their fellow animals' buttocks and sex organs, and so, all of those organs are equally familiar. (Of course, this is easily verified by observing any two dogs greet one another.) In contrast, our vertical posture creates a hierarchy in which the lofty executive mind literally looks down upon the lower "animal" functions and feels superior.

As servants, however, our bodies leave much to be desired. Even when in good health, they constantly nag our busy minds with itches, urges, twitches, and vexing somatic pains. Much of our minds' attention must be devoted to keeping our vulnerable bodies out of harm's way, and even worse, to tedious employments and regimens to provide for their needs. Yet, despite our best efforts, our bodies inevitably fail us: they plague us with periodic disease, traumas, and progressive debility almost inexorably leading to agony in our last rupture, and then, hideous decomposition. *The Egyptian Book of the Dead,* from 240 BCE, related that "When the life-force has departed… the bones crumble into a helpless mass and the flesh turns into fetid liquid."

Perhaps so many people are disgusted by bodily effluvia because they recognize in these viscous substances the semblance of the ultimate dissolution of our bodies. Jean-Paul Sartre saw the viscous as a symbol of the formless void that underlies all existence, referring to a pervasive "Nausea" that "spreads at the bottom of the viscous puddle, at the bottom of our time—"

It might be argued that some effluvia are inherently offensive because of their intense odors, but this may be countered with the observation that our four-legged friends (and some people, too) receive these with great gusto. It once seemed possible to merely invoke human superiority to justify our prejudices, but now that we've made such a mess of our entire planetary ecosystem, can anyone take such a position seriously?

The pleasures of bodily discharge are threatening to some because, on a subconscious level, they are felt to diminish the self. The second century theologian Tertullian asked: "In that last breaking wave of delight, do we not feel something of our very soul go out from us?"[*De Anima*, 27.5] In a similar vein, the French often refer to orgasm as *"la petite mort"*—the small death. And, of course, Freud traced the compulsion for orderliness and control to the sublimated desire for excretory retention.

The issue of control brings up another significant failing of our bodies: no degree of epicurean contrivance or expense can guarantee sensual gratification. The reformed rake St. Augustine lamented:

> "At times, without intention, the body stirs on its own, insistent. At other times, it leaves a straining lover in the lurch, and while desire sizzles in the imagination, it is frozen in the flesh; so that, strange to say, even when procreation is not at issue, just self-indulgence, desire cannot even rally to desire's help—the force that normally wrestles against reason's control is pitted against itself, and an aroused imagination gets no reciprocal arousal from the flesh."
> —*City of God*, 14.17.

Analogous statements could be made for all other manners of corporeal gratification. We've all suffered frustrations from poor appetite, insomnia, constipation, and the like.

Harvard psychologist Steven Pinker recently observed that excretions "have such an emotional charge that they figure prominently in voodoo, sorcery, and other kinds of sympathetic magic in many of the world's cultures." He cited linguists Keith Allan and Kate Burridge as noting that the unacceptability "of eliminating these substances from the body in public" correlates with the degree of unacceptability of the slang terms used to denote them: "shit is less acceptable than piss, which in turn is less acceptable than fart, which is less acceptable than snot, which is less acceptable than spit." Moreover, Pinker conjectured that this same order correlates with the capacities of these products to spread dangerous pathogens. However, sociologist Norbert Elias, in his classic 1939 study, *The Civilizing Process,* belied such an explanation of the disgust reaction:

> "It is well to establish once and for all that something that we know to be harmful to health by no means necessarily arouses feelings of distaste or shame. And conversely, something that arouses these feelings need not be at all detrimental to health. People who eat noisily or with their hands nowadays arouse feelings of extreme distaste without there being the slightest fear for their health. But neither the thought of reading by bad light nor the idea of poison gas, for example, arouses remotely similar feelings of distaste or shame, although the harmful consequences for health are obvious."

Elias held that the norms of acceptability and disgust are socially conditioned (and I will return to his speculations later). Pinker, though, makes the important observation that once taboos are implanted in the mind, exposure to their objects—or even the words that denote them—stimulate the most "ancient" parts of the brain, shortcutting the centers of rationality, and producing an immediate and involuntary reaction of disgust.

Even when the objects of our urges are regarded as wholesome, concerns over heath and wellbeing can dampen our appetites. The enticement of a tasty hors d'ouvre or sumptuous desert can be spoiled by the threat of fat-inducing calories. Sexual enticement can be quashed by threats of disease, unwanted pregnancy, unwise entanglement, or legal considerations. And so on. We trudge through our lives with the carrot of bodily pleasure constantly before our faces, but most of us will only occasionally crane forward for a bite. Then, too often, gratification slips from our mouths. When we are lucky enough to connect with profound bodily pleasure, after a brief euphoria,

nothing is left than a fading memory. In result, some individuals become compulsive in seeking the next thrill. Others seek solace in the more reliable satisfactions of property, whether physical or intellectual, that can be revisited at will.

II. 2 • • •

Nowadays, tightwads are admonished with the truism: "You can't take it with you when die." But the royalty of ancient Egypt evidently had other ideas. As early as the twenty-sixth century B.C.E., the tombs of the Pharaohs were outfitted with all manners of preparation for the eternal sustenance of the body and its pleasures. Among the most luxurious caches of treasure ever known, were scale models of each workshop that produced the necessities for continued corporeal existence: everything from mills, bakeries, butcheries, tanneries, cobblers, spinners, weavers, tailors and so on. They even provided for sex after death by equipping mummies with prosthetic penises. Attachment to the body was also expressed in statuary, both in tombs and in public settings, that represented scantily-clad rulers with great anatomical detail. And yet, these idealized depictions are not quite of our natural world. Flawlessly muscled and firm, they hold themselves rigidly upright in virtually symmetrical postures, devoid of torsion. Heads held high, they gaze past us, their faces free of thought or emotion. They possess the frozen quality that art historian J. J. Pollitt called "iconic," by which he meant, representing eternally "unchanging 'presences,' in tune with a higher reality and unaffected by the changing conditions of the world." [*Art and Experience in Ancient Greece,* 1972] In the contest between mind and body, the Egyptians clearly threw their lot in with the latter. Time itself, the ultimate reaper, seemed arrested in an eternal sunshine of the vacuous mind.

Was the end goal of such painstaking devices merely the comfort of the very few that could afford them? Or, was there a larger social agenda? Given the centralized and intensely hierarchical power structure of ancient Egypt, these monuments, as well as the religion that gave rise to them, undoubtedly reinforced public belief that just as their ruler's bodies are eternal, so too, will the current ruling regime continue eternally.—"resistance is futile," as the Borg more recently put it. This was the most stable society in the history of mankind; they sustained remarkable political and cultural continuity for the better part of 3,000 years.

During the mid-seventh century B.C.E., the influence of Egyptian statuary was seen in Greece with the development of standardized marble statues of young men, later called *Kouroi.* While early examples of this type were somewhat crudely delineated and ill-proportioned, their static pose was virtually quoted from Egyptian prototypes. Over the next hundred and fifty years, *Kouroi* were produced throughout Greece, serving as funeral monuments, as votives at temples, and as trophies of athletic victories. But, in these capacities, they also played an important role in the structure of Greek society.

This time in Greek history was the highpoint of conflict between the landed nobility and a rising class of mercantile entrepreneurs. In the struggle for prestige, it might be expected that the upper class would substantiate their status by flaunting accoutrements of luxury and refinement. But, in fact, the aristocrats were at an economic disadvantage in this contest. Their incomes were almost entirely limited to fixed payments of tribute from their tenants (similar to rent or taxes), while in contrast, merchants—if they were smart and lucky—could amass no end of wealth. So, the nobles took recourse in their stature as warriors, and evolved an ethic that negated luxury and instead cultivated the ascetic ideals of restraint, discipline, and physical development. Mastery of the body demonstrated fitness to master society at large. The *Kouroi* statues were the tangible embodiments of this ethos. Unlike their Egyptian ancestors, these statues were entirely nude, possibly to emphasize inherent traits of character rather than mere adornments that money could buy. A tight little smile was stuck onto their faces as the sole indicator of *psychē,* the animating spirit. But like their Egyptian predecessors, the implacable thoughtlessness of these static bodies promoted general expectation of eternal perpetuation of the status quo.

Meanwhile, the rise of mercantile enterprise stimulated a greater level of mental engagement. Merchants profited by solving practical problems such as how to measure and assess value, how to add value through manufacture, and how to transport the resulting goods. These operations demanded skills in analytical thinking. Perhaps, though, it was the challenge of aristocratic ideals that unmoored thinking from practical objects to more general speculations. In any case, the practice of philosophy began during this same period. Also significantly, the new bourgeoisie won the rights of democratic participation in government. This, in turn, elevated the importance of skills in discourse throughout the polity. The next period of nearly two centuries saw the great flowering in the life of the mind that is referred to as the Golden Age of Classical Greece. The new ethos of this period was expressed in sculpture by the development of a relaxed posture of asymmetrical balance that suggests mental reflection.

The ascendance of the mind brought greater attention to interior states and dispositions. The meaning of the term *psychē* was expanded to indicate the seat of cognition, intellect and emotion, as well as virtue or weakness for vice—what today many would call a *soul*. Orphic cults began to preach that humankind had two natures: The outward material body, derived from the sinful Titans, holds captive the divine soul, descended from the god Dionysus. In the early fifth century B.C.E., the poet Pindar may have been the first in literature to enunciate the soul's immortality. About a hundred years later [360 B.C.E.?], Plato paraphrased Socrates who, on the point of carrying out his own death-sentence, compared the body to a prison from which his soul would soon be released.

But not all Greeks were so alienated from the body. The philosopher Epicurus (341–271 B.C.E.) believed that physical sensations are the sole avenues to knowledge. Fur-

ther, he maintained, *"Pleasure is the beginning and the end of living happily..."* But he cautioned against the deleterious consequences of intense pleasures he termed *kinetic,* and instead, recommended more moderate pleasures he termed *static*. Indulgence in rich or spicy cuisine can cause indigestion; therefore it is better to find satisfaction in plainer fare. The ecstatic passions of love can bring as much torment as delight; therefore, it is better to cultivate simple friendship. His emphasis on moderation reflects the robustness of the aristocratic ideal of restraint. This continued to be a key ethical tenet throughout the entire period of classical civilization. Aristotle, in his Nicomachean Ethics [II.6–7] proclaimed: "Virtue… is a kind of moderation…" For an example, he stated that courage lies between the excesses of foolhardiness and cowardice. Temperance, be reasoned, is between profligacy and self–denial, and so on. "All things in moderation" was the watchword. None of the pleasures of the body were regarded as inherently sinful; only overindulgence and emotionalism were seen as signs of a weak character. In his Satire [II.7] from about 30 BCE, the Roman author Horace portrayed a slave berating his master for being himself enslaved to his own passions. This emphasis on self-control befitted a society ruled by patriarchs, each the king of his own domain, and each keenly involved in civic administration. It was felt that passion disrupts orderly management: "One who would rule, must first know how to rule oneself."

"Affectional preference," as we refer to it today, was a matter of indifference in most of the ancient world. Most of the Roman emperors had both male and female lovers. All flesh was considered the same—what mattered was status. All creatures, from the beasts to the gods, were thought to belong on a higher or lower station on the "chain of being." For a person of greater position to submit to sexual domination by an inferior was considered grotesque. (Julius Cesar had to endure the derision of his own troops because he was reputed to have yielded to a Middle Eastern potentate early in his career.) In this scheme, women were accorded lower status because they were generally regarded as inchoate males. Their soft curves, and pliant, recessive genitalia were seen as less fully formed, their ascribed emotionalism, undisciplined. Marcus Aurelius, the emperor-philosopher, wrote: "To be pulled by the strings of desire belongs both to wild beasts and to men who have made themselves into women." [Meditations, 3.16] Such noble patriarchs felt it incumbent to maintain a posture of rectitude, setting (what they most assuredly thought of as) an unassailable example for the women and plebeians they ceremoniously and dispassionately bullied. And so, while licentiousness was popular in Roman society, it lost ground among the "best" people. It became a frequent object of satire, while sexual continence gained respect. Ultimately, by the forth century, a major constituency was ready to embrace the stringent mores of early Christianity. But, before navigating that flood tide, let's consider its source in Judaism.

II. 3 • • •

Even in a history legendary for recurrent tribulation, the decades surrounding the seventh century BCE are notable for the reverses suffered by the Hebrew people. In 722, the ten tribes of the Kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians. Masses of refugees fled to the southern Kingdom of Judah; those remaining were forcibly deported and have disappeared from history. Judah's turn came in 587, when the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II destroyed Solomon's Temple and took the entire nobility into captivity. Over the next centuries, fiercely nationalistic Prophets sought to repair and consolidate Jewish solidarity. Their efforts were largely successful in instilling a resilient shared identity that has survived millennia of internecine conflicts, dispersion, adaptive assimilation, and persecution.

The majority of scholars believe that most of the Hebrew Bible, (including much of the text reputedly given to Moses some 800 years before) dates from this time. These texts harangued the Jews, blaming their problems on their own stubborn waywardness and perversity. Most importantly, each Jew was made responsible for the wellbeing of all. Each must atone for their guilt by wholehearted and exclusive submission to the Lord, and, by scrupulous observance of exacting laws and rituals of purity. Personal discipline was exacted, as can be seen in the previously mentioned capital punishment for gluttony, and fasting was promoted as a means of purification, atonement, and connection to the Lord. Prayer services were initiated on Sabbath and holidays, changing what had been an elitist priestly religion into a participatory one. Jews were promised that righteousness would bring the Messiah to redeem their nation.

It seems likely that it was the need for strength of numbers that led to the biblical sanctification of the family. Harsh proscriptions channeled erotic urges away from nonprogenitive pursuits. In Genesis [38:8–10], Onan incurred death for spilling his seed on the ground (although it is arguable that his crime was his denial of Tamar). The Book of Leviticus outlawed adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality. Marriage outside the faith was pronounced tantamount to bestiality. Incest (which had been common among the Egyptians) and promiscuity were also damned—perhaps because they would quell the urges that pressure young adults to set up their own households. The highest standards of modesty were prescribed to avoid temptation. [Leviticus 18:6–23] But, the pleasure of conjugal sex was proclaimed a sacrament. Celibacy was seen as contrary to the admonition to "Be fruitful and multiply" [Genesis 2:18]. Later, in the second century Babylonian Talmud, Rabbi Eliezer went so far as to declare, "Anyone who does not engage in procreation, it is as if he spilled blood."

Nevertheless, the chaffing of girded loins apparently engendered misogyny. Women were blamed for inciting lust that distracted men from "single-hearted" dedication to the Lord. Ecclesiastes 7:26 pronounced: "I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and

traps, whose hands are chains. Whoever pleases the Lord shall escape from her; but the sinner will be ensnared by her." In the succeeding centuries, celibacy gained adherents. Around the beginning of the first century BCE, the author of the so-called Wisdom of Solomon declared, "…blessed is the barren that is undefiled, who has not known the sinful bed: she shall have fruit in the visitation of souls…. And blessed is the eunuch, who has wrought no iniquity with his hands, nor imagined wicked things against the Lord: for he will be given the special gift of faith." After factionalist strife disintegrated the dynasty of the Maccabees in 66 BCE, the Essenes formed communities of celibate males that anticipated later Christian monasticism.

Others heard the call to become itinerant preachers. One of these is known to us as John the Baptist, and another, was his cousin Jesus of Nazareth. We can surmise several reasons why celibacy would be more or less prerequisite to their vocation. Certainly, their continence evinced a strength of character that lent authority to their message. And, perhaps it made these perpetual strangers seem trustworthy to the communities they visited. Also, the psychic energy of sublimated urges could be re-channeled into ecstatic visions and fiery oratory. Most practically, however, life on the road is much easier without the burden of a family in tow. In any case, Jesus' abstinence was such a commonplace that as scholar Peter Brown observed, "It was more than a century before any of his followers claimed to base their own celibacy on his example."

By all accounts, Jesus himself (rather like my mother-in-law) didn't care to say much about sex. Of the nearly 300 admonitions attributed to him in the New Testament, none concern specific types of sexual activity. The Gospel of Mathew [5:27-28] relates that he preached restraint, saying: "…whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." And, he is said to have stressed indelible connection between those who have married and "become one flesh." [Mark 10:8] Mosaic law freely permitted men to divorce, but, according to Mark [10:11-12] and later gospels, Jesus regarded remarriage as tantamount to adultery. These would be stark judgments, considering that the penalty for adultery was death by stoning. His position, however, appears to be moderated by the famous story of the woman caught in adultery. Jesus' verdict, "Let he who is without sin, cast the first stone," directed each person to examine his or her own conscience. "Go and sin no more" pointed to the sinner's capacity for redemption. But, this story seems to have been added to the Gospel of John [8:1-11] long after its completion, and some do not regard it as canonical.

Perhaps the most radical pronouncement attributed to Jesus appears in Luke [14:26-27]: "If any one comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." This demand for single-hearted dedication undermined family life itself—the very foundation of Jewish society and its sole legitimate venue for sensual pleasure. However, we must remember that the earliest canonical Gospel, that of Mark, was written some forty years after Jesus' death and Luke is newer still. At about the same time they were set down, the Romans stormed Jerusalem, destroying the second temple, and laid Judea to waste. According to Brown, the Gospels were written "in that terrible period, to meet the needs and validate the activities of wandering preachers, who claimed to be his [Jesus'] true followers." As these proselytizers spread word of the Kingdom to Come, they promoted the ideal of celibate virtue.

About twenty years earlier, Saint Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, convinced the leaders of the new faith to eliminate the requirement that non-Jewish Christians adopt burdensome Jewish observances such as circumcision and dietary restrictions. While this move surely opened the door to many new converts, it may have potentially left the heterogeneous membership of this young religion without any clear set of behaviors that could define a distinct shared identity. The sacrifices of martyrs were banners that rallied troops to the Church Militant, yet for the vast majority, such singular deeds were far above the quieter fray of daily life. Whether by instinct or design, Paul responded to the believers' need for personal engagement by initiating a crusade that each foot soldier could fight every day. At last, after centuries of initial skirmishes waged by ivory-tower philosophers and radical zealots, he openly declared war between the spirit and the urges of the flesh. In chapter seven of his letter to the Romans, Paul exclaimed, "…nothing good dwells…in my flesh; …for the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.… Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?" But, in the next chapter, he counseled that the war is winnable: "…if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he…shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwells in you. So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not…to live according to the flesh—for if you live according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.[11-13]" In other words, the path to eternal life is in accepting God and conquering all bodily urges.

But Paul, ever aspiring for inclusion, soon expressed some ambivalence about the viability of such an exacting standard. When the community at Corinth wrote to him of their intention to renounce marital relations and live in celibacy, he made an effort to dissuade them. He began the seventh chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians by conceding: "…it is good for a man not to touch a woman." But then, he countered, "…to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. … Stop depriving one another…and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. But," he hedged, "this I say by way of concession, not of command. …I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that." But, he was torn in his sen-

timents, because "the time is short" and the practical concession of marriage is not ideal: "One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and his interests are divided."[32-33] And so, like martyrdom, absolute sexual continence is only for the few; most should content themselves with the booby prize of marriage.

These reservations were later cleared away in the fifth chapter of the letter to the Ephesians: "…just as Christ…loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her…so husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. …for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the Church, because we are members of His body." This resanctification of marriage was probably the work of another hand, composed after the passing years had eroded the conviction that *"the time is short."* It may have trespassed on Paul's deepest convictions, but it brought his doctrine in line with his evangelical mission. The devout preoccupations of saints who withdrew to the desert for prayer and fasting could not spread the faith or secure its position. Instead, the powerbase for the early Church became established householders, just as it had been for Jews and pagans. The early hierarchy was recruited from the wealthy patriarchs of the cities.

In world where the average lifespan was less than twenty-five years, and less than 4% lived beyond the age of fifty [Brown: 6], the religion that promised an afterlife of eternal bliss won adherents.

[• Priestly celibacy
• Restrictions on conjugal sex]

The chaste architects of the early Church projected their repressed urges onto women, making them out as the very embodiment of carnal sin, only to be resisted from behind a barricade of deepest disgust. Tertullian (c160-c225), who first coined the phrase "original sin," excoriated the entire gender from the first: "Do you not realize that you are Eve?… You are the devil's gateway, you desecrated that fatal tree, you first betrayed the law of God, you who softened up with your cajoling words the man against whom the devil could not prevail by force. The image of God, the man Adam, you broke him, it was child's play to you. You deserved death, and [instead] it was the Son of God who had to die!" [On the Apparel of Women] St. Clement of Alexandria (c150-c215) concurred: "Every woman should be filled with shame by the thought that she is a woman." Likewise, St. Jerome (c342-420), intoned: "woman is the root of all evil." St. John Chrysostom (c347-407), asked: "…what is a woman but an enemy of friendship, an inescapable punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a domestic danger, delectable mischief, a fault in nature, painted with beautiful colors?" Elsewhere, he unleashed this astonishing diatribe against what he regarded as the illusion of feminine beauty: "The whole of her body is nothing less than phlegm, blood, bile, rheum and the fluid of digested food... If you consider what is stored up behind those lovely eyes, the angle of the nose, the mouth and the cheeks you will agree that the well-proportioned body is only a whitened sepulcher." Augustine declared, "I fail to see what use woman can be to man, if one excludes the function of bearing children." And, "Nothing is so powerful in drawing the spirit of a man downwards as the caresses of a woman." He warned Christian men "to hate in her the corruptible and mortal conjugal connection, sexual intercourse and all that pertains to her as a wife."

[• Purity of Mary as example of redemption
• Sanctification of virginity raised a high standard—one that very few could live up to, but priests were able to grant absolution.
• mortification of the flesh]

II. 4 • • •

Now that we've thrashed out—*ahem*—the main tenets of Medieval Christianity vis-à-vis the body, we'll go on to examine their wider dissemination on the broad populations of Europe—an undertaking that was difficult and never completely successful. Irish literature of the early Christian era still depicts a people with unabashed and pragmatic attitudes toward sex. Chastity was not prized or protected. For example, when the young hero Cuchulain defeated the woman warrior Aoifé, she readily gave him her sex as the battle prize. In *The Cattle Raid of Cooley*, Queen Medb and her husband Ailill encouraged their daughter Findabair to sleep with an enemy warrior in hopes of securing a truce. Later, some three hundred women, including many queens, consented to appear on the battlefield stark naked to distract the bloodthirsty Cuchulain. In another tale, the lady Deirdre had no compunctions in propositioning a handsome stranger Naoise as he passed by, even though she was betrothed to a king [Gwynn].

The worship of generative organs continued throughout the early Middle Ages (as described in exhaustive detail by Thomas Wright's treatise of 1865). The continued use of the previously mentioned phallic *fascinum* amulets was decried in *penitentials* (books that prescribe penances for sins) as late as the eighth century. Persistent veneration of the pagan fertility god Priapus was concealed under the guises of various saints. One of these, St. Foutin, was represented with a large wooden phallus—shavings from this protuberance were made into a tea that was thought to cure barren women and have an aphrodisiac effect on their husbands. (As the length this peg diminished, it was periodically restored by priests who surreptitiously hammered it outward from behind.) Women were also reported to kiss or sit on such objects. There is speculation that, in a holdover of an ancient pagan custom, some new brides would give their maidenhood to the saint. At Varailles in Provence, the ceiling of a chapel dedicated to this saint was covered with wax facsimile of genitalia of both sexes. An eyewitness account relates that when the wind blew they produced a disturbing effect. In the southern Italian town of Trani, a priapic statue, called "the Membro saint," was carried in religious processions. Maypole dances, of course, were a

relic of phallic worship. In a Swedish custom that survives to this day, a long pole is inserted through the opposite windows of the bedrooms of newlywed couples.

The Soviet literary and social theorist Mikhail Bakhtin drew attention to carnivalesque festivals that began as early as the fifth century. These celebrations included the Feast of Fools observed in late December, the Feast of Asses in January, and pre-Lenten carnivals that survive in less radical forms today. During such festivities social norms and hierarchies were temporarily subverted. The broad populace, especially the lower classes, were allowed to experience cathartic release of repressed urges and resentments. Class distinctions were negated, and the authority of the "higher" faculties of mind and soul were supplanted in favor of the "lower" functions. All that had been held in restraint throughout the rest of the year was released in peals of laughter. Not only did an atmosphere of drunken licentiousness obtain, but other more transgressive behaviors were actively embraced. Cross-dressing was common, obscene gestures or curses were often used as greetings, open lewdness and fornication went unpunished. At times, urine, vomit, or excrement were joyously flung about. Ersatz authority figures, such as a Lord of Misrule, or Abbot of Unreason, were consecrated. Priests donned masks and staged mock masses at which indecent songs were sung, dice was played, and black pudding, suggestive of excrement, was eaten from the altar. (A ruling of the Chapter of Sens in 1444 enjoined against copulation within the church at such ceremonies.) Bakhtin asserted that in renouncing all restraint and subverting all differentiation, the identities of individuals became subsumed into a collective identity. This larger identity also seemed to transcend individual mortality—images of death and renewal proliferated. The image of the "grotesque body" resulted from distortions that break down the boundaries between one person and another. Thus, such depictions exaggerate appendages that reach out from the body (nose, belly, breasts, penis and buttocks) and the orifices that may eject or receive (mouth, genitals and anus). Bakhtin reasoned that such anarchic observances subverted elite authority, however, contemporary apologists asserted that they acted as a social safety valve that relived pressure, and in so doing, helped perpetuate the status quo. [Bakhtin, Rattray-Gordon, Ellis]

In spite of evident complicity by some churchmen in such licentious behavior, others continued to decry moral laxity. In the early eighth century, Saint Boniface complained that the English "utterly refuse to have legitimate wives, and continue to live in lechery and adultery…." About a century later, Alcuin of York lamented: "the land has been absolutely submerged under flood of fornication, adultery and incest, so that the very semblance of modesty is entirely absent." Judicial registers throughout the early Middle Ages recorded a plethora of prosecutions for fornication, adultery, incest and homosexuality. Further evidence of the latter can be found in the proceedings of the Sixteenth Council of Toledo (693), which declared that "many men" were contaminated with "the sodomitical evil" and, likewise, testimony at the Second Synod of Aachen (860) stated that homosexual copulation was ubiquitous. About 1050, Peter Damian addressed a book length letter entitled *The Book of Gomorrah* to Pope Leo IX, wherein he accused priests of rampantly fornicating together and then granting each other absolution. Evidence of a well established homoerotic subculture among clergy in the towns of the Loire valley is found in Latin verses by poets including Marbod, Bishop of Rennes, (1035-1123) and Baudri of Bourgueil, Archbishop of Dol (1046-1130). Here is a sample verse from Marbod:

> This flesh is so smooth, so milky, without moles,
> So good, so pretty, so smooth, and so tender.
> But the time will come when it will become base and coarse,
> When [this] dear flesh, [this] boyish flesh will become vile.
> Therefore, while you flourish, take up mature customs.
> While you are able and you are sought,
> Do not be slow to give [yourself] to a lover. [Pugh 9]

These works mention male prostitution in Sens, Chartres, Orléans, and Paris. Young men of that time were warned, "Don't go to Chartres, unless you wish to become a woman!"

[• Church & state complaisant with prostitution
• Masturbation not regarded as a grave sin
• Marriage was a secular contract until 13th century; Short-term trial marriages were common ; Polygamy defended by Augustine & Luther]

A myth has grown up that medieval knights locked "chastity belts" onto their wives while they were off fighting in the Crusades. However, there is no evidence that any such contrivance existed until over one hundred years after the last of those campaigns. Moreover, the state of medieval metalworking technology precluded manufacture of an apparatus that could be safe for long-term use. It seems that the legend of these devices is more a projection of our own mores than an index of those of the past. In point of fact, the ties of marriage were not so strongly binding. A legend is told that a boy brought to the court of King Arthur a magic mantle that could only be worn by faithful wife—but none could pass this test. [Gwynn]

There was less physical modesty in the Middle Ages than we have today. Extended families often lived in single rooms, and since it was common to sleep nude, we can suppose that most people were intimately familiar with the sight of one another's bodies. Moreover, under these circumstances, it seems probable that sexual intercourse was not always conducted in private. Among the upper classes, it was common for servants of either sex to attend to the most personal needs of Lords and Ladies. A drawing from the fifteenth century *Medieval House Book* depicts a nude man receiving his lover into a bath, while an old woman with a stony expression brings them refreshments. [Elias:180] Testimony indicates that it was common for families to walk to public baths with very little or no clothing. [Elias] Nude bathing in mixed gender groups is still common today in Scandinavia.

Erotic literature was very influential since the second half of the eleventh century when Ovid's *Ars amatoria* (The

Art of Love)—the ancient Roman manual for finding, seducing and satisfiying lovers—became a standard school text. Its effect on European literature in the subsequent century was so great that the German medievalist Ludwig Traube referred to this period as the "the Ovidian epoch." [Wikapedia] This trend continued in the succeeding centuries with the development of lyric troubadour poetry, lais, romances, and fabliau, which will be discussed below.

The structure of society changed decisively in the twelfth century with the revival of mercantile enterprise, which had been largely dormant since the fall of Rome. Sociologist Norbert Elias (1994: 239–250) explained that while the lesser nobles continued to subsist on feudal tribute, larger fiefdoms engaged in commercial ventures. Such enterprises required educated administrators, and so these courts gradually became filled with sophisticated courtiers vying for advantage. Because the value of combat skills were somewhat diminished in favor of organizational abilities, upperclass women, who often had better intellectual education than men, gained status. Moreover, Elias makes the point that women's previous subjugation actually prepared them for success in these new environments because they were better conditioned to "control, refine, and fruitfully transform their affects than… men of equal status" and, therefore, they became very effective in influencing court opinion. Another contributing factor was the call of the crusades, which left noble Ladies in charge of estates during their Lords' absence.

This empowerment of noble women encouraged the development of troubadour poetry in the court of Occitania (in the south of France). In these lyric verses, the traditional bond of fealty between a Lord and his vassel was transferred to adoration of the mistress, but this relationship became strongly infused with precariously restrained erotic desire. Out of such sublimated urges the ideal of romantic love was first elaborated. This tradition came to its fullest flowering under the patronage of Eleanor of Aquitaine during the last decades of the twelfth century. This brief excerpt from one of her leading bards, Bernart de Ventadorn is fairly typical with its tone of modest masochistic submission (translated from Provençal by James H. Donalson):

> My lady, I sing just for you,
> And by your mouth, you wound my heart
> With a sweet kiss of true and heartfelt love
> To turn to joy and save from deathly rage.

Occasionally, more exotic cathexis was expressed, as in this fetishistic example from the same author:

> Evil she is if she doesn't call me
> To come where she undresses alone
> So that I can wait her bidding
> Beside the bed, along the edge,
> Where I can pull off her shoes
> Down on my knees, my head bent down:
> If only she'll offer me her foot.
> (Benton, 2008:264)

Andreas Capallanus, Eleanor's courtier at Poitiers, combined the influence of Ovid with the troubadour ethic to compose *The Art of Courtly Love* (ca.1184), a handbook that set down rules for would-be lovers, but also offered practical advice for gaining gratification. Another poet who may have written for Eleanor during her earlier reign in England, was Marie de France, a composer of popular narrative songs called *lais* (or *lays*). Some of Marie's works condone, even celebrate, abandonment of loveless marriages in favor of new love. In the roughly concurrent chivalric *romances*, adulterous love triangles were commonplace. On a darker note, it was considered completely honorable in these stories to slay a man in single combat to take his lady without her acquiescence.

While the literature just discussed was primarily directed at courtly audiences, thirteenth century *fabliau* from northeastern France appealed to the broad spectrum of secular society. These verses were often grotesque, obscene, scatological and peppered with strong language. Here is the synopsis of representative example, *The Four Wishes of St. Martin*:

> One day a man happened to meet St. Martin, who was impressed with his devotion, and rewarded him with four wishes. Afterwards, the man ran home to tell his wife about this extraordinary occurrence. But, rather than rejoicing in his good news, she became enraged because he should still be at work. To appease her, he offered her the first wish. Still fuming, she shouted: "you should be completely covered with pricks," and she stipulated, "each prick should have its balls." This wish immediately came to pass. In anger, the husband responded: "you should have as many cunts as I have pricks on my body," and this too transpired. Things were made arguably worse when the husband, following his wife's direction, wished that all of their cocks and cunts would vanish. The fourth wish was used to restore the couple to their original state. The author ends with a moral, somewhat misogynistic, that when a man trusts his wife more than himself, he will regret it in the end. (Hopkins, 2005:3)

Chaucer later drew extensively from fabliau and their influence extended through the Elizabethan period until it was stemmed by for a time by Puritan censorship.

II. 5 • • •

Elias explains that the congestion, interdependence, and competition of courtiers at the larger courts brought interpersonal skills came to the fore, and so, manners gradually began to become more refined. However, from the vantage point of today's standards, this development had rude beginnings. Neither dishware nor utensils were in common use in eleventh century Europe. A chronicle from the time relates that when a Byzantine princess came to Venice to marry the son of a Doge, guests at the wedding banquet were amazed when she was seen to eat with a fork.

According to the account "...this novelty seemed such an excessive mark of breeding that the princess was severely disapproved of by the priests, who called down divine wrath upon her. A short time later, the princess was taken by an unmentionable disease, and Saint Bonaventura did not hesitate to declare that it was 'God's punishment.'" [Elias, 59]

As late as the sixteenth century, manuals of etiquette cited detailed descriptions of indelicate table manners and indiscreet bodily elimination—*ad nauseam*—as counter-examples. The demand for such handbooks rose sharply during that time, precisely because standards were changing and the new upwardly mobile bourgeoisie were eager for their children to learn how to fit in with the elite. One prominent guide was the previously mentioned work by della Casa. The importance of such works is evidenced by the fact that the eminent humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam also felt it worthwhile to pen one. The popularity of his book over several generations demonstrates how well it fit the ethos of the time. Writing in scholarly Latin, his advice was nevertheless down-to-earth; for example he advised: "Fools who value civility more than health repress natural sounds." (Elias 51) He included not only frank discussion of bodily functions, but also a cautionary dialog in which a young man virtuously rejects solicitation from a prostitute. Elias notes, no "wall of secrecy" yet separated the world of children from that of adults; Erasmus straightforwardly "wanted to show…the world as in a mirror… to teach what must be avoided and what was conducive to a tranquil life." (147)

Elias reasons that further refinement of etiquette in the succeeding centuries can at least partly be explained by the continued desire of the aristocracy to differentiate themselves from the aspiring bourgeoisie—as the parvenus learned to emulate each nicety, their "betters" continually needed to invent new ways to demonstrate their superiority (Elias 1994:86). This tendency intensified in the courts of absolute monarchs of the seventeenth century and reached its peak just before the bourgeois revolutions of the eighteenth century.

In fourteenth century Tuscany, new bourgeois patronage fostered the development of Renaissance humanism. By the next century, the heroic nudity of classical antiquity was revived in the plastic arts. But, along with this idealism came erotic interest, which was even expressed in religious works. For example, art historian Leo Steinberg undertook a survey of hundreds of images of Christ, from the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, where the savior's genitals were emphasized. Steinberg argues that these exposures affirmed that Jesus had fully participated in the human condition—his lifelong virginity was not attributable to a superhuman nature—he, too, possessed a sexual capacity that he held in check. Any number of other works from the Renaissance may be cited that combine erotic impulses with theological, mythological, historical or philosophical programs.

Fast-forwarding to 1527, the first work was published that might be labeled "pornography" in modern sense of the word, in that it was mass produced, sexually explicit and intended to stimulate arousal. *I modi* or *(The Ways)* consisted of sixteen engravings of couples modeling various positions for copulation, each picture accompanied by a sexually explicit sonnet. The project had its origin in erotic frescos that Guilio Romano created for Frederico II's Palazzo del Te in Mantua. Marcantonio Raimondi based the prints on these, and hawked them to elite clients in Rome. However, when the Vatican caught wind of this venture, Raimondi was jailed. Romano claimed ignorance of the enterprise and escaped punishment; interestingly, his corresponding paintings were not considered transgressive because they were not intended for public distribution. Then, Pietro Aretino, a writer who had won high connections by producing biting satires of Church corruption, took an interest in the case. He prevailed on his friends to secure Raimondi's release, and then, he had the audacity to compose the verses that accompanied a second edition of the work. In the preface he wrote:

> "…let the hypocrites take a flying leap; I'm sick of their thieving justice and their filthy traditions that forbid the eyes to see what most delights them. What harm is there in seeing a man mounted atop a woman? Must beasts be more free than we are?…"

The Pope ordered this edition destroyed. Only a few fragments of it remain in the British Museum, although Aretino's text survives and Agostino Carracci illustrated a later edition. Marianna Beck recently wrote that this work evoked "an earthly utopia—a world of limitless sex and possibility, in which women expressed their desires as vociferously as men. His work is a paean to sex, a celebration of eros, and reflects a powerful reaction against centuries of Church repression." Since pornography is a surrogate for repressed needs, it has frequently accompanied anti-authoritarian impulses in literature.

II. 6 • • •

Meanwhile, the Protestant Reformation was sweeping Europe. By rejecting the sacramental power of clergy in favor of "the priesthood of all believers," Protestantism initiated profound reconsideration of many key Christian tenets related to bodily urges. Vows of celibacy, the sine qua non of priestly authority, were scorned as contrary to biblical teaching, a cause of innumerable clerical sexual transgressions, and an insult to the institution of marriage. In contrast to Catholic dogma that pronounced sex inherently sinful and excusable only as a passionless instrument of procreation, the Protestants recognized sex within marriage as the appropriate expression of conjugal love. Marriage was seen as central to Christian life, but it was no longer held to be a sacrament, so divorce could be permitted on grounds of faithlessness. Also, wider latitude in courtship was granted. In Germany and Holland, young unmarried men and women were permitted to pass the entire night in the same bed if they but promised to keep the sheets between them. Immigrants later brought this practice to New Amsterdam, Pennsylvania, and New England. Soon, a more elaborate contraceptive method of wrapping of blankets evolved, and

the custom eventually became known as *'bundling.'* Often a board was set between the couple as a further precaution, but nevertheless pregnancies occasionally resulted. Even so, bundling persisted in this country well into the nineteenth century.

Protestants found no value in mortification of the flesh. Martin Luther derided the practice of fasting, expostulating: "No eating or drinking, gluttony or drunkenness can be so bad as fasting; indeed, it would be better to swill day and night."

As mentioned previously, early Lutherans had no reluctance in employing scatological references. Luther himself conceived of excretion as the concrete indication of humanity's corrupt nature. A chronic sufferer of constipation, he construed this malady as an attack from Satan. Such evil was not to be passed over in silence—to the contrary, he fought abomination with its like. Reasoning that the devil was driven by pride, he saught to humiliate him with the coarsest language: "Almost every night when I wake up, the devil is there and wants to dispute with me…I instantly chase him away with a fart." And elsewhere: "But if that is not enough for you, you Devil, I have also shit and pissed; wipe your mouth on that and take a hearty bite." Nor did he spare his mortal adversaries: "No sooner do I shit than they smell it at Rome." And: "I see plainly whence the Pope came; he is the vomit of the lazy, idle Lords and Princes." And also: "When the slanderer whispers: Look how he has shit on himself, the best answer is: You go eat it...."

Perhaps Luther's vulgarity was a reflection of his peasant origins. Or, perhaps it was the symptom of a personality caught in the *anal stage* of psychic development. But most probably, he used such language because it effectively conveyed his message to his audience—people who still retained regard for carnivalesque grotesquerie. Luther was not alone. Even the more authoritarian Calvinists used scatological rhetoric abundantly. One example is a tract that savagely satirized Catholic belief in the transubstantiation of the Eucharist. It told the story of a poxy old monk who, immediately after taking Communion, fell ill and vomited, leaving his brethren at a quandary as to how to dispose of what they had been taught to believe was the Body and Blood of their Lord and Savior. As no friar could be convinced to accept the honor of re-ingesting the hallowed remains, it was ultimately decided that they be incinerated and the ashes preserved in a reliquary. Scholar Jeff Persels, who cited this as a representative example, wrote: "…vulgarization of difficult doctrinal issues [was] considered vital to the salvation of the faithful8 and to the reform of contemporary religious institutions…[they exercised] that most Christian and Pauline of paradoxes, putting the low to high purpose, turning scatology into rhetoric, excrement into eloquence…." (Persels, 2004:40)

In contrast to the aforementioned liberalities, a new type of asceticism emerged from the Reformation, which has become known through the work of German sociologist Max Weber as "the Protestant work ethic." Whereas Catholicism stressed contempt for worldly endeavor, Weber recognized that Protestantism (and Calvinism in particular) instilled the belief that dedication to work, prudence, parsimony, as well as the material gain that resulted, were signs of blessing in the world to come. As a result, commercial enterprise intensified in Protestant countries, leading to the development of capitalism.

The rise of capitalism produced several consequences that affected manners and attitudes related to bodily urges. First, it changed the type of people that rose to power. Whereas the old feudal nobility got power by inciting intimidation and buying loyalty, the new bourgeoisie succeeded instead through fastidious control of affairs and hoarding of resources. This favored anal-retentive personalities that are receptive to orderly protocols and cleanliness, and are uncomfortable with spontaneity. Also, more than previous enterprises, the new businesses, forced dissimilar people into greater interaction, interdependence, and competition. In addition, the greater urban concentration brought about by capitalism intensified the aggregation of inconveniences and annoyances—not to mention various residues—that each person suffered from others; good deportment and restraint of affect became crucial to defuse the inherent tensions. At the same time, workers became required by the demands of efficiency to defer gratification and regulate bodily functions. In result, they came to experience their own bodies as mere engines that they operated to produce the commodity of labor—this objectification is corollary to the condition of "alienated labor" later described by Karl Marx. At all levels of society, rules and protocols demanded more and more attention from each individual. And, as business and manufacture began to move from households into public environments, the possibility of being observed when one slipped up was increased. Fear of humiliation became each person's constant companion.

Elias documented further tightening of manners related to bodily functions during this period. (Even the use of forks began to take hold among the upper classes: In Ben Jonson's comedy *The Devil is an Ass* (1616), Meercroft praises "The laudable use of forks, brought into custom here as they are in Italy to the sparing of napkins….") As manners became more elaborate, it fell on parents to inculcate them on their young. Children were taught to experience shame when they failed to properly restrain their impulses. This shame, in turn, led them to attach repugnance to their urges as well as any attendant ejecta. From this point forward, such things elicited involuntary reactions of disgust; external restraints became internalized as somatic reflexes. Elias has documented that, at this juncture, etiquette guides began to deal with these matters in far less explicit, more euphemistic terms. Each person had become divided within her-or-himself—a "wall of silence" hid the contours and dimensions of the boogeyman within.

Among the growing ranks of the Puritans in England, the conviction took hold that parental love is best expressed through discipline. It was believed that, because obedience to parents was seen as preparation for obedi-

ence to the Lord, the eternal punishment of hell's fires awaited children that were allowed to stray. Therefore, mothers were warned of the ill effects of excessive "fondness." Affection was withdrawn altogether from disobedient children in order to break their will. Fathers were expected to govern with absolute authority from a further saturnine remove.

Under the Protectorate, Puritans quashed all sorts of spontaneous diversions. Carnivals, masquerades, mumming, and other jollifications were anathematized. Laws were enacted that proscribed drinking, swearing, and public nudity—public baths and taverns were shut down. Gambling was outlawed. Theaters were closed. Sunday sports and dancing were banned. Organs were removed from churches. "Unnecessary walking in the fields…or other places" was restricted. The death penalty was instituted for adultery and incest, but, significantly, the most common forms of punishment during this period involved public humiliation, such as being locked into stocks or pillories. [Federici, Rattray-Taylor] The Puritans later brought their ascetic standards and patriarchic family organization to the shores of America, where they still remain a persistent thread in our national fabric.

As the Reformation loosened the grip of Catholic dogma, many searched beyond the confines of religion for other foundations for belief. During the second quarter of the sixteenth century, in predominantly Catholic France, the novels of physician François Rabelais drew from the tradition of carnivalesque imagery to celebrate human freedom. His grotesque hero "the Great and Enormous Giant" Gargantua established the utopian Thelema Abbey, where the brethren spent their life "not in laws, statutes, or rules, but according to their own free will and pleasure. They rose out of their beds when they thought good; they did eat, drink, labor, sleep, when they had a mind to it and were disposed for it.… In all their rule and strictest tie of their order there was but this one clause to be observed: 'Do What Thou Wilt;' because men that are free… have naturally an instinct and spur that prompts them unto virtuous actions…."

Alas, the current of history ran against Rabelaisian freedom. The accentuated need to reign-in bodily impulses that came with the early development of capitalism brought forward the notion of dichotomy between body and mind. Silvia Federici, a scholar who has surveyed literary and philosophical trends throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, has observed: "The conflict between appetites and reason was a key theme in Elizabethan literature," for example in the contrast between rude Caliban and the spiritual Ariel in Shakespeare's *The Tempest.*

Federici sees the work of René Descartes and Thomas Hobbes as prime exemplars of debates during the seventeenth century over "the crucial question of whether human beings are voluntary or involuntary agents." Both of these thinkers redefined the human body as a mechanical device, a mere collection of "members." However, Descartes identified the true self as an immaterial cognitive mind or "soul" (he used the terms interchangeably), while Hobbes, a materialist and an atheist, believed that human beings are entirely of one nature—all behavior is strictly determined by physical causes. Federici summarizes Hobbes' position that "human behavior is a conglomerate of reflex actions that follow precise natural laws, and compel the individual to incessantly strive for power and domination over others (*Leviathan*: 141ff). Thus the war of all against all (in a hypothetical state of nature), and the necessity for an absolute power [monarch] guaranteeing, through fear and punishment, the survival of the individual in society." In contrast, the philosophy of Descartes, an avowed monarchist with little interest in politics, provided bourgeois intellectuals with justification for free enterprise and inspiration for the development of liberal democracy. By subordinating the body to the mind, his dualism "postulates the possibility of developing in the individual mechanisms of self-discipline, self-management, and self-regulation allowing for a voluntary work relation and a government based on consent." She continues, "…it was the Cartesian model that was to prevail, for it expressed the already active tendency to democratize the mechanisms of social discipline by attributing to the individual will that function of command which, in the Hobbesian model, is left solely in the hands of the state. As many critics of Hobbes maintained, the foundations of public discipline must be rooted in the hearts of men…" for as Alexander Ross observed, "…it is the curb of conscience [a.k.a. superego] that restrains men from rebellion, there is no outward law or force more powerful...." Even so, this bourgeois ideal of self-management, with its suppression of the body and its appetites, was arguably more consonant with the totalitarianism of Hobbes than the anarchy of Rabalais.

But, many aristocrats at this time came to distain the new bourgeois morality. After the severe Puritan restrictions of the English Protectorate were overthrown, the figure of the *libertine* began to take shape: usually of noble rank, sometimes philosophical, but usually more committed to contrivance of refined witticism and extravagant debaucheries. (Ironically, many invoked Hobbes' pessimistic estimation of humanity's essential depravity to justify their dedication to hedonism.) Such were the "Merry Gang" that grew up around King Charles II after the Restoration of the monarchy. Among this coterie was John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester (1647–1680), a man so charismatic that his contemporaries lauded him in verse and modeled dramatic characters after him. He himself produced much satirical and ribald poetry, but chose to publish very little. The Romantic critic William Hazlitt remarked "his contempt for everything that others respect almost amounts to sublimity." His disarming combination of high eloquence with utter candor can be seen in this excerpt from *The Imperfect Enjoyment:*

> … whilst her busy hand would guide that part
> Which should convey my soul up to her heart,
> In liquid raptures I dissolve all o'er,
> Melt into sperm and, and spend at every pore.

A touch from any part of her had done't:
Her hand, her foot, her very look's a cunt.

Smiling, she chides in a kind murmuring noise,
And from her body wipes the clammy joys,
When, with a thousand kisses wandering o'er
My panting bosom, "Is there then no more?"
She cries. "All this to love and rapture's due
Must we not pay a debt to pleasure too?"

But I, the most forlorn, lost man alive,
To show my wished obedience vainly strive
I sigh, alas! and kiss, but cannot *swive [fuck]*….

Some stanzas later, he ends his lament with a harsh curse on his indolent member and a wish of ample recompense for his unfulfilled paramour:

May'st thou to ravenous chancres be a prey,
Or in consuming weepings waste away
May strangury and stone thy days attend
May'st thou ne'er piss, who did refuse to spend
When all my joys did on false thee depend.
And may ten thousand abler pricks agree
To do the wronged Corinna right for thee.

While Rochester pretends to disown his penis, dualism is not systematic in this work; he includes his organ as a constituent part of himself when he says "I dissolve" and "I…cannot swive." Moreover, he reverses the Cartesian power hierarchy: He cannot master his corporeal self in this instance, and overall, the chief principle that drove his life and work was the perusal of *physical gratification*. In distinction to Hobbes' pessimistic appraisal of human impulse, Rochester was not selfish in this principle. In this poem he is not disturbed by hurt pride, but instead, by his failure to satisfy his lover. He portrays her as at least his equal; an active agent with proclivities similar to his own, restrained only a little by a kindly manner. Another interesting feature of this poem is its elevation and empowerment of female genitals, which misogynists had long cast into the worst repute. Rochester's egalitarian sentiments, however, didn't extend beyond his class; in another rhyme he callously admitted: "…missing my whore, I bugger my page."

Rochester's curse on himself was more than fulfilled when he perished at the young age of 33, in all probability from some combination of venereal and alcohol-related maladies. His mother put out word of a deathbed conversion and tried to repress his unpublished works.

The ethos of libertinism was broadcast to British theatrical audiences through bawdy *'Restoration comedies.'* These plays must have been hugely liberating spectacles after nearly two decades of Puritan repression. They featured sexually explicit plots and dialog, occasionally alluding to acts of intercourse just off stage. Female actors performed onstage for the first time, and about a quarter of the plays throughout the period featured them in *'breeches roles,'* where some contrivance made it necessary for them to dress and behave like men. These roles reflected a trend toward greater empowerment of women—the first professional woman playwright, Aphra Behn, also emerged during this time. But social progress is seldom straightforward. The popularity of breeches roles undoubtedly derived from the general perception that the novel notion of gender equity was good for a laugh, and also, from the fact that pants are more revealing of actresses' figures than hooped skirts. These factors may be seen as regressive, but nevertheless, the overall trend reinforces Bakhtin's hypothesis that social equality is enhanced by laughter and freedom from restraint. Behn was able to stage female characters that had the agency and volition to pursue sexual pleasure just as actively as men. [Chernaik cited in Williams]

During the same period, a new type of erotic literature came to England from the continent. The genre has been generally referred to as "whore's dialogs," although characters included nuns and pre-nuptial brides as well as prostitutes. Examples include Nicolas Chorier's *The School of Women* (1660), Ferrante Pallavicino's *The Whore's Rhetorick* (1683), and Jean Barrin's *Venus in the Cloister* (1683). These works took the form of conversations in which a sophisticated woman instructs an inexperienced girl in sexual pleasure. At the conclusion of one such lesson in Barrin's book, the novice exclaims to her mentor: "You know, love, I think I should rather like to try this thing, in the way you've just described. I'm quite sure I should get the greatest possible enjoyment out of it." [p. 86, cited in Toulalan] The popularity of such narratives suggests that men appreciated a view into a secret feminine realm where it was revealed that women, in fact, shared their own proclivities. However, it was said that such books were kept in bawdy houses, not only for the arousal of male customers, but also, "to train up the younger sort"; that is, to arouse the desires of novices and teach them ways of satisfying clients. [*Strange & true Newes FROM Jack-a-Newberries Six Windmills* (1660), p. 5. cited in Toulalan] Historian Sarah Toulalan has reasoned that such works may not have been read exclusively in private. Given the low levels of literacy of the time, it was a common pastime for those who were able, to read aloud to those who could not. In Edward Ravenscroft's play, *The London Cuckolds* (1682) two girls, of twelve years or less, were mentioned to be "reading the beastly, bawdy translated [Chorier's] book called the Schoole of Women." [Donoghue, *Passions between Women*, pp. 10-24; cited in Foxon, *Libertine Literature in England*, p. 6 and in turn cited by Toulalan.]

II. 7 • • •

A strong reaction against sexual expression began to develop soon after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 instilled new monarchs, William and Mary, who cultivated a tone of high moral rectitude. The ranks of middleclass expanded during this time, and, while erotic comedies had previously enjoyed some bourgeois patronage, many of the newly rich resented their licentiousness. The Church of England enhanced its stature by supporting this sentiment. Over the next few years, the Society for the Reformation of Manners and other likeminded organizations were founded. They

policed public morality by exposing brothels and other illicit businesses, and by mounting publicity campaigns and repeated lawsuits against theaters and publishers that produced work that they deemed obscene. Soon, public opinion shifted in a more conservative direction.

Curiously, there was a major shift in homosexual practice in many cities across Europe at this juncture. Previously, bisexuality had been common among libertines and was more or less an open secret. 'Buggery' was usually pederastic (between a man and a boy). The Church considered the practice a grave sin and the state decreed it a capital crime, but it was broadly tolerated and prosecutions were extremely rare. Queer Theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick speculates that instead of wholesale extermination of sodomites, authorities fond it more expedient to control them through a terrorist strategy of making examples of a few now and again by punishing them with public confinement in the stocks or brutal executions; the rest would then recognize the advantage of keeping a low profile. Moreover, if a masculine man occasionally indulged in buggering a boy he was not considered constitutionally different than other men. Likewise, boys' development was not thought to be affected by the practice. But, the early seventeenth century saw the development of urban subcultures comprised of men who exclusively saught adult male partners. Edward Ward described two types of clandestine establishments in his *Secret History of the London Clubs* (1710): one type catered to effeminate *"mollies,"* named after a longstanding slang term for female prostitutes; the other was frequented by foppish men-about-town called *"beaus."* Interestingly, mollies tended to be of working class background. More research must be done to satisfactorily explain these developments. Pressure from the bourgeois moral crusades against pederasty was certainly a factor. Another ingredient seems to have been economic: satirical literature of the time derided 'woman-haters' for pursuing pleasure free from the expenses of supporting a family. *[Mundus Foppensis, The Levelers]* [Contradiction with concurrent development of essentialist theories of sexual difference]

Libertinism was effectively quelled in England by the second decade of the eighteenth century, but it soon resurrected in France under the Regency. As the century progressed, the public sphere became thoroughly perforated with labyrinths of clandestine sexual intrigue, as dramatized in the epistolary novel *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (*Dangerous Liaisons,* 1782) by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos.

Certainly, the most notorious exemplar of French libertinage was Donatien Alphonse François, the Marquis de Sade (1740–1814). In his youth, this scion of ancient Provençal lineage and cousin to the Bourbons took full advantage of his exalted privilege to pursue unconstrained licentious pleasure. However, his fortunes began to take a different course when he was about twenty. His father, also an inveterate rake, had nearly bankrupted the family with his excesses. Prestige of ancestry was virtually the last remaining family resource, so the elder Sade effectively sold his son into marriage with the plain daughter of a recently ennobled bourgeois magistrate. But Donatien found his wife's younger sister more to his liking; he seduced her and they ran off together. This and other escapades ultimately incited the wrath of his formidable mother-in-law and she petitioned to the King to have him thrown in jail. He languished there for twelve long years, not to be freed until after the French Revolution. Imagine the anger and frustration of this impetuous and imperious man! His sole avenues of release were eating, writing, and masturbation.

Much of Sade's fiction can be understood as savage satire. He pretends to take the reader behind the façades that cloak the hypocritical stalwarts of society—nobles, bourgeois, and priests—revealing them as avaricious aficionados of vice. His work anticipated Marx's critique of the fetishization of wealth by depicting characters driven to masturbate upon piles of gold. It abounds with descriptions of tremendous wasteful luxury. Juliette's mentor Clairwil stated: "…only fools are unable to understand that one… can love wasteful squandering upon one's pleasures and refuse a farthing to charity." (*Juliette*: 410) At the other extreme from these cynical characters are innocent waifs and prim matrons (uncannily resembling his mother-in-law) who take society's moral standards at face value; these are repeatedly rewarded for their putative 'virtue' with tortuous sexual humiliations. Throughout it all, the Church is lambasted with all manner of extravagant blasphemies.

In the sensory deprivation of his incarceration, Sade invented characters who saught "the final limit of what our human faculties can endure." (*Juliette*: 340) His quest for utmost excess led him to imagine orgies that could be said to prefigure the assembly line efficiency of the Industrial Revolution. But sex was not an unadulterated impulse in his work. His reaction against society was so complete that the satisfaction derived from any imaginary act depended almost entirely on its level of transgression. In his powerlessness, he created characters that proudly declared freedom from any restraint or moral grounding. These refined personifications of Hobbes' brute invoked Nature to justify the free reign of their impulses. Mutual satisfaction in sex was of no concern to them; much the opposite, cruelty was proclaimed to be an essential desire of all who have the strength to express it. Therefore rape, torture, or even murder were ideal corollaries to sex. Moreover, in extending these principles to society at large, they asserted that civilization and morality have only weakened mankind; they aspired instead to a sublime condition of violent chaos: "…one great volcano belching forth an uninterrupted spew of execrable crimes…." (*Juliette*: 732)

And yet, while some have used Sade's literature to substantiate an inextricable link between sex and violence, his life indicates otherwise. In his detailed police dossier, there is no record of him doing serious harm to anyone even in his wildest days. Upon his release from prison, he was penniless. He first turned to writing for income, authoring some non-descript plays and publishing a sensationalized version of *Justine* in 1791. The Revolutionary period has been called a "Golden Age" of "licentious lit-

erature" (the term *pornography* as we use it was not yet extent); the genre gained repute because it was used to satirize, smear, and excoriate the aristocracy and clergy. Nevertheless, Sade was briefly reduced to working as a theatre usher. However, he was soon able to leverage his cachet as a former prisoner of the *Ancien Régime* to obtain positions as a judge on the revolutionary tribunal and as the secretary of his section of Paris. In these capacities, he worked to improve sanitation in the Paris hospitals, spoke out against dueling, argued for lenient sentences for criminals, and inveighed against the death penalty. He even risked himself to save his in-laws from the guillotine! But, with the rise of Robespierre and the onset of *The Terror*, his "counter-revolutionary" opposition to the Revolution's "blade of justice" was noted and he was arrested in 1793. Narrowly escaping execution, he was released after the overthrow of Robespierre the next year. He lived quietly until 1801, when Napoleon Bonaparte ordered his arrest on an obscenity charge. He was imprisoned without trial until his death in 1814. In all, Sade was incarcerated for more than a third of his 74 years, but the man's immense energy could not be stymied. Given his obesity, and the volume of his literary output, one hazards to imagine the extent of his third preoccupation.

During the eighteenth century the "solitary vice" became an object of fear bordering on hysteria. This trend seems to have begun in England as part of the previously mentioned morality campaigns that began near the end of the previous century. Then, in 1712, an anonymous tract was published entitled: *Onania; or, the Heinous Sin of Self-Pollution, and All Its Frightful Consequences, in both Sexes, Considered, with Spiritual and Physical Advice to those, who have already injur'd themselves by this abominable Practice*. Historian Thomas W. Laqueur has established the identity of the author, one John Marten, a quack purveyor of patent cures. Laqueur writes that Marten sold the book together with medicine for 12 shillings—"more than two weeks' wages for a footman." Dr. Marten warned that the consequences of the "heinous sin" included pimples, slack jaws, stunted growth, priapism, gonorrhea, blindness, heart murmurs, epilepsy, wasting, and insanity (all of these, incidentally, could be treated with the good doctor's compendium of potions) and ultimately death. *Onania* was wildly successful; by 1750 it had sold some thirty-eight thousand copies.

As the century progressed, more reputable medical authorities took up this crusade. Even though these men were ostensibly scientists rather than clergy, they stigmatized masturbation as among the most perfidious of failings. This view gained wide acceptance. Among the charges trumped-up against Marie-Antoinette in her capital trial of 1793 was the assertion that she had instructed her 9-year-old son in the practice. By the early nineteenth century, doctors who promoted public health decried masturbation as a crime that "strikes society in its element…and tends to destroy it by enervating…the subjects who would efficaciously contribute to its preservation and splendor. How often we see these weakened, pallid beings, equally feeble of body and mind, owing only to masturbation, principal object of their thoughts, the state of languor and exhaustion to which they have sunk! Thenceforth, incapable of defending the nation or of serving it by honorable or useful work, they lead, in a society that despises them, a life that they have rendered void for others and often onerous to themselves" (Drs. Fournier and Béguin, 1819, cited in Bennett & Rosario:122).

How can we explain the transformation of a relatively minor sin into such a loathsome crime? Perhaps, at a time when diseases were abundant, but real knowledge of their causes was not, the guilty pleasure of the "convenient vice"—broadly practiced, if not universal— provided the nascent medical profession with an ideal scapegoat for all ills. When a cure lay beyond the power of a physician, at least the patient could be made to understand that the fault lay not with the doctor, but with himself.

Still, it seems ironic that, just when the Enlightenment began to espouse the importance of individual autonomy, sexual self–sufficiency began to become so anathematized. As Robert Darby has observed: "John Locke (c1690) had famously declared that all political liberty derived from an individual's property in his own person; for a doctor, priest or philosopher to assert that girls and boys, or even women and men, were not free to do what they wished with their own genitals seems a blank denial of this proposition." But the social contract implied that individuals must accept the responsibility to contribute to rational discourse in managing a just society. They must reach beyond the private domain of sensations and urges to the public sphere where universally valid governing precepts may be deduced. And so, Jean-Jacques Rousseau condemned the "pure interiority" of the "dangerous supplement that deceives nature." "Nature," whose authority had superseded that of "God" for many intellectuals, was not understood by looking inward, but instead, by discovery of rational and functional principles. Thus, in *The Metaphysics of Morals,* Immanuel Kant decried "wanton self-abuse" by reasoning:

> "As one's love of life is intended by nature for the preservation of his person, so is his sexual love intended for the preservation of his kind, i.e., each is a natural end. ...A lust is called unnatural when a man is stimulated not by an actual object but by imagining it, thus creating it himself unpurposively. For his fancy engenders a desire contrary to an end of nature and indeed contrary to an end more important even than that of the love of life, since it aims only at preserving the individual, while sexual love aims at the preservation of the whole species. …the thought of it is so revolting that even calling such a vice by its proper name is considered a kind of immorality; such is not the case with suicide, which no one hesitates to publish to all the world with all its horrors. … [the] unpurposive use, of one's natural attributes…[is] a violation of one's duty to himself (and indeed in the highest degree where the unnatural use is concerned). …a man gives up his personality

(throws it away) when he uses himself merely as a means for the gratification of an animal drive."

The illimitable imagination became an object of deep concern. While many applauded the popularization of novels, saying that they encouraged emotional sensitivity *(la sensibilité),* sympathy for human commonality, and provided useful exemplars for living, several of the same critics warned that reading them could encourage substitution of fantasy for reality and withdrawal into a private world of false pleasures. Particular trepidation was expressed for those with "impressionable brains," especially women and children.

The new demands of bourgeois society had initiated a rise in formalized education in the late seventeenth century, and with it came a greater general investment in the notion of "childhood" as a distinct stage of life. [Philippe Aries (1960) cited in Bennett] Locke's idea of the innocent mind as an impressionable *tabula rasa* (blank slate) became very influential in pedagogical theory, and so major importance was placed on formative experience. (Rousseau offered support of this proposition in his posthumously published *Confessions* (1882)*,* when he described how his childhood experience of receiving spankings from an attractive nanny instilled in him a lifelong erotic fixation on that punishment.) Added to this was the popular medical opinion that since the onset of puberty is marked by the development of seminal fluid, this fluid must be essential to maturation—therefore, wasting it was deemed to be a matter of serious concern. With such propositions in mind, Rousseau warned educators in *Emile, or On Education* (1762): "If [your student] once knows that dangerous supplement [masturbation], he is lost. Thenceforth his body and heart will be enervated, he will carry to the grave the sad effects of that habit, the most mortal one to which a young man can be subjected." [cited in Bennett] By the next century, antionanism literature in France and the U.S. stressed what could be called "spermatic economy": wise management and investment of seminal resources. (Barker-Benfield 1972 cited in Bennett) Moreover, it was reasoned, if youth could satisfy *themselves* sexually, what would entice them to accept the duties of family?

It can be seen that masturbation became, in effect, a screen onto which was projected bourgeois anxieties. It was the inversion of the core values of responsible self-management, public participation, realism, rational functionalism and thrift. Ironically, the secular bourgeois Enlightenment accomplished what over a millennium of Christian proselytizing had failed to do: impose sexual continence on the broad populous. Adolescents were sentenced to years of privation, a cruel proving ground where they learned to hide their desires (even from themselves, as much as possible), to economize their resources, and to put a good face on it. Eventual gratification was only promised to those who could achieve what it takes to win a life-long mate; for boys: status and prosperity; for the girls: physical attractiveness and chaste coquetry.

This prohibition was enforced with terrifying cautionary lectures punctuated with gruesome illustrations of diseases that were said to result. Bland food and regular exercise were thought to help forestall the urge. Children that failed to restrain themselves were faced with humiliating confrontations and surveillance. Physical remedies included forcing children to wear special mitts or tying down their hands. Apparatuses evocative of sadomasochistic fetish were employed: spiked penis sheaths, chastity-belt-like cages that fastened over the genitals, and hobbles that restrained girls from opening their legs. Later, erection alarms that gave electric shocks were contrived. In the late nineteenth century, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, health crusader (and inventor of cornflakes) recommended all of the measures just listed, but prescribed harsher treatment for persistent recalcitrants. In 1888, he wrote in his *Treatment for Self-Abuse and Its Effects*:

> "A remedy for masturbation which is almost always successful in small boys is circumcision. The operation should be performed by a surgeon without administering an anesthetic, as the brief pain attending the operation will have a salutary effect upon the mind, especially if it be connected with the idea of punishment. In females, the author has found the application of pure carbolic acid [phenol] to the clitoris an excellent means of allaying the abnormal excitement."

II. 8 • • •

In *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Michel Foucault famously drew attention to Enlightenment philosopher Jeremy Bentham's 1785 proposal for a model prison he termed the Panopticon (which may be translated as *all seeing* or *totally visible*). Bentham's plan was configured to allow surveillance of any prisoner at any time, but no prisoner could know when he is actually being watched. It was thought that the insecurity produced by this situation would compel the same discipline as constant observation. Although this plan was never realized, Foucault proposed that it was a manifestation of a modern mechanism of control though threat of surveillance that has been employed not only in prisons, but in modern institutions including schools, workplaces, military and medical facilities, and ultimately, throughout modern society at large. However, with due deference to that author, it must be said that the transparent surveillance society was *not* an innovation of the Enlightenment. To the contrary, what was new in this period was greater pressures of humiliation and legal hazards that resulted in a general *desire for privacy*.

In the seventeenth though nineteenth centuries increasing numbers of Europeans and Americans crowded into large into cities with narrow streets, living in ramshackle housing with thin walls that were prone to cracks. Windows and doors would remain open during the stifling summer months. Many people lived in their places of business, where the public may enter at will. Under these circumstanced people would constantly overhear, or catch glimpses of, one another's most intimate behavior.

In the climate of the new moral standards that prevailed in England after the Glorious Revolution, court reports reveal that witnesses had no compunctions in spying on suspected illicit activities; frequently they would enjoin others to the specticle. One record related:

> The Evidence against her was a Girl, who lived in a Room [on] one pair of Stairs in the same House where the Prisoner liv'd, who deposed, That there being a Hole in the Floor, and the Cieling broken through, whereby she could see into the Prisoner's Room, at Night about 8 or 9 a Clock, she being above Stairs, and there being a Light in the Prisoner's Room, she saw the Prisoner sitting in a Chair by the Fireside, leaning backwards; and that she took the Dog to her, who she said acted to her as with a Bitch. [*The Tryal, &c. of Mary Price* (1704), in *A Compleat Collection Of Remarkable Tryals Of the Most Notorious Malefactors, At The Sessions-House in the Old Baily, for near Fifty Years past. Vol. II* (London, 1718), pp. 94-9, cited in Toulalan:708]

The supposed puritan reformer John Dunton, who professed a redemptive mission but, in fact, trafficked in voyeuristic sensationalism, frequently reported observing sex acts in semi-public places such as parks or rooms in taverns in his monthly journal entitled: *The Night-Walker; or, Evening Rambles in Search of Lewd Women, With The Conferences Held with Them, &c. To be publish'd Monthly, 'till a Discovery be made of all the chief Prostitutes in England, from the Pensionary Miss, down to the Common Strumpet* (1696-1697). [Toulalan]

Toulalan has pointed out that tension between privacy and voyeurism figures highly in John Cleland's *Fanny Hill, Or, The Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748). The eponymous heroine was initiated into sexuality through voyeurism; she is shown a place from which she can spy on others as they have sex, which stimulated her own desire.

The issue of privacy is central to the enjoyment of such literature. It functions as a window into a hidden, private world where all urges may be fulfilled. He (or she) has the privilege to voyeuristically breach that privacy, but can never actually join it. Yet, for this very reason, he has the privilege of maintaining his own privacy. Therefore he can concentrate his entire attention on his pleasure, but must also feel the lack of spontaneous interaction an actual human being.

Against this background, further antecedents of the modern genre of pornography gradually took shape. As we have seen, erotic content had appeared in bawdy poems, romances and stories. It also figured in anti-ecclesiastical tracts and political exposés. The rise of the novel and biography provided additional venues, and the growth of science brought pseudo-medical manuals. The word "pornography" was first applied in its current meaning in the 19th century. Originally it meant "writing about prostitutes." I will be supplying a sample from that genre, but first a brief digression to investigate the trade that occasioned it.

As the eighteenth century wore on, London's nouveau riche grew more complacent and the shine of reformist zeal eroded. The wide gulf between the moneyed classes and the proletariat stimulated an unprecedented growth in the market catering to male proclivities. In 1762, James Boswell reported walking along the Strand and being delighted to find himself "surrounded with numbers of free-hearted ladies of all kinds: from the splendid Madam at fifty guineas a night, down to the civil nymph with white-thread stockings who tramps along the Strand and will resign her engaging person to your Honour for a pint of wine and a shilling." [Denlinger] Four years earlier, a conservative estimate put the number of full time prostitutes in London at over 3,000, when the total population was only about 675,000. [Randolph Trumbach cited in Denlinger] In addition, many women worked part-time to supplement meager incomes earned as servants, laundresses, maids, shop girls or as vendors in the streets or market. [ibid] While the loss of a woman's virtue was often portrayed as the first step down the road to a dismal end in many contemporaneous novels (and in a well known suite of prints by William Hogarth), historian Anna Clark has observed that in London's "plebeian culture chastity was not necessarily the most important female virtue; whatever their sexual situation, women could be valued as industrious workers, affectionate mothers, kind friends and good neighbors." [cited in Denlinger] However, disincentives including police harassment and the dangers of disease and ill-tempered clients did appear to have their effect; most prostitutes seem to leave the profession after about six years. [ibid]

This brisk trade occasioned a new literature whose foremost example was *Harris's List of Covent-Garden Ladies; or, Man of Pleasure's Kalendar,* a kind of Fodor's Travel Guide to London prostitutes which was published annually for forty years. It listed names, addresses, prices, and poetically evocative descriptions of women and their skills. The following entry is an example:

> ***Mrs. Dodd, No. 6, Hind-court, Fleet Street***
> [W]e may conclude, from Mrs. Dodd, that a woman in years may be perfectly alluring; she is, indeed, turned of forty, rather fat and short, yet she looks well, dresses neat, and can divide as smartly covered, and as neat a leg and foot as ever beat time to the silent flute; her temper and behaviour are good, and if you are not soon disposed for the attack, she will shew you such a set of pictures, that very seldom fails to alarm the sleeping member. Then may you behold the lovely fount of delight, reared on two pillars of monumental alabaster; the symmetry of its parts, its borders enriched with wavering tendrils, its ruby portals, and the tufted grove, that crowns the summit of the mount, all join to invite the guest to enter. The cordial reception he meets with therein, with the tide of flowing bliss, more delicious than the boasted nectar of the gods, engulph the enraptured soul, and set the lovely owner of the premisses, above nine tenths of the green gewgaws that flutter

about the town. If discipline firms the soldier in the wars of Mars, experience finishes the female combatant in the skirmishes of Venus. That experience this lady has, and is perfectly skilled in every delightful manoeuvre, knowing how to keep time, when to advance and retreat, to face to the right or the left, and when to shower down a whole valley of love; so that those who are vanquished by her glory in their defeat, pant only for returning vigour to renew the combat; she is perfectly mistress in the art of restoring life, and performs the tender friction with a hand as soft as turtles [turtledove's] down. Keeps the house, and after giving you a whole night's entertainment, is perfectly satisfyed, and will give you a comfortable cup of tea in the morning, for one pound one. (63)

The public/private dichotomy operates again when the description of Mrs. Dodd's outer public appearance—rather prosaic—gives way to ecstatic grandiloquence when her hidden sex is revealed. The dénouement returns to reassuring practicalities. *Harris's List,* and similar publications, painted the vision of an inexhaustible cornucopia of all manner of willing and able feminine talent, hidden away, only to be found with the invaluable aid of this selfsame guide. Those who were not so intrepid as to explore this plenitude at first hand, and those who lacked sufficient funds, could use the guide as an card of introduction to imaginary companions who's company could be enjoyed in private.

As we saw earlier, the symbiosis between licentiousness and political engagement is demonstrated again by this quote from the preface of the 1789 *List*: "[W]hy should the victims [i.e., prostitutes] of this natural propensity [i.e., sexual desire] ... be hunted like outcasts from society, perpetually gripped by the hand of petty tyrany? ... Is not the minister of state who sacrifices his country's honour to his private interest ... more guilty than her?" [Margaret Jacob cited in Denlinger]

During English Queen Caroline's trial for adultery in 1820, political pamphlets became infused with obscene allegations and derision (just as in France in the years surrounding the Revolution). However, in the years following the trial, many printers shifted their energies from political work to more remunerative salacious literature. Over the next ten years, "pornography," as we have come to understand it, became a major underground industry in Britain. [Iain McCalman cited by Mudge]

[• Thomas Rowlandson's obscene satire was rejection of elite culture.
• 1810 Primitive sexuality: Saartjie Baartman, the "Hottentot Venus"
• Orientalism

II. 9 • • •

• Early American culture had earthy acceptance of sexuality. Prostitution throughout NYC. Visible homosexual subculture paralleled the growth of a rowdy and macho "sporting" culture of young, heterosexual, working class men who engaged in bar hopping, and promiscuous sex with prostitutes.
• Puritan and Enlightenment influences
• 18th_19th cen mores: bourgeoisie saught to differentiate themselves from both from aristocratic licentiousness and underclass vulgarity-primness as over-compensation for underclass origins; Cult of True Womanhood, passionless wife, private home as shelter from world (& some revisionism)
• 1850-Dress reform; In reaction to the cost and physical restrictiveness of Victorian dress, with its bustles and corsets, Amelia Bloomer and Elizabeth Cady Stanton designed a simple dress that women could wear over "bloomers," which were ankle-length pantaloons. The bloomers, which many Victorian-era Americans viewed as sexually suggestive
• Modernist functionalism
• 1890 Beginning of kitchen and bathroom as domestic laboratories for administration of bodily needs
• Influence of Louis Pasteur's germ theory1878
• Freud brought sexuality into the social; unsettled the Victorian centrality of reproductive sexuality and the rigid distinction of masculinity and femininity. conceptualization of how the "natural" materials of sexuality (instincts) are transformed into culture and individual psycho-sexuality. civilization is only possible at the expense of repressing and regulating our natural sexual instincts.
• 1873 Anthony Comstock created the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice
• The Fairy Craze, 1890-1914,
• Slumming
• Throughout most of the nineteenth century, living outside the family was not a viable option for most women. But by the 1890s, "mannish" women had begun to gather in public places in NYC's Bowery.
• 1897 Emma Goldman 1869 - 1940, contraception, free love, gay rights
• 1904 G. Stanley Hall, the first defined "Adolescence" as separate from adulthood
• Post WWI loosening of morality—reasons??
• 1916, Margaret Sanger opened a family planning and birth control clinic, published *What Every Girl Should Know,*
• 1930: Hayes Production Code in Hollywood
• 1941 the word "teenager" entered the language, referring to a distinctive culture and market rather than to a biological stage of life. Since then, adolescence expanded at both ends, with pre-adolescents adopting the behavior and fashions associated with the teen years and young people in their 20s delaying marriage and remaining financially dependent on their parents. Fear that kids were growing up too fast while their older siblings weren't growing up at all.
• 1950s generation traumatized by the Great Depression and World War II created a culture with emphasis on normality and conformity & promise of material prosperity
• Kinsey Reports
• Rock and Roll
• Playboy

• 60s Sexual Revolution: Birth control, Legitimization of women's sexuality,
Reforms in the legal and medical regulation of sexuality. Increased commercialization and commodification of sexuality through pornography and mass media. Concomitant relaxation of censorship laws.
• Anti-porn activists
• Herbert Marcuse & William Riech fused Marxism and Psychoanalysis to forge a revolutionary sexual radicalism which argued that capitalism sexually repressed the masses in the interests of its life-negating and exploitative goals. They argued that liberated and spontaneous sexual expression is repressed under capitalism to encourage self-restraint and compulsive work. Marcuse expanded the Freudian concept of the "internalization of authority" from the individual to a cultural scale to explain how our instinctual erotic drives are transformed both through sublimation and repressive desublimation until the work ethic and altered "Pleasure Principle" of the consumer society have become second nature.
• feminist gay & lesbian movements
• 1973 Mulvey , "Visual Pleasure & Narrative Cinema"
• Rise of religious right
• Effects of new media
• Under-class chic, recent rise of lesbianism

Conclusion]