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*June Dobbs Butts*

## INEXTRICABLE ASPECTS OF SEX AND RACE

### **Introduction:**

The concepts of sex and race are interwoven in the fabric of American culture to such a degree that it is virtually impossible to separate them. One can best study their interaction from a cognitive point of view—i.e., by thinking as well as feeling. The purpose of this paper is to present three major hypotheses which the author feels characterize American culture racially as well as sexually. For each hypothesis, specific examples will be cited delineating the interaction of two variables, sex and race. Broadly stated, the hypotheses contend that American culture is characterized by three great quests or pursuits, and that in each the concepts of sex and race are so enmeshed as to defy separation. They are, first, the *Quest for Power Dominance*, secondly the *Quest for Identity*, and thirdly the *Quest for Love*. Each will be considered in turn.

### The Quest for Power Dominance: Hypothesis #1

The pursuit of power has always been regarded as honorable in American culture. The following brief historical examples support this theory:

#### **Examples:**

Witness if you will, the arrogance of our claim to have “discovered America” and our relationship with the original native Americans—the mistreated and misnamed “Indians.” Reflect on our frontier mentality, and the continued flaunting of it, even in times as recent as the inauguration of the late President John F. Kennedy wherein he and Robert Frost made poetic references

justifying the continued need for a frontier mentality. And today, witness the lack of clarity or focus characterizing our Bicentennial celebrations as we attempt to recall and relive our nation's origins. Analyze our attitude toward the land itself which we thought—in spite of evidence to the contrary—offered us boundless resources and cultural isolation, and then ponder our current indifference to ecology in terms of national priorities. Consider our history of institutionalized human slavery, the dissolution of which came with the end of the Civil War in 1865 but the legacy of which is felt in 1975 by white parents who are, according to real estate brokers, now fleeing South Boston in significant numbers so as to avoid next fall's scheduled public school integration.

The need for power dominance is no less virulent when it is applied to the sexual domain. Notice our national preoccupation with things sexual, and especially when taken out of a specifically sexual content. Americans snicker at sexual references in polite society, yet are embarrassed to talk freely about their sexual lives, especially if they are experiencing inadequacies or discomfort in this domain. One can freely make a sexual joke to pass the time of day, but it is considered in bad taste to tell a friend of sexual troubles. It is as though Americans are saying that sex is legitimate subject matter outside the bedroom rather than inside, in other words it's OK to joke but not to be serious. Only in America is a car advertised as "the sexy European" or a toothpaste sold because it allegedly "gives you sex appeal." The American need to commercialize sex has led us into sexual schizophrenia. This is only in part due to our Puritan heritage.

**Examples:**

When Americans in West Virginia burn books and call them destructive forces in their schools, they perpetuate sexual schizophrenia. When we advise other nations as to the conduct of their population study and population control, while doing nothing in America to discourage the true cause<sup>1</sup> of our population increase—i.e., the fashionable 3rd or 4th child born to the upper and middle classes of white suburban families, we show our schizoid nature. When we encourage World Bank to push recently independent countries such as Trinidad-Tobago to accept loans for family planning centers throughout the land, a massive program of Sex

Education in all schools, while simultaneously turning a deaf ear to their government's request for loans for small businesses and for sewerage removal, then we become "the ugly American," and can expect to hear cries of "genocide."

It is typically American to strive to be a winner, or at least to be on the winning side, but we as a nation should be aware that such an attitude is out of character for millions of people on this earth. They are group-oriented. We, as Americans, have a need to be the *first*—or put another way, to be the winner—or put yet another way, to be the strongest, or even merely the biggest. All these superlatives are aspects of power dominance, and have become a psychological need which is deemed proper behavior throughout our country. It is inculcated in toddlers on the playground as assiduously as it is expressed by brokers in the American Stock Exchange. I contend that cut-throat competition has thus been made a virtue and is now proudly referred to as "rugged individualism," a recognizable American trait.

How does one trace the interaction between the factors of sex and race in the Quest for Power Dominance? One of the surest indices of the ethos of the culture is via its language. It has been said that one does not teach English grammar to children so much as one teaches English manners. Language tells us how people feel about themselves and others. I have long been aware that the Anglo-Saxon word "fair" has several meanings, all of which convey intrinsically a sense of worth and goodness, beauty and honesty, and above all, a sense of whiteness.

"She's a fair young maid" . . . means she's blonde.

"He struck a fair bargain" . . . means he's honest.

"The day dawned bright and fair" . . . means good weather.

It was only when I consulted Webster's dictionary that I found fourteen differentiations for this word—all of them salutary. When the Anglo-Saxons spoke of themselves, they spoke exceeding fair. Witness, however, the opprobrium engendered by such words as dark, black, swarthy, and colored. These words, all of which are used when referring to people termed "non-white," have negative connotations which range from dishonesty, bad luck, and deceit, to nameless evil! Frantz Fanon, a psychoanalyst by training and a revolutionary by calling, though writing in another language, has captured the intention of the word "fair" when he paraphrases what whites think of their whiteness: "I am white: that is

to say that I possess beauty and virtue, which have never been black. I am the color of the daylight.”<sup>2</sup>

When dark people speak of themselves—in their native languages—a different picture emerges. The Spanish words of “*negra*,” “*morena*,” and “*trigena*” inherently signify beauty, affection, warmth, all in a dark-skinned person. Little wonder since the Moors’ sojourn literally colored and enriched that part of Europe for about 400 years; approximately the equivalent amount of time in which the slave trade colored and made rich America. It is interesting to note that there is no single word in the English language which simultaneously means dark and delightful. Although many African languages contain words referring to themselves which mean both beauty and merit, their descendants in America only adopted the slogan, “Black is beautiful,” about twelve years ago. Unfortunately, even now most black people do not yet know their infinite, sun-drenched beauty. Witness the bitter musings of the poet Waring Cuney:

She does not know her beauty,  
She thinks her brown body has no glory.  
If she could dance naked under palm trees,  
And see her image in the river she would know.  
But there are no palm trees on the street,  
And dishwasher gives back no images.<sup>3</sup>

Most whites are unaware of what they envy when they tell each other “Oh, you just got back; boy, what a gorgeous tan!” So much for language and what happened linguistically to black people and to their self-concept during the hundreds of years of forced slavery. Is not the linguistic evolution of Black Americans inextricably bound up with what happened to white Americans, or in a word—to America? This leads us to the second great pursuit:

## The Quest for Identity: Hypothesis #2

Again the concepts of sex and race are inextricably interwoven. It is my contention that whites and Blacks became obsessed with each other during the long centuries in which the slave traffic made America a rich and dominant world power. Through sexual union, all manner of things were assumed to take place. It was as though

the sex act *per se*—especially when inter-racially ignited—was thought capable of magic powers. I do not doubt that some fireworks took place, but I suspect that the circuit was often overloaded.

Although many black women were forced to honor the sexual whims, desires, and even depravities of white slave masters, there were also some slave women who sought such contact (or at least took comfort once it had happened) in the hope of securing freedom for their offspring. The renowned scholar, W. E. B. DuBois, was the first to document the thesis that white prostitution was unknown in this country until the dissolution of black slavery.

Many black sociologists, such as Robert Staples, have substantiated the degree of non-competitive companionship which existed between black men and black women during those turbulent days, even if lacking now.<sup>4</sup> It is my belief that this example of sensual egalitarianism was unique in Western civilization. Black men and black women served as support systems for each other, and the emotional bond of family was even more precious because of its tenuous hold: any slave master could break up the most loving marital or familial bonds if a tempting price were made for a slave. Black men and black women brought to their social and to their sexual relations a sense of equality: they both needed each other, and both suffered from the white master.

Some masters, after having had children by slave women, later freed their slave children, usually upon the event of their death, as was said to be the case with George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and numerous other founding fathers. The rarity of such an event as bequeathing money or property only lent more lustre to the likelihood of its occurrence: indeed Fisk University was started for emancipated slave children. What this tells about white sexuality of prominent white citizens who could father children, call them slaves or chattel, and only from the confines of their graves “free” them—what this awful truth portends for untold generations of Americans—has yet to be seen. The white woman as historian has been curiously silent on this aspect of our common heritage.

Frantz Fanon wrote tellingly on the issue of interracial sexuality. Himself married to a white woman and having completed a successful course of psychoanalytic training, he could afford to

be honest in writing of his inmost motivations. He met his wife after leaving his medical practice in France, and devoted himself from then until his death to the cause of Algerian independence. His role in this cause is of singular significance. Both he and his wife came from countries which the French had colonized, she from Algeria and he from Martinique. His fight for the freedom of her country was successful many years ago whereas today in the French West Indies, life is so tranquil that one can scarcely hear a revolutionary ripple. Nonetheless, Fanon's words give us insight into the intricacies of sex and race, and should be interpreted—judging from the larger context of his writings—not as dissatisfaction with his own skin color, but as a fundamental demand to exist and to be reckoned with on the world's terms. He wrote in a work which predated his revolutionary experience and which represents a classic description of the colonized mind:

Out of the blackest part of my soul, across the zebra striping of my mind, surges this desire to be *white*.

I wish to be acknowledged not as a *black* man but as *white*. Now—and this is a form of recognition that Hegel had not envisioned—who but a white woman can do this for me? By loving me she proves that I am worthy of white love. I am loved like a white man. I am a white man.

Her love takes me onto the noble road that leads to total realization.

I marry white culture, white beauty, white whiteness.

When my restless hands caress those white breasts, they grasp white civilization and dignity, and make them mine.<sup>5</sup>

The inference that there is an inherently special ingredient in interracial sexuality has appeared in several publications by black men—notably Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul On Ice*, Calvin Hernton's *Sex and Race in America*, Frantz Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks*, and John O. Killens' *Black Man's Burden*. In each of these books, at least one chapter is devoted entirely to this theme. White writers like Norman Mailer have written about the impact which Blacks have made upon their lives, even though they seldom attempt to elucidate the etiology of their fears.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the writings of Alan Bell serve a useful purpose as he summarizes the research which the Kinsey Institute has continued over the genera-

tion since Kinsey's death.<sup>7</sup> In tracing the etiology of a fear on the part of whites toward Blacks in general, Bell states:

We must begin with the black body which looms larger than life in the perceptions of white people who are basically alienated from their own bodies, who reject the body's message, who try to disregard any evidence of its impulses, who proclaim a victory of mind over matter, who deodorize it in life and make sure it doesn't stink in death.<sup>8</sup>

Very few whites have written about or tried to explain their feelings concerning the number of black children whom they and their forefathers have caused to be born. Many try to disclaim knowledge or culpability. A memorable occasion occurred several years ago on television when the celebrated black author James Baldwin confronted a southern white gentleman. During the course of their debate over what black people really wanted in America Baldwin announced bluntly:

You're not worried about me marrying *your* daughter.  
You're worried about me marrying your wife's daughter.  
I've been marrying your daughter ever since  
the days of slavery.<sup>9</sup>

The record does not show what the gentleman replied—but after all, what could he have said? The 25-plus million black people in America today are not the result of inbreeding alone: we are the living testimonial to the inextricable aspects of sex and race, and America has never rested easy with that fact of life. It has tormented the dreams of many white people—male and female.

When Sigmund Freud was coming to international prominence, shortly after World War I, a young physician who had grown up in the South named Clarence Oberndorf was one of the first to travel to Vienna seeking to become psychoanalyzed. Being Jewish like Freud and of European extraction, Oberndorf felt sufficiently at home with Freud, indeed even conducting his analysis in German, to wish to introduce Freud's method of treating emotional illness to America. Unfortunately, they fell into a dispute over Freud's interpretation of one of Oberndorf's initial dreams. The dream which Oberndorf presented was that he was "in the driver's seat of an old-fashioned country wagon drawn by a white horse and a black horse . . .,"<sup>10</sup> with both horses pulling in opposite directions, he could not control the wagon and was in peril of



being torn apart. Freud interpreted this dream as indicating that Oberndorf had an unresolved childhood conflict between competing forces. On the one hand there was his biologically real white Mother whom society esteemed but whom he found to be personally withdrawn as a Mother; on the other hand there was his caretaker since birth, a black Mammy whom society devalued as a woman but whom he found to be personally warm and invaluable as a mother figure. Oberndorf disagreed with Freud, and even left this interesting detail out of his autobiography; to this extent he had picked up some of the sexual schizophrenia of his native land. Thus, a method of treatment which was designed to help people rid themselves of emotional illness and psychic blind spots was refused by a worthy disciple because of the interlocking forces of sex and race, American style.

Another psychoanalyst, Dr. Phyllis Greenacre, has done an extensive critique on what I would call both the Quest for Power Dominance, and the Quest for Identity. She illustrates how the interlocking forces of sex and race have been used in their service.

The use of slaves as domestic servants furthered prolongation of infancy and childhood. Having things done for them gave whites a feeling of power.<sup>11</sup>

As the white child is socialized, the consequences of having two mother figures—one white and one black—makes for developmental difficulties. It would seem that Oberndorf's dream was more prototypical than extreme. Greenacre in her essay "The Child Wife as Ideal: Sociological Considerations" traces the difficult development of the southern white boy as well as the southern white girl as they stumble through the maze of interlocking forces involving the very roots of sex and race. As she puts it, the young white boy learns to avoid a solution to the Oedipus complex, and the young white girl abdicates her role of maturing woman altogether.<sup>12</sup> Thus, for whites it seems easier to cut the Gordian knot than to unravel it. One wonders about the psychic development of the young black boy and the young black girl, for according to these psychoanalytic models they do not even come up for consideration.

The impact which Blacks, particularly as servants, have made upon the psyches of white Americans, youngsters and adults, is a

continuing part of the contemporary American social scene. Some years ago a friend of mine, the wife of a New York psychoanalyst called me on the phone after acquiring their first sleep-in maid. She was jubilant in describing how elated she felt. As she put it, "I'm just sitting here doing nothing—not lifting a finger—and my house is getting cleaner and cleaner. I really feel like a lady!" When I asked her whether she didn't also feel guilty saying this in front of the maid, she replied "Oh no! That's her job." A week later she couldn't understand why the sleep-in maid had vanished without giving notice or without taking any of her clothing out of the closet. She seemed particularly concerned that the maid had left a new pair of sneakers which she had purchased for her the day before. The point of this anecdote is to illustrate the fact that, regardless of whether this sleep-in maid was unreliable, irresponsible, or psychotic, the attitude of her employer was seen as mechanistic and ultimately dehumanizing. The sexualization of their roles (lady/servant) galvanized their relationship to the point where the employer felt powerful and the maid felt powerless as long as they maintained the servant-master relationship. Housework was not the issue; this was a quest for power dominance and a quest for identity with the usual manifestations of sex and race, American style.

Conflicting childhood attitudes continue, a century after slavery, in the minds of many whites. A friend told me recently that as she grew up in the South, one of her childhood curiosities was whether the black maid had white breasts—i.e., was she black all over? One day she watched as the maid changed her clothes, and was thus able to satisfy her childhood curiosity. She was a trifle embarrassed as she recounted these events, but I was made aware of a greater truth: little children get very confused sexually and racially in this country, and some of it comes right down to (or up, depending on a child's view) equating whiteness with propriety, even in anatomical features like secondary sex characteristics—i.e., breasts. This young child had already learned to fuse racial identity with sexual validity.

Several books currently on the best-seller list today have been written by white women, and deal with a topic heretofore thought to be exclusively in the male sexual domain: the world of sexual fantasy. It is interesting to note that the only reference to black people which Erica Jong makes in her popular book, *Fear of*

*Flying*<sup>13</sup>, is in a dream in which she must make public her sexual attraction for a black woman in order to “come of age” and literally to graduate into the world of letters. What this symbolism means to Erica Jong is never known, for she simply states that the “strangest dream of all” fades away.

A less esoteric author is Nancy Friday who, in her collection entitled *My Secret Garden: Women's Sexual Fantasies*, leaves little to the imagination. In the very first fantasy which Friday describes, she depicts Blacks in a glaringly derogatory fashion, equating thoughts of sex with Blacks among acts of bestiality and other fetishes. Bear in mind that this means high priority according to author Friday in terms of esoteric and ultimately forbidden types of sexual behavior. Nevertheless, this first fantasy, in my opinion as a sex educator, is racist in the extreme.

There are variant types of sexual behavior and there are deviant types. Most authorities today would agree that an example of a variation (from the heterosexual biological norm) would be homosexuality. However, there is no cataloging sexual deviations beyond general terms such as sado-masochism or bestiality, for the number of fetishes which human beings can and do employ is unfortunately infinite. The term fetish simply means using something—anything—for sexual stimulation which in and of itself has no sexual meaning.

Although no fantasies of black women are recorded in Friday's book she devotes an entire chapter to “Big Black Men.” Friday states that white women project their own sexual desires—especially of rape—onto the socially forbidden black man: “The first thing a woman does in the black-man fantasy is to remove the guilt by making it a rape.”<sup>14</sup> Perhaps only then, as she struggles valiantly, can this type of woman enjoy the process. If she acknowledged her acquiescence on a conscious level she would then have to accept responsibility for her own sexual desires and for her consequent sexual behavior—and this she is not ready to do. So she resorts to fantasies of being “overwhelmed,” or even raped by someone whom she considers lower than herself socially so that, by comparison, she herself can appear courageous and upstanding. Here is an area, I feel, wherein Women's Lib should speak out and discourage such counter-productive behavior. Nowhere is the truth more needed than in the white woman-black man encounter. Conversely, the black woman-white man

relationship has never been as socially stigmatized, has resulted less in marriage than in live births, and is perhaps of more reality than fantasy. Author Friday strikes a note of humanitarian concern for the black man when she writes:

I can't help wondering how rough all this advance billing must be on the black man in reality; it's a great deal to live up to, whether or not his desire for the forbidden white woman is as strong as the cases of alleged rape would have you believe.<sup>15</sup>

Let us now turn away from the world of fantasy which is neither moral or immoral. Such a world can be compared to looking into a kaleidoscope: what we see through our fantasies is but a fragmentation of mental imagery—fascinating to behold, but impossible to sustain. Thus even when fleetingly glimpsed, our fantasies provide us at best with evanescence. But at their best, fantasies do at least point us in the right direction—toward the search for pleasure. And as all philosophers have cautioned, the search for true and lasting pleasure is really the search for the good life, the life with meaning.

Few black women authors have written essays analyzing racial and sexual factors in our society with more wisdom than has Toni Cade in her compendium, *The Black Woman*.<sup>16</sup> Her own essay in this collection entitled "On the Issue of Roles" speaks against perpetuating the anachronistic concepts of masculinity and femininity when they fall into the trap of fostering mutual antagonism. She points out how Western society (of which America is a prime example) fosters enmity between people of different working classes. Toni Cade speaks to the issue of an American Quest for Identity and questions whether we may not profit from study of non-Western societies wherein men and women together bring up children in a group orientation, rather than in a spirit of cut-throat competition and sexual divisiveness.

Such a society would be based upon a socialistic model—one which involved change in several features of our present-day American culture. It would involve a shift in our American emphasis: we would stop blaming and start re-claiming. A child born out of wedlock would be called a child of the state, and would be considered as a natural resource. Neither parent would be blamed, although each parent would be charged by the state to

act responsibly and to think through the issues attendant upon the act either of impregnating or of becoming pregnant. We would of course have Sex Education classes from kindergarten through 12th grade, much as Sweden has done for the past 20-odd years. Emphasis would be placed upon planning, upon information, upon education and values clarification, and ultimately upon being responsible at the individual as well as at the communal level. Then, hopefully, each child (born out of wedlock or within) would be a part of the community, and a part of the community's potential. In this light there would be no blame. If children represent our collective future and not just our biological potential, then all children born to a community would be regarded as that community's future. The pejorative word "illegitimate" would be dropped from our sociological vocabulary entirely.

If we were to stop blaming and start as a society re-claiming our wasted resources, human and otherwise, we would make peace between and within the sexes as well as between and within the races. Spelled out, this means that between and within the sexes, men and men, and women and women could become friends instead of competitors. It further means that the American Quest for Identity could take place in relationships rather than in labels. It is the contention of the author that intimacy is feared in our American culture more than sexual contact is feared. Intimacy by definition means two things. The more popularly understood definition of intimacy is a turning toward another person. The dictionary mentions synonyms such as familiarity, closeness, fellowship, friendship, intercourse. The latter circumstance is associated in the minds of most people as sexual intimacy.

However, there is also another equally valid definition of intimacy—a turning inward, an interior exploration—or as some would put it, an implosion meaning an "explosion within." This burst of discovery of one's self can often be the basis of genuine self-esteem, or of love. One must learn to love one's self before one can offer another person love. The person who cannot love him or herself only asks another person to "make love," not to share it. Since love is not exclusively genital or sexual, much of love concerns people of our same sex, and herein lies great fear. We Americans have so rigidly defined masculinity and femininity that we fear intimacy on any except sexual grounds. We say that we can "understand" if a man and a woman sexually love each other,

but we cringe when men love other men or when women love other women with no sexual expression involved. It seems unlikely that we can actually “understand” love with sex if we cannot first understand love without sex, for indeed that was the primal example for each of us as infants: love without sex.

I believe that the great fear in this country of homosexuality will only be re-evaluated when men can become friends without fearing a contest of power, and when women can befriend other women without arousing suspicion. Perhaps then we will see, not an upsurge of homosexuality on a genital basis, but the creation—perhaps for the first time—of true friendships and real heterosexuality instead of pseudo- “master/slave” relationships. And thus we have launched into the third and final hypothesis of this paper.

### The Quest for Love, Hypothesis #3

There is a third American quest, which permeates the other two pursuits. If Americans seek power, and seek identity, and use the twin issues of sex and race in the service of each of these unrelenting pursuits, would it not seem reasonable that underlying this frantic endeavor is a genuine wish for love? There is a disarming quality of naïveté—such an American emotion for such a French word—which asks forgiveness from its victims. Only Americans wash their dirty political linen on TV, get married on TV, kill Presidents and also their assassins—all on TV. Perhaps it is just this Achilles’ tendon—our own ingenuousness—that may be our saving grace. We Americans were questing *power* when we enunciated the Monroe Doctrine, as much as when we try to justify our presence in Southeast Asia. We were questing *identity* when we placed our national flag on the moon, as much as now when we initiate lend-lease and other goodwill programs abroad while ignoring rampant poverty at home. And we Americans have never been more truly ourselves than when we look for *love*—or more truthfully “to be loved.”

Herein lies the secret which we as a nation and as individuals must learn: love is a by-product, something that occurs when we offer it rather than when we demand it. The Bible says it well: it is more blessed to give than to receive. Another good definition of

love is that it is a feeling that exists when the needs of someone else are *at least* as important as your own. Many people want to be loved; few are willing to offer love unconditionally. Some cynics have said that the only type of love fitting this description exists between mother and child. And the still more cynical deny that even this is love, preferring to call it symbiosis, or extended narcissism<sup>17</sup> if one follows the tenets which Freud enunciated fifty years ago.

And then there are those who believe that love is a very powerful emotion (to feel good *is power*), and that this emotion tells us who we are (when we love, or “make love” we gain a sexual *identity*), and that love comes in a variety of expressions. One of these expressions is the language of human sexuality, and it serves as a congenital conveyor belt by means of which the stream of mankind is set forth. Sex is, therefore, a powerful component of love; but it can and does exist quite apart from love, as we all know. It is an ideal situation for the mature adult when the two components occur together. Put another way—the well-adjusted person does not have sex with everyone whom he or she loves (some are relatives, some may be dead, some may be fictional); but hopefully, the well-adjusted person should love everyone with whom he or she has sex.

Unfortunately, this ideal does not always get realized either. And so we hope to educate the young to accept their feelings of love and of sex without projecting these feelings on to others, or thinking of them as “dirty.” The growing child can learn to accept and to enjoy his or her own sexual feelings, and to realize that the body is not wild, or capricious, or to be feared. Hopefully, the child will then learn joy within his or her own body, toward loved ones, and toward mankind. A sense of responsibility for one’s own body, and for the relationship with a loved one should then follow naturally.

Those of us in the field of human sexuality, whether in education or in therapy, hope to break the bond which now exists in this society between *seeking* and *fearing* love. How do we go about this educative quest? One way has been the development of visually explicit materials; this is a very recent and a very American phenomenon. The usual format is to show sexual development (anatomy, physiology, birth, V.D., contraception, etc.) as well as scenes of sexual behavior in a multi-media presentation to be

followed by guided small group discussions. This type of material may involve nudity, body contact, or overtly sexual behavior—but is decidedly not to be confused with pornography. This needs to be clarified because many people have preconceived and therefore prejudiced notions about sex education.

In essence, sex education helps young people to do two things: to get in touch with their own feelings (or even to come to the realization that one is *not* in touch with his or her sexual registration, in which case simple awareness may at times be therapeutic). Secondly, sex education classes help the youngster to learn from others. Here again, the inability to share ideas and to accept feelings which are different from one's own may come as a surprise to the individual whose only chance to discuss sex heretofore has been either the locker room for boys or the hen session for girls. This is another illustration of the aforementioned truism that we have all learned our English grammar and our not-so-English manners from others. Seriously though, sex education can help youngsters to learn to cope with the quintessential loneliness which every person must face.

Many concerned people have asked whether sex education may not actually be too provocative for youngsters; whether such information or the study of visually explicit materials may not "turn kids on." It is striking that such concern is seldom voiced about the violence in our culture and the inevitability of scenes of raw horror and violence which flood our mass media and enter our homes via television. The neighborhood movie shows films rated PG (Parental Guidance) which are censored for nudity and sexual themes of genuine love, but which are full of physical abuse and violence. In America we permit children to witness brutal aggression but do not permit them to see erotic tenderness. In Sweden, there is censorship of our comic strip character "Popeye" on their television programs for children; they disapprove of his violence and find him obscene.

To continue the analogy between what is censored in the two countries, the Swedes usually advocate swimming in the nude for their children, reasoning that if sunshine is healthy for growing bodies, then the entire body should be exposed. Americans, on the other hand, are uncomfortable with nudity especially in children and often dress youngsters in bathing suits of adult imitation. It is more sad than amusing to witness a bevy of little girls approx-



imately three years old sporting bikini bathing suits whose bra-tops rest more nearly on their bellies than on their chests.

## Conclusions and Generalizations

American violence is a real cause of worry for most sex educators. We are extremely alert to the implication that sexual violence is often equated in the minds of the public with sex. Nothing is further from the truth. Violence is violence, whether perpetrated upon one's genitals or upon one's fingernails: it is not an act of love. It is not sex which is "sick," it is our society. Therefore, young children especially need to be exposed to the ameliorative aspects of love and healthy sexuality. Perhaps sex education can be a vehicle—not the sole route—but one way in which youngsters may become not only socialized but humanized. If America can look honestly and without shame at the ways in which sex and race have been inextricably interwoven in her history, her future may be one of great promise.

Each of the three hypotheses set forth in this essay may still characterize America, but with honor instead of hypocrisy. First, in the *Quest for Power* leaving off the word Dominance, if America can utilize the rich resources of sexual and racial input in every phase of the economy, what a burst of "manpower, womanpower, and human power" we would see. Secondly, in the *Quest for Identity*, if America can make up a new national image which reflects the rich diversity of sexual and racial differences found herein, what a beautiful and complex national image we would have. And thirdly, if America in her *Quest for Love* could seek not to be loved, but to love, what a wonderful good life we would all enjoy. Is not the goal worth the quest in each case?

We have discussed some of the common cultural settings which call forth national characteristics in America. Specifically, we have delineated examples in which the factors of race and sex have become indelibly stamped on the national image. The dynamism of America is reflected in her quest for these goals. This dynamism can be a creative force for good rather than a destructive force for selfish and ultimately self-defeating purposes. We have the creativity, the prowess, and the imperative; do we have the incentive for real change? It will take black and white, female and male Americans to bring this to fruition.

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