

ly, the costs for such cheating rise astronomically with each increment in longevity. A few simple public health measures, an improved diet, and regular vaccinations can have a major impact on those under 50. Keeping a single seriously ill 90-year-old alive can cost a fortune. And this fortune squeezes out only a few more years at best.

It is the attempt to add a few more years of life to people who are seriously ill that escalates the cost of medicine. A sickly person, especially one of advanced age, not only requires more and more expensive health care, but for several reasons, he or she is also more likely to burden the government with this cost. Moreover, thanks to the onward march of high technology this situation will get worse. In the past there was relatively little that could be done for a person with a serious heart condition—some medication, a new diet, and advice to avoid strain constituted the treatment. Today, the same person might be given a new natural or artificial heart. What future treatments for heart ailments will be like we cannot say. It is likely, however, that they will be even more technically complex and thus more costly than present cures. And since only the government could afford such cures, it will be the taxpayer who pays for cheating death by a few more years.

Though it might make good financial sense for the government to recognize that higher expenditures for seriously ill people are likely to yield smaller health gains, such a recognition is politically unacceptable. Any administration that refused to help the seriously ill, even if this help was of limited value and highly expensive, would soon be labeled as coldhearted, inhuman, obsessed only with money, etc. The mass media would have a field day with cute ten-year-olds who were denied one last chance at life merely because the odds of a cure were low and the operation cost a small fortune. Together with all the moralizing there would be cries of pain from the scientific community about the government's failure to encourage medical breakthroughs and research.

The high-technology approach to increasing the life expectancy of the seriously ill person is clearly going to drive the government to a financial crisis. Yet we cannot simply abandon our commitment to providing for the sick. How can we help the sick, even the very sick, cheaply and in a way consistent with high

moral values? Preventive medicine is no solution since one still has to deal with those who eventually become seriously ill and therefore become candidates for expensive government-subsidized health care.

The solution is *renaming* the causes of illness and death. The fact that people get sick and die is *not* the problem; the problem is the *reason* for sickness and death. In the old days, before the development of good diagnostic techniques, what could not be accounted for was attributed to "natural causes." And since not much was known about disease or how the body operated, "natural causes" loomed large as explanations of illness and death. As medical knowledge grew, "natural causes" declined in importance. Today, they represent a miniscule cause of human misery and will probably cease to exist as medicine continues to become more sophisticated.

A biological event is viewed quite differently when it is labeled "natural causes" as opposed to, say, arteriosclerosis, cirrhosis, or cholelithiasis. The last three terms cause concern, alarm, and the feeling that something ought to be done, regardless of the cost. When grandpa dies of nephritis this is a tragedy. Had he died of "natural causes" or its close relative, "old age," people would not be bothered all that much. In fact, there is something vaguely pleasant or commendable about being a victim of natural causes.

The path to a solution of the health care crisis should now be clear. Instead of spending millions on diseases such as cancer, research on natural causes should be encouraged. Such research will inevitably lead to the discovery that "natural causes" are more common than previously believed. Indeed, thanks to improved diagnostic techniques and heightened awareness among physicians, illnesses once mistakenly classified as, say, heart attacks will now correctly be attributed to natural causes. In time, the proportion of troublesome, alarming, and horrible diseases will decline.

A few million dollars spent each year on the Natural Cause Institute and grants to other research facilities will pay handsome dividends. As already mentioned, the incidence of "disease" will decline as more and more people die a natural death. And because "death by natural causes" is not something that inspires a financially unrestricted holy war, the government can avoid financial in-

volvement in the name of keeping the hopeless alive for a little longer. Nor will anybody suggest a crash program to find a cure for natural causes. An emphasis on "natural" causes also fits nicely with current infatuations with natural foods and holistic approaches to health care. A call for a natural solution to illness rather than a reliance on drugs, radiation, and cutting people open will be a serviceable campaign promise for many politicians.

Natural causes is also consistent with high moral principle. Hardly anyone would fault a doctor who refused to perform a risky and expensive surgery once it had been discovered that the person suffered from natural causes. There is something vaguely divine and predetermined about natural causes that makes human intervention not only unnecessary, but slightly undesirable as well. The "should we pull the plug" debate is also neatly solved by a greater reliance on natural causes—there is no expensive life-support system to disconnect when the diagnosis is natural causes.

All in all, by focusing on natural causes as the root of sickness we would have a healthier citizenry, lower taxes, fewer people worried about the growing number of dreaded diseases and a solution to some of the ethical problems now facing doctors. What could be more natural?

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When Sex Conquers Love

by B.K. Eakman

Much as I hate to admit it, AIDS Mazarina Kristine Gebbie got it right. The message to youngsters these days does indeed give the impression that sex is ugly, dirty, and a more perverse than pleasurable experience. Ms. Gebbie bungled only when she took on the role of anti-Victorian-morality crusader.

In the space of a few months, I read about public school teachers who "have sex with" (not merely "seduce") their

students; priests who sexually abuse little boys; naval officers who apparently make orgies an annual, celebrated event; and movie stars who take on the names of solemn religious figures to promote videos and books portraying kinky sex. Then there was the ongoing debate over gays in the military, which meant that newspaper and magazine readers were treated to ever more graphic descriptions concerning the sexual gymnastics performed by homosexuals. Rap music lyrics got accolades for their latest achievement in moving the term *'hos* into the mainstream of American lexicon. The Whitney Museum of American Art launched its exhibit "Abject Art: Repulsion and Desire," which managed to outdo even Robert Mapplethorpe, Annie Sprinkle, and Madonna. And last August, South Florida installed a "public service" hotline for teenagers (377-TEEN) called "The Link," which promotes sex as a means of getting rid of tension, abortion on demand without parental consent, and homosexuality as a lifestyle as opposed to a handicap.

All this doesn't begin to include the multifarious accounts of rape-torture murders; the endless articles exploring the DNA analysis of semen found on some poor, dead girl's panties; the demands of the Man-Boy Love Association; the aborted fetuses in our faces; and the new horrors on the sexually transmitted diseases front, such as cytomegalovirus (CMV), which is causing birth defects in pregnant women. At a subway station entrance, my husband and I were shocked by a billboard as stunningly tasteless as the sexual message it sought to rebut. The billboard was designed to appear spattered with blood. The caption read: "Virgin' is not a dirty word."

By last summer's end, I was glad I wasn't a kid anymore. Somehow such an introduction to the world of sexuality would have failed to inspire passion, raging hormones or no. Indeed, if we observe the recent admonitions of Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders and deposed New York School Chancellor Joseph Fernandez, we shouldn't wait until youngsters' hormones are raging. We should assault their sensibilities in kindergarten with a panoply of condoms, sex toys (no kidding), and legitimized pornography. The National Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexual Education, produced two years ago by the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States,

recommend teaching kindergartners to feel comfortable with their genitals by having them shout "penis" and "vulva." By fourth grade, the sex education curriculum has youngsters performing the now-familiar ritual of unrolling condoms on bananas and discussing the benefits of "mutual masturbation." In seventh grade, children advance to discussing oral and anal sex, role-playing sexual situations, and learning the street names for a variety of sexual acts. In high school, young students are awash in bisexuality, transvestitism, sadomasochism, and bestiality. Teachers are supposed to pass around "finger cots," which are condoms for the fingers, and "dental dams," a kind of condom for oral sex, and discuss "brachioplastic penetration," which the curious can look up. The idea, supposedly, is to make youngsters hygiene-conscious at dating time. This is sold in catchy phrases like "safe sex" and "no glove, no love!"

Love, indeed. What happened to it?

Somewhere between the bluegrass-country ballads that the Everly Brothers and the Kingston Trio interpreted for their teenage audiences—songs that expressed an amorous sentimentality, incorporated complex harmonies, evoked an entreating innocence, and connected sex with affection—and the heavy metal-rap cra, music moved from seduction to sadism, from beautiful to brutal, from romantic to repulsive. Today it is difficult to find a station to wake up to in the morning that isn't filled with squealing and shrieking and a what's-love-got-to-do-with-it mentality. Talented new instrumental composers like John Nilsen, Danny Wright, Tom Barabas, Karunesh, Gary Sills, and Clifford White are ignored by disc jockeys and can be located only through independent music distributors and heard about only by word of mouth, as increasing numbers of individuals seek to escape the cacophony of pulsating commercials and exploitive song lyrics for more uplifting and romantic fields.

Meanwhile, television languishes in the language of abuse—nonstop sexual innuendos, putdowns, and lascivious cat-calls from the audience. Youngsters cut their teeth on the putrid squalor of *Beavis and Butt-head*. Media moguls say these and other shows are successful because they attract a large share of the viewing audience.

But what about the nonviewing, non-listening audience? How about those

who rarely turn on the tube or radio anymore? Where are the statistics on us? More to the point, when did sex become a mere animalistic instinct? When did "flirting" and "courtship" become synonyms for "sexual harassment"?

As a final indignity, Ann Landers, after 38 years of preaching commitment and caring, offered her commentary on a piece she reprinted from the *Los Angeles Times* by a Dr. Steven Sainsbury of San Luis Obispo, California. He had written to comment on a 15-year-old girl he was treating for "a rip-roaring case of gonorrhoea"—a typical occurrence in his practice, apparently. It was bad enough that he criticized experts who equate condoms with "safe sex," saying the high breakage rate during normal, vaginal intercourse did not support such a claim. But Dr. Sainsbury committed the ultimate blasphemy when he maintained that the only safe sex is no sex, until one is ready "to commit to a monogamous relationship." The key words, he reiterated, were "*abstinence and monogamy*."

The good doctor didn't mention marriage, but no matter. Ann Landers took on the heretic, declaring that she was going to "stick her neck out" and "suggest a more realistic solution than abstinence." Her recommendation? "Self-gratification or mutual masturbation, whatever it takes to release sexual energy." "This is a sane and safe alternative to intercourse," she wrote, "not only for teenagers, but for older men and women who have lost their partners." Her rationale was that "the sex drive is the strongest human drive after hunger."

It was this sanctimonious diatribe that brought me to the word processor. I'm going to stick *my* neck out and say: No. The sex drive is *not* the strongest human drive after hunger. It may be the strongest *animal* drive after hunger, but it is not the strongest *human* drive. Love is. Love is what separates animals from humans. Animals may exhibit loyalty, trust, and affection, but these are not the equivalents of compassion and commitment, which comprise the key elements of what we know as romantic love. Certainly there's physical attraction, or "chemistry." But having celebrated my 25th wedding anniversary, I can tell you it's commitment and compassion that keep the "chemistry" intact 25 years after the wedding march is over. Conversely, as any separated or divorced couple will tell you, when there is no love left in a relationship, sex is the first thing to go.

Down through the centuries, music from popular to opera has revolved around love. Love lost. Love gained. Endless love. Falling in love. Unrequited love. Sometimes naive, corny, and sentimental. Occasionally erotic in an amorous, lighthearted way. But love, nevertheless. Until recently, song lyrics were never mean, grotesque, or disrespectful. The music did not remind you of a *grand mal* seizure. Certainly love was not reduced to crotch-grabbing, cruel images of caged, raped, or battered women and of ripped genitalia (à la 2 Live Crew).

How ironic that the 60's generation—my generation—which once proselytized “Make love, not war” now admonishes its young to “have sex, not love” and to equate love with a glove, sex toys, and condoms; these, Ms. Gebbie, are the “negative” images; these, Ms. Elders, are the “criminal” messages. Too many psychologists, too many grownups in general, have forgotten what it was like to be a child. Never mind whether it was the 1950's, 60's, or 30's. Just a child. We all had hormones, you know. Today's kids didn't invent them. But that first exposure to sexual topics, if I remember correctly, was not about our hormones.

Before I knew where babies come from, before I knew about menstruation, before I knew about the sex act, before I needed a bra, my little friends and I fantasized about love. Paul Newman was handsome; we weren't interested in his groin. And from the teenage years on into young adulthood, flirting was fun; conversation was the means of exploring the first exhilarating feelings of attraction; and those initial fleeting moments of physical intimacy were exciting. We were in love with being in love. An off-color joke, if it was clever, drew a smile. The details of people's sex lives did not. They were private. A person's virginity intensely so.

Because of my recent book, I receive all kinds of adolescent tests and surveys in the mail—some anonymously, some not. One of the most recent, from Nebraska, asks youngsters, among a long list of provocative questions, what they think *about* when they think of sex. Forgetting the inappropriateness of such a question for a moment, I wonder how many wrote “love.” Or “caring.” Or “warmth.” Or “tenderness.”

I was not raised a Fundamentalist Christian. But ever since my book was published—which struck a particularly

sensitive chord among the orthodox Christian community, as well as with other religious groups—I think I better understand why those sneeringly referred to as “religious” these days get bent out of shape when the topic of teaching evolution comes up. It's not merely that they are offended that humankind may technically at some point have had some close relatives among the simian family, although no direct proof of that theory has ever been confirmed. What really gets under the skin of orthodox religious parents is the suggestion, frequently passed along *with* this theory, that humans are really just advanced animals.

Don't get me wrong. Anyone who knows me will tell you that, left to my devices, I would take home the entire contents of the animal shelter. But humans are not animals. And animals, despite some similarities, including emotions and the rudimentary ability to plan, think, and make decisions, are not humans with fur. Humans are not at the mercy of their instincts and emotions. Animals are. Animals, including those species that mate for life, do not contemplate their own existence.

At the heart of the resistance by orthodox religious people to today's government-mandated sex training is that children are being encouraged to consider themselves as animals, with slightly more complex brain functions, of course—i.e., animals cannot be trained to use a condom. But the fact is, animals don't need condoms. Nature did not construct animals in such a way that “promiscuous” or indiscriminate sex is going to hurt them. The purpose of sex in the animal kingdom is reproduction. Period. To animals, procreation is of serious interest only when the female is in *heat*. In humans, procreation is of serious interest mainly when two people are *in love*.

Love is most fulfilling when it involves loss of self to another person. For that reason, sex tends to fall short of expectations if its sole purpose is self- (much less group-) gratification, when it becomes, in effect, a sporting event. It is this point that is at the core of what is called the “sanctity of the family.” Sex, the most intimate way possible to express love on a physical level, is an intensely private matter.

Which brings up the other source of objection among orthodox religious parents to the currently vogueish sexual teachings: the rejection of a “privacy eth-

ic” by sex educators. Look at the surveys and the distribution of sexual paraphernalia to young, impressionable children. What is the message? It is that you won't have any problem with this “unless you have something to hide.” And also that nothing is private. Not even “what you think about when you think of sex.” Not your bowel habits, either, if you read the sex surveys. And when you move on to some of the drug and alcohol surveys, and even to some so-called academic tests, like the Metropolitan Achievement Test put out by Psychological Corporation, it is clear that the details of your family life are not private—and shouldn't be. Do your parents do such-and-such? Do your parents have this or that in their homes? If you believe the literature, the purpose of this information-gathering is to construct a curriculum that will instill ethical values.

Isn't it ironic that we once had social sanctions that worked in this country. That kept behavior within tolerable limits and the libido in check. When adults, not adolescents, held cultural authority, young men were actually taught that certain behaviors are unacceptable around women. They were taught attentiveness and courtesy and to avoid foul language. They weren't given lame excuses about their sexuality peaking at the age of 17.

Similar codes of conduct were taught young girls. You didn't go alone to a man's room, much less at all hours of the night, and expect no consequences. You were taught what it meant to conduct yourself in a dignified fashion. You didn't even consider going to bed with a fellow on a first, second, or third date. You didn't go braless in tank-tops, wear skin-tight skirts, fishnet hose, and spike heels, get your legs shaved by a bunch of drunken sailors, and then turn around and complain about being sexually harassed. Bearing a child out of wedlock was disgraceful and showed a lack of self-discipline and character.

Then the mental “health” experts and the courts came along and in just 30 years managed to remove the stigma from behaviors that, today, are completely out of control. No law against “sexual harassment,” no sex ed course, no “deadbeat dads” legislation is going to bring back the morality and sense of privacy-in-intimacy that was once passed down from generation to generation—values like modesty and chastity, which parents are no longer *permitted* to pass

along, because the schools and the media—backed up unwittingly, perhaps, by the courts—continually undermine the efforts of responsible parents trying to do their job.

Thus has sexuality become the stuff of billboards and bumper stickers, each vying for attention, each more shocking than the last. Oh, yes. Today's teachings about sex are negative, all right, just as AIDS czarina Kristine Gebbie says. But no more so than allusions to and discussions about the subject in entertainment and the nightly news. As a result, the allure of physical attraction and the rituals of courtship are no longer cute, fun, flirtatious, titillating, or even risqué; they're just plain gross. Sex and love have been granted a divorce.

Sex is now defined as "release of tension." Art, music, and much of literature focus not on romance, but on genitals, multiple orgasms, and little-understood chromosomal mix-ups that result in unfortunate genetic mistakes like homosexuality and the penchant for pedophilia.

What have we done to love? We have debased it. Defiled it. Desensitized it. Depersonalized it. Disparaged it. We've even urinated on it. And, judging from our drug and crime statistics, society is paying the heaviest possible price.

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Daddies and the Swedish State

by Allan Carlson

The Mercy Killing of Socialism, launched so hopefully throughout Central and Eastern Europe in 1991, has failed. Most visibly, Polish voters returned the communists to parliamentary control in 1993, while Russia swung toward a version of National Socialism. Even in the smaller but symbolically important nation of Sweden, the "conservative revolt" sparked by right-wing election victories in September 1991 has ground to a halt.

For a while, all things seemed possible,

as Swedish voters appeared to repudiate the widely admired "Third Way." The Social Democrats, who had ruled Sweden with few interruptions from 1932 to 1991, found their voting strength reduced to 37 percent, the lowest figure since the 1920's. Today, however, polls show the socialists claiming 50 percent of would-be voters, a historic high, while the "Green" and "Left" (read communist) parties pull another 7 percent. Meanwhile, the four-party "bourgeois coalition" government—composed of the Moderate Party (formerly the Conservative Party), the Center Party (formerly the Agrarian Party), the Peoples Party, and the Christian Democrats—has lost nearly a fifth of its support, falling to 38 percent. With elections set for early autumn, few doubt that socialism will soon be back in control.

This conservative coalition blames its troubles on a four-year-long recession, caused by past socialist excesses and the crushing burden of the welfare state. There simply has not been enough time, they claim, to cut through the tangled legacy of 60 years of socialist intervention into private life. Yet the deeper problem may lie within the government itself, where a dominant neoconservative vision has made a true assault on the bloated state apparatus impossible. Accepting the welfare state as an inevitable and necessary aspect of postindustrial life and buying into the overarching principle of equality, these intellectuals work only to reposition state power in line with "traditional values," crafting their own version of Big Government Conservatism.

In family policy, for example, the coalition government has done nothing to dismantle the web of child allowances, daycare entitlements, housing subventions, and parent insurance—all of which make single-parenthood very attractive (over half of Swedish births are still out-of-wedlock), marriage legally and economically inconsequential, and family autonomy but a memory. The government's major initiative has been to propose a new *vårdnadsbidrag*, or childcare allowance, for all families with children ages one to three, including those with a parent at home. While resting in theory on "family values," this plan emerged only as an *addition* to existing schemes and costs, not as a substitute. As such, it marks little more than a deepened level of state intrusion into what remains of private households.

Even more telling was the October 1993 report of the government's "Daddy Group," appointed to review family policy in light of fathers' interests. Did these "conservatives" plot some resistance to the liberal feminism that had revolutionized Swedish social life in the 1960's and 70's? Did they dream of some timid reassertion of patriarchy? To the contrary, the panel urged new steps to engineer the full victory of gender equality *within each family*. The Daddy Group's central recommendation was a radical change in Sweden's paid-parental-leave program.

At present, parents can claim up to 12 months of leave from work after the birth of a child, receiving 90 percent of the insured value of their income (up to \$2,700 a month or \$32,400 for the year, tax free) and a guaranteed job of equal merit on their return. This generous benefit has, not surprisingly, become wildly popular among younger Swedish women, and baby prams are once again a common sight in Stockholm. (Indeed, Sweden's birthrate has *climbed* 30 percent over the last eight years, making this nation one of the few in Europe with *above-replacement* fertility.)

Accordingly, conventional politicians fear to touch the program, despite the crippling burdens it places on both the state budget and the private business sector. Feminist leaders, however, have fretted that paid leave has been utilized overwhelmingly by women. Parents themselves may decide how to split the 12 months, and the vast majority choose to have the mother at home for nearly the full period.

Most people would see this as a minor triumph of common sense or nature over egalitarian nonsense, but not the "bourgeois" government's Daddy Group. It recommended a change in the law to *require* that at least *three months* of the paid leave be taken by the father, and its long-term goal is to mandate that the leave be equally shared. As one member of the panel—Andreas Carlgren of the Center Party—explained, it was time to toss the notion of parental choice "into the garbage can." All other forms of social insurance, he noted, ignore family bonds such as marriage. Allowing parents to opt exclusively for maternal care for their children was "old-fashioned" in an age when the individual's relationship to the egalitarian state was all that really mattered.

Meanwhile, the one Swedish political