

Sexlib's Stories

*Considerations on Free Love:
A Trialogue*

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The Prude: Have you heard what the homosexuals are trying to do in this state?

The Libertarian: You mean marry?

The Prude: Yeah, it's a cryin' shame! Flaunting their sexuality at us like that.

The Libertarian: What's so wrong about wanting to get married?

The Prude: Getting married is fine, but you're not supposed to get married to someone of your own gender. It's just wrong. You know this will only lead to other people wanting their sexual habits promoted. What's next, polygamy, incest?

The Libertarian: As long as it's voluntary, why not?

The Prude: Why not? Sex is supposed to be something private, between a man and a woman who love each other. And who aren't related! Anything else should be prohibited for common decency.

The Libertarian: Could it be that you simply feel this way because you grew up in a society where heterosexual monogamy was the *status quo*?

The Prude: What do you mean?

The Libertarian: I mean, if you had come of age in a society that had a more libertine attitude toward sex, might you be less inclined to say that the voluntary sexual activities of others should be prohibited?

The Prude: I do not believe it is possible for such a society to long exist, for any society that becomes licentious quickly collapses.

The Libertarian: I believe it's more accurate to say that any state that acts to debase its own currency thereby renders its own collapse. If government as we know it in America collapses, it will not be because of our sexual liberation, of which I see rather little personally; it will rather be a result of government greed.

The Prude: And you don't see sexual attitudes connected to that in any way?

The Libertarian: Should I?

The Prude: You don't think a willingness to engage in sexual debauchery leads to a willingness to engage in other forms of debauchery?

The Libertarian: They are very distinct activities, and further, I cannot in all good conscience assent to your description of sexual liberation as debauchery. It is not as though a society that engaged in free love would also consent to allowing such evils as rape.

The Sadist: My companions, I have been listening to the two of you speak on the current matter, and have yet to chime in with my thoughts, but I at this time feel I must, for I cannot honestly understand your objection to rape.

The Libertarian: You cannot?

The Sadist: I cannot. For, if free love is truly free, does this not mean that it is free for the taking?

The Libertarian: Every person has a right to sex, but this is a negative right, as positive rights cannot rationally exist.

The Sadist: What do you mean by a "negative right"?

The Libertarian: By that I mean nobody is *owed* sex, not even those who are married. One certainly has no right to take it from another without her consent, since the right to *not* have sex is just as important and vital as the right *to* have sex when the other party has consented.

The Prude: But why does a person have a right to sex at all, if he has no absolute right to it? Does it not seem to you that you are making an arbitrary choice here in defining what you consider a right?

The Libertarian: Not at all, my friend. For one's natural rights are derived from one's nature. By nature, every person justly owns her or his own body, her or his own will. To own a thing is to have just control over that thing, and indeed each of us has a body that necessarily constitutes our just property. As a self-owner, each person naturally has a legitimate authority over her or his flesh, blood, and bone, and may do with it as she or he pleases so long as she or he does not violate the rights of others in the process. For two—or more—persons to engage in consensual sexual relations with another, no rights need be violated, and in those events where rights are *not* violated, we must permit the action, for it would necessarily be a violation of the rights of those persons to step in and forcibly prevent their continuation. Contrariwise, when a person rapes another, the rapist is necessarily usurping control of the raped party from her or him, thus violating her or his natural rights.

The Sadist: You bring up nature, but is not pleasure the only natural end to man's actions?

The Libertarian: Man has a nature, and although desires are a component of this nature, they be not the sole component. To imply they are is to vastly oversimplify man! Man's nature dictates what is permissible and, likewise, what is not, and as man's nature requires the undeniable existence of natural rights, it must be so that anything that violates these rights is naturally criminal.

The Sadist: But could it not be said that he who is naturally stronger than another has a natural right to the pleasure of the other's sex by virtue of his superior strength?

The Libertarian: Do I take you correctly to hold the view of the Marquis de Sade, that there truly is no wrong in rape if it gains pleasure for the rapist?

The Sadist: I do not see how one could call herself a libertine without taking this stance.

The Libertarian: Admittedly, the term *libertine* is vague, insofar as it has been used to interchangeably describe differing philosophies. Allow myself to clarify therefore that I am only a libertine insofar as my libertinism does not conflict with my overarching libertarianism.

Beyond this, I have to ask you, what about the pleasure of the raped party? For, if she had anticipated that she would have derived more pleasure ultimately, in the final analysis, from the sexual interaction than from refraining therefrom,

she surely would have consented in the first place. The fact that she opted to withhold her consent is apodictic proof that she could not have been of the view that engaging with her rapist in sexual activity would derive from her greater utility than not engaging with her rapist in sexual activity. How can you then condone the rape which constitutes an anticipated diminishing of pleasure for the raped party?

The Sadist: You say the diminishing of pleasure is anticipated. But then you assume too much. How can we know that the raped party does not gain in pleasure despite his anticipation to the contrary?

The Prude: This is a weak challenge you issue, as demonstrated by the fact that one could issue this challenge about anything. For instance, I could say to you, “Although you anticipate that you will not experience greater pleasure should I drive a nail into your skull than if I do not, you cannot truly be sure of that fact. Thus, I have a right to commit this act. If, afterwards, you find that you truly *did* enjoy having the nail driven into your skull, then hurray; but, on the other hand, if you did not enjoy it, oh well, at least one of us received pleasure.” Surely, there are none who would not find such a position absurd. Even Antiphon, who shares in the view that it is acceptable to engage in such lawlessness (so long as the crook takes whatever precautions necessary to ensure he is not caught) would not be so cavalier as to try to pretend that the mere potential for the other party to find pleasure in being victimised somehow creates a justness in the crime.

But where I believe this conversation is most lacking is in a deeper consideration of human nature. Our libertarian friend here keeps trumping the importance of human nature in discerning human ethics, but fails to acknowledge the blunt reality of the human anatomy. It must surely be recognised that a man’s and a woman’s sexual organs perform a very specific purpose, namely that of procreation. But, of course, procreation can only occur between a man and a woman. Regardless of whether you believe man is the creation of evolution or divine intervention, the penis and vagina were clearly made for one another. Natural law must therefore dictate that, as this is the natural function of the sexual organs, it is also therefore the *purpose* of those organs, and any use of these organs contrary to its natural purpose must logically be impermissible.

The Libertarian: I think you are misunderstanding the nature of *purpose*, which is never objective but rather always subjective.

The Prude: How so?

The Libertarian: That which is used as a table by a midget may, upon being sold to a giant, be used as a bench. The purpose of any given thing is thus always defined by the owner of said thing. And since an individual's body and sexual organs are always ultimately owned by the individual herself, it stands to reason that only she can define the purpose of said body and of said sexual organs. Any attempt to impose upon her an arbitrary definition without her consent, and to restrict her from nonviolently and voluntarily using—or *not* using, as the case may be—her body and organs as she pleases is therefore nothing less than a crime and usurpation from her of her natural right to self-ownership. In short, this arbitrary imposition can be nothing other than outright and literal enslavement.

The Prude: So I take it then that you are an advocate of free love.

The Libertarian: Yes, so long as that isn't taken to imply that one "*ought*" to surrender her or his body to the sexual whims of others, so long as that is taking instead to mean that one *may* make such a surrender.

The Sadist: But do you not know that the free love movement originated in anarchist circles? I cannot say much more on the subject, having not studied the matter thoroughly, but I do believe that the free love movement began as an outgrowth of anarchism. Insofar as you are willing to say that certain sexual advances are criminal, are you not therefore coming out decidedly against free love?

The Libertarian: Before answering, I must ask, do you fancy yourself an anarchist?

The Sadist: I cannot say I've given the subject of anarchy much thought, honestly, but if pressed, I suppose I would assent to the label.

The Libertarian: May I speak bluntly?

The Sadist: Please do!

The Libertarian: I do not consider your position anarchistic in the least. Rather, I find your stances decidedly

authoritarian. When a man rapes a woman, he is creating a coercive hierarchy, no different than the coercive hierarchy created when the state coercively steps in and bans sodomy or prostitution. This imposition of coercive hierarchy is authoritarian to its core. I, conversely, *am* an anarchist, as I reject any and all coercive hierarchies as naturally illegitimate, and aim to do away with them. All statutory laws in violation of natural law should be viewed for what they are: dictates and edicts pretending, like charlatans, to be just and binding. All statutory laws in concert with natural law, conversely, are simply redundancies.

You are not an anarchist, and will never *be* an anarchist until the day you surrender this silly notion that arbitrary imposition from those persons or organisations that happen to have more power than their victims is somehow condonable. The impositions of the rapist, of the thief, and of the murderer are no less authoritarian or coercive than the impositions of the state itself.

Nor are you an advocate of free love. The free love movement is so opposed to rape, in fact, that its advocates shun in horror those statutory violations of natural law that consider spousal rape to be in some manner not *actually* rape or not as serious as non-spousal rape. Just as a person who believes that the state should dictate what women can do with their own bodies *via* banning prostitution can *call* himself a “feminist,” you can just as easily *call* yourself an “advocate of free love”; but your latent authoritarianism is nevertheless impossible to hide from the keen eye. How, after all, is the man who rapes another person any different ultimately than the state that forbids sex? In both cases, a coercive and arbitrary authority imposes itself and usurps from the victim her or his self-ownership. And you dare call this coercive hierarchy “*anarchy*”? I humbly request that you pay me at least enough respect to realise that I would so quickly and effortlessly see through such a shallow and unconvincing claim.

Your position is base and arbitrary, and no less so than that of the other gentleman in our current trio. But at least he has the virtue to not go around pretending to be something that he’s not. You advocate the pursuit of pleasure—a fine thing, to be sure—but with no consideration toward the equality of rights among man. This leaves your position, in the end, with no · rational · defence.

A Note from Sexlib

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