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## Balancing Sex and Love since the 1960s Sexual Revolution

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### INTRODUCTION

People long for sexual gratification and for an intimate relationship. These longings are interconnected, but not unproblematically. Today, some people (mostly men) even view them as contradictory. Traditions providing examples of how to integrate these longings have disappeared; the old 'marriage manuals' have become suspect or hopelessly obsolete, mainly because they hardly acknowledged, if at all, the sensual love and carnal desires of women. Statements such as 'the more spiritual love of a woman will refine and temper the more sensual love of a man' (Calcar, 1886: 47) typify a Victorian ideal of love that is as passionate as it is exalted and desexualised (Stearns, 1994), with a rather depersonalised sexuality as a drawback and outlet for the man's 'wild' sensuality behind the scenes of social life. This ideal of love mirrors the Victorian attempt 'to control the place of sex in marriage ... by urging the desexualisation of love and the desensualisation of sex' (Seidman, 1991: 7). In the twentieth century, particularly from the 1920s onward, this process was reversed in a 'sexualisation of love' and an 'erotisation of sex'.

Until the second half of the twentieth century the dominant social code regarding the sexuality of women and men clearly continued to represent a lust-dominated sexuality for men and a complementary (romantic) love or relationship-dominated sexuality for women. In this 'traditional lust balance', female sexuality remained highly subordinated to male sexuality:

A woman does not *take*, but *tempts* in order to be taken ... Copulation is performed *by* a man and *to* a woman. (Wattjes, + 1930: 34)

The newly married woman *is as a rule*, more or less completely 'cold' or indifferent to and in sexual intercourse. She must be *taught to love*, in the complete sense in which we here use the term. The husband may perhaps not succeed in imparting this erotic education; generally that is because he takes no trouble about it. She then *remains* permanently *frigid*... (van de Velde, 1933: 271) [It is no surprise, therefore, that the title page of the original Dutch edition of this international best-seller said: 'written for the physician and the husband', that is, not for women]

Outside this literature, discussions of female sexuality usually had a negative tone centring on the

'prostitution issue' and the issue of 'immorality among the lower classes'. A new branch of this discussion expressed moral concern for what (from the 1920s to the 1950s) was called the 'amatrice' (female amateur):

The appearance on the scene of the amatrice as a *dramatis personae* ... is connected to the appearance of a premarital female sexuality that could no longer as a matter of course be localised only within the lower classes nor be lumped automatically under the heading of prostitution. (Mooij, 1993: 136)

Up to the Sexual Revolution, a woman's sexuality and her reputation remained interconnected within social codes in such a strong way that, in retrospect, it gives the impression that 'as far as her reputation was concerned, a girl who admitted to having sexual needs might as well take a seat behind a window in the red light district' (van Dantzig, 1994: 1276). In the course of the century, more and more women have deviated from this code behind the scenes, but whenever caught in the glare of public attention, they gave rise to scandal and were treated like 'fallen women'.<sup>1</sup>

The 'traditional lust balance' was attacked in the 1950s, when the topic of female sexual pleasure and gratification gained considerable importance in sexual advice literature - *The Adequate Male*, translated into Dutch as *My Husband, My Lover*, is predominantly a good lover (Caprio, 1960). Especially from the 1960s on, the sexual longings of all women, including the 'respectable' and the unmarried, could openly be acknowledged and discussed. Then, for the first time, women themselves actively took part in public discussions about their carnal desires and a more satisfactory relationship between the longing for sexual gratification and the longing for enduring intimacy (love, friendship) - a more satisfying lust balance. Thus, emancipation of women ran in tandem with changes in public morality as well as in individuals' codes and ideals regarding love and sex. These changes coincided with rising tensions between the two types of longing. From the 1960s on, topics and practices such as premarital sex, sexual variations, unmarried cohabitation, fornication, extramarital affairs, jealousy, homosexuality, pornography, teenage sex, abortion, exchange of partners, paedophilia, incest and so on, all part of a wider process of informalization (Wouters, 1986), implied repeated confrontations with the traditional lust balance. People were confronted again and again with what might be called the lust balance question: *when and within what kind of relationship(s) are (what kind of) eroticism and sexuality allowed and desired?* This question is first raised in puberty or adolescence when bodily and erotic impulses and emotions that were banned from interaction from early childhood onwards (except in cases of incest) are again explored and experimented with:

Sexual education predominantly consists of 'beware and watch out'. The original need for bodily contact or touching, which has a very spontaneous frankness in children, also

becomes prey to this restriction in the course of growing up. Sexuality *and* corporality are thus separated from other forms of contact. Whenever two people enter an affair, the taboo on touching and bodily contact has to be gradually dismantled. For most people, this is a process of trial and error. (Zeegers, 1994: 139)

In this century, especially since the 1960s, it seems that a similar process of trial and error has been going on collectively, bringing about a collective emancipation of sexuality, that is, a collective diminution in fear of sexuality and its expression within increasingly less rigidly curtailed relationships. Sexual impulses and emotions were allowed (once again) into the centre of the personality - consciousness - and thus taken into account, whether acted upon or not. As the social and psychic distance between the sexes and the classes diminished (Wouters, 1995a; 1995b), both women and men became involved in a collective learning process - experimenting in mainstreams and undercurrents - in which they have tried to find new ideals and ways of gratifying their longing for both sex and love. The questions and answers with which they were confronted shifted and varied along with changes in the spectrum of prevailing interpretations of what constitutes a satisfying lust balance. This article aims at a description and interpretation of this collective learning process.

As studies into the connection and the tension between love and sex are rare, and historical studies into this area are even harder to find,<sup>2</sup> what follows is an 'essay'. It is an attempt at sketching a coherent picture of these social and psychic changes within and between the sexes, and to unfold a perspective that is inherent in the concept of the lust balance. This concept is taken from Norbert Elias, who used it in a wider sense, indicating the whole 'lust economy' (Elias, 1994: 456, 519).<sup>3</sup> Here, the concept is used to focus on the relationship between sex and love, a 'balance' that is perceived to be polymorphous and multidimensional (just as in Elias's concepts of a power balance and a tension balance): the attempt to find a satisfying balance between the longing for sex and the longing for love may be complicated by many other longings; for instance by the longing for children or by the longing to raise one's social power and rank.

Empirical evidence is drawn from a study of changes in the popular Dutch feminist monthly magazine *Opzij*<sup>4</sup> (Aside/Out of the Way!), established in 1973, and from sexual advice books. In addition, reference is made to data resulting from sociological and sexological research, as well as from the experience of these decades. Some of these data refer to changes in actual behaviour but most of them refer to changes in codes and ideals of behaviour and feeling. This selection of empirical evidence also implies a stronger focus on women, the women's movement and the emancipation of women, and, by implication, on female sexuality. The reaction of men, their accommodation and the restraining of their sexuality will receive less attention, partly

because for men there is no source of evidence comparable with *Opzij* that could be studied as diachronically and systematically: accommodation processes are rather 'quiet' on the whole.

This introduction will be followed by two larger parts. The first one aims at describing significant changes in the lust balance since the sexual revolution. It is subdivided according to the four phases that are distinguished. The first phase is the sexual revolution itself. The second one, a phase of transition from the end of the 1970s to the mid-1980s, is characterised by the shift from 'sexual liberation' to 'sexual oppression'. In the third phase, there is a lust revival, and in the fourth, from the early 1990s onwards, a lust *and* love revival continues. The second part of this article consists of an attempt at interpreting and explaining these changes by presenting them as regularities in processes of integration and civilisation.

### *CHANGES IN THE LUST BALANCE*

#### *1. The Sexual Revolution*

The sexual revolution was a breakthrough in the emancipation of female sexuality even though many women throughout these years continued to think of sex in terms of duty (Frenken, 1976), sometimes worsened by the new 'duty' to achieve orgasm. Due to the 'pill' and an increase in mutually expected self-restraint (mutual consent) in interactions, the dangers and fears connected with sex diminished to such a degree that there was an acceleration in the emancipation of sexual emotions and impulses. Women's sexual desires were taken more seriously: men became 'more strongly directed at clitoral stimulation' and their aversion to oral sex diminished considerably - from more than 50% reported in the early 1970s to about 20% ten years later (Vennix & Bullinga, 1991: 57). This means that increasing numbers of men learned to enjoy the woman's enjoyment and that many women have opened up to sexual fantasies and titillations. The dominant image of single females, if not already 'old spinsters', changed accordingly from 'failed-as-a-woman' and 'sexually deficient' into the opposite: sexy and independent (for USA: Ehrenreich and English 1978: 258/9). In a relatively short period of time, the relatively autonomous strength of carnal desire became acknowledged and respected. Erica Jong had her large audience dream about a pure form of instant sex, the 'zipless fuck':

the incident has all the swift compression of a dream and is seemingly free of all remorse and guilt; because there is no talk of her late husband or of his fiancée; because there is no rationalising; because there is no talk at *all*. The zipless fuck is absolutely pure. It is free of ulterior motives. There is no power game. ... No one is trying to prove anything or get anything out of anyone. The zipless fuck is the purest thing there is. And it is rarer than the

unicorn. And I have never had one. (Jong, 1973: 14)

For both genders, sex for the sake of sex changed from a degrading spectre into a tolerable and thus acceptable alternative, allowing more women and men to experiment with sex cheerfully and outside the boundaries of love and law. Until around 1970, the slogan of the advice literature that accompanied this process was that 'men should restrain themselves somewhat more and women should be a bit more daring' (Röling, 1990: 90), a slogan that was obviously attuned to men who came too quickly and women who did not come at all. From then on, interest and attention shifted from joint pleasures towards discovering one's own sexual desires and delights. In close connection with this, the ideal of love shifted further away from the Victorian ideal of a highly elevated marital happiness towards individual happiness and greater scope for each partner to develop themselves (Blom, 1993; Mahlmann, 1991; Swidler, 1980). In the early 1970s, the growing emphasis on individual development also came to be expressed collectively in the deliberately created 'apartheid' of discussion groups, refuge homes, pubs, bookshops, etc. 'for women only', expressing an outlook of 'emancipation-via-segregation' (van Stolk, 1991).

Sex-for-the-sake-of-sex was first and to a greater extent accepted among homosexual men, who almost seemed to realise the dream of the 'zipless fuck'. The far-reaching liberation of sexuality among them, was a topic that was also frequently discussed outside their circles, both with an envious and a frightened tone. The comparison with homosexuals also had another function, put into words by Joke Kool-Smit (commonly credited with having triggered the second feminist wave in the Netherlands): 'feminists and homosexuals are each other's natural allies', she explains, not only because both groups are discriminated against, but from a

much deeper similarity between the liberation of women and of homosexuals. Both demand the right not to behave like a woman or a man ought to, they do not accommodate to their sex role of strong man and soft woman. (*Opzij* 1973(11): 26)

However, as Kool-Smit continues, 'some male homosexuals ... are even more strongly adapted to male mysticism than the average hetero-man. And this group and feminists stand directly opposed to each other.' The struggle for liberation from the straitjacket of sex roles obviously had priority, but as far as sexual liberation was concerned, Kool-Smit referred to lesbian women as a model:

lesbian feminists could be an example for other women with regard to their relationships and in finding a distinct identity. For in these relationships where men are absent, emotional warmth need not come from one side only, and erotics can at last be separated from dominance. (*Opzij* 1973(11): 26)<sup>5</sup>

In their quest for a more satisfying lust balance, the two sexes tended to go in opposite

directions. Led by their gender-specific definitions of lust, men tended to go towards a lust-dominated sexuality, towards sex for the sake of sex as (imagined) in the world of homosexual men, and women towards a love and relationship-dominated sexuality in which physical love and psychological love are integrated and set apart from domination as (imagined) in the world of homosexual women. An undercurrent of women emphasising lust by sharing the dream of the 'zipless fuck', also shared the mainstream women's longing for a sex that is pure, that is, uncontaminated by power and dominance.

In these years, increasing numbers of women and men will have experienced with greater intensity that the relationship between carnal desires and the longing for enduring intimacy is an uneasy one, and that the continuation and maintenance of a (love) relationship had on the whole become more demanding. The feelings of insecurity, shame, guilt, fear and jealousy, as well as the conflicts, divorces and other problems related to their drifting lust balance, were all perceived and discussed, for instance in the encounter and sensitivity movement, but hardly, if at all, by the women's movement. At the time, the spirit of liberation from the straitjacket of older generations and their morality, and the fervour of the movement did not allow much attention to be given to the *demands* of the liberation.

## 2. From 'Sexual Liberation' to 'Sexual Oppression'

In several respects the sexual revolution ended towards the end of the 1970s, as the voices against sexual violence became louder and louder. At that time, as the study of *Opzij* shows, in addition to sexual assault and rape, sex with children - incest in particular - and pornography also came to be included in the category of sexual violence. In the early 1980s, sexual harassment was added. As the women's movement turned against sexual violence, attention shifted from differences between the generations to differences between the sexes. Opposition to the sexual practices and morality of older generations diminished, while opposition to those of the dominant sex gained momentum (van Daalen & van Stolk, 1991). 'Greater sexual openness and more acceptance of sexuality had brought sexual abuse into sight' (Schnabel, 1990: 16), and this was another reason for the shift of emphasis from sexual liberation to sexual oppression. In the media, the misery surrounding sex came under the floodlights. In the women's movement, heterosexuality was sometimes branded as 'having sex with your oppressor', a sentiment also expressed in the lesbian slogan 'more sun, fewer men'. In 1976, one of two lesbian women was reported to have said: 'We are interviewed because of being lesbians, because we make love to women ..., whereas this is the perfectly normal result of seeing yourself as important and of refusing to live in oppressive conditions any longer' (*Opzij* 1976(10): 4-6). Hardly anything but 'soft sex' - sex that is not aimed at intercourse - still attracted

positive attention, and the phrase 'potteus bewustzijn' (lesbian consciousness) became popular as a kind of yardstick for feminism.<sup>6</sup> Retrospectives on the 'years of sexual liberation' were also increasingly set in a negative tone:

It is appalling to notice how many people's thinking became stuck in the ideas of the sixties, at least with respect to sexuality. 'Anything goes' and 'the sky is the limit' are still their slogans and these stimulate a tolerance regarding any daughter-sister assault, which is a slap in the face of the victims. (*Opzij* 1983(2): 14)

The change of perspective and feeling from liberation to oppression, occurring from the end of the 1970s into the first half of the 1980s, did not imply an increase in attention to the demands of liberation, that is, increased demands on self-regulation, such as the capacity to negotiate a more ideal lust balance. Whereas before the fervour of the struggle against the old morality had prevented this, now moral indignation about oppression functioned as such a barrier. This indignation also produced a blinkered view of the (gender-specific) difficulties connected with the emancipation of sexual impulses and emotions. Directing public attention to the difficulties of women in particular was met with moral indignation by feminists; it was branded as 'individualising', that is, as reducing structured male oppression to individual problems of women. While the perspective did shift collectively from the other (older) generation to the other sex (men), it remained almost exclusively directed *outwards*: the origin as well as the solution of all difficulties was to be found in oppression by men.

Banning the psychological demands of emancipation from public discussions and from sight did not, of course, facilitate the quest for a new lust balance, as may be concluded from two extreme ways in which it was sought. One extreme consisted of a romanticisation of old we-and-I-feelings - of traditional female solidarity and identity - and an attack on pornography as a form of sexual violence. Here, the implicit lust balance strongly emphasises love and soft sex, coupled to tenderness and affection. This view was the dominant one, and also advocated by the intellectual avant-garde of the women's movement. Only one author deviated strongly from the general trend by expressing regret that a monthly like *Playgirl*, in comparison with magazines for homosexuals, contained so few pictures evoking a visual pleasure that presupposed 'a pleasure in sex without the ballast of love' (Ang, 1983: 433; Wouters, 1984). Other contrasting voices did not go nearly as far and, taken together, in the early 1980s their force seems to have shrunk to a marginal whisper. In that margin, the other extreme was to be found. It consisted of a tipping of the lust balance to its opposite side. According to tradition, a woman should have sexual desires and fantasies only *within* a romantic relationship, which was meant to last a lifetime. In a lust balance that is tipped the other way, a woman's sexuality could be aroused only *outside* such a relationship, in almost

anonymous, instant sex. All public discussion focused on the first of these two extremes, while the second remained virtually in the shadows. Ironically, in emphasising male oppression so strongly, the difficulties connected with the emancipation of sexuality were indeed reduced to the psychic and/or relational problems of individuals, thus leading precisely to the 'individualising' that was so fiercely opposed at that time. A closer inspection of both extremes follows in the next two sections.

### *The Anti-Pornography Movement*

During the first half of the 1980s, protests against pornography were numerous and sizeable, sometimes even violent. In 1980, a massive anti-pornography demonstration was held. Slogans such as 'pornography is hatred of women' and 'pornography is sexual violence' became well known. In 1984, shortly before AIDS, a Dutch ministerial report on sexual violence was strongly against pornography and against 'the process of pornographisation in the media, in the advertising industry and in mass-produced literature' (Nota, 1984: 47). To the extent that this stance was explained, reference was made to a romantic relational ideal of love, thus preventing any public recognition of the appreciation of sex, and certainly not of sex for the sake of sex.

Although pornography certainly contains many examples of images that are degrading to women, the rejection of the whole genre was nevertheless remarkable. For one thing, the numerous protests against pornography usually suggested that only men were susceptible to this kind of titillation of the senses, and that therefore only men were responsible for the process of 'erotization', referred to as 'pornographisation' in the ministerial report. At that time, there was already plenty of evidence - data derived from experimental research - to suggest that this is quite unlikely: images and fantasies of fortuitous sexual conquests by sexually active and dominant women could certainly titillate the female senses. This kind of research suggests that it is plausible to assume that both women and men are more strongly sexually aroused by fantasies and images of sexual chance meetings than by those of marital or bought sexual intercourse (Fisher and Byrne, 1978), that fantasies about 'casual' and 'committed' sex make no difference in women's sexual arousal (Mosher and White, 1980) and that women, just like men, are more strongly sexually excited by fantasies and images of sex that is initiated and dominated by someone of their own gender (Heiman, 1977; Garcia, et al., 1984; at a later date also: Dekker, 1987: 37; Laan, 1994). Furthermore, research data also suggested that the difference between the sexes in experiencing pornography was relatively small, provoking more arousal and fewer conflicts and guilt feelings, if women had been able to explore their sexuality more freely, just like men, and had developed a more liberal, 'modern' sexual morality (Sigusch and Schmidt, 1970; Straver, 1980: 55). An



interesting (later) finding in this context is that on the whole, genital arousal - vascocongestion - occurs 'even when the erotic stimulus is evaluated negatively or gives rise to negative emotions and when little or no sexual arousal is reported' and that 'the gap between genital and subjective sexual arousal is smaller for women who masturbate frequently (10 to 20 times per month) than for women who masturbate less often or not at all' (Laan, 1994: 78, 164, 169). This finding suggests the interpretation that women who masturbate often are better informed about their carnal desires and/or indulge more (easily) in them. In addition to frequency of masturbation, frequency of coitus also yielded higher correlations between genital and subjective sexual arousal (Dekker 1987).<sup>7</sup>

Women's public opinion on pornography was also remarkable in comparison with that towards prostitution and 'pornoviolence' - imagined violence as the simple, ultimate solution to the problem of status competition.<sup>8</sup> There have been hardly any protests by women against the spread of 'pornoviolence' in the media. In the second half of the 1970s, next to pornography, prostitution also became a significant issue. At first the women's movement was ambivalent about prostitution, but in the 1980s, the voices defending prostitutes increasingly drowned out the sounds of protest against them. Prostitutes even succeeded in winning the support of the mainstream women's movement. Yet in fact, on even more adequate grounds than those which apply to pornography, prostitution can be seen as a perverted expression of a sexual morality directed only towards male pleasure and to keeping women in the position of subordinates and servants. As far as 'consumption' is concerned they relate to each other as imagination (pornography) to action (prostitution), while the conditions and relationships of 'production' seem also to be in favour of pornography: the dangers for women are most probably larger in prostitution than on 'the set' or in a studio, and they are absent in the representation of sexual fantasies in books or paintings. In sum, the difference in moral indignation between pornography and prostitution are not likely to be explained by a difference in the dangers of production or consumption. Nor can this difference be explained by a reference to the prostitutes' organisation *De Rode Draad* (The Red Thread), which was established only in 1985.

Except as a symptom of women's solidarity,<sup>9</sup> the comparatively small extent of moral indignation at prostitution may be largely understood from women's sensitivity to the argument that there is little difference between the selling of sex in prostitution and in marriage - 'for the sake of peace, or as an expression of gratitude for a night out or a new dress' (*Opzij*, 1979(7/8): 41). In this 'sex-is-work' view, prostitutes (like swinging singles) may seem to have the upper hand by staying more independent and obtaining higher financial rewards. In this view on housewives, lust has no place and sex brings more displeasure than pleasure: women appear predominantly as

sexual objects, not as sexual subjects. As such, it mirrors another view that was still widely held in the 1970s, the belief that men are entitled to have sex with their wives. In 1975, a detective of the Amsterdam vice squad was still shameless enough to say: 'I'm almost sixty years old now and I've raped my wife quite often. Yes, if she didn't want to [do it with me]' (*Opzij*, 1975(3/4): 38). In addition to this sex-is-work view, the image of the 'prankster' emerged: 'naughty' women who (more often than not) enjoy the sex they are paid for - an example of women turning traditional double morality upside down.

The protests against pornography also evoke surprise because they go against the flow of the twentieth-century process of informalisation (increasing behavioural and feeling alternatives) and its inherent 'erotisation of everyday life' (Wouters, 1990; 1992). Together, all these arguments seem to permit the conclusion that the anti-pornography movement to a large extent was an 'emancipation cramp'. It was predominantly an expression of the problems connected with the emancipation of sexuality: the attack on male pornography was a sort of 'best defence', concealing as well as expressing a 'fear of freedom' (in Erich Fromm's famous phrase), a fear of experiencing and presenting oneself as a sexual subject.

### *What is the price of sex?*

In the margin of the public debate, some of the difficulties attached to the emancipation of sexual feelings sometimes surfaced more or less casually, one of them being the risk of tipping over to the other extreme of the lust balance. At this other extreme, sex was isolated by excluding sexual intimacy from other forms of intimacy, as these had come to be experienced as obstacles to sexual pleasure. Sexual desires tended towards the 'zipless fuck', to a 'sex without the ballast of love', while the forces which formerly forbade this - the social code and individual conscience - still had to be avoided with such energy and determination that their absence, so to speak, loomed large.

This was expressed by a woman who said:

For years and years I did not want any emotional commitment with men. ... What I did do regularly at the time, though, was pick up a one-night stand. In fact, that suited me well. ... Because I was not emotionally committed to those men, I was able to take care of my sexual needs very well. ... It also gave me a feeling of power. I did just as I pleased, took the initiative myself and was very active. (Groenendijk, 1983: 368)<sup>10</sup>

A statement like this shows more than a shift of accent in the traditional mixture of love ('emotional commitment') and carnal desire. Here, the price of sex, to put it dramatically, is nothing less than love. The formulation - particularly the word 'because' - indicates that the lusts of the flesh can be given a free rein only if the longing for love is curbed radically, as radically as lust

was curbed before. For this reason this was called 'the new withdrawal method': 'Don't go for happiness, just go for orgasm' (Rubinstein, 1983: 79). The coexistence of an abhorrence of subordination to men with a longing for a loving relationship will have made many women suspicious of their relational longing. They feared that if they gave in to this craving for love, they would lose 'the feeling of power' since they would (as usual) almost automatically flow into the devouring dependence of a self-sacrificing love (cf. Dowling, 1981). Therefore, what at first sight appears to be a fear of intimacy is in fact another expression of the 'fear of freedom'.

As an undercurrent, this lust balance formed the negative of that propagated by mainstream feminism, i.e. the anti-porno movement. It is an open question as to how many women who in public turned against pornography and, by implication, against male sexual fantasies, to some extent combined this attitude in private with an escape from emotional commitment into volatile sexual affairs. What may be concluded, however, if only from the coexistence of these two extremes, is that in this period there must have been a tug-of-war between and within women; *between* women who ventured into giving free rein to sex for the sake of sex, and women who rejected this; and *within* women to the extent that women encountered both sides in themselves, and met them with ambivalence. The question of how many and how intensely women experienced this tug-of-war or ambivalence cannot be answered. From a longer-term perspective, it is obvious, however, that throughout the twentieth century and especially since the sexual revolution, many women have been involved in the quest for a more satisfying lust balance, somewhere in between the extremes of 'love without the ballast or duty of sex' and 'sex without the ballast of love'. No woman will have been able completely to withdraw from this development and its inherent tug-of-war and ambivalence, if only because before the sexual revolution the social code allowed women to express only one side of the lust balance.

### 3. *Lust Revival*

In the latter part of the 1980s, the outlook of leaders in the women's movement was less exclusively outward, that is, focused on oppression by men. They developed a more relational view of oppression, a view that saw oppression as incorporated in the social code as well as within personality structures - the latter via the mechanism of an 'identification with the established'. Thus the difficulties and pressures connected with the emancipation of women and of emotions came to attract more attention. This was aptly expressed in the title of the inaugural lecture of a professor of women's studies: *The Burden of Liberation* (Brinkgreve, 1988). Its point of departure was the insight that 'greater freedom of choice once again turned out to be a pressure to perform', as the historian Rölling summarised it (1994: 230). Consequently, emancipation (and assertive use of the

greater freedom of choice) was also seen as a learning process in which problems are expected to occur as a matter of course:

It is the complicated task of a 'controlled letting go', making heavy demands on affect control, and it is not to be expected that without a learning process this will proceed spontaneously and 'smoothly'. (Brinkgreve, 1988: 14)

In the latter part of the 1980s, this more reflexive outlook coincided with further emancipation of sexual impulses and emotions. In magazines like *Opzij*, more attention was given to themes like 'men as sexual objects', bought sex for women, women's adultery, SM, positively evaluated passes and eroticism in the workplace, and also for 'safe sex' (owing to AIDS). These topics were discussed soberly. When an early attempt at commercialising this interest was made through the establishment of a Dutch version of *Playgirl*, the magazine had the cautious and typical policy of not publishing 'frontal nudes'. It was defended with the argument that

women have only in the last five years begun to discuss their fantasies. Male nudity does not eroticise. ... It is power which makes men erotically appealing. Hence the popularity of romance novels in which the male star is a doctor, a successful businessman or an elderly father figure. (*NRC Handelsblad*, 21 October 1987)

Yet the wave of moral indignation at pornography faded away and in retrospect the anti-pornography movement was characterised as a 'kind of puritanism' (*Opzij*, 1988(9): 43). From the mid-1980s onwards, a number of women-made, female-centred pornographic films showing women actively initiating and enjoying sexual activity appeared on the market (Laan, 1994: 163).

In this period, a sexologist relativized the importance of 'intimacy'. She wrote: 'in many ways, the need for intimacy can be a trap for women', and after having presented some examples of women who like making love to strangers, finding sexual pleasure, she concludes:

Indeed, at times there is this double feeling: you *do* want that pleasurable experience of togetherness, you *do* want to have sex, but you don't bargain for a rather too intimate steady relationship. (*Opzij*, 1986(7/8): 69)

In 1988, in a special issue of *Opzij* on 'Women and Lust', this argument was supplemented with a strong attack on the traditional lust balance:

Tradition teaches a woman to experience her sexuality as predominantly relational and intimate. But it is an amputation through traditional female socialisation to represent a sexuality so weakly directed at pleasure and lust.

The article, directed especially at 'career women who live alone', continues first with a plea to have 'sex for the sake of sex, to be erotic and horny but not emotionally committed' and then warns:

If a woman nevertheless (secretly) needs intimacy in order to enjoy sex, she will be always

left with a hangover. After too many hangovers she will stop having this kind of affair.

Then, she may help herself, that is, masturbate. That can be gratifying too. (*Opzij*, 1988(1): 86-7)

In later years, this appreciation for masturbation is supported, although sometimes only half-heartedly, as in a review of the first issue of BEV, a 'lust magazine' for women:

I think we are on the brink of an individualisation of sexuality, a development that very well befits the growing self-sufficiency of women and also accedes nicely to this age of video, telephone sex and special sex-shops for women. However, this image does not please me. What I sketch here, in fact, is an exact copy of what men are used to doing: they hurry to see a peep show during lunch hour, or use the company toilet to take the matter into their own hands. (*Opzij*, 1989(2): 17)

A few months later, this author attacked a sexologist (Vennix), who had found that half of his female respondents repeatedly made love without the lust to do so, for creating the impression that women actually *are* like that. After having pointed out that these sombre data on '*the* female orgasm' were derived from questioning 'only married people', she concludes:

I think data like these should be connected above all to circumstances. Personally, I would resent it in any case, if from Vennix's research even *one* man might jump to the conclusion that the importance of *my* orgasm could possibly ever be overestimated. (*Opzij*, 1989(6): 25)

A 'large study of sex and relationships', published in *Opzij* in 1989, comparing female readers of this magazine to a general sample of Dutch women, shows that the emancipation of women and of sexuality run in tandem. It concludes that *Opzij* readers in certain respects had become more like men - a 'masculinisation'. They are, for instance, more playfully thinking about keeping up more than one relationship, and they rate having sex (masturbation as well as coitus) higher on a scale. On the other hand, a 'feminisation' is concluded from their pursuit of 'a sex between equals, allowing, even stimulating dedication':

Traditional 'femininity', including tenderness, foreplay and passion, is not weakened in this process of renewal. On the contrary, men are expected to behave like this too. The renewal can be characterised as eroticising feminisation. (*Opzij*, 1988(1): 70)

In this period, the Chippendales and similar groups of male strippers (who keep their G-strings on) appeared on the scene, and their success shows that the public titillation of female lust has become a socially accepted fact. Although the Chippendales do indeed make caressing movements in the direction of their crotches, their coquetry in military uniforms, however, is a continuing variation upon the tradition of the Mills & Boon romance novels in which women need

to look up to a man before they are willing to nestle in his arms (van Stolk & Wouters, 1987a: 136-172). This pleasure in looking up shows how deeply rooted in the personality the longing for (male) protection is, while all the same it is based on the woman's subordination. It also shows the significance of 'identification with the established' as a defense mechanism.

Since all the changes described above represent movements in the same direction, it is plausible that from the mid-1980s onward, the difference between men and women regarding their lust balance - ideal and practice - has diminished. There was a certain lust revival, an acceleration in the emancipation of sexuality. The revival was limited, however, as can be demonstrated from the lack of commercial success of magazines aiming at female sexual fantasies, magazines like *Playgirl* and *BEV*: both disappeared after a few issues.

#### 4. Lust and Love Revival

A research finding regarding the difference in appreciation of qualities of one's own partner and those of a fantasy partner possibly expresses a characteristic tension of the female lust balance, prevailing in the 1990s: women reported to particularly appreciate their own partner for qualities that are traditionally female - no macho, but sweet, tender, sensitive, emotional, honest, faithful, caring, devoted, companionable, all together 62 per cent - whereas dreams about a (sex)partner mainly refer to corporal characteristics like robust, big, handsome, dark type, sexy; all together 65 per cent (Brinkgreve, 1995). Deze spanning in de lustbalans van seks en liefde, een spanning tussen droom en daad, wordt niet alleen door veel vrouwen ervaren maar kennelijk ook beter verdragen dan tevoren, hetgeen erop wijst dat het geweten en het zelf-ideaal van vrouwen in deze minder rigide en dus soepeler zijn geworden.

In the 1990s, further revival of female lust has been expressed in the successful sales figures of mailing businesses and chain stores marketing erotic articles for women, in particular from the sale of vibrators: both in 1993 and 1994 there has been an increase of 25 per cent (*NRC Handelsblad*, 6 April 1995). In Germany, the network of female sexshops has become so dense in the 1990s that *Die Tageszeitung* has proclaimed the decade as that of the 'lusty lady' (6 March 1997). Owners of videoshops have reported women's growing interest in porno-videos. A 'sexuality weakly directed at pleasure and lust' has become more of a humiliating spectre, while at the same time the sex that prospers in anonymity, sex-for-the-sake-of-sex, evokes far fewer elated reactions, and not only in the context of AIDS. A Dutch trend-watcher claims: 'Sex for the sake of sex is out. ... Sex is once again being perceived as part of a relationship (as it seems to have been before the sexual revolution)' (Kuitenbrouwer, 1990: 48-9). And an assertive heading in a book on 'erotic manners' reads: 'Sex for the sake of sex is old-fashioned' (van Eijk, 1994). These statements

are backed up by research data on young people; they confirm: 'Free sex certainly has not become a new sin, but it is losing popularity.' As an ideal, 'most young people think of love and sexual pleasure as two sides of the same coin, and this goes for both boys and girls' (van der Vliet, 1990: 65; see also Vogels & van der Vliet, 1990). In 1995, 'having strong feelings for each other' sufficed for three-quarters of the Dutch school population (aged 12 years and older) as a precondition for having sex (Brugman et al., 1995). This attitude is reinforced by their parents: 'Many report the presence of a "relationship" to be decisive for their consent to a teenage child wanting to have sex. Some indicate that depth and stability of a relationship, more than age or anything else, makes having sex acceptable (Schalet, 1994: 117). Teenagers themselves in no way exclude the possibility of having sex for its own sake,<sup>11</sup> but in the longer run the ideal of lovers being matched to each other, including in bed, seems to have gained strength. This interpretation is supported by an increase in the number of young people between 17 and 24 years old who would consider an act of sexual infidelity to be the end of a relationship; in a 1979 survey, 41 per cent held that opinion and in 1989/1993 this had risen to 63 per cent. This very trend is most spectacular for cohabiting youngsters (by now a 'normal' way of life) from 30 to 65 per cent (CBS, 1994: 15). Onderzoek onder de hele Nederlandse bevolking suggereert verder dat over de gehele linie ook 'de normen omtrent de huwelijksrouw in de jaren negentig minder vrijblijvend werden'; zo reageerden in 1970 (tot 1980) nog maar 26% totaal afwijzend op de stelling dat een enkel avontuurtje voor een goed huwelijk geen kwaad kan, terwijl dat percentage na 1980 steeds verder opliep: 35% in 1991, 45% in 1995, en 57% in 1997 (SCR 1998 140). Maar deze cijfers over slippertjes moeten in het licht worden geplaatst van veranderingen in het spreken daarover: het ideaal van openheid en elkaar "de waarheid" blijven vertellen is opgeschoven in de richting van: 'Might keeping silent about unfaithful adventures range among the defensible cowardices in a human life?' (Van Eijk 2001: 42).

In the 1990s, the women's movement joined this trend under the new name of 'power-feminism'. Women's solidarity was no longer axiomatic, women could and did cooperate with men, and this attitude coincided with an increasingly mounted attack on those who still emphasised oppression. This was branded 'victim feminism' and denounced as 'victimism'. The attack was also aimed at romanticising old harmonious (as well as unequal) relationships and the traditional lust balance of predominantly 'sweet and soft'; by calling that 'vanilla-sex' a larger variety of tastes is indicated as acceptable.

In the homosexual world as well, pioneers in the cultivation of sex for its own sake have lately expressed an ambivalent if not critical attitude towards this (tilted) lust balance. Opposing the lust profit of 'the streamlined way in which sex was organised, discarded from clumsy

introductions and annoying questions', Stephan Sanders (1994: 47,46,13,18) mentions the loss of lust in having sex without passion: 'the continuous coupling ... of more or less perfunctory fucks - the waiting, the posing desirably, the taking down of the trousers, the panting, the hoisting up of the trousers'. Here 'the suspicion that, despite all his efforts, his grip on his desire had not gained strength, but had rather weakened' is gnawing. This outlook implies the view that in the longer run, the absence of passion or emotional involvement limits the possibility of having a lustful orgasm.<sup>12</sup>

On the whole, the changes of the 1990s can be interpreted as a lust *and* love or relationship revival. On the basis of continued reinforcement of the principle of proceeding only by mutual consent, mutual trust has been embedded in the prevalent relational or figurational ideal (van Stolk and Wouters, 1987b), to the extent that social interaction between the sexes has become more careful as well as more subtle. Because of the sensitivity and caution needed to proceed in such a way, erotic and sexual consciousness and tensions have expanded and intensified. Therefore, as 'no' became more unswerving,<sup>13</sup> latitude in sexual activity has enlarged and attempts at integrating sexual and relational desires have intensified. Together, these changes represent a shift in the ideal lust balance towards 'diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties' (Elias, 1994: 460 ff.), and they also represent a process of integration and civilisation of the sexes. This diagnosis is confirmed by other data showing that 'on the whole, women feel like having sex more often, allow more sexual incentives more easily and have learned to discuss these matters more freely,' whereas 'on the whole, men have learned to connect relational satisfaction and sexual gratification' (Straver et al., 1994: 154-64).

The emancipation of female sexuality and its counterpart, the bonding of male sexuality, will have certainly been channelled by literature (like feminist publications), by protest activities (like those against sexual violence and harassment) and by changes in the law (like making rape in marriage liable to penalty). But even more significant for explaining this process is the pincer movement that has affected men: they have found themselves between their longing for an enduring intimacy, on the one hand, which became subjected earlier and more strongly to more or less rigorous limitations such as desertion and divorce or the threat of them; and their increasing dependence upon their talent to arouse and stimulate a woman's desires, on the other hand, for satisfying their own sexuality.



In this process of integration and civilisation of the sexes, and in interconnected changes in the dominant lust balance, a few patterns can be discerned. These are regularities in all integrating and civilising processes, to be presented in the following sections.

### *1. Lust Anxiety: Social and Sexual Fear of 'Heights' and 'Depths'*

The first regularity is related to the mechanism of 'identification with the established': identifying with the uneven balance of power between the sexes functions as a psychical impediment in developing a higher-levelled and more integrated lust balance with more sex. It produces a lust anxiety that can be illustrated from a passage in a 1950s Dutch advice booklet on 'becoming engaged':

Look at this engaged couple sitting in the car of a roller coaster. The car is pulled up slowly and then descends with flying speed down the steep slope. Other couples in other cars laugh and scream while falling into each others arms, the fair sex seeking protection, as it were, from the sterner sex. But both of the engaged couple, who have turned-into-themselves, do not have the courage to do likewise. They braced themselves in the corner of their seat. They clench their teeth and lips and do not want to admit that they too were terror-struck when screeching down the slope. When at the end the cars are stopped and the other couples go in search of the next amusement, arms dearly linked, the turned-into-themselves couple tell each other: 'There was actually nothing to it, it's a shame and a waste of money!' Well, a waste it certainly was, for they wasted an opportunity for people in love to let themselves go a little more on such an occasion than is possible when in serious company.

This lust anxiety is interpreted as follows: 'Quite often it is the result of a wrong kind of upbringing by dictatorial parents. ... These dictatorially raised young people constantly ask themselves: "Is this permitted" or "Is it allowed?" ... They never really loosen up' (Mounier, n.d.: 13-15). Here, the explanation is found in the dictatorial relationship between the generations, but the same explanation can be applied to most expressions of lust anxiety in the relationship between the sexes: its inequality at least partly explains the greater difficulties of women in enjoying a lust balance with more sex. They remain afraid of the 'shame' of becoming more of a sexual subject, of the consequences of repudiating, if only in fantasy, the attitude of subordination. It is a 'fear of freedom'. From the fear of running wild through loosening up, they clam up. Their source of power and identity, the whole of their personality, is still strongly interwoven with the old balance of power between the sexes and also with the old lust balance, the old ratio of relational and sexual desires.

In this respect, homosexual women seem more like heterosexual women than homosexual (and heterosexual) men:

Emotional involvement is the context within which most lesbian sexuality takes place.

Lesbian couples indicate that closeness is more often a reason to have sex than arousal or orgasm. Monogamy is preferred by the majority of lesbians and most respondents act accordingly. (Schreurs, 1993a: 61)

And many lesbian women report having difficulties in taking sexual initiatives or in seducing their partners:

In this context, their need to avoid even the slightest ring of dominance, power or male sexual behaviour, and to repudiate any behaviour that could possibly be experienced as an imitation of heterosexuality, is often mentioned as an impediment. (Schreurs, 1993b: 333)

From this outlook, the psychic repercussion of the uneven balance of power between the sexes is still a substantial barrier for continued emancipation of sexual impulses and emotions. This barrier might be conceptualised as a fear of social and psychic (including sexual) heights (Wouters, 1990: 74-5, 98). With regard to the men's accommodation process, the counterpart of this barrier might be conceptualised as social and psychic (including sexual) fear of depths, a fear of losing traditional sources of power and identity and of the jealousy and desertion anxieties that are involved, which prevent men from imagining and enjoying the pleasures of a more restrained kind of intercourse with a woman – the more 'civilised' satisfaction which this may bring.

Sometimes, the struggle of getting men to attempt to overcome their fear of depth is mentioned explicitly in advice books. In the first half of the twentieth century, these books mainly emphasize female endurance, also in feeding his male pride, as the only way to enjoy or even preserve a relationship with a man. Here is an American example from 1933:

MEN ARE NOT ANALYTICAL ABOUT WOMEN ... LIKE A CHILD, A MAN DEMANDS PHYSICAL AND MENTAL COMFORT or he will be cranky and unreasonable. ...Whenever you attend a golden or a silver wedding you may write it down on your cuff that there is one more woman who has found ways and means (not words) to make her man believe that her way was *his happiness*. (Wilson 1942: 225)

A more militant but at the same time a more optimistic example is again taken from an American advice book, entitled *Plain Talk for Women Under 21!*, published in 1956:

So, the object is to destroy a man's generalized concepts of women. He must be made to see the advantages and pleasures of admitting defeat in his game of dating. He has to be turned against his own side, taking pleasure only in the victory of his adversary.

Obviously, this is quite a feat, but it's done every day. (Ludden 1956: 38)

An example of a man struggling with this fear of depth comes from an interview with someone who sometimes watches pornographic videos with his wife and who reported being struck by a terrific stab of jealousy when his wife once said: 'It's odd, I'm 31 years old now and yet I only know your dick.' And he continued with an example of what he called the enormous gap between his emotions and his mind:

For instance, the other day she asked me to lie at her side of the bed, so it would be pleasantly warm by the time she got in. That's what I did, and I don't see any reason why not, but I did feel like an idiot. I thought: 'Luckily my friends can't see me because they would laugh their heads off, Charlie impersonating a hot-water bottle.' (van Stolk & Wouters, 1987a: 133, 249)

Lacking data, it must remain an open question how many and to what extent men have suffered from impotence or other forms of loss of lust as an 'accommodation cramp'.<sup>14</sup> However, simply raising the question may suffice to suggest that the distinction between safe sex and emotionally safe sex (Orbach, 1994: 165) is significant for both sexes.

## *2. Three Types: Trend-followers, Radicals and Moderates*

Another important regularity follows from the fact that emancipation and accommodation are learning processes in which there are differences in tempo and emphasis, on which basis three different groups can be discerned: there are always trend-followers, radicals and moderates (cf. van Stolk, 1991: 59/60). With regard to the lust balance, these three types correspond to the three possibilities or scenarios that are open after the first few preliminary moves on the road of love and sex have been made:

At that point, the outlines of different possibilities become apparent: one resigns oneself to one's partner's limits and satisfies oneself with what has been accomplished [followers].

The second possibility consist of a continued transgression of boundaries, the path of lust [radicals]. The third solution consists of preserving or reviving sexual tension and challenge in contact with the present partner [moderates]. (Zeegers, 1994: 140)

The lust balance of trend-followers is mainly characterised by the longing for a lasting and taken-for-granted intimacy. Their sexual activity is directed at perpetuating their relationship: 'In the midst of social jostling and the ups and downs of personal positions and social identities, the family and, within that, sex, offer an *oasis of stability and predictability*, an area where one knows the dos and dont's and who's who' (Zeegers, 1994: 131). Confronted with a widening range of socially acceptable behavioural and emotional alternatives, they clam up to some extent, from fear of jealousy, desertion, loneliness, anxious to lose themselves and their relationship. The dangers

traditionally connected with sex may have diminished since the sexual revolution, but for them the anxieties connected with those dangers persevered - an example of a cultural lag. Thus, they held on and stayed conservative where moderates and radicals continued the emancipation of sexuality.

The lust balance of the radicals is strongly sex-oriented. They have become involved in the dynamics of lust as they continued to search for and to build up erotic and sexual tensions in situations or scenarios. In these dynamics, their sexual desire becomes specialised, while formerly lustful situations lose attraction:

One thing I do occasionally regret ... If I compare myself to colleagues who, when looking at these girls in mini skirts, exclaim: 'Whow! What a delicious piece!', I can't help thinking: 'if you only knew what I've seen and done'. Do you understand? They still have that fantasy, that delightful 'Good God! What would she look like under her nickers?' In fact, I don't have that fantasy any more. Because I've experienced so much (Zeegers, 1994: 119).

The lust balance of the moderates is relationship *and* sex-oriented. They combine attention for both person and body in intimate activity: 'In letting oneself go, in knowing that the partner does that too, in showing a certain "childlike" lack of inhibition and in getting rid of feelings of shame, the feeling of mutual contact and appreciation is actualised' (Zeegers, 1994: 138/9). In this way, moderates have 'learned' to combine their longing for an enduring intimacy with their carnal desires.

One would expect an unequal division of the sexes among the three types, if only because the dangers and anxieties surrounding sex (rape, unwanted pregnancy, etc.) have always been (and are) greater for women than for men. In addition, for many women sex functioned as an important source of power (as a means of temptation, reward and punishment) and identity. On this basis it is also to be expected that the fear of giving up that traditional female pattern has been (and is) stronger. However, research into these three types revealed that moderates consist of just as many men as women. Moderates are reported to have developed the kind of sex in which 'lust and proximity are intrinsically connected, and even indulging in lust has the denotation of frankness'. This kind of sex 'is not a personal feature but a characteristic of the interaction with the partner' - that is, of the relationship (Zeegers, 1994: 138-140). This means that, as the principle of mutual consent became anchored and expanded both within a relationship and in having sex, the development of such a lust balance of greater uninhibitedness and candour in (sexual) behaviour and feeling has become more strongly a relational process as well as an individual one.

### *3. Phases in Processes of Emancipation, Accommodation and Integration*

Just as the accomplishments of one generation become habitually taken for granted in the next, so the feeling of liberation, inherent in a successful emancipatory struggle, can topple over into its opposite when what was first an achievement becomes a taken-for-granted fact of life: when this happens, a feeling of oppression and of being burdened can become prevalent.

In the twentieth century, the feeling of liberation prevailed in the 'roaring twenties' and again in the 1960s and 1970s. In those decades, entire groups were socially rising; there was a collective emancipation or, to put it differently, the most striking social pressure came from *below*. In such phases of emancipation and resistance, the *gains* in terms of we-feelings and I-feelings are usually emphasised and what prevails is the feeling of liberation from the straitjacket of old authoritarian relationships. In this phase, much of what was once considered to be bad luck is then experienced as injustice.

When collective emancipation chances diminish and disappear, another phase of accommodation and resignation has begun (for these phases, see Wouters, 1986 and 1990). In this phase, the most striking social pressure comes (again) much more unequivocally from *above*. When this occurs, the gains of the emancipation phase have largely come to be taken for granted, and thus the pressures of having to comply with authority relations are emphasised more strongly. The same goes for increased demands such as enlarged knowledge, ability, reflexivity and flexibility in dealing with others and oneself. Complying with these demands had been a precondition for reaping the gains of emancipation, but only when the pressure from above clearly prevails once again do they also come to be experienced as demands. This opens a perspective in which the *loss* and the oppression of old we-feelings and I-feelings are emphasised. In this phase, in deliberations as to whether one is confronted with bad luck or injustice and whether it is befitting to react with resignation or resistance, bad luck and resignation will usually get the benefit of the doubt. The following examples from the 1930s may illustrate this emphasis on the burden of liberation and on loss:

By their equalisation the sexes certainly have gained mutual understanding and conscious peacefulness in relating to each other, but they have lost happiness. (Haluschka, 1937: 178)

If one only looks at photographs of life at the beach! Perfectly innocent if considered in themselves, but fatal in their effect, because, through lack of distance and deference, they continue to rob love of its poetry, its fine inner blossoming and spiritual contents. Love is in danger of becoming nothing but instinct or ambiguous friendship. (Haluschka, n.d.: 26)

The lust anxiety that speaks through these words, as well as the romanticisation of the relationships and the lust balance of those 'happy days' of 'paradise lost', is expressed only in the

margins of public debate in a phase of emancipation and resistance, when the feeling of liberation prevails.

In both phases, marriage was one of the institutions involved: while the old Victorian ideal of an elevated spiritual love lost vigour, the demand of always preserving one's marriage lost precedence. Particularly in phases of emancipation, desires and interests of individuals gained importance - a shift in the we-I balance in the direction of the I (Elias, 1991). Moreover, by the 1970s, the social security provided by welfare arrangements had been transformed into an 'equanimity of the welfare state', on the basis of which many women have liberated themselves from the shackles of their marriage (van Stolk and Wouters, 1987a). In the 1980s and 1990s, as pressures from above gained precedence and collective emancipation chances disappeared, the longing for enduring intimacy has strengthened and intensified - a shift in the we-I-balance in the direction of the we. In this most recent phase of accommodation and resignation, this longing will also have gained importance by the trimming down of social security and welfare arrangements, corroding the 'equanimity of the welfare state'.

Seen from a longer-term perspective, these alternating phases appear to change in a particular direction: in a spiral movement, both sides of the we-I balance, liberation as well as the burden of demands, are raised. This is the third pattern or regularity in the connection between changes in prevailing power and dependency relationships and in the dominant lust balance. On the one hand, the spectrum of accepted emotional and behavioural alternatives expanded, but on the other hand an acceptable and respectable usage of these alternatives implied a continued increase of demands on self-regulation. Although sometimes one side is emphasised and sometimes the other, taken together they are best understood as phases in integration processes of sexes and classes within states (Wouters 1995a; 1995b).

#### *4. Intensified Tugs-of-War and Ambivalence*

Coinciding with the spread of less uneven balances of power and dependency and of stronger ideals of equality, intimate relationships have become more strongly dependent on the style of emotion management of the partners involved: how to negotiate the terms of the relationship as two captains on the same ship without losing love and respect? At the same time, all kinds of conflict or conflicting needs and interests, formerly a tabooed non-topic, came out into the open and were subject to negotiation. According to traditional ideals, conflicts did not happen - female resignation would prevent them - and if they occurred, then they were seen only as a natural phenomenon, refreshing, like a thunderstorm. Since the 1960s, the art of 'conflict management' has developed, and marriage or living intimately together has become a conflict-prone balancing act

(Mahlmann, 1991: 327).

As more egalitarian rules take time to 'sink in', both women and men have increasingly become subjected to a tug-of-war between old and new ideals (and power resources) and to related feelings of ambivalence. Most men and women seem to be egalitarian 'on the surface' and traditional 'underneath'. Most men react in accordance with the dynamics of established-outsider relationships: they do not want to accommodate and do not easily perceive the 'civilised' pleasures of a more egalitarian relationship. Therefore, they will use the 'gender strategy' of appealing to a woman's *old* identity underneath, trying to restore it, whereas most women will appeal to a man's *new* identity, trying to reinforce it and make it sink in. Therefore, 'sex and love are no longer given facts but talents to be exploited' (Schnabel, 1990: 16), and the art of obliging and being obliged as well as the art of escaping or sublimating these pressures have developed to increasingly higher degrees. As these demands increased, to lose oneself in making love was increasingly acknowledged as one of the ultimate forms of uncomplicated and unreflected existence. In the same process, the pursuit of a more stable and moderate lust balance also intensified. Recent discussions of issues like sexual harassment, pornography, rape in marriage and date-rape, can be understood as a common search for ways of becoming intimate and of keeping at a distance that are acceptable to both women and men. Precisely because of the sensitivity and caution needed to proceed in such a way, erotic and sexual consciousness and tensions have expanded and intensified, stimulating a further sexualisation of love and an erotisation of sex. This quest for an exciting and satisfying lust balance, avoiding the extremes of emotional wildness and emotional numbness, has also stimulated the emotional tug-of-war and ambivalence to a higher tension-level. That is so, if only because the increased demands on emotion management will have intensified both the fantasies and the longing for (romantic) relationships characterised by greater intimacy, as well as the longing for easier (sexual) relationships in which the pressure of these demands is absent or negligible, as in one-night stands. This ambivalence, together with an increasingly more conscious (reflexive) and calculating (flexible) emotion management as a source of power, respect and self-respect, is characteristic of processes of the decreasing segregation and increasing integration of classes and of sexes. This forms another, fourth pattern or regularity in the connection between changes in figurations and in lust balances: as long as those integration processes continue, these ambivalent emotions may be expected to accumulate and intensify, including both longings that make up the lust balance. This is why the body, nudity and sex are becoming increasingly prominent in the media (for Germany, see König, 1990), and why this trend is likely to persist; they contain the promise of natural physicality and of a harmoniously combined attention for both person and body in intimate activity. It may be expected that as the integration of

the sexes continues to proceed, heightened sensitivity to this promise will accumulate as well, together with erotic consciousness and erotic tensions. However, because in the same process the ideal and longing to be known and loved body and soul, will mount as well, both longings will remain connected to each other in heightened ambivalence.<sup>15</sup> Overall, this boils down to intensified longings, more contradictory desires, and thus, on the whole, less satisfaction or gratification... unless people (once again) manage to deal with these contradictions in playful ways.



## NOTES

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1. For this reason many scholars claim that the sexual revolution mainly consisted of the decline of the enormous distance that had grown between the public front kept up and actual behaviour (see, for instance, Bailey, 1994).
2. Cf. Blom (1993); Hatfield & Rapson, 1994); Kooy (1968, 1983); van Zessen and Sandfort 1991); and Zwaan (1993). Besides the problem of distinguishing between changes in the lust balance as a dominant ideal and as a practice, there is an additional complication: studies of sexuality usually do not pay much attention, if any, to the kind of relationship in which it occurs; and vice versa, studies of loving relationships usually do not take a systematic interest in sex. Both kinds of research are even reported as attracting different kinds of respondents (Schreurs, 1993b: 332).
3. The German words for 'lust balance' and 'lust economy' were translated into English as 'pleasure balance' and 'pleasure economy': 'The degree of anxiety, like the whole pleasure economy, is different in every society, in every class and historical phase' (Elias, 1994: 519).
4. My thanks to Bram van Stolk who initiated this study and presented me with his notes and photocopies. I would also like to thank Jon Fletcher for his stimulating advice.
5. In 1974 Anja Meulenbelt, probably the foremost Dutch feminist, also contributed to this development by announcing her love affair with a woman under the title 'Homosex en feminisme' in *Opzij* 3: 7-9.
6. In 1980, in a report entitled *Women and Sexuality: Ten Years After The Sexual Revolution*, the author excuses herself for being 'obliged' to discuss male sexuality: 'Because most women still [sic!] prefer to make love with men, we cannot talk about "her" sexual gratification without referring to "his" modeling of sexuality.' This author also advocates 'soft sex': 'Women can contribute a lot to the recognition of this 'soft' pole. And this would not only liberate our own sexuality, but also that of men' (de Bruijn, 1980: 4,23).
7. The question of what determines whether genital arousal is interpreted as, and leads to, subjective sexual arousal, could not be answered by Dekker. He hinted at 'external information' such as 'appraisal of the erotic stimulus'. In her study, Ellen Laan could be more precise. She compared women's responses to the 'regular' man-made pornographic film and to a number of women-made, female-centered pornographic films: 'Contrary to expectation, genital arousal did not differ between films, although genital response to both films was substantial. Subjective experience of sexual arousal was significantly higher during the woman-made film. The man-made film evoked more feelings of shame, guilt, and aversion. ... The largest contribution to female excitement might result from the processing of stimulus-content and stimulus-meaning...' (Laan, 1994: 49).
- 8 Tom Wolfe introduced the concept *pornoviolence*: 'Violence is the simple, ultimate solution for problems of status competition, just as gambling is the simple, ultimate solution for economic competition. The old pornography was the fantasy of easy sexual delights in a world where sex was kept unavailable. The new pornography is the fantasy of easy triumph in a world where status competition has become so complicated and frustrating' (Wolfe, 1976: 162).
- 9 The difference in image-formation - the concept of prostitution draws attention more strongly to prostitutes than to their customers, pimps or managers, whereas the concept of pornography predominantly evokes the image of wallowing male consumers - seems to be the result rather than a cause of the anti-pornography movement. In prostitution women are 'real', whereas in pornography they are visually only a recording and tangibly absent. This may help to explain why women's solidarity is more easily and strongly directed at prostitutes than at female porno-stars.
- 10 In his famous *The Culture of Narcissism*, Christopher Lasch presented a similar example: 'more and more people long for emotional detachment or "enjoy sex," as Hendin writes, "only in situations where they can define and limit the intensity of the relationship." A lesbian confesses: "The only men I've ever been able to enjoy sex with were men I didn't give a shit about. Then I could let go, because I didn't feel vulnerable"' (Lasch, 1979: 338).

11. Suffering from a fatal disease, a few weeks before she died, the fifteen year old Floortje Peneder still frankly expressed the independent power of sexual desire, as is characteristic for her age. Under the heading *Wishes*, five of them, all numbered, are mentioned on separate lines, followed much lower, near the bottom of the page, by: 'A GOOD FUCK !!! (but that is out of the question).' A little later, her spirit rises above the fact that she is in hospital suffering from a fatal illness and adds: 'But look, these two sides in me are very strong. On the one hand ... very well-behaved and neat/respectable. But on the other hand (and that side is now much more important to me), I am a swinger. The pleasure of going to a pub, having a drink with friends, musing about sex (not just love, but real sex too) smoking and drinking together. To go out for a night with somebody, being able to say "Whow, I'll grab that sweet thing!"' (Peneder, 1994: 92, 111).
12. To put it differently: the bottom of the well of pleasure is covered with broken glass and used condoms. This is captured in the expression *Fuck Romance!* (1970s?) that primarily relativises romance to the point of sex, but in fact also sex to the point of romance.
13. Sadoomasochism seems to be an exception, because here, lust seems to be derived from trampling on both 'yes' and 'no'. But this impression is largely deceptive, for the trampling happens within firmly defined borders. A German study, for instance, concludes that SM consists of carefully staged rituals, of which the high level of (mutually expected) self-restraint is the most striking characteristic (Wetzstein 1993).
14. When this issue was first raised in *Opzij*, the tone was jeering: in a spoof interview with 'the last potent man', he finally became violent (1983(5): 16). Four years later, the question was taken up somewhat more seriously, but the answer ('no need for that') overlooks the possibility of impotence as a transitory problem of accommodation: 'An equal relationship is pre-eminently an important support for sexual gratification, for only then can sexuality be liberated from ulterior motives like a display of power. Then you do what you do simply because you like it. And what can then fail?' (*Opzij*, 1987(1): 46-48).
15. The tension between these longings is likely to be heightened as well by a relentless and less religiously inspired curiosity for what was placed behind social and psychic scenes in former centuries, for both sex and death. In this process, awareness of bodily attraction and erotic longings will increase together with awareness of transitoriness, of death as the denial of endurance in relationships.

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