

Unpopular Essays

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"BEYOND the academics, there is one assumption upon which people's attitudes towards this matter is based, the assumption that since every man has his social level, he should restrict his sexual activities to women who occur within this bracket. Hence, extra-marital affairs involving a woman who is considered his social equal is not considered criminal for the man. What is indefensible is for him to develop glad eyes of the pretty little house maid".

SHE has a knack for starting marital controversies. This Kate Okon— (Chronicle features Editor). From the vexed issue of whether "Madam" should have an affair, the lady is now talking about the unsightly sex preferences of married men (Chronicle 11/7/77).

She records her shocked horror at the fate of an innocent lady whose husband "had a nasty hobby of going down to very low brow women. The climax of his mixed

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affair was that he had just turned to the house maid and made her mother of an energetic healthy boy".

What follows is the author's effort to probe for the emotive and psychological factors that can lead a respectable married man to

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The entire attitude of official christianity to sex therefore, appeared to be negative. It has even been suggested that if it were possible, christianity would have out-lawed sex.

CONCERNING THE ORIGINAL

SIN

such a mean level of sexual activity.

Beyond the academics, there is one assumption upon which people's attitudes towards this matter is based, the assumption that since every man

eyes for the pretty little house maid.

The mind boggles at the extent to which people who clamour for political democracy are prepared to go, to keep democracy out of sex. Their attitude goes to reinforce the argument that class and money are the objective motor of culture.

An endorsement of that position however, obliges us to acknowledge the present class content of sex as an advancement on what went before.

The christian religion, like islam and a few others, has had a stultifying influence on sex because the economic circumstances of the world, which was reflected in the mental formations of the

broad masses of the people, permitted them to do so.

There was a time when ignorance of his environment compelled man to look beyond his physical world for answers to his problems of poverty and hunger. Religion returned these answers by teaching that social satisfaction lies in the here-after, that privation in the world was an express-ticket to happiness in heaven.

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One of the ten commandments is about extra-marital sex; the bible supplants that with an attempt to stamp out what it calls 'fornication' (sex by unmarried people); the Catholics prevent their priests from doing it. Or try to prevent them.

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ced its no-sex position by a recourse to a reward and punishment system that was tied up with God.

The rewards-and-punishment connection was set in an extremely exploitative context. From the slave

society, through feudalism to capitalism, man has historically accepted to toil for the comfort of a minute section of the society partly because of the promise that his rewards were in heaven.

A logical flow from the acceptance of that promise is that man kept a distance from everything that could induce sin. And because sex is considered the premier sin, the avoidance of illicit sex became the centre-piece of man's efforts to go to heaven.

Things have since changed. The sharpening of the various economic contradictions have since freed most humanity from the promise of heaven, and therefore, from their stealthy attitude to sex.

Everywhere, we have agitations against one form of socio-economic injustice or the other. This has resulted from a general dissatisfaction of the masses with their economic circumstances. The more they challenge the relations of production, the less attention they pay to religion and its sanctions.

Sex has therefore, been on the loose.

Even for the privileged classes. But like in the case of the aggrivated house wife, they try to restrict it to their class.

That effort is also on the loose. The tendency is towards cultural democracy.