

## The Sexual Evolution

Dellyn and Antonio were sitting at a worktable in the corner of their research room. It was eight o'clock in the morning. They were both drinking coffee with the intensity of anticipation. They were waiting for Shoshonee, the third member of their team. They were waiting for the results of a study that had taken, so far, over a year of the Institute's resources.

They had begun by spending two months soaking themselves in the existing literature: they found out about everything that had already been done that had anything to do with what they were planning to do. Then they got a grip on the current stuff, the relevant studies-in-progress. Then they took a month to select their sample. Then another month to revise it, as various schools, companies, municipalities, and other groups said they'd be unable to participate. Nevertheless, in the end, the beginning, they had almost 10,000 subjects representing the full spectra of age, gender, income, education, occupation, culture, philosophy, etc., etc.. etc. It had taken another two months to prepare the questionnaires. Then over six months of mailing them out, receiving them back, coding them, and entering them into their computer base. The next step, analysis, had been left to the stats whiz of their group, Shoshonee. She had been spending upwards of ten hours a day almost every day of the past month collating the data, cross-referencing everything, checking for relationships, tossing the numbers into every possible configuration to see what patterns existed...

There was nothing compelling them to rush except the excitement of being near the end, of taking the last turn in a long journey--of finally finding out where you've gotten yourself to. Shoshonee expected to be able to tell them today.

Seconds after the noon whistle blew, Ed was in the lunchroom, one hand barely managing to hold a huge salami-ham-and-pickle sandwich, the other flipping through a well-smudged copy of *Studies Illustrated*. An article on sex caught his eye and he stopped to read a bit of it till the others came in.

Suddenly Shoshonee flung open the door and burst into the room. "We've done it!" she cried out triumphantly, waving a floppy disk in her hand.

"We have significant results?!" Antonio half-asked, half-echoed, his body relaxing with obvious relief.

"Oh--that too" she said, as she switched on one of the computers and loaded the disk.

"That *too*?" Dellyn asked, "what did *you* mean we've done?"

She turned to them and with the gravity of a great announcement, said "We, as a species, have evolved away from genital sex!"

"What?" they both exclaimed.

She nodded vigorously with her back to them as she punched at the keys of the computer. Then she pointed to the screen. "No one is having sexual intercourse anymore!"

"No one?" It was hard to believe. They crowded around the computer to look at the statistics she had called up.

"Well, only two percent of the population--the deviants", she grinned at them.

Antonio slowly found his way back to his chair. He sat down. He didn't know what he found harder to believe: the significance--98% of anything would make the *world*, never mind the Institute, stand up and take notice; or the results themselves--no more sexual intercourse?

"Not in 'recreational sex'", Shoshonee answered, and he realized then that he had muttered his disbelief aloud. "When people want to reproduce," she punched up another set of numbers, "they engage in sexual intercourse. Otherwise," she smiled, "penile-vaginal penetration/enclosure is a habit of the past."

"Wow." Dellyn had also returned to the table to sit down.

"So--Tony, you'll prepare the briefs? We can get an article in the journals right away, and of course a preliminary final report to the Institute," she whirled to Dellyn then, "and Dell, you want to start writing the book while I put together the 'discussion' of our findings?" She smiled at her stunned research partners. She had already passed through this shock of discovery,

several hours ago.

"Book?" Then she seemed to snap out of it--or into it. "Of course I want to! --write the book-- Masters and Johnson move over!" She looked about for pen and paper as if to begin that instant. "What are we going to call it?"

"Well I remember an article called 'The Sixties: The Sexual Revolution'. It changed my life", Shoshonee grinned. "I thought we'd call this one 'The Nineties: The Sexual Evolution'."

"I love it!" Dell looked over at Tony then, and punched him on the shoulder, "Wake up! We did it!"

"No," he said slowly, and gestured vaguely at the world, "*they* did it." Shoshonee nodded in agreement with his implied praise and sat down at the table to join them.

"We're dinosaurs, Bill," he called out to the greying man who had entered the lunchroom, "about to become extinct. You still fuck your wife?"

"Actually no--I never did fuck my wife", he said, sitting on the bench at the long table. "We made love", he smiled.

"Ed fucks his wife", said a third man, who had come in just behind Bill and had heard the question. "But only when she lets him." He paused. "Too much hassle otherwise, right Ed?"

"You mother-fucker", he grinned.

"Hey Tom, you still diddling your wife?"

"What kind of question is that to ask a man?" He half-turned to acknowledge that Beth was behind him.

"Well--are you?"

"Well--no--not since we had Kyle."

"Fifteen years?" Ed couldn't believe it.

"Well--we didn't want more than three kids, and the pill gave her headaches and the IUD made her bleed and--well hell sex isn't *that* important!" He started to eat his lunch.

"Not that important!" Ed snickered and nudged the guy beside him, who smiled

uncertainly.

"So what are they doing instead?" Dell asked. Tony glanced at her, grinning a bit. He had recovered somewhat. "I mean," she amended, "I know what the possibilities are--I want to know what the realities are."

"Well," Shoshonee bounced up and skipped over to the computer again. She punched up another screen. "A lot of attention to--touching and stroking the erogenous zones," she read out, "breasts, nipples, of both sexes, the chest, neck, thighs, wrists, legs, back--"

"What's *not* an erogenous zone?" Tony smiled.

"A lot of sound--music--"

Dell interjected then. "Remember the 'new age' movement? Music for relaxation, for healing, and so on? The science of psychoacoustics really took off then. Remember all those studies about the effect of sound on the human organism, its biorhythms, etc."

"Yeah--'heavy metal increases one's blood pressure'--I could've told them that--"

"Well there are tons of cassettes and stuff available now--'sensual sound' they call it: some focus on rhythm, some on timbre--"

"So are you saying that because of that, our sexual practices changed?" Shoshonee asked.

"I don't know--do we know which came first?"

"More likely the supply encouraged the demand--" Tony suggested.

"But if they didn't think the market was ripe--"

"And dancing is making a comeback", Dell was leaping ahead. "Have you ever seen what 'dirty dancing' has grown into?"

"Hang on!" Shoshonee was trying to take notes, to put all of this into some kind of sense later.

"It's almost like a regression, isn't it?" Tony thought aloud. "When sex was taboo, all of these other things became very sexy."

"No--this is definitely a step forward--"

"But Shon, he has a point--sex--sexual intercourse *has* become taboo again--for physical reasons this time though, not moral ones."

Shon made a few more notes then continued, referring back to the computer. "And there's use of scent--"

"That's understandable. Just look at the perfume and candle/incense industry--"

"And use of light--"

"Sounds like a lot of people are into a very carefully composed environment--"

"Use of props and costume--" she continued scanning the screens, "what you wear, how you put it on, take it off--gloves are big--"

"I thought 'performing' was on the way out--" Tony commented.

"This doesn't sound like performing, it sounds like pleasing, exploring the full range, the whole realm of sexual pleasure--"

"A lot more talking--"

"How do you explain that?" Dell asked. "It used to be you said nothing at all."

"Or sweet nothings", Tony amended. Dell smiled.

"Well how about this: remember when sexual assault really came out? The courts were full of hearings and trials and the clincher always seemed to be consent. We realized that the normal *modus operandi* was for the male to approach physically before knowing whether or not the female was receptive, before actual consent--an uncanny similarity to rape--"

"Even animals have it straightened out better than that, don't they?" Dell commented.

"So maybe flirtation--maybe even 'foreplay'--though I don't think that term has any meaning anymore--maybe flirtation became, almost for legal reasons, very verbal: it wasn't just eye contact and subtle touches, it became much clearer, it became 'I want to be sexual with you' or 'Do you want to be sexual with me?'"

"A far cry from 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day'" Tony lamented.

"That's right", Dell pressed on, "remember that pop song, 'Do You Want?'"

"Ah--Barry White and Donna Summers." He began to hack it, switching voices with each line, "do you want to touch, do you want to touch me, do you want to feel, to feel me, feel me touch you, to feel you touch my--"

"No it wasn't them," Dell cut into his performance, laughing, "but you're right, it could have been--twenty years later--"

"I wonder if homosexuality didn't also contribute to opening up the repertoire. A lot of same sex couples were not into penetration. We should read the literature again on homosexual practices--especially lesbian, we may find a lot there--" Shon scribbled the idea onto her note pad.

"What else?" she looked up, "what other reasons can we suggest to explain our findings?"

"Besides the obvious one you mean?"

"What about you, Beth?"

"What about me--am I still fucking my wife, is that your question of the day, Ed?" The others laughed.

"When I was growing up, we had this thing called AIDS. Ever hear of it, Ed? It's for the most part genital-sexually transmitted; and it's for the most part, fatal. So I said--", she looked straight at him, "Fuck it!" The others hooted and hollered.

"You mean you never--" one of them asked.

She shook her head. "Never."

Ed blinked but then said, "Yeah but you're just a woman, your needs aren't--"

"Me neither", a youngish man in the corner spoke up. "Same reason."

"Don't you feel--unfulfilled?" Ed grinned at Beth, ignoring the man.

"I'm working at a ten dollar an hour job with the likes of you and you ask me if I don't feel unfulfilled?" It was her turn to grin, and a few of the men chuckled.

"You know what I mean--"

"Yeah he means unful-*filled*", someone snickered.

"Listen, the movies I can roll in my head are better than any show any of you could put on for me--" she looked straight at Ed again, "even twenty-five years ago!" They gave her applause on that one.

"Well, don't forget, there were a few years in there, remember, that vicious backlash--for a while *all* abortions were illegal and there was talk of making contraception illegal again too--"

"Yes--that was surely an incentive to explore alternatives."

"The ascent of the male ego", Tony offered.

"What?"

"Yes--you see it used to hang, down between our legs?" He grinned.

"And now?" Shon grinned back.

"Hey Stud! Did you read this article in *Studies Illustrated* yet?" Two younger men had entered. One was especially handsome--he was a bit of a mascot for the crew of mostly older, faded and jaded men. He caught the magazine Ed had tossed at him and skimmed the article, reading certain sentences aloud. "'The act of sex' is now more properly called 'the art of sex'...98% of the people who 'have sex' say it does not include sexual intercourse...a wide range of activities--" He started grinning as he read, to himself now, the most popular repertoire.

"Well?" Ed interrupted his pleasure.

"Well what?"

"Is it true? Guys like you--you're still--aren'tcha?"

"Ed, when 'guys like me' are out on the town, we're out practising" he smiled as he quoted, "'the art of sex', not making babies." He unscrewed a bottle of pop. and grinned at Beth --not for the first time.

Ed raised his eyes at the other young man. "Hey," he answered the implied question, "you're talking prehistoric. I'm a 'sexual artist' too," he laughed with delight at the term, "not a baby machine!"

Ed looked disappointed, but then he bounced back and nudged Bill, "Well us old dinosaurs will just have to keep them fires burning--"

"Speak for yourself, Ed."

"What?" There was a fear in his voice as he turned to face Bill.

"Well--hey--I found out long ago, Vera likes a lot of other stuff better than that--so--"  
Seeing Ed's face crumple into what looked like pain, he added quickly, "Angela may be different--"

"Who's talking about Angela?" Ed roared, too loudly.