

tion of individual self-interest that collectivist ideologies such as Marxism formally entail.

As has been noted, all subsequent analyses of oppression stem from the original insights of the Hebrew Prophets. While it is theoretically possible to devise a critique of oppression independent of both the Judeo-Christian tradition and its Marxist offshoot, the task has not been seriously attempted, and it is hard to see what framework might serve the purpose. Detached from the larger intellectual context that would give it meaning, the discourse of oppression now seems rhetorical. While it undoubtedly encapsulates social and psychological realities, it does so in a partial way that many find unsatisfying.

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ORAL SEX

Human oral sex may be said to be the one family of sexual practices that is truly universal, inasmuch as it is common to heterosexuals, male homosexuals, and lesbians. Although oral sex is widely diffused among the world's societies, past and present, no detailed studies have been made as to the reasons for its relative popularity—in comparison with anal sex, for example—and the relevant correlations with other cultural traits. One reason why many prefer it to anal sex is the absence of the pain and discomfort often initially experienced by the passive partner in the latter activity, particularly if the sphincter has not been sufficiently loosened.

Mouth-to-Penis Activity. The ancient Mediterranean peoples were familiar with this behavior in both its homosexual and heterosexual forms. The Romans distinguished between fellatio—in which the penetrating partner remains relatively motionless, allowing his receptive partner to do most of the work—and irrumation, in which the penetrator engages in vigorous buccal or laryngeal thrusts. Depending on the individual, both are felt to enhance the penetrator's masculinity: in fellatio the beneficiary of the action luxuriates in making the other service him completely, while in irrumation he has the converse satisfaction of being able to give full vent to the impulse to aggressive penile thrusts. In modern writings, however, it is usual to refer to both forms simply as fellatio; the street terms "cock-sucking," "blow job," and "(giving/getting) head" are also current.

There are three common positions in this form of sexual activity. In the first, the penetrator stands, while his partner kneels, sits, or crouches to take the erect member in his mouth. In the second main position, the penetrator lies on his back, and the insertee crouches over him or lies between his legs. In the third position, especially suitable for irrumation, the insertee lies on his back with head propped up, and the penetrator straddles his chest, leaning forward over his head while thrusting forward. Of course there are many variants and intermediate positions.

The novice fellator tends to be inexpert in various ways that may prove frustrating to his partner. Since he has usually not yet overcome the gag reflex, he may take only the head of his partner's member in his mouth rather than depthroating it, which is optimal. Furthermore, anxiety about ejaculation may cause him to slow his movements or even freeze up at the stage in which the tempo of the action should be increased. With relaxation and experience these difficulties are usually overcome, and many prac-

titioners learn to swallow the semen, even developing an appreciation of variations in its taste.

There is a tendency to associate the two very different roles in fellatio—penetration and reception—with a hierarchy of beauty, age, and sexual orientation, wherein the favored position is that of penetrator. With respect to the latter, many men who regard themselves as heterosexual will accept a blow job (“trade”), claiming that there is little difference between a female and a male mouth; yet they show revulsion at the slightest suggestion that they should return the favor. This attitude is characteristic of a certain type of adolescent male prostitute. In toilet sex contacts it has been observed that younger men expect to be fellated, but as they get older will switch to the receptor role. Some older men are only active as cocksuckers, having long since given up the expectation of having their own member orally stimulated. By convention, regardless of the source of effort, the penetrator is considered “active” and the insertee “passive.”

Some hold that sixty-nine, in which the two partners fellate one another simultaneously, is ideal because of its mutuality. Certainly this reciprocity offers a psychological advantage. Yet sixty-nine has real drawbacks. First, the position decreases each partner’s maneuverability. Secondly, the distraction at one end tends to cause a slowdown or even cessation of activity at the other. Finally, the tongue is of necessity on the upper side of the penis, where it is less stimulating than it would be if it were placed on the lower side. For these reasons, many prefer serial fellatio to the simultaneous mutual form known as sixty-nine.

In the 1980s oral–penile activity has become more popular as it has been shown that the risk of contracting the AIDS virus is either insignificant, especially for the penetrator, or at least enormously lower than with penile–anal activity. However, oral activities do not usually lend themselves to shielding

the penis in a rubber condom, while anal ones do.

Lesbian Oral Activity. Physically, lesbian cunnilingus does not differ in any essential way from heterosexual cunnilingus, the configurations of the mouths of women and men being essentially the same. However, the fact that a woman is better able to gauge the physiological responses of another woman than is a man (a factor which also favors male fellators) allows for lengthy and subtle sessions that take advantage of the capacity of women for multiple orgasms. As with men, the oral activity may be sequential, one woman sucking another first and then having the favor returned, or the sixty-nine position may be assumed. However, lesbian relations are less likely to be hierarchical, so that neither partner is “left in the lurch” by receiving an inadequate amount of stimulation. Contrary to popular belief, modern lesbians rarely resort to dildoes, though electrical vibrators—usually not phallus-shaped—may be employed as a supplement to oral activity.

There is virtually no risk of venereal disease, including AIDS, in lesbian activity. However, yeast and other infections of the vaginal region may on occasion be transferred to the mouth.

Variations. Some people enjoy giving their partner a tongue bath, though the extent of this procedure is usually limited by the exhaustion of the tonguer’s saliva. Many restrict themselves to French kissing, laving the inside of the outer ear, nipple sucking, or (less commonly) toe sucking.

Anilingus or “rimming” is the tonguing of the anus. Although this is mildly enjoyable to the recipient of the action, the main benefit appears to be the psychological effect that the rimmer has of accepting his partner totally. In other cases, however, the rimmer may be enacting his own self-abasement, and in a few extreme scenes his partner may even expel faeces which he then ingests. One need scarcely stress that anilingus in all of its versions

is dangerous to health; it has been implicated in hepatitis and probably transmits other diseases as well. Erotic **urination** may take place in or into the mouth, sometimes as an adjunct to oral sex; unlike faeces, however, fresh urine is normally sterile and thus poses no comparable health problem.

Legal aspects. In the **canon law** of the medieval church the definition of sodomy included all forms of oral sexuality, whether the partners were of opposite sexes or of the same sex, because the possibility of fecundation was excluded in both. The prosecution of participants in oral sexuality, however, has certainly been less frequent than legal action against those engaging in anal penetration, and in regard to lesbians, virtually non-existent.

While English **common law** took over many of the canon law definitions, in 1817 a court decision excluded oral sexuality from the definition of **buggery**, so that the crime was later prosecuted under other statutes such those prohibiting gross indecency, lewd and lascivious conduct, and the like. In entrapment cases, however, the unsuspecting victim of the plainclothesman's advance may have agreed to nothing more than one of the forms of oral sex in order to find himself under arrest.

In the recent Georgia case of *Bowers v. Hardwick*, which went to the United States Supreme Court (1986), the party under indictment had been accidentally observed in the act of fellating another male; the court ruled that the American legal precedents extending the right of privacy to heterosexual intercourse did not apply to sodomy.

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ORGANIZATIONS

See **Movement, Homosexual.**

ORIENTATION, SEXUAL

The expression **sexual orientation**, which came into general use only in the 1970s, denotes the stable pattern established by an individual of erotic and affectional response to others with respect to gender. Commonly two orientations, **heterosexual** and **homosexual**, are recognized; many would add **bisexual**. Attractions to sectors within the male and female populations with respect to age, race, and the like are not normally regarded as orientations, nor are such paraphilias as eroticization of **urine** and **sadomasochism** (S/M).

In comparison with older judgmental terms, such as **sexual deviation** and **perversion**, sexual orientation has the advantage of value neutrality. In comparison with the expression **sexual preference**, it emphasizes that erotic attraction stems from the deep structure of the personality, and is not a mere choice or taste which can be easily altered. Moreover, the metaphor of orientation, which originally referred to alignment according to the points of the compass, suggests the possibility of variety among individuals, rather than the rigid either/or contrast that a strict polarity of heterosexual/homosexual implies. Finally, the concept of sexual orientation conveys something of the complex interactions between the individual personality (itself made up of conscious and unconscious components), on the one hand, and the changing scripts and cues being transmitted by the social environment, on the other. One responds to a subtle "landscape of eros" as posited by society, but one does so in keeping with one's individual character and experience.

In the view of some, the expression should be altered to *affectional* orientation, to indicate a broader concern with the whole person, rather than overtly expressed erotic or genital acts. Restriction