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Was There Sex Before Calvin Klein?

Linda R. Hirshman*

Was there sex before Calvin Klein? This may seem like a pretty silly question to ask. After all, *here we are*. Assuming that at least some of us were born before 1980, when Brooke Shields announced her affinity for jeans over nothing in the first of Calvin Klein's increasingly controversial advertisements, one might conclude that there was, indeed, sex before Calvin Klein. This matters to me because I am writing a book about the history of the legal regulation of sexuality in America,¹ and it would be a pretty short book if everything that mattered started a scant sixteen years ago! But it turns out that things regarding sex are never simple.

There has been a fashion for some time in contemporary American and European sexual history to hold that sex is not a natural urge, but a product of social institutions. This school of thought denies that people feel sexy because otherwise we would not reproduce, and there would be no people; we would all just be a bunch of amoebas or something. In other words, people feel sexy because someone like Calvin Klein told them they should.² And there is a related belief that another seemingly universal and natural phenomenon — the urge to push people around, which we call dominance — is also not natural, but results from centuries of Western capitalism and other competitive institutions.³ And because sex and dominance are not natural

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1. LINDA HIRSHMAN & JANE LARSON, *AFTER VICE: POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY, AND THE LEGAL REGULATION OF SEXUALITY* (forthcoming 1997).

2. The father of this school of thought is generally thought to be Michel Foucault. See generally MICHEL FOUCAULT, *THE HISTORY OF SEXUALITY* (Robert Hurley trans., Random House 1980) (1976).

3. My earliest authority for this theory is C.B. MACPHERSON, *THE POLITICAL THEORY OF POSSESSIVE INDIVIDUALISM* (1962), but the role of culture in shaping personhood dates back at least to Plato.

in this tradition, we can make any kind of life we like for ourselves. We just have to watch what we put in jeans ads.

In what follows, I am going to argue that there probably is an irreducible minimum of other-sex sexual desires in the species because, after all, *here we are*. And there probably is an accompanying desire to dominate other human beings in the species because dominance is the universal theme of the history of sexuality since the first writings appeared. In any event, if the related inclinations of sex and dominance are not natural, they are so embedded in our cultural history that theorizing — at least about Western politics — without dominance is simply writing science fiction. And worse, the sexual encounter, especially the male/female sexual encounter, is an ideal opportunity for the exercise of dominance.⁴ And still worse, part of the payoff for sexual exertion is the dominance payoff. But while sexy and domination-inclined, we, the products of Western culture (and this probably is also a universal human characteristic), desire to live in a civil society, not out there in the situation of the universal dominance contest of all against all that political theorists call the "state of nature." So the really interesting question is how to use the power of cultural institutions — law, economics, art, religion — to constrain the natural dominance, which is linked with sexuality, without sacrificing the sexuality.

A. *The Nature/Nurture Debate*

Things were a lot easier before all this theorizing about the cultural construction of sexuality replaced the basic birds-and-bees scenario. I first learned of the cultural construction of all sexuality theory when giving a speech at an interdisciplinary conference at an Ivy League university last year. In that speech, I was talking about sex in the state of nature, that imaginary time before there was a state or much in the way of institutions of culture, and certainly before the concept of designer jeans. In state of nature theory there is little differentiation between male and female. As with much of Western political theory, the players in state of nature theory are imaginary characters much more interested in power than in sex; let's call them . . . men.

Anyway, I argued that if we recognized the existence of both men and women in the imaginary state of nature, heterosexual sexual exchanges would involve certain problems that did not surface in conventional state of nature theories, which do not recognize the existence of male and female, but treat

4. The *locus classicus* for this insight is Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory*, 7 SIGNS 515 (1982) and Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: Toward Feminist Jurisprudence*, 8 SIGNS 635 (1983).

everyone as male. An audience member who I suspect came from the English Department asked me why I thought there would be sex in the state of nature at all. Michel Foucault, she announced, in a tone substantially reminiscent of that normally reserved for references to the deity, had demonstrated beyond cavil that sex was a social construct produced by society in a series of related social exchanges to satisfy "society's" needs, for instance, for population growth or control at any particular time. Sex is not a natural biological inclination inherent in the species that reproduces heterosexually. No society. No sex.

I was completely floored by this suggestion and, after long moments, I finally sputtered, "But here we are." And *here we are*. She did not seem obviously demented. What could be going on? One possibility is that our primal ancestors, whatever they were, started creating sexy jeans advertisements the moment they dropped out of the trees. But that seems improbable. I admit that I had never read Foucault's work — on sexuality or anything else. But I knew that he was famous for finding in texts from Classical Greece evidence that the division of humanity into gay and straight categories was a modern notion, that in Greece men would have both same-sex and other-sex sexual exchanges without moral censure — shame being reserved in any given encounter for not being the person on top.

As a longtime feminist, I have no trouble in recognizing the ancient lineage of concern with who is on top. Indeed, since I started doing the research for my current book, I learned to my delight that, after the Counter-reformation, the Catholic Church devised an elaborate hierarchy of sexual positions. Thinking, rightly or wrongly, that reproduction was a function of the so-called "missionary" position, the Church categorized all other positions as venial sins, except for sex with the woman on top. That was a mortal sin. But even if the division of sexuality between same-sex and other-sex encounters were socially constructed, which it turns out is not exactly what Foucault said, still there had to be some minimal desire for other-sex exchanges because *here we are*. But the suggestion just keeps coming up. It turns out that La Rochefoucauld thought something similar. He asserted that people would not fall in love unless they read about it first, truly a statement for a product of the age of printing.

What is going on here? I am working with the writings and records of the legal and social regulation of sexuality — old codes, old statutes, old moral exhortations and analyses, the Bible — and the work assumes that there is a bedrock of natural sexuality to be "regulated" by law and other technologies of social governance. But if Foucault is right, then there is no sex there, and the very laws that purport to regulate pre-existing biological reality actually take people who are perfectly content to sit under a tree alone, and exhort and instigate them to heterosexual activity by drawing it, writing it, talking

about it, and putting it in their jeans ads. There is no natural bedrock of sexuality, and things are pretty fluid.

The only constant in Foucauldian theories is that the people in power keep trying to write the sexual script for the people out of power. The content of sexuality will differ depending on how society fills in the blanks. Sex will be a mixture, unfamiliar to post-Christian sensibilities, of gay and straight, and of boys and wives in ancient cultures. Alternatively, sex will be confessional and regulated by the Church's concern with positions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, or confessed to on the psychiatric couch and brought into being for the examination and classification of a Freudian authority as normal or abnormal, depending on what the powers that be in Vienna would find palatable in the twentieth century. Setting aside the problem of the cave men, women, and children, this has a certain explanatory power. As I studied the history of the regulation of sexual access in the West, it seemed to me that many things did indeed change over time and that it is not unthinkable that, given other historical contingencies, things might have been somewhat different even in the arguably "natural" realm of sex. But in the end, I must believe that there is an irreducible minimum of heterosexual desire in the species because *here we are*.

B. *The Constant of Domination*

I did find one constant, in addition to the presence of the human species over time, and it is certainly not something that should have surprised Foucault, who after all, thought that the powerful player in any given relationship was using his power to cause the weaker player to experience sexuality in a way that served the interest of the stronger player. I see the constant and universal presence of the desire to dominate. From ancient Greece to the photo studio of famed fashion photographer, Steven Meisel, who shot those raunchy pictures for Calvin Klein and for Madonna's sex book, everywhere you look, someone is on top and someone else is on the bottom.

Foucault did not miss this. In his first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, he describes the universality and the pervasiveness of the will to dominate in marvelously graphic terms. "My main concern will be to locate the forms of power," Foucault writes, "the channels it takes, the discourses it permeates in order to reach the most tenuous and individual modes of behavior, the paths that give it access to the rare or scarcely perceivable forms of desire, how it penetrates and controls everyday pleasure . . . in short,

the 'polymorphous techniques of power'⁵ As historian Lynn Hunt so eloquently expressed, power is Foucault's virus.⁶

Many critics have noted that Foucault, the god of historical contextualization of even seemingly natural phenomena like sex, thus inconsistently embraces a universal constant — the perennial presence of power. Even more interestingly, Foucault's power is a type and manifestation of power that is very familiar to the post-Enlightenment thinker because it is manifestly derived from the political theory of the founder of modern political thought, Thomas Hobbes.⁷ The power both Hobbes and Foucault see is rooted in the physical body, is pervasive in all human relationships rather than being concentrated in the law or the king's decrees, and is the source of most human behavior. Hobbes, writing in the materialist tradition of Descartes and Bacon, describes all phenomena as ultimately material physical events.⁸ Foucault sees the material body as the situs of history. Hobbesian actors, driven by the impact of material events on their imaginations, are as often as not set into motion by their imaginings.⁹ In Foucault's world, the actions of powerful actors set into motion interior understandings in human beings, and these understandings establish people's lived reality, including their sexual reality. Hobbesian imaginings are ultimately desire or aversion; humans will be driven by desire to approach and by aversion to avoid other objects, including other humans. Foucault's externally inspired imaginings include the construction of categories of desire and aversion. Ceaselessly in motion, humans are also and importantly *nearly alike in power*, such that they are ceaselessly a danger to one another, and enact or reenact dramas of fear and dramas of desire. In Foucault's world, power is a virus, spreading among all of us equally; there is no monopoly on force.

One would think that the radical devolution of power from the monarchy to the populace in the real world of political history or the viral spread of power in Foucault's reconstruction of the history of sexuality would produce some pretty scary results. Hobbes thought that the state of nature, in which equal men are endlessly in motion, would be a state of war of every man against every man. Each encounter is a possible occasion for violence; fearing violence, each man is driven to strike first. Life is solitary, poor, nasty,

5. 1 FOUCAULT, *supra* note 2, at 11.

6. Lynn Hunt, *Foucault's Subject in The History of Sexuality*, in *DISCOURSES OF SEXUALITY: FROM ARISTOTLE TO AIDS* 78, 83 (Domna C. Stanton ed., 1992).

7. The historicism of Hobbesian man was the inspiration for MacPherson's seminal work on the localism of Enlightenment theory generally, so it is striking that Foucault seems to be making the same mistake. *See generally* MACPHERSON, *supra* note 3.

8. *See generally* THOMAS HOBBS, *LEVIATHAN* (1651).

9. *See id.* at ch. VI.

brutish, and short. The game theorists have a game to describe Hobbes's problem: they call it the Prisoners' Dilemma.

MODEL 1. RELATIVE PAYOFFS TO PLAYERS IN THE PRISONERS' DILEMMA

		P1	
		Strike	Lay low
P2	Strike	3, 3	1, 8
	Lay low	8, 1	5, 5
		P1, P2	

But, one might assert, sex is not all violence and killing the other player and taking what he or she has or is. If the parties would prefer to cooperate over going their own way, say, because of the irreducible minimum of natural sexual desire in the species, they will play a different game. Accordingly, you can imagine how delighted I was when I learned that the game theorists had devised a model for the next game down from the Prisoners' Dilemma, which they called, completely without input from me, the Battle of the Sexes. In the Battle of the Sexes, she wants to go to the ballet and he wants to go to the prize fight. However, each would prefer to go to the other's entertainment over going to his or her preferred entertainment alone.

MODEL 2. RELATIVE PAYOFFS TO PLAYERS IN THE BATTLE OF THE SEXES

		F	
		Ballet	Prize Fight
M	Ballet	10, 5	3, 3
	Prize Fight	4, 4	5, 10
		F, M	

Foucault's picture of sex is not even the Battle of the Sexes because he does not see each player as desiring his own good and acting strategically to

obtain it. Instead, Foucault's sex is, as Catharine MacKinnon described it, "sexuality as the life and times of desiring man in bondage and being disciplined and loving every minute of it, and loving his struggle to get out of it even more."¹⁰ We can envision Foucault as not wanting to go to the prize fight but instead, wanting to be disciplined into going to the ballet, struggling to get out of his bondage for the fun of it rather than in a desire to see the fight. So the fight is not a negative outcome for Foucault — he embraces the intersection of sex and dominance games, and he calls a truce in the Battle of the Sexes.

This happy picture of a bondage game, I contend, can exist within a Hobbesian framework of endless power-seeking only if the players are genuinely equal, so that bondage remains a game. As we have seen in Hobbes's world, perfect equality leads to the Prisoners' Dilemma. However, if the players can forego killing each other because of the pull of sexuality and move to the stage of the Battle of the Sexes, in Foucault's world, the game would take the form of who gets to go first in constructing the other's sexuality, or put another way, who gets to play domination and who gets to play submission. This option is available to Foucault's players because, although they are motivated to dominate, their domination inclination is moderated by their desire to have sex rather than to kill or to enslave, their strength is so equal that only taking turns will work, and finally, their chances of surviving a round of "tie me up, tie me down" are pretty good. If they are not pretty close to equal, but they would rather have sex than murder or enslavement, then the delightful game of sexual construction will quickly turn to rape and other less appealing forms of sex plus dominance.

There is only one way that such equality can be ensured in the natural world, and that is exactly what Foucault did: he wrote his whole story of the modern construction of sexuality without women. Or, where women appear, it is without any of the will that characterizes his other players. In Foucault's world of sex, men act and women are acted upon. And accordingly, because the actors are roughly equal, Foucault and the other social constructionists miss the threatening, scary, preemptive, and chilling centrality for women of the one universal characteristic Foucault does recognize: the will to power, or as we feminists put it, to dominance.

Was there sex before Calvin Klein and the other social institutions that describe and invoke sexuality? Probably. Was there heterosexual dominance between unequal players embedded in the sexual regimes before Calvin Klein? Every organization of human heterosexuality that Foucault examines, or that

10. Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Does Sexuality Have a History?*, in *DISCOURSES OF SEXUALITY: FROM ARISTOTLE TO AIDS*, *supra* note 6, at 117, 119.

I have examined in doing the work for my book, reflects the constant of dominance. In the ancient Near East and in Jewish sex laws, men could have many wives and they could patronize prostitutes. In Athens, men could have concubines but the concubines had to come from a lower social order. In Rome, the crime of fornication did not include sexual relations with concubines and prostitutes. When Christianity appeared, with its assertions about equality before God, dominance was seriously imperilled. Augustinian celibacy was an important response to the radical equality immanent in early Christianity. If women were going to be equal to men, sex would have to stop. I suggest that the solution of reproductive monogamous marriage (better to marry than to burn) was proposed to return women to their pre-Christian posture of submission. Adultery was a crime of married females from the Code of Hammurabi through nineteenth-century criminal law. For most of Western history, until the nineteenth-century feminist movement, the age of consent for sex was *ten* years of age. As I said, so consistently does the dominance theme appear that it supports a good argument for the existence of some natural heterosexuality and some natural inclination to dominate the weaker player in a sexual transaction.

C. *What Is to Be Done?*

Several things might be said at this point. First, you notice that I am talking only about Western history: Europe and the European colonies. Second, I have not yet addressed the sexually liberated present day. So it is possible, as critics have long said about Hobbes's work, that we are making a universal subject out of bourgeois European males at the dawn of capitalism.¹¹

Anthropologists keep coming up with — and then debunking — happy islanders somewhere who lead a matrilineal or egalitarian life among the coconuts without the Western institutions of private enforcement of rape laws and death penalties for adultery, salvation tied to monogamous marriage, and the concept of "opposite sexes." So far, the examples have turned out to be far too elusive to support a meaningful political theory. But even assuming they exist, I am not interested in them. As far as I am concerned, for those of us inheritors or adopted children of the Western story, it is too late. For natural or cultural historical reasons, male/female sexuality has been linked with male dominance for at least five thousand years; we may not be imprisoned in it for sociobiological reasons, but we would be fools not to address it (as Foucault failed to address it). Even if it is not universal, and therefore not "hard-wired" in a totalizing sense, certainly the prevalence indicates that at least an inclination to heterosexual dominance is universal.

11. See MACPHERSON, *supra* note 3, at 9-106 (discussing Hobbes's political theories).

So, let us address it. Let us assume that either because dominance is natural or because dominance is part of the bedrock of our Judeo-Christian-Greco-Roman-English-Protestant culture, it is the viral presence Foucault described. And not just any virus — it is a venereal disease lurking in every sexual interaction.

Sociobiologists would say that nothing is to be done.¹² Boys will be boys; they will rape and pillage and abandon their offspring.¹² So, as Queen Victoria allegedly reminded her daughter on the eve of her marriage, "Just close your eyes and think of England." Or relax and enjoy it, as the *Village Voice* feminists and the Katie Roiphe feminists might say;¹³ just drink your wine and think of appearing on the cover of the *New York Times* with an article about how there is no such thing as date rape and it is a good thing, too.¹⁴

The great philosopher of American democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville, and his contemporary interpreter, William Kristol,¹⁵ say that rampant biological male sexuality must be controlled and that the way to do it is for women to sacrifice themselves to submission in monogamous marriage for the sake of the American Republic.¹⁶ Boys will be boys, unless women will be slaves. Men are so disorderly, Tocqueville and Kristol say, that if they cannot exercise their dominance in a rigid framework of monogamous marriage, they will be unfit citizens for a liberal democracy. The only solution is for morally superior women to marry them. And because there must always be one master in any institution, including marriage, and men are stronger — there they are. I call Tocqueville's and Kristol's prescription for female self-sacrifice in the interest of the nation, "Close your eyes and think of Washington, D.C."

12. Will girls be girls? Being smaller, weaker, and vulnerable in childbirth and nursing has constrained females from effectuating what I consider the universal human will to dominance. Female strategies resulting from physical weakness are the subject of my dissertation. See Linda R. Hirshman, *Material Girls: A Game Theoretic Revision of the Social Contract Exercise with Women Present* (1995) (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois (Chicago)) (on file with University of Illinois (Chicago) Library). For purposes of this lecture, I will focus on the more obvious problem of constraining the stronger player.

13. See generally KATIE ROIPHE, *THE MORNING AFTER* (1993) (debunking the movement against date rape); PLEASURE AND DANGER (Carole S. Vance ed., 1984).

14. Katie Roiphe, *Date Rape's Other Victim*, N.Y. TIMES, June 13, 1993, at 16.

15. Chief of Staff for former Vice-President Dan Quayle, Kristol is often described as Dan Quayle's "brain." Quayle caused a stir during the 1992 presidential campaign by criticizing television's single woman heroine, Murphy Brown, for having a baby outside of a monogamous marriage.

16. See generally 2 ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, *DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA*, pt. ii, ch.3 (1835); William Kristol, *Women's Liberation: The Relevance of Tocqueville*, in INTERPRETING TOCQUEVILLE'S "DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA" 480 (Ken Masugi ed., 1991).

On the other side of the coin, feminists who (unlike the youthful Ms. Roiphe) do not think date rape is a good thing, prefer Foucault to the sociobiologists because the idea that sex is socially constructed could also mean that dominance is a cultural artifact and therefore, that sex with dominance is a cultural construct. People of goodwill can get together and decide to construct a sex without dominance through institutions other than Tocqueville's and Kristol's marital slavery. Boys will not be boys, so to speak.

A plague on all their houses. First, a plague on the social constructionists. Sex is natural. *Here we are*. The will to power is natural, or at least so embedded in our cultural history as to be as much as natural. If the sexual encounter also contains the payoff of being able to dominate another human being, it will be doubly appealing. The history of sex and dominance dictates a Hobbesian skepticism about the malleability of human nature.

A plague on the sociobiologists. We do not live in the state of nature, and it is a good thing, too. Because whether there was or was not a social contract moment when people agreed to leave the state of nature, it seems pretty clear that we are better off in a civil society than in the state of nature. We are better off not killing each other whenever the opportunity arises and all the rest of the stuff. I suspect that what the sociobiologists really want is to leave the state of nature with all the bad stuff behind (we do not see them foregoing indoor plumbing, for example, although a necessity for flush toilets would probably not have been an evolutionary advantage on the African savannah so beloved of the sociobiologists), with the sole exception of sex with dominance. And given the structural inequality between the genders, we probably could have some heterosexual sex with dominance while foregoing the war of all against all. To some extent, we did live like that for many years, as the history of laws and mores invoking dominance reflects.

Still, even the most abusive sexual regime — cloistered women, tribal enslavement, gift-giving — contains or limits the play of dominance somewhat. Rape, for instance, is contained. While it was perfectly legal to rape your wife in the United States until ten or twenty years ago, civil society contains the desire to rape whoever comes along. After all, as the saying goes, maybe "that was no lady, that was my wife." Where there is property or where there are blood lines to be transmitted, unconstrained rape and adultery make the picture very confusing. Moreover, if other-sex sexuality and same-sex sexuality are distributed among the population in equal measures, attempting to dominate someone of your size and weight involves certain risks not present in heterosexual sexuality on average. So, moving from the sexual state of nature to a sexually civil society has a lot of advantages not obvious at first glance, and the regime of enforced female fidelity within monogamous marriage reflects

the advantages of confining random sexual dominance. But absent the kick of dominance, the problem could be that people — as the Foucauldians suggest — would just as soon sit around under a tree.

And here we return to Calvin Klein and Michel Foucault. The social construction of sexuality, I contend, does not just serve the agenda of the powerful. It is a necessary effort by civil society to present a sexual vision sexy enough to motivate people accustomed to dominance to have sex when dominance is constrained. The Greeks constructed an elaborate description of men's natural hierarchy over their wives, concubines, and prostitutes in ancient Greece. The result? Men did not have to obtain the payoff of sexual dominance by random acts of rape, as portrayed in the mythic period of Greek culture. They established an elaborate social structure of sexual inequality and convinced themselves that their social dominance over their wives and companions was just as good. The private governance of women in the post-Enlightenment years of "opposite sexes" and "separate spheres" had the same agenda: As women emerged into equality under the influence of Protestantism and the printing press, the sexual regime of dominance was reconstructed with the language of separation. As women moved into social equality in the twentieth century, especially in the United States, there was an explosion of the most misogynistic and violent pornography. The centrality of cultural mechanisms of synthetic sexual dominance like pornography to self-realization for the beneficiaries of the dominance regime is reflected in the terms in which they are defended.¹⁷

The truth is, however, that socially destructive vehicles of dominance for sexual functioning are a sign of impotence, not strength. The test of any construction of sexuality, I assert, is not how successfully it re-introduces dominance into civil society to incite sexuality for those who cannot feel sexual without dominance. The test of the construction is how much sexuality it constructs at the lowest price in dominance. Like hierarchical marriage, pornography is better than unrestricted rape, but it is still a failure. In that way, pornographic dominance in erotic literature is like swearing in a comedy routine. Its very presence is a sign that the author lacks enough imagination to inspire sexuality without violating the norms of civil society. Moreover, the civility standard is rising as the oppressed people's willingness to tolerate dominance dwindles with, for example, the falling from favor of the "naturally submissive female" so beloved of early Victorian thinkers, the changing social

17. See MARTIN H. REDISH, *FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS* 11-12 (1984) (arguing that only true value of free speech is "individual self-realization"); Martin H. Redish & Gary Lippman, *Freedom of Expression and the Civic Republican Revival in Constitutional Theory: The Ominous Implications*, 79 CAL. L. REV. 267, 304-10 (1991) (defending pornography as ideology).

construction of childhood, and the attitude toward the sexual harvesting of children.

By these tests, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century pornography, with its feminine philosophers leading priapic clergymen and nobles on a merry-go-round of improbable but titillating exchanges, is seditious and blasphemous.¹⁸ But from the standpoint of sexual politics, the works appear quite harmless — and probably effective in inciting desire — or there would not have been such a big market for it.¹⁹ Thus, early pornography scores pretty well on the standard of making people feel sexy without needing to make them — and especially the naturally stronger men among them — feel dominant over their sexual partner. Late twentieth-century hard-core pornography does not. This brings me back to Calvin Klein.

Calvin Klein, normally so closely tuned to social constructions, missed the boat with his impliedly pornographic jeans ads.²⁰ His pictures of models looking just at the age of consent or a little under, his thinly veiled imitation of kiddie pornography with the older male voice asking a young-looking boy to describe his sexuality, invoked a notion of dominance unacceptable to the mainstream, commercial American world.

And, I suggest, he made this mistake in part for the same reason that feminists criticize Foucault. Klein and his advisors were thinking of an all-male world, the world of same-sex transactions in which the level of sexual dominance in the social construction may, in light of the relative equality of strength and size, be acceptable at quite a different level. By applying the same-sex standard of dominance to the construction of sexuality between adults and children and between males and females, he ran right into the forces resisting dominance-based sexual constructions. Society responded in very interesting ways — with savage criticism in the market and threats of prosecution, to be sure, but most interesting of all, with a stream of mockery worthy of the best seventeenth-century blasphemous and seditious pornographic tradition. My favorite example is the *Cincinnati Post* cartoon showing two very New York older women with Bloomingdale's bags being flashed by a man in nothing but bare feet and an open raincoat. "Don't worry," one lady says to the other, "It's just one of those Calvin Klein ads."

Being compared to a dirty old man whose sex life is reduced to exposing his private parts to unwilling witnesses on New York streets probably was not what the ever-hip Calvin Klein people hoped to evoke. "What was the matter with the Calvin Klein folks?," the mocking words and pictures all asked. "Weren't they sexy enough to have sex without the props?"

18. See generally *THE INVENTION OF PORNOGRAPHY* (Lynn Hunt ed., 1993).

19. See generally ROBERT DARNTON, *ÉDITION ET SEDITION* (1991).

20. See Vicki Goldberg, *Testing the Limits in a Culture of Excess*, N.Y. TIMES, Oct. 29, 1995, § 2 (Arts & Leisure), at 1.

SYMPOSIUM
