

Sexuality – In a Historical Perspective

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SPEAKING OF SEXUALITY





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Peter Thielst

- **History of Ideas:** The way in which we have talked about the things throughout time. A long history of how people have given words to their lives. How perspectives shift. Texts are being researched.
- Sex and human beings belong together: three examples of sexuality put into words in the Summer of 2012:
 1. Circumcision of boys
 2. Rape
 3. Homosexuality

Sexuality throughout history: pederasty, masturbation, illegitimate children / infidelity, hysteria, active / passive

How will we put sexuality into words sexuality this year?

Sexuality – nature or culture?



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- "Sexuality is changeable both in the life of the individual human being as well as seen by society.
- Sex is a constantly mutating concept both from a cultural and an existential perspective, sex is always associated with a time and a place as well as situations.
- Because the human being is first of all a cultural being or in other words: We are insanely advanced biological machines who are able to dream, yearn, fantasize, and reflect upon ourselves and create complex social spaces.
- So nature and culture go hand in hand." Christian Graugaard



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Knowledge about Sexuality

Studies of sexuality: Handled with a combination of quantitative and qualitative strategies

- map both the width = count the general cases, and the depth = understand the special cases

Two tendencies within sexology:

1. a liberation tradition with emphasis on knowledge, removal of taboos and diversity
 2. a tradition which aim to categorise, regulate and normalise
- »But despite attempts since the constructivist flows in the 60s it is only today that we are seriously doing away with the natural 'truths' about gender and sex that the sexology of the 1800s generated.« Christian Graugaard

The Scientific Traditions of Sexology



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Natural Science

- Something you 'are'
- the clinical sexology where you treat sexual dysfunctions

Social Science

- Something you 'do'
- Puts sexuality into figures and examines large populations.

The humanities

- Something you 'do'
- humanistic, constructivist tradition: sexuality is created socially



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Movie and Group Work

Factor: circumstance, force or influence that contribute to the generation of a certain result. The Factors in focus are:

1. Individual factors
2. Social factors
3. Institutional factors
4. Cultural factors

Group work in 4 groups: The group must take notes with regard to their focus area.

After the movie, the group writes a summary.

Individual and Social Factors



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- **Individual factors** - an individual is a living creature with consciousness, desires, needs and rights.
 - The factors are related to elements that concern or characterise the opportunity of the individual to live as desired.
- **Social factors** - the way in which both the individual human being and the different groups in a society have the opportunity for personal development, for freedom and equality – as well as in the tasks of helping each other. In this way, all the members of the society will have a social responsibility and social obligations.
 - The factors are about a common will to do something for each other – particularly for the people in the society who need help for social reasons.

Institutional and Cultural Factors



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- **Institutional factors** – institutions are e.g. the state, church, courts, educational sites, family. The institutions will decide who are legitimate stakeholders, determine the number of stakeholders, structure the acts and provide information on other stakeholders' intentions.
 - The institutional factors are the factors that structure the lives of human beings through established traditions, statutes, laws etc.
- **Cultural factors** - the way of living and the conceptual world that characterises a certain population for a certain period, i.e. all the material and non-material results of human activity that can be passed on from generation to generation.
 - The factors are also expressed through the habits and ways that different groups within the population do things.



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Exercise on the Sexuality of Today

The factors: individual, social, institutional and cultural

1. Four groups = 1 group for each factor to focus on.
2. The groups will watch the movie “Kinsey” = 113 min. – it is found on Netflix
3. After the movie, the groups will prepare a presentation about where and how their factor was expressed in the movie.
4. The groups will give their presentation.
5. Discussion and reflection in plenum about how the factors are expressed today.