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## Statement # 4

# Sexual Intolerance

For centuries, the Netherlands has been regarded as a tolerant country. Dutch and Turkish children are playing together and churches and mosques are peacefully located next to each other. In the city you can see a Chinese, Mexican and Turkish restaurant. Apparently and logically, no taste is the same and anybody should be allowed to follow his predilection. Except ...  
... when we are talking about sexuality.

"Faggot" is about the worst example of name calling at the schoolyard. Well, "Pedophile" or "Dutroux" is even a bit worse. We really can't consider this sexual tolerance.

Why not?

### What are the motives behind this intolerance?

It can't be explained by any rational motive. We're left with the irrational motives: egocentric motives or fallacies. These start with "I feel that..." and continue with "so it should"

For instance:

**Heterosexual fallacy:**

I only like heterosexuality, so any homosexuality should disappear

**Homosexual fallacy:**

I only like homosexuality, so any bisexuality should disappear

**Contact fallacy:**

I only like physical contact, so any type of masturbation, voyeurism and exhibitionism should disappear.

**Enrichment fallacy:**

I only like variations if they are an enrichment of "normal" sexuality, so any exclusively "deviant" sex or a sexual limitation to masturbation should disappear.

**Relational fallacy:**

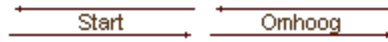
I only like sex within a relationship, so any type of prostitution or contacts outside a relationship should disappear.

This are only five examples.

In the next article, first the rational arguments are discussed.  
Then sixteen irrational and egocentric fallacies are presented.

Read the article:





## Sexual Intolerance

By T. Rivas

### Introduction

In the Bible, Leviticus, Chapter 20, verse 13, we can read:

If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.

This verse quite outspokenly shows what sexual intolerance may imply.

Sexual behavior that deviates from one's own behavior is termed horrible and disgusting. People showing the behavior are criminalized and threatened with a (death) penalty, social casting out and the sabotage of their erotic or love relationship.

In this essay, I want to consider if there is a rational ground for this type of intolerance towards deviant sexual behavior. I also want to look at irrational factors. Finally, I want to argue for a radical sexual tolerance.



### 1. Biology

If we look at the rejection of sexual behavior, we see that the most consistent form of this rejection manifests through prudishness. Prudishness embraces the thought that all types of sexual behavior are disgusting and that nobody should practice any of them. This is why prudish people can be strongly against any type of pornography and

voluntary prostitution and why they want to legally prohibit it. The prudish rejection of deviant behavior is almost greater.

Most people who themselves reject deviant behavior think that the general prudish attitude boils down to a form of intolerance that goes too far.

The "moderate" types of intolerance imply a distinction between natural and unnatural sexuality. Natural sexuality should be tolerated and have its course – possibly with certain restrictions, unnatural sexuality should be prohibited as much as possible. Thus, "natural" sexuality is the collective norm, and those who want to practice a deviant form of (or even no) sex are to be considered sick (pathetic) or perverted (dirty), and they should be helped or punished respectively. Sometimes both sanctions are applied simultaneously.

From an evolutionary point of view, sex originated out of the biological need of reproduction. To many, sex that is intrinsically unrelated to this need of reproduction is "unnatural". This does not imply that all types of sexuality should directly serve reproduction, but simply that they might lead to reproduction if no special precautions to prevent this were taken.

All other types of sexuality and eroticism (and perhaps even platonic love) should be regarded as a perversion or aberration, as a fatal way that alienates man from his natural sexual fulfillment.

The foregoing leads to the conclusion that exclusively heterosexuality between sexually mature partners is natural. For instance, voluntary sex among or with children who aren't sexually mature can never be tolerated because this is unnatural in this sense. The same can be said about heterosexuality without genital coitus, about homosexuality, or about sex with animals. Within this perspective all these types of sexuality are by their very nature reprehensible unhealthy perversions.

Now we have to ask ourselves if the argument of biological naturalness is really sound.

As said before, natural sexuality is usually not considered as limited to sex that serves reproduction, except for the case of prudishness, but it is defined as sex that might naturally serve reproduction. This is even expressed by such statements as "the anus is not meant to be used as a vagina". In other words, for these people the structure of the genital organs determines what one should understand by natural sex, not whether reproduction is involved or not.

This is very peculiar because according to these people, sexuality apparently can involve other things besides reproduction, namely pleasure and the expression of love. Now, neither pleasure nor the sexual expression of love depend on the match between genital organs. We only have to think about masturbation. The biological naturalness

argument can only be judged reasonable if, contrary to ethological and psychological data, you reduce sexuality to its reproductive function. If you don't, and if you don't reject contraceptives or masturbation, you can no longer talk about unnatural sex on biological grounds. As you admit that sex can have two other functions besides reproduction, namely pleasure and expression of love, you can't find the realization of these functions by other than adult heterosexual partners biologically unnatural.

Thus, the bio-psychological naturalness argument of for example Freudian psychoanalysis is no less than irrational and it contains a covert proclamation of bourgeois morals. In fact, the argument of biological naturalness itself can be regarded as a "perversion", because it sins against the rules of the rationality it claims to adhere to.

But the biological argument can be tackled at an even more fundamental level. That's because it is a *naturalistic* argument. This can be understood in two ways.

1. Only sexual behavior originally meant for reproduction, would be all right. But exactly why should such behavior be alright only because it would be natural? What would determine that types of sexuality that still refer to the original reproductive function are good and healthy and that all other forms are not? The mere fact that something is natural does not imply yet that it is okay. For instance, if a boa constrictor kills a human being, this is completely natural for the animal, but few people will consider this as positive. In fact, the whole of human culture rests on this principle: man creates all kinds of artificial phenomena as an improvement of what is given by nature.

So we can't just suffice with ascertaining that something is natural, to correctly and immediately conclude that therefore it is good as well. As I have shown elsewhere, people may even have respectable reasons to personally evade all "natural" sexuality. This shows that man as a cultural, mental being cannot just thoughtlessly accept anything suggested by bodily evolution.

Thus, the leap from the realization that something is natural, to the notion that it would therefore be good, is completely unjustified, precisely because any justification is something that belongs to the realm of the psyche.

This is because nature itself does not make any moral distinctions, as can be seen in the existence of predators, parasites or germs. Therefore, realizing that something is natural exclusively boils down to a neutral insight, which doesn't imply any judgment about forms of sexuality, nor about any other form of behavior and feelings for that matter.

2. What do we mean by the term "natural" anyway? From a strictly physical point of view, the genital organs do indeed directly suggest what is to be considered natural or not. However, if we don't approach the term "natural" from a materialist framework, but in

the sense of "according to the nature of reality", the concept should in fact embrace any type of behavior, regardless of whether it ought to be considered healthy or unhealthy, innocent or criminal. A murder driven by lust should in that case be included in the category of the natural, just like any other behavior.

The category of the "natural" would have to embrace the whole of culture and all personal feelings and behavior. Such terminological considerations may seem trivial, but people often don't realize what they really mean by the term "natural" if they formulate a so called "biological" argument against deviant forms of sexuality.

## 2. Religion

However, there is also a second kind of type of naturalistic criterion, which can be termed religious naturalism. In this case the idea of naturalness is seen as the consequence of the order of creation as intended by God. A typical example can be found in the story about the cities of Sodom and Gommories where people indulged in types of sex deemed perverted by God. For this reason, they were completely destroyed through divine interaction.

In this time and age we can see that some fundamentalists don't feel any doubt, when they consider HIV/AIDS as a divine punishment for the "counter-natural", essentially diabolical misdeeds of homo- and bisexuals.

Believers usually assume that God will only punish the awful sexual sinners after their death, during the last judgment: they will end up in hell

Apart from the prudish variants of the concept of divinely ordained naturalness, we also see that the concept as such usually does not limit acceptable heterosexuality to reproduction. However, forms of heterosexuality that deviate from what God would have in mind, such as masturbation and sex before marriage may be approached with anxiety.

The problem with the religious naturalist argument is that it is explicitly non-rational, and that is supposed to be "supra-rational", revealed by God Himself, and therefore also indubitable. The issue cannot be discussed but you simply have to accept it as a believer, unless you would start a heretic current with new dogmas. Thereby the religious naturalist concept is invulnerable to criticisms but also non-rational. Now, in principle we need to have respect for anyone's outlook on life, and any decent religion will itself hold that it should be a matter of personal free decision to become a believer. Therefore, we need to respect the religious concept of naturalness, unless it clashes with the freedom of others. A Christian is completely entitled to consider homosexuality diabolical, but he doesn't have the right to prevent others from being practicing homosexuals.

### 3. Egocentrism

Unfortunately, the foregoing, our analysis isn't complete yet.

There also is a third factor that makes people abhor deviant sex, namely egocentrism. Whatever I find pleasant, really is pleasant in an objective sense, and whatever I don't like or wouldn't like, is unpleasant, and whatever I'd find disgusting, really is disgusting. This egocentrism is the foundation for something like the aggressive rejection of voluntary sadomasochism and sex with animals: Because this is often found disgusting, it would be objectively disgusting.

Egocentrism typically implies that your own subjective feelings are seen as the objective truth, and that you don't even take into account that another person's feelings may be completely different.

It is quite peculiar that many people seem to accept that culinary preferences may differ, while not accepting the same about sexual preferences. As if you declared that you wish to practice certain forms of sex yourself if you don't reject them. Meaning that accepting deviant sexuality would induce a fear of losing oneself.

Remarkably enough, this egocentric phenomenon may indeed arise in an extreme form in the case of homophobia, in which social contact with homosexuals is experienced as a "danger" for one's own heterosexuality.

Similarly, the almost unanimous Western rejection of incestuous relations between brothers and sisters is probably not based on knowledge of genetics, but simply on the fact that most people would never want to get involved in such a relationship themselves.

If a very self-centered person doesn't want to experience some practice for himself, and even finds it repulsive, he apparently finds it threatening if others do want to engage in it. And the other way around: if a self-centered person wants to experience some type of behavior, it may be threatening if others do not.

This is because for the egocentric person there is only one norm in sexual matters; everybody must share the way he feels about them. If anybody deviates from the person's norm, this seems to force the egocentric person to choose between two options: either to accept the deviant behavior (and therefore to practice it himself), or silencing anyone who wants to engage in it. Pluralism simply is not an egocentric option.

Although I treat egocentrism as the last cause, I can easily imagine that it is the real, ultimate motive in any case of intolerance. In that case the biological and religious argument would only be used as rationalizations of a completely irrational and destructive urge. And in that case sexual intolerance would not be any less irrational than other forms of intolerance such as racism.

A strong indication for this is formed by National Socialism that is not only notorious for its genocide and unlimited urge for expansion, but also because of its persecution of sexual minorities.

The well-known pink triangle is derived from this context and points to a sign that homosexuals had to wear on their cloths in concentration camps. Although many now regard Nazi "biology" as caricatured and primitive, their biological argument against sexually deviant behavior is not more irrational than the one still current.

Unfortunately, Nazis haven't been the only ones who used to treat sexual minorities as scapegoats. Just as in the case of other minorities, the authorities have cunningly used the egocentric human tendency of demonizing that, which is deviant. The more people are socially dissatisfied or insecure, the more widespread the persecution of sexual and other minorities tends to get. In this context, Huib Kort and G. G. conclude:

"The solution lies in the awakening of independent thinking. It seems people have to learn to be more critical towards their own opinions, but also towards the information that reaches them, in order to become more independent from it."

### **Schematic overview (With 3. Egocentrism)**

#### **The main egocentric fallacies**

##### **1. Prudish fallacy:**

I don't like sexuality, so any kind of sexuality should disappear completely.

##### **2. Romantic fallacy:**

I only like loving, tender sex, so any lustful sex without love should disappear.

##### **3. Heterosexual fallacy:**

I only like heterosexuality, so any homosexuality should disappear

##### **4. Homosexual fallacy:**

I only like homosexuality, so any bisexuality should disappear

##### **5. Holistic fallacy:**

I only like sexuality in relation to a whole human body, so all fetishism should disappear.



**6. Contact-fallacy:**

I only like physical contact, so any type of masturbation, voyeurism and exhibitionism should disappear.

**7. Enrichment fallacy:**

I only like variations if they are an enrichment of "normal" sexuality, so any exclusively "deviant" sex or a sexual limitation to masturbation should disappear.

**8. Hedonic fallacy:**

I like sexuality, so any chastity should disappear.

**9. Generational fallacy:**

I only like sexuality or erotic relationships with members of my own generation, so any other type of sexual or erotic relationships, including pedophilia, should disappear.

**10. Anthropic fallacy:**

I only like sexuality with human beings, so any sexual contact with animals should disappear.

**11. Gender fallacy:**

I only feel fine sexually as a fully-fledged member of my native gender, so any type of transvestism and transsexuality should disappear.

**12. Genetic fallacy:**

I only like sex with people who are unrelated to me, so any type of incest should disappear.

**13. Relational fallacy:**

I only like sex within a relationship, so any type of prostitution or contacts outside a relationship should disappear.

**14. Monogamy fallacy:**

I only like sex within a monogamous relationship, so any type of promiscuity, polyandry, polygyny, polygamy, orgies and swinging should disappear.

**15. Esthetic fallacy:**

I only like soft, tasteful and hygienic sex, so any S&M and other types of "dirty" sex should disappear.

#### **16. Relational fallacy:**

I only like sex within a relationship, so any type of prostitution or contacts outside a relationship should disappear.

#### **17. Monistic fallacy:**

I only feel attracted to one kind of sexuality, so any polymorphous type of sexuality should disappear.

### **4. Tolerance**

From a moral perspective, sexual intolerance is indefensible.

The religious rejection of deviant sexuality can't be founded on reason and it is based on a voluntary subjection to dogmas so that you mustn't force such a submission on anyone.

The apparent "biological" rejection can't be sustained, as it very un-biologically limits sexuality to reproduction, and also because naturalist arguments always fail.

The concept of sexual revolution is not all outdated, but it is not even completed yet. Morally seen, tolerance must be extended to all forms of voluntary sexuality and abstinence.

The limits of our sexual tolerance should not lie with what is suggested by the reproductive organs or with what is written in the Bible or any other holy book, let alone with our own personal orientation or choice. These limits must lie with involuntary sex and unwanted abstinence. Rationally speaking there are no good arguments to distinguish between natural and unnatural sexuality, but there is a basis for a moral distinction between forced and free sexuality (and abstinence).

People should have the opportunity to choose for themselves for things that others may find repulsive or perverted, as long as they don't harm others.

Wanting to keep people from sex as a source of pleasure is a brutish form of paternalism, and so is trying to force a particular taste upon them. Interference in erotic relations is at least as wrong, especially if they involve more than purely sensual ties. In many, if not most erotic relations, sexuality cannot be reduced to a source of pleasure but it is also an expression of deep affection. Furthermore, the enforced ending of the sexual aspects of a relationship is usually accompanied by a prohibition of intimate spiritual contact between the lovers.

Therefore we aren't exaggerating if we say that from a human point of view, interference in erotic relations belongs to the worst kind of social crimes one can think of. If anything should be punished, it certainly shouldn't be the "illicit" love relationships, but rather their inhumane sabotage.

Not to mention other expressions of sexual intolerance that aren't limited to interference, but also involve ridiculing, pathologizing, criminalizing, persecution, physical abuse and even murder.

## 5. Sexual tolerance as an expression of sexual freedom

Sexual tolerance roots in the moral principle that we aren't allowed to interfere in the private life of another person without a very good reason. In the sexual realm, such a reason is always absent unless there are sexual practices involved that are harmful to others. However, in practice sexual freedom is not only limited by intolerance, but also by forms of coercion, exploitation and violence. Unfortunately such excesses are more than once abused by the intolerant to stigmatize generally innocent, *bona fide* phenomena (such as erotica or voluntary pedophile relationships). This does not take away the fact that the excesses mentioned should not be denied or played down.

Instead, we should realize that sexual freedom implies both sexual tolerance and the struggle against sexual coercion, violence and exploitation. There is no conflict whatsoever between these two, as they are both expressions of unconditional respect for everyone's sexual freedom.

## 6. Psychosexual health

Defending sexual freedom and tolerance is not incompatible with all types of concepts of psychosexual health, though it certainly can't be combined with uniform standards based on the "biological" fallacy mentioned or on religious dogmas. Exactly what is psychologically healthy in sexual matters is a lot more personal than is usually believed.

Psychosexual health might be redefined as:

"handling sexuality in a way that corresponds to personal desires and values, and is not accompanied by guilt, fear or hatred".

We can't exclude the possibility that there is a universal spiritual development in our relation to sexuality. For instance, one might imagine that there would be ever increasing sexual awakening, or rather an ever more specific orientation, or rather an ever progressing detachment in favor of other values, etc. All this depends on the general axiology you endorse and that axiology shouldn't be forced upon another person, but you can only explain your arguments for believing in it. Time will teach every one of us personally and we can't and shouldn't force

others to progress to a possible next level of development.

In general we can say that somebody's relation to sexuality only becomes problematic if that is how the person himself views it, or if others suffer because of that sexuality. Thus, I would like to classify as unhealthy:

- ✚ 1. Prudishness,
- ✚ 2. Obsessive sexuality,
- ✚ 3. Denial of deep (voluntary) desires,
- ✚ 4. Unwanted intimacies,
- ✚ 5. Sexual violence, and
- ✚ 6. Fear of sexual failure.

This libertarian concept of psychosexual health implies that any type of a voluntary relation to sexuality is healthy. Health can't be identified with what is commonly done, but exclusively with what is personally satisfying and isn't accompanied by aggression. Therefore, there are no easy general solutions for sexual problems.

Psychosexual health is to be seen as the result of sexual freedom, and as fundamentally opposed to sexual intolerance. Sexual intolerance probably is one of the main sources of psychosexual problems.

In this context, it is especially sad to see how some members of sexual minorities start looking at themselves as sick people. Engulfed by waves of sexual intolerance they look for comfort in psychiatric explanations of their 'deviations' even if they don't show any intrinsically sexual problems.

For example, morally responsible people with pedophile feelings may think that they suffer from a developmental disturbance, whereas according to reactionary sexology any sexual variation boils down to such a developmental disorder.

Freud believed that all sexual orientation that deviate from the "norm" arise as fixations (or regressions) upon forms of sexual pleasure that following a "healthy" development would finally have to be left behind in favor of a "normal sexuality". For years, homosexuality was also seen as a developmental disorder.

It is clear that (implicitly or explicitly) clinging to a sexological norm of heterosexual intercourse between adult partners (and the accompanying obsession with the roots of deviations of that norm) will not contribute anything substantial to sexual emancipation.

