

# Respectability's edge: Transnational sex radical René Guyon

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## Abstract

The writings and life of French sex radical, René Guyon (1876–1963), offer a fascinating opportunity to examine together western European sexological thought, human rights movements, and imperial privilege in Asia. As one of France's early promoters of sexual rights as a human right, Guyon revealed himself to be a radical advocate for sexual liberation from what he called the 'hideous bondage of conventional "sexual morality"' in Europe and America. From his residence in Siam, Guyon penned his magnum opus, *Etudes d'éthiques sexuelles*, a series of nine volumes that he wrote between 1929 and 1944 in which he promoted all consensual sexual acts, regardless of one's sex, age or race, within 'ethical limitations.' His law background earned him a high position in the Ministry of Justice in Siam, where he worked as a legal reformer and judge from 1908 until 1963. His 50-plus years of experience in Siam and sexual adventures in other non-western countries served as an unacknowledged springboard for his views and provided him invaluable credentials in the eyes of his western sexologist peers. I examine the relationships among his excoriation of western sexual mores, his concept of a sexual utopia, and his life experiences in Africa, Asia and other non-western areas of the world. An examination of the life of one of France's first promoters of sexual rights reveals the fissures within nascent human rights movements in Europe and reflects on the implications of his peculiar defense of the non-western countries where he worked.

## Keywords

Childhood sexuality, France, imperialism, René Guyon, sexology, Thailand

Sedan, a provincial town along the border with Belgium, found its way into history books as the site where Napoleon III and the French army suffered a staggering defeat and capture in the Franco-Prussian war in 1870. It is also the birthplace of a

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far less familiar Frenchman, René Guyon (1876–1963). Recently, in the journal *Sexologies*, the editors noted with curiosity that little has been written about early French sexologists such as Guyon (Béjin and Giami, 2007: 170). Although he has failed to surface in French history, Guyon played a more conspicuous role in the history of Siam (the former name of Thailand), where he served the royal government for over 50 years as a legal reformer, judge and advisor. He was central to codification of Siam's modern family law and served as legal advisor in discussions at the League of Nations about international standards for deeply fraught issues such as the age of consent. Although Guyon's name is familiar to historians of law in Siam, no one has examined together his life in Siam and his massive corpus on sexuality and human rights published in Europe and the USA. From his residence in Bangkok, Guyon wrote nine volumes and multiple articles published in sexological journals outlining a utopian plan for a sexual revolution. Often pedantic in tone and always directed at a European and American audience, his oeuvre was interspersed with selective examples of what he considered unrestricted models of sexual freedom from Asia and North Africa. Like many westerners, Guyon considered the non-European Other sexually exotic, but he specifically differed from them in his emphasis on the purity of the sexuality of the Others, who were as yet untainted by Christian morality. Guyon founded his theories of sexual emancipation on religious and cultural distinctions from the West. Although religion appears to be the most significant division between the West and the rest, a closer examination of Guyon's sexotic philosophy reveals that race, geography and climate are foundational to his hierarchical notions of human difference.

In this article, I locate his experiences in the East and his publications concerning sex reform and sexology within a European context, and reveal his transnational connections with sexologists and human rights advocates there. Guyon was hailed by some for his radical views on sexuality and criticized by others for his controversial stances, particularly on the sexuality of children. He belonged to a European-led transnational movement that examined non-normative forms of sexuality, and produced studies that aimed at objectivity but were steeped in the racial and gendered hierarchies embedded in early 20th-century scholarship. These implicit hierarchies, common even among sexual scientists who considered themselves progressive and objective social critics, help to make sense of their silence regarding what I will expose as Guyon's misogyny and imperial deployment of the bodies and moral codes of non-western subjects.

After considering the biography of Guyon, his publications, and an overview of his blueprint for massive sexual reform in Europe, the second half of the essay problematizes his ideas by revealing how they relied on the racial and gender privileges afforded white men under imperialism in Asia, where he resided. Guyon's ideas and the contexts in which he wrote and was read are fertile topics for a much deeper study, of which this is the first endeavor. Embedding his philosophy within that of similarly minded sexologists, psychoanalysts and French intellectuals more generally is a crucial next step in the study of Guyon that I hope this preliminary examination will encourage.

## Guyon's life and publications

Historian Charles Guyon (1848–1923) finished his *Histoire d'un annexé: souvenirs de 1870–1871* (1877) the same year his pregnant wife gave birth to a son, René. Although Charles wrote about and taught local history at the College of Sedan, he also had a knack for narrating adventure stories for youth. Charles published over two hundred history books and novels, mostly juvenile fiction. He encouraged his son, René, to write, even co-authoring René's first publications, *L'héritage du Dr. Van Tropp* (1898) and *À travers la forêt vierge: Aventures extraordinaires de deux jeunes français au Brésil* (1907). It is perhaps from his father Charles, who published a travel book on the Malay Archipelago and Oceania in 1890, that René first learned about Southeast Asia (C Guyon, 1890). Going by their book titles alone, it appears that father and son relished the idea and experience of travel. Birth along a contested national border may also have made René receptive to boundary crossing, for he did this both in life and in his publications. In 1908, one year after he published *À travers la forêt vierge* (*Through the Jungle*) about adventures in Brazil, René Guyon left France for Siam, where he remained for the rest of his extraordinary life. It is unclear if he ever returned to France, let alone Sedan. However, long after he left the continent, Europe remained the target of his scathing criticisms of western civilization's stifling sexual norms. Europe, not Asia or Africa, also was envisioned as the location of a future sexual utopic state.

Nothing has been written about René Guyon's upbringing in Sedan or his decision to study law at the University of Paris, where he received a doctorate in 1902 for a dissertation on the Australian constitution of 1900. He may have been married, if there is any truth in his dedication of at least one poem to his wife in his book, *Les paques païennes* (1911: 29), but there is no evidence that he had children. In any case, his work on law brought him to the attention of Siam's rulers who hired him in 1908, by then in his early 30s, to help draft and codify civil codes for that kingdom. Siam's King Chulalongkorn, who reigned from 1868 until 1910, oversaw a complete administrative overhaul of his government, which hired dozens of foreign legal experts to help draft new legal codes that would help Siam abolish the unequal treaties hindering the kingdom's full sovereignty (Loos, 2006). Unlike other foreign legal experts, Guyon chose Siam over his place of birth, renounced his French citizenship, and in 1942 naturalized as a Siamese, named Mr. Phichan Bunyong. Also unlike most foreigners hired by Siam's administration, Guyon was exceptionally broad in his interests: he was also a poet, philosopher, novelist, hedonist, sexologist, and an early advocate of sexual rights. His legal background distinguishes him from other sexologists, who were largely medical men or psychiatrists. For Guyon, the etiology of sexual neurosis never went beyond social and legal repression, and his solutions were legalistic, outlining in great detail the rights of all people to sexual pleasure.

Guyon remained in the service of the Siamese government as a judge, judicial advisor, law code drafter and public prosecutor, until his death in 1963 (Phichan Anuson).<sup>1</sup> Sarit Thanarat, a notorious military dictator known for his dissolute



**Figure 1.** René Guyon in official uniform, Bangkok. Date unknown.

sexual life and equally corrupt management of Thailand, proudly contributed the introduction to Guyon's Thai cremation volume in 1963, just months before Sarit himself died of cirrhosis. Sarit considered Guyon exemplary for his decency and loyalty to Siam. Scholars of Thai history and law, to the extent they mention Guyon, similarly laud him for his contributions to law. They appear unaware of his sexological scholarship and the role his personal sexual experiences abroad and in Siam played in Guyon's theorizing about sex and western society.

Yet it was these very experiences that provided him with invaluable credentials in the eyes of his western peers. In his introduction to Guyon's *The Ethics of Sexual Acts*, American sexologist Harry Benjamin noted that 'There is hardly an author anywhere with qualifications comparable to those of Guyon, who not only writes from a vast personal experience but is also a philosopher, a world traveler, and a student of human behavior, fully familiar with the main roads and the byways of passion' (Benjamin, 1974 [1948]: a). Why does he know so much about how sexuality works around the globe? 'The answer lies partly in the unusual intellectual capacity of the man and partly in the opportunities offered to him by world-wide travels that took him through Europe, North Africa and the Sudan, through Siberia, China and Indochina, to Malaya and the Indonesia Archipelago' (Benjamin, 1974 [1948]: d). Guyon considered himself a global sex expert. And his experience abroad served as an intellectual launching pad for his criticism of western sexual morality.

From his posting in Bangkok, Guyon penned dozens of books and articles, the sheer volume of which is staggering. His first publication was in 1898, and his last in 1961. He published love and erotic poems, legal tomes, metaphysical treatises on Buddhism, tolerance and cruelty, and materialist philosophies of biology and psychology.<sup>2</sup>

Guyon had already resided in Siam for 20 years and was nearly 50 when he began his magnum opus, the *Study of Sexual Ethics* (*Etudes d'éthiques sexuelles*),



**Figure 2.** Interior photograph of Guyon's residence in Bangkok. Archive for Sexology  
<http://www.sexarchive.info/GESUND/ARCHIV/COLLGUY.HTM>

a series of nine volumes that he wrote between 1929 and 1944. Six volumes appeared in French before the Second World War broke out: *The Ethics of Sexual Acts* (1929), *Sexual Freedom* (1933), *Revision of the Classic Institution: Family and Marriage* (1934), *A Rational Sexual Policy: Human Reproduction* (1936), *A Rational Sexual Policy: Sexual Pleasure* (1937), and *The Persecution of Sexual Acts: Courtesans* (1938). The remaining three volumes exist only in manuscript form, and he drafted a tenth volume.<sup>3</sup> Volume 1 proved popular enough to have been reprinted multiple times and translated into English, German, Italian and Chinese. Guyon published articles as well, mostly extracted from his nine-volume series on sexual ethics, about marriage and the family (1948a, 1948–1950), childhood sexuality (1948a), venereal diseases (1949), chastity and virginity (1961), and human rights and the denial of sexual freedom (1951), among others.

It is difficult to discern how widely his works were read, particularly those on sex and society, but clearly some in Europe and the USA were paying attention. By the 1920s, sexology was a relatively well-defined intellectual field with its own journals, conferences, and professional bodies. One scholar claims Guyon participated in the work of the World League for Sexual Reform by supporting Magnus Hirschfeld's endeavors and corresponding with Freud, but the evidence for this has yet to appear (Shively, 1990: 510). Even in the unlikely event that he was not in contact with Europe's sexology community before he published his first volume, he quickly came to their attention thereafter (Benjamin, 1974 [1948]; Haeberle, 1983). In 1932, the well-known doctor and pioneer of sexual reform, Norman Haire, wrote an introduction to the English translation in which he praised Guyon's first volume on *The Ethics of Sexual Acts* (Haire, 1941 [1932]; Haire, 1950).

Sexologists were not the only ones aware of Guyon: in the increasingly repressive climate of Europe that led to the Second World War, the Pétain government banned Guyon's six French language volumes (Haeberle, 1983).

This occurred despite the fact that Guyon consistently soft-pedaled on France's sexual politics, which he subtly defends as pro-sex in comparison to Anglo nations. In France, state policies before and after the war were vigorously pro-natalist and pro-heterosexual.<sup>4</sup> Likely his patriotic defense stems from France's legal tolerance of private sexual acts, which made it the envy of sex reformers elsewhere in Europe despite its continued harassment and prosecution of homosexuals in medical literature and state pro-natal policy and propaganda (Nye, 1999: 97, 103; Quinlan, 2007: 7; Robcis, 2013).

After the war ended and censorship decreased, Guyon entered mainstream sexual circles, evidenced by his participation in the journal, *Marital Hygiene*, later named the *International Journal of Sexology* (IJS). He wrote articles for them in the 1940s and 1950s, and was named an advisory editor in the 1950s. The journal, which first was published in 1934, counted Havelock Ellis, Norman Haire, Norman and Vera Himes, and other well known sexologists among its contributors. Margaret Sanger helped support it. The journal also published reviews of Guyon's books. Harry Benjamin, a US medical doctor, wrote an introduction to and a review of the 1948 reprint of *The Ethics of Sexual Acts*. In it, he places Guyon alongside Havelock Ellis, Magnus Hirschfeld, Krafft-Ebing, and other scientists foundational to the science of sex (Benjamin, 1974). Guyon, he states, is 'today's foremost sex-philosophical writer,' and likens him to Kinsey, whose volumes on male sexuality had just been published in the USA (Benjamin, 1949: 165). Guyon corresponded with Alfred Kinsey and welcomed the publication *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Haeberle, n.d.; Shively, 1990: 510). Kinsey, in turn, cited Guyon's work in *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953). On the whole, the responses to his articles and reviews of his books reveal support for Guyon's ideas within Europe and the USA (Gumpert, 1948).

### **Guyon's sexually liberated utopia**

René Guyon's *Studies in Sexual Ethics* (1948b) outlines principles of sexuality and a concept of sexual freedom that resonated with many sexologists in the first half of the 20th century. His American translator, George Russell Weaver, explains that 'René Guyon dreamed of, and hoped for, a future pro-sexual society' (Weaver, 1986: 378). He called the volumes 'the most monumental and important work on sex ever written, a complete blueprint for sexual relations in the World of Tomorrow' (Weaver, 1947: 111). Guyon was a practical idealist: he crafted practical steps towards revolutionary change in mores that would result in a sexual utopia. He envisioned himself as a crusader for sexual freedom and for the emancipation of the sexually enslaved.

The fundamental principle underlying Guyon's revision of sexual morality was his doctrine of sexual legitimacy, which held that all acts of sexual pleasure are amoral and legitimate so long as they do not involve violence, coercion or fraud. There are several parts to this doctrine that need to be considered separately: sexual pleasure as amoral and legitimate, the corollary that taboos against sex are



illegitimate, and finally the limitations placed on sexual acts based on the notion of mutual consent, non-violence, and honesty rather than deceit or fraud.

Guyon fiercely argued that nearly all forms of sexual pleasure are legitimate and amoral. Physiologically, sex organs are natural and exist to experience pleasure, not exclusively to reproduce the species. He likened sexual acts to food and drink: we eat when hungry, drink when thirsty, and gratify sexual urges when they arise. These are essential human needs outside morality. '[T]he right to sexual satisfaction is just as inalienable as the right to eat' (Guyon, 1953: 341).

Guyon encapsulates this idea in what he calls the 'Mechanistic Theory of Sexuality,' in which he argues that all sexual objects are legitimate to use for the purpose of sexual pleasure (Guyon, 1953: 430–431). It doesn't matter what one uses, if anything, to achieve pleasure or what erogenous zone is stimulated. It could be your hand, someone of the same sex, your sister or brother or son or daughter, a vegetable, dildo, pornographic images, nudity, a dead body (necrophilia), excrement (coprophilia), or exhibitionism (Guyon, 1941: 336). It is not a stretch to imagine why, in the mid-20th century, transnational homophile organizations such as the International Committee for Sexual Equality found in his ideas support for the legitimacy and decriminalization of homosexuality (Rupp, 2011: 1032).

For Guyon, it did not matter what part of the body is stimulated: oral, anal or armpits, inside or outside the vagina, with or without a penis. Orgasm was treated similarly, as a psycho-physiological, almost mechanical response. Sexual organs are not shameful, they are just like the nose or the tongue. The only conditions he considered truly abhorrent were chastity and virginity. The glorification of chastity was 'sheer claptrap' that went 'against nature,' while he considered the concept of the virgin 'an absurdity, a sort of monstrosity' (Guyon, 1961: 253, 255). He went so far as to argue that '*the chaste individual is not a valuable or desirable member of society*,' (emphasis in original, Guyon, 1961: 254) that one's genital organs would atrophy if not used, and that a lack of sex would lead to illness (Guyon, 1941: 226–255; Guyon, 1949 [1939], 138: 140–141).

For Guyon, human bodies were created as erogenous zones and everyone had the right to exercise freely their sexual preferences so long as no violence or act of deceit was committed (Guyon, 1941: 295–297, 1953). Sadism, because it infringed upon the liberty of sexual partners and involved violence, was one of the few acts that he did not support as belonging within the sphere of sexuality (Guyon, 1941: 340–341). He believed that sadism, like mass murder, resulted from sexual repression or sexual abuse, so it and other neuroses would disappear in a society founded upon sexual freedom (Guyon, 1941: 340–341, 1949: 174). In fact, any repression of this wide range of physiologically natural, legitimate sexual acts would result in neurosis. In other words, Guyon argues that sexual aberrations or perversions do not exist a priori or in nature, but are created by social conventions and sexual taboos. He believed that taboos merely strengthened the desire for that which it seeks to combat: taboos compel the act that breaks the taboo (Guyon, 1941: 14).

Unlike other French philosophers before and after him, Guyon's theory of pleasure did not hinge on any form of transgression. Violence was a form

of transgression, which made it central to Georges Bataille's and Sadean notions of sex and the erotic, but not to Guyon's.<sup>5</sup> Whereas Bataille eroticized this process, Guyon preferred the removal of taboos, which he did not find erotic to transgress, in order to engage legitimately and freely in the erotic act. Taboos stemmed ultimately from the construction of a moral hierarchy of sexual acts, with legitimate sexual intercourse for reproductive purposes within heterosexual, monogamous marriage at the top. According to his philosophy, only as a consequence of the introduction of Judeo-Christianity over 2000 years ago, with its cardinal sin of sex outside of marriage or for non-reproductive purposes, had all sorts of barbaric taboos been introduced to western societies.

The vehemence with which Guyon criticized the hypocrisy of western morality is seductive in tone.

Modern sexual life, as it has issued from two millenniums of Christian dictatorship, is indeed profoundly immoral. This immorality is not of the kind supposed by the anti-sexual 'moralists.' The immorality from which we suffer is falsehood, hypocrisy, and cowardice—with all of which vices we are drenched. Married couples clandestine in their infidelity and ending by murder, parents and children endlessly wrangling about the limits of authority, brains disordered by continence, characters embittered by window-dressing chastity which is belied by dreams and by auto-eroticism, sexual acts performed as furtively as theft, the lying utterances of those who publicly condemn what they secretly practice, servility in the face of the increasing violence of purity-fanatics, the outrageous persecution of those who lead a natural sex life, the deliberate blunting of our intelligence when we come to examine the code of sexual morals—combine to make our civilization a scandal and a hissing. (Guyon, 1949: 50–51)

Guyon's anger and disdain are palpable. He believed that the hustle and bustle, the speed of modern civilized life, and the introduction of sexual taboos including the most invidious one of the cardinal sin, all crippled western society. Western civilization was steadily more exacting because of its repression of sexual acts, which led to all types of neuroses that manifested in the crimes of Jack the Ripper, flashers, drug addiction, lynching, and even the Russian Revolution (Guyon, 1941: 15, 5). The restrictions imposed on sexuality by puritans 'have created for mankind a civilization which is essentially a civilization of sexual slavery' that will ultimately cause the downfall of modern societies (Guyon, n.d.).

In his vision of a sexual utopia, Guyon believed that marriage and the family required reorganization, but that this could be accomplished without harm to the social order by allowing a variety of arrangements such as free unions, polygamy, legal concubinage, trial marriage, companionate marriage, homosexuality, prostitution and so on. These were all more or less considered equivalent contracts. His ideas about the state's role in reproduction are not covered here, but entailed state-run institutions for women who desired to be mothers or 'procreatrices,' and for children who may have parents unsuited by temperament or otherwise to raise them. He was against all types of sexual censorship including pornography and



all anti-sexual intervention in private and social life. Although monogamy or what he calls individualized love is allowable, it is preferable to have sexual companionship guided by sexual pleasure, non-monopoly of partners, and mutuality. Courtesanry, his preferred word for prostitution, should be legalized for it does not involve the sale of a body, but entails more simply the rental of a service. These and other radical ideas about pimps, venereal disease, and brothels fill later volumes. The vitriol of Guyon's criticism of a sexually repressed Christian West propelled his vision of a sexual utopia, but the specific design he gave this future world stemmed from his decades of sexual experience and experimentation in non-western, non-Christian societies in Asia and parts of North Africa. This becomes evident in his discussion of the most delicate topic of childhood sexuality and pedophilia.

### Childhood sexuality

Nothing he wrote caused a stronger reaction than his treatment of childhood sexuality, which Guyon believed (like Freud and later Kinsey) should be acknowledged. Children have and are capable of sexual desires, masturbation, and sexual pleasure. He argued that sexual acts are imperious in nature—they demand to be enacted and to be satisfied, based on evidence from studies of infantile sexuality, research on ancient western sexuality (Greek and Roman), and demonstrated in the contemporary era among what he considered primitive societies.

Recall that Guyon wrote in the wake of Freud's *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex* (1905), which included a chapter on infantile sexuality. Freud theorized that children have a sexual instinct, an impulse they gratify by exciting a selected erogenous zone that moved depending on distinct periods of development (Reevy, 1961: 259). In this regard, Guyon shared commonalities with contemporaries such as Austrian psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich (1897–1957), who claimed that the 'threat of authoritarian political regimes everywhere in the world in the 1930s was, above all, a product of their manipulation of sexual energy, aided by the 'patriarchal' family's repression of childhood sexuality' (Moore, 2016: 99). Reich too saw a link between sexual perversion and modernity. He defined the modern family as nuclear, monogamous, and patriarchal, whereas primitive societies practiced matriarchal communism and greater sexual freedom.

Reich, Guyon, and other psychoanalytically minded scholars, saw in primitive societies a sexual freedom that 'no longer' existed in modern Europe. While this may have been considered a politically radical position within Europe because it pushed the boundaries of sexual propriety, in Asia it denied the coevalness of racially distinct Others. It located contemporaneous non-western societies at an earlier and more primitive stage of development on the scale of civilizational progress—a scale based on West Europe's historical experience and used to justify imperial rule over others. In other words, the sexually progressive political stance in Europe taken by Guyon and Reich relied on a repressive and normative strategy of representation in which they, as European bourgeois subjects, secured their

innocence as objective scientists of sexology while simultaneously asserting a racia-  
lized and gendered hierarchy of power in the non-West (Pratt, 1992: 7).

While Reich did not elaborate on his theories about childhood sexuality in relationship to race and empire, Guyon did. Stunningly, his theories about race, childhood, and sexuality ignore the longstanding and contentious debates about child labor, the age of consent for sexual intercourse, trafficking in children for prostitution, and the meaning of childhood in empire. Instead of embedding his arguments in these debates, Guyon blithely ignores the cultural and legal contexts of colonial Asia, which is all the more astounding given that he lived and worked as a lawyer in Siam. When he does bring up the legal changes that impinged on children, he concentrates exclusively on the activities of western feminist campaigners at the League of Nations and in other venues. He considered them moral puritans determined to block male sexual access to women, particularly non-western women, as can be seen in his arguments about children and sex.

Guyon slowly built his case about children and the need for them to explore sexuality. In *The Ethics of Sexual Acts*, he argues that the history of laws and customs around the world reveal that the age of consent used to be low but has gradually been raised in conjunction with so-called civilization. Among the Romans and other ancient civilizations, individuals were considered adults when they were about seven years old. In France, the age of consent was puberty, set at the age of 11 in 1832, then thirteen in 1863. Until 1929, Guyon notes the age of consent in England was 12 for girls and 14 for boys (Guyon, 1941: 40, 46). The comparisons between the ancient West and contemporary Asia help build his case against the puritanism of the contemporary West. He recounts that the Quran authorized marriage for girls at 9 and boys at 12. In India, courts did not intervene in determining the age at which a girl could consummate a marriage and certain castes would marry their daughters at 5 years old and under until the British Raj promulgated an act that prohibited girls under 14 from marrying (Guyon, 1948a: 28).

Guyon's omission of longstanding debates over child marriage in India is telling. He writes, in the 1940s, that

Hindu custom seems to be very popular and had never shocked anyone until a few years ago. It is only under the influence of foreign ideas—especially after the publication of a recent book by Miss Mayo,<sup>6</sup> which violently attacked Hindu social customs from the Western point of view, without any attempt to understand the racial differences involved—that certain Hindu politicians hurriedly proposed to suppress the custom of infant marriage. These proposals seemed to be inspired less by local conviction than by the fear of appearing to outrage the sexual code of the West. (Guyon, 1941: 46–47)

As a lawyer working in Asia, Guyon must have known that debates over the age of consent had rocked colonial Bengal since the 1890s, when a Bengali man raped to death his 11-year-old wife (Sarkar, 2001). The fault lines of the debates then fell

between a defense of the Hindu custom of child marriage and the enforcement of 'universal' moral principles, including the sanctity of the lives of women and children. The British, like other colonizers in Asia, protected the space of customary law, which includes personal and religious law, from direct legal change. As a consequence, custom began to operate as a space of cultural authenticity and cultural nationalism. After the British colonial government promulgated laws in 1890 that raised the age of consent in Bengal to 12 and criminalized as rape intercourse with a child under 10, some Hindu politicians considered these measures an intrusion into customary law (Sarkar, 2001: 226, 233). This is one example of how the age of consent debates were lightning rods for debates about the politics of cultural recognition and cultural nationalism in defiance of imperial rule and intervention.

Yet Guyon failed to engage with this literature except to target one American woman, Katherine Mayo, who argued in polemical, racist terms against Indian self-rule. Instead he claimed that it was high time to conduct a thorough investigation of children and their sexuality. Psychoanalysis, he writes, has shown to the West what pro-sexual societies take for granted, that sexual activity and pleasure take place long before puberty. But no one is allowed to study this. 'Anyone attempting to study the sexual desires of minors by favouring or satisfying them (the only fruitful method) encounters such risks due to the existing law that no one dares carry out the experiment' (Guyon, 1948a: 31–32).

He proposes to contribute to Freud's theories by offering examples from non-Aryan races in French North Africa, East Asia, and Southeast Asia, and by supplementing with real data conjectures about children and sexuality.

With the present work in mind, I have observed, examined and questioned young people of all ages and all races for a period of thirty years, and I have arrived at the conclusion that Freud's theory of infantile sexuality is profoundly right, and is in harmony with the facts. (Guyon, 1941: 37)

## Guyon

collected a large number of observations, both those of others (such as were contained, for instance, in the reports made by the heads of institutions, or in the reports of criminal cases classed as moral offenses), and those made by himself (either from personal experience or from confidential accounts he had received, especially those obtained in the course of his residence and travels among many races). (Guyon, 1941: 51–52)

He advocated for personally engaging in intimate relations as a way to collect this data. 'In the present prohibitionistic conditions, the best method is perhaps that of intimacy, especially erotic intimacy between lovers' (Guyon, 1941: 43). He justifies his methodology through abstract references to history: 'Examples of ardent loving and joyous relations between children and adults abound in all the history of

humanity; what is lacking is not facts but the frankness to acknowledge them' (Guyon, 1948a: 28).

These experiences litter his works and frame his contrasts with the West.

In China, at dinners between friends, children of both sexes were sometimes placed under the table and instructed discreetly to masturbate the guests. The use of child (pre-adolescent) courtesans was at one time quite frequent, and still exists, but less openly because of Western criticism. (Guyon, 1941: 51–52)

The author has observed numerous cases of pre-adolescent girls in Egypt, in China, in Indo-China, etc., who are much addicted to sexual manipulations, with all the variations of which they are well acquainted. (Guyon, 1941: 53)

Girls flash their bodies in exchange for change in North Africa, where the children 'spontaneously and with obvious enjoyment, seek occasions of sexual pleasure, even with persons much older than themselves.' Guyon acknowledges that western criticism had caused the sexual exploitation of children to go underground, and notes the financial incentive for children to exploit their own bodies, but otherwise completely fails to recognize how imperial rule redefined childhood in ways that reinforced economic hierarchies and reproduced racial differences.

Yet, this exploitation was well known and widely reported in the press. The traffic in children, especially females, was a 'global cause célèbre' by the 1920s and 1930s that tested the limits of imperial responsibility for the child subjects of empire (Leow, 2008: 1; Pomfret, 2015: 178). In fact, the League of Nations and the International Save the Children Union, both founded in 1920, were charged with the goal of championing and protecting the 'universal ideals of childhood' by introducing protective child labor and trafficking laws (Pomfret, 2015: 116, 189). The 'child courtesans' in China mentioned casually by Guyon had been, like the child brides in India, subject to an exhaustive debate that pitted the protection of local cultural customs against the protection of youth from abusive labor practices and prostitution. Most well known as the *mui tsai* controversy, this debate engaged officials and the public in British Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaya as well as parts of French Indochina since the 1870s, but had become particularly heated after the 1920s (Leow, 2008: 1; Pomfret, 2015: 179–180). *Mui tsai* meant *younger sister* in Cantonese, and referred to the practice by which female children of typically poor rural families were sold to or adopted by better off Chinese families who used them as domestic laborers or sold them into prostitution. Colonial officials tolerated it as a Chinese philanthropic custom, despite evidence of its transracial practice, until they could no longer deny that young women and children were being sold into prostitution under the Orientalist guise of custom.

*Mui tsai* and related customary practices in Asia blurred the lines between slavery, child labor, and prostitution, which lent enormous moral weight to the demand by British feminists and Asian reformers to introduce protective legislation (Leow, 2008: 2–3; Pomfret, 2015: 193–194). Although Guyon lived in

non-colonized Siam, he traveled throughout colonial Asia (and Africa), and was a legal advisor tasked with age of consent legislation at the League of Nations. His omission of treatment of the broader imperial context in which children and young people engaged in sexual activity must have been deliberate.

Instead, Guyon argues that prepubescent girls enjoy sexual pleasure, which offers proof that they are ready for sexual intercourse. ‘The present author is acquainted with the case of two girls of 10 (of Indochinese descent) who had in this way acquired a more or less complete sexual knowledge; their education having entirely preserved from them all idea of sexual repression as this is currently understood in the West, they exhibited a surprising accuracy and breadth of understanding, due more to keen observation than to personal experience. Cases of this kind have certainly been very numerous in the societies where children have not been brought up in a directly anti-sexual fashion (Greece, Rome, the East, China, Africa, Polynesia, prehistoric races, etc.)’ (Guyon, 1941: 57). He mentions ‘sexual love’ observed by other men in children of three and four, and reports of travelers who mention sexual relations with children between the ages of six and seven in parts of Africa (Guyon, 1941: 54).

Sex with and by young people, whether pre-pubescent or adolescent, prolongs the life of both parties, according to Guyon’s experience. Writing when he had just entered his 50s, Guyon notes: ‘A man in the fifties, who is old if he has not enjoyed a vigorous sexual life, remains young and active in lands where sexual freedom prevails, and where he will always be able to find young and desirable partners’ (Guyon, 1949: 145). This elixir also worked for the young women with whom he had relations.

Experience proves (as I have personally been able to observe in non-Aryan societies) that a girl who has had the advantage of a complete sexual education that includes practical experience is often, at about 12 or 13 years, *a young woman*, having a clear understanding of sexual manifestations and ready to complete it by that devirgination which will dedicate her sexual autonomy. And note that this policy of rearing the young has a valuable advantage: *it lengthens* life, it restores to existence a number of years that at present are left barren and wasted. The girl who begins to live sexually at twenty years of age may have her life reduced by a good third. (Emphasis in original, Guyon, 1961: 255)

To assist them, he suggested that an ‘experienced technician’ should rid these young girls of their hymens.

And that would render a valuable service to all those females who are now destined to become ‘old maids,’ and who, useless and miserable, live all their lives without any transports of ecstasy, never daring to let themselves go for fear of breaking a thread. (Guyon, 1961: 256)

Through these examples, Guyon links the concept of western civilization with a late age of consent to expose the West as a repressive culture that bans the mere

acknowledgment of childhood sexuality, let alone its examination. By contrast, his jocular writing style suggests that the sexuality of the young should be celebrated and encouraged as harmless and healthy. Based on his selective ethnographic 'evidence' of sexual practices among and with the young in non-western society, Guyon thereby undermines the western rational ideal of Enlightenment. He can only accomplish this by denying the dense node of power hierarchies—race, gender, age, imperial—embedded in his own positionality and in the contexts of the examples cited.

It appears, however, that many politically and socially liberal sexologists shared Guyon's blind spots. The ideas Guyon expressed in his multiple volumes sprawl across thousands of pages. Excerpts from his longer pieces, including an article replete with many of these examples of childhood sexuality, found their way into sexology journals such as *The Journal of Marital Hygiene*, where they were distributed throughout the world, including to China, India, Russia, and throughout western Europe.<sup>7</sup> The editors of such journals knew Guyon's ideas were provocative, but also admired them.<sup>8</sup> When a translation of Guyon's reforms regarding marriage appeared in *Marital Hygiene* (November 1947), the editors preemptively stated that they had 'no desire to suppress views, however unpalatable they may be . . . [but] Dr. Guyon's reputation as a fearless critic of cant and pious platitudes in the field of sex is sufficient justification for us to have given him space to air his views' (Notes and Comments, 1947: 109).

Guyon positions himself as a global cultural sexpert, and is accepted by his western sexological and sex-positive peers as such. He deploys his experience in Asia and elsewhere to demonstrate that western sexual norms are backward and harmful because they fail to recognize the rational, scientific proof that sexual acts even with the very young are healthy, normal and civilizationally advanced. He justifies all of his actions based on his foundational principle regarding the legitimacy of sexual acts.

The legitimacy or morality of actions is not dependent upon age. *With sexual acts, the fact that those concerned are very young should not modify the appreciation of them, and, in particular should not prevent them from being considered legitimate and acceptable as long as there is no violence, coercion, or fraud.* (Emphasis in original, Guyon, 1948a: 30)

A new penal code in his sexual utopia would ensure that 'No person should be liable to arrest or prosecution for having had sexual relations with another person whose consent is manifest and proved, no matter what the age of the consenting partner may be' (Weaver, 1986: 377).

## **Pornotropics and racial hierarchies**

Sexologists, their journals, and other publishers provided Guyon a platform for his ideas, arguably legitimizing them. Curiously, no one criticizes or even mentions



Guyon's extensive use of non-western societies as examples of sexual activity with non-white, non-Christian children. In part, the seductively defiant language Guyon used to excoriate western civilizing norms may have insulated him from a race-based criticism and blinded like-minded scholars from discerning the troublingly sexist foundation for his utopian society. Guyon rebelliously inverted the civilizational hierarchy that had been deployed to justify the colonization of 'backward' peoples the world over. In Asia and Africa, the low status of women and non-normative sexual practices such as sodomy formed part of the arsenal of empire. In the 19th century, western imperialists argued that it was their duty to intervene in cultures in which women held a low status—evidenced by non-monogamous marital institutions like polygyny, widow immolation, child marriage, and related practices. Guyon's work reveals the degree to which this narrative had shifted by the early 20th century. He used examples of sexual practices such as homosexuality, childhood sexuality, and the tolerance of sexual intercourse outside monogamous marriage in non-western countries to argue that western sexual norms were legally and politically repressive. Asian sexual practices were freer and therefore politically more advanced than those in Europe, which were full of artifice, caused neuroses, and would eventually lead to the demise of European society. They amounted to what he called an anti-sexual dictatorship.

Even though the majority of his books and essays target the West, they rely on examples that juxtapose the West with a fantasyland in the East. Anne McClintock refers to Guyon's positioning of Asia as 'pornotropics': the idea that the non-West had for centuries 'figured in European lore as libidinally eroticized' (McClintock, 1995: 22). Guyon's sexual utopia is founded upon a series of oppositions he creates between western Christian societies and non-western societies around the world. These non-western societies operate as abstract, exotic and sexually unrestricted spaces devoid of history, hierarchy, politics and morality. On the one hand, the inversions he makes appear politically radical and anti-imperial: the primitive trumps the civilized, the ancients are more progressive than modern society, colonized peoples are morally superior to imperialists. On the other hand, the very binaries he relies on merely reaffirm extant global power differentials and ignore the social realities for non-western societies. Asian and other non-western countries undergird his negative stance on western morality. They form a springboard for his criticism of western Europe but only can do so as exotic abstractions rather than as sites of historical and cultural specificity. He understands them as an inversion of western sexual norms, a sort of primordial past that paradoxically exists at the apex of true civilization for its proximity to nature rather than at the barbaric nadir.

Typically, Guyon clumps these binaries together. 'The nearer the race is to nature, the less artificial, the less influenced by philosophic speculation, the closer its attitude approximates that of children.' He continues, 'This applies particularly to the more civilized of the black, yellow, Hindu and Polynesian races... The civilizations of the races which inhabit Asia, from the Arabian peninsula to India and the confines of the Far East, are *different* from those of the white races; they are not *inferior*' (emphasis in original, Guyon, 1941: 60–61). Siam,

China, India, Persia, Japan, and Arabia all 'possessed a culture, a civilization, a morality, which were not at all inferior to those of Europe; Europe merely considered them inferior because they were different' (Guyon, 1941: 62). Guyon argued that non-western races existed at a lower stage of civilization yet were not inferior because he believed that civilization itself was a negative attribute.

Asians, he writes in *The Ethics of Sexual Acts*, approach sexuality with rational motives and open minds. However, western imperialism had introduced increased sexual repression and primitive sexual taboos, especially through law.

*[B]y a singular irony of fate, it is at this very hour, when the West is beginning to realize that its whole narrow and fanatic sexual policy should be recast, that this same anti-sexual morality . . . is coming to be looked upon as a sign of progress by certain races who are ignorant of the general sexual malaise existing in the West, and who are in all too great a hurry to abandon their own principles, which our own growing rationalism is now beginning to admire!* (Emphasis in original, Guyon, 1941: xiv–xv)

Countries outside Europe and America were modeling their legal codes on European criteria, but western law, '*especially in sexual matters*—supports one morality alone and makes it prevalent in all legal fields' such as marriage, family, and 'absurd' sex crimes (emphasis in original, Guyon, 1948–1950: 58).

### **Guyon, gender, and the civilizing project**

So, even though Guyon was clearly critical of western imperialism's civilizing mission, he was hired to fulfill this very purpose, to 'modernize' Siam's civil and legal codes. He supported Siam's attempts to legally maintain its cultural norms in the face of mounting pressure to adopt monogamy and to outlaw prostitution. These legal measures would create some of the problems targeted by 'puritans' in Europe. For example, adopting monogamy as the sole legitimate form of marriage, as Siam did in 1935, would create illegitimate children in a culture that accepted polygynous unions and children born within them.

Guyon's philosophy about creating a sexual utopia was not just raced, but gendered. According to McClintock's conceptualization of 'pornotropics,' European writings about the Other as highly sexualized were deployed within Europe as a way to control women, who like the Other were categorized as closer to nature. Guyon's theories added a twist. He did not see western women as closer to nature. Quite the contrary: he argued that they led the anti-sexual dictatorship. White women, he argued, infringed upon the natural male sexual libido by strangling it with the rope of civility. He revealed this by comparing the 'freedom' of female sexuality in the East to the repression of all sexuality in the West. For example, Tahitian women considered it an honor for men to sexually proposition them or otherwise she would be humiliated because she failed to receive this 'natural homage' (Guyon, 1941: 66). In sexually free societies, a woman naturally glances at a man's head and genital regions as an automatic reflex while a man can 'provoke the sexual reflex of the

woman' just by looking at the right part of her dress (Guyon, 1941: 68). In Asia, virginity is not valued and out-of-wedlock births are tolerated. Eastern civilizations have long established 'a happy compromise between work and sexual pleasure, not upsetting the balance (as we do in the West) in the attempt to make work alone matter ... Having spent their days at work, they passed their evenings dallying with pretty girls whose numbers were not restricted by any monogamic code' (Guyon, 1941: 132). Guyon's gaze is irresolutely masculine.

Guyon's views about childhood sexuality and western white women may have been catalyzed by and crystallized in his experiences with the League of Nations in the 1920s, just before he began to write his philosophical volumes about the anti-sexual dictatorship in Europe. Western women's rights groups drove the agenda at a League conference held in 1921 that sought to prohibit prostitution altogether and to increase the age of consent to 21. In Siam, the age of consent in 1921 was 12, in India it was 11, and 16 in Japan. Despite arguments by most delegates from Asia that individual states should determine the appropriate age of consent for their own nations, the League adopted an 'International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic of Women and Children' that set the age of majority at 21. Trafficking in bodies under that age was criminalized.

The laws on trafficking and age of consent had a history of being implemented unequally. Until the 1930s, the League of Nations concerned itself with 'trafficking' and prostitution engaged in by white women—mostly Jews and Russians who left Russia after 1917—revealing the League's racial hierarchies. In Europe and the USA, age of consent laws had indeed been enforced unequally to prosecute same-sex relations and to crack down on white prostitution. However, Guyon's criticism was not about the deployment of age of consent legislation against homosexuals or white sex workers, but about preventing the worldwide imposition led by western women of a foreign standard regarding the age of consent for children. He saw older women as behind laws and conventions that prevent men from engaging in sex with pre-pubescent girls. He held western feminists in contempt because they challenged men's sexual access to women and children of any race. Guyon, the bull, saw a monolithic red cape when it came to women who campaigned against trafficking and slavery, even though the feminist campaigners were themselves divided over what issues deserved priority. British campaigners had effectively linked child slavery to male vice and female prostitution, thereby harnessing the moral power of antislavery and child protection sentiments. French feminists by contrast, for reasons having to do with domestic setbacks in their push for suffrage and equality, were less effective in their demands for legal change in French Indochina (Moses, 1984: ix–x; Pomfret, 2015: 190–194, 200–207). Yet Guyon simplified the complexity of the debates and rationales behind raising the age of consent. In his view, these laws were not meant to protect girls from predatory adults, but to protect older women's sexual access to adult men. Because of 'the desire of older women to prolong as far as possible their own erotic life *and to protect themselves from the disastrous rivalry of young girls*, ... there has come about the gradually increasing postponement of the age of marriage and of the legal age at which a woman is

allowed to indulge any wishes she may have for sexual relations outside marriage' (emphasis in original, Guyon, 1941: 48).

For this reason, Guyon saves his most intense vitriol for the League of Nations, which he considered an outrageous enforcer of cultural imperialism because it imposed western morality upon non-western nations. He penned a treatise against the organization in his unpublished book, *The League of Nations in the Hands of the Puritans* (Guyon, n.d.; Haeberle, 1983). Contrary to its primary purposes of promoting world peace, it enforced a restrictive sexual regime in previously sexually permissive societies. The League, he argued, has 'shown indefatigable activity in sexual matters' particularly concerning the traffic in women and children, all manner of pornography, and the age of consent (Guyon, 1948–1950: 55–56).

Siam had to sign the League of Nations' convention on trafficking and the age of consent in order to appear progressive and civilized (Hell, 2010: 168–169). After 1925, Guyon, as Siam's judicial advisor, handled age of consent issues for Siam with the League of Nations. He produced a legal memo that defended Siam's customary age of consent, set at puberty, and argued that the League should not intervene in Siam's domestic affairs (Hell, 2010: 171). According to him, the League and similar entities violated sexual rights. They nullified the free contract in the case of prostitutes, negated the consent of women who voluntarily agreed to their 'procuration,' and had been party to 'that grotesque invention of having located the honor of a woman in the most unexpected of places' (Guyon, n.d.). It is hard not to interpret his Orientalist deployment of 'local custom' against legal change as a defense of an existing power structure that empowered him and similarly positioned men, regardless of whether they were Siamese or foreign.

He later argued that the United Nations fared no better than the League of Nations because it dashed hopes for sexually enslaved citizens in the modern world. The use of pronouns reveals the androcentrism of his perspective. 'Every person has the right to have his own morality, even and especially sexual morality' so long as they respect the law, the rights, and the freedoms of others. But the 1948 UN Declaration only pretends to protect human rights while in the end simply reaffirms sexual slavery by 'Religious Conformity and the Morality of Continence' (Guyon, n.d.: 5–6).

Through the League of Nations and direct colonization, European and American authorities in Asia introduced some of these poisonous puritanical principles, only making the situation worse, in Guyon's view. By restricting prostitution and sex with native women, boys rather than girls are offered in Asian ports. And those European men without recourse to sex turned to alcohol and cocaine (Guyon, 1941: 245). Chastity, he argued, led to drug addiction, sadism, depression, religious mysticism, the development of sport, and feminism (Guyon, 1941: 243–244).

## Imperialism's sexual liberal in the pornotropics

Guyon's laudable advocacy of the inclusion of sexual rights as a fundamental human right both in the League of Nations' charter and as part of the UN

Declaration of Human Rights must be understood within Guyon's broader agenda. Perhaps one of the reasons why few sexologists have substantively grappled with Guyon's theories is because they are riddled with troubling internal contradictions. He has been criticized for the sheer impracticality of his solutions, and the total omission of a discussion about the economy, class organization, and political order in his utopic society in some of his short articles (Davis, 1948: 174–175). Others have pointed out his ignorance of economic inequalities between men and women (Sokhey, 1947: 110). But none discussed the strategic deployment of non-western society or his profound misogyny directed at western women.

Guyon's fatal flaw in his theory and blueprint for a sexually emancipated society was his inability to include a sophisticated treatment of power hierarchies, whether they are imperial, economic, gender, or age-related. In terms of consent, he never explains how one might discern whether or not a child was mature enough emotionally or physically to engage in sexual activity with an adult. He blamed the feminists behind the League of Nations conventions against human trafficking for 'caviling and quibbling [about the age of consent]...in the case of girls' (Guyon, n.d.). Objectors argued that young people may not have a clear idea about the meaning of sex. But Guyon responded that objectors confused knowledge and feeling. One doesn't have to know about sex, reproduction or sexual differences to enjoy sex (Guyon, 1941: 59). Guyon painted his detractors as anti-sexual puritans who violated the human right to sexual freedom.

Even with adults, Guyon could not imagine a complicated notion of consent. His was blissfully simple, void of power hierarchies that muddle notions of consent. A firm believer in the liberal enlightenment legal subject, Guyon presumes that the individual *qua* individual obtains the same rights and obligations and has equal access to them regardless of messy historical contingencies like poverty, imperialism, and gender that limited one's ability to fully exercise control over one's body. So women who sold themselves to brothels in Asia did so voluntarily and didn't need laws to protect them because the laws would simply be used against them. The same applied to laws protecting children. He never considered them as potential victims of cultural, economic and imperial power hierarchies.

Guyon's principles about sexual freedom and a sexually emancipated West are unanchored from his own participation in the benefits of imperialism in Asia and elsewhere. After all, he owed his position in Siam to imperial pressure placed on Siam to 'modernize' its legal code or else continue to suffer under unequal legal clauses that limited the kingdom's sovereignty within its own borders. His residence in Siam and eventual naturalization as a Thai citizen enabled Guyon to develop and implement his theories about sexuality without needing to come to terms with gender inequalities and the complex issue of consent. As a European man working at the highest levels of Siam's Ministry of Justice, Guyon sat at the apex of racial, gender, and other more subtle power hierarchies. He was not even subject to Siamese law until the 1930s.

His privileged position explains, but does not excuse, his lack of reflection on the gender and racial hierarchies that imbue his work. It may also help explain his

troubling notion of consent, which is presumed unless vociferously and perhaps violently refused. Consent, Guyon argues, is 'a matter of evidence. The existence of this volition [consent] should be presumed in the absence of contrary evidence' (Weaver, 1986: 377). No complaints about a sexual act are prosecutable if no personal injury exists and if no violence, coercion or deception was involved. Moral injuries do not count. Guyon's notion of consent is similarly blind to power inequalities, which abetted his sexual practices in Asia. Guyon took full advantage of the gender and racial privileges afforded him by imperialism, exercising personal sexual freedom with youth in Asia.

His ability to travel around the world and participate in sexual exchanges stemmed from his race and gender and sexual position vis-à-vis colonized and semi-colonized Others. He used his imperial position to criticize the West as repressive and regressive, while projecting onto Siam and other non-western countries a sexual freedom that existed for him and perhaps local elite men, but not for the population more broadly. For example, virginity mattered in most of the places for some classes but not others, sex with children was illegal in many places, incest was taboo in many of these locations for the lower classes but not among the highest ranks of royalty, adultery could be punished by death in polygynous societies depending on who committed it. But these realities complicated the abstraction of the exotic space that was necessarily categorically free from sexual restrictions.

Only as an abstraction—a pornotropical space—could Asia serve as an idealized location from which Guyon might attack the sexual regime extant in western Europe and the USA. Guyon, the man who helped review and revamp Siam's civil codes on prostitution, marriage, divorce, and related family law, was not blind to Siam's specificity (Guyon, 1919). But that would not have served him or his sexual proclivities well. He wanted to 'protect' from change one small but crucial slice of Siam's laws on sex and the family, but not the vast remainder of the kingdom's commercial, criminal and international law, which he helped to 'modernize.' Opportunistically, he saw himself as a universal champion of sexual rights, which existed in greater degree in non-western, non-Aryan societies where sexual repression was not commonplace. At least not for him.

For all his output regarding the need for a sexual insurgency in the West to free human sexuality, he remained remarkably conservative when it came to Siam's politics. The legal revisions he helped draft in Siam facilitated the centralization of legal authority in the hands of an absolute monarch. In the 1920s, when Siamese disenfranchised middle classes began to discuss a different form of government that would allow for greater democratic participation, Guyon sat on the legal committee that advocated against this change. Their report concluded that:

There is another danger in Siam, to wit: unwise and premature agitation for changes in the form of government. In the process of time there may be a general desire for some form of popular participation in government or some restraint upon the power of the sovereign. The great bulk of the people of Siam however are as yet not trained in political or economic thought. There is not now nor will there be for a considerable



time to come any possibility of any fundamental change in the Government of Siam. There is a danger accordingly that agitation of a political nature would lead to unrest and possible premature attempts to secure some changes in the constitution of the country. (Batson, 1984: 147)

It seemed that the Siamese had remained children not only in terms of their primitive, free sexuality, but also in terms of their ability to advocate for themselves. Except, of course, in terms of sexual consent.

Unlike so many of his sexologist peers, Guyon has not been recuperated in the scholarly and human rights literature. His vast corpus—both the rebelliously pro-sexual ideas and his more problematic, at least from today's perspective, views about childhood sexuality, non-western societies, and white women—have arguably kept him from obtaining posthumously a place of respectability.

## Notes

1. Many sources claim he died in 1961, but his Thai cremation volume cites 11 February 1963. It also suggests Guyon was naturalized as a Thai citizen on 28 March 1942, not in 1940 as other sources claim. *Phichan Anuson* [Cremation volume for Nai Phichan Bunyong] (Bangkok 1963), k–kh.
2. His poetry includes *Les pâques païennes* (1911) and *La porte large* (1939); law books include *Ce que la loi punit: code pénal expliqué* (1909), and *The Work of Codification in Siam* (1919) among others; religious and metaphysical publications include *Anthologie Bouddhique* (2 vols., 1924a), *La Cruauté* (1927), *Réflexions sur la tolérance* (1930), and *Essai de Métaphysique Matérialiste* (1924b). Other works include *Essai de psychologie matérialiste* (1926) and *Essai de psychologie matérialiste* (1931).
3. 'The Persecution of Sexual Acts: Procurers and Pimps,' 'The Puritan Terror in Modern Society,' and 'The Organization of a Pro-Sexual Society.' The tenth volume on the 'Abolition of Sex Offenses from Penal Law,' which he drafted, was reprinted in Weaver's book (Weaver, 1986).
4. The demographic consequences of the First World War and the epidemics of typhoid fever in 1915 and Spanish influenza in 1918 caused the birth rate to collapse and infant mortality to soar, provoking a state obsession with the need to procreate French citizenry and a virtual sacralization of heterosexual love, which does not square with Guyon's defense of France as a relatively sexually open society (Bonierbale and Waynberg, 2007: 239–240; Nye, 1999).
5. Guyon differs from Sade and Bataille in many other ways as well. Guyon wrote against religion, whereas Bataille considered religion and morality essential because they created boundaries that he found erotic when transgressed. For Bataille, eroticism cannot be inferred from natural instinct but is a spiritual, subjective experience. Bataille and the Marquis de Sade were also both erotic writers whereas Guyon is didactic. See John Philips, *The Marquis de Sade* (2005: 110); David B Allison, et al., *Sade and the Narrative of Transgression* ((1995: 7–8); William Pawlett, *Georges Bataille: The Sacred and Society* (2016: 63); and Chris Vanderwees, 'Complicating Eroticism and the Male Gaze: Feminism and Georges Bataille's Story of the Eye' (2014).
6. The book he refers to is Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* (1927) that did attack many customs including child marriage from a racist and imperialist point of view.

Guyon and Mayo share in common their racism but use it to forward radically opposing ideas.

7. Curiously, one of the few countries that did not have representation in these two journals was France.
8. For example, Conrad van Emde Boas, a contributor to *IJS* and a psychiatrist, responded with measure to Guyon's article about childhood sexuality (1948a). Although Boas agrees that it is high time to admit the importance of child sexuality, he cannot abide by Guyon's elisions of the differences between children and adults in terms of emotional or psychological maturity, not just biological maturity. Moreover, the ethical implications troubled him (Van Emde Boas, 1948: 128).

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