

Sex script theory essay essay sample



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What drives a person to repeatedly enact in sexual activities such as solitary behaviors (masturbation, fantasizing) and partnered activities (oral sex, coitus ect.)? Is it a natural urge prompted by an abundance of biological genes geared towards reproduction or are we impelled through culturally influential stimulants? These sexual responses are often times mysterious even to ourselves, thus driving unanswered questions as to why some actions turn us on and why some actions have no sexual impact on us.

It has been theorized that sexual pleasure is what drives us, but to what extent is it by our own authority? The sexual script theory introduced by sociologists John H. Gagnon and William Simon aspires to answer these questions and give rise to new conceptions of how our sexual conduct develops over time. The sexual script theory proposes that sexual encounters between two sexually attracted parties are imprinted through the influence of mass media outlets-such as: books (e. g. , karma sutra), TV shows (e. g. , Sex and the City) and Websites (e. g. , [www. everythingtodowithsex. com](http://www.everythingtodowithsex.com)).

Through this exploitation of the media, society is then able to set the standard for the socially acceptable sexual norms within a culture. No longer are our sexual conducts viewed as “ hard wired” sexual compartments, but instead our sexual conducts are learned from culturally produced messages. Messages that define what sex is, how to recognize sexual situations and how to behave in such circumstances. Additionally, sexual scripts are progressively learned throughout life and are ever changing with the influences of social construct.

Namely, sexual scripts similarly resemble how language is developed and stored within us as we mature with time. Just like language, even though we are unable to recall specific phases of development, we can still infer that we have repeatedly received sexual input throughout our lives. This sexual input is then stored and employed during the appropriate time that was designated by the script, thus beckoning us to take action through sexual roles, fantasies and impulses (Blackwell, 2008). Furthermore, the sex script theory encompasses four fundamental hypotheses on how specific sexual patterns are obtained and conveyed. 1) The sexual effect of biological instincts are minor compared to those of social-cultural processes. (2) The meaning of sex differs by culture. (3) Individuals acquire patterns of sexual conduct through a lifetime process of acculturation and (4) people may make minor adaptations in cultural scripts to suit their own needs (Markle, 208). Granted we are all born with sexual urges that are biologically instilled in us, pushing one to partake in sexual activity in certain sexual roles, but it doesn't rationalize our need to participate in unnatural sexual conducts.

Although, humans still display identical compulsions that animals demonstrate, we segregate in the sense that we are “Awakened” by abstract images, narratives and objects that deviate from the genetically inherited sexual stimulants of various animals. Human sexual conduct has matured beyond the primitive perception of sexual behaviors being “hard wired” to a more counterintuitive portrayal of sexual imprinting, which is derived through sexual scripts, thereby shaping how that urge is answered.

Sexual scripts are increasingly abundant and unique, ranging from simple sexual scripts such as monogamist scripts to the extremely outrageous like

fantasizing about being raped or killed. Nevertheless, they can still encompass common themes, especially when constructed on a larger social plane (Cheney, 2008). Many sexual scripts are acquired in a passive way. Namely, through the merging of concepts, images, ideals, and sometimes misconceptions, illustrated predominantly through the mass media.

For instance, porn is an illustrious example on the effect of media constructed sexual script on its audience, for it employs many different sexual scripts at one time within scenes. For example: porn contains sexual scripts that display heterosexual/homosexual relationships, fetishes and fantasy sex scripts (e. g. , threesomes, role playing). Therefore, by viewing these constructed sex scripts, we are able to conclude which sexual roles, behaviors and acts of sexual countenance are personally proper and up to standard in the bedroom.

Additionally, it is essential to reiterate, that the way sexual conduct is enacted depends upon the sexual script viewed. Although porn is a great example of how sex scripts are influential, it only pertains to certain individuals, namely 18 and older adults. When thinking about how a culture views norms of sexual conduct as a whole I think it is best to consider the social construction of which the country is grounded on. This is notable, for sexual scripts can come from how an individual is raised, through the beliefs of its surrounding social environment.

For instance, when visualizing western society, which is mainly governed by Christian ethics, the populace withholds a predisposition of sex for pleasure as repentant and shameful. Casual sex and promiscuity are greatly despised

by Christian philosophies, which in turn form the primary foundations of westernized ideology in society (Rye, 2007). Consequentially, this Christianize western ideology namely affects women rather than men, thus operating as a double standard for the conventional heterosexual scripts.

This double standard supports the stereotype that women are to withhold from formulating further sexual conducts with other persons by confining themselves to a committed relationship (Cheney, 2008). Men on the other hand, are foreseen by the public as accepted and sometimes even encouraged to partake in sexual conducts within many types of relationships. Although research demonstrates that this traditional sexual script has lessened and become more subtle over time, it is still present through various shows like teen mom.

Pugsley a commentator, who endorses the idea of media influencing sexual conduct through sexual scripts, further reports evidence in support of social construct, through her article Sex and the City-State: A Study of Sexual Discourse in Singaporean Women's Magazines. Pugsley addresses Singapore's concern on their declining birthrate and their solution to the problem by governing, regulating and creating media outlets to covertly influence their ideological ideals onto the public.

Singapore, a nation once fixated on decreasing the birthrate of their country now struggles to gain back a once overly prosperous population. Not only are they providing a number of incentives to combat this decrease, but now they are employing media outlets to influence there citizens. By utilizing and governing media outlets, which mainly hold western culture ideologies,

Singapore can strategically advise and influence their cultures participation in sexual conducts, while still maintaining their traditional moral values (Pugsley, 2007).

This is namely through the regulation and censorship of westernized TV shows like SATC and the construction of their own local magazine SWW. Singapore's government proficiently influences their own ideologies, while both confining and controlling western culture philosophy. This thus enables Singapore to promote the increase in birth rates or any particular values they want to set fourth at a specific time. Sex Scripts through the mass media are increasingly significant for it's an easy and accessible way for individuals to learn about and view sexual conducts.

Particularly in the United States, young people spend 6 to 7 hours each day on average with some form of media, which is gradually displaying more explicit materials and sexual talk (Brown, 2002). Mainly, the sexual content in the media fluctuates between flirting to coitus. One TV Show in particular, significantly demonstrates and manipulates cultural philosophies pertaining to sexual behaviors and ambitions; this show is title as Sex and The City. The four main characters: Samantha, Miranda, Charlotte and Carrie, aim to break through gendered sexual roles, at one point or another, within their mission to experience “ sex like a man. The girls engaged in behaviors that exercised emotional unavailability and performing self-indulgent sex that is exclusive of monogamy. These behavioral attributes, in turn, amend the audience's understanding of societal construction on sexual behavior. This was done by inverting a once monogamous and male reliant social attribute to a more female superior, self-governing role. Concisely, all four women successfully

symbolize what is to be recognized as appropriate sexual conduct, based off of what society deems as acceptable behavior, namely towards contemporary American women.

In this series, the sexual scripts represent “ blueprints” that depict a women’s sexual behavior by conveying when, where and what sexual exploits should be exercised, along with who and for what purpose (Markle, 2008). Furthermore, by categorizing these sexual scripts into three distinct categories, we can further comprehend the influences of these various scripts on the audience. The three distinct categories are labeled as cultural scenarios, interpersonal scripts and intrapsychic scripts. Cultural scenarios, based off of cultural norms and narratives are directors of sexual conduct (Markle, 2008).

Secondly, interpersonal scripts transform conventional cultural scenarios into customary scripts that are drafted in correlation to a specific situation. At this stage, humans acquire skilled methods for understanding their own individualistic sexual yearnings. Then lastly, intrapsychic scripts aims to unite personal desires to social meanings through the implementation of sexual fantasies, objects, and other varying arrangements of behaviors that stimulate and maintain sexual arousal (Markle, 2008).

Whether through our own personal experiences, the media or from periodical publications, these sexual scripts are undeniably noticeable in society today. This can mainly be credited to the cultures innovative individuality when associated with our primitive ancestors. Our ancestors in early years foraged the most basic of sex scripts from everyday life, which in today’s culture is

seen as monotonous. This is due to the fact that our culture today has transcended from a more guarded and suppressed perception of sexual conduct than most primitive cultures did.

This repressed outlook thus caused the culture to integrate pint-sized sexual script imprints from the natural world (Park, 2008). This in turn, impelled us to incorporate more imagery and conceptions from human nature. Some of these sexual scripts, prompted from human nature, contain social normatives concerning male and female genders. For instance, many women are bombarded by sexual scripts that reflect a more conservative and traditional attitude. These reflections mainly display women as passive creatures, awaiting the pursuit of a man. They are typically presented as sentimental and always eager to satisfy their male partner.

It has been noted that many women in these sexual scripts are perceived as skillful individuals in the art of performing oral sex and lap dancing behind closed doors (Singh, 2011). Evidently enough, female sexual scripts namely gyrate around being an attractive and seductive stimulus; focusing primarily on establishing the mood. Men on the other hand, exhibit a more masculine role by enacting as the aggressor, and becoming increasingly assertive when choreographing the sexual performance. This role is greatly opposed when considering the female's duty, which is to entice and invite a male to initiate sexual interaction (Singh, 2011).

Only after a woman has given her consent to the male, is he then allowed to take the lead and enact in his masculine sexual role. Additionally, as seen within women's gender roles, men too are portrayed as having many skills

within the bedroom. Namely, this entails upholding an erection, not succumbing to pre-mature ejaculation, being able pinpoint a woman's sexual desires and lastly, to behave accordingly (Singh, 2011). These kinds of ideologies are only observed within human nature through cultural outlets such as the media and are subjective, depending on the script being viewed.

Additionally, sexual scripts can also be shaped by individuals through personal experiences and/or by their understanding of another person's sexual experience (Blackwell, 2008). Specifically, when an individual experiences doubt and is uncertain about what constitutes appropriate sexual behavior, they sometimes observe other individuals who are in similar circumstances (Markle, 2008). Furthermore, disruptions, in response to a personal experience, can occur in a script making it necessary for an individual to alter their otherwise expected behavior.

Scripts in general, enable individual's to take a dominant stance over there sexual situations; creating a pleasurable atmosphere with little room for anxiety or risk (Markle, 2008). Consequentially, not all sex scripts have a good effect on the observer, especially in cases where we are dealing with children and adolescent teens. From what has been stated earlier, sexual scripts are learned throughout life, not only in response to the media, but also through personal experience. This being said, depending on the individual's history and environment, an abnormal development could harbor unhealthy ideas which transcend into their later years.

In today's culture, children and adolescent teens are coming of age earlier than past generations (Blackwell, 2008). Many of the traits and behaviors

that were unacceptable a couple of years ago are now the main conducts of today's young adults. It has been surveyed that 82% of adolescents and young adults who had engaged in sexual intercourse between the ages of 15-20, reported having had oral sex as did 12% of adolescents and young adults who had not had sexual intercourse (Pate, 2011).

This is a great increase in sexual conduct when compared to young adults ten years ago. Even so, these abnormal sexual scripts show signs of change. Whether it is positive or negative, these scripts are a normal part of each individual's development. Being as these sexual scripts are ingrained deep in our minds it can be challenging to alter them, but alterations can transpire. Young adults are living proof of this, but still many of these scripts are rooted from the basic foundations which have remained unchanged for a very long time (Blackwell, 2008).

In conclusion, sex scripts whether through the media, personal experience or periodical publications, effectively depicts the impact of sexual script through cultural communications. These publicize communications disclosed the "ideal" gender roles of sexual conduct by culture, that label what sex is, how to distinguish sexual settings and how to act through characterization portrayal. These sources of sexual scripting are an effectual depiction of appropriate sexual conduct through which sexual identities and gender are instituted and fortified.