Sexual revolution

The Sexual Revolution, also known as a time of Sexual Liberation, was a social movement that challenged traditional codes of behavior related to sexuality and interpersonal relationships throughout the Western world from the 1960s to the 1980s. Sexual liberation included increased acceptance of sex outside of traditional heterosexual, monogamous relationships (primarily marriage). The normalization of contraception and the pill, public nudity, pornography, premarital sex, homosexuality and alternative forms of sexuality, and the legalization of abortion all followed.

Overview[edit]

The term "sexual revolution" has been used at least since the late 1920s. Some early commentators believed the sexual revolution of 1960–1980 was in fact the second such revolution in America; they believe that the first revolution was during the Roaring Twenties after World War I and it included writers such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Edna Saint Vincent Millay, and Ernest Hemingway. However, the age of changes in perception and practices of sexuality that developed from around 1960 was to reach mainstream, middle-class, even middle-aged America as well as most of western Europe. It brought about profound shifts in the attitudes to women's sexuality, homosexuality, pre-marital sexuality and the freedom of sexual expression. Psychologists and scientists such as Wilhelm Reich and Alfred Kinsey influenced the revolution, as well as literature and films, and the social movements of the period, including the counterculture movement, the women's movement, and the gay rights movement. The counterculture contributed to the awareness of radical cultural change that was the social matrix of the sexual revolution.

In 1969, Blue Movie, directed by Andy Warhol, was the first adult erotic film depicting explicit sex to receive wide theatrical release in the United States. The film was a seminal film in the Golden Age of Porn and helped inaugurate the "porno chic" phenomenon in modern American culture. During this time, porn was being publicly discussed by celebrities, and taken seriously by critics. According to Warhol, Blue Movie was a major influence in the making of Last Tango in Paris, an internationally controversial erotic drama film, starring Marlon Brando, and released a few years after Blue Movie was made. In 1970, Mona, the second adult erotic film, after Blue Movie, depicting explicit sex that received a wide theatrical release in the United States, was shown. Following mentions by Johnny Carson on his popular TV show, and Bob Hope on TV as well, the adult film Deep Throat achieved major box office success, despite being rudimentary by mainstream standards. In 1973, the far-more-accomplished, but still low budget adult film, The Devil in Miss Jones, was the seventh most successful film of the year, and was well received by major media, including a favorable review by film critic Roger Ebert. Shortly thereafter, other adult films followed, continuing the Golden Age of Porn begun with Blue Movie. Later, in 1976, The Opening of Misty Beethoven, based on the play Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw (and its derivative, My Fair Lady), and directed by Radley Metzger, was
released theatrically and is considered, by award-winning author Toni Bentley, the "crown jewel" of the Golden Age of Porn.\(^1\)

By the mid-1970s and through the 1980s, newly won sexual freedoms were being exploited by big businesses looking to capitalize on an increasingly permissive society, with the advent of public and hardcore pornography.\(^2\) Historian David Allyn argues that the sexual revolution was a time of "coming-out": about premarital sex, masturbation, erotic fantasies, pornography use, and sexuality.\(^3\)

**Historical development**

The sexual revolution can be seen as an outgrowth of a process. Though its roots may be traced back as far as the Enlightenment (Rousseau, Marquis de Sade) and the Victorian era (Algernon Charles Swinburne's scandalous *Poems and Ballads* of 1866), it was a development in the modern world which saw the significant loss of power by the values of a morality rooted in the Christian tradition and the rise of permissive societies, of attitudes that were accepting of greater sexual freedom and experimentation that spread all over the world and were captured in the concept of "free love". Modern medicine may also have played a role, penicillin was able to largely eradicate syphilis and this brought greater freedom.\(^4\)

The sexual revolution was initiated by those who shared a belief in the detrimental impact of sexual repression, a view that had previously been argued by Wilhelm Reich and D. H. Lawrence, by Sigmund Freud and by the Surrealist movement. The counterculture wanted to explore the body and mind, and free the personal self from the moral and legal sexual confines of modern America, as well as from 1940s-50s morals in general.\(^5\) The sexual revolution of the sixties was an uprising rooted in a conviction that the erotic should be celebrated as a normal part of life and not repressed by family, industrialized sexual morality, religion and the state.\(^6\)

In 1953, Chicago resident Hugh Hefner founded *Playboy*, a magazine which aimed to target males between the ages of 21 and 45.\(^7\) Featuring cartoons, interviews, short fiction, Hefner "Playboy Philosophy" and - most crucially - half-naked female "Playmates" posing provocatively, the magazine became immensely successful.\(^8\) In 1960, Hefner decided to expand his enterprise and opened the first *Playboy Club* in Chicago.\(^9\) The private clubs, which expanded in numbers throughout the 1960s, offered relaxation for its members, who were waited on by *Playboy Bunnies*.\(^10\) Hefner's influence would represent a growing change in America's attitude towards sex.\(^11\)

There was an increase of sexual encounters between unmarried adults.\(^12\) Divorce rates were dramatically increasing and marriage rates were significantly decreasing in this time period. The number of unmarried Americans aged twenty to twenty-four more than doubled from 4.3 million in 1960 to 9.7 million in 1976.\(^13\) Men and women sought to reshape marriage by instilling new institutions of open marriage, mate swapping, and swinging, and communal sex.\(^14\) There is an introduction of casual sex during the revolution to a level that was never seen or heard before. Americans were gaining a set of relaxed morals and with the contribution of premarital sex on the rise and the development of birth control, casual sex between adults was becoming very popular.
Role of the mass media[edit]

TV, the new mass communication device of the age, along with other media outlets such as radio and magazines, could broadcast information in a matter of seconds to millions of people, while only a few wealthy people would control what millions could watch. Some modern historians have theorized that these media outlets helped to spread new ideas, which were considered radical. The struggles, skirmishes and rhetorical confrontations happening in the course of these movements also became directly visible to ordinary people in a way they would never have been before; the sense of involvement in a social and sexual shift happening in the present could rapidly win new converts and spread discussions afield. The counterculture of the 1960s was becoming well known through radio, newspapers, TV, books, music and other media by the end of the 1960s.

One suggested cause of the 1960s sexual revolution was the development of the birth control pill in 1960, which gave women access to easy and reliable contraception. Another likely cause was a vast improvement in obstetrics, greatly reducing the number of women who died due to childbearing, thus increasing the life expectancy of women. A third, more indirect cause was the large number of children born in the 1940s and early 1950s all over the western world—the 'Baby Boom Generation'—many of whom would grow up in relatively prosperous and safe conditions, within a middle class on the rise and with better access to education and entertainment than ever before. By their demographic weight and their social and educational background they came to trigger a shift in society towards more permissive and informalized attitudes.

Other data suggest the "revolution" was more directly influenced by the financial independence gained by many women who entered the workforce during and after World War II, making the revolution more about individual equality rather than biological independence. Many historians, however, feel that one specific cause cannot be selected for this large phenomenon. French feminist writer Simone de Beauvoir was particularly adamant that economic equality greatly contributes to improved gender equality.

Modern revolutions[edit]
The Gay Rights Movement started because the Stonewall Riots of 1969 crystallized a broad grass-roots mobilization of the homosexual movement. New gay liberationist gave political meaning to “coming out” by extending the psychological-personal process into public life. During the 1950s the most feared thing of the homosexual culture was “coming out”, the homosexual culture of the 1950s did everything they could to help keep their sexuality a secret from the public and everyone else in their lives, but Alfred Kinsey’s research on homosexuality proved that 39% of the unmarried male population had at least one homosexual experience to orgasm between adolescence and old age. By the gay liberationist making “coming out” public they helped mobilize people to live full-time as a homosexual, they no longer had to live in secret. Homosexuals could now enjoy sexual relationships and encounters much more often than ever before. They no longer had to sneak around and occasionally receive the sexual attention that they desire or force themselves into a heterosexual relationship in which they had no interest, and was full of lies. The 1970 gay novelist, Brad Gooch, wrote the “Golden Age of Promiscuity” meaning that the gay male community finally had reached a rich culture of “easy sex”, “sex without” commitment, obligation or long-term relationships. The gay rights movement was reclamation of cultural, social, and political citizenship through sex and decriminalized gay sex, by removing gay sex as a psychological sickness.

The Women’s Movement in the time of the Sexual Revolution helped contribute to redefining women’s sexuality, not in the terms of simply pleasing men any longer but instead there was recognition of women’s sexual satisfaction and sexual desire. Finally "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm" by Anne Koedt discovered an understanding of a women’s sexual anatomy. The female anatomy was now given some scientific fact and reasoning for how and why women orgasm the way they do instead of Freud’s basis of women’s vaginal orgasm which was not based on a women’s anatomy, but rather upon his “assumptions of women as inferior appendage to man, and her consequent social and psychological role.” The women’s movement was able to develop lesbian feminism, freedom from heterosexual act, and freedom from reproduction as distillation of feminism during the time of the Sexual Revolution. Feminist Betty Friedan published the Feminine Mystique in 1963, concerning the many frustrations women had with their lives and with separate spheres, which established a pattern of inequality.

The Industrial Revolution during the nineteenth century and the growth of science and technology, medicine and health care, resulted in better contraceptives being manufactured. Advances in the manufacture and production of rubber made possible the design and production of condoms that could be used by hundreds of millions of men and women to prevent pregnancy at little cost.

Advances in chemistry, pharmacology, and biology, and human physiology led to the discovery and perfection of the first oral contraceptives also known as "the Pill". Purchasing an aphrodisiac and various sex toys became "normal". Sado-masochism ("S&M") gained popularity, and "no-fault" unilateral divorce became legal and easier to obtain in many countries during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.
Gay Pride in Rio de Janeiro

All these developments took place alongside and combined with an increase in world literacy and decline in religious observance. Old values such as the biblical notion of "be fruitful and multiply" were cast aside as people continued to feel alienated from the past and adopted the lifestyles of modernizing westernized cultures.

Another contribution that helped bring about this modern revolution of sexual freedom were the writings of Herbert Marcuse and Wilhelm Reich, who took the philosophy of Karl Marx and similar philosophers, and mixed together this chant for freedom of sexual rights in modern culture.

When speaking of sexual revolution, historians make a distinction between the first and the second sexual revolution. In the first sexual revolution (1870–1910), Victorian morality lost its universal appeal. However, it did not lead to the rise of a "permissive society". Exemplary for this period is the rise and differentiation in forms of regulating sexuality.

Feminism and sexual liberation

Coinciding with second-wave feminism and the women's liberation movement initiated in the early 1960s, the sexual liberation movement was aided by feminist ideologues in their mutual struggle to challenge traditional ideas regarding female sexuality and queer sexuality. Elimination of undue favorable bias towards men and objectification of women as well as support for women's right to choose her sexual partners free of outside interference or judgement were three of the main goals associated with sexual liberation from the feminist perspective. Since during the early stages of feminism, women's liberation was often equated with sexual liberation rather than associated with it. Many feminist thinkers believed that assertion of the primacy of sexuality would be a major step towards the ultimate goal of women's liberation, thus women were urged to initiate sexual advances, enjoy sex and experiment with new forms of sexuality.[23]

The feminist movements insisted and focused on the sexual liberation for women, both physical and psychological. The pursuit of sexual pleasure for women was the core ideology, which subsequently was to set the foundation for female independence. Although whether or not sexual freedom should be a feminist issue is currently a much-debated topic, the feminist movement overtly defines itself as the movement for social, political, and economic equality of men and women.[24] Feminist movements are also involved the fight against sexism and since sexism is a
highly complex notion, it is difficult to separate the feminist critique toward sexism from its fight against sexual oppression.

The feminist movement has helped create a social climate in which LGBT people and women are increasingly able to be open and free with their sexuality, which enabled a spiritual liberation of sorts with regards to sex. Rather than being forced to hide their sexual desires or feelings, women and LGBT people have gained and continue to gain increased freedom in this area. Consequently, the feminist movement to end sexual oppression has and continues to directly contribute to the sexual liberation movement.

**Freudian school**

Sigmund Freud of Vienna believed human behavior was motivated by unconscious drives, primarily by the libido or "Sexual Energy". Freud proposed to study how these unconscious drives were repressed and found expression through other cultural outlets. He called this therapy "psychoanalysis".

While Freud's ideas were sometimes ignored or provoked resistance within Viennese society, his ideas soon entered the discussions and working methods of anthropologists, artists and writers all over Europe, and from the 1920s in the United States. His conception of a primary sexual drive that would not be ultimately curbed by law, education or standards of decorum spelled a serious challenge to Victorian prudishness, and his theory of psychosexual development proposed a model for the development of sexual orientations and desires; children emerged from the Oedipus complex, a sexual desire towards their parent of the opposite sex. The idea of children having their parents as their early sexual targets was particularly shocking to Victorian and early 20th century society.

According to Freud's theory, in the earliest stage of a child's psychosexual development, the oral stage, the mother's breast became the formative source of all later erotic sensation. This new philosophy was the new intellectual and cultural underpinning ideology of the new age of sexual frankness. Much of his research remains widely contested by professionals in the field, though it has spurred critical developments in the humanities.

Anarchist Freud scholars Otto Gross and Wilhelm Reich (who famously coined the phrase "Sexual Revolution") developed a sociology of sex in the 1910s to 1930s.

**Mead's Coming of Age in Samoa**

Main articles: Margaret Mead and Coming of Age in Samoa

The publication of renowned anthropologist and student of anthropologist Franz Boas, Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* brought the sexual revolution to the public scene, as her thoughts concerning sexual freedom pervaded academia. Published in 1928, Mead's *ethnography* focused on the psychosexual development of adolescent children on the island of Samoa. She recorded that their adolescence was not in fact a time of "storm and stress" as Erikson's stages of
development suggest, but that the sexual freedom experienced by the adolescents actually permitted them an easy transition from childhood to adulthood.

Her findings were later criticized by anthropologist Derek Freeman who later investigated her claims of promiscuity and conducted his own ethnography of Samoan society. Mead called for a change in suppression of sexuality in America and her work directly resulted in the advancement of the sexual revolution in the 1930s.

**Kinsey and Masters and Johnson[edit]**

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Alfred C. Kinsey published two surveys of modern sexual behaviour. In 1948 Alfred C. Kinsey and his co-workers, responding to a request by female students at Indiana University for more information on human sexual behavior, published the book *Sexual behaviour in the Human Male*. They followed this five years later with *Sexual behaviour in the Human Female*. These books began a revolution in social awareness of, and public attention given to, human sexuality.

It is said that at the time, public morality severely restricted open discussion of sexuality as a human characteristic, and specific sexual practices, especially sexual behaviours that did not lead to procreation. Kinsey's books contained studies about controversial topics such as the frequency of homosexuality, and the sexuality of minors aged two weeks to fourteen years. Scientists working for Kinsey reported data which led to the conclusion that people are capable of sexual stimulation from birth. Furthermore, Kinsey's method of researching sexuality differs significantly from today's methods. Kinsey would watch his research subjects engage in sexual intercourse, sometimes engaging with his subjects as well. He would also encourage his research team to do the same, and encouraged them to engage in intercourse with him, too.

These books laid the groundwork for Masters and Johnson's life work. A study called *Human Sexual Response* in 1966 revealed the nature and scope of the sexual practices of young Americans.

**Erotic novels[edit]**

In the United States in the years 1959 through 1966, bans on three books with explicit erotic content were challenged and overturned. This also occurred in the United Kingdom starting with the 1959 Obscene Publications Act and reaching a peak with the LCL court case.

Prior to this time, a patchwork of regulations (as well as local customs and vigilante actions) governed what could and could not be published. For example, the United States Customs Service banned James Joyce's *Ulysses* by refusing to allow it to be imported into the United States. The Roman Catholic Church's *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* carried great weight among Catholics and amounted to an effective and instant boycott of any book appearing on it. Boston's Watch and Ward Society, a largely Protestant creation inspired by Anthony Comstock, made "banned in Boston" a national by-word.
Lady Chatterley’s Lover[edit]

In 1959 Grove Press published an unexpurgated version of Lady Chatterley’s Lover by D. H. Lawrence. The U.S. Post Office confiscated copies sent through the mail. Lawyer Charles Rembar sued the New York City Postmaster, and won in New York and then on federal appeal.

In 1965 Tom Lehrer was to celebrate the erotic appeal of the novel in his cheerfully satirical song "Smut" with the couplet "Who needs a hobby like tennis or philately? / I've got a hobby: rereading Lady Chatterley".

Tropic of Cancer[edit]

Henry Miller’s 1934 novel, Tropic of Cancer, had explicit sexual passages and could not be published in the United States; an edition was printed by the Obelisk Press in Paris and copies were smuggled into the United States. (As of 2003, used book dealers asked $7,500 and more for copies of this edition.) In 1961 Grove Press issued a copy of the work, and dozens of booksellers were sued for selling it. The issue was ultimately settled by the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1964 decision in Grove Press, Inc. v. Gerstein.

Fanny Hill[edit]

In 1965 Putnam published John Cleland’s 1750 novel Fanny Hill. This was the turning point, because Charles Rembar appealed a restraining order against it all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court and won. In Memoirs v. Massachusetts, 383 U.S. 413, the court ruled that sex was "a great and mysterious motive force in human life", and that its expression in literature was protected by the First Amendment.

Only books primarily appealing to "prurient interest" could be banned. In a famous phrase, the court said that obscenity is "utterly without redeeming social importance"—meaning that, conversely, any work with redeeming social importance was not obscene, even if it contained isolated passages that could "deprave and corrupt" some readers. This decision was especially significant, because, of the three books mentioned, Fanny Hill has by far the largest measure of content that seems to appeal to prurient interest, and the smallest measures of literary merit and "redeeming social importance". Whereas an expurgated version of Lady Chatterley’s Lover had actually once been published, no expurgated version of Fanny Hill had ever been. By permitting the publication of Fanny Hill, the U.S. Supreme Court set the bar for any ban so high that Rembar himself called the 1966 decision "the end of obscenity".

Nonfiction sex manuals[edit]

The court decisions that legalised the publication of Fanny Hill had an even more important effect: freed from fears of legal action, nonfiction works about sex and sexuality started to appear more often.
In 1962, Helen Gurley Brown published *Sex and the Single Girl: The Unmarried Woman's Guide to Men, Careers, the Apartment, Diet, Fashion, Money and Men*. The title itself would have been unthinkable a decade earlier. (In 1965 she went on to transform *Cosmopolitan* magazine into a life manual for young career women.)*

In 1969 Joan Garrity, identifying herself only as "J.", published *The Way to Become the Sensuous Woman*, with information on exercises to improve the dexterity of one's tongue and how to have anal sex.

The same year saw the appearance of Dr. David Reuben's book *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex* (*But Were Afraid to Ask*). Despite the dignity of Reuben's medical credentials, this book was light-hearted in tone.

In 1970 the Boston Women's Health Collective published *Women and Their Bodies* (which became far better known a year later under its subsequent title *Our Bodies, Ourselves*). Not an erotic treatise or sex manual, the book nevertheless included frank descriptions of sexuality, and contained illustrations that could have caused legal problems just a few years earlier.

Alex Comfort's *The Joy of Sex: A Gourmet Guide to Love Making* appeared in 1972. In later editions though, Comfort's libertinism was tamed as a response to AIDS.

In 1975 Will McBride's *Zeig Mal! (Show Me!)*, written with psychologist Helga Fleichhauer-Hardt for children and their parents, appeared in bookstores on both sides of the Atlantic. Appreciated by many parents for its frank depiction of pre-adolescents discovering and exploring their sexuality, it scandalised others and eventually it was pulled from circulation in the United States and some other countries. It was followed up in 1989 by *Zeig Mal Mehr!* ("Show Me More!").

These books had a number of things in common. They were factual and, in fact, educational. They were available to a mainstream readership. They were stacked high on the tables of discount bookstores, they were book club selections, and their authors were guests on late-night talk shows. People were seen reading them in public.

In a respectable petty bourgeois middle-class home, *Playboy* magazine and *Fanny Hill* might be present but would usually be kept out of sight. But at least some of these books might well be on the coffee table. Most important, all of these books acknowledged and celebrated the conscious cultivation of erotic pleasure.

The contribution of such books to the sexual revolution cannot be overstated. Earlier books such as *What Every Girl Should Know* (Margaret Sanger, 1920) and *A Marriage Manual* (Hannah and Abraham Stone, 1939) had broken the silence in which many people, women in particular, had grown up in.

By the 1950s, in the United States, it had become rare for women to go into their wedding nights not knowing what to expect. But the open discussion of sex as pleasure, and descriptions of sexual practices and techniques, was revolutionary. There were practices which, perhaps, some
had heard of. But many adults did not know for sure whether they were realities, or fantasies found only in pornographic books.

Were they "normal", or were they examples of psychopathology? (When we use words such as fellatio we are still using the terminology of Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*). Did married ladies do these things, or only prostitutes? The Kinsey report revealed that these practices were, at the very least, surprisingly frequent. These other books asserted, in the words of a 1980 book by Dr. Irene Kassorla, that Nice Girls Do — And Now You Can Too.

**Contraception**

As birth control became widely accessible, men and women began to have more choice in the matter of having children than ever before. The 1916 invention of thin, disposable latex condoms for men led to widespread affordable condoms by the 1930s; the demise of the Comstock laws in 1936 set the stage for promotion of available effective contraceptives such as the diaphragm and cervical cap: the 1960s introduction of the IUD and oral contraceptives for women gave a sense of freedom from barrier contraception. The opposition of Churches (e.g. *Humanae vitae*) led to parallel movements of secularization and exile from religion. Women gained much greater access to birth control in the "girls world" decision in 1965, in the 1960s and 1970s the birth control movement advocated for the legalization of abortion and large scale education campaigns about contraception by governments.

**United Kingdom**

In the United Kingdom, the new generation growing up after World War II had grown tired of the rationing and austerity of the 1940s and 1950s and the Victorian values of their elders, so the 1960s were a time of rebellion against the fashions and social mores of the previous generation.

An early inkling of changing attitudes came in 1960, when the government of the day tried unsuccessfully to prosecute Penguin Books for obscenity, for publishing the D. H. Lawrence novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, which had been banned since the 1920s for what was considered racy content. The prosecution counsel Mervyn Griffith-Jones famously stood in front of the jury and asked, in his closing statement: "Is it a book you would wish your wife or servants to read?" When the case collapsed, the novel went on to become a bestseller, selling two million copies.

The Pill became available free of charge on the National Health Service in the 1960s, at first restricted to married women, but in 1968 its availability was extended to all women.

In 1967, laws prohibiting abortion and male homosexuality were repealed, although the age of consent for homosexual men was set at 21, in contrast to the heterosexual age of consent of 16. This is how it stayed until 1994, when the male homosexual age of consent was lowered to 18, and then equalised at 16 in 2001. Also in 2001, lesbian sex was recognised in British law for the first time ever, with an age of consent of 16.

**Free love**
Beginning in San Francisco in the mid-1960s, a new culture of "free love" emerged, with thousands of young people becoming "hippies" who preached the power of love and the beauty of sex as part of ordinary life. This is part of a counterculture that continues to exist. By the 1970s, it was socially acceptable for colleges to permit co-ed housing.

Free love continued in different forms throughout the 1970s and into the early 1980s, but its more assertive manifestations ended abruptly (or at least disappeared from public view) in the mid-1980s when the public first became aware of AIDS, a deadly sexually-transmitted disease.

Explicit sex on screen and stage[edit]

Swedish filmmakers like Ingmar Bergman and Vilgot Sjöman contributed to sexual liberation with sexually themed films that challenged conservative international standards. The 1951 film Hon dansade en sommar (She Danced One Summer AKA One Summer of Happiness) (directed by Arne Mattsson) starring Ulla Jacobsson and Folke Sundquist was notable in this regard for depicting explicit nudity, including nude bathing in a lake.

This film, as well as Bergman's Sommaren med Monika (The Summer with Monika, 1951) and Tystnaden (The Silence, 1963), caused an international uproar, not least in the United States, where the films were charged with violating standards of decency. Vilgot Sjöman's film LAm Curious (Yellow), also created waves of international outcry, but it was very popular in the United States. Another of his films, 491, highlighted homosexuality among other things. Kärlekens språk (The Language of Love) was an informative documentary about sex and sexual techniques that featured the first real act of sex in a mainstream film, and inevitably it caused intense debate around the world.

From these films the concept (or catchphrase) of "Swedish sin" (licentiousness and seductive nudity) developed, even though Swedish society in the 1950s was still fairly conservative regarding sex, and the international concept of Swedish sexuality was and is largely exaggerated. The image of "hot love and cold people" emerged. Sexual liberalism was seen as part of the modernization process that, by breaking down traditional borders, would lead to the emancipation of natural forces and desires. These films caused debate there as well. The films eventually progressed the public's attitude toward sex, especially in Sweden and other northern European countries, which today tend to be more sexually liberal than others. In Sweden and nearby countries at the time, these films, by virtue of being made by directors who had established themselves as leading names in their generation, helped delegitimize the idea of habitually demanding that films should avoid overtly sexual subject matter. It proved hard to question the seriousness of purpose of Bergman, Sjöman and others, and in their wake a consciously permissive and questioning attitude to sex, nudity and "difficult" subject matter in film - and on TV - became the new standard framework.

Explicit sex on screen and frontal nudity of men and women on stage became acceptable in many Western countries, as the twentieth century drew towards its close. Special places of entertainment offering striptease and lap dancing proliferated, and limits to 'acceptable' dress in
pop/rock music and at discotheques and live music festivals, especially open-air festivals ever since the flower-power generation and Woodstock (1969), became very vague, both among performers and in the audiences or attendee crowd. The rich use of crossdressing and androgynous attributes and clothes in rock and pop stage costumes and even references to this in song lyrics, to express sexual, fashion or literary themes is also notable, from the Velvet Underground (in Lou Reed's lyrics) and the glam rock wave and onward. All of this persists in the early 21st century.

The famous Playboy Bunnies set a trend. Men came to be entertained by topless women at nightclubs which also hosted "peep shows".

**Normalization of pornography [edit]**

*Further information: History of pornography*

Sexual character is closely linked with developments in technology, and the somewhat more open and commercial circulation of pornography was a new phenomenon at the time of the sexual revolution. Pornography operated as a form of "cultural critique" insofar as it transgresses societal conventions. Manuel Castells claims that the online communities, which emerged (from the 1980s) around early bulletin board systems originated from the ranks of those who had been part of the counterculture movements and alternative way of life emerging out of the sexual revolution.[29]

Lynn Hunt points out that early modern "pornography" (18th century) is marked by a "preponderance of female narrators", that the women were portrayed as independent, determined, financially successful (though not always socially successful and recognized) and scornful of the new ideals of female virtue and domesticity, and not objectifications of women's bodies as many view pornography today. The sexual revolution was not unprecedented in identifying sex as a site of political potential and social culture. It was suggested during the sexual revolution that the interchangeability of bodies within pornography had radical implications for gender differences and that they could lose their meaning or at least redefine the meaning of gender roles and norms.[29] Porn had portrayed sexual honesty and bluntly in fiction, on stage and in movies. It could reinforce the crudest stereotypes of sex roles, standards of beauty, and power dynamics or contribution in the education of desire.

In 1971 *Playboy* stopped airbrushing pubic hair out of its centerfold picture spreads; this new addition caused the magazine to hit its all-time peak circulation of more than seven million copies in 1972 and men started having more choices when it came to magazines.[29]

In 1972 *Deep Throat* became something of a date movie, being kind of a kinky-wink-wink-let's-check-it-out entertainment for heterosexual couples. The movie played all over America and was the first porn movie to earn a gross of a million dollars.[20]

The fact that pornography was less stigmatised by the end of the 1980s, and more mainstream movies depicted sexual intercourse as entertainment, was indicative of how normalised sexual revolution had become in society. Magazines depicting nudity, such as the popular *Playboy* and
Penthouse magazines, won some acceptance as mainstream journals, in which public figures felt safe expressing their fantasies.

Feminists have offered mixed responses to pornography. Some figures in the feminist movement, such as Andrea Dworkin, challenged the depiction of women as objects in these pornographic or "urban men's" magazines. Other feminists such as Betty Dodson went on to found the pro-sex feminist movement in response to anti-pornography campaigns. In India an organization namely Indians For Sexual Liberties is asking for legalisation of porn business in India. Founder of this organization Laxman Singh said when act is legal than why depiction is illegal.

**Premarital sex[edit]**

Premarital sex, which had been heavily stigmatised for some time became more widely accepted during the sexual revolution. The increased availability of birth control (and the quasi-legalisation of abortion in some places) helped reduce the chance that pre-marital sex would result in unwanted children. By the mid-1970s the majority of newly married American couples had experienced sex before marriage.

The central part of the sexual revolution was the development of relationships between unmarried adults, which resulted in earlier sexual experimentation reinforced by a later age of marriage. The counterculture and the new left was the source of this later age of marriage. Americans were attending colleges and rebelling against their parent's ideals, which caused them to marry later in age if at all. Therefore, meaning that Americans were becoming more sexually experienced before they entered into monogamous relationships. The increasing divorce rate and the decreasing stigma attached to divorce during this era also contributed to sexual experimentation. By 1971, more than 75% of America thought that premarital sex was okay, a threefold increase from the 1950s, and the number of unmarried Americans aged twenty to twenty-four more than doubled from 1960 to 1976. Americans were becoming less and less interested in getting married and settling down; less interested in monogamous relationships, 35% of the country in 1971 thought marriage was obsolete.

The idea of marriage being out-of-date came from the new development of casual sex between Americans. For those who were not there to experience it, it may be difficult to imagine how risk-free sex was during the 1960s and 1970s, casual sex could truly be casual. With the development of the birth control pill and the legalization of abortion in 1973, there was little threat of unwanted children out of wedlock. Also, during this time every sexually transmitted disease was treatable; there was no incurable bacterial STDs, no AIDS.

Swinger clubs were organizing in places ranging from the informal suburban home to disco-sized emporiums that promised a smorgasbord of sexual possibilities and free mouthwash. In New York City in 1977, Larry Levenson opened Plato’s Retreat, it was probably the closest that heterosexual America has ever gotten to the sexual frenzy of gay bathhouses. The retreat was eventually shut down in 1985 because of the constant hassle from public health authorities.

**Politics of sex[edit]**
Politics in the United States has become intertwined with sexually related issues, called the "politics of sex". A differing view of abortion pitted pro-life activists against pro-choice activists.

Women and men who lived with each other without marriage sought "palimony" equal to the alimony. Teenagers assumed their right to a sexual life with whomever they pleased, and bathers fought to be topless or nude at beaches.

Criticism[edit]

Fraenkel (1992) believes that the "sexual revolution", that the West supposedly experienced in the late 1960s, is indeed a misconception and that sex is not actually enjoyed freely, it is just observed in all the fields of culture; that is a kind of taboo behavior technically called "repressive desublimation".

Backlash[edit]

Allyn argues that the sexual optimism of the 1960s waned with the economic crises of the 1970s, the massive commercialization of sex, increasing reports of child exploitation, disillusionment with the counter-culture and the New Left, and a combined left-right backlash against sexual liberation as an ideal. The discovery of herpes escalated anxieties rapidly and set the stage for the nation's panicked response to AIDS.

Although the rate of teenage sexual activity is hard to record, the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in developed nations such as Canada and the UK have seen a steady decline since the 1990s. For example, in 1991 there were 61.8 children born per 1,000 teenage girls in the United States. By 2013, this number had declined to 26.6 births per 1,000 teenage girls.