

“Sex and Power” Symposium

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One wonders how the organizers of the 2nd Asian Congress of Sexuality Education conceive of the topic for this symposium: sex and power. Instead of speculating on sex and power in abstraction, I would like to propose that *in Taiwan the transformation of a certain kind of gender dogma into government policy is creating a social environment in which the relation between sex and power is being narrowed and channeled into a new intensity of “sex negativity” that not only undermines the efforts of an enlightened sexuality education but more importantly devitalizes the formation of sexual subjects.*

A full analysis of this historical development will take a much longer essay, so I will only gloss over the key arguments in this brief report.

1. The concept of “gender” both as a social category and as a policy category has been helped and promoted by a nation-state-status project that aims to construct women into consumers of electoral politics as well as champions of moral values. Increasingly, mainstream women’s groups are working toward a feminization of the state into its prescribed role of “care-taker of its people.” In the meantime, the Taiwanese government is more than eager to demonstrate its competency in living up to international standards of performance in terms of paternalistic measures that allegedly protect women and children against sex-related travesties such as trafficking (which equals all forms of part-time/full-time sex work) or pornography (which equals all explicit or graphic representations of sex). The intersection between gender constructions of the nation as well as nationalist constructions of gender has led to a serious simplification or rarification of the concepts of gender and, in particular, sex, that is now congealing into an intense sex negativity.

2. This new height of sex negativity materializes itself most blatantly in recent enforcements and new creations of legislation that aim to restrict information, exchange, contact, negotiation in relation to sex over the internet. Through a manichaestic dramatization of demonization and victimization, sex and sex-related information and negotiations are increasingly characterized as a corroding social force that feeds into evil minds while victimizing women and children. The overall rigidifying social milieu clearly works against rational, informed discussions and debates over sex-related issues over the internet, which, under present laws, would be considered “liable to mislead the young and feeble-minded” and thus subject to prosecution.

3. Education about the anatomy of sexual organs, moral doctrines surrounding

sex, the virtue of chastity, unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and demonized sexual perversions make up the greater part of our sexuality education. While much effort has been spent on warning people about the dangers of sex, little room is allowed for positive discussions of various ways of personal management of sex, not to mention the cultivation of a fertile and healthy sexual culture. One wonders what kind of sexual subjects will result from this kind of fear- and resentment-based education. And as sex and power is consistently presented as something that only evil people would have interest in, that only more rigid laws can protect all of us from its harm, there is little wonder that Taiwan is still plagued by a staunch moralism that only feebly maintains its reign over a rampant commercial/sexual culture.

台灣的性別主流化已經將兩性平權的眼界提升到全民關注的程度，然而，同時它也打造了一個新的社會環境，窄化了性與權力之間錯綜複雜的關係和情緒，反而形成一種新的「忌性」氛圍，不但嚴重阻礙了開明的性教育，也僵化了性主體的養成。（「忌性」就是用忌諱、顧忌、忌妒的心態來面對一切和性相關的事。）

結果，商業管道中充斥著各種露骨的情慾影像和慾望流動，我們的法律卻選擇對個人的情慾表達加以更為嚴峻的規定（例如刑法 234 條懲罰個人自拍，兒少法 29 條懲罰情慾電子訊息），這些對個人身體表現、相互交流、或情慾資訊的限制，都阻礙我們營造一個正面看待性的社會環境。