

The myth of the male orgasm

by Bette-Jane Raphael

Is there such a thing as male orgasm? For decades, scientists have argued about it, written tracts about it, philosophized about it, and, in more recent years, conducted countless studies. But as Dr. Mary Jane Grunge, president of

SMOS (the Society for Male Orgasmic Studies), said in her opening statement of the society's ninth annual cook-out: "We still don't know."

But do we? Recent findings by Dr. Fern Herpes and her colleague, Dr. Lavinia Shoot, indicate that the mystery is at least on the brink of being unmasked. Working under a grant from NASA, which was disturbed by the cleaning bills for its last Apollo mission, Dr. Herpes and Dr. Shoot conducted a study of 300 middle-class men between the ages of 14 and 23. Their findings seem to indicate that not only is there a male orgasm, there may actually be two distinct kinds!

While 43 per cent of the men in the Herpes/Shoot study were found to have trouble attaining orgasm consistently, or did not attain orgasm at all, and while another 4½ per cent had no opinion, a whopping 50½ per cent (four men fell asleep during their interviews, which accounts for the other two per cent) admitted they had two distinctly different kinds of orgasms. After careful questioning, psychological testing, and physical examinations, Dr. Herpes came to the following conclusion (Dr. Shoot came to a different conclusion and left in a huff): there are two types of male orgasm. For purposes of clarification, Dr. Herpes called these the penile orgasm and the spherical orgasm.

Of the two orgasms, Dr. Herpes hypothesizes that the spherical orgasm is the more mature. "Men who are enamored of their penises, who see their penises as the seat of all sexual pleasure, are just a bunch of babies. I hate them. Only the spherically oriented male can be thought of as mature because he can identify with the female to a much greater extent than the penile-oriented male. Thus the former's identification with his balls, which are the closest thing he has to female breasts."

Dr. Shoot, who consented to speak in rebuttal to Dr. Herpes, had this to say: "That woman is crazy. Men don't have two types of orgasm. They just think they do. My own findings reveal that they don't even have one kind of orgasm. Actually, there is no such thing as the male orgasm. What passes for orgasm in the male is really a mild form of St. Vitus dance. This afflicts more than 55 per cent of the male population in this country, and if Herpes wasn't so hyped on orgasm she'd admit she's wrong. But as far as she's concerned, *everything* is orgasm."

It should be noted that Dr. Amelia Leviathan is in close agreement with Dr. Shoot. She too believes that what passes for male orgasm is actually a disease. But contrary to Dr. Shoot, she believes the affliction is actually a form of epilepsy localized in the groin. She feels she proved this in her much publicized recent study of 100 male rats, 50 of whom had epilepsy. The epileptic rats, Dr. Leviathan found, could mate with the female rats, even if the female rats didn't want to. The non-epileptic rats just sat around exposing themselves.

Confusing the question of male orgasm even further is Dr. Jennifer Anis, who conducted a study of nearly 700 married males in their late 20s and 30s. According to the results of her study, the issue of male orgasmic or non-orgasmic capacity is clouded by the fact that many men simulate orgasm in order to please their partners. Nearly 25 per cent of the men in the Anis group admitted they had at some time in their marriage faked orgasm either because they were tired, or because they knew their partners would be hurt if they didn't climax, or because they had headaches.

Nearly half the men in the Anis study had mild to severe orgasmic difficulties. (It was this group, incidentally, whose psychological profiles appeared in Dr. Anis's widely acclaimed paper, "The Prostate, the Penis, and You-oo," wherein it was revealed that all the orgasmically troubled men shared a common fear of their mothers' cuticles, a hatred of Speedwriting ads in subways, and a horror of certain

kinds of peaked golf hats.) What has not been revealed until now, however, is that a great many of these men lead perfectly satisfactory sex lives without orgasm, a finding which would seem to put to rest the theory that men must achieve orgasm in order to enjoy sex.

Well, if men can enjoy sex without orgasm, can they also become fathers without achieving climax? Here again the answer is by no means clear. Dr. Herpes and Dr. Shoot, of course, disagree. Dr. Shoot says yes, they can, if they think they can. Dr.

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