Noah Edward Hall

Professor Nutting

Philosophical issues in Sexuality Tues 7pm

Thomas Nagel Essay

# Why Art Thou Pervertious?

Thomas Nagel believes sexual intercourse with animals, infants, and inanimate objects are sexual perversions. First, defining what is *not* considered sexual perversion will help us appreciate Nagel’s philosophical viewpoint: any sexual act that is natural with all party’s sexual desire reciprocated. The aforementioned definition of appropriate sexual conduct proposes a simple syllogism: if a sexual desire is unnatural, or if the sexual desire is not reciprocated, then the sexual act must be a sexual perversion; stated algebraically: *Unnatural + Not Reciprocated = Perversion.*

Nagel deepens his philosophical stance by resting the entire thesis on the psychologically of the individual’s desire: an unnatural inclination for sexual action. If someone’s inclination to have sex strays far from natural sexual conduct, perversion exists. In addition, if a sexual act is not reciprocated by all parties, perversion exists.

Sexual intercourse with inanimate objects meets both criteria for sexual perversion: It is very unnatural to have sex with something that is not alive and cannot reciprocate the sexual desire. Since both premises of Nagel’s syllogism have been violated, sex with inanimate objects are labeled perversions.

Sexual intercourse with animals also meets both criteria for sexual perversion: animals cannot reciprocate sexual desire, nor is it natural for humans to have sex with animals. Bestiality, from Nagel’s perspective, is psychotic inclinations towards animals stemming from perverted sexual desire.

Sexual intercourse with infants differs slightly from sexual intercourse with inanimate objects & and animals: infants are human, and infants are animate. However, sexual intercourse with infants is likely the most perverted of all three situations: the sovereignty of the infant is violated. Infants cannot reciprocate sexual desire, nor is it natural to have sex with an infant.