

sexuality this will serve to strengthen the pair-bond and maintain the family unit. The other is that it considerably increases the chances of fertilisation. It does this in a rather special way that applies only to our own peculiar species. Again, to understand this, we must look back at our primate relatives. When a female monkey has been inseminated by a male, she can wander away without any fear of losing the seminal fluid that now lies in the innermost part of her vaginal tract. She walks on all fours. The angle of her vaginal passage is still more or less horizontal. If a female of our own species were so unmoved by the experience of copulation that she too was likely to get up and wander off immediately afterwards, the situation would be different, for she walks bipedally and the angle of her vaginal passage during normal locomotion is almost vertical. Under the simple influence of gravity the seminal fluid would flow back down the vaginal tract and much of it would be lost. There is therefore a great advantage in any reaction that tends to keep the female horizontal when the male ejaculates and stops copulating. The violent response of female orgasm, leaving the female sexually satiated and exhausted, has precisely this effect. It is therefore doubly valuable.

The fact that the female orgasm in our species is unique amongst primates, combined with the fact that it is physiologically almost identical with the orgasmic pattern of the male, suggests that perhaps it is in an evolutionary sense a 'pseudo-male response'. In the make-up of both males and females there are latent properties belonging to the opposite sex. We know from comparative studies of other groups of animals that evolution can, if necessary, call up one of these latent qualities and bring it into the front line (in the 'wrong' sex, as it were). In this particular instance we know that the female of our species has developed a particular susceptibility to sexual stimulation of the clitoris. When we remember that this organ is the female homologue, or counterpart, of the male penis, this does seem to point to the fact that, in origin at any rate, the female orgasm is a 'borrowed' male pattern.