

# This Hallowed Institution

Sam Cohen

1970

Monogamy, Monogamy  
God Shed His Grace on Thee,  
And Crown Thy Mane  
With Ball & Chain,  
From Sea to Bourgeoisie  
—An S. Cohen special doggerel

Mom, dad, kiddie—cozily huddled around the TV. Symbol of Monogamy, of the one-with-one “until death shall do you part.” Symbol of a Good, the insurance against sexual chaos, shield against the slings and arrows of outrageous promiscuity.

One spouse, one home, one family. Stability. A blessing.

Except that it's less blessing and more curse, less beauty and more a bag of tricks, less kinship and more a krock. The chaos and promiscuity that monogamy-sweet-monogamy insures against are freedom and liberty, the freedom of whim against “until death do you part.”

WHIM? How horrible! Shouldn't be trusted! We are born in sin! (or the sin secularized into things like Morris's “Naked Ape”).

What should be trusted, says Civilization, are the rules and regulations laid down 6,000 years ago when Civilization emerged. As though it were not human whim that kept the human animal going and developing a whole million years preceding the civilizational hierarchy and authority—the whim impulse, proclivity, spontaneity of intro-clan and intro-commune cooperation as against the later and contemporary inter-family and inter-State antagonisms.

The whim of working together in small simple stateless groups—this is to the million years as rigidity, authority, compulsion, institution and institutionalized war are to the 6,000. The latter years are stuck in the muck of private property (the ending of communal hunting and food-gathering), the hardening-of-the-arteries Civilization, the tidbit triangular family, male supremacy and the cold-ass State. And monogamy.

So it does, our monogamy, make for stability—the stability of, for, by and beneficial to a particular vested interest, to a class. This class are the descendents of the dawn-of-civilization shamans, priests and warlords.

This class are today the big-corporation capitalist, big stockholder, top executive and upper-echelon State-man, not least the kind (like our FBI chief) who can never be voted out of office.

This class, out of sheer self-preservation, keeps monogamy an ongoing item. “Institution old and honorable.” A new mate, okay. But the new one had better be ONE. Monogamy in sequence.

And ONE means just that—non-tribal. Non-pre-civilizationally communal. Keep it, boy and girl, behind the bedroom door! As private as the penis, clandestine as the clitoris.

Not that our elite are a bunch of prudes. What they sneak in on the side would make the middle classes blush. It is monogamy as a front they must maintain.

A front, though, which the masses of people really believe, no less than their faith in Horatio Alger or in the proposition that the U.S. cannot be imperialist. They, yes, often secretly violate the monogamy, but then feel guilty as hell, swearing “never again!”

Never, that is, until the next time, until the natural again spurts through the artificial, the spontaneous again through the class-state-property frigidity, the million year life again through the 6,000-year live corpse we call Civilization, the pre-civilizational play again through the Pure.

Civilizational stability? Oui. Plus mass war, ecological insanity, angst, anomie, boredom, an orgy of megalopolitanization and a plague of stiff, potent and pointed depersonalization. All knit together by big capitalism and Big State.

But these last two biggies are themselves knit together and preserved as one fossilized whole by their massive muzzling of free love, by their 6,000-year privatism and private property. By, most subtly, monogamy.

Why the high divorce rate? Why the frequent preserving the marriage for reasons other than love? Why the terrific difficulty at finding the right mate? Or even if found, why the later discovery that the other is some weirdo? What happened to that beautiful blend in the other of sex, brains, etc.?

Why, as the relationship ripens, does one of the partners sooner or later feel cannibalized by the other—intimidated, bullied, cowed, frightened to death? And why can the other never dig what’s bugging the first?

Why, in fact, can the very one who feels devoured be later or even simultaneously devouring a third?

The answer to all of these lies neither in one partner nor the other. It lies in monogamy itself, its royal rigidity, astronomical unreality, potential heartbreak for at least one of the partners.

Its whole sex-robotized, sex-controlled, sex-privatized pattern, a pattern whose name is bourgeois, whose creed is the substitution of State for spontaneity, authority for liberty, \*\* compe’ for natural, privatism for freedom patriarchy for equality, fenced-in family for open communality, the love of law for the law of love.

## Sidebar

Gays Come Out!

NEW YORK (LNS) — New York’s Gay Liberation front has begun publishing a newspaper, called *Come Out!* The paper, staffed by homosexual men and women, is a forum for the gay community.

It also attempts to link the fight of homosexuals against their own oppression to other liberation struggles in America.

For a sample copy, send 25 cents to Come Out!, Box 92, Village Station, New York, N.Y. 10014.

# fifth Estate

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1970

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Fifth Estate #98, February 4-18, 1970

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