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Sin, Science, and the Sex Police: Essays on Sexology and Sexosophy

John Money
Prometheus Books (December 1998)
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The title of this book is enough to probably send it flying off the shelves and into the hidden corners of people's lives where no one thinks they're peeking and reading. While many readers and voters acted disgusted with the Clinton-Lewinsky-Starr judicial menage 'a trois, they read and watched whatever they could in the media. Surely, sexologist Money is going to benefit from this interest.

The title is there to lure you to the cash register. One chapter, hilariously titled, "Honk If You Masterbate," is titillating only if you agree that former U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders received shoddy handling when she tried to talk about kids and masturbation, and the far-right anti-sexualists rose up in righteous anger and forced President Clinton to dismiss her. There are still plenty of folks around who know that boys do it, girls do it, but you should never talk about it.

Another chuckle comes from Money's historical peek at Dr. John Kellogg of Battle Creek and Corn Flakes fame. Kellogg took his cue from eighteenth century Swiss physician Simon Andrew Tissot, who declared masterbation was somehow tied up with syphilis and gonorrhea. To cope with what he disgustedly viewed as unhealthy carnality at his sanitarium, Kellogg invented Corn Flakes, which he wanted his clients to substitute for meat, which he felt only fostered carnal desires.

This is a fine, almost overly scholarly work on Money's specialty, which is gender identity: Who's male? Who's female? Who's in-between? Why are people this way? What can you do about it? If you want to change sex, Money is the fellow to start with. It's also a serious academic work, right in line with the 34 other books and 346 scientific papers and 97 reviews and book chapters he's had a hand in writing. You may, however, have to puzzle your way through a lot of jargon such as lovemaps, loveblots, paraphilia, paleodigmatics and nosological sexology. Nevertheless, Dr. Money, professor emeritus of medical psychology and pediatrics at John Hopkins University, has exciting things to say.

DAVID HACKER (January / February 1999)

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