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Censorship & Morality

by [Joe Escobar](#) – Friday, April 8, 2016, 11:34 AM

This thread is for discussions on the Censorship & Morality topic.
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Re: Censorship & Morality

by [Devon Johnson](#) – Sunday, April 10, 2016, 5:41 PM

The Morality of men and women in the government has not changed much. Any time there is a sexual controversy repercussions as well as public and media humiliation takes place. I think of Anthony Weiner former house rep of New York. Mr. Weiner was involved in two sexting scandals. The first of the two led to his resignation as representative in 2011. This scandal caught s much media attention that there is even an entire Huffington post archive dedicated to these two scandals. Don't believe me check for yourself
<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/anthony-weiner-scandal/>

Think of Bill Clinton. The granddaddy of all scandals that today is still talked about in news media and pop culture. These scandals never go away they live on years after they occur. As compared to Spitzer his story is no different than Mr. Winer after being caught with an escort he is forced to either resign or he would be impeached.

I find it very interesting how the morality of the U.S. as a whole has changed drastically, especially in the media. However the expectations of our politicians and government officials have not changed. Which is a good thing if I had to choose if the people I watch on TV or the ones who run our county to have a higher moral standers it's a no brainer. In conclusion I think the country as a whole is not by any means the same morally then in the 20th century. However I believe that our political leaders now are held to the same moral standard.

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Journalism's role in publicizing Olga's trial.

by [Joseph Collins](#) – Monday, April 11, 2016, 8:44 PM

I believe that the progressive fight against censorship in the case of Sapho gives us a good look at how we

typically see the progressive movement; when they saw something that outraged their sense of morality (in this case, the bullying and wrongful charges directed towards actress Olga Nethersole) they tend to fight for reform. What I found interesting in the video, was how they subtly tied in the importance of the press coverage surrounding the case by showing the headlines and articles about the trial in the background of the video. It tied in nicely with the fact that the progressive movement would not have been nearly as successful if it were not for the rapid increase in magazine and newspaper sales in the early 1900s. Without the widespread coverage provided by journalists, including muckrakers, a case like Olga's could have fallen into obscurity, permanently silenced by the conservative "guardians of public morality". In fact, as stated in the video, the publicity provided by the newspapers' coverage of the trial backfired against the conservative censors, providing Sapho with more audiences and success than ever before.

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The significance of Sapho

by [Naima Lobby](#) – Monday, April 11, 2016, 9:26 PM

In the Sapho video, the state of censorship was much more strict. Olga, who was arrested and charged for public indecency was arrested solely for playing a part. In the play, the women were perceived to be having sex for pleasure, which was frowned upon. This is compelling because it is the woman who was arrested yet the man was not frowned upon for portraying a sexual being as he is the one initiating the sexual act with Sapho. When Olga was found not guilty, after prominent figures testified on her behalf, it opened a new perspective for those viewing photos, plays, movies. It introduced new material to the film and brought more success to Sapho.

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Necessity of the Mann Act

by [Naima Lobby](#) – Monday, April 11, 2016, 10:06 PM

When Government tries to regulate the actions of their citizens, it does not make them obey but it alienates them from the rest of the society. In Jack Johnson's case, he was forced to flee. He didn't obey the law but saw fit to continue his life elsewhere and continued to live his life with the person he wanted. This law was unnecessary as it did not prevent people from committing the crimes but instead humiliated people. The sex workers that were being transported were doing what they needed to do to survive.

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Public Humiliation now VS 20th Century

by [Naima Lobby](#) – Monday, April 11, 2016, 10:12 PM

In the case of Spitzer, as in many public humiliation cases of political figures, he is put on a pedestal as a member of the public eye. He is to set an example. Though, there is a double standard. A person working a regular day job may not be forced to resign because they are not seen as someone who may be public.

Much like the turn of the 20th century, when women weren't respected as sexual beings, they were put on a pedestal. They were not though to participate in sex for pleasure and when they did, it was seen disgraceful, similar to when a public figure does. It was cliché and inappropriate as it would be for a politician in this day.

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Should Morality have lost to Sapho?

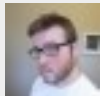
by [Thomas Bullock](#) – Saturday, April 16, 2016, 6:18 PM

The US, in the 1900s, was much more conservative that it is today. By watching older movies and talking with my grandparents, I had come to view the level of censorship that was upheld during the 1900's as slightly comical. In contrast with videos that are available today, the example of the Sapho trial looks like a blatant overreaction made by right-wing conservatives. But looking at the over-sexualization of the culture that we live in today it makes one wonder if it would be better for the government to have won

this battle... any thoughts?

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Re: Should Morality have lost to Sapho?
by *Joseph Collins* – Saturday, April 16, 2016, 6:46 PM

Personally, I think classifying our modern culture as oversexualised might be a bit off the mark in terms of the broader picture. In fact, I would say that rather than us being oversexualised, you could consider much of earlier American history undersexualized, or over censored if you will, especially compared to classical and ancient europe. This is probably because so much of our culture was inherited from the puritans, and even back then, compared to them, the rest of the world certainly would seem oversexualised by comparison.

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Re: Should Morality have lost to Sapho?
by *Thomas Bullock* – Saturday, April 16, 2016, 7:56 PM

you have a point there. the censorship upheld by the rest of the world *was* very different from the censorship of the early US.

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What can happen when the government attempts to regulate the behavior of its citizens
by *Thomas Bullock* – Saturday, April 16, 2016, 6:33 PM

With regard to the government’s enforcement of the Mann act and peoples reaction to that enforcement. I believe that it is a fairly moot point. The government can strive to restrict the transport of a woman across state lines as hard as it likes. But unfortunately, this act mostly serves to impede the travel of ordinary citizens. Because prostitution is outlawed anyway (even at that time, I think) and delinquent people will always use back channels and methods to disguise their actions from prying eyes. If someone was violating the Mann act, the person would be hidden or it would be done without being so blatant as to declare ones intentions. Furthermore, active enforcement would anger people without criminal intent, causing them to be unpredictable and irrational. Thus the enforcement would defeat itself through its actions... then again, every person caught is another person’s freedom. That is worth an annoying traffic stop right?

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Re: 20th century vs 21st century
by *Jeb Harper* – Saturday, April 16, 2016, 9:00 PM

Its amazing to me, in regards to the Sapho incident, how different things are today. Compared to todays standards this play wouldn't even raise an eyebrow. I also don't see how they were allowed to arrest her or anyone it just seems like this play wasn't breaking any laws and if anything like this happened today there would be a plethora of lawsuits. It seems like censorship in the late 19th and early 20th century was heavily based on religious morals and thinking. If something caused you to think lustfully they immediately saw it as wrong because religiously in the ten commandments it says not to lust. So i think early on a lot of the censorship was based off religious teachings and principles. Today it almost seems like if anything is considered referring to anything religious its looked down upon. It's like the exact opposite.

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Re: Mann Act
by *Jeb Harper* – Saturday, April 16, 2016, 9:30 PM

Some of Mann Act's unintended consequences were criminalizing many couples who weren't participating in prostitution. Like the video said it became a way to persecute unmarried couples premarital activities like the case with Jack Johnson. I think sometimes when the government attempts to regulate the behavior of its citizens

things can get out of hand and many unattended consequences can occur. People find loopholes and can exploit the system. However I do think the government can do a lot of good in trying to control its citizens behavior because sometimes the behavior that they're restricting could be a person with very bad behavior that wants to do harm to others. So in that sense its good because they're just trying to protect us.

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Sapho
by Jesse Dunlap – Saturday, April 16, 2016, 9:34 PM

The early 1900’s of American culture was a time when morality was seen as something that needed to be enforced, to be engrained in the minds of humanity for their own good. If you take the play Sapho for instance you can see that some peoples views were that a woman enjoying sexual pleasure and making it known so publicly by having many lovers was something that was harmful for society. The censors felt compelled to prosecute this woman in court to remove what they felt implicated immorality. I find it interesting that by them trying to censor and disband the play altogether they created a explosion of popularity for the very thing they wanted to get rid of. The nature of trying to force others to morality seems to brush up against resistance through history and create a curiosity for the thing you are trying to hide and hinder. In conclusion the ones enforcing their view of morality may have had good intentions but the backlash from their attempts helped spur more open dynamic plays.

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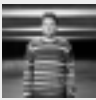


The Mann Act
by Jesse Dunlap – Saturday, April 16, 2016, 9:52 PM

The Mann Act was necessary when it was first implemented and its still important today. It was an attempt at protecting women from forced prostitution. Its downfall was in the wording that was put into it. When you use words such as immoral acts or debauchery you are leaving it open to others interpretation of what that might be. Laws should be enforced when it’s the case of protecting another human from harm and that wasn’t the case with Jack Johnson and his mistress. Their relationship was harming neither party yet some felt that it was immoral and there for he needed to be prosecuted. This is one of the unintended consequences of trying to enforce a belief surrounding what constitutes immorality to some and is perfectly fine for others. I believe the law as it stands today in its rephrasing of the terms placed in it has a superior impact in helping curb human trafficking. We have a responsibility to protect those who may not know how to protect themselves. But should be specific in how it should happen. Rather then leaving it open to interpretation revolving around who views what as an immoral act.

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Mann Act still useful
by Justin Cox – Saturday, April 16, 2016, 11:35 PM

The Mann Act serves a purpose to this day as a legal avenue to punish human traffickers. However, that was not the Mann Act's original intent. As described in the NPR radio clip, the Mann Act's original intent was to enforce morality on citizens.

Americans do not believe that all regulation of morality is bad, however. Laws against murder, rape, stealing and treason all remain on the books with broad support.

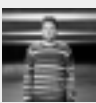
To put a fine point on it, Americans today are happy to enforce laws regarding many moral issues but they are not interested in enforcing standards of sexual behavior. This idea is supported by the lack of enforcement and repeal of other laws regarding sexual behavior such as sodomy laws.

Conversely, though, Americans do seem committed to the continued repression of the prostitution business.

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Spitzer demonstrates morality has changed
by Justin Cox – Saturday, April 16, 2016, 11:49 PM



Eliot Spitzer, the former Governor of New York, resigned in 2008 following news reports detailing his frequent use of prostitutes. I believe a politician in 1908 would also be forced out of office were the public to discover him in a similarly unflattering situation. However, what happened next to Gov. Spitzer demonstrates how Americans' morality relating to sex has changed in the past century.

In 2010, only a few years after his resignation from office, CNN, one of the largest news channels in the country, hired Spitzer to host an hour long talk show *Parker Spitzer* every night. The company put Spitzer, the admitted john on TV as a face of its channel. Certainly no media company would have hired such a disgraced former politician in 1908 for a similar purpose.

Spitzer even ran for political office again in 2013. He ran for City of New York Comptroller and lost by only 5% in the Democratic Party primary election.

Former Gov. Eliot Spitzer's experience after resigning from office in disgrace demonstrates that Americans are willing to allow their politicians broader sexual transgressions than they were 100 years ago.

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Re: Morality
by Jeb Harper – Saturday, April 16, 2016, 11:54 PM

I would say that when politicians or celebrities are involved in incidents that cause their public approval rating to go down today, its way more of a big deal because social media is so prevalent in our lives today. In history people didn't have the internet so they might've not seen the news everyday. And i think social media is in large part why are morality in America has gone down. It has caused us to be less in tuned with family and friends and life and more in tuned with ourselves and self entitlement.

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