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WE'RE NOT AS SEXY AS WE THINK!

***The Politics of Lust*, by John Ince A Radical New Perspective On Sex**

North Americans are sexual wimps. Contrary to the conventional view that our society is sexually sophisticated, most of us are mighty squeamish about sex. Our culture's much touted sexual hedonism is in fact mere bravado.

So argues Vancouver lawyer, erotic arts activist, and sexual theorist John Ince in the just released *The Politics of Lust* (September 2003).

Ince shows that though thirty years have elapsed since a supposed "sexual revolution" negative attitudes are still prevalent toward a vast array of sexual issues, including nudity, masturbation, honest sexual dialogue, sex education, sex toys, erotic art, homosexuality, anal sex and many other issues.

The most immediate effect of our sexual prissiness is to render our sex life dull and routine. Compared to our openness to innovation in travel, cuisine, recreation, art, and music, our sex lives remain a stale backwater. We are lousy lovers, uncomfortable with anything new and experimental in the erotic domain.

Ince provides example after example of our fears of things sexual. For example, most of us cannot talk comfortably about sex. We suffer from a sexual language barrier. We raise our kids to be sexually tongue-tied too. Our schools aren't much help either. Sex education is dismal in Canada.

The news media is squeamish about sex too. For example, though Canadian newspapers have reporters that focus on such specific subjects as cars, wine, gardening, fine art, or religion, not one daily has a journalist on the sex beat. Thanks to the distorted view of sexuality provided by the entertainment and adult media, most of us have a distorted idea of what really goes on, or does not go on, in the bedrooms of the nation.

Our sexual malaise also inspires much legal intolerance against sex. Canada's laws are teeming with antisexual provisions, against sex media, sexual performances, anal sex, sex toys, sex worker, swingers, and nudists. Ince has been a target of such laws. In June Vancouver police threatened to charge him with criminal offences for producing the sexually explicit performance piece *Public Sex, Art and Democracy*.

Sexual issues ramify beyond the erotic domain, says Ince. He contends that our sexual attitudes and our political orientation are closely related. Sexual anxiety is conducive to pecking order social relationships, in families, religions, and the political system. "The more we fear sex," says Ince, "the greater we favour social inequality. The more sexually relaxed a society, the more democratic it will be."

The Politics of Lust (Pivotal Press, 2003, \$24.95, softcover, 336 pages, ISBN 0-9696567-1-8)

Ince's tour schedule:

Vancouver: Oct 6-10, **Calgary** 12-14, **Toronto** 15-18,

Montreal 19-22, **Ottawa** 23-25, **Winnipeg** 25-27, **Edmonton** 28-30

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