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## GENITAL CENSORSHIP

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

Images of violence and death are common in the Canadian media mainstream. But images of genitals are entirely absent. Even when nudity is a key part of a story, the news media routinely censors sexual organs behind a black bar or digital blur.

Vancouver lawyer, erotic arts activist, and sexual theorist John Ince explores genital censorship in *The Politics of Lust* (pub. date: September 2003).

He documents example after example of such censorship in newspapers, television, and mainstream entertainment media. He points out the contradiction of the media overtly and often crudely censoring its images of genitals yet steadfastly opposing all other forms of censorship. Ince contends that the media violates its own ethical mandate to “seek truth and report it” and other ethical rule when it censors genital imagery.

What motivates such censorship? Ince shows that it results from primitive fears about genitals and sexuality. Through a fascinating conditioning process many people acquire an aversion to the sight of sexual organs. When they see genitals they feel uncomfortable. They demand that laws against nudity be enforced and that images of genitals be banished from the media. The executives running media companies hear these complaints, but nothing from people who lack such genital fears. The media responds by censoring genital images.

Such censorship in turn helps breed the very aversions which seek more censorship. Banning genitals from the media mainstream sends the message that such body parts are offensive, like other offensive things that are commonly concealed, such as blemishes, scabs, excrement, and garbage. By hiding genitals the media helps stigmatize them, the same way that hiding the faces of females in conservative Islamic nations helps breed negative attitudes toward women.

Ince shows that genital aversions and genital censorship are a key part of a much larger and more complex system that inspires intolerance aimed at nudity, sexual entertainment, sexual dialogue, and sex itself. In the same way that excluding images of women or racial minorities play a vital role in the maintenance of sexist or racist societies, excluding genitals is vital to the maintenance of our sexually squeamish society.

Genital censorship is not a trivial issue, says Ince. His book shows that such intolerance impacts beyond the erotic domain of life, affecting the deep tissue political structure of our society.

***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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