

Sexual instinct as a Need or Desire?

The role of will power is significant when it comes to wanting and desire. It has been long proved that if you have enough motivation you will eventually reach your goals. In another words if you want something badly, you will find a way to fulfill it. The difference between wanting and desire is in their intensity. Desire is stronger than wanting, therefore the probability of achievement is more likely if you desire something. The topic prompted me to think about sexual desire as a motivating force to mating in cognitive systems. This desire can be explained by the inclination towards reproduction and survival. It is counted as a basic instinct need. But what is the difference between desire and an instinct need?

The unique thing about humans that makes their reproductive life unusual is that humans can think. Thus, the criteria for desire and selection are greatly complicated. People apply not only physical, but societal, cultural and economic criteria to desire and selection¹.

There were times when people were controlled with their emotions and logics only. They would attend to their basic needs as well as desires as they come up throughout their lives. It does not seem to be the case anymore. We live in a modern world. Almost all aspects of cognition can be manipulated via available therapies and drugs. With alteration of hormones we are able to change virtues such as will power, sacrifice, trust, love and many more. There are many available treatments to enhance/reduce sexual desires as well. In this case there is no definite answer as to how much desire is optimal, or is it ok for a perfectly normal person to enhance their will power to a certain degree. Suppression is subconscious process, in which there are several contradictory factors at work. In sexual instinct, there is the drive for fulfillment of the desire, and there is a moral drive which prevents one from fulfilling the desire. With medical intervention the drive can be altered but the morality may still be in place which requires a revision of values and social conventions beforehand². Today's society does not promote reproduction as it used to in old times. In fact there are many methods of birth control available just to make sexual desire a pleasant activity rather than a means to a goal. Since we have the power to control virtually every aspect of our sexual desire it might be suitable to categorize it as a desire and not a need anymore. An optional that can be completely eliminated if needed or replaced with newer methods that serve the same purpose. Available technology allows for the fetus to be conceived with no human encounter, the growth of fetus can be monitored outside the mother's body as well. So why bother going through pregnancy phases and the taking the risks while the sexual need can be fulfilled or controlled, meanwhile using the medical technology to start a family. The argument becomes complicated when this solution does not look appealing to people. The reality is people "need" to have sexual encounters for pleasure and both for starting a family. While the instinctive need is satisfied people may "want" to start a family or develop their wanting into a "desire". The tricky part is when they prefer to have their sexual needs fulfill their wanting of a family. The other means may seem more logical if analyzed but not necessarily appealing.

It is hard to come to a conclusion whether sexual desire is still a need, a desire or has become an option, but it is apparent that it is not going to be eliminated from human life whether the intensity of it is high or low.

¹ <http://public.wsu.edu/~taflinge/socsex.html>

² <http://www.coptic.net/lessons/Instincts.txt>