

# **BLUEPRINT FOR A HIGHER CIVILIZATION**

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*Henry Flynt presents "Creep" lecture in Adam Hovre upper common room, Harvard University, May 15, 1962  
(photo by Tony Conrad)*

## 17. Creep

When Helen Lefkowitz said I was "such a creep" at Interlochen in 1956, her remark epitomized the feeling that females have always had about me. My attempts to understand why females rejected me and to decide what to do about it resulted in years of confusion. In 1961-1962, I tried to develop a theory of the creep problem. This theory took involuntary celibacy as the defining characteristic of the creep. Every society has its image of the ideal young adult, even though the symbols of growing up change from generation to generation. The creep is an involuntary celibate because he fails to develop the surface traits of adulthood--poise and sophistication; and because he is shy, unassertive, and lacks self-confidence in the presence of others. The creep is awkward and has an unstylish appearance. He seems sexless and childish. He is regarded by the ideal adults with condescending scorn, amusement, or pity.

Because he seems weak and inferior in the company of others, and cannot maintain his self-respect, the creep is pressed into isolation. There, the creep doesn't have the pressure of other people's presence to make him feel inferior, to make him feel that he must be like them in order not to be inferior. The creep can develop the morale required to differ. The creep also tends to expand his fantasy life, so that it takes the place of the interpersonal life from which he has been excluded. The important consequence is that the creep is led to discover a number of positive personality values which cannot be achieved by the mature, married adult. During the period when I developed the creep theory, I was spending almost all of my time alone in my room, thinking and writing. This fact should make the positive creep values more understandable.

1. Because of his isolation, the creep has a qualitatively higher sense of identity. He has a sense of the boundaries of his personality, and a control of what goes on within those boundaries. In contrast, the mature adult, who spends all his time with his marriage partner or in groups of people, is a mere channel into which thoughts flow from outside; he lives in a state of conformist anonymity.

2. The creep is emotionally autonomous, independent, or self-contained. He develops an elaborate world of feelings which remain

within himself, or which are directed toward inanimate objects. The creep may cooperate with other people in work situations, but he does not develop emotional attachments to other people.

3. Although the creep's intellectual abilities develop with education, the creep lives in a sexually neutral world and a child's world throughout his life. He is thus able to play like a child. He retains the child's capacity for make-believe. He retains the child's lyrical creativity in regard to self-originated, self-justifying activities.

4. There is enormous room in the creep's life for the development of every aspect of the inner world or the inner life. The creep can devote himself to thought, fantasy, imagination, imaging, variegated mental states, dreams, internal emotions and feelings towards inanimate objects. The creep develops his inner world on his own power. His inner life originates with himself, and is controlled and intellectually consequential. The creep has no use for meditations whose content is supplied by religious traditions. Nor has he any use for those drug experiences which adolescents undertake to prove how grown-up they are, and whose content is supplied by fashion. The creep's development of his inner life is the summation of all the positive creep values.

After describing these values, the creep theory returned to the problem of the creep's involuntary celibacy. For physical reasons, the creep remains a captive audience for the opposite sex, but his attempts to gain acceptance by the opposite sex always end in failure. On the other hand, the creep may well find the positive creep values so desirable that he will want to intensify them. The solution is for the creep to seek a medical procedure which will sexually neutralize him. He can then attain the full creep values, without the disability of an unresolved physical desire.

Actually, the existence of the positive creep values proves that the creep is an authentic non-human who happens to be trapped in human social biology. The positive creep values imply a specification of a whole non-human social biology which would be appropriate to those values. Finally, the creep theory mentioned that creeps often make good grades in school, and can thus do clerical work or other work useful to humans. This fact would be the basis for human acceptance of the creep.

In the years after I presented the creep theory, a number of inadequacies became apparent in it. The principal one was that I managed to cast off the surface traits of the creep, but that when I did my problem became even more intractable. An entirely different analysis of the problem was required.

My problem actually has to do with the enormous discrepancy between the ways I can relate to males and the ways I can relate to females. The

essence of the problem has to do with the social values of females, which are completely different from my own. The principal occupation of my life has been certain self-originated activities which are embodied in "writings." Now most males have the same social values that I find in all females. But there have always been a few males with exceptional values; and my activities have developed through exchanges of ideas with these males. These exchanges have come about spontaneously and naturally. In contrast, I have never had such an exchange of ideas with females, for the following reasons. Females have nothing to say that applies to my activities. They cannot understand that such activities are possible. Or they are a part of the "masses" who oppose and have tried to discourage my activities.

The great divergence between myself and females comes in the area where each individual is responsible for what he or she is; the area in which one must choose oneself and the principles with which one will be identified. This area is certainly not a matter of intelligence or academic degrees. Further, the fact that society has denied many opportunities to females at one time or another is not involved here. (My occupation has no formal prerequisites, no institutional barriers to entry. One enters it by defining oneself as being in it. Yet no female has chosen to enter it. Or consider such figures as Galileo and Galois. By the standards of their contemporaries, these individuals were engaged in utterly ridiculous, antisocial pursuits. Society does not give anybody the "opportunity" to engage in such pursuits. Society tries to prevent everybody from being a Galileo or Galois. To be a Galileo is really a matter of choosing sides, of choosing to take a certain stand.)

Let me be specific about my own experiences. When I distributed the prospectus for The Journal of Indeterminate Mathematical Investigations to graduate students at the Courant Institute in the fall of 1967, the most negative reactions came from the females. The mere fact that I wanted to invent a mathematics outside of academic mathematics was in and of itself offensive and revolting to them. Since the academic status of these females was considerably higher than my own, the disagreement could only be considered one of values.

The field of art provides an even better example, because there are many females in this field. In the summer of 1969 I attended a meeting of the women's group of the Art Workers Coalition in New York. Many of the women there had seen my Down With Art pamphlet. All the females who have seen this pamphlet have reacted negatively, and it is quite clear what their attitude is. They believe that they are courageously defending modern art against a philistine. They consider me to be a crank who needs a "modern museum art appreciation course." The more they are pressed, the more proudly do they defend "Great Art." Now the objective validity of my

opposition to art is absolutely beyond question. To defend modern art is precisely what a hopeless mediocrity would consider courageous. Again, it is clear that the opposition between myself and females is in the area where one must choose one's values.

I have found that what I really have to do to make a favorable impression on females is to conceal or suspend my activities--the most important part of my life; and to adopt a facade of conformity. Thus, I perceive females as persons who cannot function in my occupation. I perceive them as being like an employment agency, like an institution to which you have to present a conformist facade. Females can be counted on to represent the most "social, human" point of view, a point of view which, as I have explained, is distant from my own. (In March 1970, at the Institute for Advanced Study, the mathematician Dennis Johnson said to me that he would murder his own mother, and murder all his friends, if by doing so he could get the aliens to take him to another star and show him a higher civilization. My own position is the same as Johnson's.)

It follows that my perception of sex is totally different from that of others. The depictions of sex in the mass media are completely at variance with my own experience. I object to pornography in particular because it is like deceptive advertising for sex; it creates the impression that the physical aspect of sex can be separated from human personalities and social interaction. Actually, if most people can separate sex from personality, it is because they are so average that their values are the same as everybody else's. In my case, although I am a captive audience for females for physical reasons, the disparity between my values and theirs overrides the physical attraction I feel for them. It is hard enough to present a facade of conformity in order to deal with an employment agency, but the thought of having to maintain such a facade in a more intimate relationship is completely demoralizing.

What conclusions can be drawn by comparing the creep theory with my later experience? First, some individuals who are unquestionably creeps as far as the surface traits are concerned simply may not be led to the deeper values I described. They may not have the talent to get anything positive out of their involuntary situation; or their aspirations may be so conformist that they do not see their involuntary situation as a positive opportunity. Many creeps are female, but all the evidence indicates that they have the same values I have attributed to other females--values which are hard to reconcile with the deeper creep values.

As for the positive creep values, I may have had them even before I began to care about whether females accepted me. For me, these values may have been the cause, not the effect, of surface creepiness. They are closely

related to the values that underlie my activities. It is not necessary to appear strangely dressed, childish, unassertive, awkward, and lacking in confidence in order to achieve the positive creep values. (I probably emphasized surface creep traits during my youth in order to dissociate myself from conformist opinion at a time when I hadn't yet had the chance to make a full substantive critique of it.) Even sex, in and of itself, might not be incompatible with the creep inner life; what makes it incompatible is the female personality and female social values, which in real life cannot be separated from sex and are the predominant aspect of it.

Having cast off the surface traits of the creep, I can now see that whether I make a favorable impression on females really depends on whether I conceal my occupation. Celibacy is an effect of my occupation; it does not have the role of a primary cause that the creep theory attributed to it. However, it does have consequences of its own. In the context of the entire situation I have described, it constitutes an absolute dividing line between myself and humanity. It does seem to be closely related to the deeper creep values, especially the one of living in a child's world.

As for the sexual neutralization advocated in the creep theory, to find a procedure which actually achieves the stated objective without having all sorts of unacceptable side effects would be an enormous undertaking. It is not feasible as a minor operation developed for a single person. Further, as the human species comes to have vast technological capabilities, many special interest groups will want to tinker with human social biology, each in a different way, for political reasons. I am no longer interested in petty tinkering with human biology. As I make it clear in other writings, I am in favor of building entities which are actually superior to humans, and which avoid the whole fabric of human biosocial defects, not just one or two of them.