

# EXTRACTS from Film Three

## TEACHERS' NOTES: *Sex & Ethics*: Film Three

### *Utilitarianism*

When *Utilitarianism* Part Two finishes ask your students to:

1. Write or sketch down the most memorable image that sticks in their mind. Show a friend their image and explain the reason why they chose it. Discuss what they consider to be the most important point in the film. REPORT their findings back to the rest of the class.
2. Think back over what they have just seen. If your students were able to have a discussion with ANYONE *appearing* in the film WHO would they want to most talk to? WHAT would be the first question they would ask their chosen subject?

The three films are:

1. "*Pleasure & Pain*"  
{Time-code: 00:06 – 1:09}
2. "*Publish & be Damned*"  
{Time-code: 3:12 – 4:50}
3. "*Perversion for Profit & Porn Again!*"  
{Time-code: 8:34 – 11:47}

Each short film is followed with filmed discussion by 17 year old students

#### *"Pleasure & Pain"*

Given the way that normal moral behaviour is sometimes threatened by the violence and anarchy of war, any act, however brutal and sadistic, can become possible. A platoon of American soldiers, dehumanised by months of ferocious fighting during the Vietnam War, come to a village for rest. After an evening of heavy drinking four of them scout the village for sex and end up gang raping a young woman. If right moral behaviour is ultimately about bringing the greatest amount of happiness to the greatest number of people, is the case of the four soldiers experiencing sexual pleasure, at the expense of one woman, ethically acceptable? Can any

crime be justified by the utilitarian principle of the greatest happiness for the greatest number?

*"Publish & be Damned!"*

In the 1940's an American professor called Alfred Kinsey interviewed tens of thousands of people about their sex lives in order to find out what was going on behind close doors. Dealing with a generation unaccustomed to talking about their sexual behavior this was no easy task and so to protect individual privacy Kinsey made sure that personal identities remained anonymous. While the Kinsey report was groundbreaking and became a best seller it shocked a whole generation. However controversy surrounded the report as some critics argued that some data obtained, was from people who had had sexual relationships with children and therefore the Report should not have been published. However. In Kinsey's defence the Kinsey Institute said:

*"Kinsey did not carry out experiments on children; he did not hire, collaborate, or persuade people to carry out experiments on children. The bulk of this information was obtained from adults recalling their own childhoods. Some was from parents who had observed their children, some from teachers who had observed children interacting or behaving sexually, and Kinsey stated that there were nine men who he had interviewed who had sexual experiences with children who had told him about how the children had reacted".*

But sixty years on questions remain as to whether Kinsey should have reported possible paedophiles to the authorities?

*"Perversion for Profit"*

*"It is better to be a human dissatisfied than a pig satisfied, better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied."*

*{John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, 1863}*

*"Pornography and sex deviation have always been with mankind. But now consider another fact. Never in the history of the world have the merchants of obscenity, the teachers of unnatural sex acts had available to them the modern facilities for disseminating this filth. They lack the moral standards and value of our Judeo - Christian heritage. They not only oppose the principles of that heritage which has given us our rich institutions and laws but they advocate their overthrow. In the past few years this obscenity and salacious traffic of newsstand literature has become increasingly worse not*

*only in content but also in volume. This traffic continues to increase and flourish for only one reason – it is big business. Through this material today's youth can be stimulated to sexual activities for which he has no legitimate outlet. He is even enticed into a world of homosexuals, lesbians, sadists, masochists and other sex deviants. A Major fact that makes youngsters prime targets of this printed filth is the natural curiosity of youth about the mysterious force of sex. They constantly portray abnormal sexual behaviour as being normal. They glorify unnatural sex acts – they tell youngsters that its smart, its thrilling, it provides kicks to be a homosexual, a sadist and every other sort of deviant. Oh God deliver us from evil".*

{Citizens for Decent Literature, 1964}

### *"Porn again"*

Today worldwide, the industry is worth \$96 billion a year, more than the revenue of top technical companies Microsoft, Google, Yahoo and Apple combined. There are over four million websites dedicated to pornography on the internet which in terms of hardcore content has been called "the crack cocaine of sexual addiction". Every day there are as estimated sixty eight million search engine requests for hard core sex. Material that was sold under the counter and out of sight of the law forty years ago- is now widely available. Supporters of the industry argue that adults have the right to view pornographic material pornography brings pleasure to millions of people and harms no-one.

#### Watchwords

The following words and phrases have been used in these films, sometimes more than once. They are useful words and phrases to get to know. Knowing what they mean will improve your general level of understanding and self expression. You might know some of them but the ones you don't, be sure to check up on:

The principle of utility; the age of reason; utilitarianism; moral criterion; the utility or hedonic calculus; qualitative; quantative; intellectual pleasures; act utilitarianism; rule utilitarianism; the harm principle; higher and lower pleasures; ambiguous.

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