
Kurt Vonnegut

WRITING

I have read much of the heart-rending testimony extracted from victims of sexual abuse at meetings of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography. It is clear to me that our Government must be given the power to suppress the words and images which are the causes of sexually motivated insanity and crimes. As the Bible says: "In the beginning was the word."

I myself make my living with words, and I am now ashamed. In view of the terrible damage freely circulated ideas can do to a society, and particularly to innocent children, I beg my government to delete from my works all thoughts which might be dangerous. I want the help of our elected leaders in bringing my thoughts into harmony with their own and thus into harmony with the thoughts of those who elected them. That is democracy.

Attempting to make amends at this late date, I call to the attention of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, and God bless the attorney general, the fundamental piece of obscenity from which all others spring, the taproot of the deadly poisonous tree. Kill the taproot and the tree dies, and with it its deadly fruits, which are rape, sodomy, wife-beating, child abuse, divorce, abortion, adultery, gonorrhea, herpes, and AIDS.

I will read this most vile of all pieces of so-called literature aloud, so that those who dare can feel the full force of it. I recommend that all persons under 14, and all persons under 30 not accompanied by an adult, should leave the room. Those remaining who have heart trouble or respiratory difficulties, or who are prone to

KURT VONNEGUT's latest novel is *Galapagos*. In 1974 *Slaughterhouse Five* was burned in the school furnace in *Drake, North Dakota*.

commit rape at the slightest provocation, may want to stick their fingers in their ears. And what I ask you to endure so briefly now is what the selfless members of the pornography commission do day after day for the good of our children. I am simply going to dip you in filth, and pull you out of it and wash you off immediately. At terrible risk of infection, they have to wallow in pornography. They are so fearless. We might think of them as sort of sewer astronauts.

All right. Everybody ready? Tighten your G-strings. Here we go:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

That Godless loop of disgusting sexuality, friends and neighbors, happens to be a basic law of this country. How could this have happened? Some communistic, pederastic, wife-beating congressman, while we weren't watching, must have tacked it onto the Rivers and Harbors Bill. It should be expunged with all possible haste, in order that innocent children can be safe again.

Adolf Hitler blamed the Jews for inspiring every sort of sexual ugliness in Germany, so he tried to kill them all. Say what you like about him, incidentally, it can't be denied that he led an exceedingly clean life sexually. In the end, he made an honest woman of his only sexual partner, Eva Braun.

Oh dear—have I slipped into pornography yet again? It is so easy to do.

Hitler was wrong about the Jews. It is unclean

images which are responsible for unclean sexuality.

In order to protect innocent German children, all he had to do was get rid of the First Amendment. In no way can this be interpreted as an anti-Semitic act. The authors of that amendment, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, were not Jews.

It is not enough that sex crimes of every sort are already against the law, and are punished with admirable severity. It is up to our leaders, and particularly to our attorney general, to persuade a large part of our citizenry that even the most awful sex crimes are perfectly legal, and even celebrated in some godless quarters, because of the permissiveness of our Constitution. Only then will an aroused and thoroughly misinformed citizenry rise up in righteous wrath to

smash the First Amendment—and many other only slightly less offensive parts of the Bill of Rights.

Once the findings of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography are published for all to see, whether they can read or not, what sort of American would dare to defend liberty, whose cost is so horrible? I'll tell you what kind of an American, friends and neighbors: the sort of American who would rape a three-year-old girl, drench her in lighter fluid, set her ablaze, and throw her off a fire escape.

As we used to say in geometry class back in public school when I was a boy: "Q.E.D.—quod erat demonstrandum."

I thank you for your attention. □

Colleen Dewhurst

DRAMA

Actors' Equity was dismayed to see that the people who had been testifying at the Meese Commission did not include theater organizations, playwrights, actors, writers, everybody who affected our profession, which is probably the true victim of the onslaught that we see now because we deal in free speech, in the extension of ideas, in terms of expressing the human condition as it is and as the writer sees it and as the citizen of the United States sees it.

Actors' Equity began to approach the commission over and over again to ask that one of us, as a representative, be allowed to testify. We received no answer. And we continued. Finally,

COLLEEN DEWHURST, one of the theater's leading actresses, is President of Actors' Equity.

we received an answer, saying yes, we could testify—but on the final day in New York, at 6:45 I believe. And our darling, good, Equity said that's not a good time for an actor to speak, at 6:45, God forbid you should have a job. Plus the fact that she'll have no audience. So as of last week the commission said that we could speak at 1:45. I am particularly interested because we are representing a membership that would be one of the most threatened by having their work suddenly termed obscene or not obscene. The artist knows better than anyone that one man's obscenity is another man's delight.

When Mrs. Warren's *Profession* was written in 1896 by George Bernard Shaw, it was shown only in private theaters in England. It was not