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Sexuality Redefined

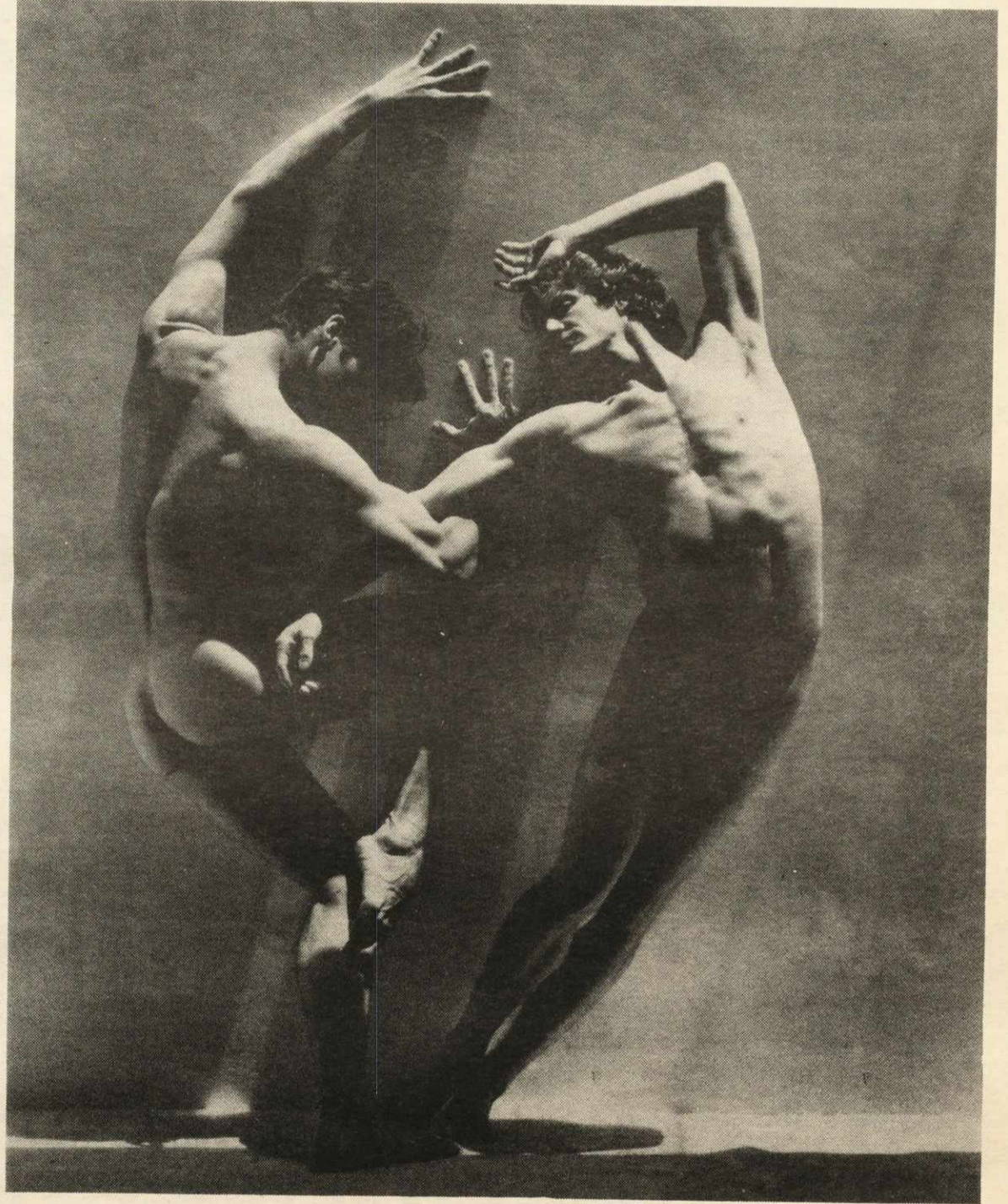
There seems to be a preoccupation with sexuality in Western culture. More accurately, I should say sex. The problem is that sexuality so often becomes reduced to the act of sex itself, denying all other aspects, manifestation and expressions of sexuality. According to Webster's Third New International Dictionary (© 1981) sexuality is:

The condition of having sex; the condition of having reproductive functions dictated by the union of male and female; sexual activity; the condition, potential or state of readiness of orgasm with regard to sexual activity.

The definition is based on the physical experience of a heterosexual couple. It does not allow for expression outside of this narrow view to be considered legitimate and is inherently heterosexist, androcentric, alienating, limiting and inadequate. Unfortunately, this is what most often educates the public sphere. Hence, when they think of the term homosexual, it seems as if they have a predisposition to consider only the physical experience of two people of the same sex and consequently, assume that it is illegitimate, unnatural and abominable.

However, there exists the problem of dealing practically with the implications of such an interpretation of a same sex couple. It would appear as if it is necessary to redefine sexuality and make it known that the existing definition is fundamentally flawed and inadequate. It is necessary that sexuality incorporate an emotional aspect and character in its definition. Although this is difficult, since we have been preoccupied with the physical account of sexual expression and have neglected to develop a vocabulary of emotive sexual expression, it is necessary for a true understanding of sexuality. We must also reject and eliminate the heterosexist bias which has permeated our concept of sexuality making us seem less than adequate and more than alienated.

The first fundamental move requires that people recognize that the above definition does not wholly reflect or incorporate many expressions of sexuality. I consider myself a sexual being and that expression can take many forms: in the manner in which I sit, the way I speak, the intention of my body movements, how I interact with others, in an embrace, etc. If sexual intercourse, or fucking as I call it, was the only recognized form of sexual expression then, by that definition, I would not be a sexual being as I do not participate in such activity. Am I to be denied my sexuality on that basis?



Redefining sexuality may be a bit more difficult. Nonetheless, recognizing that sexuality can not be reduced to a physical act necessarily assumes that sexual expression can manifest and present itself in many forms and through various modes, some of which I have mentioned above. This re-definition requires a less rigid form. We must adopt a definition which allows for those who express themselves sexually, beyond the physical, that incorporates and includes all manner and manifestation of such expression. This necessarily requires an interpretive definition. Not one that can be pitted against people but one which allows people to recognize their expression of sexuality as legitimate, real and full.

With this comes an interesting reinterpretation of sexuality. It no longer becomes an exclusive manner of expression restricted to and for a limited few. It allows and becomes an expression that incorporates and includes many forms that have in the past been marginalized and considered illegitimate and invalid expressions of sexuality. This has the effect of empowering people with a sense of worth and value never before accorded them.

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