

# Mom, What's Sex?

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Throughout this project, I have been questioning the ways in which my body has been governed, why, and by whom. I have also been contemplating what it means to have sex as a young adult, and how it can be safely done, both emotionally and physically. In my research, I explored the systems that have kept me sexually ignorant, and found a new way of looking at them, hoping to ultimately dismantle them. Intersectionality, with an emphasis on feminism and race, has been the primary way in which I have looked at these structures.

Oddly enough, while researching, I stumbled upon Satanism and its recent role in the modern political world. It holds a role as an activist group that fights for the rights of various political minorities, such as women, the LGBTQ+ community, and black lives. I examined Satanism as a form of pedagogy to be used in combating our current government/society and its opposition to promoting healthy female sexuality.

This installation explores the sacredness of being female in its most natural physical form. The use of glass allows the figure to exist in its own space, showing the confidence found in being vulnerable, and the self-assurance that all women need to possess in order to be in control of their own bodies in sexual spaces. The upside down cross beneath the circular window represents both the female symbol ♀ and Satanism. It is a symbol of eternal rebellion against tyranny and, in this case, depicts the suppression of female sexuality. Allowing the viewer to see two different (yet similar) paintings on either side of the glass demonstrates the contradictory dichotomy that exists when it comes to sexual identity: natural expression versus unnatural chastisement.

Young women must protect the right to their own bodies, and reject dominant narratives that tell them to deny their sexuality. Knowing and understanding one's physical body - within a personal context, as well as a social one - is a prerequisite to fully knowing and finding confidence within oneself.

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At this point in my young adulthood I have been thinking about and questioning the ways my body has been governed since birth, by whom, and why. I came to realize that even my parents' way of parenting has been subconsciously predetermined by our anti-sex government and the institutions that are funded by it. As an inherently religious political force, the American government stands in opposition to premarital sex, and promiscuity, specifically by teenagers. My own school, Riverdale, taught a relatively liberal sex-ed course. However, my teachers still managed to barely scratch the surface of what it means to have sex as a young adult, and how to do so safely emotionally and physically. Due to lack of information about anything other than contraception, and abstinence being the only 100% effective form of birth control, I feel cheated out of a real sex education. I feel robbed of pivotal years of my sexual adolescence. Once a teenager goes through puberty I believe they have the right to know what those hormonal changes mean in a sexual context, and how to handle them. No young person should be condemned for exploring and inquiring about their own bodies from the ages of ten to sixteen. I must have a right to the complete authority over my own body and sexual practices, however, the American government institutionalizes forces that keep me from learning about my body by promoting abstinence education programs. On the other end of the discussion, there are private media companies, such as Pornhub (and even newscasters), that generate and exploit false images of how women's bodies should look and operate for the pleasure of someone other than herself. If my body doesn't generate ratings for being "just the right amount of slutty" or "just the right amount of professional, yet bangable" then I'm not a woman worth looking at. The triviality of words like "slutty" and "bangable" make the fact that we would consider disregarding a woman for exactly that, something so infinitely unimportant, seem absolutely imbecilic. I don't find any of this to be amusing, nor correct. I want to not only explore the systems that keep me sexually ignorant, but also find a new way of looking at them to ultimately dismantle them. Intersectionality, with an emphasis on feminism and race has typically been the lens through which I looked at these structures. Oddly enough I stumbled upon Satanism and its recent role in the modern political world as an activist group fighting for the rights of various political minorities such as women, the LGBTQ+ community, and black lives. In this search for new perspectives, I examined Satanism in detail as another form of pedagogy to be used in combating our current government.

The birth of America was marked by the signing of the Declaration of Independence, a declaration that, through the use of religious language, set into motion our country's morals. The declaration states that our right to claim independence is due to "the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle [us]."<sup>1</sup> Here, our right to even assert why we wanted to be independent of Britain was due to the power that was given to us by "Nature's God," a religious figure. In the Declaration, it also states that, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men,"<sup>2</sup> which professes that the very human rights the American people were afforded was by an ambiguous "Creator." The "Creator" is another interchangeable word for God, just as "Father" or "Lord." While parts of the Declaration of Independence were borrowed from and inspired by Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man*, using religiously inspired words as the basis for erecting a nation suggests that our founding fathers carried religious morals that Americans were expected to uphold. The issue

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<sup>1</sup> *The Declaration of Independence, 1776*

<sup>2</sup> *The Declaration of Independence, 1776*

with morality predicated off of the Christian religion is its potential to be exclusionary. If certain people choose not to follow or uphold ethics that are in accordance with this religion, then they get cast out of society and ridiculed.

Nymphomania was a “scientific” term coined in 1841 to describe a disease of the female reproductive organs that had negative effects on the psyche. While the disease is described as physical, the true issue was its immorality. During the nineteenth century Victorian Era morality was running rampant not only through Britain, but through American as well. These morals were “based on a group of principles or standard of moral conduct including practicing sexual restraint, zero tolerance of criminal activity and a stern demeanor.”<sup>3</sup> The regulation of sex during this time was essential to many people in order to avoid slipping back into the lawless 17th and 18th centuries which occurred after the rule of Puritanism in England. The Victorian Era mimicked Puritanism in its pursuit of a discrete, faith and work heavy lifestyle. Science at the time was perceived to be “in beautiful accordance”<sup>4</sup> with religious faith. Thus the basis for the symptoms of nymphomania were women acting out of their predetermined moral character, in which the normal woman was “not very much troubled with sexual feeling of any kind”<sup>5</sup> noted by William Acton PhD. Science was limited at the time due to a lack of technology, so doctors relied on their intense sense of morality as guided by their religion. God calls for women to be chaste, to have sex only within the sacred bond of marriage, and not to give into temptations of any kind, especially that of the flesh. The Geneva bible was looked to during the time of the Puritans and noted that, “Likewise let the wives be subject to their husbands, that even they which obey not the word, may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives. While they behold your pure conversation which is with fear: Whose appareling let it not be that outward, with braided hair, and gold put about, or in putting on of apparel: But let it be the hidden man of the heart, *which consisteth* in the incorruption of a meek and quiet spirit, which is before God a thing much set by. For even after this manner in time past did the holy women, which trusted in God, tire themselves, and were subject to their husbands.”<sup>6</sup>

Throughout this time period, sex was feared and considered distasteful as it signified a lack of moral willpower, that one was unable to act in accordance to their religion. People of the bourgeois practiced extreme self-discipline, modesty, and moderation because they were looked at as the face of goodness. Women were held to this standard strictly, as they were expected to be pure and to keep men’s desires at bay by controlling their own. The female sphere only consisted of childrearing and comforting husbands. *Woman’s Rights*, a short doctrine written during the 19th century, indicated the accepted actions and feelings women were allowed to have. It notes that woman’s most profound purpose “which God hath given, The right to comfort man on earth And smooth his path to heaven.”<sup>7</sup> Here, it is obvious that even during this period, one completely devoid of sexual nuance, women we’re still considered only useful when subject to the will of men. The Victorian Era called for modest dress and silence about anything that even alluded to sex or sexuality. Foucault, a philosopher, notes that in this particular era “repression operated as a sentence to disappear, but also as an injunction to silence, an affirmation of nonexistence, and, by implication, an admission that there was nothing to know.”<sup>8</sup> Foucault makes it clear that Victorians refused to acknowledge that sexuality was a true component of humanity at all.

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.victorian-era.org/victorian-era-morality.html>

<sup>4</sup>[www.victorianweb.org/science/science&religion.html](http://www.victorianweb.org/science/science&religion.html)

<sup>5</sup> [www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gender-roles-in-the-19th-century](http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gender-roles-in-the-19th-century)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+3&version=GNV>

<sup>7</sup> *Woman’s Rights*. M.C.M.R.

<sup>8</sup> *The History of Sexuality*. Michel Foucault

Thus when women consulted male doctors claiming, in the case of one woman in 1855, that she finds a “struggle between [her] moral sense and lascivious longings<sup>9</sup>” she was immediately diagnosed as on the verge of madness. What this woman was complaining about wasn’t malicious. She was simply suffering from what we would define now as “sexual frustration.” Scientifically, nymphomania is unfounded. To me, nymphomania seems to stem from a religious, prudish and misogynistic culture not well educated in healthy sexual relations. The mystery of female sexuality is really a fear of female anatomy. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, there were some doctors that “recognized the role that social strictures played in limiting women’s sexual expression.<sup>10</sup>” Behind the veil of being tightly bound to their religion, I do believe that doctors of this time knew, on some level, that being able to act on these ‘impure thoughts’ would ‘cure’ these women they believed were lost to society. A doctor spoke up at the 1869 Boston Gynecological Society gathering where a woman diagnosed with nymphomania was brought so that her body, behaviors, and possibly competence could be examined. The doctor professed to the others that, “If this woman could go...to a house of prostitution, and spend every night for a fortnight at sexual labor, it might prove her salvation.<sup>11</sup>” While this statement is quite crass, considering that this man suggested she “pimp herself out,” it was against the popular opinion that engaging in sexual acts would make the symptoms better. Clearly this doctor had made the seemingly simple connection that releasing sexual tension might actually be the answer, rather than continually forcing women and their sexual desires into a corner. However, religious commentary on abstinence, sexuality, and womanhood were, and continue to be, so strongly imposed in our society that it is nearly impossible for a woman to have sex without being branded as some type of “maniac.” Even so, it still rings true that no god nor any doctor has the right to lock a woman up for exploring sexual desire.

In the present age, the American government still employs religious morality to eradicate the development of adolescent sexual identity. Sexual education was taught in American schools as early as 1912 as a way to introduce and guide teens through puberty and creating their sexual identity. Unfortunately, exploration was not on the list when it came to sex-ed and continues not to be. Abstinence education is a religiously fueled program and, according to Senator Denton who proposed the Adolescent Family Life Act, “America’s ‘top priority should be to recover our most fundamental founding belief that our national objectives, policies, and laws should reflect obedience to the will of Almighty God.<sup>12</sup>’” The Family Life Act was passed during the Reagan presidency and funded various abstinence-only programs which invade half of America’s public schools. Denton’s comment confirms the way in which the government still upholds religious morals, and conflates church and state by funding mandatory religious sex-ed programs in schools. The unfortunate part is that it’s not as though these ‘morals’ are sacred, rather they are soiled by the greed and business that hides behind them. These programs “are a new and completely legal way that the federal and state governments funnel hundreds of millions of dollars to religious groups that support them politically.<sup>13</sup>” Basically, teenagers are being lied to about the effectiveness of contraception, the disgrace and shame of sex, and the liberation of cultivating their own sexual identity in order to grease the pockets of religious and political

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<sup>9</sup> *A Treatise on the Nature and Treatment of Seminal Diseases, Impotency and Other Kindred Affections*, Dr. Homer Bostwick. 1855

<sup>10</sup> *Nymphomania: A History*, Carol Groneman. 2000

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *America’s War on Sex*, p.8, Marty Klein PhD. 2006

<sup>13</sup> *America’s War on Sex*, p.12, Marty Klein PhD. 2006

bigots. The Adolescent Family Life Act was not the only federally generated initiative supporting abstinence programs. SPRANS-CBAE (Special Programs of Regional and National Significance Community-Based Abstinence Education) is the largest federally funded abstinence initiative, launched in 2000. Between fiscal year 2001 and 2006, funding for CBAE increased 450% amounting to \$113 million<sup>14</sup>. That's hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayer money funneling into a program even when "80% of the abstinence-only curriculum, used by over two-thirds of SPRANS grantees in 2003, contain false, misleading, or distorted information about reproductive health."<sup>15</sup> Among the distorted information are obscenities such as, "the popular claim that 'condoms help prevent the spread of STDs,' is not supported by the data,<sup>16</sup>" or that "exposure to sweat and tears as risk factors for HIV transmission."<sup>17</sup> Abstinence education is not at all rooted in fact, so how can I believe that these programs have any intention other than limiting my sexual growth if they purposefully provide me with scientifically inaccurate education? Planned Parenthood released a factsheet entitled *The Truth About Condoms* with the goal of clearing away the confusion intentionally created around condoms as an effective contraceptive by religiously motivated political propaganda. It's stated that, "In June 2000, a number of federal agencies including the CDC...confirmed that condoms are the best method for sexually active people to prevent STIs."<sup>18</sup> Ultimately, by funding initiatives such as CBAE the government is purposefully denying critical information about the very health of its citizens of youth and, in my opinion, in direct violation of my right to all information concerning the health of my body.

I was unaware of the fact that I don't have my own sexual identity. The way I currently and probably would have continually engaged in sex was not formulated of my own being, rather curated for me by my school, the government and media, which feels incredibly deceitful to me. How can one of the most intimate acts to be committed between two consenting individuals be converted into currency and votes? How do I fight back? How do I reclaim a stake in my own body and sexual expression? Since sex in America seems to be intrinsically linked to religion, maybe I should turn religion on its head. I don't quite understand what is so powerful about religion that it would lead an entire government to dole out false information to its youth about their bodies. Nietzsche asks in his *On the Genealogy of Morals*, "And could anyone, on the other hand, using all the ingenuity of his intellect, think up a more *dangerous* bait? Something to equal the enticing, intoxicating, benumbing, corrupting power of that symbol of the 'holy cross', to equal that horrible paradox of a 'God on the Cross', to equal that mystery of an unthinkable final act of extreme cruelty and self- crucifixion of God for the *salvation of mankind?*"<sup>19</sup> I gather from this a sense of self enslavement to religion. We created something that we feel so indebted to that we would do anything for it: deny ourselves indulgences, deny our sexuality, condemn and ostracize our own kin. I think Nietzsche's use of "bait" and "intoxication" speaks to the idea of the all consuming nature of religion in the first place. In this sense, it seems as though if one forgoes their religion, they would lose sight of their morality and, in turn, their humanity. What sense does that make though? I think it would be better to disentangle ourselves with a religion this unforgiving, or with a religion at all. I think only when we have released ourselves from that

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.siecus.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewpage&pageid=1340&nodeid=1>

<sup>15</sup> United States House of Representatives. *The Content of Federally Funded Abstinence-Only Education Programs* 2004

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Planned Parenthood. *The Truth About Condoms*

<sup>19</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals*, p.18

self-imposed jailer will we be able to accept ourselves fully and wholly for the imperfect, yet extraordinary beings that we are, especially those who fall outside of the lines of religion in the first place.

Perhaps engaging in a Satanic mindset provides an alternate way of dismantling our sexually intolerant, religiously inspired moral society. There have been multiple factions of Satanic groups, but the one I researched is the most contemporary, The Satanic Temple. Erected in 2012, TST defines itself as a nontheistic religious group. The term ‘non theistic’ refers to the idea that the question of God has no real weight within one’s line of belief. Essentially, whether God exists or does not exist “should make no crucial difference in how we ought to live, how we ought to treat our fellow beings. My ethical obligations and potentialities—and yours—remain exactly the same.<sup>20</sup>” As a non theistic group, TST already stands in opposition to the theistic morals America subscribes to, which is essential to beginning to breakdown religiously inspired fear of sexuality. Originally, I found the idea of non theistic religion confusing as I always believed that religion had to concern God no matter what, which is why I’ve always been so averse to it. Upon researching the definition of religion I found that I was wrong. “Religion is a cause, principle, or system of beliefs held to with ardor and faith” as defined by Merriam Webster. In this case, religion is any idea or set of beliefs one subscribes importance to. Satanists of TST follow several tenants, one of which reads as follows: “The struggle for justice is an ongoing and necessary pursuit that should prevail over laws and institutions.<sup>21</sup>” This tenant is reminiscent of the Declaration of Independence in that it highlights the fact that the people of a government should be able to overturn it when it begins to encroach on their freedoms, though here it doesn’t use theistic-based language that relies on an God figure. What Satan represents to Satanists and TST is a symbol of “the Eternal Rebel” which nods to the idea that there is no such thing as conquering God, for that in and of itself brings another Godlike system into place. Instead, fighting for justice and equality becomes a process that continues to shift and adjust to new challenges. TST also looks to Anatole France, a romantic Satanist, who wrote “The Revolt of The Angels,” the story of the war in Heaven. In it lies the core of Satanism. At the very end of the book, Satan has a revelation showing that the way to defeat God is not by displacing him. Satan notes that “As to ourselves, celestial spirits, sublime demons, we have destroyed Ialdabaoth, our Tyrant, if in ourselves we have destroyed Ignorance and Fear...it is in ourselves and in ourselves alone that we must attack and destroy Ialdabaoth.<sup>22</sup>” These particular lines struck me as essential, not only because they are nearly the last in the book, but also because they bring up such a profound point: to break a cycle of tyranny, you must end it within yourself first. Once intolerance is combated within themselves, that will then be the catalyst for change in the surrounding world. Satanists believe in the eternal struggle for justice for all peoples, as they mention in their mission statement that, “The mission of The Satanic Temple is to encourage benevolence and empathy among all people...advocate practical common sense and justice, and be directed by the human conscience to undertake noble pursuits guided by the individual will.<sup>23</sup>” This statement for me initiates the right discussions that will help me, and maybe others, to look at the harmful ways our government restricts access to, knowledge about, and the freedom to engage with our sexuality.

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<sup>20</sup> L. Ericson, Edward. *What is Non Theistic Religion?* (

<sup>21</sup> *The Satanic Temple*, <https://thesatanictemple.com/pages/learn>

<sup>22</sup> *The Revolt of The Angels*, p. 282, Anatole France. 1914

<sup>23</sup> *The Satanic Temple*, <https://thesatanictemple.com/pages/about-us>

Originally, I believed that tyranny was a system of authority that could only occur outside of myself; I realized recently that I am wrong. What makes our current government and its 'morals' so appalling to me is the fact that it works in a seemingly coincidental cycle with the oversexed world of advertisement, media, and social media alike. I don't agree with abstinence by any means, but I certainly don't agree with the way in which the porn, fashion, movie, and even food industries sexualize and oppress women. While "sex" was once considered something women were meant to tuck far, far away into the private sphere, modern-day media demands that women be two things: "fuckable and saleable."<sup>24</sup> I wouldn't say that I subscribe to this notion at all. I don't "sell myself" to a virtual audience using the social media, trying to recreate, with my own body, the women and girls I see on TV, in ads, music videos and the like. Then I thought again. I do, don't I? I own Facebook, Instagram, and I've been on Tinder before. I may not wear miniskirts or coat my face in foundation every day to make my skin glow like honey, but I do concern myself with my appearance. I want guys to notice me, I want other girls to think I have style, and it is true that the "likes" I get on my photos can sometimes sway my mood.

Any girl who uses social media markets herself, it's just the way these apps are set up and no one is teaching us any different. If schools are teaching abstinence, thus refusing to give any real or accurate information on the actual mechanics of sex, much less the surrounding emotions, then where are girls getting the information? Not everyone commits to abstinence; in fact, "Over 90% of Americans have sex before marriage."<sup>25</sup> Essentially, a majority of that 90% of Americans seek out information about sex outside of school, in the media, and online. What's worse is that the porn industry, worth \$97 billion<sup>26</sup>, is the number one most readily accessible 'guidebook' for sex. The industry thrives off of catering to male sexual pleasure by way of the sexual degradation and exploitation of women. In practice, not only do men think women should be "used" during sex, but young women are conditioned to be instruments for pleasure...that pleasure is never their own. If that's all you know, why wouldn't it be true for you? Why wouldn't those images embed themselves at the core of your developing 'sexuality'?

Feminists everywhere internalized these notions when women started reclaiming 'hot' and 'sexy.' Peggy Orenstein comments on this phenomenon in *Girls and Sex*, "whereas mid-literate, feminist-identified women saw their objectification as something to protest, today's often see it as a personal choice, something that can be taken on intentionally as an expression rather than an imposition of sexuality."<sup>27</sup> If modern-day feminists can't see a way to subvert the forces that capitalize on the objectification of young women, of themselves, then isn't the logical answer to 'own' these stereotypes? Wouldn't life be easier for me if I say that I like shaving my legs every other day because they feel *so smooth*, rather than admit the fact that I know I'm seeing a guy later in the week and if the clothes come off I don't want him to see my hairy legs? Young women of today have been forced to internalize popular opinions about their bodies because they don't feel as though there's a way out. Girls want to be successful, and if all it took was the highest GPA in school, that's what the majority of girls would invest their time in. However, the focus isn't only on smarts, it's on the female body and its perceived sole function of exuding sexuality. Due to this unfortunate reality girls believe that "the fastest route to the top as a woman in a sexist entertainment world (just as for ordinary girls on social media) is to

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<sup>24</sup> *Female Chauvinist Pigs*, Ariel Levy.

<sup>25</sup> *America's War on Sex*, p.21, Marty Klein PhD. 2006

<sup>26</sup> *Girls and Sex*, p.34, Peggy Orenstein. 2016

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 14



package your sexuality, preferably in the most extreme, attention-getting way possible.<sup>28</sup> Girls then become entrapped in a situation where they feel eternally bound to the production of sex versus the actual feeling and enjoyment. Thus we have the making of an inner tyrant: an outside entity that has infiltrated the minds of young women everywhere, seemingly invited in as an honored guest. Arriving at this notion proves to be discouraging, making moving forward look impossible. What makes progression possible though, is the use of different methods and practices to engage and eventually dismantle the targeted problem.

A Satanic practice not only works against our religiously affiliated, anti-sex politics but also promotes a keen sense of self and of individual freedom, compassion, and love. What makes the concept of Satanism radical are the negative connotations that come along with it: evil, darkness, sin, temptation, demons. Ultimately, Satanism is a scapegoat for other religions, letting them off the hook for inciting political and social catastrophes, such as how white supremacy or homophobia is treated as a mental illness. What could be easier than blaming the outcasts, the misunderstood? When examined closely though, Satanism in practice is more benevolent than Christianity at work in our government. Blackmore, a Satanic Temple member told Thrillist, an online media brand, that “this isn’t a role-playing game. This is an academic, historically safe form of Satanic practice.”<sup>29</sup> Beyond the misconceptions regarding voodoo and sacrifice, Satanists are political activists who fight for LGBTQ+ rights, civil rights, and female reproductive rights. The Satanic Temple believes that, “The freedoms of others should be respected, including the freedom to offend. To willfully and unjustly encroach upon the freedoms of another us to forgo your own<sup>30</sup>” and that “People are fallible. If we make a mistake, we should do our best to rectify and resolve any harm that may have been caused.”<sup>31</sup> Our government has consistently violated the rights of its people, especially women; thus, it has rescinded its own right to the respect of the citizens it was meant to serve. I believe our current government has made mistakes that it isn’t willing to rectify. The Trump Administration intends to fund abstinence programs with \$277 million in the 2018 budget plans<sup>32</sup>, the most ever given to such programs. This funding not only undermines the efforts to reduce federal participation in religiously inspired education taken by the Obama administration, but also furthers our country’s affiliation with theistic religion and its parochial morals. The media also isn’t ready to give up on its sex doll image of women, as a Pornhub pop-up is debuting in SoHo, NYC currently<sup>33</sup>. This pop-up will include a bed with a webcam that live streams to the Pornhub website, encouraging all people who walk in to perpetuate the sexist and degrading stereotypes about women that run rampant on the site. While protesting these occurrences is a plausible approach, only by putting our beliefs into practice will we be able to fully disengage in the perceived morality of this country. Satanism provides a method to do so by applying its tenets to the self, by encouraging empathy for the self, and then for others. In truth, Satanism seeks not to impose a new form of government that forces all to adhere to self-compassion. Instead, Satanism encourages all to

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<sup>28</sup> *Girls and Sex*, p.27-28, Peggy Orenstein. 2016

<sup>29</sup> *Will The Real Satanist Please Stand Up?* Jennifer Swann. 2017

<sup>30</sup> Temple, The Satanic. “Learn.” *The Satanic Temple*, [thesatanictemple.com/pages/learn](https://thesatanictemple.com/pages/learn).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> United States, Congress, Office of Management and Budget. *A New Foundation for American Greatness: Budget of the U.S. Government Fiscal Year 2018*, U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE, 2017, p. 34.

<sup>33</sup> Mai, Andy, et al. “PornHub Debuts Pop-Up Sex Shop .” *NY Daily News*, NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, 24 Nov. 2017, [www.nydailynews.com/new-york/pornhub-debuts-soho-pop-up-sex-shop-black-friday-article-1.3653681](http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/pornhub-debuts-soho-pop-up-sex-shop-black-friday-article-1.3653681).

confront and defeat the tyranny and the God that has been instilled in us through popular propaganda, laws, and institutions.

Young women, must protect their rights to their bodies and reject dominant narratives that tell them to deny their sexuality, right to healthy, safe sex and pleasure. Orenstein brings up a vital point in *Girls and Sex*: knowing and understanding one's physical body-- within not only a personal context but also in a social one--is a prerequisite to fully knowing and being confident in oneself. I know that complete self-confidence is easier said than garnered, and even I am not ready to let go of some of my 'sexualization' embedded so deep inside of me that it feels like I wouldn't be *me* without it. Who am I if I'm not pleasing someone else? I'm not sure if I know how to please myself. I don't even know what being satisfied with myself feels like. I don't expect that Satanism or feminism or any form of social-political subversion will immediately deprogram my well-conditioned mind, but I do think that it will give me the freedom and the opportunity to remove myself from spaces ridden with fabricated messages about me that have no real roots in reality. Whether or not that's a fairytale world or a world that's attainable is unclear to me, but I do know that with my newfound wealth of knowledge, I can't rest on my knees any longer. I cannot practice my same practices, and I cannot relay the same information. Every action I take from this point onwards should be inspired by what I have discovered, and if it isn't that is a burden that will weigh heavy on my heart. This essay is a first step in engaging with my new mindset, and anyone who reads my writing will carry the same weight of knowing. Knowing and *not doing* might be the greatest mortal sin of our time,. This is me, choosing to innovate a new path.