

Sexuality workshops, using pornographic films to desensitize students, have been taking place on many Catholic college campuses and in seminaries.

The moral plague of SAR

By Randy Engel

■ Although most readers of *Homiletic & Pastoral Review* may not be familiar with the term or process known as SAR—Sexual Attitude Restructuring—many will recall the ill-fated Untener affair which involved the use of SAR techniques and the use of SAR sexually explicit films at a Human Sexuality Workshop held at St. John's Seminary in Plymouth, Michigan in the Fall of 1980.

Details of the controversial sexology program for first year theology students were initially released in a lengthy *National Catholic Register* article titled "Sex Seminar Questioned."¹ At the time the workshop took place, the seminary's rector was Rev. Kenneth Untener.

The seminar conducted at St. John's was given by sexual facilitators from the Human Growth Center of Ann Arbor. Workshop topics included heterosexual and homosexual intercourse, masturbation and other human sexual experiences discussed in a "non-judgmental" manner. The two-day lecture series was accentuated by the use of pornographic

films depicting vaginal, oral and anal intercourse including actual penetration by both heterosexual and homosexual couples performing on a giant size waterbed to the meaningful strums of guitars and the twanging of the sitar.

The use of the sexually explicit audiovisual materials was defended by St. John's formation director, Fr. Tom Moore, on the basis that the films were designed to make students "aware of their feelings," and that the "clinical" circumstances under which the films were made "automatically" ruled out the possibility of arousal.²

One month later, the U.S. Coalition for Life, an international pro-life research agency issued a follow-up report on the St. John's program. Based on documentation provided by this writer, the USCL report traced the source of the sex films used at the seminary to a San Francisco outlet owned and operated by the National Sex Forum—the creators of SAR.³

It is very important to understand

however that while both the NCR and USCL stories on the sexology seminar gave a precise accounting of the actual materials and sensitivity-training techniques used, the program was *never* identified as a workshop in Sexual Attitude Restructuring—SAR for short. Even during the Vatican investigation of the Untener affair the true nature of the St. John's sexology seminar never came to light.

It was not until these so called "Human Sexuality Workshops," complete with agendas and audio-visual materials identical to those used at St. John's Seminary, began popping at other Catholic seminaries and college campuses that this writer committed herself to an in-depth investigation into the origin and objectives of the revolutionary attitudinal and behavioral technique known as SAR.

Aim: To popularize pornography

Credit for the creation and development of SAR is correctly given to the National Sex and Drug Forum of San Francisco, an anti-life spinoff of the Exodus Trust, a non-profit California corporation dedicated to "The Coming of Age of Sexology."

The Forum was organized in 1968 by the Reverend Robert "Ted" McIlvenna of the Glide Memorial United Methodist Church for the dual purpose of popularizing the use of pornographic audio-visual media to restructure individual and societal attitudes and behavior in the area of human sexuality and to promote the legalization of mind-altering drugs especially marijuana.⁴

In the early days of the Forum, McIlvenna, a leading organizer of homosexual "rights" in Great Britain, shared

the spotlight with Dr. Joel Fort, a member of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORMAL).⁵ Later many administrative duties of the Forum were assumed by Phyllis Lyon, former President of the international lesbian society known as the Daughters of Bilitis and the Reverend Tom B. Maurer, former President of the San Francisco male homosexual advocacy group—The Society for Individual Rights.⁶

The task of producing and distributing pornographic materials used in SAR programs falls to the Multi-Media Center, the National Sex Forum's "research" arm and the sole distributor of materials developed by the Forum.⁷

In addition to marketing a wide range of sexually explicit films, Multi-Media Center also retails "adult" coloring books of human genitalia, anti-life comic books for children such as *Abortion Eve* and *Fact O'Life Funnies* and a wide range of sex gadgets and masturbation vibrators.

Another important partner in the National Sex Forum complex is the Institute for the Advance Study of Human Sexuality and the American College of Sexologists.

The Institute is the national training center for sexologists and non-professionals seeking to enrich their sex lives. The American College of Sexologists is the certifying and accrediting body affiliated with the Institute and the Forum.⁸

Finally there is The Association of Sexologists (T.A.O.S.) which is designed to promote the professional field of sexology.

Visitors to the Forum, the Multi-Media Center, the Institute, the College, T.A.O.S. and the Exodus Trust can find

them all on the same block of Franklin Street.

While the Institute in conjunction with its sister organization, the National Sex Forum, has gained a well deserved reputation as a national leader in the development of innovative sexual audio-visual materials such as the Creative Sex video cassette program featuring Creative Oral Sex, Creative Sex Fantasies, and the Creative Use of Sex Aids,⁹ the primary function of the Institute for the Advance Study of Human Sexuality remains the training of professionals and non-professionals in the SAR process.

Goal: To alter sexual attitudes

According to the Institute's academic brochure listing its courses of study, the initial SAR Course #101 features fifteen hours of films, slides, music, lectures and group discussion of a wide range of sexuality topics including homosexuality, bisexuality and lesbianism. The Institute's Advance Sexuality Course #201 offers an extended agenda on group sex, child sex, anal sex, sadomasochism and prostitution. Instruction in the use of role playing techniques and psychodrama are also available at the Institute.

On-site courses range in price from \$95.00 for a two-day workshop up to \$2750.00 for those seeking academic degrees in sexology.

During the early development of the Institute's training program, the SAR experience was available either by attending sessions at the San Francisco site or through sexology therapists trained in SAR.

Institute/Forum flyers promoting SAR claim that thousands of physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, sexologists, therapists and counselors, educators,

nurses, and health and social workers, clergy and birth control clinic personnel have taken the SAR courses at the Institute.

The SAR experience has also been packaged for home use. The complete kit contains an *SAR Guide* and sixteen Multi-Media videotapes, and retails for just under \$1000.00.

The *SAR Guide* to be used in conjunction with the films contains instructions on self-examination of genitals, new masturbation techniques, sexual exercises, and experimental techniques of sexual intercourse. Space is given for a personal sex diary-journal in which to record one's sexual experiences and fantasies with self or a member of the opposite or same sex.

The goal of Sexual Attitude Restructuring is fairly self-explanatory—to alter attitudes and behavior of individuals or groups in the realm of human sexuality. However, underlying this statement are assumptions which need some clarification.

One of these assumptions is that it is the birthright of every human being to experience a "meaningful exposure" to a wide range of human sexual behavior including behavior which extends outside of one's one area of experience, i.e., perhaps homosexual acts, group sex, and so forth.

Further SAR is not concerned with the morality or immorality of any type of sexual behavior but purports to leave that decision up to the individual.

The designers of SAR, however, from the very beginning have had a much more complex hidden agenda—one geared *towards* facilitating a paradigm shift in the direction of more liberal attitudes and behavior towards all forms of deviant sexual behavior and *away from*

traditional Christian sexual morals and values related to homosexuality, fornication, masturbation, prostitution, pornography, incest, child and animal sex, abortion and birth control.

Specific details on how the SAR facilitator goes about achieving this attitudinal and behavioral shift in their students or clients were given several years ago in *Sexual Medicine Today* by sexologist Dr. Harold I. Lief.

In response to the question: "Could you describe the learning process that takes place during Sexual Attitude Restructuring (SAR)?" Dr. Lief responded as follows:

The technique is a variant of what is called "implosion," in which the participant is inundated with multiple sensory stimuli—in this case, two or three films depicting various sexual behaviors are shown simultaneously over a concentrated period of several hours. Initially, this allows the medical student to become sensitized to his or her own feelings and to label and identify them internally. . . . After the sensitization process, desensitization occurs. The half-life of erotica is not very long. After several hours, the viewer becomes bored and can't react emotionally anymore. The learning process moves from sensitization to desensitization to integration—integrating one's feelings with new knowledge of the subject.

Dr. Lief concludes with the observation that,

Most human sexuality programs use small-group debriefing after the SAR in which the experience is processed: the feelings evoked by the films are explored. Consensual validation is another learning process that occurs. As one student expresses his feelings about sex which he may consider "way-out," he finds others who share them. This kind of checking out with peers is an essential part of the process!¹⁰

An interesting footnote to the interview was Dr. Lief's admission that after

Mrs. Randy Engel is the national director of the United States Coalition for Life, and president of The International Foundation for Genetic Research/Michael Fund. She has served as editor of The Vietnam Journal and The Pro-Life Reporter. Mrs. Engel has received the Linacre Award for Journalism Excellence, and the Distinguished Service Medal from the South Vietnam Council on Foreign Relations for her work with Asian refugees. She is the wife of Thomas K. Engel and the mother of five children.

viewing a homosexual film from the National Sex Forum depicting a warm and loving relationship he felt obligated to change his opinion that homosexual experience is "casual, shallow and relatively affectionless."¹¹

However, even where SAR does not *totally* succeed in altering one's personal sexual behavior or attitudes toward more permissive sexual experiences, the *tolerance* level of the individual toward that particular act or value usually increases. Thus if the SAR candidate is not converted he or she is at least neutralized by the process.

Immorality not SAR's concern

Most SAR sexuality workshops or seminars find entry onto the college campus or seminary via the Campus Ministry or theology departments. However, unlike their secular counterparts, i.e., state colleges or universities where SARing is often left optional and is clearly identified as a behavior modification process, operations on Catholic grounds are neither as honest nor as sensitive to delicacies of conscience as those

of tax-funded institutions.

To the best of this writer's knowledge, no Catholic center of higher learning sponsoring an SAR workshop or course has openly identified the origin, nature or real objectives of the program or the source of the audio-visual materials used for sexual sensitization or desensitization, as was the case at St. John's Seminary mentioned earlier in this article.

Sometimes, the SAR facilitator may tell his students that they will be shown explicit sexual films in order to enable them to view all aspects of human sexuality in an "objective" manner, but nothing is mentioned concerning the highly experimental nature of the program and the final objectives of the re-programming process, which if effective will turn the student away from the Faith and produce a very warped conscience.

SAR: Deviant sex—a choice

Most campus SAR workshops cover a twelve hour period, beginning on Friday evening and lasting all day on Saturday.

Participation is usually limited to students and program sponsors, that is, priests or nuns from Campus Ministry. Members of the administration, or the faculty and parents are not given details of the sexuality program. In many cases, although by Multi-Media contract regulations it is illegal, Campus Ministry will charge a \$1.00 pre-registration fee which makes an effective screening tool in weeding out undesirable elements, especially proliferators, from interfering with the conduct of the seminar.

While the basic mode of operation remains in effect when SAR is transported to Catholic campuses, there are certain modifications which the seasoned SAR facilitator will make to insure continued

re-entry and avoid adverse publicity or public exposure—the only kind of exposure SAR advocates ever have any trouble with!

The first modification made by the SAR facilitator is the avoidance of an openly pro-abortion stand. In fact, neither abortion as a possible by-product of sexual promiscuity nor related ills such as V.D., AIDS, cervical cancer or sterility are given any extended treatment since the workshop is geared toward the joys and pleasures of sex and not the consequences of immoral or deviant sexual behavior.

Secondly, when the SAR facilitator is bringing out his or her bag of contraceptive and abortifacient tricks, he or she must be careful to include natural family planning as an "option."

And lastly, and importantly, the smart SAR facilitator will make arrangements for a sympathetic priest and/or nun to conclude his presentation with a brief 15-30 minute wrap-up on the teachings of the Church in the area of human sexuality. Since the avowed role of the SAR teacher is to teach SEX and *not* sexual morality, these hand-picked religious and clergy provide a necessary defense against the charge that the workshop was totally divorced from Catholic teachings.

(Note: The following scenario is based on a composite picture of eight SAR human sexuality workshops given on Catholic campuses in Southwestern Pennsylvania over the last two years. The SAR facilitators for these programs are not identified since this matter is currently under investigation in at least three dioceses of the state.)

Introductory remarks at the Catholic workshop will begin with a defense of the use of sexually explicit materials or

films. Students are told that the viewing of a variety of sexual experiences will expand the students' options and his or her sexual horizons. The SAR facilitator will express the hope that the workshop will do away with any hereto held sexual myths or taboos and permit the participants to become more comfortable with a full range of sexual experiences.

Following a short break in which participants are encouraged to mingle and get to know one other and members of the Campus Ministry, the formal sensitization and desensitization process is begun with the viewing of a short, humorous sex film.

Full range of experiences offered

Two of the most popular ice-breakers are "A Quickie"—an explicit sex spoof depicting a two-minute sexual encounter including the act of sexual intercourse and "Love Toad," an animated non-explicit film of two copulating beanbag toads. Both are available from Multi-Media.

A group discussion follows centering on a special aspect of the films such as the sin of hurried sex (not of fornication!) and everyone in the group nods in unison with the group facilitator who suggests that sex, like a fine wine, should be slowly savored not gulped. Consensual validation has begun.

Next, students and clergy and religious are divided into small groups and are given a special task to complete as a unit, such as the drawing and labeling of the sex organs of the body. The facilitator must correct students who begin by sketching in parts of the reproductive system. Since this is a corporate act the students must openly discuss such details as whether or not Father _____'s



penis should be drawn erect or flaccid and he in return must comment on the details of the female sexuality system such as the position or size of the clitoris.

Prior to being posted on the walls of the lecture hall, the works of art are held up for group comment. Suddenly the air is filled with shouts of "penis" or "vulva" or "orgasm!" But the groups' enthusiasm is somewhat dimmed when the facilitator reminds them that the sexual system involves the whole body including the erogenous zones. The discussion is brought to a close and a standard biology slide presentation of male and female sexual organs is presented.

As the Friday evening session draws to a close, students are handed some printed materials to look over before they return to the seminar the following day. These sheets are then used as a basis

A revolutionary technique which, if it doesn't alter one's personal sexual behavior or attitudes, increases the individual's tolerance of more permissive sexual experiences.

for group discussion when the group reconvenes on Saturday morning.

One of the most widely used "homework" sheets for students undergoing the SAR transformation process is the SEX Mythology sheet composed of 101 statements which the facilitator has identified as "commonly held sexual misunderstandings or myths." The selection of topics to be demythologized and the mythological statements themselves correspond to the ultimate objectives of SAR—most especially the acceptance of masturbation, homosexual behavior and pornography.

The following statements labeled as "myths" were taken from a student hand-out distributed as part of a Human Sexuality Workshop on one of Pennsylvania's most orthodox Catholic campuses:

- MYTH - Because of its caloric content, semen, if swallowed during fellatio, is fattening.
- MYTH - Abortion, whether legal or criminal, is always dangerous.
- MYTH - Homosexuals are a menace to society.
- MYTH - Pornography has a corruptive effect on people's minds and behavior, especially children's.
- MYTH - Masturbation is a habit of the young and immature. Its prac-

tice typically ceases after marriage.

MYTH - Sex education has no place in our schools because it is a communist plot to destroy the country from within and because it leads to (1) sexual acting out behavior; (2) a rise in promiscuity; (3) an increase in premarital pregnancy, etc.

MYTH - The virginity of the woman is an important factor in the success of a marriage.

MYTH - Muscular men have the largest penises and make the best lovers.

MYTH - Excellence of athletic performance is reduced by sexual intercourse the night before or the day of any athletic competition.

A complimentary Sex Information Survey with basic physiological information taught in biology classes is laced with true-false statements pushing the SAR line. Many of the statements are taken directly—word for word—from the SAR Guide to a Better Sex Life.

- (True) Active sex play during childhood and adolescence indicates normal growth and activity.
- (False) In lesbian couples, one of the two always assumes a "male" or "butch" role.
- (False) Homosexuals can ordinarily be identified by certain mannerisms or physical characteristics.

On the second and final day of the workshop, the session is begun with a discussion of the answers to the Sex Survey or Myth sheet.

At this point, a significant portion of the course time is given over to an in-

depth group discussion of two fundamental SAR themes—the formation of the androgynous, bisexual person and the destruction of sex roles and sexual stereotypes.

Sexual lifestyles are a matter of choice—this is SAR dogma. “. . . with the crippling Victorian morality finally giving way to the individual’s right to decide, these people are discovering that all forms of sexuality are available to everyone!”²

“Each of us has the right to decide who our friends and sex partners will be, not according to a set of principles, but on the basis of that indefinable “turn-on,” the feeling that this person is someone special.”¹³

Consequences not mentioned

The next step in the SAR process is to lead the students through the elaborate maze of moral decision-making. Premarital sex is neither right nor wrong admonishes the facilitator. What is important is that we use a correct decision-making process in attempting to reach our final choice in the matter.

The following statement is a direct quote taken from a tape made by a pro-life student at an SAR program sponsored on his Catholic campus on January 28–29, 1983.

According to the group sexual facilitator:

What I am urging is the importance of establishing one’s own personal, coherent, rational basis for sexual behavior without being pressured by a need to comply with dogmatic authority . . . you determine what it is you would like to do . . . you do your own thing, whatever it is that makes you comfortable . . . nobody can tell you what really you have to do when it comes to sexuality, particularly when it comes down to whether you

should or should not engage in sexual intercourse . . . you are free to be a sexual person in accordance with whatever value or ideas that you choose to adopt. . . . The more thoughtful person will realize that he or she must become their own authority in matters regarding their sexual conduct.

By mid-day, the students, clergy and religious have been sufficiently desensitized to permit the showing of films selected from the pornographic stock of Multi-Media. Still one cannot be too careful when operating on a Catholic campus, so the facilitator begins the viewing with—Yes! a prolife film such as *First Days of Life*!

The showing of a film which glorifies the joy of a husband and wife at the birth of their baby lends a sense of ludicrousness to a workshop dominated by discussions of orgasms and non-reproductive sexual behavior. Nevertheless the showing of a film on birthing makes a terrific cover for the pornographic audio-visual media which are to follow. It is also the only film shown which has a title and credit. *All* such identification however has been edited out with the Multi-Media films making them very difficult to track down.

Program adapted to audience

The primary criterion for the selection of films to be used in any SAR program is—whatever the traffic will bear.

In a conservative diocese the facilitator may choose to limit his videos to heterosexual acts only. In a more liberal diocese, he or she may decide to run additional Multi-Media films depicting acts of sodomy and masturbation.

Films from the Forum-Multi-Media SAR unit fall into four basic categories:

*The present outbreak of
Neo-Gnosticism
reveals itself in such
pseudosexual phenomena as
Sexual Attitude Restructuring
and produces bitter fruit.*

(1) Heterosexual Patterns; (2) Male and Female Masturbation; (3) Sexual Enrichment; (4) Homosexual and Lesbian Patterns.

On Catholic campuses, the heterosexual films *The Eroginists* and *Give to Get* are the most popular. The most widely used homosexual film is *Vir Amat*—a sympathetic look at a “warm and loving” relationship which features acts of oral and anal intercourse and mutual masturbation.

And what is the typical Catholic campus audience doing at this point? Scenes of explicit sexual acts bring forth some nervous laughter and some squeamish and embarrassed looks, but for the most part the students simply sit—expressionless—in silence as the group facilitator attempts to draw their attention to such clinical details as a raised nipple or tension in the buttocks of the male. And every once in a while the eyes of the students are drawn to the place where Sister or Father is sitting—not knowing really what to expect and wondering how such people can view the films without placing themselves at the very least in an occasion of sin. Lights on!

The remainder of the workshop discussion and lectures focusses on such an-

cillary topics as birth control techniques or premarital sex.

Finally, during the last 15 - 30 minutes of the seminar, the facilitator graciously turns the podium over to a member of Campus Ministry who has patiently sat through more than twelve hours of SAR awaiting the moment when he or she can tell the students that most of what they have heard or seen is contrary to Church teachings. Actually, that moment is never realized since any clergy or religious who would have knowingly sponsored the campus workshop have either lost the Faith completely or have managed somehow to reconcile the pseudo-sexual gospel of SAR with that of Church doctrine. In either case, the facilitator has nothing to worry about. Most of the students are emotionally and physically drained and oblivious to almost everything except the sound of the dismissal bell.

The students file out of the lecture hall, the clergy and religious go back to their offices remarking how well attended this particular Campus Ministry program always is and the facilitators pack up their films and materials and tuck a check into their wallet or purse for \$300 or \$400 plus expenses, confident that next semester will be better than ever. And sad to say, it usually is.

Sexuality workshops like the one I have described have been taking place on many Catholic campuses and seminaries and training centers for religious for a number of years. Yet these SAR sessions have, for the most part, managed to keep out of the public spotlight as well as avoid any investigation by the American bishops or Vatican authorities.

Why this is so can be traced, I think, to a number of reasons—some practical and some theological.

First there is the problem of gaining

entrance into the seminar without tipping off either the facilitator or Campus Ministry. Then there is the matter of conscience—should one submit one's self to the dangers of sexual stimulation and the possible occasion of sins against purity? Lastly, in the realm of the practical, gathering documentation on the seminars is a Herculean task since no materials or films used at the workshops are identified by source.

From a theological point of view, there can be no doubt that the SAR program on Catholic campuses and other Catholic institutions falls well into the new moral agenda of what has come to be known as the American Church. That is why some SAR facilitators can openly brag that they operate with the blessings of the local ordinary.

SAR—a moral threat

Neo-Gnosticism is the order of the day and the pseudosexual phenomenon of Sexual Attitude Restructuring is one of its most proficient handmaidens.

Last September, Professor Germain Grisez delivered a brilliant address to members of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars on the occasion of accepting the fifth annual Cardinal Wright Award.

I doubt if the good professor had SAR specifically in mind when he spoke of the great challenge facing faithful Catholics from the present outbreak of Neo-Gnosticism, but his keen observation of the problems arising from the popular acceptance of pseudosexual behavior appears to this writer to be a perfect wrapup for this most painful expose.

Professor Grisez first defines what he means by "pseudosexual behavior":

By pseudosexual . . . I mean all those kinds of genital arousal, whether short or to

orgasm, which are engaged in for mere amusement, pleasure, distraction, or release of tension. Pseudosexual behavior must be contrasted with authentic sexual behavior, which carries out a real marital commitment to a common life, in which sexual intercourse is both truly love-giving and open to new life . . .¹⁴

Professor Grisez takes special note of the bitter fruits of Neo-Gnosticism and the acceptance of pseudosexual behavior: ". . . empty cradles and broken marriages . . . empty seminaries and novitiates . . . violated vows and broken promises."¹⁵

There can be no question that the SAR program fits professor Grisez's definition of "pseudosexual" nor can there be any doubt that SAR represents a moral threat to laity, clerics and religious alike. The only question remaining is how long faithful Catholics will permit this Neo-Gnostic plague to infect our colleges and seminaries. ■

¹ "Sex Seminar Questioned," *National Catholic Register*, (November 30, 1980, pp. 1, 7.

² *Ibid.* p. 7.

³ "USCL Reveals Link Between Seminary Sexuality Seminar and Porno Center," *The Wanderer*, Dec. 11, 1980, p. 1.

⁴ *The SIECUS Circle—A Humanist Revolution*, Claire Chambers, Western Islands Press, MA, 1977, p. 295.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 296.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 295.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 295.

⁸ *Multi-Media Resource Center 1980-81 Catalog*, San Francisco, CA, p. 7.

⁹ Untitled Multi-Media brochure and order form, San Francisco, CA.

¹⁰ "What Are Medical Students Learning About Sexual Medicine?"—An Interview with Dr. Harold I. Lief, *Sexual Medicine* Jan 14, 1981, p. 11.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 11.

¹² *SAR Guide to a Better Sex Life*, produced by the National Sex Forum, San Francisco, CA, 1975, p. 91.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 92.

¹⁴ "Turmoil In The Church." Speech delivered by Germain Grisez on September 18, 1983 in Chicago, Illinois before the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* Transcript page 6.