

Defining sluthood

Dalrock | 30 August, 2011 | by Dalrock

Susan Walsh tried her hand at defining sluthood back in June with her widely read and thought provoking post [What a Slut Is](#). She had drawn the ire of feminists on the topic ever since she proudly [earned a denunciation from NOW](#). Her definition begins with:

After some thought, I would like to offer the following definition of a slut:

a. A slut is a person of either sex who regards sex strictly as a physically pleasurable activity. Sex in and of itself does not include an emotional, spiritual or practical component. Love, emotional intimacy and reproduction are sometimes associated with sex, but are in no way necessary or even desirable as a precondition for sexual activity.

She follows up with bullet points b through d, and attempts to create a gender neutral definition of sluthood, which she addresses in bullet point d:

d. Male sluts are generally found highly desirable by many women, and prefer promiscuity to a committed, monogamous relationship. Female sluts are generally found temporarily desirable by highly desirable men, and have few opportunities for committed, monogamous relationships. Some female sluts feel fine about this, others feel regret.

I'm sympathetic to Susan's ambitious goal here. I can see why she wants to create a sort of unified theory of sluthood. But I think this makes the definition overly complex, and misses the *essence of slut*. In doing this she has also inadvertently fallen into playing into the female [preferred version of promiscuity](#). Note the focus on whether one associates sex with [love](#), not [commitment](#) in the beginning of the definition.

I had a roommate in college who was a natural PUA. We often laughed at him because he would come home on a regular basis and profess that he had fallen in love. The thing is, he wasn't lying. At that moment, he really was in love with whomever the flavor of the week was. Before too long of course he would fall madly in love with yet another woman, and the old one would generally find her way into the hierarchy of his soft harem. I'm not even sure he didn't continue to love all of the women in his soft harem. If he were a woman we would say *he loved too much*, which of course is often a euphemism for a slut...

The concept of slut is specifically female for a reason. Making it gender neutral denies the very nature of what slut means. Sluts are defined by and reviled for the threat their actions pose to the social order, and to a lesser degree to themselves. Much like an arsonist, sluts are defined not by an objective metric (the hard fast partner count feminists screech for) but by the destructive threat they pose to themselves and society:

1. Sluts threaten to disrupt in tact relationships and (especially) families.
2. Sluts destroy their own ability to be trusted as a [wife](#) and [mother](#).
3. Sluts [devalue the sexual currency](#) of women in general, making commitment more difficult to obtain for those who want it.

Before I continue, I want to assist with the acute hyperventilation some of my readers are no doubt experiencing right now. In addition to breathing into a paper bag, note that while the first item is in fact an example of the *ever dreaded double standard* it is still accurate from the perspective of other women.

Yes, apartment buildings should be built with sprinkler systems and otherwise up to fire code. Likewise, women should avoid relationships and especially marriage with [men who are predisposed to cheat](#). And yes, the man who cheats is morally responsible for his actions. But this doesn't change the fact that the residents of the local firetrap get extremely nervous when someone starts playing with matches.

Having hopefully addressed a potentially serious medical emergency for some of my readers, I'll continue. Susan quotes fellow blogger Elusive Wapiti in [making a very similar point as I did above about sluts](#):

Sluts don't threaten men—they may offend us, or tempt us, amuse us, or irritate us—but sluts very much threaten non-slutty women, the security of all women's relationships with the men around them, and the very fabric of our communities.

...by slutwalking, these women continue to pick at the very social fabric upon which they depend for their own safety. Slutshaming does indeed boost women's security, and is most effectively employed by more upright women whose objections keep their wayward sisters from polluting the air which we all breathe.

Elusive Wapiti is undoubtedly correct, except [upright women are generally loath to shame sluts out of their displeasure at the double standard](#). Furthermore, men could have a huge impact here by merely being willing to judge sluts. However, most of the men who are aware of this have a vested interest in keeping a plentiful supply of sluts available, and those who have a vested interest in the traditional family are generally [unaware of this power](#).

Revisiting the dreaded double standard, Susan points out in her follow on post [Manwhores: For Casual Sex Only](#) that women aren't the only ones who are damaged by promiscuity. She referenced a study which found that men with high partner counts were less likely to be satisfied in marriage. While I'm skeptical of parts of the study's findings (it claimed the effect of partner count on women was less important), the basic premise makes sense. I have previously advised [men not to marry sluts](#) and [women not to marry alphas](#), and I think this is sound advice all around. Interestingly this advice is taken differently by men and women. Men enthusiastically agreed with my advice, while women were often very troubled by it. Perhaps there is something to this double standard after all...

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