Thought on Tap February 2020 Transcript

Future Visions of Sex and the Body

Bretton Rodriguez 00:00	You're listening to Thought on Tap a monthly podcast with the role of the humanities in the world today. Brought to you by the College of Liberal Arts and the Core Humanities program at the University of Nevada, Reno. I'm Carlos Mariscal, I'm Bretton Rodriguez and I am Caitlin Earley and every month we convene a panel of local experts to discuss the issues of the day and have a moderated discussion. This month we are talking about Future Visions of Sex and the Body. And now here's our moderator OK. Good evening everyone. We are ready to get started.
Daniel Enrique Perez 00:32	Welcome welcome everyone to Thought on Tap. Thought on Tap is your weekly guide, news, views and grooves and as most of you know this year we're exploring the topic of future visions in different areas and the topic for tonight future visions of sex and the body. We have a fantastic panel set up for you tonight. But before we get started and before I introduce them I need to thank the College of Liberal Arts and the dean,
Daniel Enrique Perez 01:03	Debra A. Moddelmog. I have to also thank the Core Humanities program and the current director David Fenimore. And last but not least Tim Healion who is right over there and the Laughing Planet for hosting us. Please give them all a round of applause. [Applause.] I want to welcome you and invite you also to have some food here. We have food on the table that's free and open to the public.
Daniel Enrique Perez 01:33	I also want to ask you to please make sure you provide feedback on this program before you leave today. We have two ways for you to do this. We have some of ocean forums out there on some of the tables. But we also have this available electronically. The information is posted here. You go to menti.com M-E-N-T-I.com you enter a code. The code is 3 1 5 6 9 1. You can even do that now have it ready and make sure that it's completed before you leave today.
Daniel Enrique Perez 02:03	Thank you. It is now my great pleasure to introduce to you our panelists who for all intents and purposes I will call our panel of sexperts tonight. Our first panelists second to the last of my right here is Erica Dietlein. If you can just raise your hand Erica make sure everybody can see you. Erica
Daniel Enrique Perez 02:32	Dietlein is an MBA student in the department of philosophy here UNR. She was raised as an Evangelical Christian and at one time participated in what is known as purity culture, a religious sexual ethic which revolves around abstinence until marriage and cis-hetero

	normative modes of engaging in sexual and gender practices. However after exploring Buddhism she now identifies as an ex Evangelical Christian. Welcome
Daniel Enrique Perez 03:04	Erica. We also have to my far right Dr. Kierstin Gruys. She's an Assistant Professor of Sociology at UNR and the author of *Mirror Mirror Off the Wall: How I Learned to Love my Body By Not Looking at it For a Year.* Dr. Gruys' work explores the relationship between physical appearance and social inequality with a particular focus on gender as it intersects with body, size, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and age.
Daniel Enrique Perez 03:36	Her research has been published in the journal "Sex Roles Gender Society, Social Problems, and Social Science and Medicine" among other publishing venues. Welcome, Dr. Gruys. We also have to my immediate right here Dr. Lydia Huerta. She's an Assistant Professor of Gender, Race, and Identity and Communication Studies also at UNR. She's a feminist, De-colonial, and interdisciplinary scholar.
Daniel Enrique Perez 04:06	Her work focuses on the ethics of representation and cultural narratives centered on migration, human rights violence, race, and gender in film and social media. She examines the power of representation in shaping affect and moral attitudes in various cultures. Her most recent work on affective responses to femicide in documentary film was published in Las Gamas de la Violencia, alongside some of Mexico's top transnational scholars. Welcome Dr. Huerta.
Daniel Enrique Perez 04:38	And to Dr. Huerta's right is Faith Thomas. Faith Thomas is an activist for minority issues especially those impacting the LGBTQIA+ and black communities. She's an undergraduate student in journalism and president of the Christian Union and Gamma Rho lambda an inclusive multicultural LGBTQIA+ sorority.
Daniel Enrique Perez 05:00	She has two podcasts "Ethno Queers," which focuses on ethnic issues, queer issues, and the intersections between the two, as well as "The Drag Diaries," in which she interviews drag queens, especially drag queens of color. And on the weekends, You will find her giving money to drag queens at drag shows as we all should be doing. Welcome Faith Thomas.
Daniel Enrique Perez 05:30	So it's obvious that the way people have sex and view the body has changed over the years. Some of these changes may be viewed as positive. Others may be more negative. Tonight our panelists will help us explore different views of sex and the body. Modern beauty standards have changed for women and men, not to mention other genders. I would also argue that they are constantly changing and responding to a variety of factors in society our communities and our families.
Daniel Enrique	For example we know the media plays a strong role in some of these

Perez 06:03	formations. Women we know also have historically had to contend with the portrayal of their bodies as sex objects in the media. Today men as sex objects is also prevalent but with very different implications. Films like Real Women Have Curves have created discourses on how to combat body shaming and the push to conform to certain body size or certain way of looking at your body.
Daniel Enrique Perez 06:32	In popular culture series like Ru Paul's drag race and more recently pose present alternative ways of seeing gender and sexuality that go well beyond the man, woman, and gay/straight dichotomies. I've argued for years that one's sexuality is as unique as one's fingerprints because no two people have sex in the exact same way, regardless of how one might identify - which to me presents many queer possibilities concerning sex, gender, and sexuality. Discourses on the gender queer and queer sexualities also arise when considering the way AI and new technologies shape sexual behavior.
Daniel Enrique Perez 07:15	Do films like Her an Ex Machina present a real future or some might even argue a present where sex between a human being and an Android or operating system will be more prevalent. Several sociologists are exploring why youth are having less sex despite the proliferation of social media apps like Grinder and Tinder that make all kinds of sex more possible and readily accessible.
Daniel Enrique Perez 07:43	As a recent article in The Atlantic contends the phrase if something exists, there is porn of it is now a truism. Polyamorous relationships, S and M, and fetishes of any type. If you have a fetish, it out there on the Internet, you will find porn of it. According to the Centers for Disease Control between 1981 and 2017 the percentage of high school students who had had sex dropped from 54 percent to 40 percent.
Daniel Enrique Perez 08:16	Other research shows that even Gen Xers and baby boomers may be having less sex today than previous generations did at the same age. Some have called this a sex recession. Panelists, help us figure this out. What is going on here and what are some of the connections that may be made between some of these topics and we don't have to go in a particular order. But please feel free to chime in and join the conversation. Dr. Gruys. Um I don't know if my mic is on. Is it? Can I begin? Can you hear me?
Dr. Gruys 08:56	Mic Check! Yes, no? There we go. okay. As a sociologist I'm really interested in the social context of bodies and also sex and there is actually one really easy way to think about why we're having less sex than we used to. We're spending more time on dating apps and less time dating. We used to have nothing to do
Dr. Gruys 09:24	when the lights went out. I mean. That's not true anymore, right? And so we've actually replaced some of the activities that tended to happen when the lights were out with completely different activities

that in some way they're apparently just as exciting and addictive. To add to that, porn sites have a lot of traffic as well especially between the hours of 9 p.m. and 5 a.m..

Lydia Huerta 09:55
Those happened to be the high points of porn watching activity. And actually I just pulled this out today pornhub has this really cool report that they turned out every year called A Year in Review and last year 2019 pornhub had forty two billion. forty two billion visits in one year. per minute though, can you guess how much how many people visit point up per minute? 80 thousand people per minute worldwide.

Daniel Enrique Perez 10:24
So more time watching and less time actually doing seems to be part of that because.. Well if you have sex with yourself.. yeah maybe that's gone up. Erica, Faith? [muffled noise] I always found the it was framed in this like alarmist tone. Oh no. Kids aren't having as much sex as their parents did or as much as their grandparents did.

Erica Dietlein 10:54
And given the way that I was raised I always found that kind of funny because this message of don't have sex don't have sex don't have sex was like just shoved down my throat and all of a sudden all the sex you want us to do. But I mean they're right. With the increase of other activities that you're able to do in the evening and also a lot of people are living by themselves I think more so now than they have in the past.

Erica Dietlein 11:23
There are other ways to spend your time and I don't think that's necessarily a problem. Again that stat is like framed in this really alarmist way but like it's OK it's a form of birth control I mean less sex means less babies. I'm saying hello. So I like when I was growing up with a message of abstinence was. Definitely. Really.

Faith Thomas 11:53
Yeah. Like my parents and my dad was. Like every time like there would be like a couple kissing on the television screen. He'd go eeeeww. And then I'd go eewww. I think it's part of the reason why. But oh gosh I lost my train of thought. And like that was my experience as well like my parents watched a lot of violent media that like it treated the body as something that was expendable as a prop to be pulled a right off my microphone.

Erica Dietlein 12:31
But on the other hand when you're using that for something that they enjoy then it was a big problem regardless of whether they're straight or not sorry. I mean obviously most portray over of. Straight forms of sex and not all of it. Feasible like tables are not that strong sort of thing. And that was. I I mean by the time I was 12 years old I would like repeat myself at night like [muffled]. So. My behavior.

Erica Dietlein 13:04
Is I would tell myself over and over again that it's bad. Sex is bad. My body is bad. Sex is bad. Over and over again. At night we try and change the way my work. Is done. [muffled] Okay we have our technical people working on. [muffled] With reception.

Fatih Thomas 13:34	[muffled noise] Okay we're gonna get. Yeah that'll work. But yeah like when I was younger like my parents really would you know push the conversation of sex. They'd be like Don't have sex until you're ready, don't have sex until you're ready.
Fatih Thomas 14:01	And a lot of sex education in schools was mostly like stay Abstinent and they wouldn't really teach you how to have safe sex. They would show you like different images of like mutilated body parts and everything like that just to curb you. And that curiosity like I was actually punished for being curious about things when I was younger and it didn't curb my curiosity I ended up finding out through different avenues.
Faith Thomas 14:33	But regarding like dating now like dating culture kinda sorta has gone to shit. to keep it frank. because like with dating apps like you're swiping through like so many people and everything like that and like with my dating pool like I only have like 10 people in Reno five of them are my friends four of them are my exes. So it just it's dependent on like what you're doing at night like I'm sorry, what's your name again? Kierstin. Like
Daniel Enrique Perez 15:06	Dr Kierstin said. Kierstin. Kierstin? Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Well I wanted to thank you both for raising the issue of but the body and how the body is viewed and has been viewed maybe by even yourself in the past because the next question I want to ask the panel is regarding body positivity and also sex positivity break and ways in which we've actually dealt with I'm doing some of those ways we've been taught to view ourselves with our bodies and view sexuality.
Daniel Enrique Perez 15:37	What can you tell us. How you either define or how you managed to work with some of these issues and you can choose one or the other you can talk about both sex but sex positivity or body positivity. I mean I want to say right from the get go that body positivity and sex positivity are not the same thing. You can have one and still be working on the other and vice versa. So in my world most of my research is about the body.
Dr. Gruys 16:06	less through the lens of sex and sexuality although I'm getting there. But one of the main things that is kind of a debate in the sociological literature is this question of is the body positivity movement. And I'm putting that in quotes actually body positive and is it actually body inclusive. So I'll give you one example and then hand the mic over.
Dr. Gruys 16:33	So we see a lot of body positivity posted on Instagram and other types of social media. That's one of the most key ways that people kind of proclaim themselves to have joined this movement. But we've seen in one an increase of people using body positivity through the lens of dieting. And of making peace with your body by committing to certain types of dieting and exercise regime.

Dr. Gruys 17:05
So that's one problem I see constantly. If you ever see someone claiming to be about body positivity and their body is super hetero normative and centered all over their website I am suspicious of those not saying it can't be a body positive but I am suspicious.

Dr. Gruys 17:24
In the last piece is there seems to be an idea that it's OK for chubby people to love their bodies but truly fat people and I use fat as a neutral descriptor the same way we should be thinking about height and skin color and these other things that fatness itself is dangerous and bad and so it's OK to be not a model but it's not okay to actually be fat.

Dr. Gruys 17:49
And so that a lot of people and fat studies and in the fat acceptance community have distanced themselves from the body positive movement because they're decreasingly represented and I'll hit it off from there. So I might be overthinking this which is usually the case because I study philosophy but thanks Carlos. I think so.

Erica Dietlein 18:16
When we come we're like we've been raised in a culture that is heavily influenced by quote unquote the church and I'm going to use quote marks there too because what is the church. I'm not gonna talk about that. Let's say it's informed by some kind of Christian ethos some kind of Christian metaphysics and there is this narrative that even if you're not Christian even if you're not spiritual necessarily there's this idea that there is this hard split between the body and you like this body is a thing that you have to occupy and that you have to deal with.

Erica Dietlein 18:50
There's this strange likes mental spiritual divorce in our culture away from our bodies and we treat it as a thing for us to exert ourselves onto instead of something that we are embodied in or that we come from or rise out of. And I do wonder how much that that metaphysics that mind body dualism influences the way that we view and treat our body and often as a negative.

Erica Dietlein 19:17
We treat it as a burden as something that gets in the way of something anything goes wrong with it like we we sometimes pitch a fit because maybe we have to go to work when we're sick or we would rather have all four of our limbs or something like that just because it's easier to move through the world that way. And there's this tendency to turn against your body not just you know when we're sick but like with with diets treating it is something that has to be wrapped up really tightly and controlled so that we can walk through life a certain way.

Erica Dietlein 19:47
And I know that most of us don't think very hard about our metaphysics but it does come out in the way that we think and the way that we talk and the way that we move through life if we just assume the world operates in a certain way. For instance with mind body dualism. So I do wonder and I worry about that because when I

	divorce myself from that mode of thinking my relationship with my body changed drastically. And even in the way that I talk I can't get away from treating my body and myself as two separate things.
Erica Dietlein 20:16	But it's a language we older stand that aside the way that they treat and think about and occupy my body is very different. Now that I've kind of like intentionally dismissed this idea that I am stuck with this sinful body that does things and is always out of control and now it just this is also me my body is also me and that's helped a lot. So OK so body positivity to me is like obviously like loving your body loving the skin that you're in and everything like that.
Fatih Thomas 20:52	And I had a really really hard journey. I'm still on that journey of loving my body and everything like that because I'm plus size there's not much representation in the media for plus sized women especially plus size women of color. That's positive. The most positive influence right now is Lizzo. Everybody knows everybody loves Lizzo and seeing her wear whatever the hell she wants and flaunting like her beauty is incredibly amazing to me.
Fatih Thomas 21:25	And it's like I wish I had that when I was younger and I'm glad that I'm getting it now. Sex positivity is as the other panelists said it's completely different. It's owning your sexuality what you like what you don't like. And everything that encompasses that like you're not dirty or disgusting if you'd like to have sex every day you're not dirty or disgusting. If you don't like to have sex at all and that's okay you know it's perfectly OK because it's a natural function of our body and us as human beings.
Lydia Huerta 22:03	So I agree with the separation between body positivity and sex positivity. I don't have any resources so first resource, OMG Yes. All of you. Look it up. It's an amazing app. I study new media and this app basically teaches you how to have sex with yourself especially if your women because guess what. Society doesn't really allow you to enjoy your body because your body is supposed to be enjoyed by men. So OMG. Men you can also download this because it makes you a better lover. I kid you not. I gave this to my little team as a college going away present.
Lydia Huerta 22:33	He calls me every time he looks up something he's like thank you so much for the app it saved my life. So just you know the second thing instead of going to porn to get your sex ed don't go to porn. It's it's very one sided. Try to find other avenues to find ways to educate yourself around sex especially since schools don't have sex education that is positive. There's great shows on Netflix like sex education. Check it out.
Lydia Huerta 22:59	It encompasses sex among multiple promise dimension spiritual body Corporal OCD also like everything is included in a safe way for you to be able to actually do it without getting nervous about seeing

all your friends are like not knowing what the hell just happened on the screen especially if you're looking at porn. So those things are really important in terms of body positivity I think one of the things that we need to do more of is not look at people on Instagram as are role models or as examples of what we should look like because media has been doing that for us for over 60 years and so we should look at ourselves and figure out how we feel comfortable what clothes fit for us and how we like to be in our.

Dr. Gruys 23:38

World and occupied space and build from there. So those are the things I have to contribute to that. Can I come in on that. So one of the things I wanted to follow up on and maybe this is something for you to think about in many others is why does boss body positivity imply that we're supposed to love our bodies. Is it OK to just decide that maybe we don't always love our bodies or we don't always love certain parts of our bodies and maybe we hate certain parts of our bodies but.

Dr. Gruys 24:09

Our body is only a small piece of who we are so I like to say that if every little girl in the world thought she was just ugly as a toad but didn't give a fuck I would be thrilled. I think the last two set of comments are really great segway to another question I want to address and that is considering the title the panel and and what a few.

Daniel Enrique Perez 24:40

What future visions of sex and body might look like Lydia You were already kind of taking us in that direction but what are some of the things that excite you about the future future visions of sex and or and or the body. And what are some of the things that trouble you about. Future visions of sex and body considering a lot of these different issues whether it be technology or how we see ourselves. Education. Any of those areas you want to address.

Fatih Thomas 25:09

Sex education does not include queer people and that is starting to make up a lot of the demographic that is us as a country and that's problematic because it's like if say like I'm a high schooler I don't know how to have safe sex and I'm queer. That's an issue because like I could definitely get an STD or an STI that could possibly kill me. And that's heartbreaking too for everybody.

Fatih Thomas 25:38

In regards to future visions of pornography we were actually just talking about this. One of my classes. It can be a catch 22 because there's positive representations of pornography and everything like that but there's also like the deep dark web and negative representations and people using that power for other indulgences that might not be. I want.

Fatih Thomas 26:08

I don't want to say like P.C. but that aren't appropriate. If that makes sense. And it's definitely a difficult line to tow because you have to be careful about what you're consuming and what is out there. One

thing that I am excited about when thinking about the future of Sex and the body is that we now have access to a lot of like media resources.

Erica Dietlein 26:43
So when I say media resources I don't mean hub. I mean things like explanations or podcasts that talk about it or other YouTube channels that talk about it its explanations is mainly catered towards people who are heterosexual CIS normative bodies but that is describes a lot of us and so like that is a resource to check out if you like don't you know don't know what to do with your body when things get horny like that can help you out. Also genital piercings Yikes. But also.

Erica Dietlein 27:14
But like one thing that does excite me about the body specifically is there. We seem to be moving toward this new conception of what our body means for how we move through how we move through different spaces like more people are being outspoken about disability rights. I'm thinking specifically about like physical disabilities or those who experience sex or gender differently.

Erica Dietlein 27:46
There is this opening dialogue about what your body is and what it's for what it can look like what you can do with it. And I do think that's really exciting. Boy I am worried that for both sex and body the converse. These conversations are really out of step with one another and we're getting things like we don't necessarily know how to talk to each other to ourselves or to our kids about like rape porn. That is like not consensual between the parties who are being filmed like that scares me a lot.

Erica Dietlein 28:19
And also we still haven't sat down and had a conversation about violence and sex and how we treat those things in the media or how we like what is OK and what is not OK. Like those Malmo those Marvel movies. There's a lot of like collateral there. People are getting punched like no tomorrow but oh my goodness if Captain Marvel kissed a woman we would pitch it. So like I'm I'm both kind of excited but kind of worried because all these great conversations are really out of step with one another.

Dr. Gruys 28:49
And I'm not sure how we'd so those things together so a couple of thoughts. One is we need to acknowledge that porn is a part of media and that media literacy applies to porn. I'm not anti porn I'm not pro porn but I am pro media literacy right.

Dr. Gruys 29:16
And you know when I have in the past for example had porn actresses come to my sex and gender classes one of the things that I hear time and time again is porn is a cartoon of sex. A lot of mainstream porn is a cartoon of sex and you don't want to be learning about real life from cartoons. But that is increasingly in the absence of comprehensive sex education. Most teens are seeing porn before they have.

Dr. Gruys
29:48

The language to understand it. Much less people in their lives with which to discuss it. And I just want to see if you can hold her hand up if you. Actually believe that you've received comprehensive sex education through your pre college school experience.

Dr. Gruys
30:14

Cave your twelve so I mean I might be unique in this and that my parents were very matter of fact about how babies were made when I was about three or four they didn't really I didn't really understand sexuality at that time because I wasn't yet a sexual being. But I did go to school in a very conservative school of public school district in St. Lewis and sex education was slides and slides of it advanced untreated studies and it was not helpful.

Dr. Gruys
30:49

So I see a future coming to be in in the Internet through media. It's a double edged sword right. You can you can see the worst you can see the best. But people can actually get comprehensive pleasure focused sex education for the same resource that they could find the worst of the worst. So that's one way that I am thinking about this topic.

Lydia Huerta
31:20

Going back to porn I think one of the things that's really interesting when I read this study is that a lot of people are actually searching for amateur which means that people have a need to actually see real people having sex not just actors. Not surprising and it's interesting too because I think that there is a user group is 18 to 34 because of course they're not tracking under under age kids at porn sites but.

Lydia Huerta
31:49

I remember when I used to run a center in New Mexico you know to hear these conversations with students who were queer her like I don't I don't know how to have sex. How do you do this right. And so we started a series called Let's Talk About Sex and we basically talked about how do you have sex with different kinds of people and how did you ask your partners what feels good what doesn't feel good and so forth and I think that some of the comprehensive education that we need in K to 12 and also in college to be frank because a lot of people just learn by mistake like touching have the dark figuring it out.

Lydia Huerta
32:21

But I think it's really important for us to think about what it means to actually like be connected to the person that we are having sex with and who we one have received or get pleasure from right or provide pleasure for. And so one of the things of going back to your comment about queerness one of the most search terms for women. In the United States Central America. And South America is lesbian. So if you're looking at porn for lesbian porn you're gonna be very disappointed. Right.

Lydia Huerta
32:50

Because I know it's basically it's made for people who have a male gaze and it's basically very skinny women with very long nails which

	is by the way Hatchett do not go there. That's bad. Right. That's really bad. I actually have you come to me like you tell me this is dangerous. I was like You know what. Right. So. I. Like. Having the open conversation and being willing to sit down with people and having the conversation about hey what do you like what don't you like.
Lydia Huerta 33:20	What feels good what doesn't feel good right. And having those communicative practices in place is super important but one of the things that has been happening that's very concerning too. Is that people don't talk about sex because we're not taught how to talk about safe sex just like we're not hard to talk about race. Right. So people got all super nervous about things like oh I don't know like. You know we can have sex how do we talk about this right. And so I think it's one of the things I need to start having more and control education right.
Lydia Huerta 33:47	It's like it's not just the texting or sexting it's actually like sitting across from someone and making those connections and we actually got some great researchers here and you know that study. That's something for us to think about. I do have a couple more comments regarding long nails PSA do not do. These are only for Valentine's Day. OK.
Fatih Thomas 34:14	As far as you know everything that you were saying about queerness and being open and communication communication is key in the bedroom period point blank especially asking for kids that we don't talk about that a lot. Asking for consent and that's super important when you're about when you're in the moment and everything like that and it doesn't have to be. Are you ready to have sex. It could be something like it could be something like super in the moment like something that you come up with as long as you're getting that yes.
Fatih Thomas 34:43	And going back to like body positivity too Why do we put values on bodies. You know my body does not have less value because I have stretch marks or cellulite or anything like that. And I think that it should not have value but our society is so enamored with this perfect caricature of the 36 24 36 28 that we don't think nation or the Kim Cardassian look or like these looks of like for women and for men to like we don't even talk about body positivity for men we're starting to.
Daniel Enrique Perez 35:23	And that's a conversation that should have been had. Oh right. So we've talked about pornography. Social media. We've had some philosophical perspectives as well. And one of the last question I want to pose the panel before we open this up to our audience here is is whether or not some of these sources that we're defining as shaping sexual practices and body imagery image and body imagery are actually the sources.

Daniel Enrique Perez 35:56
Are there other things here that we're not considering or talking about some thinking can we move beyond some of those issues and think about other things perhaps like advances in medicine for example the use of Viagra as a recreational sex drug or prep as something that has changed the way people have sex no longer using condoms and things like that. So any areas you think we have not explored yet that we needs to be part of this conversation. So I do think ..so...

Erica Dietlein 36:28
Let's talk about shame and vulnerability for a second. OK so sex is this mysterious thing we don't get to talk about we kind of figure it out literally fumbling around in the dark usually. And like it makes sense if you're embarrassed or ashamed or feel rejected when something like there's a slight hiccup it makes sense because you haven't been thinking about this or talking about this in an open environment.

Erica Dietlein 36:55
So when like when it's game time and you don't feel right or doesn't feel good or you're embarrassed that makes sense. Like your sexuality or your sex life like it's like this tiny little sprout is coming out of the dirt it's really vulnerable it's really fragile. Easily scorched easily washed out easily like withered and that's fine.

Erica Dietlein 37:18
So that's also one thing too that now I think we as individuals as well as people who are engaging in relationships need to bear in mind like if you feel rejected like you have a very strong reaction to a small rejection where you feel shame for liking something or not liking something that that makes sense because a lot of the stuff you've literally had to figure out in the dark as far as technology is concerned with body positivity or just with getting to know your body and what you've got cannot.

Erica Dietlein 37:50
I would like to put forward an underrated technology called the mirror. So let's get them here between your legs. Look at yourself in full light like understand what you're working with what you got and just kind of like come to embrace you don't have to love what you look like you've just come to embrace like this is what you've got. This is what you have and that's that's fine. Like when I was pregnant for instance there was some weird stuff going through my head and I have a teenage sister.

Erica Dietlein 38:17
And one thing that I committed to ahead of time was to just have embraced whatever the heck happened which is which was good because it bloomed like a whale immediately. And my sister happened to be living with me at the time. She's 15 and I'm her only source of sex education by the way. Great. I learned a lot about me right now. I do not wear a lot of clothing around the house. And so my sister got exposed to what her body could potentially do what it could look like or the very least what mine looked like.

Erica Dietlein 38:51 — And in a weird way she's thanked me for the exposure as well as the sex education. Yeah. Just seeing things in like a normal light non-sexual way as well as a sexual light again just a mirror. It doesn't have to be an app just just start somewhere and forgive yourself when things don't feel good or don't go the way you want them to. So I feel like that's something really important bring for medical advancements as to say this is your reminder your monthly reminder to go get tested if you haven't gotten tested if you're sexually active.

Faith Thomas 39:31 — It's really amazing what we can detect and what we can't what we're still working on detecting and everything like that. As far as the C.D. however the cost is astronomical. It is ridiculous that we have to pay so much money in order for us to take care of ourselves and wanting to be responsible. And like there's other like devices out there like you can go on birth control of course condoms and everything like that but still like getting tested is so expensive and it's ridiculous.

Faith Thomas 40:06 — Um as far as technological advances I really don't have any listen to podcasts podcasts are great for sexual explanations and everything like that. There's one that I listen to I forget the name of it it's escaping me but it's like sex and spirituality together and it's super cool and it's rent and it's run by two black women. It's great like making strides like that in giving us more information is great.

Dr. Gruys 40:41 — So this is a very specific vision but we have within our grasp the ability to eliminate over 95 percent of cervical cancers as well as a few other cancers through the vaccine for HPV. That is in our reach right now. So it could actually happen in the very near future but only if people actually get vaccinated.

Dr. Gruys 41:09 — And initially the vaccine was only offered to girls and women and that is completely wrong men also can get and pass HPV and vaginas are not the only or offices where HPV virus can flourish so we actually have the technology now but we need the social change to eliminate each HPV and the cervical cancers that are related to it.

Dr. Gruys 41:45 — And by the way HPV is the yesTD that everybody has. I think it's 75 to 85 percent of people who have had genital sexual intercourse have been exposed to one of a variety of strands of HPV which some have very few symptoms some cause growths or war or lesions and some cause cancer. We have vaccines to eliminate the bad ones.

Dr. Gruys 42:16 — So it could be now it's up to you you your partners your siblings like everybody get that vaccine and don't let anyone say that it's just for women. And that's also completely eliminating queer sex. Right. So I'm going to hand it off but that's a very specific vision.

Lydia Huerta 42:39 — I think talking about abuse and sex and the power dynamic that comes sometimes within sex and abuse in relationships and how people use sex as power and a way to keep people in abusive relationships is one thing that could be addressed in the future

because I often happens in a lot of a lot of communities as I'm specifically thinking about gay men. I read this article a couple months ago about the gay men club scene in L.A. and how these men who were preying on men of color and basically like not disclosing to them whether they had done bumps or not and what have you.

Lydia Huerta 43:15

And a lot of these men were basically getting addicted to meth through that because they were based consenting to sex with their partners. And yet the man they were parting ways we're doing things that they did not consent to. And a lot of these mens rea stopped taking HIV preventive medications. There are health care providers basically each to them. They couldn't come back. So there's still a lot of discrimination happening in the health care community especially when it comes towards HIV AIDS that I think also needs to be addressed. It also is rooted in this idea of abuse and sex.

Lydia Huerta 43:46

Another thing is sex toys because there's been a lot of developments in technology especially for like couples who don't live together through Bluetooth technology and also also for people with different kinds of abilities like like there's a lot of there's a whole market for autistic people who experience sex differently and so forth. So I think those will be other avenues to explore. Excellent. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I'm also concerned about cuts in funding for a public health issue.

Daniel Enrique Perez 44:16

Some of the ones that you raised that we're seeing in different parts of the country we are running short on time. But I want to make sure I extend this conversation to our audience. So we have a few minutes here that we'd like to ask you to pose questions to our panel of sexperts please. And we only have two mics here so I'm going to ask our assistant here Mattie rose to get this mike around the audience. OK. Hi I'm Jessica.

Audience Member (#1) 44:53

OK. So I just wanted to ask how many of you run into trouble like finding clothes that fit and then that you feel comfortable in. And then also how has that affected your relationship or how you view your body. Literally this past weekend I was shopping for a red dress for my birthday. Could not find one at Meadow Wood because they only literally had 2 racks full of plus size clothing at forever 21 at Meadow Wood.

Faith Thomas 45:25

And then I went to legends and they had a whole wall and I was like This is my dream. I love it. But when I tried on the dress that didn't particularly fit I was like Oh I see my pudge. I see like my rolls and everything like that. And I didn't like that but it didn't. I didn't like it in the moment. It didn't make me love myself any less. And it's OK.

Faith Thomas 45:54

Like you might not look great in one certain size or anything like that. And that is fine. I ended up finding a dress and I ended up looking

really hot. So don't let that discourage you at all. If you need any of my plus size ladies need resources come talk to me. I gotcha. I'm writing a book about this literally.

Dr. Gruys
46:18

I'm writing a book about clothing size standards their history their production how they've changed I have an article that was co-authored with two great women titled sized out women clothing size and inequality. I'm working on a paper right now that looks at the work of fit models because there are actually real living human beings who try on clothes during the production process and impact the fit the shape and the comfort and even the style of clothes.

Dr. Gruys
46:46

But fundamentally I want to say that clothing size standards there is no standard first. And the more standardized are the more multi-national I would just say like if they're on the stock market it's going to be harder to find a wide variety of sizes and I can give you a glimpse of that for my research.

Dr. Gruys
47:13

A lot of people say oh plus size clothing isn't available because the fashion industry is anti fat that is somewhat true but is not the only reason. The other piece is that when you have stockholder or stock shareholders and you have a publicly traded stock the company is responsible it answers to its shareholders before it answers to its consumers. And one issue that is really interesting about bodies especially women's bodies or female bodies is that the bigger they get the less standard they are.

Dr. Gruys
47:50

Right. So a size zero and I put this all in is careful it's a size zero. Almost everyone who has a size zero waist measurement is going to fit into a size zero. If we go up to a size 36 waist measurement the chance that a particular garment will fit someone in terms of their proportions goes down. So we need more variety. We need more shapes represented but large companies find this too messy and too unpredictable.

Dr. Gruys
48:24

And so if you're looking for clothes that fit there's something called mass customization that is happening. And smaller companies and smaller boutique like online companies some of them are literally focused on clothing size. Universal standard write it down. It is not as cheap as Forever 21 but they do have what I would call investment pieces that range from zero to. Well above your average plus size clothing store.

Dr. Gruys
48:54

So I'm not going to quote it but there's stuff out there but just no yes the system is working against us. It wants to standardize things because it makes it easier to predict who's going to buy what and how much money they're going to make. Yada yada. So yeah I'm writing a book about it. Come talk to me. This is a quick note. If both my husband and I do experience this visceral hatred for embodied selves when we put on clothes don't fit right. He's constantly tearing

out of his jeans because they're not made for men with really thick thighs.

Erica Dietlein 49:27
And I don't buy jeans. I quit buying jeans and those like my dean and I'm like. I am so apparently I'm supposed to be like catered to like with my size but jeans a fit and me for some reason. And every time I try every now and then it makes you want to take my skin off. So like look their pants. Don't let them tell you what to do. Don't let them tell you what to think. Don't let the pants control how you view yourself. Is the pants fault. Give rid of the pants. If it doesn't spark joy just get rid of it.

Faith Thomas 50:03
When I go shopping as well like I I'm like three different sizes in three different stores. It's crazy. It's like what really is a size zero. What's truly a size 12. You know what's truly a size 14 16 18 yada yada yada. And it kind of sucks because it's like OK I fit into this size at this store.

Fatih Thomas 50:30
Why don't I fit into the same size at this store and like shops like torrid like they have the market cornered for a plus size women. And it's incredibly expensive too because like you you could be dropping like four hundred dollars when you're walking out of their whereas somebody who is you know the standard is dropping like maybe 50 bucks for the same for the same thing that a plus size woman is wearing and the average size woman in the United States is what 12 to 18 no 18 18 20 That's wild because yeah whatever that means because we don't really know what an 18 20 looks like.

Lydia Huerta 51:16
And I also want to point out bras so that you were you were talking about mass customerization right. That you walk into Victoria's Secret you're like what the fuck like that there's nothing there that's going to fit right because like oh you're a plus size let me give you this and you're like Yeah there's no boobs there. They can have padding please. Right. I remember when I was growing up I was like What. Like I couldn't buy anything because like nothing fits I was wearing sports bra all the time. This is like simple and it's really hard when you're like trying to find clothes that fit you and like you're in your undergarments don't fit you you're like How am I supposed to like actually feel quote unquote good.

Lydia Huerta 51:50
This is a bra And women are supposed to look good in the bra or whatever they can have all these like lines of sexy bras and you're just like Yeah. No there's like I could fit my entire like two fists and they're like there's just like No way. Right. Same thing with dresses and things like this. Who are they. They're made for specific kinds of bodies are very standard and they don't take into account there's there's some women that have no breasts. There's people who have more breasts those who have a lot of breasts and like very so you can't just make em like triangles to make everybody fit the same way. Right. There are some companies like third love that try to do that especially with different kinds of boob shapes and so forth.

Audience Member (#2) 52:22	But again they're not very accessible and they're very expensive. Think we have time for one more question. When who else want to ask a question OK. Right over here Maddie can we we could do to do. We can go as far as you were so this wasn't really part of the discussion but do you do you think over sexualized culture specifically the intersection of sex and capitalism in America do you think that has a beneficial or negative impact on sex positivity? Capitalism.
Erica Dietlein 53:06	Who do you want to talk about. I hate it. OK. OK. So there's so many different directions to go. OK. I'll start with this sexual integrity. So I do come from a background where purity culture was the thing and I've moved on from that into this space where I prefer to think of it as sexual integrity if you personally to start with personally or in a space where you are comfortable with your sexuality you respect your sexuality you respect your body as something that is like this is yours or this is you.
Erica Dietlein 53:47	This is something that has value and worth beyond monetary things or beyond how it might get evaluated on a scale of one to 10 by somebody like that's a good thing. And like give yourself permission not to deal with anyone who treats your body as any less valuable than you deem it to be done on the personal level someone I think you brought up like tender. I think you brought up tender the swiping left and right thing that can be very dehumanizing for men and women alike.
Erica Dietlein 54:18	And it's interesting. I've heard men talk about how like they they're so you like they feel a lot of rejection on the app. It definitely takes down like their evaluation of their own body. They feel like they're not ranking properly and woman feel like they're there just to be consumed. And that's not all experiences on Tinder or Bumble what have you. I get that. But I I am worried about treating our bodies and our sex as a mere commodity a mere thing for exchange because like neo liberalism it's everywhere everything.
Erica Dietlein 54:54	Thank you. It does really concern me and if you feel objectified and reduced to a monetary value or a number that would make sense it will require extra energy to push back on it. I think like I have to spend extra time and energy in my head pushing back on these things and re reclaiming things about my body or my sexuality or my exchanges that I have out in the world. Make it something that's like for me or something that is more organic and less about numbers and judging.
Faith Thomas 55:28	So I could go on about capitalism but I won't. I think with the rise of technology capitalism and sex with the industry and the intersection between the both of them has been great. I follow a lot of sex workers on Twitter and they're charging like three dollars for they're only fans. And I think it's amazing because like these people can

work from home and everything like that.

Fatih Thomas 55:57

And a lot of them they show like The behind the scenes like yeah like you have to have like the accessories you have to have like your nails done hair done. You know you have to have like certain everything. And it's kind of sort of crazy how we've gotten here like it's always been there as far as like by like buying sex and sex. There's the phrase sex sells you know a lot of females and males try to sell that and it's I don't know it's just crazy like I have a million one things on my mind right now but I'm going to go this way.

Lydia Huerta 56:32

I just want to give a shout out to the asexual community because there are people who are reacting towards all this by saying I don't have sex I just don't want to have sex. And there is a there's an industry who's like trying to medicalized them and tell them that they're wrong because they don't want to have sex. And sometimes like overlap and then inundation and media images of sexualized bodies turns people off. Right.

Lydia Huerta 56:52

Like there's a really good conference in Minneapolis every year call that because conference and that was the first time I think I was like 33 when I went to this thing that I heard about the term asexual and I was like Oh my God if somebody had told me about this like when I was younger everything would make so much more sense right and there was this panelist who was talking about how she went to several doctors how she had to had to do like like electrode testing how she had to go to like energy he was like all these different things as they were. She was not normal because she was asexual right. And then the different sort of like categories that exist within the asexual community.

Dr. Gruys 57:25

So I think like the stigmatizing people not having sex is also really important. And we often don't talk about it because we're always having the conversation that sex sells and sex is important. I'll keep this quick. Inequality is integral to capitalism both in theory and in practice. So there are opportunities that can come through capitalism but at the end of the day it is a system that is literally defined by inequality assuming that inequality motivates people.

Daniel Enrique Perez 58:00

And so I'll stop there and let you think about it on your own time. We are out of time so but I'm an invite you all to join us after this episode of thought on tap. Our panelists will stick around for a few minutes. They also will have dinner here at Laughing Planet.

Daniel Enrique Perez 58:23

So you are welcome to join us for an informal conversation so we can continue some of these very important conversations that they have invited us to think about before we end I want to also let you know there's still some food here if you want to have some more I need to reiterate that your evaluation of the program is important to us so we can continue to do programming like this menti.com if you

	want to use your phone. There are also evaluation forms available here.
Daniel Enrique Perez 58:52	The code is 3 1 5 6 9 1. I also want to invite you back on March 12th for our next episode of Thought on Tap. The topic will be Future Visions of Storytelling. I have to thank our sponsors once again the College of Liberal Arts, Core Humanities, and the Laughing Planet of course. I have to thank our producers of Thought on Tap and committee members Carlos Mariscal, Bretton Rodriguez, Caitlin Earley, Stephen Pasqualina, and David Fenimore. Thank you all.
Daniel Enrique Perez 59:26	Also our technical team Chris Stancil and Maddie Rose. Thank you so much for helping us to put this all together. And of course our panelists Erica Dietlein, Kierstin Gruys. Lydia Huerta, and Faith Thomas. Thank you all. God bless. And finally thanks to all of you for being here for supporting this program. We hope to see you again soon. Have a good evening. Goodbye. [Applause]