

Cultural Prostitution

How The Idea of Relationships Has Deteriorated
Over Time

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Abstract

Despite the widespread acceptance of the modern relationship most of those involved don't know the history of how the relationship became what it is today. Most of what is seen in American culture today shows the modern relationship in a positive light. This paper gives a general overview of the history and progression of the relationship in America and how, over time, it has been corrupted and degraded. Some of the research and studies show statistics and views of the effect the relationship has had on society. By observing real life situations it will be proven that dating has led to suicide and genocide. It will also prove that hooking up leads to immorality, disease, and death. This work increases our understanding of such sensitive topics of whether our society is destroying itself by its own encouragements.

Walking into any secular college institution today will lead to a bombardment of two presently familiar terms “dating” and “hooking up” (Stepp, 2007). One hundred years ago what would be heard as the term for relationship was “calling” (as a verb) and “courtship” (as a noun). The progression from “courtship” to “dating” and then to “hooking up” was a deterioration and corruption of the pure idea of relationships, in name, implication, definition, and acceptable behavior. This corruption led to disease, depravity, and lack of morality. In order to see this corruption in action, the original basis of a relationship must be defined for comparison.

When America was first colonized courtship was the predominant relationship style in society (Bailey, 1988). Courtship is “to seek the affections of, especially to seek to win a pledge of marriage from (Webster, 2010).” Calling was everything from a rural man coming to sit on a farm girl’s front porch with her (under the supervision of her father from inside) to a businessman visiting a wealthy young woman in her parlor when invited (Bailey, 1988). There was a specified etiquette as to how this process should occur due to the need for propriety and morals. First of all, courtship was only initiated by the girl or the girl’s mother, never the caller, which would have been indecent (Bailey, 1988). Second of all, the first calling was always in the girl’s home with her mother present (Bailey, 1988). Also if a man were to be turned away multiple times, it was social protocol for him to accept the limits of his social status or that he was just undesired and not call again (Bailey, 1988). When a man did come to call he would present his card at the door to identify himself and ask for permission to call and he would only come if invited and when directed to come (Bailey, 1988). Those were simpler times; if a girl were to go out with a man without direct supervision and chaperoning she was considered indecent even as far as to be seen on the same level as a prostitute (Bailey, 1988). This type of

relationship protocol continued as the main type of relationship acceptable from the start of America to the mid 1920s. In the mid 1920s a new type of “relationship” emerged: the date.

According to Merriam Webster’s online dictionary dating is “going on a usually romantic encounter” (Webster, 2010). In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the word date was originally used by prostitutes when referring to the time of their “exchanges” with clients (Bailey, 1988). As an example in context a prostitute may say, when talking to a cohort, “when I went on the date with him he gave me 500 dollars.” It was in the early 1900s, when the word date entered the general public’s vocabulary as a type of relationship (Bailey, 1988). Dating was essentially breaking the confines of the home and supervision of parents from courtship, and instead having romantic encounters outside of the home (Bailey, 1988). The basic premise of dating started as an innocent action of necessity. In the early 1900s most lower class families were living more than one family per room and or home, and therefore it was inconvenient and embarrassing to have a man call on you at home (Stepp, 2007). With this inconvenience lower class girls took to the streets and public dance halls for meetings to avoid inconvenience and embarrassment (Bailey, 1988). Although this was originally just in lower class families it soon spread to the middle and upper class by way of jealousy and conformity. When the upper and middle class women and girls saw the implied freedom of the “courting,” or more aptly put “dating,” outside of the home, they wanted it for themselves (Bailey, 1988). By the mid-1920s a majority of the lower, middle, and upper class girls were meeting out in the world on “dates” which came with new relationship etiquette. The first rule of dating from the past was the suitor or male counterpart of the date always picked up the girl and always paid for everything (Bailey, 1988). Along with this new etiquette came a shift of power (Bailey, 1988). Now the men held all the cards, whereas before when courtship was prevalent, women held all the cards. Now that the man was paying for

everything it became his choice when to ask the girl out and it became improper for a woman to initiate, since the man had to pay (Bailey, 1988). In essence, the man paid for the companionship of a suitable lady (Bailey, 1988). Beth Bailey, author of "*From Front Porch to Back Seat*," suggests that at this point women began to feel as if they owed some sort of sexual favor for a man paying for their entire date (Bailey, 1988). Even with the changes in society over the last few decades dating and the etiquette behind it have been maintained even until today.

Today if you enter a high school or even at times a middle or elementary school you will see what is called PDA (public displays of affection). High school, middle school, and elementary school students are all subject to dating in today's society, as opposed to society in the past where only girls above puberty were deemed old enough to date (Bailey, 1988). Also in today's dating society the woman has taken back a very small portion of control (Stepp, 2007). During the 1960s the women's liberation movement caused women to try to overthrow the man's rule (Gibbs, 2010). In this revolution the woman tried to take the place of the man and ask for the same freedoms. Women stopped wearing bras, took over the work force, and insisted on having control of their own bodies with birth control and making their own dates (Gibbs, 2010). In direct concordance with this new seizure of "freedom" the "casual sex" wave started. Although this wave is portrayed in pop culture as something of great stature it really didn't affect so many people (Bailey, 1988). A majority of the women in the sixties partook in regular dating relationships as opposed to "casual sex" relationships (Bailey, 1988). As time went on the rate of girls having sex outside of marriage did increase, but usually within the confines of the dating relationship. Such relationships: regular dating relationships could be seen as a form of prostitution. The man pays for the date and everything involved, the girl feels pressure to succumb and will only go on dates if the man has enough money to show her a decent time

(Bailey, 1988). In other words the man is paying for the companionship of the woman (Bailey, 1988). She would, in essence, be selling her body. Ever since the beginning of America, prostitution has been a cultural taboo. If a man were with a prostitute he was slumming it, and if a woman were a prostitute she was essentially a leper, an untouchable. So why would society deem it acceptable for a man to pay for a woman to spend time with him, in some cases to have sex with him? Is it a deterioration of the relationship to encourage prostitution? By moving from courtship to dating we personified the original meaning of the word date in our average society (Bailey, 1988). In essence America was prostituting its younger generation by encouraging the movement.

In today's society, high schools are presenting a relatively recent pressure: popularity. However popularity is not just a problem today it also expressed itself in the past: originally instigated by dating (Bailey, 1988). When dating first started it became an economic battle due to the fact that girls only wanted men who could take them on the best dates and so it soon became a popularity war: the people who got the most dates were the most popular because they had the greatest status (Bailey, 1988). Popularity for a man was determined by his wealth and ability to date; popularity for a girl was determined by her social status and her general perceived beauty (Bailey, 1988). The popularity of eligible individuals was posted in lists for girls who were trying to see if the blind date they had set up would ruin their standing. Each person was graded from A-E, A being the best and E being the worst (Bailey, 1988). If a person was unfortunate enough to be deemed an E they would not receive any dates and, unless becoming extremely lucky or acquiring a ton of money, they would probably die alone. Having this pressure weighing down on the people of the past made the people affected feel quite down (Bailey, 1988). This same effect can be seen today. Today it displays itself in cliques, and bullying in schools. In one

case related to popularity and its adverse effects, a seventeen year old boy named Eric Mohat committed suicide due to endless harassment in high school. The day he committed suicide one of the bullies went even as far as to say, “Why don't you go home and shoot yourself, no one will miss you” (James, 2009). Popularity was spawned by dating, bullying was spawned by popularity, and this boy's suicide was spawned by bullying. In the past few years there have been many documented cases of bullying leading to suicide, or in some cases murder or even genocide. Another example of the adverse affects of popularity is the broad wave of anorexia. Every day women are being diagnosed with anorexia due to the fact that they do not want to be seen as unattractive (fat) and not be seen as desirable for dates (Global Book Publishing, 2007). Even today the pressure of getting a date can lead to the destruction of a psyche or even a life. On April 20, 1999 Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, students at Columbine High School, went on a shooting spree killing thirteen students and injuring twenty four more in 16 minutes, and then 33 minutes later killed themselves (Greig & Marlowe, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold). Later when police investigated for motive they found a video in the house of Dylan Klebold stating that he despised his brother for being so popular and such a good athlete (an attractive quality) (Greig & Marlowe, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, 2009). Again popularity caused by relationships and the perception of beauty being equal to desirableness proved to be fatal. Just as this new found popularity caused death in America so did the next step in this progressive deterioration.

In the early 1990s a new form of the relationship emerged: the hookup (Stepp, 2007). On the back cover of “*The Hookup Handbook*,” a handbook for picking up partners for a hookup, it says that hooking up is “anything from making out to doing the nasty, generally with no commitment or plans for said commitment” (Rozler & Lavinthal, 2005). Hooking up was first introduced into society by a pornography magazine that referred to hooking

up in the context of the new big thing (Stepp, 2007). After being brought up in the pornography magazine the idea of hooking up spread to private colleges which eventually spread to public colleges and so on. Today studies show that the act of hooking up has become the common “relationship” source for most young people. In 2000, Elizabeth Paul, a professor at the College of New Jersey, did a survey of 555 college students to see the rate of hooking up. After surveying the student body she found that four out of every five students admitted to hooking up and two out of every five started the evenings planning for intercourse (Stepp, 2007). Two other studies, one in James Madison University with 1,500 students and the other in the University of Washington with 28,000 students, showed the same results (Stepp, 2007). Just as this behavior has shown to be highly pervasive in college atmospheres it has also been seen in middle schools and high schools. One study in the 1990s by Green State University, showed that 55% of eleventh graders in a Toledo high school admitted to having intercourse and that one third of that 55% pursued it with people who were just friends or acquaintances and not significant others (Stepp, 2007). In 2005 a CDC report showed that this study did have credence for the population of America (Stepp, 2007).

Other studies showed a lowering in the age of teenage girls partaking in intercourse (Stepp, 2007). Looking at this critically, what could this free sex entail? First of all sex, more appropriately termed intercourse can lead to pregnancy, venereal diseases, emotional hang-ups, and mental breakdowns, if not used correctly. In 2002 a survey showed that four out of five television shows watched by adolescents contained sexual material (Stepp, 2007). Some of the shows and movies available to teens and adults today are *The Secret Life of an American Teenager*, *Juno*, *Sixteen and Pregnant*, *Ugly Betty*, and *Mrs. Winterbourne*. All of these shows have teenagers who are pregnant and in most of them they show it as a bad thing simply in the respect that a baby is a

problem. If our culture mandates that premarital sex is okay and for that matter a norm by portraying it in popular TV shows, while also allowing abortion to “free” up your life since a baby is just a problem, wouldn't there be more abortions? Also, if our young people today learn early on that a baby is simply a consequence (something to be feared) and not necessarily a blessing, how will they feel about reproducing in the future? Abortions can be botched and can in some cases cause sterility, where a girl/woman loses the ability to conceive. If this is portrayed as alright, then is it not possible for this ideal set to progress to new levels in the future, to the point where there are not enough babies being produced to support our country and to replenish the population? Even if enough of these illegitimate children are born and healthy, psychological studies have shown that in order to raise a mentally healthy child you need the input of both a mother and a father figure (Stepp, 2007). Also the parents need to be willing to be serious with their child and to be attentive (Stepp, 2007). Some studies have shown that offspring are more likely to know the dangers of and avoid unhealthy, uncommitted relationships if their parents are attentive and serious with them on all topics that may come up (Stepp, 2007). If a child, teenager, or young adult is raising a child before they have reached maturity, how will they know how to raise a mentally healthy and successful child, if a majority of them didn't get the needed type of relationship with both their parents? Based on the rising rate of support and acceptance of this new found hooking up, most of the people with these illegitimate children will be single since they are not in a committed relationship which purvey no responsibility to the other involved. Again “babies” are just a hindrance for their way of life. One college boy showed his lack of attachment or responsibility by saying, “If a girl offers I'm not going to turn her down but I'm also not going to call her up and ask for a date afterward” (Stepp, 2007, p. 19). Not only is hooking up dangerous in our family units but it is also dangerous in the transmittance of disease.

In 1982 the CDC identified a main contributor to the spread and infection of AIDS in American society (Henry, 1987). This man, affectionately deemed “patient zero,” was Gaetan Dugas, a flight

attendant for Air Canada in the sixties (Henry, 1987). Dugas infected 40 people with AIDS, approximately 16.1% of the cases reported in the U.S. at the time (Henry, 1987). AIDS is the most serious and most of the time fatal stage of the HIV disease (National Institutes of Health, 2010). If one man did so much damage in a time when those pursuing casual sex were the minority, what will happen now when a majority of our population is involved in fluid exchange, whether it be intercourse, oral sex, or simply making out? Is our population not in more danger with hookups being so prevalent? A study by Dennis H. Osmond, PhD of the University of California San Francisco shows that in 1993, close to the origin time of the hookup a total of 173,772 people in America were infected with AIDS (Osmond, *Epidemiology of HIV/AIDS in the United States*, 2003). Three years later, in 1996, 237,735 people in America were infected with AIDS (Osmond, *Epidemiology of HIV/AIDS in the United States*, 2003). Another three years after that, in 1999, 312,804 people in America were infected with AIDS. By 2001, 362,827 people in America were infected with AIDS (Osmond, *Epidemiology of HIV/AIDS in the United States*, 2003). From 1993 to 2001 there was approximately a 48% increase in Americans infected with AIDS (Osmond, *Epidemiology of HIV/AIDS in the United States*, 2003). Another study conducted by Dr. Osmond showed that during the time AIDS and “patient zero” was discovered, 5% of the heterosexual population of America was infected with AIDS. In 1992, two years after the introduction of the hookup, 9% of the heterosexual population of America was infected with AIDS. By 2003, 13 years after the introduction of the hookup, 28% of the heterosexual population of America was infected with AIDS: a marked increase (Osmond, *Distributions of U.S. AIDS Cases* by Transmission Exposure Group over Time*, 2003). Hooking up opens our society to disease, death, and corruption; is this a step up from courtship and dating, or is it a step down, the deterioration of the relationship and its affect on the U.S.?

From the beginning of America until the mid 1920s America’s relationship were dominated by courtship: pure, chaperoned, and innocent. From the mid 1920s to the early 1990s America’s relationships were dominated by dating: suggestive, un-chaperoned, and solicitous. Finally, from early

1990s until today hooking up has engulfed the idea of the American relationship: infectious, fatal, and corrupting. By making this progression (or more aptly put: regression) from courtship to dating and finally to hooking up, the idea of the relationship in America has deteriorated and been corrupted to produce genocide, suicide, illness, and the destruction of the family unit. Term, definition, and etiquette changed for the worse along this path. All in all, the idea of the relationship in America has deteriorated and become corrupt over time.

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