

# Introduction

Alan Soble

This, my present love, is my first true love, but the true love is the first, *ergo*, this third love is my first love.

Kierkegaard, "The First Love," *Either/Or*, vol. 1

## 1.

In this introduction, I later provide some very brief remarks on just a few of the essays included in this book that I find especially provocative or noteworthy. My task here, as I see it, is primarily to record the important and interesting parts of the history of the Society for the Philosophy of Sex and Love (SPSL), without making too many substantive comments on or judgments about the content or quality of the essays that follow. For one thing, I authored six of the pieces included in this volume; that seems to be plenty of substance for one tiny-boss editor of one large book. For another thing, so much substance occupies the many pages of this enormous book already that no reader needs yet more substance in a mere introduction to the substance. Volumes such as this one should be entered lightly, in anticipation of and preparation for the heaviness to come. I advise examining the photographs of the authors first, taking in their humanity, character, and beauty, followed by a bit of stroking of the covers and smelling the book's paper. *Face* Italo Calvino, the sensuous should proceed and accompany the philosophy of the sensuous.

## 2.

In 1977, I decided to attempt to establish a professional organization that would devote itself to the philosophical exploration of love, human sexuality, friendship, marriage, sexual reproduction, and related matters. The central activity of the planned organization, which I eventually named the Society for the Philosophy of Sex and Love—over the objections of members (mostly women, but also some men) who preferred the reverse order—was anticipated to be the sponsoring of meetings, held concurrently with meetings of the three divisions of The American Philosophical Association, to be attended by professionals in various fields, at which papers examining the topics mentioned above would be delivered, followed by a critical commentary and audience discussion. The guiding idea was that love and sex, subjects widely talked about outside the academy, had received insufficient (or insufficiently competent) attention from philosophers, and that contemporary philosophy, when done well, had worthwhile contributions to make to our understanding of this constellation of items. The ambition of the Society was to encourage, among both philosophers and professionals in other fields who had an interest in philosophical questions and

methods, a sustained, pluralistic, and expert investigation into this area of human life.

In December 1977, right after Christmas (as has long been the habit with the Eastern Division of The American Philosophical Association), SPSL held its first meetings, in Washington, D. C., at which were presented, first, an analytic essay on the nature of sexual desire by Jerome Shaffer and, second, a historical essay on homosexuality and epistemology in Plato by Ellen Shapiro. The attendance at these meetings, as well as the number of membership subscriptions, convinced me that the formation of SPSL had been a satisfactory idea: there was enough interest in love, sex, marriage, and related topics among philosophers and scholars in other fields to justify proceeding further with the Society. During the fifteen years of my administration of SPSL (1977-1992), the Society held twenty-eight meetings in eighteen cities—from Philadelphia and New York to San Francisco, from Detroit to Atlanta and New Orleans—at which over fifty main papers were presented, along with about an equal number of brief, adversarial commentaries. I attended most of these meetings, as many as my personal budget would allow (university travel money has always been difficult to come by), and over the years found myself out of necessity either chairing more than my rightful share of them or too often commenting on the main paper. I did get to see the States.

I have gathered together in this volume many of the papers and commentaries presented at meetings of SPSL during this fifteen-year period, thereby providing a record of the activities of the Society and making this material available to members, both old and new, of SPSL and to other scholars in the humanities and the sciences working in the area of love and sex. My original goal of including every SPSL paper and commentary turned out to be unrealistic; some authors and participants could not be located and others declined, for various good and bad reasons, the invitation to participate in this project. The final table of contents lists sixty chapters. Twenty-five of these essays have been previously published elsewhere (see “Credits”) and have been revised, sometimes importantly, for this volume; the remaining thirty-five appear in print for the first time here. A glance at the table of contents will show that this collection is at the same time both eclectic and unified. (Chapter Thirty-Nine, Carol Caraway’s essay “Romantic Love: A Patchwork,” was not written for or presented at any meeting of SPSL. It is included here for the sake of completeness, since it is a reply to Chapter Thirty-Eight, my “The Unity of Romantic Love,” which was a commentary on Caraway’s 1986 SPSL paper, Chapter Thirty-Six, “Romantic Love: Neither Sexist Nor Heterosexist.”)

One question that I have been repeatedly forced to answer by callous and inquiring minds, not only about my founding the Society but also about my long string of publications in this area of philosophy, needs to be broached once again, this time publicly: “Why the philosophy of sex and love (of all things)?” The short answer, which must suffice, is that I love sex, in all its myriad forms (nearly); I love love, in many of its energizing and even agonizing forms; I love the two together and I love the two apart. So much for confessing the obvious. (Can the epistemologist say this about knowledge, or the metaphysician about relations?) Sex and love were (are) my first loves, along with

the unattainable and unforgettable trio consisting of knock-out Sharon down-the-street, my ugly, large-nosed Latin teacher Mr. Feingold, and Bertram, my handsome, much older cousin from Boston. But philosophically dissecting, in a society and in publications, that which one loves—does it not amount to murder? So claim the critics. Here is a poem that was sent anonymously to me, *qua* director of SPSL, in the early 1980s:

“Weirdo” Groups #37

Soble’s seems doubly oxymoronic  
 Causing a boom that’s visibly sonic.  
 Conjoining sex and love is bad enough,  
 Achieving tenderness is really tough.  
 While sex produces that in-bedward leap,  
 Philosophy’s Drone just puts folks to sleep.  
 Eros’ reversal makes everyone sore;  
 Philos and Sophos (once wed) merely bore.  
 That tangled web that lovers weave while *hot*  
 Tends to unravel mind’s Gordian knot.  
 Can thinking clearly be the catalyst  
 Which turns Brute Rape into a Tender Tryst?  
 Society/Philosophy/Sex/Love:  
 Can anyone have all of the above?

Maybe, if supermoms exist.

3.

For the sake of the historical record, I thought it appropriate to include in this introduction yet another introduction, the opening speech (not nearly as good as Phaedrus’s opening speech) I gave at the first meeting of the Society, which was held on 28 December 1977 during the Eastern Division Meeting of The American Philosophical Association. Instead of rewriting the text, I added, in 1996, some corrective notes, resisting the powerful impulse to change the historical and embarrassing record. I reproduce this ancient document in its entirety:

The Philosophy of Sex and Love:  
 A Subject with a Great Future

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I am pleased to see you here this afternoon, and I welcome you to the first meeting of the Society for the Philosophy of Sex and Love. I do not want to take much of your time, as we are looking forward to an interesting paper and dis-

cussion, but I would like to make a few remarks about what I take to be the dual focus of the philosophy of sex and love.

One focus was introduced by Professor Thomas Nagel in his paper on sexual perversion, which I did not discover until late in 1974.<sup>1</sup> Many philosophers were impressed by Nagel's attempt to approach philosophically a topic that had been dealt with previously primarily only by psychoanalysts and the sociologists of deviance. I was personally impressed by Nagel's courage in writing about a subject the discussion of which would almost necessarily expose his own conscious or unconscious sexual attitudes. (We know that Robert Solomon found humor in Nagel's sexual use of mirrors<sup>2</sup> and that Janice Moulton, in turn, caught Solomon on some of the absurdities of sex as communication.)<sup>3</sup> I was less impressed, however, by Nagel's particular analysis of sex.<sup>4</sup> Allow me to explore, for a moment, a relatively neglected feature of Nagel's account.<sup>5</sup>

Often I have tried to work out intellectually and to experience emotionally<sup>6</sup> the higher levels of sexual awareness that this theory says are possible, but unless I am, mysteriously, overtaken by brilliance I cannot with any great success pass beyond the second or third iteration.<sup>7</sup> On occasion I have had what I like to think of as an experience of infinity, which does include an accelerating ascent through levels of awareness, but when this happens I am usually tired and alone, and my feet seem to expand and to fill the void of the universe.<sup>8</sup> This feeling does remind me, however, of the oceanic feeling described by Sigmund Freud in the opening section of *Civilization and Its Discontents*.<sup>9</sup> Freud was describing some kind of religious experience, and therefore one might suggest that Nagel's infinite levels of awareness are helpful if we combine his theory with Wilhelm Reich's idea that during *true* orgasm a pair of persons comes to mesh, religiously, with the energy of the universe.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, we might also note the orgiastic sexual merging of Krishna with 16,000 Indian cowgirls on the banks of the Ganges, a merging that created the Oneness, the Union of Love that was God.

Of course, Nagel's thesis proposes to be an analysis of mundane sex and not a theological doctrine, and as a piece of analysis it is a noteworthy attempt. We have followed with considerable admiration how philosophers have developed, refined, modified, and complemented both the questions and the answers introduced by Nagel, and the high quality of the debate, as documented in part in the Baker and Elliston collection,<sup>11</sup> was a very important consideration in the formation of this Society. Indeed, this afternoon Professor Shaffer is going to make a contribution to this analytic progression by presenting his paper on sexual desire.<sup>12</sup>

The second focus is provided by the increasing attention paid to the feminist perspective within philosophy. In the late 1960s the contemporary independent feminist viewpoint was developed, and this movement has had significant impact only among academics but also on the administration and formation of law, on business and the economy, and on our personal lives—although one wishes that its impact in these latter areas did not encounter so many obstacles. For our purposes, the interesting contribution made by the feminist movement is its re-emphasizing and re-analyzing the ways in which sexuality, the family and marriage, and the socialization of the sexes are central to the rest of the

political, economic, cultural, and social order. This consciousness of the widespread and reciprocal relationship between gender, sexual identity, and personality, on the one hand, and, on the other, politics and economics, must certainly be a major concern for the philosophy of sex and love.

Whereas with Nagel and his successors philosophers have become concerned with trying to understand the basic concepts of sexuality and love, with the leadership provided by the feminist movement philosophers have become attuned to the promise of understanding sexuality in terms of its connections with the whole range of human social experience. In Nagel's tradition, the philosophy of sex and love pursues conceptual and linguistic matters; in the feminist tradition the philosophy of sex and love attacks the broader and, to some, the more urgent ethical, social, and political questions surrounding sexuality. The philosophy of sex and love, then, as I see it, is both analytically oriented in clarifying the language<sup>13</sup> of sexuality, and at the same time continues the interdisciplinary investigations begun by Freud, Reich, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Betty Friedan, Simone de Beauvoir, Shulamith Firestone, Kate Millet, and Juliet Mitchell.<sup>14</sup> I am optimistic that a workable alliance can exist under the general rubric of the philosophy of sex and love, an alliance between the analytic and the nonanalytic.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, on Thursday evening Ellen Shapiro, in presenting her paper on homosexuality in Plato, will show us what exciting things can be done within the nonanalytic framework.

At the very start I heard comments about a society for the philosophy of sex and love that are by now trite; I imagine that Havelock Ellis, Alfred Kinsey, and Virginia Johnson and William Masters heard similar remarks.<sup>16</sup> I was told, for example, that my proposal to establish a society for the philosophy of sex and love was nothing more than a proposal to have sex. Or we are to believe that the process of analyzing sexuality is symptomatic of our inability to lead fully satisfying sexual lives, or that our intellectual "preoccupation" with sexuality is just the manifestation of the repression and sublimation of our sexual energy. Indeed, the very ink on the pages I'm reading from has been given an astonishing sexual interpretation. Such accusations or innuendos can be safely ignored. Even if they had some truth, it is also true that an ultimate goal of this society and of our other philosophical and political activities is to make it possible for persons to live in such a way that needless repression is eliminated, and to make it possible to abandon talk about sexuality simply because there would no longer be any sexual problems to talk about.<sup>17</sup> If this society is born out of repression, then, at least the way in which the energy has been sublimated creates the attempt to exorcise the repression that makes this society both useful and necessary. Finally, it is often lamented that the philosophy of "X" (for example, art) is much less exciting, if not terribly boring by comparison, than "X" itself.<sup>18</sup> Certainly the philosophy of sex and love will be in some ways less exciting than sex and love themselves, but in other ways it will be more exciting. We would expect sex and the philosophy of sex to be exciting in the same ways only if, which is false, a society for the philosophy of sex were a society for sex. I should mention that when I first read Professor Shaffer's paper on sexual desire, my immediate gut-level reaction was to get very hungry.<sup>19</sup>

I think it is realistic to say that the philosophy of sex and love is a subject with a great future; that it is also a subject with a great past is made clear for us by Ellen Shapiro. The formation of the Society comes at a time when the study of sexuality is proceeding full-steam ahead in the other disciplines, including psychology, sociology, physiology, and medicine. And it is quite appropriate that philosophers should bring their talents to bear not only on specifically philosophical questions but also on the methodological and theoretical questions that arise from the investigations done within these other disciplines. There is much interesting work to be done, and I am pleased that there are so many philosophers who have accepted the challenge.

Let me introduce to you now Professor Jerome Shaffer, from the philosophy department at the University of Connecticut, who will read his paper on sexual desire.

Were I now, twenty years later, to deliver an opening speech of this sort for the same purpose, it would be much different. I would, for example, mention (which is today *de rigueur*) the ideas of the polar opposite thinkers Camille Paglia and Catharine A. MacKinnon, and I would ask the audience to ponder why, in January 1995, a philosopher of the caliber of Christina Hoff Sommers would make an appearance—albeit fully dressed—in the pages of *Penthouse*.

#### 4.

Jerome Shaffer's essay on sexual desire soon appeared in print in the *Journal of Philosophy*, and fittingly is the opening piece (in that later version) in this volume. Ellen Shapiro's essay on Plato could not be included here; locating her after so many years, in order to ask permission, proved impossible. I am also sorry not to be able to include, as a result, L. A. Kosman's comments on Shapiro's paper. A year later, in December 1978, the Society held its next meeting, again in Washington, D. C., and featured a paper by Donald Levy on the concept of love in Plato's *Symposium*, later published in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, and one by Jacqueline Kinderlehrer (later Jacqueline Fortunata) on masturbation and female sexuality, which was published in my first book, an anthology, the first edition of *The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings*. Levy's essay is included here, as Chapter Two, but not Kinderlehrer's, another author I could not locate.

The first meetings of SPSL, in 1977, were reviewed for the popular press by the journalist/model Suzanne Felzen, who was sent to cover The American Philosophical Association convention (including both receptions) by New York's *Cheri* magazine. Her observations were pungent, showing philosophers at work and at play in an interesting light. In late 1995, I wrote to G. J. Clique, the managing editor of *Cheri*, asking permission to reprint Felzen's account of her experiences at a philosophy convention (and for at least one photograph of her stunning beauty). Clique did not reply, not even when prompted by a follow-up request a few months later. I have misplaced, I suspect forever, my copy of the issue of *Cheri* that contained Felzen's review. Its loss saddens me

primarily because it was a gift from Richard Hull (who threatened to send another copy to the Society for Women in Philosophy).

The next meetings of the Society, in 1978, were covered by an arguably more respectable publication. The *Washington Post* was represented at the Eastern Division of The American Philosophical Association by Henry Allen, who wrote a news article about the convention, a substantial part of which was devoted to panning the Society. In "Semantics, Paradigms, Ontology . . . Love,"<sup>20</sup> Mr. Allen wrote:

One noted attraction was the meeting of the Society for Philosophy of Sex & Love, at 11:30 a.m. ("Don't they usually meet at night?" asked John Brough, chairman of the department at Georgetown.)

If the prurient itch had driven anyone to the meeting, the reading of a paper entitled "The Definition of Love in Plato's Symposium" elicited no immoderate chuckles at the more telling phrases: "Ordered hierarchy" or "Plato's ontology" or "horns of a dilemma."

One woman even wrote a postcard. In aqua ink, beneath the oratory on the intrinsic worth of love, regardless of its object, she began: "Thanks so much for the leather purse."

Another young woman seemed to be turning boredom into an amatory art form with her small sighs, surveys of the ceiling and an occasional pout that made her look as if she just might be whistling to herself.

Her companion, in beard and lumberjack shirt, even slipped his arm around her when the speaker, Donald Levy of Brooklyn College, got to the part about how all human activity is motivated by love.

"Everything was valid, I suppose, and the statements were cogent, but perhaps more was being made of it than necessary," she said afterwards in the hallway, being Susan Muller, a Long Island pianist who "takes an interest in philosophy, but more usually analytic philosophy."

Down by registration, Charles Stevenson, one of the great ethicists of the University of Michigan, emeritus, now teaching at Bennington in his retirement, said he'd seen the sex and love business but "I thought it was crackpot. Maybe I was wrong." . . .

Just down the hall from the philosophy of sex and love gang was the child-care center. Three young women looked after . . . Paul Tong . . . and his brother John.

I guess you had to be there.

## 5.

When a great deal of material is written on a subject, some things that are asserted about it will be silly; to reverse a well-known story, one of a bunch of monkeys will sooner or later type a Shakespearian sonnet. This principle holds, as it should, for the topics of love, human sexuality, friendship, and marriage. In a book that contains sixty essays, that several sentences here and there will strike some readers as absurd is unavoidable. For example, in one essay we

find the claim that after two people marry and begin their daily lives together, their personalities are fully revealed and, as a result, "idealizations give way to a better understanding of what's really admirable about one's partner." This generalization receives the "syrup-of-the-book" award. I should have thought, in the spirit of Søren Kierkegaard, that matters were quite the reverse: after marriage, or by living together, we find out how rotten the other person really is. By its nature, idealization, as pointed out by innumerable theorists of love, *collapses* (into disgust) instead of *convalescing* (into admiration). This is why, for Kierkegaard, allegiance to God (or the Party) is required of both partners, in order to keep the dyad from falling apart out of boredom or incessant annoyance. When *eros* is gone, *agape* is the cement. Or the dyad is doomed.

But even the best of philosophers has been known to say nearly moronic things about sex and love, and we need not turn to the long and disturbingly sexist history of Western philosophy of sex and love to make that point. The contemporary Harvard philosopher Robert Nozick, well-known for his award-winning explorations in social and political theory, opines that sexuality is "metaphysical exploration, knowing the body and person of another as a map or microcosm of the very deepest reality, a clue to its nature and purpose"<sup>21</sup>—as if investigating the pimples on our partner's bottom provides a reflection of cosmic order. Nozick also exaggerates the uniqueness of sexuality when he writes that "the most intense way we relate to another person is sexually."<sup>22</sup> Bursts of mutual hatred or anger can be just as if not more intense. And in the dull coitus routinely performed by long-married couples, there is not much intensity. Would Nozick remind us that, on his view, sexual activity is a metaphysical exploration, an examination of the minutiae of the other's body? The cosmic significance of the vaginal lips or the glans of the penis compensates for the loss of passion. What *I'd* like to see (instead of, or in addition to, papers on O. J. and Charles and Di, as recommended by Carol Caraway in her "Preface" to this volume) are serious philosophical studies of the death of sexual desire in marriage and other long-term relationships, and hardnosed investigations of sexual bargaining between partners, both heterosexual and homosexual, in and out of marriage. Another recent notable event about which philosophers should cogitate, that is, is the purported appointment between Bill Clinton and Paula Jones (who appears, semi-nude, a few pages after the Christina Hoff Sommers interview in *Penthouse*).

This volume, nevertheless, contains a great deal of superb material, else I would not have spent almost three years doing all the tedious things required preparing the manuscript for publication. (I beg of you not to think more than once: having sunk so much time and energy into the project, Soble is here rationalizing.) I beseech you to read carefully, as evidence of my proposition, the following essays (my favorites), after leisurely browsing through the whole book. First and foremost is Jerome Shaffer's brilliant essay on sexual desire (Chapter One), which is not only a paradigm of the philosophy of sex, but a paradigm of philosophy *simpliciter*. I wish Shaffer, before retiring, had turned his acute analytic skills and sound perceptions of the human condition to other questions in the philosophy of sex. Neera Badhwar's skillful and comprehensive treatment of loving a person as an end is another magnificent contribution

(Chapter Thirty-Three), despite the fact that I take issue with her view (Chapter Thirty-Four). The exchange between Natalie Dandekar and Carol S. Gould on Phaedrus's speech in Plato's *Symposium* (Chapters Fifty-Four and Fifty-Five) is a fascinating discussion of an underexplored portion of that rich dialogue. Gene Fendt's essay on Kierkegaard as a tricky fellow indeed (Chapter Forty-Five) is provocative, even if Steven Emmanuel is right (Chapter Forty-Six) that Fendt's thesis about Kierkegaard's deceptions is unfalsifiable. Justin Leiber's speculations about the origins of the pornographic impulse are refreshing (Chapter Fifty-Nine), and deserve to be taken into account as feminist philosophers (and others) continue to toss around this hot potato. Donald Levy's analysis of Plato's concept of love in the *Symposium* (Chapter Two)—even if, as observed by Henry Allen, some nonphilosophers in the audience were bored to tears, or to writing postcards, by it—is an insightful addition to Plato scholarship. David Mayo's essay, in which he denies that HIV-positive persons have a moral duty to warn potential sexual partners of that fact (Chapter Forty-Three), is the most outrageous piece in the book; but Mayo, the philosopher that he is, argues for his thesis vigorously. Steven Smith and Nancy Snow (Chapters Fifty-Two and Fifty-Three) fruitfully examine the relationship between sex and gender (with Kant and Carol Gilligan in the foreground), an issue probed explicitly or implicitly by many essays in this book (see, for example, the exchange among Carol Caraway, Dana Bushnell, and me in Chapters Thirty-Six through Thirty-Nine). Finally, I have always been impressed by the originality and seductiveness of Russell Vannoy's account of sexual perversity (Chapter Thirty-Five), and hope that he soon finishes writing the book in which he develops further his intriguing ideas on this topic.

## 6.

The Society began in 1977 with about fifty members. Throughout my tenure as its director, membership never fell below fifty but also never rose above seventy in any of the years from 1977 through 1992. The turnover rate, in my judgment, was on the high side: perhaps as many as twenty members let their subscriptions lapse each year, while the Society added roughly the same number of new members. That's an annual turnover rate of about 30%, which suggests that there has not been much continuity in the membership. (But I'd like to see the membership figures and turnover rates of other small societies.) Nineteen members, however, were with me from the very beginning, joining SPSL in 1977, and were still members in 1992, when I turned the directorship over to Carol Caraway. These nineteen members, the core membership of SPSL, deserve to be thanked for their initial support of the newly-formed society and for staying the course with me: Ed Abegg, Joseph Aieta, W. M. Alexander, Bernard (Stefan) Baumrin, Donald Blakeley, Richard Hull, Edward Johnson, Rolf Johnson, John Kleinig, Brendan Liddell, Pat McGraw, John McGraw, Lee Rice, R. C. Richards, Irving Singer, Art Stawinski, John Sullivan, Ed Vacek, and Russell Vannoy.

John Sullivan, one of the most distinguished members of SPSL, died in Santa Barbara, California, on 9 April 1993. His essay on sexual objectification

(Chapter Fifteen) is published here for the first time, with the permission of his wife, Judy Godfrey, who also supplied the biographical information comprising Sullivan's entry in "Contributors." Two other deaths should be noted. Fred Berger was a loyal member of SPSL from the beginning, but did not make it into the fifteen-year club; Berger died on 20 November 1986. I recommend to you his excellent essay "Gratitude."<sup>23</sup> Fred Elliston, although he was not a member of SPSL, participated generously in its meetings, presenting two commentaries for the Society, one in 1978 (on Chapter Two, Donald Levy's paper on love in Plato's *Symposium*), the other in 1985 (on Chapter Thirty, Charles Johnson's "Body Language"). Elliston died in an automobile accident on 17 May 1987. I could not locate Elliston's wife or any other appropriate party to get permission to publish his commentaries.

Special thanks are due to Richard T. Hull—my migrainous mentor years ago, and still my migrainous mentor—who has been, *qua* my **HAPS** editor, a medium-size boss with a huge-size amount of patience and words of encouragement. Others who assisted in various and sundry ways, and whom I here thank, include, in no coherent order, Kris Lackey and Terry Coverson (Department of English, University of New Orleans); Barbara Kirshner, who worked for a year with me on the project; Lee C. Rice (Marquette University); Lynn Hankinson Nelson (editor of the SWIP newsletter; Rowan College of New Jersey); Janet Sample (of The American Philosophical Association); Eric van Broekhuizen (my editor at **Rodopi**); Robert Ginsberg (executive editor of **VIBS**); the University of New Orleans Research Council and College of Liberal Arts, for release time from teaching; Irving Singer (Massachusetts Institute of Technology); Stephen Posey, Jim Wentzel, Gwen Burda, and Dennis McSeveney, for technical computer, printer, and word-processing advice; Kimberley Arrington (at the *Washington Post*); Judy Godfrey, for her help with John Sullivan's contribution and biographical note; and Sára Szabó Soble, my spouse, for performing many time-consuming library tasks for me. The "Introduction" was gone through carefully by Edward Johnson (my chairperson), Richard Hull, and Robert Ginsberg. I thank each for spotting my mistakes and bringing them to my attention, and for allowing me to incorporate (when I did) their suggestions for modifying the penultimate version. Others who contributed in diverse ways to this project and my life are L. Sacks, S. N. Moyer, B. Albright, V. Wu, R. Robbins, R. Cutlin, C. Bleier, K. Marshall, J. Grey, S. Taylor, J. Wick, S. McBeth, R. Schmidt, K. B. Craig, G. Castellano, A. Pirruccello, D. Ragsdale, and the now-deceased B. Sonia, J. Trautwein, K. Avegno, and Norton Nelkin.

My opening address at the first meeting of the Society for the Philosophy of Sex and Love is the only piece in this volume that is absolutely unchanged. Because I prepared the manuscript of the entire book on the top of my desk, it was both possible and necessary to edit (in either a weak or a strong sense, depending on the nature and provenance of the essay occupying the screen of my monitor at the time) every other essay contained in this volume. Further, most authors had the opportunity (and took it) to revise their original contributions. In some cases, the author and I settled on a new title as well. This explains the several discrepancies between the title given directly below the

author's photograph—the title of the original SPSL live presentation—and the title that appears at the beginning of the author's essay and in the "Contents."

At first I used WordPerfect 5.1 on the entire manuscript, but later, in light of severe formatting and printing problems, I converted everything into WordPerfect 6.0 (at the suggestion of Richard Hull). In many ways, that decision proved wise, but I soon discovered that WordPerfect 6.1 for Windows 3.1—even though I was equipped with limited hard drive space and only 8 megabytes of RAM—was the best choice. The final manuscript was printed 600x600 dpi on a Hewlett-Packard LaserJet 4Plus, an HP LaserJet 5P, and an HP LaserJet 5L Xtra (which three printers gave nearly visibly identical results, even if not at the same speed: the workhorse 4Plus is the fastest).

The photographs were the occasion for additional headaches and expense. Although most of the contributors supplied photographs of excellent quality and appropriate size and color, others, unfortunately for me, could not do so. Of these photographs new negatives had to be made, and if the final results are acceptable, I will owe a great deal to luck and to the efforts of the professionals at **Rodopi**. A word about the photographs of the editor: since a history of me and a history of the Society are inseparable (although not seamlessly), I have chosen to show my face, body, and clothing at various stages of their predictable development. (There are no nudes of me in *Penthouse* or *Cheri*.) *In mitn derinnen*, I share with the readers of this book another part of my history and development: the reader will find photographs of my two wonderful daughters (Rebecca Jill Soble and Rachel Emőke Soble), my two loving parents (Sylvia and William Soble), my two terribly-missed grandmothers (Gertrude Bronsweig Ratener and Rose Goldberg Soble), my two strong and successful sisters (Phyllis Ellen Soble and Janet Marlene Soble), and my second, but number one, wife (Sára Szabó Soble).

## Notes

1. Thomas Nagel, "Sexual Perversion," *Journal of Philosophy* 66:1 (1969): 5-17; reprinted in Alan Soble, ed., *Philosophy of Sex*, 1st ed. (Totowa, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams, 1980), 76-88, and *Philosophy of Sex*, 2nd ed. (Savage, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1991), 39-51.

2. Robert Solomon, "Sexual Paradigms," *Journal of Philosophy* 71:11 (1974): 336-45; reprinted in Soble, *Philosophy of Sex*, 1st ed., 89-98, 2nd ed., 53-62.

3. Janice Moulton, "Sexual Behavior: Another Position," *Journal of Philosophy* 73:16 (1976): 537-46; reprinted in Soble, *Philosophy of Sex*, 1st ed., 110-18, 2nd ed., 63-71.

4. I am more impressed now with the subtlety and beauty of Nagel's account of psychologically natural human sexuality; see my sympathetic discussion in *Sexual Investigations* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 71-4, 81-3.

5. What follows was meant as a joke; the large and possibly apprehensive audience (I wore my uniform—jeans and a dungaree jacket—and my hair was tied back in a long ponytail) did not take it that way. Or maybe they were concentrating on their postcard-writing.

6. Today I would replace "emotionally" with "phenomenologically."

7. I have trouble comprehending "x is aroused by sensing that y is aroused by sensing that x is aroused by sensing that y is aroused by sensing that x is aroused by sensing y." So do my philosophy of sex and love students.

8. I am sad to report that I no longer experience this infinity feeling, which is odd, since I am more exhausted these days than I ever have been.

9. *Civilization and Its Discontents*, in James Strachey, ed. and trans., *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 21 (London: Hogarth Press, 1964), 64-5.

10. Today I would replace "religiously" with "ontologically."

11. I was referring to the first edition of Robert Baker and Frederick Elliston, eds., *Philosophy and Sex* (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1975), which later appeared in its second edition (1984). Not too long after this meeting, I put together the first edition of my *Philosophy of Sex* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980). The second edition (much revised) came out in 1991 and the third (again largely a new book) in 1997.

12. A longer version was published as "Sexual Desire" in *Journal of Philosophy* 75:4 (1978): 175-89, and is included in this volume as Chapter One.

13. And "logic."

14. More writers must be added to the list of significant earlies: Ti-Grace Atkinson, Susan Brownmiller, Andrea Dworkin, Germaine Greer, Sheila Rowbotham, and Eli Zaretsky, to name a few.

15. This optimism has nearly been shot to heck by Catharine MacKinnon and the more recent work of Andrea Dworkin, as well as by postmodernist and French feminism. But note the existence, if not popularity, of the Society for Analytic Feminism, which also meets with the three divisions of The American Philosophical Association.

16. Robert Solomon quipped, in the prestigious pages of the *Philosophical Review*, that "the program committee of the APA . . . delights in assigning the newly formed Society for the Philosophy of Sex and Love to the 'Thoroughbred Room' of its convention hotel" (review of *Sex Without Love: A Philosophical Exploration* by Russell Vannoy, 91:4 [1982], 653-6, at 654). Cute, but false. A glance through the *Proceedings of The American Philosophical Association* reveals that the Society has dwelled in such distinguished locations as "Monroe West," "Holmes," "Independence East," "Commonwealth," "Consulate," and "Cabinet."

17. ©

18. Said to me by the late Thomas D. Perry, who might have thought that the philosophy of law was less exciting than law itself.

19. At least Shaffer laughed at this from the podium, and added before reading his paper that he got hungry writing it. (As the young Woody Allen might have said, the best part of sex is the fettuccine alfredo that comes afterwards.)

20. Henry Allen, "Semantics, Paradigms, Ontology . . . Love," *Washington Post* (28 December 1978), B1, B3.

21. Nozick, *The Examined Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 67. Not much life-examination on this page, at least.

22. *Ibid.*, 61.

23. *Ethics* 85:4 (1975): 298-309.