

Zeitschrift: Der Kreis : eine Monatsschrift = Le Cercle : revue mensuelle
Band: 30 (1962)
Heft: 12

Artikel: Is sex a narcotic?
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-570181>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 31.01.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Is Sex a Narcotic?

(From a recent letter)

One little snippet from you arrived not long ago which you probably sent me with delight, hoping it would sting me a bit. It was: «Most men, disturbed or scared, lose their sexual drive. But for him, sex was a narcotic, a bulwark against care.» And then you went on to say that the first sentence was true of you—and—then went on to ask: «What about the second sentence and you?» Well, it's hardly a narcotic. In my books, 'narcotic' is usually taken to mean a drug that induces profound sleep, lethargy and relief of pain. Sex hardly ever did that for me. The root of 'narcotic' is the Greek *narke*, which means numbness—and I never got numb after a party in all my life. Sex is not even an escape for me. The only kick I get out of it might be defined by taking a couple lines out of context from Shelley's 'Skylark'—«We look before and after / And pine for what is not.» I hate the act itself and always have. But I have always 'looked before and after, and pined for what is not'. Anticipation is wonderful, and afterwards, you can call up the event in retrospect and caress it and make love to it—but ugh, the thing itself! You set me to thinking a bit about it, and I decided that if it could be defined by any word at all, you would just have to say it was habit. You know I have always been a record-keeper, knowing (contrary to a quote you used as a filler a while ago) full well when I was seventeen that I would be seventy some day, and want the memories to look back upon—and so I kept records and names, and most of them I have already forgotten: what names are attached to what bodies, who this romantic stranger was, who was the 'Italian taxi-driver' from 1948? Who was the 'huge Negro' from 1952? Who was Leonard? Who was Kenny King? Of course, Kinsey was delighted that I had kept a count . . . And so, we fall into the habit of sex, and we keep it up. And once in a while, alone in the apartment at night, I think to myself of its foolishness and its waste of time and money and emotion; I don't give a damn for it, and yet I keep it up. Is it pride? What the hell is it? I never liked it when I was seventeen, even. I'm not looking for a soul-mate or a Great Love. I'm doing it, I guess, just because it comes along, and there's nothing to do. I could, with ease, stop tomorrow; and depend henceforth on my fantasies and my hand. But when you are as aware of what it is and what it means to you, as I seem to be, can you actually say that it is a narcotic, that it induces profound sleep, lethargy, and relief of pain? In my case, it causes more pain than it relieves, believe me . . . «We look before and after, and pine for what is not.» Well, I've looked before and after—and as for the pining for what is not, do you remember what old Freud said in a late work? It was something to the effect that: «I suspect that in most sexual encounters involving two persons, there are at least four people present.» He was referring, I suppose, to the fantasies created by each person as he engages in sex. When with A, do you think of B? And what does A think of? You, or C?

And finally, if it is a narcotic, and you stop it, would there not be 'withdrawal symptoms'? There would certainly not, in my case. I could cut it off as easily as I stop breathing—and if I did, (he said wryly, negating everything he'd said before) I probably would. . .

Hotel „Flora“

KERKSTRAAT 366
bij de Utrechtschestraat

AMSTERDAM-C.
Telefoon 3 7 6 2 3

Single and Doublerooms
With breakfast
All rooms running water

1 - en 2 - persoons kamers
Logies met ontbijt
Alle kamers stromend water

Directie: Mevr. ANNIE WALDEN

CANNES - FRANCE

Hôtel P.L.M.**

3, Rue Hoche

Propriétaires: Jean et Charly
ex-Casanova

English spoken — Man spricht Deutsch

Hotel Zwitserland Amsterdam

Reguliersgracht 17, beim Rembrandtplein
Zentrum
Ruf 35056 Amsterdam

Die Freunde und Freundinnen
aus aller Welt
wohnen in Amsterdam im

**Das einmalige Hotel mit Bar,
an einer der berühmtesten Grachten
im Zentrum von Amsterdam**

Hotel Zwitserland

Dir. Ad. van Besouw

TUSCULUM

die exclusive Bar im Zentrum von Hamburg

Täglich ab 19 Uhr geöffnet

Hamburg 1, Kreuzweg 6 - Telefon 24 26 07