Summary:

The world can hurt you if you have less or nothing to eat, or have no comfort and so on, but many, many things that hurt you are only in your head. They are merely part of your own projection.
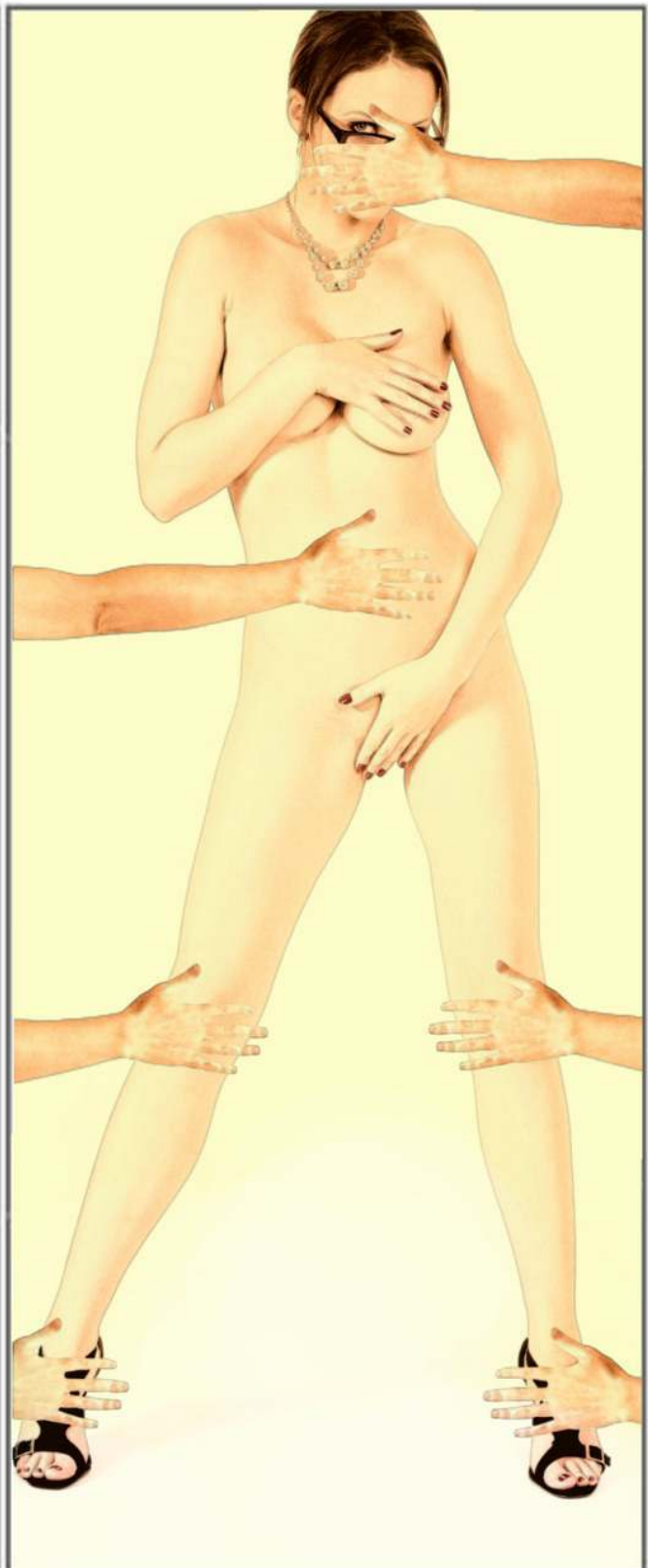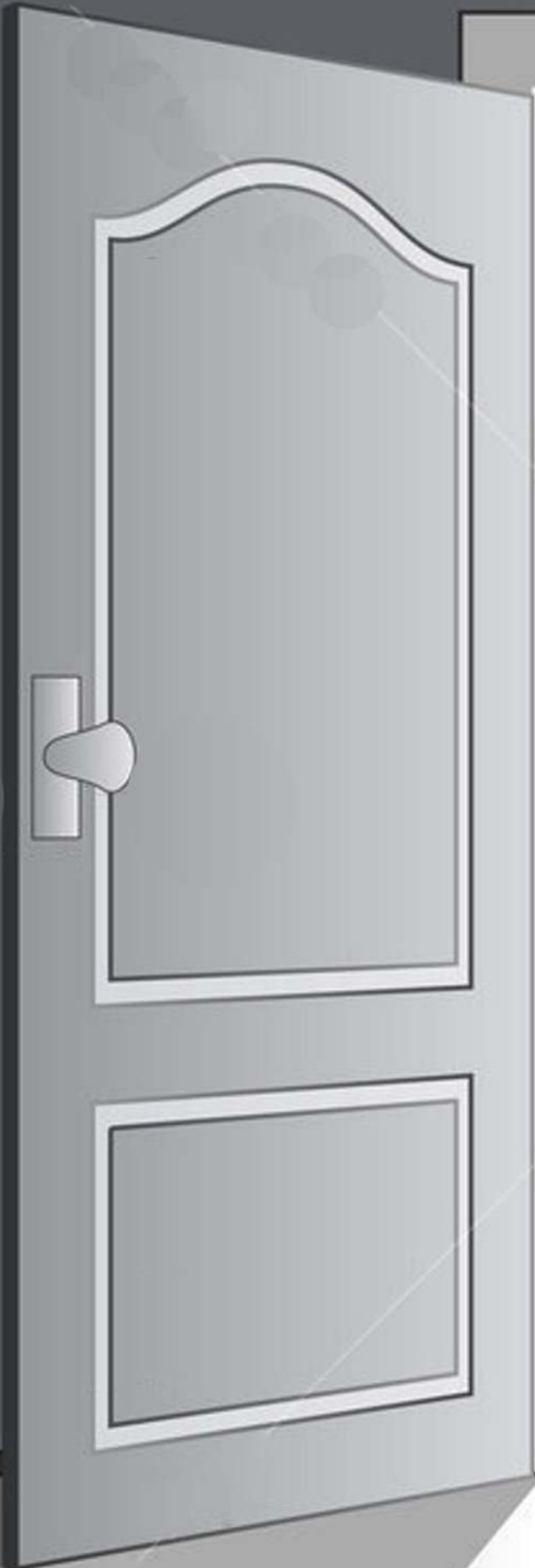
"If people were just as offended by war as they are about showing genitalia it would save a lot of lives."
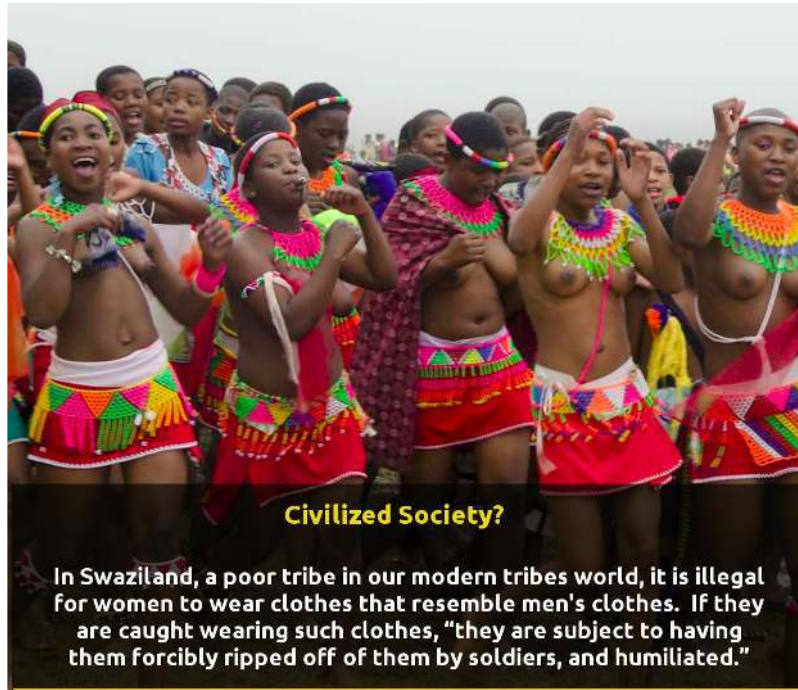
Jacque Fresco

In one of our previous articles we discussed 'morality' and 'ethics' idea(l)s, showing how they are notions without a proper meaning. Today we will discuss the notion of obscenity and what causes people to feel offended.

A while ago, while managing some social networks for a project, I posted a promotional image across all of the official social networks of that project and it was only banned from Facebook, by the Facebook staff. We were posting images every single day, promoting articles like this one. However, this particular photo was removed because it included something called 'nudity'. Here is Facebook's official statement, which is very important for this article:

"*A photo or post on your Timeline was reported to Facebook. After reviewing the report, we determined that the photo or post doesn't follow the Facebook Community Standards: Nudity Facebook restricts displays of nudity because some audiences within our global community are particularly sensitive to this type of content. We understand that these limitations will sometimes affect content shared for legitimate reasons, including awareness campaigns or artistic projects, and we apologize for the inconvenience. We're constantly re-evaluating how to balance people's interest in free expression with the needs of our diverse, global community.*"

The picture showed exposed 'female milk glands', as a side effect of the Swaziland's clothing tradition where women do not wear a bra.

THIS IS THE PHOTO:

Civilized Society?

In Swaziland, a poor tribe in our modern tribes world, it is illegal for women to wear clothes that resemble men's clothes. If they are caught wearing such clothes, "they are subject to having them forcibly ripped off of them by soldiers, and humiliated."

The image text provided this relevant message: "*In Swaziland, a poor tribe in our modern tribes world, it is illegal for women to wear clothes that resemble men's clothes. If they are caught wearing such clothes, they are subject to having them forcibly ripped off of them by soldiers, and humiliated.*" The message was a very important one, but the emotionally-driven reaction to a somehow offensive pair of 'boobs' stopped the message from being spread.

The irony is that this picture represented an article about 'morality' and 'ethics', and how the present system is as coercive and as ass-backwards as the ancient world when it comes to such judgements. Facebook proved that more than any picture could ever have hoped to achieve. Because of this incident, we had to manually censor any such image from there on so that the Facebook account won't be removed.

As we have shown in the 'morality' article, many companies/organizations/clusters of people have been actively trying to impose their own values onto others through such tools like the internet, restrictive laws, or whatever else they find appropriate to impose their own ideals.

On the other hand, that post was flagged as inappropriate by someone who saw it, and we have to wonder what this person thinks of as being inappropriate. Why did this person think that this digital representation of this certain 'thing' (a celebration dance) was obscene (bad) and, for that matter, what is 'obscene' after all?

If you were to look at nipples close-up, you often wouldn't be able to tell if they are female nipples or male nipples. The 'bulges' of the typical female breast are also not specific to females when it comes to how they look. Take a look at the pictures below and try to guess which nipple/'bulge' belongs to a woman and which ones belong to a man. Click the photo to see who is behind the 'nipples'.
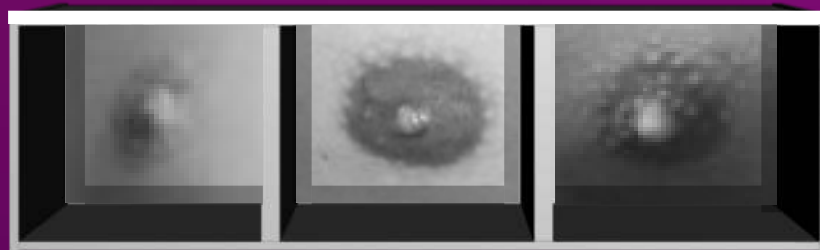

Have you guessed right? Perhaps not, since it's hard to tell sometimes. I am left wondering why so many in this world regard female chests as 'obscene' but male's chests as completely normal. It's a bizarre contradiction with no apparent justification.

At the same time we posted that image on Facebook, it just so happened that a very well-known Facebook page called "I fucking love science", which has over 18 million likes, posted a news item from their website that asked "Have you ever wondered why men have nipples?" and included a big picture of a man's naked chest.

Our post showing naked female chests was removed, but their post was not (and I promise that we're not at all jealous of that).
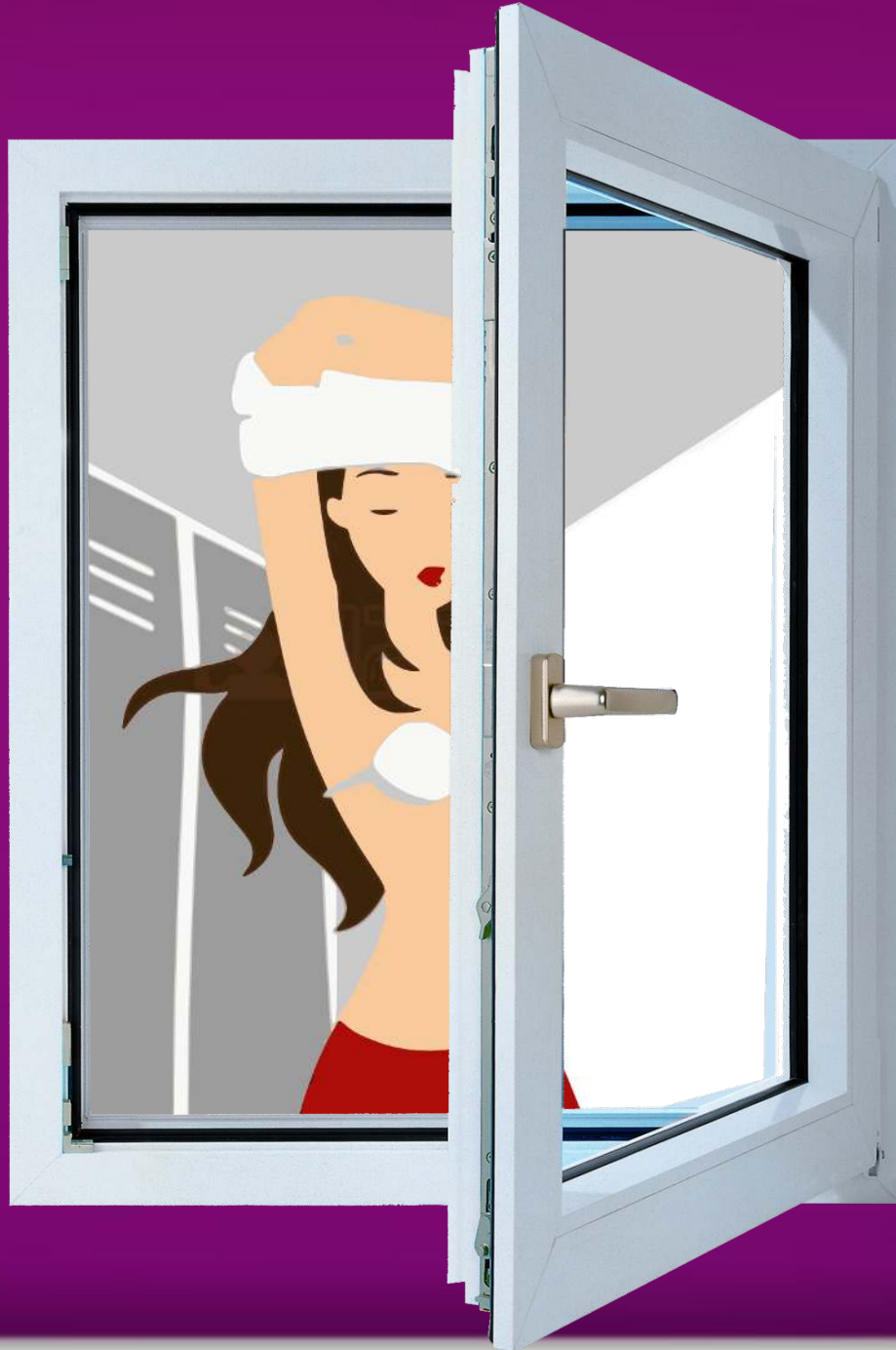
So, imagine that you are a guy just changing your shirt alone in your own bedroom, when suddenly your sister bursts into the room and accidentally sees your naked chest. Your manliness is now destroyed! Your sister saw your nipples. How creepy is that, right? Well, I don't know anyone who would be emotionally impacted by such an event, since it's a 'normality' in this world for guys to walk around without a shirt. How crazy is the idea for us to socially 'force' guys to wear a bra from now on? Well, then ask yourself why it is 'normal' for girls to be socially forced to wear a bra.

Now, imagine the opposite situation: a girl changing in her room and her brother bursting in and seeing her naked 'bulges' with nipples. The girl will definitely be ashamed by this incident. Perhaps even more interestingly, so will her brother. If this wasn't allowed by us to be such a taboo, it wouldn't be able to emotionally hurt anyone.

If you look across human history, human beings started to wear 'clothes' of some sort around 72,000 years ago, and it is thought that the primary causation was the utility factor (cold, rain, protection from the elements, etc).

Clothes served a very real function (unlike in some cases today). For about 128,000 years before that, however, it is thought that humans did not wear clothes at all (maybe because we had much more body hair protecting us, we hadn't yet migrated far from warm climates, etc.).

From this perspective alone, it is 'unnatural' to wear clothes, yet going without would not be a smart decision for many present day societies living in a plethora of climates where clothes still serve a very necessary function.

In ancient Egypt (5,000 years ago), clothing was much simpler. Women wore transparent robes and children went without clothing until puberty, at about age 12. Many street performers performed nude in that period of time.

In ancient Greece (2,000 years ago), athletic and/or cultist nudity of men and boys – and less frequently, of women and girls – was a natural concept. Athletes competed naked in public sporting events. Spartan women, as well as men, would sometimes be naked in public processions and festivals. In the case of women, this practice was designed to encourage virtue while the men were away at war. Nudity in sport was very common, with almost all sports performed naked. The word gymnasium actually comes from the Ancient Greek term gymnós, meaning "naked"(source). In all of this, such events were intended to promote appreciation of the human body and were regarded as 'esthetical' offering to the gods.

In Greek culture, depictions of erotic nudity were considered normal. In both ancient Greece and ancient Rome, public nakedness was also accepted in the context of public bathing. Roman art regularly features nudity in mythological scenes, and sexually explicit art appeared on ordinary objects such as serving vessels, lamps, and mirrors, as well as among the art collections of wealthy homes.
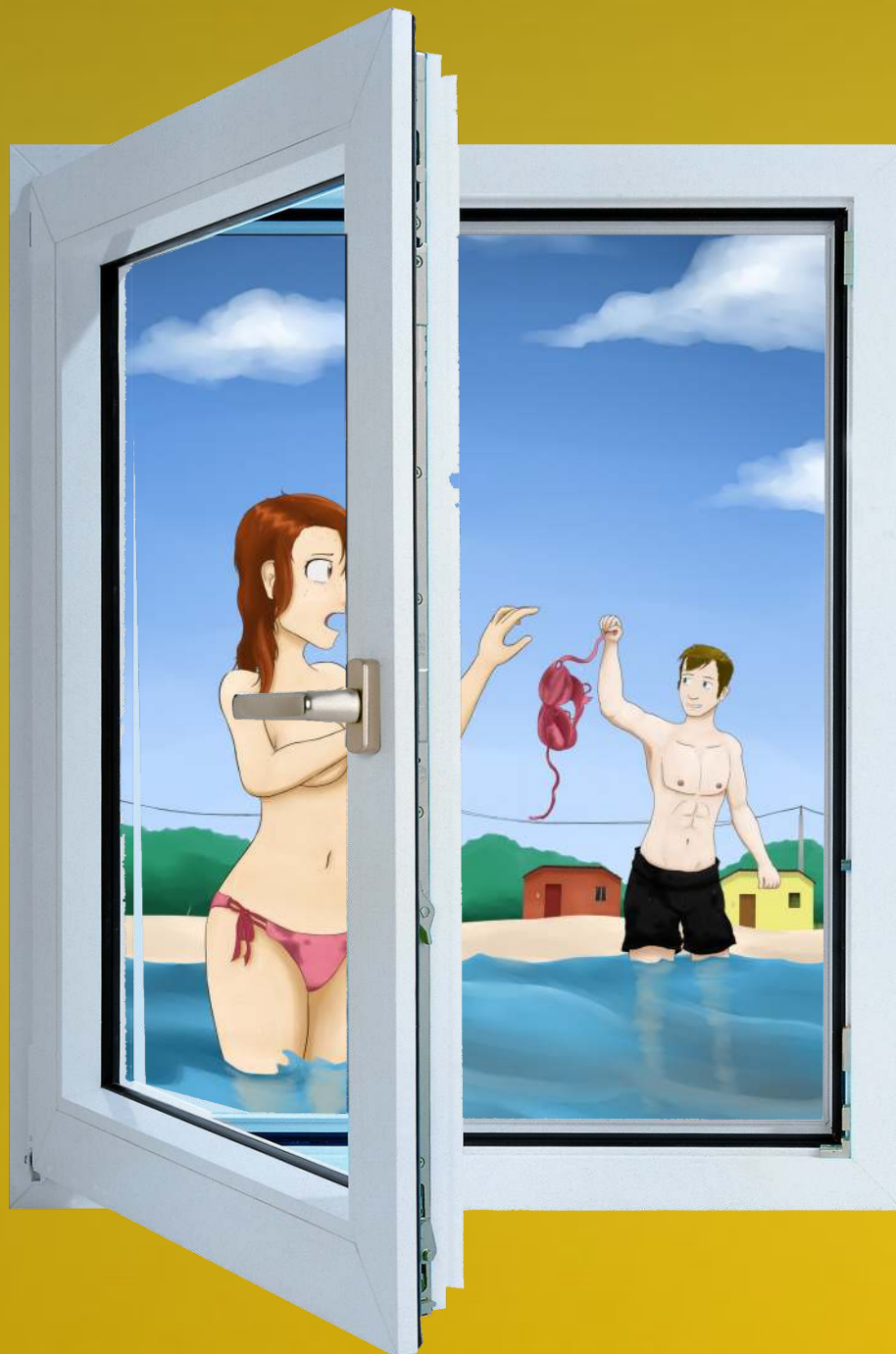
In more recent history, in the early 20th century, exposure of male nipples was considered indecent at some beaches. During this period, women's bathing suits had to cover at least the thighs and exposure of more than that could lead to arrests for public lewdness. But after WWII, the arrival of the bikini was quickly accepted with relatively few complaints.

In the 1920's, the Soviet Union under Stalin, by then a well-known tribe of the world, decided to suppress the 'radical' ideas that had circulated in the early years of the Soviet Union: Nudism and pornography became prohibited.

History goes on and you can read <u>this</u> Wikipedia article, where you can reflect on a religious influence regarding the human naked body becoming viewed as 'sinful' or 'obscene'.

However, religion was not the only influence on these notions. In ancient Rome (and other places), they started to associate nakedness with being poor or weak. This was partly because in war, prisoners were often stripped naked in an attempt to humiliate and convince them that they were no longer in control of their body. Also, slaves were displayed naked to be inspected for 'defects'. These kinds of associations defined 'nakedness' as offensive and degrading.
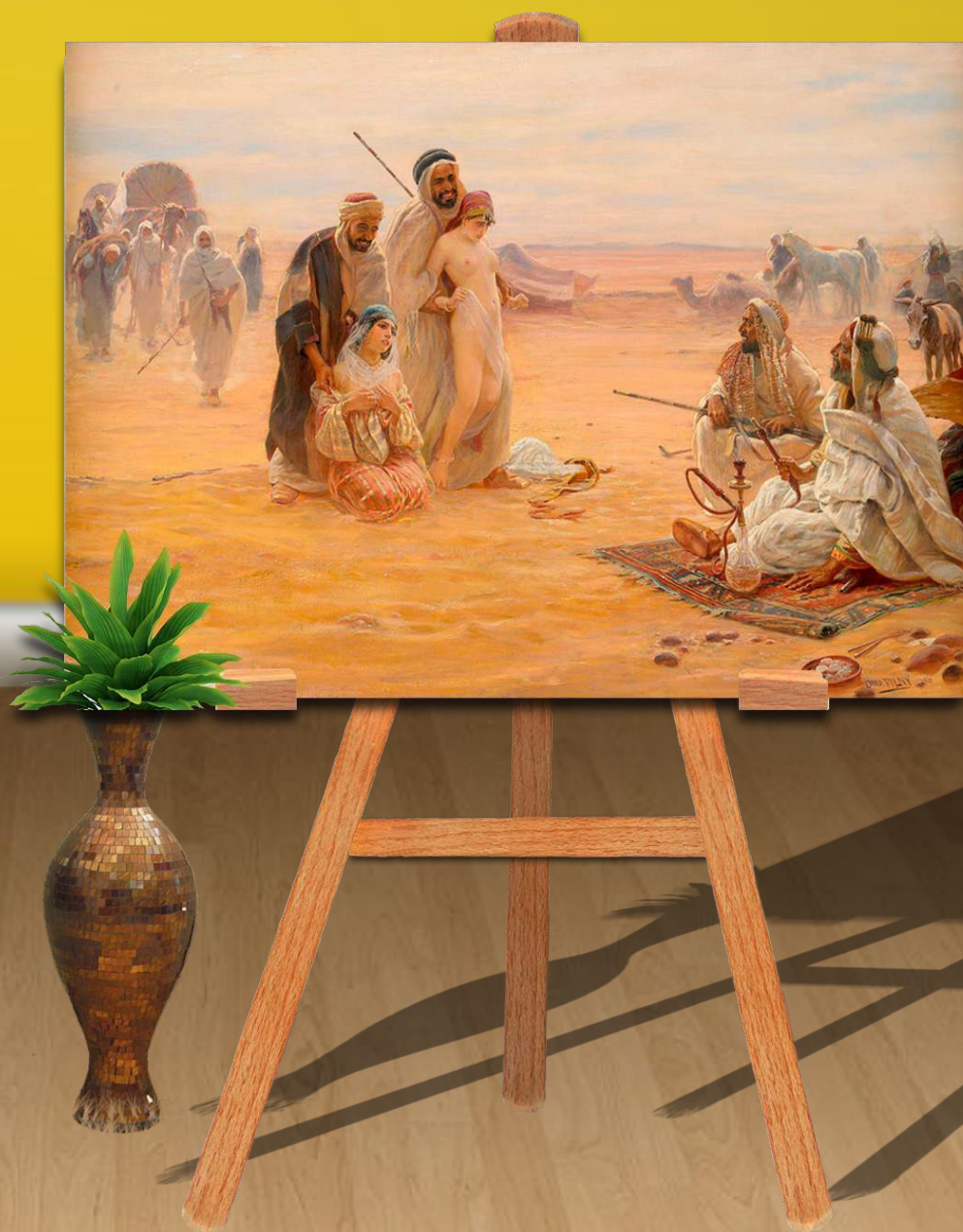
Complete nudity among men and complete or near-complete nudity among women is still common for many communities and social systems (Mursi, Surma, Nuba, Karimojong, Kirdi, and so on). Many indigenous peoples in Africa and South America train and perform sport competitions naked. Indian male Digambara monks practice yoga naked, and there are millions of people all over the world that 'practice' naturism/nudism.

In some warm climate hunter-gatherer cultures, nudity or near-complete nudity either has been (until the introduction of Western Culture or Islam), or still is, the social norm for both men and women. It seems that powerful clusters of people, such as 'Western Culture' and Islam, are forcing their ideals upon other cultures and changing these notions.
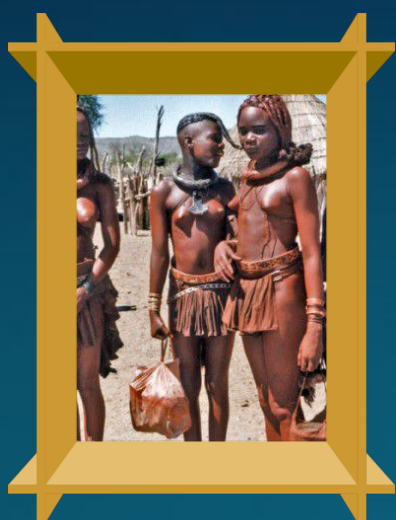
There are so many tribes in the world that do not wear clothes, where guys do not get instant erections when they see naked girls, and girls don't gawk at boy's penises or other parts of the body.

We might expect that if we were to suddenly abandon clothes right now, we would start raping each other, and that might actually be true, but it's only because of the culture we were raised in. Perhaps people from such tribes look at us, 'the so-called modern' ones, and ponder how sick we are.

Some people believe   that breasts and genitalia are the

'obscene' parts of the human   body everywhere, but if you burst into

a room where there is a naked girl, she will cover her genitalia if she is from

America or many other parts of the Western culture world, she will cover her
face and hair if she is from the islamic world, her ankles if she is from the
Victorian era or the back of her neck if she is from Japan.

Sex and nudity are not the only offensive offenders. I remember all through my
school years that teachers would act offended if we wore a cap/hat in the
classroom. Even if it was very cold (winter) and we wore winter caps to help
keep us warm, the teachers would force us to take them off. If you tried to
argue with them about it, you could find yourself in even more trouble. So,
people can feel offended just by the way you dress, or talk.

At one point in the 20th century, in the early days of television, it was quite
rude (and even prohibited) to show a bathroom on TV. If you need a source for
that claim, just watch your local TV stations to see many 'prohibited' things due
to 'offensive' reasons.

In America, there is a small group of people that establish the rating system for all the movies that go into theatre or TV. You may have heard that some movies are not suited for certain ages, while others are. Well, only a handful of people (less than 20) are responsible for assigning these ratings to everything. What they do is basically watch these movies/documentaries and, based on their own judgements, they say which are suited for different audiences. They even have two priests as among their members.

In the documentary "This Film is Not Yet Rated", this organization (the Motion Picture Association of America's Classification and Ratings Administration, or MPAA CARA) was brought into the spotlight to show the ridiculosity of their judgements. One interesting conflict occurred when a documentary maker created a documentary about war and soldiers, depicting images with real violence and the soldiers they filmed used 'normal' language, meaning they sweared, cursed, talked 'dirty', etc..

Since it is a documentary, the producer presented that situation as it was, but the 'rating judges' wanted to make his documentary not suited for people under 17, censoring it. Think about that a minute. A documentary must present reality as it is. Imagine if you were to censor footage of the world's genocides or the real plight of starving children, just because some people are 'sensitive' and refuse to witness that. Doing this greatly warps the reality that's presented to people. That same association allows penises to be shown in movies, but only to a certain degree for certain ages. If the penis is at a different angle or state of erection (a very natural phenomenon), then it is considered pornography. However, these systems fail miserably, because if you censor the word 'fuck' with a blip, not only will no one stop saying that word, but that 'blip' then becomes the new 'fuck'.

There are people who feel offended when they see others naked or people enjoying each other's bodies, yet they too have a naked body and they probably have sex somewhat frequently. In Romania, the interior of churches is full of orgy paintings, yet people become offended if you attempt to talk about sex inside those churches, or wherever. Parents don't let their children watch certain kinds of programs or hear certain words, yet the parents (and often the children themselves) use these 'dirty' words everyday.

These examples seem to prove just how hypocritical a lot of people have allowed themselves to become.

Here's a real story I read once about a guy who was with his wife at a streaptease bar in Thailand. The woman said, "You've noticed honey that I am the only girl in here that would not take clothes off for money?", and the husband replied, "Well, it depends how much one is willing to pay you…". The woman felt quite offended.

If you offer a girl $100 to have sex with you, she would probably slap you across the face (if she is from an American middle class family; if she is from a poor family and culture, then she might be quite happy at the opportunity). If you offer the same American girl $1,000, she might be inclined to consider it. For $1,000,000, she might even replace that 'offended' feeling with a 'proud' feeling about herself (her newly acquired 'wealth'). Check out this video of a guy doing just that, as part of a 'social experiment':

I saw a movie once that seemed to reflect this culture pretty well, especially one particular scene from it (the movie was also inspired by real events). An underage girl (16 or so) had a relationship with a 'mature' guy (40 or so). The police were looking for this guy to arrest him for underage sexual relationships, but the girl refused to give the police any details about him, in order to protect him. She was saying that she loves him and their relationship is a great one. Then the police showed the girl some pictures with this guy that depicted him having similar relations with other underage girls. After seeing that, the girl screamed: "He raped me! The son of a bitch! He raped me!", and she gave all the details to the cops. The girl wasn't offended or felt raped before she learned that the guy had other relationships.

It seems that most of the things that hurt people are their own personal projections. If you take the time to think seriously about it, words are only sounds. So how is it possible that any word can make you feel bad? How can a sound be allowed to piss you off?

In Romania, I had a neighbor who had a dog that barked every time I passed in front of his house. The dog barked like crazy, but for me, his barking was only noise. If I was pissed off by anything, it was only because of the high noise he made (they hurt my ears a bit). I never considered stopping to try to argue with the dog, right? I view many people as barkers in this world. They say things that make no sense at all, and then you have to ask yourself why you are trying to argue or feel offended by barking?

If someone starts to curse at me in Japanese, I won't know what he means. In that same way, if someone starts to say nonsense things at me, I don't know what he or she means, either.

In many parts of the world, calling someone 'gay' is still considered an offensive thing to do. But let's think this through a little. If you are not gay, then what is the problem in the first place? And, if you are, then you are; so what?

If you go to a doctor and the doctor says "I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but you have a brain tumor." Would you say to the doctor "You and your family have brain tumors, you son of a bitch!"?

Of course not. Then how can you get pissed off if someone tells you that you are a moron or weirdo? Are you? Do those words mean anything to your life situation? If not, then how could you feel offended?

I would like to challenge anyone that reads this article to send me an email and try to make me feel offended. I have no idea what could make me feel like that. If I was a black guy and someone said to me "You filthy nigger!", I would feel nothing because those words mean nothing. If someone would say "Look man, I read somewhere that black skin is more prone to 'bad' smells when exposed to sunlight.", then I would thank the guy and read more about it. Maybe he knows something I wasn't aware of.

Get it?
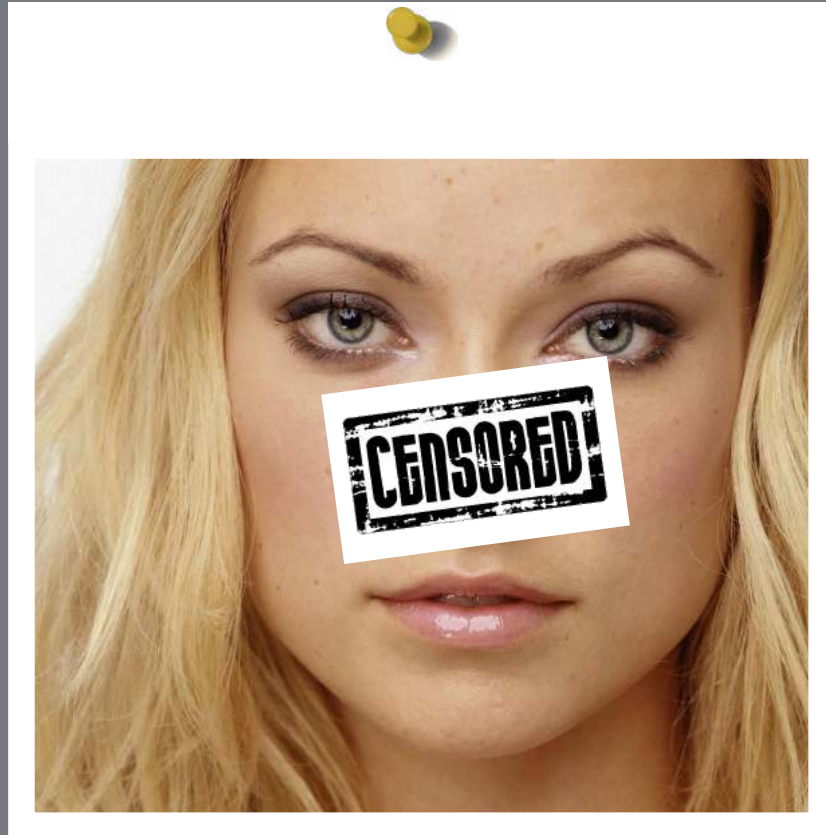
Let's go back to our banned Facebook image with those 'indecent' breasts. In order to more fully comprehend the extent of the tremendous stupidity around what happened there, imagine that the world was more Islamic than whatever else, and we had posted an image of someone's face with her nose uncovered.

Imagine Facebook banning that photo because it showed a naked nose. Wouldn't all of the people find that outrageous? What is the difference between banning a photo of people wearing blue shoes versus someone wearing nothing artificial?

In my view, such acts of censorship are violent. I don't feel offended though :). I understand why it happens and how we may change it.

One way to help people not feel offended and get rid of notions such as obscenity, is to expose them to real, verifiable information. The more you know about the 'real' (scientific) world, the less likely it is for you to be hurt by such imaginary notions. If you know that beauty is a subjective notion, if someone then tells you that you are ugly, you cannot be affected by that attempt to hurt your feelings. You will understand that it is only his subjective reaction. If someone would tell me that I am so ugly that he pukes a little bit into his mouth everytime he sees me, I would tell him to be careful not to choke on his vomit. :)

A scientific mind is the most wonderful mind a human can sculpt. A scientific mind understands that racism, nationalism, beauty, art, social classes, money and so on, are only human inventions and that it would be near to impossible to be hurt by notions revolving around these concepts. If you recognize that nationalities are human inventions, you happen to be Italian and someone says that "All Italians are thieves", you cannot be harmed by that because you immediately recognize the irrelevancy of this claim. This perhaps applies to every such artificial notion there could be.

A word, a sword, an ass, a penis, a duck, a mock...whatever the fuck, are not the ones that are obscene or offensive. The human mind can regard them that way or not, as it is completely your choice as to how you view these things.

Let me say it again: the world can hurt you if you have less or nothing to eat, or have no comfort and so on, but many, many things that hurt you are only in your head. They are merely part of your own projection.

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