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Think Piece: Colleen Hoover

Sex.

The three-letter word comparatively holds more weight than the average expression.

For a long time, sex was one of those things, and as a society, we just didn’t talk about it. American school systems do everything they can to avoid the word sex and sexuality. The education right off the bat is to just not talk about it. When you heard the word sex as a kid, you giggled and laughed, because it was never truly a comfortable thing to talk about. but why? Something that creates life and fuels human existence seems like something we shouldn’t be ashamed to discuss.

Colleen Hoover is a wonderful author who has social media and most women in a complete and utter chokehold. She is known for her “spicy” books and her ability to use her own life experiences in her fiction literature. Hoover's most popular book “It ends with us”, sparked a fire in a lot of women that they never knew existed. Now, this spark could be in reference to a newfound love for reading, however, the spark I’m more specifically referencing is sexuality. An uprising of women has dawned upon 2023 and a new wave of feminism is forming through “spicy” literature. Large groups of women are discussing the impact of Hoover's books on their sexuality and comfortability with discussing sex. Sexuality and sex for a long time have been a hush-hush conversation for many women. Unlike men, society deems it inappropriate for women to have healthy sexual desires or opinions. Hoovers' books bring women together and tear apart the negative narrative’s surrounding the conversation.

Now with all the unfortunate things about society put aside, a lot of men and women are embracing “spicy” books in the best ways possible. Some buy these books for themself, their partners, or for friends, all ways of empowering the reader. This new wave of book feminism wasn’t started by Hoover, but her book “it ends with us” gained popularity through multiple demographics. A lot of 2014 Tumblr-era teens that are now in their 20s will be the first to say that “spicy” books have been around for a long time, mostly circulating through an app called Wattpad. This is an accessible platform for writers and readers to read fanfiction or self-published work for free. Not all, but the majority of fanfiction I came across at the mature age of 13, was written for the female gaze.

As a young woman who enjoys reading, Wattpad was my first introduction to intimate scenes written from the women’s perspective, for the women. The female perspective in writing is an empowering and inclusive way for women to reclaim power over their sexuality. Standard media has shown unrealistic and confusing ideologies revolving around intercourse. Hoover's books share these intimate moments through a women’s perspective, which is why the audience consists of such a large age demographic ranging from 17 and up. Wattpad allows writers and readers to be creative and to read the things they relate most to. “Spicy” books are the new-age fanfiction in a sense because they get uncomfortable and personal in ways many books don’t. Hoover's popularity has given many girls and even boys new perspectives on intimacy. This affects society because it can change sex from something for men to something for both parties involved. A lot of women grow up with this perspective that has been displayed in the mainstream media, that their only job is to please. Women are more likely to put themselves in an uncomfortable and not reciprocated situation because they are too scared to be lame, a bitch, or a letdown. This means women are less likely to say no and some of them don’t realize until later in life, that they have the right to say no, under any circumstance. Taking away the stigma around sex talk is so important for women’s safety and well-being because of this.

The narrative of Colleen Hoover's “spicy” books and the formula for female relationships with sexuality create a perfect combination to support a safe space to talk about sex. We should not be ashamed to talk about intimacy not only because it is inherently sexist to feel like we can’t, but because it’s human nature. The societal struggle to be free and confident with oneself is a challenging hurdle to overcome, but this new wave of spicy feminism is a great way to start. Colleen Hoovers, “It ends with us” lit the match for a new generation of confident, intelligent, readers that will not be ashamed of speaking their minds.