THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF DESIRE

Sitting in an outdoor cafe in Manchester on a lovely spring day, four people were enjoying a leisurely stroll through a renovated section of the city. Noticing some scantily clad pedestrians pass by and some alluring displays in the store windows around her, Cantara glanced shrewdly at her companions, then raised this question:

"Does it ever seem to you that desire is like a commercial product that is bought, sold, and marketed?"

An uncomfortable silence persisted a few seconds. Tim was about to speak, then paused to avoid impoliteness.

Sipping a cup of lukewarm cappuccino with more than a dash of cinnamon, Miok offered this conciliatory response:

"It may seem tempting to think that way."

Chris then jumped into the conversation. Without the slightest worry of social decorum, he added:

"I think desire is built into our genes – we have a powerful genetic programming to procreate. Astute manipulators know how to manipulate those urges."

Tim, who has been gracefully silent up to this point, sniffled, then offered this intentionally obscure comment:

"The thing about desire to remember is: you can never get enough of what you don't need."

At this point Cantara hesitated whether to continue the conversation or simply let it die. She had an uncomfortable feeling that this was an unsuitable topic, but still felt it important to recognize how each of us is manipulated unconsciously by emotional tugs.

After draining their cups, and talking disconnectedly about that favorite British topic – the weather – there was a strange silence. What can four odd chaps actually do in Manchester? Why were they together?

At this point Chris noticed a young woman in a tight skirt walking past and Cantara smiled while observing her brother mentally undress her. At this point, Tim rose from his seat, thanked everyone for a "wonderful" afternoon and said clumsily:

"Well, I suppose I had better get going. More obscure poetry to write, you know . . . . "

Nobody raised their head as that pathetic old man melted off into the horizon.