

Modern Psychology, Eros, and the Sexual Revolution

Samuel Bendeck Sotillos

Institute of Traditional Psychology, Chicago, IL, USA

Abstract

The immense confusion surrounding sexuality is a powerful indication of the spiritual crisis of the modern world. What are the causes and underlying factors of this state of confusion? The effects of the sexual revolution of the 1960s—a movement rooted in much earlier ideologies—have not diminished but, rather, expanded. The gradual emergence of the Enlightenment project has led to the desacralization of human existence, reducing higher realities to the plane of the material. Modern psychology has played a decisive role in this problem by limiting its account of sexuality to the purely horizontal level of the psycho-physical, when a true comprehension requires the vertical dimension of the Spirit. Modern mental health treatments initially identified the lack of sexual fulfillment as the etiology of psychopathology itself and, while many novel treatment modalities have since been created, to a great extent they only add to the confusion. By contrast, sacred psychology and its metaphysical foundations provide a framework that integrates the horizontal and vertical dimensions of sexuality.

Keywords: Sexuality, Perversion, Psychology, Mental Health, Metaphysics

Introduction

It is becoming readily apparent that “progressive” attempts to sever the sacred from eros and the mystery of sexual love have led to calamitous consequences for human relationships. How has this happened? Needless to say, the eclipse of humanity’s integral connection to the Spirit has not occurred overnight or in a vacuum; the catalyst was the gradual secularization brought about by the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, and the European Enlightenment—a development that is rapidly reaching its consummation. Enlightenment philosophy claims to have rendered the sacred implausible or unnecessary.

The perennial question—“Who am I?”—has been reduced to merely exploring our sexual identity. This is the consequence of following one’s instincts without reflection—yet the unbridled pursuit of our urges, that we see taking place in our times, is unprecedented in human history. However, knowing who we truly are cannot be accomplished by dismantling sexual norms, for this undermines self-knowledge of a higher order and is indicative of the spiritual crisis in our midst. It is important to note that the great surge in sexual aberrations courtesy of this revolution—such as we see in the proliferation of pornography today—has largely contributed to the rise in rape, sexual abuse, violence, and the global human trafficking industry; not to mention heightened levels of hedonism and promiscuity.

In reaction to the perceived rigidity and repression of Victorian morality, “Freud introduced a great revolution.... He destroyed the taboo of sex.”¹ Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) declared the rationale for his antinomianism when he wrote: “Sexual morality ... strikes me as very contemptible.”² For this reason, the status of “prophet for the Victorian age of sexual suppression”³ has been conferred upon him, as he encouraged free inquiry into human sexuality when it was uncommon to do so. He writes that “from the very first, what has to

do with sexuality should be treated like anything else that is worth knowing about.”⁴

Freud identified Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist Carl Jung (1875–1961) as the successor of the psychoanalytic movement, referring to him as the “crown prince”⁵ and ambiguously alluding to the existence of a modern sexual crisis: “Serious-minded people know that there is something of a sexual problem today.”⁶ Freud is often referred to as a precursor to the sexual revolution of the 1960s counter-culture, and it is well known that human sexuality held a central place in his psychological model. Yet it was Austrian medical doctor and psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich (1897–1957)—a brilliant contributor to the psychoanalytic movement whom Freud regarded as his one-time “favorite son”⁷—who first utilized this term, as Reich himself asserts: “I coined the term ‘Sexual Revolution’ in the 1930’s.”⁸ As was the case with his former master, “To Reich, sex was to be equated with life per se.”⁹

German-born psychiatrist and pioneer of Gestalt therapy Fritz Perls (1893–1970) upholds the centrality of Freud’s role in the sexual revolution: “Great [is] the service ... which Freud has rendered to mankind by unchaining the sex instinct.”¹⁰ Once the self has been psychologized and happiness is determined to be the sole purpose of life, the next step of measuring this value by means of sexual fulfillment (as being central to human identity) becomes inevitable. Freud makes the following comment:

[M]an’s discovery that sexual (genital) love afforded him the strongest experiences of satisfaction, and in fact provided him with the prototype of all happiness, must have suggested to him that he should continue to seek the satisfaction of happiness in his life along the path of sexual relations and that he should make genital eroticism the central point of his life.¹¹

No matter how thoroughly the scientific basis of Freud’s theories has been discredited (which is a side issue), what is most important here is his central theory that human beings are fundamentally sexual, and

that this fact shapes all our thoughts and behavior. This has proven to be revolutionary like few ideas in history.

The destructive forces that were unleashed during the sexual revolution, like that of other counter-culture movements, had a highly detrimental impact on society and the family. These subversive currents emerged to challenge discontent with prevailing power inequities and, while assumed by many to be positive, they proved to be quite otherwise. In hindsight, it can be seen that these momentous developments had an altogether baneful impact on the human psyche.¹²

The Assault on the Sacred and the Inversion of Eros

The pioneering and controversial American sexologist Alfred C. Kinsey (1894–1956) is often regarded as the “father of the sexual revolution.”¹³ *Upon its publication in 1948, his book *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* was likened to an atomic bomb that was dropped on the cultural and social mores of the time. His follow-up study was published in 1953 as *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*; together, these books constitute what is referred to as the “Kinsey Reports.” Kinsey expresses a pansexualism that is akin to not only Freudianism, but also to the Sabbatian-Frankist movements,¹⁴ and he was also said to have been influenced by the British occultist Aleister Crowley (1875–1947).¹⁵ It is important to note Crowley’s destructive influence in his transgression and inversion of Victorian social norms, which paved the way for others to do the same:*

Mankind must learn that the sexual instinct is ... ennobling. The shocking evils which we all deplore are principally due to the perversions produced by suppressions. The feeling that it is shameful and the sense of sin cause concealment, which is ignoble, and internal conflict which creates distortion, neurosis, and ends in explosion. We deliberately produce an abscess, and wonder why it is full of pus, why it hurts, why it bursts in stench and corruption.... *The Book of*

the Law [1904] solves the sexual problem completely. Each individual has an absolute right to satisfy his sexual instinct as is physiologically proper for him. The one injunction is to treat all such acts as sacraments.¹⁶

We recall Crowley's infamous maxim: "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law."¹⁷ This is an inversion of what we find in St. Augustine (354–430): *Dilige* [deum] *et quod vis fac* or "Love [God], and do what thou wilt."¹⁸

The following statement by Kinsey, cloaked in what could only be described as a conundrum of semantics, illustrates his nefarious outlook: "The only unnatural sex act is that which you cannot perform."¹⁹ According to a biographer, Paul Robinson, Kinsey's work was instrumentally designed to "undermine the traditional sexual order."²⁰ This point is made evident by Kinsey himself, who writes: "Biologically, there is no form of outlet which I will admit as abnormal."²¹

There were early indicators of Kinsey's troubled and deviant attitude toward sexuality in his adolescence, as shown by James H. Jones: "Kinsey's behavior was clearly pathological, satisfying every criterion of sexual perversion."²² Hugh Hefner (1926–2017), the founder of *Playboy* magazine and proponent of the legalization of pornography, was highly influenced by Kinsey's work and its academic pretensions. Incidentally, the first issue of *Playboy* magazine coincided with the publication of Kinsey's second book in December 1953. Another biographer, Thomas Weyr (1927–2022), remarked: "Hefner recognized Kinsey as the incontrovertible word of the new God based on the new holy writ—demonstrable evidence. Kinsey would add a dash of scientific truth to the *Playboy* mix."²³ Hefner was also a militant critic of religion, emphasizing that "It's perfectly clear to me that religion is a myth."²⁴

Another precursor to the sexual revolution was British physician Havelock Ellis (1859–1939). Ellis also prided himself on challenging the conventional morality of his time: "I have never repressed

anything. What others have driven out of consciousness ... as being improper or obscene, I have maintained and even held in honour.”²⁵

Yet Freud’s role in the sexual revolution should not be minimized due to Kinsey’s work; on the contrary, as prominent sociologist John H. Gagnon (1931–2016) stated: “The Freudian tradition was especially influential in general intellectual matters and was probably the most important in the development of twentieth-century sexual ideologies.”²⁶ Wardell Pomeroy (1913–2001), a disciple of Kinsey, points out that it was Freud’s pioneering work to which later research on sexuality would become indebted: “[It was] Sigmund Freud whose genius introduced the idea of *childhood* sexuality—that children are sexual beings was an idea never considered before—an idea that forever affected our conception of human sexual development and thoughts about sex education.”²⁷

We need to highlight the broader historical trajectory of the sexual revolution, by asserting that “the first tentative ideas of how to exploit sex as a form of social control arose during the Enlightenment”²⁸ and noting that, paradoxically, “Sexual liberation leads to anarchy, chaos, and horror, and chaos invariably leads to forms of social control.”²⁹ All of this contributes to the conviction that sex is an end in itself. Indications of such changes in sexual attitudes were already apparent in the year 1660, as David F. Foxon (1923–2001) shows:

[A]lmost all the themes of later pornography are present; within a completely amoral attitude, in which all perversions are welcome if they gratify the senses ... these take place within a tightly knit family circle, with the shocking suggestion that all the conventional relationships of society are merely a façade for personal gratification.³⁰

English novelist John Cleland’s (1709–1789) erotic novel *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1749) is often also cited as an early forerunner of contemporary pornography.

As several writers have established connections between modern psychology and the desacralized ideology of the European Enlightenment, it is also important to link these with the events of the sexual revolution.

British author Richard Webster (1950–2011) writes: “Freud’s theory of sexuality, which was to be the doctrinal rock on which his own church was founded, certainly bears all the marks of his messianic and profoundly mystical personality.”³¹ Freudian therapy is equated with sexual theory itself: “Freudian psychoanalysis is sexual psychoanalysis.”³² Freud himself believed that man “should make genital eroticism the central point of his life.”³³ Freud’s conception of psychopathology was confirmed in sexuality, which he viewed as “the key that unlocks everything.”³⁴ We recall here Freud’s oft-quoted dictum that “No neurosis is possible with a normal *vita sexualis*.”³⁵ Freud takes a reductionist approach and defines a human being according to sexual potency, which is considered a mirror reflection of their terrestrial existence: “The behaviour of a human being in sexual matters is often a prototype for [their] whole ... reaction to life.”³⁶

Sexual Repression as the Etiology of Mental Illness

Freud identifies the absence of sexual fulfillment as the cause of mental illness: “Psychoanalytic work has furnished us with the rule that people fall ill of a neurosis as a result of *frustration*.”³⁷ Freud adds that “human beings fall ill when ... the satisfaction of their erotic needs *in reality* is frustrated.”³⁸ He claimed that “in every case of neurosis there is a sexual aetiology,”³⁹ and that “anxiety is always libido which has been deflected from its [normal] employment.”⁴⁰ Freud went as far as to claim that “what we call libido ... is the drive behind every neurosis.”⁴¹ Or as Jung stated: “There is an unspoken expectation that it is a fact that neurosis comes only from repressed sexuality.”⁴² Freud suggests that “[sexuality] is regarded as a more

comprehensive bodily function, having pleasure as its goal and only secondarily coming to serve the ends of reproduction.”⁴³

The psychoanalytic view of human sexuality is succinctly captured by Freud as follows:

[N]ormality developed as the result of repression of certain component-instincts and components of the infantile disposition, and of subordination of the remainder under the primacy of the genital zone in the service of the reproductive function; perversions represented disturbances in this process of coalescence caused by an excessive (obsessive, as it were) development of certain of the component-instincts; ... neurosis could be traced back to unduly severe repression of libidinal tendencies.⁴⁴

Another idea that is central to the Freudian understanding of human sexuality is the pervasiveness of the Oedipus complex, which pertains to a desire for sexual involvement with a parent of the opposite sex, and an associated sense of rivalry with the parent of the same sex, that begins during the phallic stage of psychosexual development. A clear demarcation exists for Freud between the “faithful”—those who believe in the doctrine of the Oedipus complex—and the unfaithful—those who do not grant it any credibility. Freud draws an allegorical line in the sand for followers and opponents alike to identify themselves:

It has justly been said that the Oedipus complex is the nuclear complex of the neuroses, and constitutes the essential part of their content. It represents the peak of infantile sexuality, which, through its after-effects, exercises a decisive influence on the sexuality of adults. Every new arrival on this planet is faced by the task of mastering the Oedipus complex; anyone who fails to do so falls victim to neurosis. With the progress of psycho-analytic studies the importance of the Oedipus complex has become more and more clearly evident; its recognition has become the shibboleth that distinguishes the adherents of psycho-analysis from its opponents.⁴⁵

Regarding the crucial pathogenic role of this phenomenon, Freud observed that “the Oedipus complex is the nucleus of the neuroses.”⁴⁶ Likewise, British neurologist and psychoanalyst Ernest Jones (1879–1958) affirmed that “the kernel of any neurosis is the Oedipus complex.”⁴⁷

Freud goes on to propose the following condition for any relationship based on love between men and women to be successful: “It sounds not only disagreeable but also paradoxical, yet it must nevertheless be said that anyone who is to be really free and happy in love must have surmounted his respect for women and have come to terms with the idea of incest with his mother or sister.”⁴⁸ Furthermore, he asserts that “Conscience and morality arose through overcoming, desexualizing, the Oedipus complex.”⁴⁹ It is evident, therefore, that Freudian metapsychology tirelessly reduces the human condition to what is sexual in nature: “The beginnings of religion, morality, social life and art meet in the Oedipus complex.”⁵⁰

The Oedipus Complex and the Origin of Religion

In a letter written to Fliess on May 31, 1897, Freud confides: “I am about to discover the source of morality.”⁵¹ He then references a dream which “of course fulfills my wish to pin down a father as the originator of neurosis and put an end to my persistent doubts.”⁵² What becomes evident is that “The Freudian theory of the origin of religion is the cultural and collective dimension of the discovery of the Oedipus complex.”⁵³ Jung comments: “Above all, Freud’s attitude towards the spirit seems to me highly questionable. Wherever, in a person or in a work of art, an expression of spirituality (in the intellectual, not the supernatural sense) came to light, he suspected it, and insinuated that it was repressed sexuality.”⁵⁴

Freud frames the doctrine of the Oedipus complex within a developmental context:

When a boy (from the age of two or three) has entered the phallic phase of his libidinal development, is feeling pleasurable sensations in his sexual organ and has learnt to procure these at will by manual stimulation, he becomes his mother's lover. He wishes to possess her physically in such ways as he has divined from his observations and intuitions about sexual life, and he tries to seduce her by showing her the male organ which he is proud to own. In a word, his early awakened masculinity seeks to take his father's place with her.... His father now becomes a rival who stands in his way and whom he would like to get rid of.⁵⁵

Psychic Energy and the Psychologizing of Sexuality

The seminal importance of Freud's discovery, as some have suggested, was not the unconscious but his theory of the libido. Reich writes:

Freud discovered the principle of energy functioning of the psychic apparatus. *The energy-functioning principle*. This was what distinguished him from all other psychologists. Not so much the discovery of the unconscious ... the theory of the unconscious, was, to my mind, a consequence of a principle he introduced into psychology. That was ... the natural scientific principle of energy—the "libido theory."⁵⁶

Freud defines it further in this way:

We have laid down the concept of the libido as a force of variable quantity by which processes and transformations in the spheres of sexual excitement can be measured. This libido we distinguished

from the energy which is at the basis of the psychic processes in general as far as their special origin is concerned, and we thus attribute to it also a qualitative character. In separating libidinal from other psychic energy, we give expression to the assumption that the sexual processes of the organism are differentiated from the nutritional processes through a special chemism.⁵⁷

Freud links eros and libido when he writes: “The greater part of what we know about Eros—that is to say, about its exponent, the libido—has been gained from a study of the sexual function, which, indeed, on the prevailing view, even if not according to our theory, coincides with Eros.”⁵⁸ The Freudian notion of eros and love are radically different from those of Platonism, with which it is fundamentally incompatible, as Douglas N. Morgan (1918–1969) shows:

The truth is that Freudian love is very nearly the obverse of Platonic love. In their metaphysical bases, and in their dynamic directions, they do not merely differ, but in effect contradict one another. So far are the two interpretations from being (as Freud thought) coincident, that neither could be true if the other were even meaningful.⁵⁹

Reich affirms his own role in continuing this energetic principle that was first articulated by his former master: “I consider my bio-energetic work with the emotions to be a *direct continuation* of that energy principle in psychology.”⁶⁰ Many of Freud’s disciples differed in this regard by extracting this principle from their version of psychodynamic theory. Reich explains: “What is important, however, is what they did—what analysts like Adler, Stekel and Jung did. They took his theory, broke off the most important thing, pulled it out, threw it away and went after fame.... [I]t was always the sexuality that they threw out.”⁶¹ Freud writes the following regarding his former disciple, Jung, and his deviation from the libido theory: “All that has been gained thus far from psychoanalytic observation would be lost if, following C.G. Jung, one would subtilize the very concept of libido to the extent of making it synonymous with psychic instinctive energy in general.”⁶² Incidentally, this is one of the

reasons why Jung, a chief disciple, broke away from the master. Jung writes:

There was no mistaking the fact that Freud was emotionally involved in his sexual theory to an extraordinary degree. When he spoke of it, his tone became urgent, almost anxious, and all signs of his normally critical and skeptical manner vanished. A strange, deeply moved expression came over his face, the cause of which I was at a loss to understand.... I can still recall vividly how Freud said to me, “My dear Jung, promise me never to abandon the sexual theory. That is the most essential thing of all. You see, we must make a dogma of it, an unshakable bulwark.” He said that to me with great emotion, in the tone of a father saying, “And promise me this one thing, my dear son: that you will go to church every Sunday.”⁶³

Although Freud was preoccupied with religion throughout his life, he never ceased to reduce religion to a regressive childlike fantasy, or even to the “sexual libido”⁶⁴ itself. Jung challenges his former master and urges a theoretical outlook that goes beyond the sexual: “I therefore suggest that psychoanalytic theory should be freed from the purely sexual standpoint. In place of it, I should like to introduce an *energetic viewpoint* [libido] into the psychology of neurosis.”⁶⁵ Jung continues: “All psychological phenomena can be considered as manifestations of energy.... I call it *libido*, using the word in its original sense, which is by no means only sexual.”⁶⁶

While he criticizes his onetime master, Jung also comes to his defense: “If I accuse the Freudian sexual theory of one-sidedness, that does not mean that it rests on rootless speculation; it too is a faithful picture of real facts which force themselves upon our practical observation.”⁶⁷ While Jung’s portrayal of libido is more nuanced than Freud’s, and although he goes further than his master in situating the doctrine of the “talking cure” beyond human sexuality, he nonetheless ends up in a reductionistic *cul-de-sac*—albeit more inclusive—in that he still appears to limit the spiritual domain solely to the libido. Jung writes: “The sun is, as Renan remarked, really the

only rational representation of God, whether we take the point of view of the barbarians of other ages or that of the modern physical sciences.... [T]he sun is adapted as is nothing else to represent the visible God of this world. That is to say, that driving strength of our own soul, which we call libido.”⁶⁸

Harmonizing Polarities: The Masculine and Feminine

German psychoanalyst Karen Horney (1885–1962) challenges the Freudian orthodoxy, reminding us of the imbalance within psychoanalysis, as it privileges a masculine outlook at the expense of the feminine: “Psychoanalysis is the creation of a male genius, and almost all those who have developed his ideas have been men. It is only right and reasonable that they should evolve more easily a masculine psychology and understand more of the development of men than of women.”⁶⁹ Freud made explicit assumptions about biological determinism, such as the assertion that “anatomy is destiny,”⁷⁰ suggesting that female anatomy is inferior to male anatomy and that this in turn shapes the psychic apparatus. Freud informs us: “we have learned that the small girl feels sensitive over the lack of a sex organ equal to the boy’s, and holds herself to be inferior on that account; and that this ‘penis-envy’ gives rise to a whole series of characteristic feminine reactions.”⁷¹ Jung also confirms this limitation as the “feminine principle which could find no place in Freud’s patriarchal world.”⁷²

In this context, Freud suggests that the most upsetting occurrence for little girls is the realization that they are without the genital organs that males have. Freud writes, “The discovery that she is castrated is a turning-point in a girl’s growth.”⁷³ Horney continues highlighting the inadequacies of Freud’s outlook on female psychology:

In this formulation we have assumed as an axiomatic fact that females feel at a disadvantage because of their genital organs, without this being regarded as constituting a problem in itself—possibly because

to masculine narcissism this has seemed too self-evident to need explanation. Nevertheless, the conclusion so far drawn from the investigations—amounting as it does to an assertion that one half of the human race is discontented with the sex assigned to it and can overcome this discontent only in favorable circumstances—is decidedly unsatisfying, not only to feminine narcissism but also to biological science.⁷⁴

Female sexuality clearly challenged Freud's narrow assumptions: "The sexual life of grown-up women ... is still a 'dark continent' for psychology."⁷⁵ Freud admits to his inability to comprehend the feminine psyche to Princess Marie Bonaparte (1882–1962): "The great question that has never been answered and which I have not yet been able to answer, despite my thirty years of research into the feminine soul, is 'What does a woman want?'"⁷⁶ It may be interesting to note that Freud compares the doctrine of the "talking cure" to a woman: "Psychoanalysis is like a woman who wants to be seduced but knows she will be underrated unless she offers resistance."⁷⁷

Freud maintains the supremacy of masculine sexual potency and emphasizes that it is required for the greater good of society: "[I]t is positively a matter of public interest that men should enter upon sexual relations with full potency."⁷⁸ Josef Breuer (1842–1925) recognized early on that "the great majority of severe neuroses in women have their origin in the marriage bed,"⁷⁹ and regarded "sexuality as one of the major components of hysteria."⁸⁰ Freud makes a striking statement on the loveless phenomenon of contemporary marriage when proposing its remedy: "The cure for nervous illness arising from marriage would be marital unfaithfulness."⁸¹

It has been suggested that Freud himself had an affair with his sister-in-law, Minna Bernays (1865–1941).⁸² The official biography attempts to cast doubt on this claim. Ernest Jones emphasizes that "There was no sexual attraction on either side, but he found her a stimulating and amusing companion and would occasionally make

short holiday excursions with her when his wife was not free to travel.”⁸³ Yet as historian Peter Gay (1923–2015) points out, concerning this alleged affair, Freud “left behind some tantalizing private mysteries.”⁸⁴ Jones, being a good disciple of the master, writes: “His wife was assuredly the only woman in Freud’s love life.... Freud no doubt appreciated her [Minna Bernays’s] conversation, but to say that she in any way replaced her sister in his affections is sheer nonsense.”⁸⁵ Jung, who knew Freud more intimately than Jones did, provides an account of his first visit to Vienna in 1907, where Minna Bernays confided in him that “Freud was in love with her [Minna Bernays] and that their relationship was indeed very intimate.”⁸⁶ In this context, the following becomes clearer: “Minna Bernays’s importance for psychoanalysis has been largely overshadowed by controversy over her putative sexual liaison with Freud—a controversy that members of the profession have until recently put down to Freudicidal malice.”⁸⁷

Jung justified his position by sanctioning extramarital relations, which he deemed necessary for a successful marriage such as his own; but his wife was exempt from such arrangements. Jung observes: “The prerequisite for a good marriage, it seems to me, is the license to be unfaithful. I in my turn have learnt a great deal.”⁸⁸ On the issue of monogamy, Horney writes: “We know that the dissociation between ‘spiritual’ and sensual love, which has so strong a bearing on the possibility of faithfulness, is dominantly—indeed, almost specifically—a masculine characteristic.”⁸⁹

Normalizing Perversion

Early on, modern psychology held perversion to be a common feature of normal sexual development, as Freud observed: “A disposition to perversions is an original and universal disposition of the human sexual instinct and ... [n]o healthy person ... can fail to make some addition that might be called perverse.”⁹⁰ He normalizes such aberrations by arguing that “sexual perversions are very widely

diffused among the whole population.”⁹¹ One wonders whether Freud would have viewed the alarming rise, in the world today, of sexual addiction, pornography, exhibitionism, voyeurism, sadomasochism, and fetishism as a normal feature of human sexual development. Yet it cannot be overlooked, as American Author Neil Postman (1931–2003) reminds us, that “Civilization cannot exist without the control of impulses.”⁹² However, this should not be confused with repression.

It is important to recall, in this context, Freud’s notion of “polymorphous perversion”—the idea that people can obtain sexual gratification outside accepted norms of sexual behavior. He elaborates how this phenomenon can arise: “It is an instructive fact that under the influence of seduction children can become polymorphously perverse, and can be led into all possible kinds of sexual irregularities. This shows that an aptitude for them is innately present in their disposition.”⁹³

Contemporary research shows that the human brain can be changed through an addiction to pornography, as Norman Doidge illustrates:

Pornography, by the offering an endless harem of sexual objects, hyperactivates the appetitive system. Porn viewers develop new maps in their brains, based on the photos and videos they see. Because it is a use-it-or-lose-it brain, when we develop a map area, we long to keep it activated. Just as our muscles become impatient for exercise if we’ve been sitting all day, so too do our senses hunger to be stimulated. The men at their computers [addicted to] looking at porn were uncannily like the rats in the cages of the NIH, pressing the bar to get a shot of dopamine or its equivalent. Though they [do not] know it, they [have] been seduced into pornographic training sessions that [meet] all the conditions required for plastic change of brain maps.⁹⁴

The larger social and global ramifications of the following insight cannot be ignored: “The normalization of pornography in mainstream

culture is deeply connected to the mainstream culture's rejection of any kind of sacred order."⁹⁵

The escalation of sexual aberrations can be considered as reflecting a crisis in the human psyche, due to its having lost a connection with a spiritual order of reality. "Psychoanalysis has emphasized the subpersonal primordialism of sex by applying a degrading inversion."⁹⁶ Seeking intimacy, connection, and fulfillment solely within the corporeal realm, devoid of what transcends and contains the physical, is futile. Sexual deviations, like the myriad addictions of the present day, are a symptom of the pathology of fallen man, who attempts to find wholeness in that which is incapable of providing it.

The failure of false substitutes for true well-being are—as the great religions have always pointed out—due to the gradual dissociation of the human psyche from the Spirit; a development characteristic of what is known as the *Kali-Yuga* or "Dark Age." The sexual revolution has effectively desacralized human sexuality, cutting it off from its metaphysical root: "The reaction of the so-called sexual revolution has only led the masses to a regimen of quick, easy, and cheap sex treated as an item of consumption."⁹⁷

We are told that "practically all modern schools of psychology and psychotherapy inform us [that happiness and emotional stability] can only be achieved when the individual achieves sexual maturity."⁹⁸ Yet what is "sexual maturity" according to modern psychology? Albert Ellis (1913–2007), one of the most influential figures in contemporary psychology, opines that:

Sexual maturity ... [is] the *realistic acceptance* of the *facts* of human sexuality, ... so that a maximum number of human beings may satisfy their biosocial sex urges with a minimum of unnecessary stress and strain. [Society must] arrange its customs and mores so that virtually all its males and females obtain a reasonable degree of sex satisfaction during their adolescence, young adulthood, and mature years.⁹⁹

Yet beyond the need to satisfy our sexual urges, there is an even more inherent need for the sacred, as Roshi Philip Kapleau (1912–2004) explains:

Freud and other psychologists speak of the great harm done to the psyche when sexual desire cannot find an outlet. But far worse is the frustration of the primordial need to know who and what we are and the meaning of our life and death. These questions are barriers you yourself must penetrate; on the other side of them is the Reality you sense. But it is not separate, this Reality—how can there be more than one Reality? When the silt of your delusory thoughts settles, you will gaze into fresh, clear water that is really the same water purged of dirt and impurities.¹⁰⁰

In light of our growing rupture with the sacred, human relationships, intimacy, and sexuality become ever more debased. Frithjof Schuon (1907–1998) writes that in “Loving each other, Adam and Eve loved God; they could neither love nor know outside God. After the fall, they loved each other outside God and for themselves, and they knew each other as separate phenomena and not as theophanies; this new kind of love was concupiscence and this new kind of knowing was profanity.”¹⁰¹

The Metaphysics of Sex

According to a traditional perspective, sexuality has two main functions: procreation and the union of the sexes. Erotic love includes the capacity to raise us, so to speak, above ourselves and beyond the narrow confines of the empirical ego. Through the erotic embrace between man and woman, as envisaged esoterically, our lost primordial unity can thereby be regained.

Due to its degraded *samsāric* consciousness, humanity today endeavors to find completion in various pursuits (including sex) but usually to no avail. In pursuing sexual ecstasy, we unknowingly seek a deeper wholeness, not realizing that it cannot be found in merely

carnal activity. This is exemplified by the purely horizontal outlook on sexuality that we see in Freud when he writes: “The theory of bisexuality ... [suggests that] each individual seeks to satisfy both male and female wishes in his sexual life ... [as if] those [two sets of] demands are not fulfilled by the same object.”¹⁰²

What becomes apparent is that people today unknowingly seek to “find themselves” through sex. Philip Sherrard (1922–1995) points out that, for modern man, “sexual life is a sad search for his lost androgynous state.”¹⁰³ Having *its source in the Spirit, the original anthrōpos* (or androgyne) was subsequently divided into male and female,¹⁰⁴ as cosmic manifestation *unfolded from its divine archetype into more pronounced levels of duality*.

The spiritual metaphysics of the world’s religions do not ignore or downplay the role of human sexuality, nor do they take a prudish stance, as is often mistakenly believed, but view integral sexuality as the communion of the human with the Spirit: “In primordial man, sexual ecstasy coincides with spiritual ecstasy, it communicates to man an experience of mystical union, a ‘remembrance’ of the Divine Love of which human love is a distant reflection.”¹⁰⁵ Since the earliest times, human beings have known that “Traditional man sought to find the secret and essence of sex in divinity itself.”¹⁰⁶ Julius Evola (1898–1974) observes:

With regard also to sex, the rediscovery of its [highest] primary and deepest meaning ... depend[s] on the possibility of the reintegration of modern man and on his arising once more and betaking himself beyond the psychic and spiritual lowlands into which he has been led by the mirages of his material civilization, for in this lowlands the meaning of being truly a man or woman is doomed to vanish.¹⁰⁷

Freud’s obsession in reducing everything to a sexual common denominator prohibited him from seeing what was fully human. This being a significant factor in the break with his master, Jung adopts a broader symbolism that is not limited to just sexuality:

A man may dream of inserting a key in a lock, of wielding a heavy stick, or of breaking down a door with a battering ram. Each of these can be regarded as a sexual allegory. But the fact that his unconscious for its own purposes has chosen one of these specific images—it may be the key, the stick, or the battering ram—is also of major significance. The real task is to understand *why* the key has been preferred to the stick, or the stick to the ram. And sometimes this might even lead one to discover that it is not the sexual act at all that is represented, but some quite different psychological point.¹⁰⁸

Another early criticism of Freud comes from American psychologist Knight Dunlap (1875–1949):

There is absolutely nothing in the universe which may not readily be made into a sexual symbol.... We may explain, by Freudian principles, why trees have their roots in the ground; why we write with pens; why we put a quart of wine into a bottle instead of hanging it on a hook like a ham, and so on.... [C]ures resulting from Freudian treatment have no value as evidence in support of the Freudian dogmas.¹⁰⁹

This speaks to the perversion of traditional symbolism, the latter of which is rooted in spiritual principles rather than in subjective speculation. Freud's doctrines (and those of his disciples) ignored the integral meaning of symbolism and subverted its sacred significance: "Symbolism ... is characteristic of unconscious ideation."¹¹⁰ French metaphysician René Guénon (1886–1951) perceptively observes:

[W]hen Freud spoke of 'symbolism', what he thus misnamed was in reality only a simple product of the human imagination, variable from one individual to another and having nothing in common with authentic traditional symbolism. But that was only a first stage, and it remained for other psychoanalysts to modify the theories of their 'master' in the direction of a false spirituality, in order that by a more subtle confusion they might apply them to the interpretation of traditional symbolism itself. This was especially the case with Carl Gustav Jung.¹¹¹

He further writes:

[E]very true symbol bears its multiple meanings within itself, and this from its very origin, because it is not constituted as such by any human convention but in virtue of the ‘law of correspondence’ that links all worlds together; if some see these meanings while others do not, or see them only in part, they are no less truly contained in the symbol, for it is the ‘intellectual horizon’ of each person that makes all the difference, symbolism being an exact science and not a reverie in which individual fantasies are given free rein.¹¹²

Transpersonal Symbolism of the Human Body

Nakedness before the Absolute symbolizes a human being’s proximity to the primordial state; or our true identity prior to developing a separate self that becomes entangled with the world through a false identification with it. The symbolism of sacred nudity embraces the correspondence between earthly and heavenly beauty; earthly beauty being “outward” and heavenly beauty being divine and “inward.” Here, nakedness refers not only to outer clothing but to the state of purity when we abide in the Absolute. By means of a spiritually integrated framework that includes both esoteric and exoteric dimensions, sacred nudity—as found across all sapiential traditions—can be much better understood.¹¹³

Both Adam and Eve were naked in their primordial state and “were not ashamed” (Genesis 2:25). With respect to the Islamic tradition, Martin Lings (1909–2005) remarks:

Originally there was, for both sexes, an alternative to clothes, namely a return to the nakedness of primordial man. This remained a fully approved mode of *iḥrām* until ... the last few years of the Prophet’s life ... as to the traditional alternative, like certain other already

mentioned aspects of the precious legacy of the first of the Patriarchs, sacred nudity presupposes a spiritual development which could not be said to characterize more than a very small minority in any one of those three religions which are, in a sense, Abraham's legatees. There could therefore have been no question of Islam's retaining nakedness as the pilgrimal alternative to clothing.¹¹⁴

We can see that what psychodynamic approaches hold to be symbolic are but pale reflections of a desacralized and psychic residue of the former. Titus Burckhardt (1908–1984) explains:

In every collectivity that has become unfaithful to its own traditional form, to the sacred framework of its life, there occurs a collapse or a sort of mummification of the symbols it had received, and this process will be reflected in the psychic life of every individual belonging to that collectivity and participating in that infidelity. To every truth there corresponds a formal trace, and every spiritual form projects a psychic shadow; when these shadows are all that remains, they do in fact take on the character of ancestral phantoms that haunt the subconscious. The most pernicious of psychological errors is to reduce the meaning of symbolism to such phantoms.¹¹⁵

Due to their fallen condition, Adam and Eve lost their capacity for knowing spiritual realities directly. This led to them losing a sense of the sacred, and their "eye of the heart" became corrupted: "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (Genesis 3:7). Through a profanation of the primordial state, this nakedness—now no longer holy—is thus condemned. St. Paul writes: "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked" (2 Corinthians 5:3). Anything other than spiritual nakedness implies worldly separation and division, which places a veil between the human and the Divine. Metaphysically speaking, as Meister Eckhart (1260–1328) confirms, to be 'naked' is to be more unified with the Absolute: "The greater the nakedness, the greater the union."¹¹⁶ Likewise, St. John of the Cross (1542–1591) speaks of a "nakedness of spirit."¹¹⁷ It is by recovering this innate mystical nakedness that

we can efface ourselves and ultimately unite with the Absolute: “as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2 Corinthians 6:10).

Jiří Langer (1894–1943), in his 1923 work *Die Erotik der Kabbala*, attempted to interpret the sacred symbolism of Jewish mysticism through the lens of modern psychology. Yet this attempt, as the eminent scholar of Jewish mysticism Gershom Scholem (1897–1982) points out, was unsuccessful: “An attempt to interpret the ‘Eroticism of the Kabbalah’ in psychoanalytical terms has actually been made, but the author has not advanced beyond the common catch-phrases which not a few adherents of the school unfortunately seem to regard as a sufficient answer to problems of this nature.”¹¹⁸ Regarding reductionistic interpretations of Jewish mysticism, Scholem adds: “there is little hope ... that real light can be shed on the matter in this way [through psychoanalysis or modern psychology].”¹¹⁹

Sacred Meaning of Sexual Union

While Freud shares a belief in the profound significance of sexuality with Kabbalah, his point of departure desacralizes and pathologizes its transcendent symbolism. According to the Zohar, the sexual union between husband and wife symbolizes the union between the spiritual body of the *sefirot* and the Divine:

When he is male together with female and is highly sanctified and zealous for sanctification; then and only then he is designated one without mar of any kind. Hence a man and his wife should have a single inclination at the hour of their union, and the man should be glad with his wife, attaching her to himself in affection. So conjoined, they make one soul and one body: a single soul through their affection; a single body, for only when male and female are conjoined do they form a single body; whereas, and this we have learned, if a man is not wedded, he is, we may say, divided in two. But when male and female are joined, God abides upon “one” and endows it with a

holy spirit; and, as was said, these are called the children of the Holy One, be blessed.¹²⁰

Scholem articulates the sacred dimension of sexuality as it appears in the Kabbalah:

The mystery of sex, as it appears to the Kabbalist, has a terribly deep significance. This mystery of human existence is for him nothing but a symbol of the love between the divine “I” and the divine “You,” the Holy one, blessed be He and His Shekhinah. The *ἱερός γάμος* [*hieros gamos*], the “sacred union” of the King and the Queen, the Celestial Bridegroom and the Celestial Bride, to name a few of the symbols, is the central fact in the whole chain of divine manifestations in the hidden world. In God there is a union of the active and the passive, procreation and conception, from which all mundane life and bliss are derived.¹²¹

The symbolism depicting this embrace can be traced back to rabbinic writings; for example, in the following important Talmudic passage (*Yoma* 54a-b):

Rab Katina said: When the Israelites entered the Temple in Jerusalem [during the three pilgrimage festivals], the curtain [to the Holy of Holies] was opened and they were shown the cherubim in intimate embraces, and they were told: Behold, the love between yourselves and God is like the love between man and woman.... Resh Lakish said: When the Gentiles conquered the Temple, they saw the cherubim in intimate embraces. They hauled them out into the marketplace and said: “Behold! Israel, whose blessing is a blessing and whose curse is a curse, concerns itself with such things?!” Then they reviled them, as is said, “All that honored her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness” [Lam. 1:8].¹²²

Freudian therapy and its outlook on human sexuality appear, then, not only as a parody but as an aberration of how sexuality was viewed within the Jewish mystical tradition. August Forel (1848–

1931), a Swiss psychiatrist, concluded that Freudianism was a secular religion by drawing upon its Jewish symbolism, “sanctifying sexual church, its infant sexuality, its Talmudic-exegetic-theological interpretations.”¹²³

Similar examples of sacred sexuality can be found across the diverse cultures of the world. The traditional Tibetan symbolism of *yab-yum* (“father-mother”) is known as the primordial union of wisdom and compassion, or the feminine and masculine depicted in sexual embrace, two aspects that are fundamental for enlightenment. Sexuality looks very different in this traditional context from the way it appears in mainstream psychology:

The man [sees] the woman as a goddess,
The woman [sees] the man as a god.
By joining the diamond scepter and lotus,
They should make offerings to each other.
There is no worship apart from this.¹²⁴

Without meditating, without renouncing the world,
Stay at home in the company of your mate.
Perfect knowledge can only be attained
While one is enjoying the pleasures of the senses.¹²⁵

Similarly, the *yin-yang* as feminine and masculine—found in both Taoism and Confucianism—while considered as opposites, represent the two poles of universal manifestation inherent in all phenomena. These terms correspond metaphysically to the *liṅgam-yoni* of Hinduism, symbolizing Shiva and Shakti, which is *purusha* and *prakriti*, or essence and substance. All manifestation issues from these complementary principles: “From the relation of *liṅga* and *yoni* the whole world arises. Everything therefore bears the signature of the *liṅga* and the *yoni*. It is divinity which, under the form of all individual *liṅgas*, enters every womb and procreates all beings.”¹²⁶ It also needs to be noted that “every manifested being participates in the two principles ... but in different proportions and always with one or the other predominating; the perfectly balanced union of the two terms can be realized only in the ‘primordial state’.”¹²⁷

Within the *Kāma Sūtra* of the Hindu tradition, human sexuality is regarded as a dimension of spiritual practice: “Sexual intercourse is a form of yoga in which two beings blend, two hearts are united. Duality always desires unity.”¹²⁸ The physical embrace is then about communion with the Divine:

Not only can the physical sexual act be transcended, but it is only when it is transcended that the sexual life can attain its highest levels of expression. The sexual life is linked with the deepest roots of man’s being—with his metaphysical roots and with the meeting-place in him of the divine and the human.¹²⁹

Alain Daniélou (1907–1994), noted Hindu scholar and translator, also writes:

Happiness both given and received is mutual enjoyment. For this shared happiness and pleasure, a man is willing to give himself entirely. For a man as for a woman, the total gift of self is a source of wonderful happiness and luck. Sexual intercourse is not merely a pleasure of the senses: more important is the sacrifice of oneself, the gift of self. To understand the mystery of sexual intercourse, to know and make use of what is fitting is the essential difference between man and beast.¹³⁰

The intention of such a communion is not a promiscuous search for endless partners or novel sexual experiences, but centering one’s attention on one’s partner and submitting in the fullest sense to the sacred and transpersonal enactment of this metaphysical embrace. Accordingly, “Happy is the possessor of a single lover.”¹³¹

In Tantric Buddhism, women are viewed as embodiments of the great goddess, as Vajrayoginī states: “Wherever in the world a female body is seen, that should be recognized as my body.”¹³² Śrī Rāmakrishna (1836–1886) observes: “He who has realized God ... perceives clearly that women are but so many aspects of the Divine Mother. He worships them all as the Mother Herself.”¹³³ In Islamic spirituality, Ibn ‘Arabī (1165–1240) describes contemplating the Divine in the

female form as the highest method of contemplation possible. He writes:

When man contemplates God in woman, his contemplation rests on that which is passive; if he contemplates Him in himself, seeing that woman comes from man, he contemplates Him in that which is active; and when he contemplates Him alone, without the presence of any form whatsoever issued from him, his contemplation corresponds to a state of passivity with regard to God, without intermediary. Consequently his contemplation of God in woman is the most perfect, for it is then God, in so far as He is at once active and passive, that he contemplates, whereas in the purely interior contemplation, he contemplates Him only in a passive way. So the Prophet—Benediction and Peace be on him—was to love women because of the perfect contemplation of God in them. One would never be able to contemplate God directly in absence of all (sensible or spiritual) support, for God, in his Absolute Essence, is independent of all worlds. But, as the (Divine) Reality is inaccessible in respect (of the Essence), and there is contemplation (*shahādah*) only in a substance, the contemplation of God in women is the most intense and the most perfect; and the union which is the most intense (in the sensible order, which serves as support for this contemplation) is the conjugal act.¹³⁴

Within the Christian tradition, St. John Climacus (c. 579–649) describes a form of contemplation that has almost Platonic resonances:

A certain man, seeing a woman of unusual beauty, glorified the Creator for her: the mere sight of her moved him to love God and made him shed a flood of tears. It was indeed astonishing to see how what for another could have been a pitfall to perdition was, for him, the supernatural cause of a crown of glory. If such a man, on similar occasions, feels and acts in the same way, he is already risen, and is incorruptible, even before the general resurrection.¹³⁵

It is also worth recounting the Lakota Sioux story of Pte San Win—the “White Buffalo Calf Woman”—that revealed the seven sacred

rites, including the sacred pipe and the sacred ritual of the Sun Dance. It is recounted that, very many winters ago, when the White Buffalo Calf Woman appeared, one of the two men who had bad intentions, and sexualized the *wakan* or “holy” woman, perished because of his profane vision. The Lakota holy man Hehaka Sapa, more commonly known as Black Elk (1863–1950), said the following regarding this desacralized state of mind: “Any man who is attached to the senses and to the things of this world, is one who lives in ignorance and is being consumed by the snakes which represent his own passions.”¹³⁶ We recall the following teaching conveyed by the Christian tradition: “But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5:28).

Conclusion

The desacralized image of the human being, viewed through the lens of modern psychology’s reductionism and scientism, portrays this state not only in terms of what is beneath it, but also in its most opaque condition. The view of *homo naturalis* is not that of a liberated human being but, rather, a caricature of fallen or *samsāric* humanity that has lost its connection to the Divine. Modern psychology’s theories not only fueled the *Weltanschauung* of the modern world, but have bequeathed to us a fragmented and inverted image of the human state. These ideas have become so ubiquitous in our profane *Zeitgeist* that they are barely questioned. It is paramount to see that all post-Enlightenment psychology, no matter what novel modalities it presents, is situated on a debased foundation that cannot be ignored; it needs to be seen for what it is.

Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971) makes an astute point regarding this secular outlook and its dehumanizing consequences: “The modern naturalism which seeks to solve the problems of man’s sexual life by

treating him as an animal, only slightly more complex than other brutes, represents a therapy which implies a disease in our culture as grievous, or more grievous, than the sickness it pretends to cure.”¹³⁷ When our transpersonal faculty—the “eye of the heart” —is obscured, we fail to perceive things as they truly are. Having no adherence to a divinely revealed spiritual path, we are driven by our egoism and its never-ending desires, thus harmfully distorting how we view sex. Renowned scholar of patristics and Orthodox priest Jean-Claude Larchet points out that “Fallen man destroys himself by means of his desires contrary to nature.”¹³⁸ To this, we may add the discerning words of St. Augustine: “Thus, a good man, though a slave, is free; but a wicked man, though a king, is a slave. For he serves, not one man alone, but, what is worse, as many masters as he has vices.”¹³⁹

Our task is to realize what the masculine and feminine are called to be in principle, so that we can live this archetypal reality faithfully, through recognizing the Divine qualities in each sex and in ourselves. In the spiritual dark age in which we currently find ourselves, the lower dimensions of the psyche overwhelmingly determine the formation of a false sense of personal identity. Our true self transcends the psycho-physical order which, nevertheless, remains subsumed in the Spirit. The sapiential traditions, with their metaphysical approach to human sexuality, convey—in their own unique languages—the essence of love in its highest expression. The mysteries of eros disclose, in their innermost essence, that human sexuality is a sacrament that allows us to momentarily partake of the supernatural, thus unifying the horizontal with the vertical dimensions of our being. Again, the masculine and feminine poles are integral to the manifestation of the cosmos, and to our own inner life. Becoming restored to our fundamental identity requires embracing these binaries, not suppressing them, and it is only through a sacred psychology—and its metaphysical foundations—that this objective can best be supported.

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⁴ Sigmund Freud, “The Sexual Enlightenment of Children (*An Open Letter to Dr. M. Fürst*)” (1907), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 9*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London, UK: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1981), p. 138.

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⁶ C.G. Jung, “New Paths in Psychology” (1912), in *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (New York, NY: Meridian, 1956), p. 269.

⁷ Sigmund Freud, quoted in Ilse Ollendorff Reich, *Wilhelm Reich: A Personal Biography* (New York, NY: Avon Books, 1970), p. 36.

⁸ “I [Wilhelm Reich] coined the term ‘Sexual Revolution’ in the 1930’s” (Wilhelm Reich, “Interview with Kurt R. Eissler—October 18, 1952,” in *Reich Speaks of Freud: Wilhelm Reich Discusses His Work and His Relationship with Sigmund Freud*, trans. Therese Pol, eds. Mary Higgins and Chester M. Raphael [New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972], p. 44). See also Wilhelm Reich, *The Sexual Revolution: Toward a Self-Regulating Character Structure*, trans. Therese Pol (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1986); Michael Minnicino, “The Frankfurt School and ‘Political Correctness,’” *Fidelio*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Winter 1992), pp. 4–27.

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¹¹ Sigmund Freud, “Chapter 4,” in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989), p. 56.

¹² See Carl R. Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020); Gabriele Kuby, *The Global Sexual Revolution: Destruction of Freedom in the Name of Freedom*, trans. James Patrick Kirchner (Kettering, OH: LifeSite/Angelico Press, 2015); Mary Eberstadt, “The Zealous Faith of Secularism,” *First Things*, Vol. 279 (January 2018), pp. 35–40.

¹³ See Judith A. Reisman and Edward W. Eichel, *Kinsey, Sex and Fraud: The Indoctrination of a People*, eds. J. Gordon Muir and John H. Court (Lafayette, LA: Huntington House, 1990); Judith A. Reisman, *Kinsey: Crimes and Consequences* (Crestwood, KY: Institute for Media Education, 2003); Judith A. Reisman, *Sexual Sabotage: How One Mad Scientist Unleashed a Plague of Corruption and Contagion on America* (Washington, D.C.: WND Books, 2010).

¹⁴ The Sabbatian-Frankist movements represent a controversial chapter in Jewish history, centering around the heretical yet charismatic figures of Sabbatai Zevi (1626–1676) and Jacob Frank (1726–1791), both of whom claimed to be the Messiah. They upheld the perilous notion of “redemption through sin” in order to hasten the Messianic era. It is through these antinomian figures that one of the most powerful currents of inverted spirituality was unleashed into the modern world which, for the most part, remains largely unknown. Its nefarious and destructive influence continues to the present day, and should not be underestimated. See Samuel Bendeck Sotillos, “Psychoanalysis and the Heretical Jewish Messianic Movements,” in *Dismantling Freud: Fake Therapy and the Psychoanalytic Worldview* (Brooklyn, NY: Angelico Press, 2020), pp. 195–209.

¹⁵ In 1955, Kinsey traveled to Cefalù in Sicily (Italy), at the invitation of filmmaker Kenneth Anger (1927–2023), a disciple of Crowley. He visited the ruins of Crowley’s residence, known as “The Abbey of Thelema,” which was a central location for Crowley’s sex magic. Kinsey admired Crowley and had a great interest in obtaining his daily sex diaries, which he was reported as having been successful in obtaining, likely for his own research. See Bill Landis, *Anger: An Unauthorized Biography of Kenneth Anger* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1995); Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, *Sex the Measure of All Things: A Life of Alfred C. Kinsey* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000).

¹⁶ Aleister Crowley, “At the Abbey of Thelema,” in *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley: An Autobiography*, eds. John Symonds and Kenneth Grant (New York, NY: Arkana Books, 1989), p. 851.

¹⁷ Aleister Crowley, “The Law of Thelema,” in *The Book of the Law* (Boston, MA: Red Wheel/Weiser Books, 1976), p. 9.

¹⁸ St. Augustine of Hippo, “Ten Homilies on the First Epistle of John,” in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff (New York, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1888), p. 504.

- ¹⁹ Alfred C. Kinsey, quoted in Judith Reisman, "The Homosexual in America," *Time*, Vol. 87, No. 3 (January 21, 1966), p. 52.
- ²⁰ Paul Robinson, "Alfred Kinsey," in *The Modernization of Sex: Havelock Ellis, Alfred Kinsey, William Masters and Virginia Johnson* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1976), p. 59.
- ²¹ Alfred C. Kinsey, quoted in Wardell B. Pomeroy, *Dr. Kinsey and the Institute for Sex Research* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 77.
- ²² James H. Jones, "Be Pure in Thought and Clean in Habit," in *Alfred C. Kinsey: A Life By* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Norton, 2004), p. 82.
- ²³ Thomas Weyr, "The State of the Art," in *Reaching for Paradise: The Playboy Vision of America* (New York, NY: Times Books, 1978), p. 11.
- ²⁴ Bill Zehme, "Playboy Interview: Hugh M. Hefner," *Playboy*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (January 2000), p. 244.
- ²⁵ Havelock Ellis, quoted in John Stewart Collis, *An Artist of Life: A Study of the Life and Work of Havelock Ellis* (London, UK: Cassell & Company, 1959), p. 8.
- ²⁶ John H. Gagnon, "Sex Research and Social Change," *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (March 1975), p. 111.
- ²⁷ Wardell Pomeroy and Leah C. Schaefer, "Impact of Published Surveys and Research on Public Concepts of Human Sexuality," in *Medical Sexology: The Third International Congress*, eds. Romano Forleo and Willy Pasini (Littleton, MA: PSG Publishing, 1980), p. 76.
- ²⁸ E. Michael Jones, "Introduction: Internet in Gaza: Sexual Liberation as Political Control," in *Libido Dominandi: Sexual Liberation and Political Control* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2000), p. 2.
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- ³⁰ David F. Foxon, "Nicolas Chorier: Satyra Sotadica," in *Libertine Literature in England, 1660–1745* (New Hyde Park, NY: University Books, 1966), p. 48.
- ³¹ Richard Webster, "Mysterious Mechanisms," in *Why Freud Was Wrong: Sin, Science, and Psychoanalysis* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1995), p. 181.
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³³ Sigmund Freud, “Chapter 4,” in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989), p. 56.

³⁴ Sigmund Freud, “Letter to Wilhelm Fliess—[Undated] 1893,” in Marie Bonaparte, Anna Freud, and Ernst Kris (eds.), *The Origins of Psychoanalysis: Letters to Wilhelm Fliess, Drafts and Notes: 1887–1902*, trans. Eric Mosbacher and James Strachey (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1954), p. 75. See also Sigmund Freud, “Letter to Wilhelm Fliess—[Undated] 1893,” in *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887–1904*, trans. and ed. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 45–46.

³⁵ Sigmund Freud, “My Views on the Part Played by Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses” (1905), in *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, ed. Philip Rieff (New York, NY: Collier Books, 1978), p. 14.

³⁶ Sigmund Freud, “‘Civilized’ Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness” (1908), in *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, ed. Philip Rieff (New York, NY: Collier Books, 1978), p. 35.

³⁷ Sigmund Freud, “Some Character-Types Met with in Psychoanalytic Work” (1916), in *Character and Culture*, ed. Philip Rieff (New York, NY: Collier Books, 1963), p. 162.

³⁸ Sigmund Freud, “Fifth Lecture” (1910), in *Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989), p. 54.

³⁹ Sigmund Freud, “Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses” (1898), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 3*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London, UK: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1981), p. 268.

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⁴⁷ Ernest Jones, “The Fliess Period,” in *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 1: The Formative Years and the Great Discoveries, 1856–1900* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1959), p. 307.

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⁵⁰ Ernest Jones, “Anthropology,” in *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 3: The Last Phase, 1919–1939* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1957), p. 329.

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⁵⁴ C.G. Jung, “Sigmund Freud,” in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, trans. Richard Winston and Clara Winston, ed. Aniela Jaffé (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 149.

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⁶³ C.G. Jung, “Sigmund Freud,” in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, trans. Richard Winston and Clara Winston, ed. Aniela Jaffé (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 150.

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⁶⁵ C.G. Jung, “Psychoanalysis and Neurosis” (1916), in *Critique of Psychoanalysis*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 165.

⁶⁶ C.G. Jung, “Psychoanalysis and Neurosis” (1916), in *Critique of Psychoanalysis*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 165. “Jung had never really grasped Freud’s concept of the libido and that he continued wittingly or unwittingly to equate it with the energy of adult sexual instincts.... Only in Jung’s later writings does it become uncompromisingly clear that in his view libido is nothing more than a synonym for psychic energy” (Edward Glover, “Mental Energy,” in *Freud or Jung?* [New York, NY: Meridian, 1956], pp. 57, 58).

⁶⁷ C.G. Jung, “General Remarks on the Therapeutic Approach to the Unconscious,” in *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (New York, NY: Meridian, 1956), p. 128.

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⁷⁸ Sigmund Freud, "Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses" (1898), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 3*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London, UK: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1981), p. 278.

⁷⁹ Josef Breuer, "Innate Disposition—Development of Hysteria," in Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000), p. 246.

⁸⁰ Josef Breuer, "Innate Disposition—Development of Hysteria," in Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000), p. 244.

⁸¹ Sigmund Freud, "'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness" (1908), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 9*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London, UK: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1981), p. 195.

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“Freud, His Wife, and His ‘Wife,’” *American Imago*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (Winter 2006), pp. 497–506.

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¹⁰¹ Frithjof Schuon, "The Forbidden Fruit," in *Islam and the Perennial Philosophy*, trans. J. Peter Hobson (London, UK: World of Islam Festival Publishing Company, 1976), p. 191.

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¹⁰³ Philip Sherrard, "Towards a Theology of Sexual Love," in *Christianity and Eros: Essays on the Theme of Sexual Love* (Limni, Evia, Greece: Denise Harvey, 1995), p. 62.

¹⁰⁴ See Plato's *Symposium* (189c–193e).

¹⁰⁵ Frithjof Schuon, "The Problem of Sexuality," in *Esoterism as Principle and as Way*, trans. William Stoddart (Bedfont, Middlesex, UK: Perennial Books, 1981), p. 129.

¹⁰⁶ Julius Evola, "Gods and Goddesses, Man and Women," in *The Metaphysics of Sex* (New York, NY: Inner Traditions, 1983), p. 115.

¹⁰⁷ Julius Evola, "Conclusion," to *The Metaphysics of Sex* (New York, NY: Inner Traditions, 1983), p. 276.

¹⁰⁸ Carl G. Jung, "The Importance of Dreams," in *Man and His Symbols*, ed. Carl G. Jung (New York, NY: Laurel, 1968), pp. 13–14.

¹⁰⁹ Knight Dunlap, "The Pragmatic Advantage of Freudo-Analysis: (A Criticism)," *Psychoanalytic Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1913/1914), p. 151.

¹¹⁰ Sigmund Freud, "(E) Representation by Symbols in Dreams—Some Further Typical Dreams" (1899), in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York, NY: Science Editions, 1963), p. 351.

¹¹¹ René Guénon, "Tradition and the 'Unconscious,'" in *Symbols of Sacred Science*, trans. Henry D. Fohr, ed. Samuel D. Fohr (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2004), p. 38.

¹¹² René Guénon, "The Holy Grail," in *Symbols of Sacred Science*, trans. Henry D. Fohr, ed. Samuel D. Fohr (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2004), p. 28. "First, symbolism seems to us to be particularly well adapted to the

exigencies of human nature, which is not a purely intellectual nature but requires a sensory basis from which to raise itself to higher spheres.... [S]ymbolism in the strict sense is essentially synthetic and thereby 'intuitive' as it were, which renders it more apt than language to serve as a support for intellectual intuition ... [which] is higher than reason.... Thus the highest truths, not communicable or transmissible in any other way, can be communicated up to a certain point when they are, so to speak, incorporated in symbols which will no doubt conceal them for many, but which will manifest them in all their brilliance to those with eyes to see." (René Guénon, "Word and Symbol," in *Symbols of Sacred Science*, trans. Henry D. Fohr, ed. Samuel D. Fohr [Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2004], pp. 7–8).

¹¹³ See Deborah Casey, "The Basis of Religion and Metaphysics: An Interview with Frithjof Schuon," *The Quest*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Summer 1996), p. 77.

¹¹⁴ Martin Lings, *Mecca: From Before Genesis Until Now* (Cambridge, UK: Archetype, 2004), pp. 33–34; "In pre-Islamic times, the circumambulation of the Kaaba was probably performed naked, as sacred nudity is well known in ancient religious traditions." (Annemarie Schimmel, "Sacred Action," in *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam* [Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994], p. 93).

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¹¹⁶ Meister Eckhart, "Selections from the Commentaries on Genesis," in *The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense*, trans. Edmund Colledge and Bernard McGinn (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1981), p. 105.

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¹²² Talmud, quoted in Gershom Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1991), p. 111.

¹²³ August Forel, quote in Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1970), p. 814.

¹²⁴ Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantra, quoted in Miranda Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 153.

¹²⁵ Saraha, quoted in Miranda Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 22.

¹²⁶ Swāmi Karapātrī, quoted in Alain Daniélou, *The Myths and Gods of India* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1991), p. 225.

¹²⁷ René Guénon, “The Great Triad,” in *The Symbolism of the Cross*, trans. Angus Macnab (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2004), p. 137.

¹²⁸ Alain Daniélou, “Virile Behavior in Women [*Purushāyita*],” in *The Complete Kāma Sūtra: The First Unabridged Modern Translation of the Classic Indian Text by Vātsyāyana*, trans. Alain Daniélou (Rochester, VT: Park Street Press, 1994), p. 179.

¹²⁹ Philip Sherrard, “Towards a Theology of Sexual Love,” in *Christianity and Eros: Essays on the Theme of Sexual Love* (Limni, Evia, Greece: Denise Harvey, 1995), p. 61.

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