

# THE MASS PSYCHOLOGY OF FASCISM

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## CHAPTER VII

### SEX-ECONOMY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST MYSTICISM

In a mass meeting in Berlin, in January 1933, the National Socialist Otto Strasser asked his opponent, the sociologist and sinologist Wittfogel, a striking question which made the listener feel that had it been answered, mysticism would have been shaken to its foundations. Strasser reproached the Marxists with underestimating the

importance of psychic life and religious experience. If religion, according to Marx, was nothing more than an embellishment of the exploitation of the workers, then one could not understand how religion could maintain itself for thousands of years, in particular, how the Christian religion could maintain itself, almost unchanged, for two thousand years; all the more so because, in its early stages, its maintenance required greater sacrifices than all revolutions put together. The question remained unanswered, and is important in the context of this book. The question was justified as an admonition from the mystical opponent to ask oneself whether natural science had really comprehended mysticism and the means of its anchoring. The answer had to be in the negative: *science had been unable to comprehend the enormous emotional power of mysticism*. This in spite of the fact that the representatives of mysticism, in their writings and sermons, had presented the solution of the problem as clearly and openly as could be. The sex-political character of mysticism is obvious. Yet, it was as thoroughly overlooked by the freethinkers as the equally obvious sexuality of the child had been overlooked by the most famous educators. Clearly, mysticism is in the possession of a hidden bastion which it defended against science with all available means, even before science had an [123] inkling of the fact that there are such mechanisms of mysticism.

### 1. THE THREE BASIC ELEMENTS OF RELIGIOUS FEELING

I shall not present here an extensive study of religious feeling but merely give a résumé of what is already known. The phenomena of orgasmic excitation meet at a certain point with the problem of religious excitation, ranging, as it does, from the simplest pious belief to full-fledged religious ecstasy. The concept of religious excitation should not be restricted to the sensations which deeply religious people experience, say, during a religious service. Rather, we must include in this concept all phenomena which have in common a certain psychic and somatic excitation, such as, say, the excitation of masses when listening to a beloved leader in whom they believe, or the excitation caused by an overwhelming natural phenomenon. Let us begin by summarizing what was known about religious phenomena previous to sex-economic investigation.

Sociological research showed that the forms of religions and various elements of their contents depend on the development of socio-economic conditions. Animal religions, for example, correspond to the mode of living of primitive hunting peoples. The human conception of divine, supernatural beings is always determined by the relative stage of economics and culture. Religious ideas are also essentially determined by man's ability to master nature and social difficulties. Helplessness in the face of natural forces, as well as major social catastrophes, makes for the production of religious ideology.

The sociological explanation of religion, then, refers to the *socio-economic* soil in which religious cults grow. It has nothing to say either about the dynamics of religious ideology nor about the psychic process at work in the people who harbor this ideology. The formation of religious cults, then, is independent of the will of individuals; they are sociological formations, stemming from the relationships between people and from their relationship to nature.

[124] The psychology of the unconscious, Freud's psychoanalysis, complemented the sociological with the *psychological* interpretation of religion. While sociology had explored the social roots of religious cults, psychology now explored the psychological process *in* the people who are subject to these objective religious cults. Thus psychoanalysis found that the idea of *God* is identical with the idea of *father*, the idea of the *Mother of God* with the idea of the *mother* of each religious individual. In the *trinity* of Christian religion, the triangle of father, mother and child finds its immediate representation. The psychic contents of religion stem from the infantile family situation.

Psychological study, then, explained the contents of religious cults; it failed, however, to reveal the energy which enabled them to gain such a firm hold on people. In particular, the question remained obscure as to why religious ideas are invested with such intense feelings. Also obscure were the questions: why were the ideas of an all-powerful father and a benevolent mother translated into mystical terms, and what was their relationship with

the sexual life of the individual.

A great many sociologists have long since pointed out the orgastic character of many patriarchal religions. Similarly, it was shown that patriarchal religions are always politically reactionary. In every class society, they are in the service of the powers that be; they prevent the elimination of the prevailing mass misery by claiming it to be willed by God and by referring demands for happiness to the hereafter.

Sex-economic investigation was concerned with the following further questions:

1. *In what manner* do the ideas of God, the ideologies of sin and punishment—which are produced by society and reproduced by the family—become anchored in the individual? In other words, what compels humans not only to accept these religious ideas, not to feel them as a burden, but, on the contrary, to uphold and fervently defend them, at the sacrifice of their most primitive life interests?

[125] 2. *At what time* does this anchoring of the religious ideas take place?

3. *What energy* makes it possible?

Clearly, without an answer to these three questions, a sociological and psychological *interpretation* of religion is possible, it is true, but no real *alteration* of human structure can be achieved. For if the religious ideas are not forced upon the humans but—contrary to their life interests—are absorbed and retained by them, then we are dealing with a structural alteration of the humans themselves.

The basic religious idea in all patriarchal religions is *the negation of the sexual needs*. Only in very primitive religions were religiosity and sexuality identical. When social organization passed from matriarchy to patriarchy and class society, the unity of religious and sexual cult underwent a split; the religious cult became the antithesis of the sexual. With that, the cult of sexuality went out of existence. It was replaced by the brothel, pornography and backstairs-sexuality. It goes without saying that when sexual experiences ceased to be one with the religious cults, when, instead, they became antithetical to them, religious excitement assumed a new function: that of being a substitute for the lost sexual pleasure, now no longer affirmed by society. Only this contradiction inherent in religious excitement makes the strength and the tenacity of the religions understandable: the contradiction of its being at one and the same time *antisexual* and a *substitute* for sexuality.

The structure of the genuinely religious individual can be briefly described as follows: Biologically, he is subject to states of sexual tension like any other living being. But, through the assimilation of the sex-negating religious ideas in general and the fear of punishment in particular, he has lost all capacity for natural sexual excitation and gratification. As a result, he suffers from a chronic state of *excessive* somatic excitation which he is constantly forced to master. Happiness in this world is not only unattainable for him, but it does not even seem desirable to him. [126] Since he expects happiness in the hereafter, he develops a feeling of being *incapable of happiness* in this world. But, being a biological organism and thus unable to renounce happiness, relaxation and satisfaction, there is only one thing left for him to do: to seek the *illusory* happiness provided by the religious *forepleasure* excitations, the well-known vegetative currents and excitations in the body. He will, therefore, together with his fellow believers, create institutions which alleviate this state of somatic tension and at the same time disguise its real nature. Thus he builds a church organ the sound of which can produce such vegetative currents in the body. The mystical darkness of the churches enhances the seemingly supernatural sensitivity to vegetative sensations and the sounds of a sermon, a choral, etc., which are designed to arouse them.

In real life, the religious individual has become altogether helpless, for the repression of his sexual energy has deprived him of the capacity for happiness and of the aggression necessary to master the difficulties of real life. The more helpless he is in reality, the more is he compelled to believe in supernatural forces which give him support and protection. We thus understand how he may, in certain situations, develop an unbelievable strength of conviction, even to the extent of sacrificing his life. He derives this strength from his love of his own religious conviction which, as we know, is based on highly pleasurable somatic excitations. He believes, it is true, that this strength comes from "God." His longing for God, then, is in reality the experiencing of his fore-pleasure excitations which call for release. The "delivery" can be but one thing: the delivery from intolerable somatic tensions which can be pleasurable only as long as they find a phantasy gratification in an imaginary union with

God. A confirmation of this can be seen in the tendency of religious fanatics to masochistic, self-injurious acts. Sex-economic clinical observation has shown that the desire for self-castigation or the desire to be beaten stem from the desire to obtain *gratification without guilt*. If the individual is unable to bring about the relaxation himself, somatic tensions result inevitably in ideas of being beaten or tortured. [127] Here lies the root of the *ideology of passive suffering* which is part of all patriarchal religions.

The inner situation of helplessness and of somatic suffering creates the need for consolation and support from without, particularly in the fight against the "evil instincts," the "evils of the flesh." Religious individuals, with the aid of their religious ideas, attain a state of vegetative excitation which resembles gratification but does not, in reality, bring about somatic relaxation. As is well known from therapeutic experiences with priests, involuntary ejaculation at the height of states of religious ecstasy is of frequent occurrence. Normal orgasmic gratification is replaced by a generalized state of somatic excitation which excludes the genital and which may result in involuntary, as if accidental, partial discharges of sexual energy.

Originally and by nature, sexual pleasure was that which was good, beautiful, happy, that which linked man with the whole of nature. With the splitting up of the sexual and the religious feelings, the sexual became inevitably that which is evil and infernal.

I have tried elsewhere to show the origin and the effects of *pleasure anxiety*, i.e., the fear of sexual excitation. To summarize briefly: To people who are incapable of sexual relaxation, sexual excitation gradually and inevitably becomes something torturing and destructive. As a matter of fact, sexual excitation is torturing and destructive if the discharge of the sexual energy is not allowed to take place. Thus we see that the religious conception of sexuality as an evil and destructive force has its basis in actual somatic processes. Under these circumstances, the attitude toward sexuality must split up: the typically religious and moralistic evaluations, "good—bad," "heavenly—worldly," "divine—infernal" become symbols on the one hand of sexual gratification and on the other hand of the punishment for it.

The deep longing for delivery, *consciously* from "sin," *unconsciously* from sexual tension, is repressed. States of religious ecstasy are nothing but states of vegetative sexual excitation without a normal outlet. Without this contradiction, religious [128] excitation can neither be understood nor mastered. It is not only antisexual, but at the same time highly sexual; not only moral, but also altogether unnatural and unhygienic from a sex-economic point of view. In no other social group do hysterias and perversions flourish as they do in ascetic religious circles. It would be erroneous to conclude, however, that such people should be treated as perverse criminals. In talking with religious individuals one finds that, together with their antisexual attitude, they also have a good understanding of their condition. Like everybody else, they are divided into an official and a private personality. Officially, they consider sex a sin; privately they know very well that without their substitute gratifications they could not exist. More than that, many of them understand the sex-economic solution of the contradiction between sexual excitation and moralism. If one establishes human contact with them, they understand very well that what they describe as their communication with God is nothing but actual communication with the whole process of nature, that they are a bit of nature, that, like all others, they feel themselves as a microcosmos within a macrocosmos. One has to grant them that their deep conviction has a true core, namely, the vegetative currents in their organism and the ecstasy which they may attain. Particularly among the poorer strata of the population, the religious feeling is absolutely genuine. It becomes false only by the denial of its origin and of the unconscious desire for gratification. In this way develops the *false* kindly attitude of clerics and religious people in general.

As incomplete as this presentation is, the following conclusions stand out:

1. Religious excitation is vegetative, sexual excitation in a disguised form.
2. The religious individual negates his sexuality by mystifying the excitation.
3. Religious ecstasy is a substitute for orgasmic vegetative excitation.
4. Religious ecstasy does not result in true sexual relaxation but only—at best—in a muscular and mental lassitude.

[129] 5. Religious feeling is subjectively genuine and has a physiological basis.

6. The negation of the sexual nature of these excitations results, characterologically, in insincerity.

Infants do not believe in God. The belief in God never takes root in them until the time when they have to learn to suppress their sexual excitation which makes them want to masturbate. Thus they acquire a fear of sexual pleasure. Then they begin not only to believe in God and to fear him as a supernatural being which knows everything and sees everything; they also begin to invoke his protection against their own sexual excitation. All this serves the function of avoiding masturbation.

This, then, is the way in which the anchoring of religious ideas takes place in childhood. But these religious ideas would not bind the child's sexual energy and transform it into the opposing forces of moralism and sex-negation if they were not attached to the actual figures of father and mother. When a child does not "honor his father," he "sins"; in other words, if he does not fear his father, and indulges in sexual pleasure, he gets punished. To the child's thinking, the strict, denying father is God's representative on earth, his executive organ. When the awe of the father gives way to a realistic insight into his human foibles and inadequacies, the awe-inspiring father nevertheless continues to exist in the form of an abstract mystical idea of God. Just as patriarchal society says "God" when it really means actual paternal authority, so does the child, in saying "God," really mean the actual father. In the child's structure, sexual excitation, the idea of father and the idea of God form a unit; a unit which, during therapy, becomes palpable in the form of a spastic condition of the genital musculature. Elimination of this genital spasm regularly brings with it the disappearance of the idea of God and of the fear of the father. The genital spasm thus not only represents the physiological, structural anchoring of the religious fear; at the same time it also creates the pleasure anxiety which is the core of every religious moralism.

Detailed study of the highly complicated interrelations of the [130] different kinds of religious cults, socio-economic organization and human structure must be left to further investigation. Whatever these details may be, they are less important than the fact that the energy core of all sex-negating patriarchal religions is *pleasure anxiety*.

## 2. THE ANCHORING OF RELIGION THROUGH SEXUAL ANXIETY

Antisexual religiosity is a product of patriarchal authoritarian society. The son-father relationship found in every patriarchal religion is no more than a socially determined content of the religious experience; the experience itself results from patriarchal sexual suppression. The function which religion gradually assumes, that of maintaining renunciation and submission to authority, is secondary. It can build on a solid basis: *the structure of the patriarchal individual* as it is molded by sexual suppression. The source of religiosity and the core of any religious dogma formation is the negation of sexual pleasure. This is particularly clearly expressed in Christianity and in Buddhism.

### *a. Anchoring of mysticism in childhood.*

Lieber Gott, nun schlaf' ich ein,  
Schicke mir ein Engelein.  
Vater, lass die Augen Dein  
Über meinem Bette sein.  
Hab' ich Unrecht heut getan,  
Sieh es, lieber Gott, nicht an.  
Vater, hab mit mir Geduld  
Und vergib mir meine Schuld.  
Alle Menschen, gross und klein  
Mögen Dir befohlen sein.

[Dear God, I lay me down to sleep,  
Send an angel watch to keep.  
And, Father, let your loving eye

Look down upon me from the sky.  
If wrong I've done within the day

[131]

Overlook it, God, I pray  
Father, guide me patiently  
And may my faults forgiven be.  
And all persons great and small  
Feel your protection overall.]

This is one of the many typical prayers which children must recite before going to sleep. One is prone not to pay any attention to the content of such a prayer. Yet, it contains in concentrated form all that is the essence of mystical content and feeling: In the first couplet the petition for protection; in the second, a repetition of this petition, made directly to the "father"; in the third, the petition for forgiveness for a committed wrong: God should *not look at it*. What does this guilt feeling refer to? What is God petitioned "not to look at"? If one knows the world of the average child, the answer is not difficult: In the center of the forbidden things is *the wrongdoing of playing with the genitals*.

The prohibition of masturbation would remain ineffective were it not supported by the idea that God sees *everything*, that, consequently, one has to be "good" even when the parents are not around. If anyone should be inclined to brush this off as "phantasy," he may learn something from the following observation which clearly demonstrates the anchoring of the mystical idea of God by means of sexual anxiety.

A girl of about seven, having been brought up without religion, suddenly developed the compulsion to pray. It was a compulsion because she herself found it to be at variance with her knowledge and tried to resist it. The praying compulsion developed as follows: The child was accustomed to masturbate every night before going to sleep. One day, she suddenly was afraid to do so and therefore abstained from it. Instead, she developed the impulse to kneel down before her bed and to say a prayer somewhat like the one cited above. "When I pray," she explained later, "I am not afraid." *The fear had appeared when, for the first time, she denied herself the pleasure of masturbation*. Whence this self-denial? She told her father, in whom she had full confidence, that [132] a few months earlier, during vacation, she had had an unpleasant experience. Like other children, she used to play with a little boy at having sexual intercourse ("playing house"); one day another boy came upon them and shouted Phew! at them. Although her parents had told her that there was nothing wrong in such playing, she became ashamed, gave it up and started, instead, to masturbate before going to sleep. One night, shortly before the onset of the praying compulsion, she had the following experience: On the way home from a group evening, she and a few other children were singing revolutionary songs. They met an old woman whose looks reminded her of the witch in "Hänsel und Gretel" and who scolded them: "You Godless bunch, the Devil will get you yet!" When, later in the evening, she was about to masturbate again, she thought, for the first time, that maybe there was a God after all who would see and punish it. Unconsciously, she had associated the old woman's threat with the sexual experience with the little boy. Now she began to fight against masturbation, became anxious and, to ward off the anxiety, developed the praying compulsion. *The praying, then, had taken the place of sexual gratification*. Nevertheless, the anxiety did not disappear; the girl began to develop night terrors. Now she was afraid of a supernatural being which was going to punish her for her sexual sinning. She sought its protection in her fight against the temptation of masturbation.

It should not be thought that this process is an individual occurrence; rather, it typifies the process of anchoring the idea of God in the overwhelming majority of children in religious cultural circles. The same function is served by fairy tales of the "Hänsel und Gretel" variety in which children are threatened with punishment for masturbation in a disguised but, for the child's unconscious, unmistakable way. Every case treated by character-analysis shows that mystical feeling develops from a general guilt feeling which is centered in the guilt about masturbation. It is hard to see how psychoanalytic investigation could have hitherto overlooked this fact. That the idea of God represents the conscience, the internalized admonitions and threats from parents [133] and educators,

is a well-known fact. What is less well known is the fact that, from an energy point of view, the belief in and the fear of God are sexual excitations which have changed their content and goal. The religious feeling, then, is the same as sexual feeling, except that it is attached to mystical, psychic contents. This explains the return of the sexual element in so many ascetic experiences, such as the nun's delusion that she is the bride of Christ. Such experiences rarely reach the stage of genital consciousness and thus are apt to take place in other sexual channels, such as masochistic martyrdom.

To return to our girl. The praying compulsion disappeared when she understood the origin of her anxiety; instead, she resumed her masturbation without guilt feelings. As unimportant as this may seem it points to a possible prevention of the mystical infestation of our children. A few months after the disappearance of the praying compulsion, the girl wrote from summer camp to her father:

Dear Charlie: There is a wheat field here and at the edge of it we have our hospital (of course it's only a game). There we play Doctor (we are five girls). If one of us has a pain at the pussy, she goes to that hospital. There we have cotton and salves and creams. All that we have swiped.

That is, undoubtedly, *sexual cultural revolution*. And what, many will ask, happens to "culture"? The child was in a class with children one to two years her senior, and the teachers confirmed her great industry and talent. As far as general knowledge and a lively interest in reality was concerned, she was far ahead of the rest. Twelve years later, she was a sexually healthy, very intelligent and generally liked person.

### *b. The anchoring of mysticism in adolescence.*

In the example of the little girl I tried to show the typical way in which religious fear becomes anchored in the young child. Sexual anxiety is the central factor in the anchoring of the authoritarian social order in the child's structure. Let us follow [134] this function of sexual anxiety into puberty and examine one of the typical antisexual pamphlets:

There are two rocks in the life of every man which are his strength or on which he suffers shipwreck: God—and the other sex. Innumerable young men suffer shipwreck in life not because they have not learned enough, but because they do not come to terms with God and—because they do not know how to master—that instinct which can bring untold happiness to man but also untold misery: *the sexual instinct*.

So many never become full human beings because they are under the sway of their instincts. In itself, it is true, strong instincts are nothing regrettable. On the contrary, they make life rich and full, make possible strong love and great achievement. They can make a strong personality. But the instinct becomes wrong and a sin against the Creator when man no longer keeps it in check and becomes its slave. One or the other governs man: the spirit or the instinct, that is, the animal. They do not go together. Thus every man, at one time or another, is confronted with the terrific question: Are you going to recognize the real meaning of your life, that is, to be a light, or are you going to be consumed by the flame of your unbridled instincts?

*Are you going to spend your life as an animal or as a spiritual human being?*

The process of becoming a man is the problem of the fire in the hearth. If it is kept in check, it warms and lights the room. But woe if it leaps out of the hearth! Woe if the sexual instinct governs the whole man to such an extent that it becomes the master of all thought and action!

Our times are sick. In earlier times, people were expected to keep their sexuality in check. Today they say that modern man no longer needs this check. What is overlooked is that the city man of today is much more nervous and much weaker of will and that, therefore, he needs even more self-control.

Now, look around: It is not the spirit that rules in our fatherland but the unbridled instincts, particularly the unchecked sexual instinct, and indecency. In the factory, the office, on the stage, in public life, there rules the spirit of the demi-monde and often the dirty joke. How much youthful joy is ruined in the pestholes of the city, the nightclubs, gambling places and poor movies! The young man of today thinks of [135] himself as particularly clever when he advocates the theory of living out one's sexuality. In reality, Mephisto's saying in Goethe's Faust applies to him:

Er nennt's Verstand und braucht's allein

Um tierischer als jedes Tier zu sein.

Two things make the process of becoming a man difficult: the large city with its abnormal conditions, and the demon in us. The

young man who comes to the city for the first time, perhaps from a family in which he was well protected, is exposed to a wealth of new impressions: Noise, exciting sights, erotic literature, alcohol, movies, theater, etc. And wherever he looks, there are dress fashions designed to excite him sexually. Who can withstand such a concentrated onslaught? And to a temptation from without the demon within says Yes only too willingly. For Nietzsche is right, "There is muck at the bottom of the soul"; it is true that in everyone "the wild dogs bark below," only waiting to be released.

Many young men fall prey to indecent living because they were not warned in time about the dangers. They will be grateful for a frank word of warning and advice which will make it possible for them to escape or to turn back.

To most, immorality comes first in the form of *self-abuse*. Scientific investigation shows that this is often taken up at a terrifyingly early age. True, the consequences of this bad habit have been somewhat exaggerated. Nevertheless, the opinion of outstanding physicians gives one food for thought. Professor Dr. Hartung, for many years chief of Dermatology at the Allerheiligen-Hospital in Breslau, makes the following statement: "There can be no doubt that indulgence to any considerable extent in the vice of self-abuse damages the body most severely and leads, later on, to general nervousness, incapacity for intellectual work, and physical debilitation."

Furthermore, he emphasizes the fact that *a person who indulges in self-abuse loses his self-respect and can no longer look people straight in the eye. The constant consciousness of having to keep his disgusting activity concealed from others degrades him morally in his own eyes.* Professor Hartung says further that the young people who indulge in this vice become soft and flabby, that they lose their incentive to work, and that all kinds of nervous conditions weaken their memory and their capacity for work. Other eminent physicians agree with these statements.

[136] But self-abuse not only makes the blood unhealthy; it also eliminates spiritual forces and inhibitions which are indispensable in the process of becoming a man; *if it becomes a chronic habit*, it works like a malignant cancer in the organism.

But much worse than all this are the consequences *of immorality with the other sex*. It is not by accident that the most terrible plague of humanity—the venereal diseases—is a result of this transgression. Dr. Paul Lazarus, Professor at the University of Berlin, draws a terrifying picture of the psychic and physical devastations wrought in our population by the venereal diseases.

*Syphilis* is one of the worst grave-diggers of folk strength. But *gonorrhoea*—which unfortunately so many young men fail to take seriously—is also a most serious and dangerous disease. The fact alone that medical science cannot cure it with certainty should warn everybody against not taking it seriously.

Professor Dr. Binswanger says with regard to the venereal diseases: "It is noteworthy that seemingly very light infections lead to such serious consequences; that often many years elapse between the original infection and the onset of serious nervous disease; that over sixty per cent of that disease which the layman calls 'softening of the brain' is attributable to an earlier venereal infection."

Is it not a soul-shaking thought that, as a result of such a youthful sin, those who are most dear to us, wife and children, should be exposed to devastating disease?

But I must mention another aberration, one which is much more frequent today than many think: *homosexuality*. Be it said at the outset: we have the greatest sympathy for all those who fight a battle for their purity against this thing. We have respect for those who come out victorious because they fight with God on their side. But just as Jesus loved the individual sinner and helped every one who wanted to be helped while he fought against sin itself with deadly seriousness, so must we fight the manifestations of homosexuality which ruin our youth and our folk. There was another time in history when the world was about to be engulfed in the floods of perversion. Only the gospel could overcome a culture which was rotting away from these perverse sins and could bring about something new. About the victims of these sins, Paul wrote to the Romans: "And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in them-

[137]selves that recompense of their error which was meet." (Romans 1, 27). Homosexuality is the mark of a thoroughly rotten, Godless and soulless culture. It is a result of the prevailing *Weltanschauung* that enjoyment is the highest goal. Quite rightly, Professor Foerster, in his *SEXUALETHIK*, says: "Where spiritual heroism is ridiculed and natural living-out is glorified, everything which is perverse, diabolical and base comes to the surface; more than that, it calls health disease and makes itself the yardstick of life."

Today things come to the surface which even the most depraved do not want to admit in themselves. Worse things yet will come to the surface, and then it will become clear that only a great spiritual power, the gospel of Jesus Christ, can bring help.

Many people will raise objections to what has been said here. You may say, for example, "Are we not dealing with a natural instinct which must be satisfied?" No, if the passions are released, we are not dealing with anything natural, but with something entirely unnatural. Almost in every case, we find that *the evil lust has been in some way aroused and nurtured*. Look at an alcoholic or a drug addict. Is their constant craving for alcohol or morphine natural? No, it has been *nurtured artificially* by an ever repeated indulgence. The instinct which God gave us for procreation in marriage is in itself good and not too difficult to check. Thousands of men keep it successfully in check.

"But," you may ask, "is it not harmful for a mature man if he abstains from sexual gratification?" This is what Professor Hartung says in answer: "Unequivocally, I say that is not so. *If any man has told you that sexual abstinence can be harmful he has led you*

*dangerously astray; if he has thought through what he told you, he was either an ignorant or an evil man."*

You are seriously warned against the use of contraceptives. The only real protection is abstinence until marriage.

I have tried to show you, openly and truly, the consequences that result from immorality. You have seen what this sin does to the body and the mind. But there is, in addition, the harm which this vice does to the soul. I tell you in deadly seriousness: *Unchastity is a crime against God*. It makes it impossible for anybody to have real peace and joy. It is written, "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." (Gal. 6, 8).

*The spirit of the demi-monde inevitably moves in where the connection with God's world was lost.*

[138] For all those, however, who do not want to be victims of unchastity I shall add a few words of advice and encouragement. It is necessary to make an absolute and clean break with unchastity, *in thought, word and deed*. This is the first thing to do in order not to become its slave. Of course, you must stop going to *places of temptation* and sin; everything which may lead to temptation must be avoided. For example, the company of unchaste companions, the reading of salacious books, the looking at provocative pictures or dubious shows. Instead, you must seek good company which elevates you. Do everything which steels the body and helps in the fight against unchastity: *athletics, gymnastics, swimming, hikes, getting up immediately* on waking up. Be *moderate* in eating and especially in drinking. *Alcohol must be strictly avoided*. But even all that does not suffice. Many have again and again the painful experience that even if they follow all this advice the instinct is too strong.

Where do we find the power to resist, where the strength for victory? Confronted with temptation, with the glowing lust of the flesh, we find that advice and enlightenment alone does not help. We need an alive power to master our instincts and to overcome the unchaste forces within and without ourselves. There is only One who can give us this power: Jesus. He who wants to achieve real freedom must come to Jesus Christ who has taken power away from sin and who has strength and help for everyone. *This is not a Christian theory but a fact which many young men in temptation have tested and experience everyday*. If possible, get into the confidence of a serious Christian friend who can give you advice and fight with you. A fight there will be, but a fight with victory in sight.

In conclusion, let me ask you this personal question: What about you, my friend, what are you going to do with this warning?

Are you going to let yourself be ruined in order to please frivolous and unscrupulous people, or are you going to associate with pure, noble men whose company will elevate you and steel your will in the fight against everything unchaste? Are you going to be a man who, through his words, his example and his behavior is a curse to himself and others, or are you going to be a man who is going to be a blessing for his fellows?

Are you going to let yourself be ruined in body, character and soul, for now and forever, for the sake of a few moments of fleeting pleasure—or will you let yourself be saved as long as there is still time?

[139] Please, answer these questions sincerely and have the courage to do what God, in your conscience, tells you to do!

*Make an honest choice! Demi-monde or super-world? Animal or spiritual human being?*

In this pamphlet, the adolescent is confronted with the alternatives: God or sexuality. True, to be a "Vollmensch" or "Übermensch" means more than being asexual; but asexuality is the first prerequisite. The antithesis of "animal" and "spiritual human being" is the antithesis of "sexual" and "spiritual." It is the antithesis which has always been the basis of any theological moral philosophy. To date, this moral philosophy has remained inviolate, because its basis, sex-negation, has never been touched.

The average adolescent, having been brought up in an authoritarian family, suffers from an acute conflict between sexuality and anxiety. A pamphlet such as the one above forces him in the direction of mysticism, without, however, eliminating the difficulties. The Catholic church uses the expedient of giving the adolescent periodic absolution for his masturbation in the confessional. But in doing so, it gets into another difficulty. The church attains its mass basis by two measures: it binds the masses to itself by sexual anxiety, and it stresses its anti-capitalistic attitude. It condemns city life with its many temptations for adolescents for it must fight against the revolutionary sexual forces which are aroused in youth by city life. On the other hand, the sexual life of the masses in cities is characterized by an acute conflict between high sexual demands and minimum opportunities, material and structural, for gratification. This contradiction is of the same kind as another basic contradiction, namely, defense tooth and nail of the very family authority which is destroyed by economic crises and sexual disturbances. Knowledge of such contradictions is of great significance for it opens up vast possibilities for striking the ideological apparatus of political reaction at its softest spot.

Where is the adolescent to seek the strength for fighting down his genital impulses? In the belief in Jesus! As a matter of fact, [140] the adolescent does find, in this belief, a powerful force against his sexuality. On the basis of

what mechanisms? His mystical experience creates a state of vegetative excitation which never ends in natural orgasmic gratification. The adolescent develops a passive homosexual attitude. From the point of view of the dynamics of instinct, passive homosexuality is the most effective force against natural masculine sexuality, for it replaces activity and aggression by passivity and masochistic attitudes, by those attitudes, in other words, which determine the structural mass basis of patriarchal authoritarian mysticism. The adoption of such attitudes, however, means at the same time uncritical following, submission to authority and adaptation to the institution of patriarchal compulsive marriage. Religious mysticism, then, plays one sexual force against another. It utilizes itself sexual mechanisms for the attainment of its goals. These non-genital sexual impulses which it partly created, partly brought to flowering, determine the mass psychology of the followers: moral—and often definitely physical—masochism and passive submission. Religion derives its power from the suppression of genital sexuality which, secondarily, produces passive and masochistic homosexuality. It is based on genital anxiety and the replacement of genitality by secondary impulses which are no longer natural to the adolescent. In sex-economic work with religiously mystical adolescents, the natural genital demand has to be played against the secondary (homosexual) and mystical impulses. This mass-psychological task is completely identical with the objective lines of social progress in the sex-economic field: *Elimination of genital suppression, and affirmation of a genital sex life for youth.* There is, however, more to the problem than the discovery of these mechanisms of the infestation of the masses. A particularly important aspect is the cult of the Virgin Mary. To quote another typical pamphlet:

Marienverehrung und der Jungmann  
von Dr. theol. Gerhard Kremer

Genuine Catholic piety among youth will always think much of the [141] ideal of the Virgin Mary . . . Youth is a time of struggle, a time when the passions awake, a time of stormy growth and struggle. In this struggle youth must have an ideal before itself which is far above all that is base and ignoble and which pulls the vacillating mind upward. This ideal, for the young man, should be *the ideal of the Virgin Mary who embodies an all-radiating purity and beauty.* "It is said that there are women whose very presence educates one, since their behavior alone chases away base thoughts. Such a noble woman is Mary" (P. Schilgen S. J.). *The Virgin Mary stands before the young man with such loveliness and dignity as cannot be found in nature, in art or in the human world.* Why have artists again and again consecrated their skill to the Madonna? Because she has a dignity and beauty which will never disappoint. There the young man has standing before him a queen "whom to serve, of whom to prove worthy, is the highest honor. There is the exalted woman and soul bride to whom you can give yourself with the whole surging love of your youthful heart, without having to fear degradation and desecration." . . . The ideal of the Virgin Mary will show the young man that there is something great and exalted in psychic beauty and chastity . . . You young men who have an ideal mind and fight a battle for sacred virtue, *look up to your queen.* How can a young man look up to her, how can he greet her in the Ave Maria, without feeling a strong longing for chastity? How could a young man who has the ideal of the Virgin Mary go and rob a woman of her chastity? *Yes, the ideal of the Virgin Mary, if taken seriously, is a powerful incentive for the young man to chastity and masculinity.*

The moral attitude of the young man is determined by his attitude toward the girl, the woman.

. . . The symbols of the Knights are no more. But what is worse is that among the male youth of today the shy veneration of the woman disappears more and more, giving place to a frivolous, base piracy. Just as the Knights, in their armor, used to protect female weakness and innocence, so has the modern man a duty toward female chastity and innocence. Solid masculinity and true nobility of heart will be revealed most readily toward the female sex. Blessed the young man who has surrounded his passion with such an armor! Blessed the girl who has found the love of such a man! "*Do no harm to a girl and remember that your mother, too, once was a girl.*"

The adolescent of today is the man and husband of tomorrow. How [142] should he be able, as man and husband, to protect womanhood and woman's honor if as a young man and fiancé he has desecrated love and the time of engagement? The engagement should be a time of sacred *undesecrated love.* How many lives would be happier if the ideal of the Virgin Mary were alive among our young men. How much suffering would be avoided if young men did not play a wicked game with the love of a girl's soul. *Oh, you young men, let the light of the ideal of the Virgin Mary shine into your love, so that you will not stumble and fall.*

The ideal of the Virgin Mary can mean very much to our male youth. For this reason, we have, in our youth organizations and in our congregations, unfurled the banner of the Virgin Mary.

*Katholisches Kirchenblatt, May 3, 1931.*

The Virgin Mary cult is used with great success for the enforcement of sexual abstinence. Again we must ask, what is the mechanism which makes this success possible? It is made possible by the suppression of the genital impulses. While the Jesus cult mobilizes the passive homosexual forces against genitility, the Virgin Mary cult utilizes forces from the heterosexual sphere itself. "Do no harm to a girl and remember that your mother, too, once was a girl." The mother of God, then, in the emotional life of the religious youth, takes over the role of his own mother and he gives her the whole love which as a child he had for his own mother, that is, all the strong love of his first genital impulses. In the meantime, however, the *incest taboo* has split his genitility into orgasmic longing on the one hand and asexual tenderness on the other. The orgasmic longing must be repressed. Its energy reinforces the asexual tender impulses and makes them into a strong fixation on the mystical experience. It goes with a violent defense not only against the incestuous desire but against *any* natural genital relationship with a woman. All the living strength and love which the healthy young man experiences in the orgasm with the woman he loves, goes, in the mystical man, who has repressed his genital sensuality, to support the mystical Virgin Mary cult. These are the sources from which mysticism musters its forces; forces which should not be underestimated [143] because they are *unsatisfied*. They explain the power over people which mysticism has had for thousands of years and the inhibition of responsibility on the part of the masses.

It is not a matter here of the veneration of the Virgin Mary or of any other idol. It is a matter of the *reproduction of the mystical human structure* in every new generation. Mysticism is nothing but unconscious orgasmic longing. The orgasmically potent, healthy individual is capable of great veneration of historical persons. He experiences the primitive history of man *besides* his sexual happiness; he does so without becoming mystical, reactionary or metaphysical. A healthy sex life of youth would not of necessity do away with their veneration for the legend of Jesus. One may have the greatest admiration for the Old and the New Testament as gigantic achievements of the human mind; but one need not utilize this admiration for the purpose of repressing one's sexuality. Character-analytic experience shows that the sexually unhealthy youth experiences the legend of Jesus in an unhealthy and distorted manner.

### 3. HEALTHY AND NEUROTIC SELF-CONFIDENCE

To the sexually healthy young man with a sex-economic structure, the orgasmic experience with a woman means fulfillment and higher estimation of the partner; any tendency to look down upon the woman who gives herself is absent. In the case of orgasmic impotence, on the other hand, the psychic defense forces predominate: there is disgust and horror of genital sensuality. These defensive forces derive their energy from several sources. To begin with, the defensive forces are just as strong as the warded-off genital desire; the desire is increased by the lack of gratification and is not made any less urgent by its being repressed and made unconscious. Second, the disgust with sexual intercourse is justified by the actual brutalization of sexual life in modern man. This *brutalized* love life comes to be considered the prototype of love life in general. A third source of the antisexual defense forces is the sadistic concept of sexual life which all children acquire at an early age in all patriarchal societies. Since [144] any inhibition of natural genital gratification increases the sadistic impulses, the whole sexual structure becomes sadistic. Since, further, genital impulses become, to a large extent, replaced by anal ones, the sex-reactionary concept of the debasement of woman by sexual intercourse gains further support. The adolescent has formed the sadistic concept of sexuality on the basis of his own personal experience. Here, too, we find that compulsive moral defenses form the basis of the power of political reaction. The connection between mystical feelings and sexual "morality" becomes understandable. No matter what the content of mystical feelings may be, it is essentially the negation of genital striving, it is sexual defense by way of *non-genital* sexual excitations. The difference between sexual feeling and mystical feeling is that the latter does not permit the perception of sexual excitation; consequently, there is no orgasmic *discharge*, not even in the case of so-called religious ecstasies.

In the absence of perception of sexual pleasure and of orgasm, mystical excitation must lead to a lasting alteration of the biopsychic structure. Sexual experience is felt as something debasing. A full natural experience

never occurs. The defense against the orgasmic desire takes the form of obsessive concepts of "purity" and "perfection." Healthy sensuality and capacity for gratification convey a natural self-confidence. The mystical individual develops an artificial self-confidence. As in nationalistic feeling, the self-confidence is based on the defense functions. Even superficially, this self-confidence is quite different from that based on a healthy genitality: it is overemphasized, there is a lack of naturalness in behavior, there are sexual inferiority feelings. This is why the individual brought up in nationalistic or mystical "morality" is so easily accessible to such phrases of political reaction as "honor," "purity," etc. He is forced to admonish himself constantly to be honest and pure. The genital character, on the other hand, is spontaneously honest and pure; he does not need constant admonition to be so.

[145]



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