E. MICHAEL JONES

DEGENERATE MODERNS

MODERNITY AS RATIONALIZED SEXUAL MISBEHAVIOR

IGNATIUS

– 1 Corinthians 2:15

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INTRODUCTION

Why Modernity Is Rationalized Lust: Why Biography Is Destiny

Every cloud, they say, has a silver lining. The same thing is true of the sexual revolution. Any attempt to place a date for its beginning would be purely arbitrary, but if we look back over the past forty some years, the period beginning with the first Kinsey report in 1948, it becomes evident that an unprecedented openness about matters sexual has transformed our cultural landscape. With the gift of hindsight, it is difficult to see that much good has come from the "liberation", which has meant little more than death, disease, and wrecked lives to most people who chose to participate and profits to the exploiters. But that would overlook the fact that we do now have hindsight at all, specifically hindsight on sexual matters.

Fiona MacCarthy's biography of Eric Gill[1] set off a barrage of moral outrage that is unprecedented in recent literary history. From both sides of the Atlantic, the English stone carver and letter maker who was a friend to eminent figures on all sides of the cultural spectrum in modern England—from Catholic traditionalists like Chesterton and Belloc to the Woolfs and Maynard Keynes of Bloomsbury—was so excoriated for his sexual behavior that one might have thought a new age of moral probity had descended on late-twentieth-century sexual mores. Unfortunately, things are not quite that simple—although the denunciations certainly were. Barbara Grizzuti Harrison, writing for the *New York Times,* calls Gill "a poseur, a fraud and a pervert. . . . Wicked is one word for Gill's activities. . . ."[2] Bernard Levin, writing in the *Times,* calls Gill "a revolting criminal". And Lucy Ellmann, writing in *New Statesman and Society,* describes him as "a devout Catholic convert who copulated and confessed in equal proportion". With this last quote we are beginning to get to the heart of the moral outrage. For the rage of the reviewers and the society they represent is not so much against the sexual sins a particular man commits; it is against his willingness to repent of them after he has committed them. In his sexual life, Eric Gill was a typical modern—perhaps a little more exuberant than most. In his spiritual life, however, he was

[1] Fiona MacCarthy, *Eric Gill: A Lover's Quest for Art and God* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1989).

[2] Book review, *New York Times,* May 7, 1989, p. 11.

a Catholic. And it is the conflict between the two that brings out the rage of the reviewers.

Eric Gill was born on February 22, 1882, to a poor nonconformist parson and a devoted mother. He was one of twelve children raised in what he describes as the essentially wholesome but sexually repressive atmosphere of a Victorian family. He married at the age of twenty-two, and on his thirty-first birthday, after making a name for himself as a letter carver, he converted to Roman Catholicism. Age thirty-one, it should be noted, is more than half a lifetime away from the onset of puberty and time enough to acquire bad sexual habits. That he had such bad habits, no one would deny, least of all Gill himself. In his autobiography Gill wrote:

> It is one of the difficulties of this book that I must always be appearing on a higher plane than that to which I properly belong . . . at least I must always be omitting the evidence of my sinfulness. And it is a hateful situation. I do not want to appear other than I am—partly because of the untruth. . . . [3]

In her biography, Miss MacCarthy goes into the details that Gill omitted in his autobiography but preserved in coded form in his diaries. She is more restrained in condemnation than her reviewers, but for all its vehemence the condemnation strikes one as particularly hollow or, better expressed, without foundation. In order to get to that foundation, one has to ask a few preliminary questions. To begin with, is adultery wrong? What about fornication, incest, and bestiality? If so, then Gill was wrong and a sinner, but in that case he is no different from so many of his contemporaries in this century, and the secular organs of opinion seem unconcerned about condemning them. If these acts are wrong, who is saying they are wrong now? Certainly the Catholic Church, but the *New York Times?* Hardly; it and the other arbiters of secular sexual morality in our day seem to be saying the opposite. And if these sexual practices are not wrong, as all of secular culture seems to agree, then whence all this moral outrage? The secular reviewer, for all of his outrage, seems to be caught in a bind. If what Gill did was wrong, then the whole culture stands condemned as well, and the Catholic Church and Moses were right all along. If, on the other hand, the culture is right about sexual freedom, then one can hardly criticize Gill for putting his particular sexual orientation into practice. The key to understanding the peculiar sort of outrage that surfaces in the case of Gill has to do with the way he lived his life. Gill was both a Catholic and a sinner. He sinned and went to confession and sinned again all the way up to his death, at which point he confessed for a final time, received the last rites and died. The rage against Eric Gill that one perceives in the reviews of MacCarthy's book has a common root:

[3] Eric Gill, *Autobiography* (London: J. Cape, 1941), p. 247.

Gill is excoriated not so much for his sexual sins but because he wasn't modern about them. Unlike the good moderns of then and now, he never attempted to make wrong right. One incident from his life, I think, makes this clear.

Not quite three years after his marriage, in early 1907, Gill fell in love with Lillian Meacham, a fellow Fabian Socialist and prime example of the "New Woman". Following a whirlwind romance, which included readings of Nietzsche and meetings at the theosophical society, Gill began an affair with Meacham that culminated in a trip to Chartres, described by MacCarthy as "a New Woman's holiday, free love and architecture, taking in a performance of Wagner's *Valkyrie* at the Paris Opera on the way home".[4] The significance of the affair is best judged by what did not happen: Gill did not leave his wife and family; he did not become the proponent of some social movement that rationalized his misbehavior; he did not set himself up in a mode of permanent rebellion against the moral law as a salve to his conscience. Gill did not go to confession after his fling at Chartres because he wasn't a Catholic at the time; however, he was always willing—in his diary, for example—to admit that what he did was wrong. In this regard he separates himself from the typical modern. By going back to his wife and family after this fling in 1907, Gill was no less a sinner, but he backed away from becoming a modern. He could have been another Bloomsbury foot soldier, but he decided to go back home instead. "I was", he writes in his autobiography,

> too deeply in love with the mother of my children and too deeply in love with the Christian idea of the family and the home and parental love thus to throw everything away. . . . I should have broken my own heart as well as hers. It was shortly after this affair that we moved to Ditchling and soon afterwards I resigned from the Fabian Society.[5]

There are ultimately only two alternatives in the intellectual life: either one conforms desire to the truth or one conforms truth to desire. These two positions represent opposite poles between which a continuum of almost infinite gradations exists. So, to give two extremes first, we might have St. Thomas Aquinas or, more dramatically, St. Augustine representing the former position—desire subject to the truth—and Sigmund Freud or Martin Luther representing the latter—truth subject to desire. Eric Gill occupies an intermediate position on this spectrum. He was not victorious over sexual desire in the way that St. Augustine was, but neither did he devote his life to rationalization of his moral failures as both Luther and Freud did. In strictly quantitative terms, Gill was much more licentious than Sigmund Freud; however, he never went so far as to say that man had a "universal" desire to

[4] MacCarthy, p. 76.
[5] Gill, p. 272.

sleep with his mother or sister because he himself had committed incest. Gill's attitude toward sexual sin was quite simple; it was, as he wrote in his diary, "Bad, Bad, Bad".[6] In this Gill was typically unmodern, and as a result he has earned the rage of the reviewers of our age, who look upon making wrong right as the primary intellectual virtue. No sin is so bad, the moderns would say, that one can't go on the Donahue show and claim it as a right.

Sexual sins are corrupting. No one who reads Gill's biography will deny that. One is confronted on almost every page with opportunities that never reached fulfillment, of projects begun in hope and broken off in bitterness and disgust. The most insidious corruption brought about by sexual sin, however, is the corruption of the mind. One moves all too easily from sexual sins, which are probably the most common to mankind, to intellectual sins, which are the most pernicious. Gill was certainly no stranger to rationalization; he argued some of his theories, as MacCarthy states, "with a zeal that sometimes looked like desperation, because it cast a blanket of righteousness over actions which otherwise seemed dubious—the adulteries, the incest."[7] But he never goes all the way. In the end he would always admit that what he had done was "Bad, Bad, Bad". Or, as he says at another point, "This must stop."[8] This, I would submit, and not his sexual dereliction is what moderns find so enraging.

Because of the sexual revolution, we are witnessing a revolution in that exercise in formal hindsight known as biography. The standard has changed. Now, in keeping with the times, the sex life of the person is no longer excluded from scrutiny. There are any number of popular paradigms that will serve as examples, John F. Kennedy being one of the most obvious. Then there is the case of Martin Luther King's womanizing, documented by the FBI and available now under the Freedom of Information Act. The fact that all this information is now available has made for some interesting complications in public life. Full disclosure has opened a window of vulnerability. Gary Hart and John Tower had to find out the hard way that there are more kinds of double standards than they had imagined. Suddenly the things that people had gotten used to taking for granted were being held against them. Once again the rules had been changed in the middle of the game and the players were perplexed. "Why," said a professor from Princeton who had been the focus of a large sexual scandal at that school, "if I'm guilty in what I did that night, I've been guilty all my life, you see. Then I've been terrible all along." For the first time in his sixty-two years, it dawns on this professor, it would seem, that sexually molesting graduate students is not acceptable behavior.

[6] MacCarthy, p. 47.
[7] Ibid., p. 163.
[8] Ibid., p. 156.

Something was happening. The lechers were being caught with their pants down, and the claim that all they were involved in was striking a blow for personal freedom was not getting the response that it used to.

The foreign press was, for the most part, either perplexed or livid with outrage over this alleged return of "Puritanism" to public life in America. However, at least from a scholarly point of view, America was hardly the place to start looking for an explanation. Beginning in the late seventies, a ground-breaking series of biographies began to appear in England, focusing for the most part on English figures. Michael Holroyd's 1978 biography of Lytton Strachey was followed a few years later by Robert Skidelsky's biography of John Maynard Keynes. Both, but especially the latter, dealt openly with Strachey's and Keynes' homosexuality, a fact suppressed, for example, in the up-to-that-time standard biography of Keynes. Suddenly the private lives of everyone, but especially the key figures of the modern age, were fair game for biographers. Before long, the reader had come to expect this sort of revelation, and, given the lives that virtually all the moderns lived, they were right to expect it.

Paul Johnson's book *Intellectuals*[9] is what one might call a product of the second generation of this revolution. It is a book that is based on the openness that the sexual revolution has engendered, but it is also one that simultaneously subverts that revolution and the modern age that fostered it by exposing the intimately personal roots of modern ideology. *Intellectuals* is not primary research; it is an extended reading in the biographies that his, for the most part, English contemporaries have been producing of late. Johnson is a Catholic, and his book is informed by a strong Catholic moral sense—there is no attempt to make moral failure into something other than what it is. However, it is just as much the book of an Englishman. *Intellectuals* is relentlessly empirical, with all the virtues and faults that entails. As a result, one all too often gets lost in the details and loses sight of the bigger issues involved.

The biggest issue of the book, although one not really faced directly, is the relationship between intellectual product and private life. Because Johnson goes pretty much from one example to another, without providing an intellectual framework that will explain the details he recounts, he opens himself to misunderstandings from readers who might otherwise be sympathetic or who need to be educated beyond the assumptions of their milieu. So, for example, Joseph Sobran, the conservative columnist, did not like the book's focus on these intellectuals' private, i.e., sexual lives. Patrick Buchanan, another generally sympathetic conservative, felt that the whole enterprise came perilously close to the *ad hominem*. Liberals, who were for the most part anxious to preserve the climate of values established by modernity, were inclined to make

[9] Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).

large distinctions between the intellectual and the personal, as if they could be separated into neat compartments that did not influence each other. Many conservatives were simply variant liberals or lacked the intellectual wherewithal to disagree.

This sort of controversy was not limited to Johnson's book. Controversy over the Huffington biography of Picasso[10] raged in the pages of *National Review,* and conservatism, it seems, could come to no consensus on modernity, not even on the sexual revolution, or on the relationship between a man's moral life and the products of his mind. The issue could be misframed any number of ways: for example, were Picasso's paintings to be rejected because of his personal life? That sounded illiberal in a way that was repugnant even to conservative ears.

Peter Gay, recent biographer of Freud, commenting on the controversy surrounding the missing correspondence between Freud and his sister-in-law, Minna Bernays, gives what might be termed a classic expression of the liberal, disjunctive view of the relation between life and work. According to Gay, there is no connection.

"Surely", he concedes,

> we are entitled to make moral judgments about the character and conduct of historical figures. But I insist that the greatness or failure of their work, the validity of their ideas, however deeply influenced by their personal history, are nevertheless independent of it. Freud might have been a spotless gentleman and still developed a fatally flawed theory of mind; he might have been a consummate villain and yet tumbled onto profound truths about human nature. Hence the question about his possible affair with his sister-in-law has no bearing on whether there is an Oedipus Complex or not.[11]

Johnson's whole book cries out against the dualism implicit in Gay's formula: however, because Johnson has written so radically empirical a book, he fails to explain why the liberal disjunctive thesis is wrong and why what he is doing is something more than just gossiping. This is not to say that *Intellectuals* doesn't have a theory behind it. However, the theoretical skeleton gets lost in the fleshy mass of detail and fails to support it effectively. As a result, Johnson loses an opportunity to make a bigger point with readers who are naturally on his side.

Intellectuals, he tells us, are

> free spirits, adventurers of the mind. With the decline of clerical power in the 18th century, a new kind of mentor emerged to fill the vacuum and

[10] Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington, *Picasso: Creator and Destroyer* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988).

[11] Letters to the Editor, *New York Times,* April 9, 1989, sec. 7, p. 36.

> capture the ear of society. The secular intellectual might be a deist, sceptic or atheist. But he was just as ready as any pontiff or presbyter to tell mankind how to conduct its affairs.[12]

Evelyn Waugh, as a result, "was not an intellectual: he did not think he could refashion the rules of his life out of his own head but submitted to the traditional discipline of his church."[13]

The intellectual, then, is a peculiarly modern invention, whose rise is predicated upon the demise of the Church as a guide to life. It is then no coincidence that the rise of the intellectual should coincide with something like the French Revolution. The two things were, in effect, causally related. The demise of the Church created the moral and intellectual vacuum in which the intellectual needed to flourish. Just what that flourishing entails is depressingly common and documented *ad nauseam* in Johnson's book. The modern intellectual is, for the most part, a lecher and a fool. His theories are propounded for everyone but himself. So Rousseau, the writer of *Emile,* the first modern book on childrearing, sent all five of his illegitimate children to the orphanage shortly after they were born, which, given the condition of orphanages in the eighteenth century, meant to their deaths. Marx, the champion of the proletariat, knew only one proletarian in his life, his maid, Lenchen, to whom he paid not one single penny in wages. In addition to this economic exploitation, there was also sexual exploitation. Marx fathered an illegitimate child by her and refused to acknowledge it.

"But Lenchen", according to Johnson,

> was a stronger character than Rousseau's mistress. She insisted on acknowledging the boy herself. He was put out to be fostered by a working-class family called Lewis but allowed to visit the Marx household. He was, however, forbidden to use the front door and obliged to see his mother only in the kitchen. Marx was terrified that Freddy's paternity would be discovered and that this would do him fatal damage as a revolutionary.[14]

The conclusion to all this is inescapable: Rousseau's theory of the state and Marx' theory of economics are deeply rooted in their personal lives. To return to Peter Gay's claim, understanding the Oedipus Complex has everything to do with whether Freud had an affair with his sister-in-law. The Oedipus Complex is Freud's compulsion and his guilt projected onto humanity as a whole. There is something deeply satisfying, if ultimately neurotic, about projecting one's guilt onto the world at large. It is, in fact, the all-but-constant

[12] Johnson, p. 1.
[13] Ibid., p. 171.
[14] Ibid., p. 80.

occupation of those whom Johnson denominates "intellectuals". Johnson, however, because of the radically empirical nature of his book, never gets around to formulating the counterposition to Gay's assertions explicitly.

But isn't this a dangerous assertion, this claim that intellectual product is just the projection of inner need? It is, and it isn't. The claim has to be refined so that it covers, not just "intellectuals", but also the activity of the legitimate scholar as well. Put more generally, the idea can be formulated thus: the intellectual life is a function of the moral life of the thinker. In order to apprehend truth, which is the goal of the intellectual life, one must live a moral life. One can produce an intellectual product, but to the extent that one prescinds from living the moral life, that product will be more a function of internal desire—wish fulfillment, if you will—than external reality. This is true of any intellectual field and any deeply held desire. In the intellectual life, one either conforms desire to truth or truth to desire. In the first instance, the importance of biography is negligible; in the second instance, it is all-important. The steady-state theory of the origin of the universe, for example, was deeply satisfying to those who had decided a priori that there was no God. It was only when the evidence supporting the Big Bang became scientifically overwhelming that the steady-state crowd abandoned positions that had long since become scientifically untenable.

If this is true of astrophysics, it is a fortiori true of fields that impinge more immediately on areas of human desire, and, as the modern age seems bent on showing, the most urgent area of human desire has to do with sex. So we now know that cultural relativism, as propounded by Margaret Mead, was nothing more than a clever rationalization for her own adultery. What better way to salve the conscience than to find that Samoans, the natural man, don't take adultery seriously.

Lust is a common enough vice, especially in this age. The crucial intellectual event occurs, however, when vices are transmuted into theories, when the "intellectual" sets up shop in rebellion against the moral law and, therefore, in rebellion against the truth. All the modern "isms" follow as a direct result of this rebellion. All of them entail rationalization. All of them can be best understood in light of the moral disorder of their founders, proponents, and adherents.

So the antithesis of Peter Gay's (and modernity's) dualism is summed up in the following passage from *The Silence of St. Thomas* by Josef Pieper:

> Since we nowadays think that all a man needs for acquisition of truth is to exert his brain more or less vigorously, and since we consider an ascetic approach to knowledge hardly sensible, we have lost the awareness of the close bond that links the knowledge of truth to the condition of purity. Thomas says that unchastity's first-born daughter is blindness of the spirit.

> Only he who wants nothing for himself, who is not subjectively "interested", can know the truth. On the other hand, an impure selfishly corrupted will to pleasure destroys both resoluteness of spirit and the ability of the psyche to listen in silent attention to the language of reality.[15]

It is the curse of this age to have to prove on its own pulse and in the degrading minutiae of the biographies of its *prominenti* the lessons that the Catholic Church in her wisdom (which was once the collective wisdom of the West) knew all along. Paul Johnson, reaping the harvest of the new biographical realism, has documented the decline of the West in the personal lives of its intellectual elite. Johnson gives the evidence but seems reluctant to come up with the conclusion. The evidence, however, is all in, and the verdict is clear: modernity is rationalized lust.

In the memoir she wrote about her life with the liberal Protestant theologian Paul Tillich, Hannah Tillich describes her husband's "inclination to pornography", his equally pornographic life and, most interestingly, their connection with his intellectual pursuits. After his death, she describes opening his desk and what she discovered there, and presents the postmodern age with one of its most apt epiphanies:

> I unlocked the drawers. All the girls' photos fell out, letters and poems, passionate appeal and disgust. Beside the drawers, which were supposed to contain his spiritual harvest, the books he had written and the unpublished manuscripts, all lay in unprotected confusion. I was tempted to lay between the sacred parts of his highly esteemed lifework those obscene signs of the real life that he had transformed into the gold of abstraction, King Midas of the spirit.[16]

So now, thanks to the frankness engendered by the sexual revolution, we know that the best explication of the theories of modernity comes from the biographical details of its proponents. Given the nature of the lives they led, we also know why they were so interested in transformations into abstraction. We also know now—and with hindsight it's hard to imagine that so many people took them seriously at the time—that what the Midases of modernity produced was more fool's gold than anything else.

The thesis of this book is simple: modernity was rationalized sexual misbehavior. All the intellectual and cultural breakthroughs of modernity were in some way or other linked to the sexual desires their progenitors knew to be illicit but which they chose nonetheless. Their theories were ultimately rationalizations of the choices they knew to be wrong. The lives of the

[15] Josef Pieper, *The Silence of St. Thomas: Three Essays* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1965), pp. 19–20.

[16] Hannah Tillich, *From Time to Time* (New York: Stein & Day, 1973), p. 241.

moderns are, then, an uncanny substantiation of the power and scope of the moral law. "All who desert you", St. Augustine says in his *Confessions,*[17] "and set themselves up against you merely copy you in a perverse way." St. Augustine is talking about God here and those who rejected him in his age; however, his words apply equally well to the moral law and those who reject it in ours.

So much for the simplicity of the book's thesis. Its form is dual, a meditation on the lives of some of the seminal modern thinkers followed by an application of that thinking in the lives of contemporary epigoni. Critical parlance notwithstanding, there is no postmodern age, just thinkers following the ever-constricting ruts of sexual liberation in increasingly compulsive, increasingly self-negating ways. If there is ever to be a postmodern era, it will have to rise out of the negation of what went before it and not in increasingly etiolated theories or increasingly violent forms of self-destruction.

[17] St. Augustine, *Confessions* (London: Penguin, 1961), p. 51.

Chapter 1

SAMOA LOST: MARGARET MEAD, CULTURAL RELATIVISM, AND THE GUILTY IMAGINATION

Many wrongdoers have even turned evidence against themselves.

— Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum*

For instance, pagans who never heard of the Law but are led by reason to do what the Law commands may not actually "possess" the Law, but they can be said to "be" the Law. They can point to the substance of the Law engraved on their hearts—they can call a witness, that is, their own conscience—they have accusation and defense, that is, their own inner mental dialogue.

— St. Paul, Romans 2:14–16

Thy law is written in the hearts of men, which iniquity itself effaces not.

— St. Augustine, *Confessions*

> Unnatural deeds
> Do breed unnatural troubles. Infected minds
> To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
> More needs she the divine than the physician.
>
> — William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

We impute it, therefore, solely to the disease of his own eye and heart, that the minister, looking upward to the zenith, beheld there the appearance of an immense letter,—the letter A,—marked out in lines of dull red light. Not but the meteor may have shown itself at that point, burning duskily through a veil of cloud; but with no such shape as his guilty imagination gave it; or, at least, with so little definiteness, that another's guilt might have seen another symbol in it.

— Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*

As academic controversies go, it was high-powered stuff, the type of event that explodes the normal confines of debate like a spark entering a house full of pent-up fumes. The type of thing that is usually confined to the book-review sections of esoteric journals that average 1.5 readers per article exploded across the front page of the *New York Times.* "New Samoa Book Challenges Margaret Mead's Conclusions", ran the headline on January 31, 1983.[1] At issue was the claim put forth by the Australian anthropologist Derek Freeman, in his book *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth,*[2] that "Margaret Mead seriously misrepresented the culture and character of Samoa."[3] Freeman was less restrained in describing his own work than the *Times* was. "I may have written a book", he was quoted as saying in *Smithsonian,* "that will create the greatest denouement in the history of anthropology so far, not excepting Piltdown Man."[4] "The entire academic establishment", Freeman said to the *New York Times,* "and all the encyclopedias and all the textbooks accepted the conclusions in her book and those conclusions are fundamentally in error. There isn't another example of such wholesale self-deception in the history of the behavioral sciences."[5]

The reason this was a source of consternation to anyone other than anthropologists and Samoans had to do with the nature of Mead's book. *Coming of Age in Samoa* not only launched Mead's fifty-year-long career as an anthropologist, it made her a household word and guru on just about any area of human endeavor on which she cared to pontificate. The book, which sold millions of copies in sixteen languages including Urdu and Serbo-Croatian, also had a beneficial effect on anthropology, which was now seen as a discipline that studied cultures far away in order to have an impact on how we did things close to home. *Coming of Age in Samoa,* according to Sherwood L. Washburn, past president of the American Anthropological Association, "influenced the way people were brought up in this country".[6] If the controversy over Mead began within the discipline of anthropology, it was becoming increasingly clear that more than someone's scholarly reputation was at stake. At stake were significant currents in the culture that a book written in the late twenties by a graduate student at Columbia University had helped to form.

[1] Edwin McDowell, "New Samoa Book Challenges Margaret Mead's Conclusions", *New York Times,* January 31, 1983, p. 1.

[2] Derek Freeman, *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).

[3] McDowell, p. 1.

[4] Jane Howard, "Angry Storm over the South Seas of Margaret Mead", *Smithsonian* 14 (April 1983), p. 67.

[5] McDowell, p. 1.

[6] Ibid., p. 1.

Mead arrived in Pago Pago in American Samoa on August 31, 1925, finding that the site of her researches into what she construed as a primitive culture was surrounded by American battleships: "Airplanes scream overhead, the band of some ship is constantly playing ragtime", she was to write later.[7] Mead then settled down to learn the language, and by October she felt confident enough to move to a new site. Freeman was to maintain later that her preparation was insufficient, which (given the differences between Samoan and the Indo-European languages and the fact that Mead had never learned another foreign language) seems a plausible objection. In her memoir *Blackberry Winter,* published forty-seven years later, Mead herself wrote, "I myself had never learned a foreign language; I had only 'studied' Latin and French and German in high school."[8] Even her generally sympathetic biographer, Jane Howard, claimed, "A flair for languages . . . was never one of Mead's strong suits; anthropologists and others who knew Samoan wondered whether she could possibly have learned enough of the language in six weeks' time to carry out so delicate a task."[9]

Whether she did or did not, Mead arrived on Ta'u, an island in the Manu'a group about a hundred miles east of Pago Pago, on November 9, settling into the household of U.S. Navy Pharmacist's Mate Edward Holt to conduct an investigation into the lives of adolescent girls there. Mead's mentor, Franz Boas, troubled by claims in a recent book by G. Stanley Hall on adolescence, wanted to know if adolescence was universally a period of turmoil characterized by what the Germans termed *Sturm und Drang* and *Weltschmerz,* or whether these difficulties were simply a phenomenon in certain cultures. Was adolescent rebelliousness something associated with, say, hormones and, as a result, inevitably linked with the onset of puberty, as Hall claimed, or was it simply the result of factors that might not exist in certain cultures and were therefore amenable to modification?

Mead's attempt to answer that question was also hampered by the fact that a tropical storm virtually levelled the island on the first day of January 1926, disrupting the normal pattern of life as the natives attempted to rebuild their village. In spite of all these difficulties, Mead left Samoa nine months after she arrived, claiming that she had enough material to allow her to generalize not only about the life of Samoan adolescents but about Samoan culture in general and beyond that about "our humanity" as well. "One by one," she wrote in *Coming of Age in Samoa,* "aspects of behavior which we had been accustomed to consider invariable components of our humanity were found

[7] Jane Howard, *Margaret Mead: A Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), p. 79.

[8] Margaret Mead, *Blackberry Winter: My Earlier Years* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1972), p. 139.

[9] Howard, *Margaret Mead,* p. 79.

to be merely a result of civilization, present in the inhabitants of one country, absent in another."[10] Her mentor Franz Boas was just as willing to generalize about what even then must have seemed the slim anthropological research of his student. "Much of what we ascribe to human nature", he wrote in the preface to her book, "is no more than a reaction to the restraints put upon us by our civilization."[11]

It was a message that the progressive intellectual trendsetters of the late twenties on both sides of the Atlantic were only too happy to applaud. *Coming of Age in Samoa* was a runaway best-seller when it appeared in 1928. Apparently the claim that our troubles were caused by restrictive cultural conditions and that human nature was "unbelievably plastic" resonated favorably with large numbers of the people who bought books. It was all a part of the *Zeitgeist* of the twenties. Freeman cites advertisements in *The Nation,* a magazine that Mead later cited as part of the intellectual excitement she savored when coming to New York as a Barnard student, which

> exhorted American intellectuals to "Go to Soviet Russia", where the world's most gigantic social experiment was being conducted. And those who made the pilgrimage returned to write of having been "thrilled by the spirit of the children . . . trained under the Soviet regime", and of never having seen a more engaging picture of happy childhood. There were reports of human nature having been decisively changed, as for example in the form that jealousy took under the Soviet regime, and of "mental hygiene" being inherent in the social organization of the new Russia.[12]

Jane Howard describes much the same frame of mind in her description of the preparations for a field trip Mead was later to make to New Guinea:

> In the back of her own mind as she planned this expedition, Mead later wrote, were two things: the influence of the progressive education movement and "a quick and partial interpretation of the first flush of success in Russian education experiments", which had caused educators and philosophers to say, "Yes, the child is malleable, he takes the form you wish him to take; therefore, if you train him sufficiently differently from the way his unfortunate parents were trained, in no time at all you will produce a new generation which will build a new world."[13]

Just why so many people were interested in discovering the malleability of

[10] Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization* (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1928), p. 4.

[11] Ibid., p. xv.

[12] Freeman, p. 96.

[13] Howard, *Mead,* p. 119.

human nature became evident from the tenor of the early reviews of *Coming of Age*. Writing in *The Nation*, Freda Kirchwey claimed that "somewhere in each of us, hidden among our more obscure desires and our impulses of escape, is a palmfringed South Sea island . . . , a languorous atmosphere promising freedom and irresponsibility. . . . Thither we run . . . to find love which is free, easy and satisfying."[14] Samuel D. Schmalhausen effused over "the innocent strangely impersonal naively mechanistic-behavioristic sexing of the light-hearted youths and maidens of faroff Samoa" and felt that there were but two roads of heart's fulfillment: "Samoa or Calvary: happy-go-lucky felicity or tragic intensity."[15] In his book, *Our Changing Human Nature*, published one year after *Coming of Age*, Schmalhausen concluded, "Back to the South Sea Isles!" back to "naturalness and simplicity and sexual joy".[16] It was a cry echoed by both Bertrand Russell and Havelock Ellis, the sexologist, paramour and associate of Margaret Sanger.

Mead's novelistic account of life in Samoa lent itself quite easily to such effusions. It is an account composed of equal parts of poetic description and anthropological moralizing. So a day in Samoa begins as "lovers slip home from trysts beneath the palm trees or in the shadow of beached canoes."[17] Although Christianity, with the premium it places on chastity, has been a feature of Samoan life since the nineteenth century, "the Samoans regard this attitude with reverent but complete scepticism and the concept of celibacy is meaningless to them."[18] Samoans, Mead continues,

> laugh at stories of romantic love, scoff at fidelity to a long absent wife or mistress, believe explicitly that one love will quickly cure another, . . . although having many mistresses is never out of harmony with a declaration of affection for each. . . . Romantic love as it occurs in our civilization, inextricably bound up with ideas of monogamy, exclusiveness, jealousy and undeviating fidelity, does not occur in Samoa. . . . Adultery does not necessarily mean a broken marriage. . . . Divorce is a simple informal matter. . . . It is a very brittle monogamy often trespassed and more often broken entirely, but many adulteries occur . . . which hardly threaten the continuity of established relationships . . . , and so there are no marriages of any duration in which either person is actively unhappy.[19]

In addition to this, Mead finds that "casual homosexual practices . . . are the

[14] Freeman, p. 97.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid., p. 98.
[17] Mead, *Samoa*, p. 14.
[18] Ibid., p. 98.
[19] Ibid., pp. 104–8.

usual manifestation of most associations between young people of the same sex."[20]

If Samoans are polymorphous in their sexual lives, family life is similarly diffused. Children are raised in amiable independence from their biological parents. With one stroke of seemingly impartial research on a primitive people living close to "nature", Mead at once abrogates the Sixth Commandment and the responsibilities parents have toward raising their children. "The close relationship between parent and child," Mead tells us in a chapter entitled "Our Educational Problems",

> which has such a decisive influence upon so many in our civilization, that submission to the parent or defiance of the parent may become the dominating pattern of a lifetime, is not found in Samoa. Children reared in households where there are half a dozen adult women to care for them and dry their tears, and half a dozen adult males, all of whom represent constituted authority, do not distinguish their parents as sharply as our children do.[21]

As Freeman's book points out, Mead's claims about Samoa not only persisted throughout her long career as an anthropologist, they became more dogmatic and exaggerated with time, even though she never went back to confirm her data. Indeed she refused to return, claiming at one point that her picture was valid for all time, "forever true," she wrote in prefaces from 1949 on, "because no truer picture could be made of that which was gone". So, Mead was later to claim that in Samoa, "the child is given no sense of belonging to a small intimate biological family. . . . The relationship between child and parent is early diffused over many adults. . . . Children do not think of an own mother who always protects them. . . . The child owes no emotional allegiance to its father and mother."[22] And as a result, "the setting for parent fixation vanishes." Children in Samoa "are schooled not by an individual but by an army of relatives into a general conformity upon which the personality of their parents has a very slight effect. In such a setting, there is no room for guilt."[23]

Once the idiosyncrasy of our own attitudes toward sex and childrearing is established in light of the experiences of the carefree Samoans, it is only a short step to recommending their mores as a corrective to our own. "What are the rewards of the tiny, ingrown, biological family," Mead wonders in *Coming of Age*,

> opposing its closed circle of affection to a forbidding world of the strong ties between parent and children, ties which imply an active personal

[20] Ibid., p. 165.
[21] Ibid., p. 209.
[22] Freeman, p. 113.
[23] Ibid., p. 86.

> relation from birth until death? . . . Perhaps these are too heavy prices to pay for a specialization of emotion which might be brought about in other ways, notably through coeducation. And with such a question in our minds it is interesting to note that a larger family community, in which there are several adult men and women, seems to ensure the child against the development of the crippling attitudes which have been labelled Oedipus complexes, Electra complexes, and so on.[24]

Samoans, Mead tells us, "have no preference for reserving sex activity for important relationships". As a result,

> The Samoan girl who shrugs her shoulder over the excellent technique of some young Lothario is nearer to the recognition of sex as an impersonal force without any intrinsic validity, than is the sheltered American girl who falls in love with the first man who kisses her. From their familiarity with the reverberations which accompany sex excitement comes this recognition of the essential impersonality of sex attraction. . . .[25]

Imitating the attitudes and techniques of Samoan Lotharios will, according to Mead, reduce "the possibility of neuroses".

> By discounting our category of perversion, as applied to practice, and reserving it for the occasional psychic pervert, [Samoans] legislate a whole field of neurotic possibility out of existence. Onanism, homosexuality, statistically unusual forms of heterosexual activity, are neither banned nor institutionalized. The wider range which these practices give prevents the development of obsessions of guilt which are so frequent a cause of maladjustment among us. . . . This acceptance of a wider range as "normal" provides a cultural atmosphere in which frigidity and psychic impotence do not occur and in which a satisfactory sex adjustment in marriage can always be established.[26]

Samoans, in short, were "without the doctrine of Original Sin".[27]

To the polymorphously perverse, to the sexually liberated, to those who felt unduly burdened by the Judeo-Christian prohibition against adultery, to those who felt that raising their children was an intolerable restriction on their freedom, all of what Mead was saying must have seemed too good to be true. Fifty-five years later, it turns out that it was. In the course of Freeman's book, each of Mead's assertions about Samoa as the paradise of adolescent free love falls under the blows of his methodological research. To Mead's claim that the suicides of humiliation so common in parts of Polynesia do not exist in Samoa,

[24] Mead, *Samoa,* p. 212.
[25] Ibid., p. 222.
[26] Ibid., p. 223.
[27] Freeman, p. 91.

Freeman counters with studies of twenty-two cases of suicide committed from 1925 onward. "Fourteen of these twenty-two persons (64 percent)", Freeman writes, "had committed suicide in a state of anger at having been scolded or punished by a parent or some other elder".[28] "Six of the twenty-two individuals who committed suicide did so out of shame at illicit sexual liaisons (the remaining two killed themselves after being jilted)."[29] Nine of the twenty-two were adolescents, leading Freeman to conclude that the "proportion of adolescent suicides" in Samoa "is high in comparative terms. . . . [T]he incidence of adolescent suicide relative to that of older age groups is, in fact, considerably higher in Samoa than in some other countries. This is scarcely a confirmation of Mead's claim that in Samoa adolescence is 'the age of maximum ease. . . . ' "[30]

According to Freeman, the Samoans, far from being the sexual libertines Mead depicted, placed a premium on female virginity. This was true of the pagan Samoans as well as the Protestant Christians Mead studied. In fact it seems that the advent of Christianity in the islands was an instance of grace perfecting nature. Freeman speculates that virginity is something intrinsically valuable because it is lost only once. On the issue of virginity, Christianity only gave an added dimension to a belief that was already strong among pagan Samoans. "Within the traditional Samoan system of rank," Freeman writes, "the proof of a bride's virginity was regarded, as Kraemer remarks, as 'indispensable'. The public testing of her virginity was the established method of avoiding any possibility of the bridegroom's being shamed by some other male who might secretly have had sexual connection with her."[31] One of the things overlooked by the proponents of sexual liberation who were so enthusiastic about *Coming of Age* when it first appeared was the fact that even by Mead's own reckoning the majority of her informants about Samoa as the paradise of adolescent sex were still virgins.

The Samoans' veneration of virginity is not limited to the theoretical. According to Freeman, they guard the virginity of their daughters and sisters with a vengeance:

> It is thus customary in Samoa, as Mead quite failed to report, for the virginity of an adolescent daughter, whatever her rank, to be safeguarded by her brothers, who exercise an active surveillance over her comings and goings, especially at night. Brother will upbraid, and sometimes beat, a sister should she be found in the company of a boy suspected of having

[28] Ibid., p. 221.
[29] Ibid., p. 221.
[30] Ibid., p. 222.
[31] Ibid., p. 232.

> designs on her virginity, while the boy involved is liable to be assaulted with great ferocity. Gerber, from her work in Tutuila in the early 1970s, records that many girls reported that "they were afraid of their brothers beating both them and their boyfriends if they were found together"; while Young (who worked in both western and eastern Samoa in the 1970s) writes that a brother will fly into a "killing rage" at an attempt to seduce his sister. To cite a case from my own researches, on a Sunday in June 1959, Tautalafua, aged 17, found his 18-year-old classificatory sister sitting under a breadfruit tree at about 9:00 in the evening with Vave, a 20-year-old youth from another family. He struck Vave with such violence as to fracture his jaw in two places. For this attack he was later sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment.[32]

Freeman also finds Mead's claim that in Samoa "adultery was not regarded as very serious" to be "seriously in error".[33] In pre-Christian Samoa, adultery was a crime punishable by death. As time went on, the punishment was ameliorated to having the adulteress' "head fractured and bone broken or by having her nose or an ear cut off and cast away".[34] Under the influence of Christianity the Samoans gradually did away with such draconian measures; however, this in no way changed their opinion of the seriousness of the offense. In the 1920s, at the same time Mead was doing her research, adultery was listed in the legal code of American Samoa as "an offense for which those guilty 'shall be fined not more than one hundred dollars, or imprisoned not more than twelve months, or both.' "[35] In 1967, as the West was plunging ever more recklessly toward greater sexual license, the talking chiefs of Si'ufaga informed Freeman that "the judgment of a local polity is exceedingly severe in the case of adultery, with the land of an offender being taken from him."[36]

To substantiate his point further, Freeman cites a case occurring in February 1967 of a twenty-eight-year-old married man who was caught trying to seduce a seventeen-year-old virgin. In addition to being denounced verbally—the attempted seduction was "a happening frightening to both ghosts and men"—the seducer's "family was fined two large pigs, two large tins of biscuits, and one hundred corms of taro, while the family of the girl he had been with was fined half this amount."[37]

In 1928 Mead claimed that "the idea of forceful rape or of any sexual act to which the participants do not give themselves freely is completely foreign to the

[32] Ibid., pp. 236–37.
[33] Ibid., p. 241.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., p. 242.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.

Samoan mind." In response to that claim, Freeman examined the police records and found that there were sixty rapes per hundred thousand females per annum, "a rate twice as high as that of the United States and twenty times as high as that of England". If in addition one adds to those statistics the Samoan custom of *moetotolo,* or surreptitious manual rape, the numbers climb to 160 rapes per hundred thousand females per annum, leading Freeman to conclude that "the Samoan rape rate is certainly one of the highest to be found anywhere in the world."

The effect of Freeman's critique is quite devastating. Where the young Mead paints a generally impressionistic novelistic account that is suspiciously vague on sources—"When I wrote *Coming of Age in Samoa,*" Mead was later to say in *Blackberry Winter,* "I carefully disguised all the names, sometimes using double disguises so that the actual individuals could never be identified"[38]—Freeman cites public documents, his own accounts of fieldwork there (he passed a government exam in proficiency in the language and was made a Samoan chief), accounts of travellers and missionaries, and, most tellingly, contradictory accounts of people who claim to agree with Mead. The result of Freeman's *tour de force* is that he all but swept the board of public opinion. The initial articles were uniformly positively disposed toward what he had to say. His arguments and documentation were so persuasive that virtually everyone who read the book was convinced.

Everyone, that is, except fellow anthropologists. Once the initial wave of publicity had subsided, the reaction among the anthropological profession set in. It is not surprising that the anthropologists should want to mount a counter-attack. First of all, if (as in fact was the case) the profession had all but unanimously claimed that a seriously flawed book like *Coming of Age* was a classic in modern anthropology, this didn't say much for their standards, nor did it inspire great confidence in anthropology as a science. Freeman claimed that Mead as the student of Boas had subordinated scientific considerations to the ideology of cultural relativism. She had tailored her data to suit the ideology she went there to substantiate. The initial response of the anthropological establishment did little to allay the fears that Freeman's book had inspired.

According to Colin Turnbull, a professor of anthropology at George Washington University, whose review appeared in the March 28, 1983, issue of *New Republic,* Freeman's book "deserves review only because it could do harm to anthropology and particularly to the kind of humanistic anthropology that Margaret Mead also preferred to petty academic rivalry."[39] According to Turnbull, "the Samoa that Margaret Mead saw in 1925 . . . was an island where

[38] Mead, *Blackberry Winter,* p. 154.

[39] Colin M. Turnbull, "Trouble in Paradise", *New Republic* 188 (March 28, 1983), p. 34.

people learned to grow to maturity without the stress that besets adolescents in the Western world even more today than when she made her study."[40]

Given Mead's claims that adolescence would be less stressful if the West relaxed sexual mores, Turnbull's argument makes no sense in light of developments here over the past fifty years. If adolescent stress has increased in the West—and I think a case can be made that it has—it is a result of following Mead's prescriptions based on the supposed sexual freedom of Samoan life. In addition to making factual errors—Turnbull states categorically that Mead did not live with an American family—Turnbull's defense of Mead is long on the *ad hominem* and short on substance. He makes veiled accusations of racism and other isms offensive to the *New Republic* readership: "With a revealing show of male chauvinism, Freeman even mentions how this 'young female student' included as part of her field equipment some 'cotton dresses'."[41] It was a charge that would surface frequently in the controversy. An anonymous anthropologist quoted in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* was to circumvent the whole laborious business of refuting what Freeman said by hanging the same label on him. "There is", he or she hinted darkly, "one sense in which a sex angle is probably operative. There are a lot of male anthropologists who had trouble with Mead, who were uncomfortable that one woman should be that strong."[42] Such accusations were a good sign that the profession was running out of ammunition.

In general, the more the profession tried to attack Freeman, the more convincing they made him seem by contrast. Lowell Holmes, an anthropologist at Wichita State University who was to become Mead's prime defender in the debate, reacted in a way that bespoke emotional loyalty in place of scientific objectivity: "I find an element of resentment at a foreigner attacking 'our Margaret' ", he told *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* "America loved this woman."[43] Joy Pratt, director of publicity at Harvard University Press, was taken aback by the vehemence of the response. "What shocks me about the reaction to the book", she said in the *Chronicle* article, "is the scholars who say Mead was a great humanitarian and scholar, and it's mean to publish a nasty book about her. Whatever became of scholarship and looking for the truth?"[44]

As the Mead-Freeman controversy was to make clear, scholarship and looking for the truth had become early victims of ideology. In fact, ideological considerations had so dominated the profession that Freeman found it impossible to get a forum for his ideas while Mead was alive. In fact, ideology

[40] Turnbull, p. 32.

[41] Turnbull, p. 33.

[42] Cheryl M. Fields, "Controversial Book Spurs Scholars' Defense of the Legacy of Margaret Mead", *Chronicle of Higher Education* 26 (May 11, 1983), p. 27.

[43] Ibid., p. 28.

[44] Ibid.

had become such an all-pervasive element in modern anthropology that the anthropologists themselves were for the most part blind to it. Lowell Holmes is a good example. In the book he wrote defending Mead after the Freeman book came out, Holmes makes it clear that for him the doctrine of cultural relativism means little more than having an open mind. According to Holmes, cultural relativism

> requires that no single culture be held up as offering the "right" or "natural" way of doing things or valuing things. It reminds people of all nations that each society should be free to solve cultural problems according to their own time-tested methods without condemnation from those who would choose different solutions. Having been trained in such a philosophical tradition, Mead, myself, and the bulk of American anthropologists would believe that behavior associated with adolescence or other aspects of the life cycle must be evaluated only in terms of the cultural context in which they occur.[45]

If this is so, one is forced to wonder why Mead recommended changing the sexual mores of American adolescents in light of what she discovered during her stay in Samoa. Holmes can't even explain cultural relativism without involving himself in a flagrant self-contradiction. The attraction of relativism has always been a moral one. It had great appeal to people with troubled consciences, and Mead's book appealed specifically to those troubled by sexual matters.

In general, Holmes has the unfortunate habit of undermining his case in the very act of stating it. He debunks Mead more effectively by agreeing with her than Freeman does by disagreeing with her. Thus he tells us that "during the entire residence in Samoa it was impossible to obtain details of sexual experience from unmarried informants though several of these people were constant companions and part of our household." In spite of the fact that Holmes' own research in Samoa leads him to conclusions opposite to those that Mead herself drew on romantic love, married love, suicide, and emotional intensity, he nonetheless concludes: "I find the validity of her Samoan research remarkably high." To top it all off, he sent Freeman a letter in 1967 in which he wrote, "I think it is quite true that Margaret finds pretty much what she wants to find."[46] Holmes then goes on to add in a moment of remarkable candor that "I was forced by my faculty advisor to soften my criticisms" of Mead.[47] "The only tragedy with Margaret", Holmes added in 1967, "is that she still refuses

[45] Lowell Holmes, *Quest for the* Real *Samoa: The MeadFreeman Controversy and Beyond.* (South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin & Garvey, 1987), p. 17.

[46] Derek Freeman, " 'O Rose Thou Art Sick!' A Rejoinder to Weiner, Schwartz, Holmes, Shore and Silverman", *American Anthropologist* 86 (1984), p. 404.

[47] Ibid.

to accept the idea that she might have been wrong on her first field trip."[48] Professor Holmes is to be praised for his candor, if not for his ability to draw logical conclusions from his premises. He, more than anyone, seals the case in Freeman's favor.

This is not to say that there are no implausibilities in Freeman's account. The book ends with Freeman espousing a mechanistic philosophy that confuses human nature with biology and is full of all sorts of incantations and evolutionary mumbo-jumbo.

> Cultural adaptations, [Freeman tells us] are made possible by the evolutionary emergence of what Ernst Mayr has termed open programs of behavior, resulting from a gradual opening up of a genetic program to permit the incorporation of personally acquired information to an ever-greater extent.... Within an open program of behavior, then, a choice is made by the brain or in other parts of the nervous system between two or more responses to produce what Bonner calls "multiple-choice behavior."[49]

The appearance of culture is thus to be viewed as a "new niche that arose from the experimentation of animals with multiple-choice behavior...."[50] With all due respect to Professor Freeman and the service he has done in exposing Margaret Mead, this is simply mechanistic nonsense, little better than the cultural determinist nonsense that Mead propagated. The brain is about as capable of choosing as it is of playing tennis. Only the mind can make choices, and to say that the brain and the mind are the same thing is the crudest type of materialism. It is like saying that radios can predict the weather. Freeman's nosedive at the end of his book is a sad denouement to a sound piece of anthropology. It is also a pretty good indication of the general poverty of intellectual discourse in the twentieth century. The anthropological pendulum swings from racist mumbo-jumbo to cultural relativism and then can find nowhere else to go but back again to a hopefully more benign form of the type of mechanism it left in the first place.

In the midst of all this, the crucial question about human nature continues to go unanswered. Is it a mere function of superego or culture, as Mead claimed? Or is it to be discovered by ever more meticulous dissection of our DNA? The answer is that it is neither. Neither alternative is anything more than a blind alley that has already been tried more than once and found wanting.

Beyond that, Freeman's myopia about human nature prevents him from answering probably the most important question of his study, a question he

[48] Ibid.

[49] Freeman, *Margaret Mead and Samoa,* p. 296.

[50] Ibid., pp. 298–99.

himself formulated in his interview with *Time,* namely, "How could anyone get things so astronomically wrong?"[51] Freeman attempts to answer his own question with two partial answers—which in effect cancel each other out. Rejecting the notion he heard among many Samoans that "Mead lied", he claims instead that her adolescent informants lied to her, but at the same time Freeman claims that Mead went to Samoa to substantiate the ideology of cultural relativism that Boas had inculcated in her while she studied with him in New York. The two explanations don't add up. Moreover, the doctrine of cultural relativism in no way explains the specific conclusions Mead drew about adultery, rape, childrearing, etc. Beyond that, there is the question of why the general reading public read *Coming of Age* so avidly. Were they also interested in refuting biological determinism? No, there was something more basic to human nature at play here. The general public—and Mead as well—was only interested in cultural relativism insofar as it sanctioned a certain attitude toward sexual mores. As Freeman himself wrote, "That *Coming of Age in Samoa* so rapidly attracted attention was due more than anything else to Mead's alluring portrayal of Samoa as a paradise of free love."[52] Mead had turned anthropology into a powerful engine designed to soothe the troubled consciences of those who were interested in overthrowing the mores of Western, i.e., Judeo-Christian, civilization. That was why she was so interested in primitive peoples: not only because they fit so well into the Europeans' notion of a natural paradise regained (an iconography composed of elements as disparate as Melville's *Typee* and the paintings of Gauguin) but also because by using an intellectual sleight of hand played on the word nature, Mead could claim that "primitive" peoples (most notably in their sex lives) were more in keeping with the way things were naturally meant to be.

This linking of cultural relativity and relaxed sexual norms was associated with Mead's career from its beginning until after its end. Indeed the real crux of the Mead/Freeman controversy was the debate over the values Mead espoused, values that still attracted passionate loyalty even after Mead was dead. So, according to Mead's daughter Catherine Bateson, "the debate was not limited to scientific issues but became rapidly politicized, exploited as an occasion to attack a range of liberal beliefs", the most cherished of which was, of course, sexual liberation. Annette B. Weiner, chairman of the anthropology department at New York University, defended the value of Mead's version of anthropology by claiming that to "undermine this value falsely is to make us all members of an old myth perpetrating the claim that human

[51] John Leo, "Bursting the South Sea Bubble", *Time,* February 14, 1983, p. 68.
[52] Freeman, *Margaret Mead and Samoa,* p. 284.

behavior is grounded in only one kind of truth and one set of values."[53]

The real attraction of cultural relativism was that it condoned sexual license, something of interest to Americans during the entire span of Mead's career. According to *Time* magazine, which weighed in with its report on February 14, 1983, "Mead became the natural ally of those who promoted free education, relaxed sexual norms, and green light parenting intended to give American youngsters the trouble-free adolescence enjoyed in Samoa."[54] *Coming of Age in Samoa*

> attracted a wide audience for its implied critique of Western civilization. The book said in effect: The West featured fidelity, competition, overheated sexual arrangements, a tight nuclear family, guilt, stress, and adolescent turmoil; yet here are alleged primitives leading graceful lives of cooperation, adolescent bliss, casual family ties, and easy sex, all without any signs of guilt or neurosis.[55]

At issue, then, was not so much one anthropologist's reputation on the academic stock market but a project dear to large segments of the American population, namely, sexual liberation. The issue was sex, sex disconnected from the norms of Western civilization, for the most part known as Christianity. One of this century's seminal disconnectors, it now seemed, was seriously in error—a state of affairs that threatened the whole enterprise. It was, shall we say, a story of the eighties, something from intellectual history to complement the epidemics of venereal disease now awash in the blood of the sexually liberated. Now it could be shown not only that sexual license led to disease and death but that its papers had been forged as well. *Coming of Age in Samoa,* the idyll of casual sex beneath the palm trees, was proving to be about as scientific as the screenplay of *Blue Lagoon. Coming of Age in Samoa* was in effect *Blue Lagoon* anthropology. What purported to be scientific investigation turned out in reality to be massive rationalization. The fact that the book proved to be a best-seller and was considered a classic in the profession only showed that the same need for rationalization permeated large segments of the culture it addressed. People read such books and chose such professions because of deep-seated emotional and moral needs. The intellectual project of cultural relativism was rooted in sexual guilt.

This hypothesis goes a long way toward explaining the question that Freeman, notwithstanding the brilliance of his critique, fails to answer satisfactorily, namely, how Mead "could . . . get things so astronomically

[53] Annette B. Weiner, "Ethnographic Determinism: Samoa and the Margaret Mead Controversy", *American Anthropologist* 85 (1983), p. 918.

[54] John Leo, "Bursting the South Sea Bubble", p. 68.

[55] Ibid., p. 70.

wrong".[56] If Samoan culture is as sexually strict as Freeman portrays—and the counterattack of the Meadian anthropologists has, if anything, strengthened his case—then where exactly did a statement like "adultery was not regarded as very serious" come from? In just about every sense of the word, it came from Margaret Mead.

According to Jane Howard's sympathetic biography of Mead, "Preoccupation with sex was common among Barnard undergraduates"[57] in the twenties. Howard cites one alumna who claimed, "If you went to Barnard in those days, you were assumed to be a nymphomaniac."[58] Mead had come from a liberal background ("we're the kind of people who read Emerson", said Emily Fogg Mead);[59] had an uncle who was expelled from the Unitarian Church for heresy; was conscious of her father as someone with less than salutary sexual morals; but had married young to a young Episcopalian seminarian, Luther Cressman. Perhaps Mead became interested in anthropology because she herself had proven so malleable to the sexually stimulating environment at Columbia. At any rate the young lady who said of her early engagement and marriage that "it kept me from worrying about men or dates"[60] was soon swept up into the sexual *Zeitgeist* at Barnard—at first theoretically, then more intimately.

The Mead/Cressman apartment was a meeting place where Mead's friends could discuss their generally unhappy love affairs and the latest methods of birth control. It was also a place where they could go beyond the theoretical and get actual experience. One afternoon when Mead's husband, Luther Cressman, returned to their apartment unexpectedly, he found a condom in the bathroom and "heard enthusiastic noises from one such couple in the bedroom".[61]

Given this type of atmosphere, anthropology became popular among Barnard students as a way of making sense of the changes they were experiencing in their lives. As Jane Howard writes, "Anthropology seemed a new and stirring way of sorting out the ambiguities and contradictions of a world that lurched between what Mead would later recall as the 'stupid underbrush of nineteenth-century arguments based on ethnocentric superiority'—of isolationism, Victorianism, and xenophobia—and of the new currents suggested by Freud, Marx, Havelock Ellis, and mechanization."[62]

[56] Ibid., p. 68.
[57] Howard, *Mead,* p. 48.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid., p. 21.
[60] Ibid., p. 36.
[61] Ibid., p. 63.
[62] Ibid., p. 52.

By the time she was a graduate student in anthropology, Mead had gone from the theory to the praxis of sexual liberation herself. In the summer of 1925, in the middle of a visit with her family in Pennsylvania, Mead travelled to New York City, ostensibly to interview for a job with the American Museum of Natural History. Her real purpose was to dine with the linguist Edward Sapir and spend the night with him at a New York hotel. At the time of this adulterous affair, Mead had been married for less than two years. In the same summer, she set out for Samoa to do the research for the book that was to launch her career. On the way out to San Francisco, where she was to board ship, she stopped off to see the anthropologist Ruth Benedict, fourteen years her senior, who had been instrumental in getting her into graduate studies under Franz Boas. While sitting overlooking the Grand Canyon, Mead and Benedict discussed the best way for Mead to extricate herself from the affair with Sapir. At that point, according to a memoir written by Catherine Bateson, Mead's daughter, Ruth and Margaret decided that neither of them would choose further intimacy with Sapir but rather "preferred each other".[63] It was the beginning of a lesbian relationship that was to last until Benedict's death in 1948. Margaret Mead, now sexually involved with two men and a woman, then resumed her journey to Samoa to examine the sexual mores of the adolescents there.

The strategem she had discussed with Benedict had apparently been successful. Sapir had broken off the relationship by letter. In a passage that may have referred to Mead, Sapir was to write in 1928, "As one emancipated young woman once expressed it to me, it would be an insult either to her or her husband to expect fidelity of them. Yet what is more obvious than that jealousy can no more be weeded out of the human heart than the shadows cast by objects be obliterated by some mechanism that would restore to them an eternal luminosity?"[64] Mead was of a different mind on the matter. "The Samoans", Mead was eventually to write, "laugh at stories of romantic love, scoff at fidelity to a long absent wife or mistress, believe explicitly that one love will quickly cure another."[65] On her return trip back to the States, which was eventually to take her by way of Europe around the world, Mead fell in love with the New Zealand anthropologist Reo Fortune, whom she met on board ship. According to Jane Howard, Fortune "distracted her from thoughts of Edward Sapir and Luther Cressman. . . ."[66] When their ship, the *Chitral,* docked in Marseilles, Mead and Fortune, to the consternation of Mead's waiting husband, were the last two passengers off the ship. Fortune,

[63] Mary Catherine Bateson, *With a Daughter's Eye: A Memoir of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1984), p. 125.

[64] Howard, *Mead,* pp. 74–75.

[65] Mead, *Samoa,* p. 104.

[66] Howard, *Mead,* p. 95.

according to Howard, had almost succeeded in persuading Mead to go on with him to England.

Unlike the Samoans, who tend to react violently when they catch their wives with lovers, Luther Cressman proved to be unusually obliging. One evening after going for a walk, Cressman returned to their Paris hotel room only to find his wife in such a passionate embrace with Fortune that neither heard him come in. Cressman then obligingly took another spin around the block so as not to disturb the young lovers. At another point he even told them where they could get contraceptives in England if they were so inclined. During her stay in France, Mead went to visit Notre Dame Cathedral with Ruth Benedict. "Isn't it unbearable that all this", Benedict fumed (referring to the cathedral), "is about nothing?"[67]

Eventually Mead was to leave Cressman and marry Fortune, the second of her three husbands. The parting is mentioned briefly in *Blackberry Winter:* "I returned to New York to say good-bye to Luther. We spent a placid week together, unmarred by reproaches or feelings of guilt."[68] In the summer of 1926, however, she returned (still married to her first husband) to New York to sift through her experiences and write what was eventually to be the book about how the Samoans don't take adultery very seriously. Since she mentions the absence of feelings of guilt in her last meeting with Cressman, is it fair to assume that the guilt was there in other meetings? Neither Mead nor her biographers have much to say on the matter.

Eventually Reo Fortune was to suffer the same fate as Luther Cressman. Mead was to dump Fortune to marry Gregory Bateson, whom she and Fortune met while doing fieldwork in New Guinea. The experience of dying by the sword after having lived by it was to have a devastating effect on Fortune. "Margaret", said someone who knew them both, "simply ripped him to shreds. You don't have to do much to destroy a person, you know, if you have that person's affection."[69] But while Fortune may never have fulfilled his potential as an anthropologist, he did do fieldwork with Mead and did leave an interesting record of what he thought of her methodology.

In 1932 Mead was encamped with both Bateson and Fortune on the banks of the Sepik River in New Guinea and felt on the verge of a great intellectual breakthrough—she cabled Boas to expect it when they returned—in which culture would be reduced to personality types characterized by the compass points. It was a breakthrough that never materialized. As her daughter was to describe the period, Mead "set the process of falling out of love with Reo and

[67] Ibid., p. 100.
[68] Mead, *Blackberry,* p. 165.
[69] Howard, *Mead,* p. 171.

into love with Gregory into the context of the anthropological work she was doing and the theoretical questions she was involved with."[70] To put the same thing another way, Mead's anthropological conclusions were drawn primarily from her own personal unresolved sexual conflicts. According to Catherine Bateson,

> This was a moment when both personal and intellectual concerns, concerns about gender and genetic endowment, about culture and personality, reached a critical point. The conceptual scheme that they developed seemed to Margaret at the time a deep synthesis of all the fieldwork she had done to date and a resolution of deep conflicts in her own identity, including the question of how it is possible to be in love with more than one person at the same time if they are different kinds of person. Not only were the three of them gathered in that tiny screened room, but parents and friends and lovers as well, above all Ruth [Benedict], whose voice was freshly present among them, for her manuscript for *Patterns of Culture* had just arrived. . . .
>
> It is hard to visualize the kind of feverish atmosphere that must have characterized that interval. Under other circumstances, that level of intensity might have led to an immediate affair between Margaret and Gregory, but that seems to me unlikely, given the minimum availability of privacy and Reo's puritanical jealousy, and above all given Margaret's ethic of putting scientific work first and maximizing productivity in the field. An explosion of love and jealousy in that room would have immediately affected their ability to work with the community outside. Instead all passion was channelled into ideas, and Margaret and Reo telegraphed Boas that they were coming home with major new scientific insights.[71]

Needless to say, the breakthrough never came. As Bateson later wrote, "the explanation still remains largely unintelligible",[72] causing Mead to treat it finally "as a part of her autobiography rather than of her scientific work".[73] However, along with *Coming of Age in Samoa* it remains a good example of the "passion . . . channelled into ideas"[74] that was characteristic of Mead's anthropology. Mead's anthropology was, in effect, thinly rationalized sexual behavior. This was the thrust of a letter Fortune wrote to Mead in 1949:

> You . . . put your private affairs first: and I am definitely not interested in any later rationalizations of your messianic message of 1932. It was mostly about "southern" sweetness & light & northern responsibility for power politics, and was a dishonest way of treating your private affairs. I do not

[70] Bateson, *Daughter,* p. 128.
[71] Ibid., p. 129.
[72] Ibid., p. 132.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid., p. 129.

> care how you have rationalized it later—It was quite recognizable for what it was as it was. There is no question of handling that kind of thing in what you call poetic terms—or scientific ones for that matter. It is not serious that from any thorough point of view you have not made Arapesh history intelligible. It is merely unfortunate that since the Arapesh did a certain amount of killing to try to keep marriages stable, you should have played that particular point down. It looks like a reaction of your own personality: and not just inadequate field work—though I know it is the latter. . . .[75]

So it turns out that Ruth Benedict was right in a way after all. Her claim about culture being personality writ large is true at least about her own and Mead's anthropology. Mead's anthropology is her own personality writ large. Mead's anthropology is "a dishonest way of treating [her] private affairs". It is rationalization. The truth that she tells is one she tells in spite of herself, and that is about the power of conscience, even conscience thwarted. Mead went to Samoa to disprove the existence of human nature and in a sense proved just the opposite. She was driven by the moral laws she violated, driven to exorcise them to ease her conscience, and in doing so she merely substantiated the universality of the very thing she was in rebellion against.

We are talking about a phenomenon more often described by literature than by the sciences here. To use another vocabulary, we might characterize it as the return of the repressed. How is it, for example, that only Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost taking his seat at the banquet? It is because of his guilty conscience. When Macbeth, after having murdered Banquo, is unable to "smear the sleepy grooms with blood", Lady Macbeth chides him and denigrates conscience in the same speech:

> Infirm of purpose!
> Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead
> Are but as pictures. 'Tis the eye of childhood
> That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
> I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
> For it must seem their guilt.[76]

However, by the end of the play she is unable to get what is now truly imaginary blood off her hands. The imaginary blood springing from guilty conscience is much more difficult to eradicate. There is a thematic, almost artistic sense to conscience, which tends to reassert the very thing the guilty mind seeks to repress.

So, in *The Scarlet Letter,* the minister Dimmesdale is drawn inexorably back to the scaffold where Hester, his partner in adultery, was condemned. The

[75] Howard, *Mead,* p. 268.
[76] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth,* II, ii, 52–57.

minister, whose conscience is troubling him, seeks the only relief there is—confession. Until that takes place, his guilty conscience keeps forcing him to project the unrepented adultery onto the world around him to the point where even neutral meteorological phenomena take on a moral meaning, as for example when a meteor illumines the night sky above the head of the tormented minister. "We impute it, therefore," the narrator tells us,

> solely to the disease in his own eye and heart, that the minister, looking upward to the zenith, beheld there the appearance of an immense letter,—the letter A,—marked out in lines of dull red light. Not but the meteor may have shown itself at that point, burning duskily through a veil of cloud; but with no such shape as his guilty imagination gave it; or, at least, with so little definiteness that another's guilt might have seen another symbol in it.[77]

So, to answer the question that stumped Derek Freeman, the statements on adultery in *Coming of Age in Samoa* came from the mind of Margaret Mead: Mead's guilty imagination projected adultery onto the puritanical Samoans just as unerringly as Dimmesdale's mind projected it onto the clouds above him, and for the same reason: both were guilty of the same sin. Both had within them—as do all men—the voice of conscience, responding to the dictates of the natural law, which are, in the words of St. Paul, "engraved on their hearts". Mead's work is a perverse tribute to the universality of the moral law that she set out to deny. "Many wrongdoers", Cicero writes, "have turned evidence against themselves." *Coming of Age in Samoa* manifests precisely this phenomenon. The guilty flee when none pursueth.

One of the biggest ironies of the whole story is that Mead ended up choosing a culture that so completely contradicted her theories. Let us assume for a moment that she had accompanied Cortez to Aztec Mexico. She would have found there widespread acceptance of human sacrifice; indeed she would have found that human sacrifice was considered a tradition honored by the state and its official religion, but what would that have proven? That the West was wrong in abhorring it? That our notions of the sacredness of human life were hopelessly ethnocentric? That morals were culturally relative? Hardly. Similarly, Mead could have found cannibals in the South Seas, but what lessons is one to draw for our culture from their practices? The fact of the matter is that large segments of the intelligentsia in the West in the twentieth century were dissatisfied with the sexual mores of their culture and were looking for some sort of rationalization to justify their violation of these norms. Mead, with her unerring sense of what was current and popular, provided them with this rationalization and was rewarded handsomely for it.

[77] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (New York: Signet, 1959), p. 151.

The fact that her reputation went for so long undisturbed is a sad commentary on intellectual standards in this century.

But in fact the two phenomena go hand in hand. The traditional manuals of moral theology have always claimed that one of the results of lust was a "darkening of the mind". Hatred of God is another. So intellectual life in the twentieth century is characterized by a vicious circle, oscillating between sexual and intellectual sins: sexual sin leads to bad science as a form of rationalization, turning one's back on the truth in the interest of ideology or self-will, which in turn leads to more dissolute behavior, which in turn leads to ever more ludicrous theories, until something like the Freeman book comes along and the bubble bursts; whereupon the world says, in effect, well, we never really took her seriously anyway. As St. Paul said of the intellectuals of his day,

> The more they called themselves philosophers, the more stupid they grew.... That is why God left them to their filthy enjoyments and the practices with which they dishonor their own bodies, since they have given up divine truth for a lie and have worshipped and served creatures instead of the creator.... That is why God has abandoned them to degrading passions: why their women have turned from natural intercourse to unnatural practices... (Rom 1:22–26).

Lesbianism was, in a sense, both the logical outcome of cultural relativism and its driving force. The big scandal is that academe lent intellectual credibility—the anthropology profession is still at it—to what is so manifestly a rationalization of unresolved personal sexual conflicts. As Reo Fortune said, Mead's anthropology "was a dishonest way of treating your private affairs".

Anyone who doubts that lust darkens the mind need only study the biography of Margaret Mead. By the end of her life, Mead could advocate just about anything and everything, no matter how absurd or pernicious, and get away with it. In the late forties she and her lover Geoffrey Gorer proposed the "swaddling hypothesis" as the best way of understanding the Russian personality. "We've got to pursue swaddling in every direction including metaphors or any kind of figures of speech", they claimed, which prompted the generally sympathetic Jane Howard to conclude "This statement was not their finest moment."[78]

Mead had become, in Howard's estimation, "a messenger, then a prophet, now a high-class advice columnist".[79] In 1974 Mead declared that an ideal society would consist of people who were homosexual in their youth and again in their old age and heterosexual in the middle of their lives.[80] In 1969

[78] Howard, *Mead*, p. 278.
[79] Ibid., p. 390.
[80] Ibid., p. 367.

she advocated the decriminalization of marijuana. Howard gives no indication of whether Mead smoked marijuana; however, she does mention a Dexedrine prescription,[81] the procurement of which became part of the duties of her support staff.

With fame Mead became more and more oracular, less easy to get along with, and less and less comfortable with herself when she was alone. Empty time was something she found intolerable.

Toward the end of her life, Mead also got more and more deeply involved in the occult. In the late thirties both Mead and Benedict were visiting a medium in Harlem. Mead had always been favorably disposed toward the occult. After being diagnosed as having cancer, Mead started visiting a Chilean psychic healer who called herself the Reverend Carmen diBarazza. At their first meeting, Mead asked diBarazza, "Do you see more people in this room than we do? Do you see the tall one and the short one?"[82] Mead was referring to her "spirit guides—every tribe I've ever been to has seen them with me."[83] Some people found the fact that the noted social scientist was consorting with faith healers incongruous. Howard quotes someone who knew Mead as saying: "Many of Margaret's friends were most anxious lest anyone know that she, this public essence of rationality, went to a faith healer. In that case they were jolly lucky that the *National Enquirer* didn't find out."[84] As Howard notes, though, "the October 31, 1978, issue of the *Star* carried an article headlined "Famed Scientist Calls Faith Healer to Bedside in Bid to Beat Cancer".[85] Needless to say, the bid failed. Mead died at 9:20 on the morning of November 15, 1978.

Her legacy has proven to be shorter-lived than her eulogists led us to believe. It ended, aside from a few pockets of self-interest in the anthropology profession, less than five years later. We, in retrospect, are left to ponder not so much the fate of one ambitious woman but rather the collapse of intellectual standards that her career bespoke and the fact that what so many people thought was an intellectual breakthrough was really only sex on the brain.

[81] Ibid., p. 327.
[82] Ibid., p. 412.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid., p. 413.
[85] Ibid.

Chapter 2

BLUE LAGOON SOCIAL STUDIES

As part of his attempt to understand what he terms the "liberal death wish", P. T. Bauer devotes an entire chapter of his book *Equality, the Third World and Economic Delusion*[1] to analysis of Ali Mazrui's 1979 Reith Lectures, subsequently published under the title *The African Condition.*[2] Professor Mazrui, a Kenyan educated in Western-financed schools in Africa as well as universities in England and the United States, has a point of view that is easy enough to understand. He feels that "the decline of Western civilization might well be at hand."[3] And furthermore that "it is in the interest of humanity that such a decline take place, allowing the different segments of the human race to enjoy a more equitable share not only of the resources of the planet but also of the capacity to control the march of history."[4]

Professor Mazrui's aspirations are not difficult to understand. Controlling the so-called "march of history" has been the ardent wish of despots and megalomaniacs since the dawn of history. What gives Bauer problems is trying to understand why the West is so avid to cooperate in its own self-annihilation. And here Bauer can only pose questions without answers.

> How does it come about that African rulers whose military and economic resources are negligible are yet taken seriously and exercise such influence as, say, President Nyerere? Why does the West abase itself before him or Mr. Kaunda, rulers whose own resources are extremely meager and who could not survive without large-scale Western help? One factor is the

[1] P. T. Bauer, *Equality, the Third World, and Economic Delusion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).

[2] Ali Mazrui, *The African Condition: A Political Diagnosis* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

[3] Bauer, p. 191.

[4] Ibid.

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> unfounded but widespread and much articulated feeling of guilt in the West. Conflict and dissension in the West is another. There are many people in the West who have come to dislike, or even to hate, their own society and its institutions, or who long for more money and power or for greater status. They often look to Third World spokesmen and politicians as aliens or instruments in a civil conflict. Mere ignorance does not explain prevailing attitudes, because ignorance by itself is neutral and does not therefore account for a particular slant of opinion.[5]

Bauer is talking about Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere here, but he could just as easily be talking about the meteoric academic career of Professor Ali A. Mazrui himself, who has done quite well for himself since the Reith lectures. In 1990 Mazrui was lured away from the University of Michigan by the State University of New York for a package that will cost the otherwise cash-strapped university $325,000 a year.[6] Mazrui's salary was featured prominently in a February 12, 1990, *Newsweek* article as "the latest beneficiary of a bidding war for top scholars that is escalating among the nation's most select private and public universities".[7] True to the form already sketched out by Bauer, Mazrui's first act upon taking the Albert Schweitzer Chair at SUNY Binghamton was to denounce the Belgian doctor, scholar, and humanitarian as a racist. Mazrui not only attacked Schweitzer, whose Christian faith motivated him to become a medical missionary to Africa, he attacked Christianity as well, claiming that "those who profess Christianity often have inflicted punishment with fire."

In addition to his duties as holder of the Schweitzer Chair at SUNY Binghamton, Professor Mazrui has a post on the committee responsible for the revision of the social studies curriculum of the state of New York. Mazrui succeeds the notorious Leonard Jeffries, whose even more notorious "curriculum of inclusion" had to be withdrawn after almost universal public outrage at its racist ranting. Mazrui's appointment in the place of the departed Jeffries bespeaks an attempt to achieve the same ends by more diplomatic means. It is more than anything else a triumph of style over substance, which has remained essentially the same.

Then as now, Mr. Bauer's question remains unanswered. Why does the West feel obliged to promote people and curricula that call for its own demise? Before we can answer that question we have to make clear what we mean by the West. It is this failure to make distinctions that lies at the heart of Bauer's inability to answer his own questions. The West, Western culture, whatever

[5] Ibid., p. 210.

[6] David Rossie, "SUNY bids $500,000 for One Prof", *Press and Sun Bulletin,* May 28, 1989. Rossie puts the figure at $500,000.

[7] Connie Leslie, "Let's Buy a Physicist or Two", *Newsweek,* February 12, 1990, p. 60.

we want to term it, is essentially the absorption of the Greek philosophical tradition and the Mosaic moral law into Christianity and the adoption of Christianity by the nations of the former Roman empire and nations of Europe as the basis for a culture that would emerge gradually over the next one thousand years. The West is essentially the European enculturation of Christianity, and that enculturation led to an outburst of creativity unprecedented in the world. In his Templeton lectures, Rev. Stanley Jaki, O.S.B., makes the point that science arose in the West because of the Christian belief that the world was created by God as good and therefore worthy of study, as a predictable and ultimately understandable manifestation of the divine mind. If the world is just Maya, the veil of illusion, then there is no compelling reason for a culture that believes this to devote much hard work to studying it. Portrait painting, to give another example of the interaction between culture and religion, did not thrive in Aztec Mexico, where human beings were expendable objects of human sacrifice. The West arose out of a Christian matrix and created a culture that, for better or worse, conquered the world. Ever since the rise of Western technology, however, a persistent fantasy has arisen of taking the fruits of that culture, e.g., science and technology, without regard to the roots, i.e., the Judeo-Christian tradition. The Faust legend in its various permutations is just one expression of this latent desire. Rousseau's noble savage is another. Nazi racism is a similar fantasy, attempting to attribute the achievement of the West to the mythical qualities inherent in Aryan "blood". Afrocentrism and multiculturalism, as paradoxical as this may seem, are manifestations of the same sort of thing.

The prime anti-Western fantasy for our age, however, was expressed by Nietzsche. Two years after hearing the piano score of Wagner's epoch-making opera *Tristan and Isolde,* Nietzsche made a lifelong commitment to sexual revolution by deliberately infecting himself with syphilis in a Leipzig brothel. Thomas Mann saw in that gesture an act of "demonic consecration". Whatever the motivation, Nietzsche was outraged when Wagner had second thoughts. When Wagner "prostrated himself before the cross" by writing *Parsifal,* Nietzsche flew into a rage not only against Wagner but against German music and all of Europe as well. Turning his disease-damaged eyes southward, he began to discern what he termed the "lewd melancholy" across the Mediterranean. As an antidote to Wagner's prostration before the cross, Nietzsche discovered Africa. "This music", Nietzsche writes, describing his impression of Bizet's *Carmen,*

> is lively, but its liveliness is neither French nor German. Its liveliness is African. It has this destiny; its happiness is short, sudden, and without pardon. I envy Bizet, therefore, because he has the courage to give expres-

> sion to this sensibility, a sensibility which up 'til this time had no expression in European music, a more southern, browner, more burned sensibility.... How the yellow afternoons of this happiness give us pleasure! We look out and believe that we have never seen the sea calmer. And how this moorish dance speaks to us so tranquilly! How even our insatiability learns satiety from its lewd melancholy! Finally we have a love that has been transposed back to nature. Not the love of some "higher virgin"! No Senta sentimentality! Rather love as fate, as fatality, cynical, without guilt, cruel—and as a result just like nature. That love which is war in its means, and at its basis the deadly hatred of the sexes [my translation].[8]

The attraction here is obviously sexual. Africa was now to fulfill the unfulfilled promise of sexual liberation that Nietzsche first heard in *Tristan and Isolde.* Nietzsche was not alone in expressing this desire. Jung found himself drawn to Africa for precisely the same reasons. Africa was "where I longed to be: in a non-European country where no European language was spoken and no Christian conceptions prevailed...."[9] It was a place amenable to the desire of certain Europeans for release from what they considered the burden of the moral law, specifically sexual morality. Margaret Mead discovered the same thing in Samoa. She told the liberated ladies at Barnard in the 1920s just what they wanted to hear, namely, that in the state of nature people didn't take adultery seriously. For lack of a better name, we will call this intellectual construct *Blue Lagoon* anthropology. It and its variants have been the deepest aspiration of modern intellectuals.

Nietzsche had discovered Africa as the antidote for Western, i.e., Christian culture, and we have been paying the price ever since. The whole "curriculum of inclusion" in New York State and across the universities of this country fits neatly into this cultural pattern. Mazrui is being paid so handsomely not so much to attack the West as to disconnect the West from its Christian roots. Africa, as used by the cultural revolutionaries of the West, is simply secularization carried to its logical conclusion. The fact that Africa positively teems with Christians means nothing to Mazrui, who becomes the official interpreter of Africa for the purposes of Western secularism.

Professor Mazrui himself makes the connection between his version of Africa and the inexorable march of the secular ideal clear in remarks he made at a panel discussion held on the SUNY–Binghamton campus on September 24, 1991, on the topic "The Politics of University Education in the '90s". According to Mazrui,

[8] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Der Fall Wagner* in *Werke,* II (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1955), p. 906.

[9] C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections,* recorded and edited by Aniela Jaffe, translated from the German by Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Vintage, 1961), p. 238.

the history of higher education in the western world as a whole has always been a history of a struggle to extend the cultural frontier, and each time the struggle has been resisted by conservatives who in the end have been vanquished.

In the old days in Europe the cultural exclusivity was religious. There was a time at Oxford University when one had to subscribe to the articles of the Church of England to be academically eligible. Harvard University, named after a Puritan minister in the 1630s, was a church-sponsored institution for two centuries. The problem at that time was not Eurocentrism, it was Christocentrism. Harvard was culturally exclusive, but in a religious sense.

The politics of the quota system at American universities was originally intended to restrict the number of Jews admitted in favor of Christians—Christocentrism gone mad. There is still a lot of Christocentrism left at American universities, but most of the university life has been secularized. However, as the twentieth century is coming to an end, we have reached yet another cultural frontier. Just as Harvard once had to try and shed off Christocentrism, all American campuses now must shed off excessive Eurocentrism. As in the past, the conservatives are resisting, and I believe, as in the past, the conservatives will be defeated.

Africa is once again being compelled to take up the white man's burden in the West's inexorable march toward secularism. From this perspective, the answer to Mr. Bauer's question comes easy. The liberals' death wish really has to do with the death of the moral law. The liberals are willing to pay just about any price for the freedom to act out their sexual compulsions. In this sense Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* is still the seminal document of our age. People whose heritage is both Christian and European, people like Nietzsche, Jung, Margaret Mead, and presumably the committee for the revision of the social studies curriculum in New York State, look south to tropical lands like those in equatorial Africa and the South Pacific as a release from the burdens of the Judeo-Christian heritage of the West. Like Jack Kerouac, the author of the beatnik novel *On the Road,* the New York State education commissioner casts a longing glance toward the black continent, "wishing I were a Negro, feeling that the best the white world had offered was not enough ecstasy for me, not enough life, joy, kicks, darkness, music, not enough night."[10] What Kerouac saw in the Negro district in Denver was "spade kicks",[11] i.e., a racially sanctioned repeal of sexual prohibition. New York State's multicultural social studies curriculum, with its relentless relativism and deconstructive scepticism ("The subject matter content should be treated as socially constructed

[10] Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Penguin, 1957, 1976), p. 180.
[11] Ibid., p. 252.

and therefore tentative—as is all knowledge.")[12] is nothing more than an updated form of "spade kicks". It is the secularists' use of race as the final attempt to throw off the vestiges of the moral law, which they inevitably associate with the Judeo-Christian West.

This is why Professor Mazrui gets paid so handsomely. He is being paid not so much to attack the West as he is to calm the sexually troubled consciences of the white boys who want to be liberated from the moral law. That liberation is the essence of secularism; and the liberals have been using race as the prime instrument in the transvaluation of all values arguably since the Harlem Renaissance but most certainly since the days of the civil rights movement.

It is a fundamentally dishonest game in more ways than one. A university press release describes Mazrui as "an Africanist" who "has devoted much of his career to explaining Africa to the Western world and the Western world to Africans". In this regard Mazrui is a sort of double agent. In the United States he gets paid to accuse the West of genocide against blacks and urge that this point of view be implemented in New York State's social studies curriculum. But what does he do in Africa? In Africa he is a consultant for the World Bank. And what does the World Bank do in Africa? It pushes for population control policies, i.e., abortion, sterilization, and contraception. And how do the Africans feel about these population control policies? Innocent Ugochukwu, writing in a Nigerian weekly, called on his fellow Nigerians to defend themselves against what he called "the genocidal programmes" of the West.[13] Bishop M. O. Unegbu of Owerri criticized an AID-sponsored condom campaign in Nigeria in similar terms. "The West", he claimed, "is promoting condoms and other contraceptives in Third World countries because they are afraid of the consequences of continued increase in black populations."[14] On September 13, 1991, the Nigerian Catholic bishops' conference condemned population control programs that promoted abortion, sterilization, and artificial contraception and claimed that "the best solution for the problem of unwanted pregnancies is a good, moral, and disciplined life."[15]

It seems a safe bet that this is one manifestation of African culture that will not make it into the newly proposed social studies curriculum in New York

[12] "One Nation, Many Peoples: A Declaration of Cultural Interdependence", The Report of the New York State Social Studies Review and Development Committee, June 1991, p. 3 of Executive Summary.

[13] "Fight Back, Nigeria", *Glasnost*, published by the Information Project for Africa, P.O. Box 43345, Washington, D.C. 20010 (February 1992), p. 2.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Archbishop A. O. Okogie, President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, and Bishop F. F. Alonge, Secretary, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, "Communique", September 13, 1992, p. 4.

State. Hiring Professor Mazrui as a consultant all but ensures that the old tradition of the white man hiring a black man to act out his fantasies of sexual liberation will continue. The Sobol-Mazrui collaboration is an updated version of what Carl Van Vechten proposed in his Harlem Renaissance novel *Nigger Heaven*. The white editor tells the aspiring young black writer to do something on "the Negro fast set" or "a capital yarn about a Negro pimp" as long as "the milieu is correct".[16] Multiculturalism is a renewed attempt to get what the white moderns wanted out of the Harlem Renaissance; the revised curriculum of inclusion is the 1990s version of *Nigger Heaven*.

So Professor Mazrui is in the enviable position of having his cake and eating it too. He gets to extort money from the easily blackmailed conscience of the sexually troubled secular West, which wants to use race as a tool in the transvaluation of all values, and he gets to collect again as an advisor to the World Bank, which is perpetrating abortion and birth control genocide on his fellow Africans. The common denominator, both here and in Africa, is secularism. As the spread of AIDS has shown, the real death wish of the West is its persistent desire to engage in sexual liberation. As Professor Mazrui has discovered, Africans of a sufficiently secular persuasion can reap impressive financial rewards by pandering to the white desire for sexual liberation as exhibited by the relativists on the curriculum committee and the condom-hawkers at the World Bank. The children in New York get Blue Lagoon Social Studies and the Nigerians get abortion, sterilization, and contraception forced down their throats. And the liberals? Like Dean Moriarity, they get "spade kicks" and, like Gustav Aschenbach, the fulfillment of their sexual fantasies in death.

[16] Carl Van Vechten, *Nigger Heaven* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1926), p. 226.

Chapter 3

HOMOSEXUAL AS SUBVERSIVE: THE DOUBLE LIFE OF SIR ANTHONY BLUNT

On Thursday, November 15, 1979, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher announced to a hushed House of Commons that Sir Anthony Blunt, then Surveyor of the Queen's pictures, former director of the Courtauld Art Institute, Knight Commander of the Victorian Order, widely acclaimed expert on Poussin, and during World War II member of the British intelligence agency MI5, was a Soviet spy. According to the statement read by Thatcher, Blunt "had acted as a talent spotter for Russian intelligence before the war, when he was a don at Cambridge, and had passed information regularly to the Russians while he was a member of the Security Service between 1940 and 1945."[1] In 1964, when confronted with an enclosing net of evidence against him, Blunt confessed to British intelligence agents in exchange for immunity from prosecution. According to Thatcher, the Queen's private secretary was informed of Blunt's confession in April of 1964; however, Blunt was not required to resign from his position in the Royal Household, because the position was not considered a security risk and because the authorities were still interested in Blunt's cooperation. In addition to passing valuable but unspecified information on the Russians during World War II, Blunt also used his connections with the Soviets to arrange for the defection of fellow spies Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess in 1951. Thatcher did not say whether he cooperated in the defection of the so-called "Third Man", Kim Philby, in 1963 but claimed to Commons that "the exposure and defection of Philby in January 1963 produced nothing which implicated Blunt."[2] At the close of her statement she reiterated the claim that the British government had been making since 1964 when Blunt confessed; that "apart

[1] Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman, *Conspiracy of Silence: The Secret Life of Anthony Blunt* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1987), p. ix.
[2] Ibid.

from his own, damning testimony, there had never been any firm evidence against him."[3]

The announcement, as might be expected, caused a sensation. Blunt was almost immediately stripped of his knighthood. The newspapers, who had been on the case for almost thirty years, discovered one more chapter in a story whose ever-widening ramifications were implicating one English institution after another. "TRAITOR AT THE QUEEN'S RIGHT HAND", screamed the *Daily Mail* the next day. Part of the outrage was attributable to the protection that the traitor got from many in obviously high places, not excluding the Queen herself, who spoke glowingly of Blunt when he retired from his royal appointment in 1978. Part of it was attributable to the fact that other less well-placed traitors had gone to jail over espionage that had been equally bad for the country. Part of it was due to the fact that the story of espionage had continued for so long, but part as well was due to the fact that the Thatcher statement raised as many questions as it answered. Most of them centered on the relationship between intelligence services and the government and the government and the monarchy, but there were more important cultural questions as well. When looked at from a distance the real shock resulting from the revelations about Blunt comes, not from the fact that treason sprang from someone in the Queen's household, although that is from an Englishman's point of view shocking enough, but that it sprang from the heart of the English intellectual establishment. Blunt was not a foreign agent; he was, if not impeccably, then quintessentially British. He had gone from an elite public school (Marlborough) to one of England's two elite universities (Cambridge) and from there had moved just as naturally into the elite of the wartime civil service (MI5), where he was accepted as part of the establishment and given positions of trust that he betrayed. It was his position securely in the middle of the English establishment that allowed him to inflict maximal damage on his country.

Part of the shock had to do with the enigma surrounding Blunt and the incongruity of the establishment being involved in espionage. Malcolm Muggeridge, who knew the whole spy ring because of his work with MI6 during the war, finds the Blunt case particularly perplexing:

> Even . . . all those years after the war I still couldn't believe that this rather aesthetic, snobbish character should really have wanted to promote the Soviet Union. The thing that he was most concerned about was art and yet the art of the Soviet Union is, to put it mildly, the most appalling that ever existed. I still don't understand as a matter of fact.[4]

[3] Ibid., p. x.
[4] Ibid., pp. 256–57.

Then almost as an afterthought Muggeridge puts forth the only explanation that makes any sense to him: "My own opinion is that the real motive is that [Blunt] was madly, crazily in love with Burgess."[5] According to Muggeridge, the fact that Blunt was a homosexual is the key to resolving the paradox of the snobbish employee of the Royal Household whose real life is dedicated to the proletarian masses and the aesthete whose real allegiance was to communism.

Upon closer examination, the contradictions in Blunt's life resolve themselves one by one through a series of interlocking propositions. The key to understanding Blunt's life was his education, not simply the where of it—Marlborough and Cambridge—but the when of it as well: his was the generation that spanned the twenties and the thirties. The key to understanding his education is what has come to be known as modernity—the great rebellion against fixed moral norms and religious beliefs that began before the First World War and reached its high tide—at least in certain circles—in the 1920s. In England modernity has become synonymous with a group of writers and artists loosely known as Bloomsbury. By the 1920s, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, Lytton Strachey, John Maynard Keynes, Roger Fry, Clive Bell—to name just the core of the group—had virtually reformed English taste by the time Blunt arrived at Cambridge.

The connections are even closer than that. Virtually all the Bloomsberries were associated with a secret society at Cambridge known variously as the Cambridge Conversazione Society, or, more simply, the Apostles. Shortly after Blunt returned to Cambridge in 1928, he was asked to join that secret society, which because of its constitution and the fact the former members—known as "angels"—still kept up contact with the current Apostles—allowed him direct contact with people like E. M. Forster and the Bloomsbury ethos.

The final connection can now be made as a result of the breakthrough in contemporary biography that is probably the only good coming out of the sexual revolution. Now we get to know about the sex lives of the famous. When Sir Roy Harrod wrote what was then considered the definitive biography of John Maynard Keynes in 1951, he did not mention the fact that Keynes was a homosexual; Lionel Trilling's study of Forster, which appeared in the forties, was like Harrod's biography in that it failed to mention Forster's homosexuality; unlike it in that the information was probably not deliberately withheld.

Beginning with Michael Holroyd's biography of Lytton Strachey, which appeared in the late sixties, the cat gradually began to emerge from the bag. In 1983 Robert Skidelsky devoted a good deal of time in his biography to explaining how knowledge of Keynes' homosexuality is essential to under-

[5] Ibid., p. 257.

standing him as a man and thinker. The cat emerging from the bag (or the closet) gives us our third clue in understanding Blunt.

The key to understanding modernity (in England at least) is sodomy. "Love the Beloved Republic", writes Gertrude Himmelfarb, citing a maxim of E. M. Forster,

> —that motto is a cruel parody of Bloomsbury. Only recently have we discovered how large a part love played among its members and what form it took.... It is now apparent that what was being suppressed was not the fact of homosexuality itself; that was far too commonplace to qualify as a revelation, let alone to warrant suppression. The true revelation, which first emerged in Michael Holroyd's two-volume biography of Lytton Strachey in 1967–68 and which has since been confirmed in a host of memoirs and biographies... is the compulsive and promiscuous nature of that homosexuality.[6]

Himmelfarb goes on to give a fairly detailed analysis of who was doing what and to whom, a scenario that takes up the better part of a page: "In 1907, for example, Strachey discovered that his lover (and cousin) Duncan Grant was also having an affair with Arthur Hobhouse, who, in turn, was having an affair with Keynes. The following year Strachey was even more distressed to learn that Grant was now having an affair with Keynes."[7] Then the permutations become really complicated.

For Bloomsbury, and therefore for Blunt as well, homosexuality and modernism were inextricably intertwined. If the river of modernity began with the loss of faith and ended in the fen of treason, it got there by flowing through the peculiar idealization of sodomy that characterized English public-school and university education in the first three decades of the twentieth century. In retrospect one could say that Blunt's treason was a natural consequence of his education. If he found it easy to be a traitor, it was because modernity in England, or Bloomsbury, was bound up with living a number of double lives. There was the double life of the homosexual, the double life of the member of a secret society like the Apostles, whose "talk would be spiced with blasphemy and sexual innuendo, much as it had been at school",[8] and the double life of the Soviet agent. These worlds nested inside each other like Chinese boxes. In retrospect and with the more acute hindsight provided by the recent spate of revisionist biography, modernity turns out to have been just what Bloomsbury has been claiming it was (privately, albeit) all along. It

[6] Gertrude Himmelfarb, "From Clapham to Bloomsbury: A Genealogy of Morals", *Commentary*, February 1985, p. 43.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Robert Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes* (New York: Viking, 1983), p. 116.

was "the Higher Sodomy".[9] "It's madness of us", Lytton Strachey wrote to John Maynard Keynes in a moment of candor that characterized his letters but not his public writings, "to dream of making dowagers understand that feelings are good when we say in the same breath that the best ones are sodomitical".[10] Modernity was the exoteric version of Bloomsbury biography; it was a radically homosexual vision of the world and therefore of its very nature subversive; treason was its logical outcome.

Blunt himself provides the connection. In his memoir *A Chapter of Accidents,* published in 1972, Goronwy Rees describes a meeting with Blunt in 1951, shortly after Maclean and Burgess had disappeared from England. (It was only after five years' absence that they surfaced publicly in Moscow.) According to Rees, Blunt epitomized "the Cambridge liberal conscience at its very best, reasonable, sensible and firm in the faith that personal relations are the highest of all human values".[11] In arguing against Rees informing the authorities of Burgess' Soviet connections, Blunt cited E. M. Forster's famous aphorism: "If I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country."[12] It was a line that Blunt had learned at Cambridge; it bespoke a line of reasoning that Blunt was to use for the rest of his life. In his statement to the *Times* on November 20, 1979, Blunt claimed that his work for the Soviets was a case of "political conscience against loyalty to country". "I chose conscience", he said sanctimoniously. "When I later realized the true facts about Russia I was prevented from taking any action by personal loyalty; I could not denounce my friends."[13]

It was clear that England had come a long way since the days when Samuel Johnson described patriotism as the last refuge of a scoundrel. It was equally clear, for those who took the time to learn, that Blunt was speaking from the heart of the Bloomsbury tradition in claiming friendship and "conscience" as his justification for treason. In a memoir written in 1938, entitled "My Early Beliefs", John Maynard Keynes described the influence G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica,* which appeared in 1903, one year after Keynes entered Cambridge, had on his fellow Apostles:

> The influence was not only overwhelming; but it was the exact opposite of what Strachey used to call *funeste;* it was exciting, exhilarating, the beginning of a renaissance, the opening of a new heaven on a new earth, we were the forerunners of a new dispensation, we were not afraid of anything. . . . We accepted Moore's religion, so to speak, and discarded his morals. Indeed, in

[9] Ibid., p. 128.
[10] Himmelfarb, p. 44.
[11] Penrose and Freeman, p. 355.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.

> our opinion, one of the greatest advantages of his religion, was that it made morals unnecessary. . . . Nothing mattered except states of mind, our own and other people's of course, but chiefly our own. . . . The appropriate subjects of passionate contemplation and communion were a beloved person, beauty and truth and one's prime objects in life were love, the creation and enjoyment of aesthetic experience and the pursuit of knowledge. Of these love came a long way first.[14]

Keynes was referring specifically to the chapter in Moore's *Principia* entitled "The Ideal", in which he wrote:

> By far the most valuable things, which we know or can imagine, are certain states of consciousness, which may be roughly described as the pleasures of human intercourse and the enjoyment of beautiful objects.[15]

Moore, who was not a homosexual, seems to have understood "the pleasures of human intercourse" in a different sense than his disciples did, a fact admitted by Keynes in his memoir. "Concentration on moments of communion", according to Keynes, "between a pair of lovers got thoroughly mixed up with the, once rejected, pleasure. The pattern of life would sometimes become no better than a succession of permutations of short sharp superficial 'intrigues', as we called them."[16] In fact Moore's value to the Bloomsbury generation seems to have been little more than that of providing a bridge from the Victorian world of social duty cut off from religious dogma to the Edwardian world of self-indulgence thinly veiled as aesthetic experience. Describing his own beliefs and those of the Bloomsbury clique, Keynes continues:

> We entirely repudiated a personal liability on us to obey general rules. We claimed the right to judge every individual case on its merits, and the wisdom, experience and self-control to do so successfully. This was a very important part of our faith, violently and aggressively held, and for the outer world it was our most obvious and dangerous characteristic. We repudiated entirely customary morals, conventions and traditional wisdom. We were, that is to say, in the strict sense of the term, immoralists. . . . In short, we repudiated all versions of the doctrine of original sin, of there being insane and irrational springs of wickedness in most men.[17]

Moore's "religion", at least as interpreted by his disciples, was simply an elaborate rationalization of doing what one wanted to do, specifically in the realm of sexual (most specifically homosexual) behavior, by construing those

[14] John Maynard Keynes, "My Early Beliefs", in *Two Memoirs: Dr. Melchior, a Defeated Enemy, and My Early Beliefs* (London: Har Davis, 1949), p. 82.

[15] Himmelfarb, p. 40.

[16] Keynes, pp. 101–2.

[17] Ibid., pp. 97–99.

"sodomitical" feelings, to use Strachey's term, as some sort of aesthetic—and, therefore, good—experience.

Himmelfarb makes much the same point, claiming that "Bloomsbury . . . provided no ground, either in utility or in religion, for doing anything save what one wanted to do."[18] Himmelfarb is especially acute in sketching out the trajectory of this intellectual, spiritual, and moral decay, from Evangelical Christianity, specifically the Clapham sect, whose main claim to distinction is the role they played in the abolition of slavery, to Victorian respectability masking loss of faith, to Bloomsbury immoralism. The decline goes farther, as the career of Anthony Blunt will show, but Himmelfarb confines herself to Bloomsbury and its immediate antecedents:

> James Stephen, a passionate Evangelical and dedicated abolitionist, moved to Clapham to be close to the sect and married into it when he took as his second wife Wilberforce's widowed sister. Like the Macaulays, each generation of Stephens witnessed a successive diminution of religious faith. Leslie Stephen, the grandson of James and the father of four of the charter members of Bloomsbury [including Virginia Woolf], was so far gone in disbelief as to call himself an agnostic. But like most agnostics of that late Victorian generation, he believed irreligion to be entirely compatible with the most rigorous and conventional morality. His credo was simple: "I now believe in nothing, but I do not the less believe in morality, etc. etc. I mean to live and die like a gentleman if possible."[19]

Leslie Stephen lost his faith in the 1860s as a direct result of the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species,* which appeared in 1859. His solution to the problems that loss entailed was to turn religion into an ethos. The Christian who had become the Christian gentleman was henceforth to behave as simply the gentleman, making up in propriety what he had lost in dogma. It was a solution that many Victorians adopted. It was also a solution that was unable to live beyond the generation that engendered it. If the divine sanctions had been removed from human behavior, why should one behave as if they were still there, especially if the forces the Victorian ethos sought to suppress, specifically sexual feelings, were so insistent.

That denial of the truths one can know about God should lead to sodomy is in some sense a mystery; however, it is a mystery that can be fairly well documented, from Paul's epistle to the Romans to any objective view of modern British history. Robert Graves mentions what might be called the homoerotic ethos of the English public school in *Good-bye to All That* from the point of view of one who was involved in it and later escaped from it.

[18] Himmelfarb, p. 40.
[19] Ibid., p. 37.

Malcolm Muggeridge, writing about his own experience with the Cambridge-educated during the war, claimed that homosexuality was "an accepted practice that was caught up with the ethos of having been to a boarding school".

> Public schoolboys, whatever their particular school—from the most famous like Eton, to the most obscure—had a language of their own which I scarcely understood, games they played which I could neither play nor interest myself in, ways and attitudes which they took for granted but which were foreign to me—for instance, their acceptance of sodomy as more or less normal behaviour. . . . The University, when I was there, was very largely a projection of public school life and mores, and a similar atmosphere of homosexuality tended to prevail. There was also a hangover from Wildean decadence, with aesthetes who dressed in velvet, painted their rooms in strange colours, hung Aubrey Beardsley prints on their walls and read *Les Fleurs du Mal.* The nearest I came to being personally involved in these was when a High Church ordinand after dinner read to me from Swinburne's *Songs before Sunrise* in a darkened room faintly smelling of incense. I emerged unscathed.[20]

A reading of the biographies of many eminent Edwardians, however, will show that many did not emerge unscathed. Forster and Strachey were lifelong homosexuals; Keynes was one for the greater part of his life, until he married the ballerina Lydia Lopokova. The practice of homosexuality had its effect on all of them, an effect that is only now being appreciated. In his recent biography of Keynes, Robert Skidelsky takes the position that "no 'life' of Keynes which left out such central emotional episodes as his love affair with the painter Duncan Grant could seriously claim to be such."[21] "It was obvious", Skidelsky continued, "that this would be to hand ammunition to critics of Keynesian economics. I took the view that Keynesian economics were robust enough to survive revelations about Keynes's private life."[22]

The fact that Skidelsky feels that revelations about Keynes' private life may be damaging to his stature as an economist is itself indicative of a revolution in scholarly attitude. But beyond that there is also the fact that in the age of crushing government deficits, the economics that mortgages the future to pay for present consumption may bespeak a vision that is radically flawed. That this vision is characteristically homosexual is now coming to be better appreciated. The real revelation of the revisionist biographies is that human nature does not allow itself to be so neatly sealed off in mutually exclusive compartments. A man confirmed in homosexual behavior will have a radically different view of the world than someone, say, who tries to follow the

[20] Penrose and Freeman, p. 47.
[21] Skidelsky, p. xv.
[22] Ibid.

Christian view of sexuality as being inextricably bound with procreation and limited in expression to a partner in marriage. Economics, like sexuality, is based upon human nature. In the classical scheme of things it was the intermediary science between ethics and politics, all of which were part of practical wisdom, the way to achieve not the true but the good in human affairs. In fact economics taken etymologically has its roots in the Greek word *oikos,* meaning household, so the classical tradition was wiser than it seemed in expressing the connection between sexual and economic behavior, whose traditional nexus was the household or family. The homosexual vision has a peculiar view of human sexuality and the family, and therefore it should come as no surprise that its view of economic exchange should bespeak a similar type of ipsation.

Skidelsky mentions the view of Sir William Rees-Mogg, who "argued that Keynes' rejection of 'general rules', which his homosexuality reinforced, led him to reject the 'gold standard which provided an automatic control of monetary inflation.' "[23] Similarly, "Ramsay MacDonald felt that the 'homosexual culture' in which Keynes lived his early life explained his ambivalent attitude to authority: 'Keynes . . . was not a true member of the Establishment after all. He merely took its shilling and wore its coat. Emotionally he was always an outsider, with outsider values and outsider loyalties.' "[24]

Attempting to establish the connection between Keynes' life and work provides the Skidelsky biography with some of its best moments, moments denied the earlier Harrod biography because Sir Roy Harrod refused to admit the existence much less the significance of Keynes' homosexuality. The fact remains that deficit economics bespeaks a radically "childless" vision, one in which present pleasures are fostered over building for future generations. Unlike most of Bloomsbury, Keynes was able to implement his vision in a unique way. The workings of the economy were subordinated to his idea of how the fruits of the economy might best be enjoyed by Keynes and those who shared his views. Keynes' economic views were a part of his views of "the good life", a point Skidelsky makes and yet doesn't make as evidenced in the following passage:

> No one who has read Keynes's correspondence with Lytton Strachey or Duncan Grant can doubt that homosexuality for him was not just a sexual preference, but part of the "good life" as he then defined it; and while no one would want to argue that knowlege of Keynes's sexual and emotional leanings gives one a better understanding of his economic theory, there are interesting connections to be made between his economic outlook and what Schumpeter calls his "childless vision". . . .[25]

[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., p. xvi.
[25] Ibid., p. xxii.

Himmelfarb makes the same point more forcefully in her essay. "There is a discernible connection", she writes,

> between the Bloomsbury ethos, which puts a premium on immediate and present satisfactions, and Keynesian economics, which is based entirely on the shortrun and precludes any long-term judgments. (Keynes's famous remark, "In the long run we are all dead", also has an obvious connection with his homosexuality—what Schumpeter delicately spoke of as his "childless vision".) The ethos was reflected as well in the Keynesian doctrine that consumption rather than saving is the source of economic growth—indeed that thrift is economically and socially harmful.[26]

Himmelfarb then cites a passage from Keynes' *The Economic Consequences of the Peace,* in which he attacks the idea of saving as a remnant of Puritanism:

> There grew around the non-consumption of the cake all those instincts of puritanism which in other ages has withdrawn itself from the world and has neglected the arts of production as well as those of enjoyment. And so the cake increased; but to what end was not clearly contemplated. Individuals would be exhorted not so much to abstain as to defer and to cultivate the pleasures of security and anticipation. Saving was for old age or for your children; but this was only in theory—the virtue of the cake was that it was never to be consumed, neither by you nor by your children after you.[27]

Keynes, of course, made the connection between his economic theories and his attitude toward religion and morals himself, even while an undergraduate. "Sir," he wrote to his friend Bernard Swithinbank on December 15, 1903, "I hate all priests and protectionists. . . . Free Trade and free thought! Down with pontiffs and tariffs. Down with those who declare we are dumped and damned. Away with all schemes of redemption or retaliation."[28]

Joseph Schumpeter, in an especially acute essay on Keynes published in 1951, adverted delicately to *"the kind of Englishman"* [his emphasis] Keynes was and how this helped explain his economic theories and their shortcomings. Schumpeter, whose psychology is as acute as his economics, describes Keynes as

> the English intellectual, a little *déraciné* and beholding a most uncomfortable situation. He was childless and his philosophy of life was essentially a short-run philosophy. So he turned resolutely to the only "parameter of action" that seemed left to him, both as an Englishman and the kind of Englishman he was—monetary management. Perhaps he thought that it

[26] Himmelfarb, p. 41.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Skidelsky, p. 122.

might heal. He knew for certain that it would soothe—and the return to a gold system at pre-war parity was more than *his* England could stand.[29]

Later in the same essay, Schumpeter explains what he means when he refers to "his" England:

> Many of the men who entered the field of teaching or research in the twenties and thirties had renounced allegiance to the bourgeois scheme of life, the bourgeois scheme of values. Many of them sneered at the profit motive and at the element of personal performance in the capitalist process. But so far as they did not embrace straight socialism, they still had to pay respect to saving—under penalty of losing caste in their own eyes and ranging themselves with what Keynes so tellingly called the economist's "underworld". But Keynes broke their fetters: here, at last, was theoretical doctrine that not only obliterated the personal element and was, if not mechanistic itself, at least mechanizable, but also smashed the pillar into dust; a doctrine that may not actually say but easily be made to say both that "who tries to save destroys capital" and that *via* saving, "the unequal distribution of income is the ultimate cause of unemployment". *This* is what the Keynsian Revolution amounts to.[30]

The Apostles were essentially a neo-Gnostic sect, from their penchant for secrecy and their view that homosexuality was a superior form of sexuality to their view that the world broke down into those who were in the society and therefore "real" and those who were outside the society, whose existence was therefore "phenomenal". They were also Gnostic in their belief that knowledge could be divided up into esoteric and exoteric doctrines.

In a letter to his then lover Arthur Hobhouse, Keynes wrote: "I don't think one realizes how very discrete (in the mathematical sense) one's existence is. My doings at school don't seem to have the remotest connection with my doings up here: nor my life in one term with my life in any other."[31] Keynes' life, however, took on a consistency that was as yet unapparent to the undergraduate. It was however the consistency of the double life. Necessary to the homosexual vision is a duality that neatly parallels the distinction between esoteric and exoteric knowledge so congenial—nay, necessary—to the Gnostic view of things. The Bloomsberries' public writings—Keynes' economic theories, Strachey's best-selling *Eminent Victorians,* etc.—were the sodomitical vision for public consumption. Their letters comprise the true esoteric literature of Bloomsbury, a fact that Skidelsky understands well in his biography of

[29] Joseph Schumpeter, *Ten Great Economists from Marx to Keynes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 275.

[30] Ibid., p. 289.

[31] Skidelsky, p. 129.

Keynes. Sodomy, wrote Strachey in a letter to John Sheppard in 1903, "is what all of Us—the terribly intelligent, the unhappy, the artistic, the divided, the overwhelmed—most intimately worship, and most passionately, most vainly love."[32]

Commenting on that letter, Skidelsky writes:

> It was easy to build on an inaptitude for ordinary human contact an ideology of a higher form of love. Keynes and Strachey had been brought up to believe that women were inferior—in mind and body. Love of young men, they believed, was better than love of women. They built an ethical position—the "Higher Sodomy" they called it—on a sexual preference. Keynes was fully alive to the dangers of his choice. Oscar Wilde's conviction and disgrace were recent memories. "So long as no one has anything to do with the lower classes or people off the streets," he wrote to Strachey on 20 June 1906, "and there is some discretion in letters to neutrals, there's not a scrap of risk—or hardly a scrap." In their letters to each other there was less need for discretion. Keynes and Strachey felt that later generations would regard them as pioneers, not criminals. They carefully preserved their correspondence and expected that one day its contents would become public knowledge.[33]

The fact is, though, that Keynes and Strachey and Forster were criminals and to a certain extent adopted a criminal's attitude toward what they came to see as the overwhelmingly heterosexual "Establishment", which had become a shorthand way of describing society itself. Skidelsky claims that the election of Arthur Hobhouse, over whose affections Strachey and Keynes had a falling out, to the Apostles on February 18, 1903, began a whole new phase for that society. Now the criterion for election became good looks rather than mental or spiritual qualities. Bertrand Russell disputes the assertion, but the fact remains that by the 1920s, when Blunt was "born" into the Apostles, it had become a predominantly homosexual organization. As a result it was also an illegal organization, and the society's secrecy and its members' mutual loyalty to each other took on a new meaning in light of the punishment that awaited them if the authorities found out what they were doing. By virtue of their sexual activities alone, members of the Apostles had become a conspiracy of outlaws whose activities required the utmost circumspection, a lesson not lost on Anthony Blunt.

However, the subversion that homosexuality entails goes deeper than simply breaking the law. It entails a subversion of society that goes deeper than that of, say, the person who cheats on his income tax, because it is that much more personal. Perhaps the one Bloomsbury creation that goes farthest in bridging the

[32] Ibid., p. 128.
[33] Ibid.

gap between their exoteric and their esoteric writings is the long-suppressed novel by E. M. Forster, *Maurice,* which according to the blurb on the latest edition is "Now a Major Motion Picture". *Maurice,* unlike the exoteric works of Strachey, Keynes, Woolf, and the rest of Forster, tells about the homosexual conflict with society from the inside, so to speak, from the homosexual point of view. What is surprising about it is how shot through it is with ambivalence.

Maurice begins with the protagonist, whose father is dead and whose life at home is dominated by his mother and two sisters, leaving public school and going to Cambridge, where he meets another undergraduate, Clive Durham. Gradually friendship grows into a full-blown homosexual relationship. In the world of this novel it's hard to tell whether declining religious faith fosters homosexuality or whether homosexuality kills faith. At any rate Forster sees a connection. Discussions of the inadequacy of Christianity seem to have an aphrodisiac effect on the undergraduates Hall and Durham; they become a—necessary, perhaps?—preliminary to sexual activity.

> They talked theology again. Maurice defending the Redemption. He lost. He realized that he had no sense of Christ's existence or of his goodness, and should be positively sorry if there was such a person. His dislike of Christianity grew and became profound. In ten days he gave up communicating, in three weeks he cut out all the chapels he dared. Durham was puzzled by the rapidity. They were both puzzled, and Maurice, although he had lost and yielded all his opinions, had a queer feeling that he was really winning and carrying on a campaign that he had begun last term. . . . Was there not something else behind his new manner and furious iconoclasm? Maurice thought there was. Outwardly in retreat, he thought that his Faith was a pawn well lost; for in capturing it Durham had exposed his heart.[34]

As their involvement in sodomy increases, so also does their opposition to Christianity. Describing Clive Durham, the narrator tells us that "He was obliged . . . to throw over Christianity. Those who base their conduct upon what they are rather than upon what they ought to be, must always throw it over in the end, and besides, between Clive's temperament and that religion there is a secular feud."[35] However, as the rebellion grows and succeeds, the attack on Christianity is transmuted into an attack on Victorian society, which calls itself Christian but really believes only in propriety. Home on vacation, Maurice proclaims his atheism and then is disappointed that his attack on God isn't taken more seriously:

> Maurice's atheism was forgotten. He did not communicate on Easter Sunday, and supposed the row would come then, as in Durham's case. But no one

[34] E. M. Forster, *Maurice: A Novel* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1971, 1987), p. 50.
[35] Ibid., p. 70.

> took any notice, for the suburbs no longer exact Christianity. This disgusted him; it made him look at society with new eyes. Did society, while professing to be so moral and sensitive, really mind anything?[36]

Because religion has provided such ineffectual resistance, society will now bear the brunt of homosexual aggression. Society becomes responsible for the sense of isolation that ensues from the practice of sodomy. At first Maurice lashes out at his family. After trying to talk about Durham with his mother only to have her confuse Clive with a don named Cumberland, "a profound irritation against his womenkind set in. His relations with them hitherto had been trivial but stable, but it seemed iniquitous that anyone should mispronounce the name of the man who was more to him than all the world. Home emasculated everything."[37]

As the involvement in sodomy increases, so also does the threat of aggression against society, which is to say, against women, family, Church, and country. Forster in a "Terminal Note" to the book claims to have created in Maurice "a character who was completely unlike myself or what I supposed myself to be".[38] However, in spite of superficial dissimilarities, the more Forster talks, the more the note of aggression creeps from the voice of the narrator to that of the author. It is clear that they both hold the same grudge based on the same homosexual vision, which longs to perpetrate the same type of aggression against society. "His surroundings", Forster writes of Maurice, "exasperate him by their very normality: mother, two sisters, a comfortable home, a respectable job gradually turn out to be Hell; he must either smash them or be smashed, there is no third course."[39]

After a while the alienation becomes both more deeply internalized and more readily projected. Society is responsible for their condition, and they identify with their condition to the point of seeing themselves as being at war with society. As Clive says to Maurice:

> "I'm a bit of an outlaw, I grant, but it serves these people right. As long as they talk of the unspeakable vice of the Greeks they can't expect fair play. It served my mother right when I slipped up to kiss you before dinner. She would have no mercy if she knew, she wouldn't attempt, wouldn't want to attempt to understand that I feel to you as Pippa to her fiance, only far more nobly, far more deeply, body and soul, no starved medievalism of course, only a—a particular harmony of body and soul that I don't think women have even guessed. But you know."[40]

[36] Ibid., p. 53.
[37] Ibid., p. 52.
[38] Ibid., p. 250.
[39] Ibid., p. 251.
[40] Ibid., p. 90.

The law proscribing homosexual behavior (eventually removed at the recommendation of the Wolfenden Report) takes the brunt of homosexual aggression in Forster's terminal note; however, a close reading of the text itself shows that the grudge against society goes much deeper than that. It goes to the heart of that which makes society as an ongoing entity possible, namely, sexuality, the fact that male and female uniting are the *sine qua non* for further existence of the human race, of which society is the concrete manifestation. The grudge is with nature. The rebellion that began as rejection of God continues its rage against the natural order that God created and of which the homosexual finds himself an unwilling and uncooperative part. Forster's book points out one of the paradoxes of contemporary sexual history. The more the barriers against sodomy fall, the more the rage of the homosexual increases. Midge Decter, in her brilliant essay "The Boys on the Beach" (*Commentary*, September 1980), hints at a causal connection between the cessation of police harassment of homosexuals in New York and the rise of drugs, sadomasochism and the ultimate in self-punishment, suicide. "A homosexual friend," she writes,

> when questioned about whether the scenes of the leather bar in *Cruising*, scenes of an almost unbelievably relentless degradation, were truthful, said they were much exaggerated. Because, he explained, while such places are always packed with masochists, there are usually never enough sadists to go around.... Having to some extent succeeded in staying the hand of the cops..., can it be that they feel the need to supply for themselves the missing ration of brutality? Having to a very great extent overcome the revulsion of common opinion, are they left with some kind of unappeased hunger that only their own feelings of hatefulness can now satisfy?[41]

Behind the homosexual's railing against what he claims to be the arbitrary and discriminatory restrictions placed on him by an unthinking and insensitive society is his simultaneous fear and conviction that the laws against sodomy are based on some deeper immutable configuration of the nature of things. "Clive", the narrator tells us, "was in full reaction against his family."[42] And the main source of the reaction is the burden he feels at the prospect of getting married and having children.

> "These children will be a nuisance", he remarked during a canter.
>
> "What children?"
>
> "Mine! the need of an heir for Penge. My mother calls it marriage, but that was all she was thinking of."

[41] Midge Decter, "The Boys on the Beach", *Commentary* September 1980, p. 48.
[42] Forster, p. 96.

> Maurice was silent. It had not occurred to him before that neither he nor his friend would leave life behind them.[43]

These intimations of mortality then fill Maurice with "an immense sadness" and the realization that his homosexuality has not only placed him at odds with society but at odds with nature as well.

> He and the beloved would vanish utterly—would continue neither in Heaven nor on Earth. They had won past the conventions, but Nature still faced them, saying with even voice, "Very well, you are thus; I blame none of my children. But you must go the way of all sterility." The thought that he was sterile weighed on the young man with a sudden shame. His mother or Mrs. Durham might lack mind or heart, but they had done visible work; they had handed on the torch their sons would tread out.[44]

The passage indicates a turning point in the novel. From this point on there are only two choices. The homosexual can become, to use Forster's word, "normal", i.e., he can marry, or he can persevere in rebellion, rage, and subversion. In *Maurice*, Clive takes the former path and Maurice the latter. While sitting in Athens in the theatre of Dionysus, Clive writes to Maurice, "Against my will I have become normal. I cannot help it."[45] With normality comes marriage and with marriage a new more conciliatory attitude toward society. Clive now joins the entity he had formerly chosen to subvert. "With the world as it is, one must marry or decay. . . . All his grievances against society had passed since his marriage."[46]

Maurice, however, fails to make the transition, either because he is unable or unwilling. In the world of the novel, the question remains open. His inability, however, has certain consequences. As homosexuality becomes the norm in his life, Maurice finds himself judging nature according to it. Unlike the first instance, where nature passed judgment on his sterility, now Maurice's sterility passes judgment on what he perceives as the deformity of nature. The epiphany comes while looking half-absentmindedly at a hedge of dog roses:

> Blossom after blossom crept past them draggled by the ungenial year: some had cankered, others would never unfold: here and there beauty triumphed, but desperately, flickering in a world of gloom. Maurice looked into one after another, and though he did not care for flowers the failure irritated him. Scarcely anything was perfect. On one spray every flower was lopsided, the next swarmed with caterpillars, or bulged with galls. The indifference of nature! And her incompetence![47]

[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid., p. 97.
[45] Ibid., p. 126.

The epiphany ends with Maurice leaning out of the window "to see whether she couldn't bring it off once" and finding himself confronted with "the bright brown eyes of a young man".[48] The young man is the gardener, with whom he eventually has an affair, and the affair eventually confirms him in his choice of homosexuality over being normal. It is as if the deformation he perceives in nature allows him to feel vindicated in the eventual moral deformation that he chooses as his way of life.

> By pleasuring the body Maurice had confirmed . . . his spirit in its perversion, and cut himself off from the congregation of normal man.[49]

The consequences of this choice are predictable—guilt followed by rage. When he comes downstairs the morning after, he closes his eyes, "feeling sickish. He had created something whose nature he ignored. Had he been theologically minded, he would have named it remorse. . . ."[50] But the remorse is soon transmuted into something else. After an unsuccessful attempt to treat his homosexuality, Maurice stops "because the King and Queen were passing; he despised them at the moment he bared his head. It was as if the barrier that kept him from his fellows had taken another aspect. He was not afraid or ashamed any more. After all, the forests and the night were on his side, not theirs; they, not he, were inside a ring fence."[51]

The images of aggression are unmistakable. Maurice will wage a kind of sexual guerilla warfare against the society that is an implicit and inescapable reproach to what he has become. As Forster himself says, "mother, two sisters, a comfortable home, a respectable job gradually turn out to be Hell; he must either smash them or be smashed, there is no third course."

The novel ends with Maurice going off to live with his erstwhile blackmailer; "They must live outside class, without relations or money; they must work and stick to each other till death. But England belonged to them."[52]

Given the compulsively promiscuous nature of homosexuality, the ending is hardly realistic. However, since Forster himself was to claim that "a happy ending was imperative",[53] the only one he could possibly manufacture had to entail a parody of heterosexual marriage. However, given subsequent revelations about the homosexual demimonde and espionage, his final line was true in a sense he could not have known.

Or could he?

In the same Forster essay, "What I Believe", which Blunt cited to Goronwy

[48] Ibid., p. 179.
[49] Ibid., p. 214.
[50] Ibid., p. 200.
[51] Ibid., p. 214.
[52] Ibid., p. 239.
[53] Ibid., p. 250.

Rees, not too far after the line about hoping that he would have the guts to betray his country, Forster finally does get around to telling us what he believes in.

> I believe in aristocracy, though—if that is the right word, and if a democrat may use it. Not an aristocracy of power, based upon rank and influence, but an aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky. Its members are to be found in all nations and classes, and all through the ages, and there is a secret understanding between them when they meet. They represent the true human tradition, the one permanent victory of our queer race over cruelty and chaos.[54]

Queer race, indeed! One can imagine Forster having a good laugh with what was left of Bloomsbury over the obvious double meanings in his speech. It was classic Bloomsbury; it was classic Gnostic homospeak, and had evidently made enough of an impression on another member of the queer race, Anthony Blunt, to last him his whole life. In the years between when *Maurice* was written, in 1913–14, and when Forster wrote "What I Believe", in 1938, the subversion had become much more explicit, much more palpable, and much more effective, and it had done so by becoming linked with the great conspiracy of our age, Soviet communism.

Malcolm Muggeridge, writing in his memoir *Chronicles of Wasted Time*, saw the "queer race" from a different point of view. Its *locus classicus* was Lord Rothschild's basement flat in Bentinck Street during World War II:

> There, we found another gathering of displaced intellectuals; but more prosperous, more socially secure and successful . . . John Strachey, J. D. Bernal, Anthony Blunt, Guy Burgess, a whole revolutionary *Who's Who*. It was the only time I ever met Burgess; and he gave me a feeling such as I have never had from anyone else, of being morally afflicted in some way. His very physical presence was, to me, malodorous and sinister; as though he had some consuming illness. . . . The impression fitted well enough with his subsequent adventures; as did this millionaire's nest altogether, so well set up, providing among other amenities, special rubber bones to bite on if the stress of the Blitz became too hard to bear. Sheltering so distinguished a company—Cabinet Minister-to-be, honoured Guru of the Extreme Left-to-be, Connoisseur Extraordinary-to-be, and other notabilities, all in a sense grouped round Burgess; Etonian mudlark and sick toast of a sick society, as beloved along Foreign Office corridors, in the quads and the clubs, as in the pubs among the pimps and ponces and street pick-ups, with their high voices and peroxide hair. A true hero of our time, who was to end his days in Moscow; permitted even there, for services rendered, to find the male

[54] E. M. Forster, *Two Cheers for Democracy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951), p. 70.

> company he needed. Now gone to Stalin's bosom; hip before hipsters, Rolling before Stones, acid head before LSD. There was not so much a conspiracy gathered round him as just decay and dissolution. It was the end of a class, of a way of life; something that would be written about in history books, like Gibbon on Heliogabalus, with wonder and perhaps hilarity, but still tinged with sadness, as all endings are.[55]

Perhaps because of the sexual revolution, most certainly because of the increased political power homosexuals have acquired over the past twenty years, it has become unfashionable to ask, as one was wont to do in the fifties, about the connection between homosexuality and treason. When asked in 1979 if it weren't possible that homosexuals were more likely to become spies because they felt rejected by society, Blunt said he thought not. It was the type of response one had come to expect from a master of disinformation. Goronwy Rees remembers receiving a letter from Guy Burgess, who was posted in Washington at the time of McCarthy's anti-communist crusade: "What aroused Guy almost to hysteria was McCarthy's identification of communism with homosexuality in the United States, and especially in the State Department"—a strange reaction coming from someone who was both a Soviet spy and a notorious homosexual. But then again, perhaps the reaction isn't so strange after all.

The fact remains that during the Second World War in England both treachery and faggotry shared the same headquarters. They were in effect two sides of the same coin. They shared a common vision—subversion—and a common *modus operandi*—the double life. In the final analysis, the interlocking worlds were, as Muggeridge indicated, impossible to separate; both bespoke not so much conspiracy as decay and dissolution.

The interconnections between sodomy and espionage were confirmed by those who knew the interlocking circles from the inside, so to speak. Jack Hewit, picked up by Burgess when he was a nineteen-year-old working-class youth, became Burgess' more or less permanent lover, a status that did not preclude his being passed around as part of a deal whereby sexual favors were exchanged for valuable bits of information. If we take Hewit as an arbitrary center point of the World War II London homosexual scene, we begin to see how the homosexual underground was to be found, as Forster claimed, "in all nations and classes".

"The London gay world", according to Penrose and Freeman,

> was an illegal one. Burgess and Blunt were both intrigued by pretty working-class boys like Hewit, known as "rough trade". There were certain well-

[55] Malcolm Muggeridge, *Chronicles of Wasted Time* (New York: William Morrow, 1974), p. 107.

> known pubs, such as the Bunch of Grapes, where rough trade could be spotted. This was fairly safe. What was definitely not safe was "cottaging" (hanging around in a public lavatory waiting for men willing to perform short, anonymous sexual acts in the cubicles); and both Burgess and Blunt found the excitement of this irresistible, though it could have led to an embarrassing appearance in a magistrate's office.[56]

Hewit, perhaps because of his lower class background, found "cottaging" not to his liking. He preferred liaisons with the more refined, people like . . .

> E. M. Forster, for instance, was very kind to me. You have to understand that the gay world then had style which it doesn't now. There was a sort of gay intellectual freemasonry which you know nothing about. It was like the five concentric circles in the Olympic emblem. One person in one circle knew one in another and that's how people met. And people like me were passed around. I wasn't a trollop. Amoral perhaps but not a trollop.[57]

In addition to his literary connections (Hewit had a short affair with Christopher Isherwood), Hewit was passed on by Burgess to people in the diplomatic world as well, people like Baron Wolfgang zu Putlitz. According to Penrose and Freeman, the baron

> was providing the British government with vital secrets about Hitler's intentions and by having an affair with him he, Jack Hewit, the boy from Gateshead, was doing his bit for Britain by calming the diplomat's shaky nerves. What Hewit did not know was that Burgess was also feeding information from zu Putlitz to his Soviet controller. Hewit conceded that to the mostly heterosexual MI5 and MI6 officers who had the job during the post-war years of trying to investigate the Soviet infiltration of the British establishment, the dynamics of the 1930s gay world must have seemed an incomprehensible web of interlocking relationships. But there was a logic to it.[58]

The logic is the logic of subversion, shared by homosexuals and communists alike. In the intellectual world of England in the 1930s, homosexuality, whose practice was rampant in public schools and universities, had established a pool of intellectuals alienated from the goals of their own and, for that matter, any society. With the arrival of fascism and the worldwide economic crisis, these alienated intellectuals now saw a mechanism whereby they could put their alienation into practice. Sodomy provided the motivation (and the guilt—a topic we will discuss presently) and communism provided the means.

[56] Penrose and Freeman, p. 204.
[57] Ibid., p. 205.
[58] Ibid., pp. 205–6.

Just as Victorian irreligion led inexorably to Bloomsbury immoralism, so Bloomsbury's theory led to Marxist praxis.

The transition is adumbrated in the lives of its protagonists. Julian Bell, writing in the *New Statesman* in 1933, claimed that "Communism in England is at present very largely a literary phenomenon, an attempt of a second post-war generation to escape from the Waste Land."[59] Bell, who had a homosexual affair with his fellow Apostle Anthony Blunt, found the philosophy of Bloomsbury, which is to say the philosophy of his parents Clive and Vanessa (sister of Virginia Woolf), inadequate. Bell needed something more potent than the religion of personal relations and aesthetic experiences to escape from the Waste Land. He found temporary escape in communism and permanent escape through the Spanish Civil War, where he was killed in 1936. His experiences are paradigmatic for the Blunt generation. Bloomsbury had been overtaken by what seemed to be a more powerful vision. When Lytton Strachey's book *Portraits in Miniature* appeared in 1931, one reviewer sniffed: "Mr. Strachey's values seem bland and banal. It is less easy these days to do without a conscience."[60]

Now that the details of the Cambridge conspiracy are coming out in the open, observers of the scene are increasingly willing to discuss the connections that drove Guy Burgess to hysteria when Senator McCarthy made them in Washington over thirty years ago. In his recent book on Cambridge, *The Red and the Blue,* Andrew Sinclair has written a history of Cambridge in the twentieth century. One of the topics he discusses is how sodomy eventuated in treason. The first link is the educational system:

> The hidden group and the exclusive club were very much part of their education and their heritage. From the age of eight, boys were separated from their families and herded into preparatory and public schools, which became a substitute for the family. "The boys sought among their contemporaries affections which they associated with the school", Noel Annan wrote of Stowe, "and reciprocated by giving their hearts to the place." From the self-electing "Pop" of gaudy prefects at Eton who ran the college, through the innumerable societies at Oxford and Cambridge, of which the Apostles and the Communist cells were secret ones, through to the London clubs and the Masonic lodges so powerful in the world of business, an Englishman from the privileged classes expected to achieve male bonding exclusive of others, even of his own peers, certainly of the other sex.[61]

[59] Andrew Sinclair, *The Red and the Blue: Cambridge, Treason, and Intelligence* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1986), p. 34.

[60] Penrose and Freeman, p. 77.

[61] Sinclair, p. 40.

Upper-class England was honeycombed with secret societies, good, bad, and indifferent. The rise of homosexuality in the upper classes, fostered by public school and university education, simply added a note of urgency to the already extant secrecy. Now insofar as secret societies like the Apostles became homosexual organizations, they were also beyond the law, antithetical to society, and a potential fifth column waiting to be exploited. Communism, with its claim to a superior morality, with its claim to have the solution to the world's problems, with its claim to be the only force organized to be an effective bulwark against fascism, was the superior force in the thirties that could and did arrange the exploitation. Sinclair gives his view of the connections:

> The strong homosexual element among the Apostles did buttress their oath of secrecy and separate them more from conventional society. To be an open homosexual was to ruin one's career and risk legal prosecution and prison, but unnecessary in the inner world of truth among the Apostles.

According to Sinclair, homosexuality "encouraged a double vision and a double language".

> Those Marxists who were homosexuals were even more tightly bound together in worlds of subterfuge and deceit. They could betray neither their party nor their friends to their disapproving countrymen. . . . Homosexuality, indeed, reinforced the closeness of the Communist conspiracy. It was a tool of recruitment as well as a mechanism of control, a second threat of exposure to an alien and capitalist environment. Anthony Blunt certainly shared his sexual preferences as well as his ideology with Guy Burgess. . . . The selection process which made them Apostles was elaborate and began with their birth. Bennett called the Cambridge traitors of the thirties "English to excess". They were proud of their inheritance of irony and scepticism. "To be dubious about that inheritance was to be part of that inheritance." To mock one's country was to prove one's right to mock it. Bennett quoted W. H. Auden saying that if he had been more clever, he would have been a criminal or a spy.[62]

E. M. Forster said that he was too old and didn't have the guts. One used to use claims like Auden's to support the thesis that all artists were outsiders. Now it seems more plausible to apply it to homosexuals or most especially homosexual artists like Auden. Left to fester long enough, the self-subversion that is implicit in every homosexual act will extend beyond itself to include an attack on society, first as manifested in the family but then as manifested in one's country as well.

George Steiner in his essay on Blunt remarks on "the strongly homosexual character of the elite in which the young Blunt flourished" but goes on to

[62] Ibid.

lament that "neither sociology nor cultural history, neither political theory nor psychology has ever begun to handle authoritatively the vast theme of the part played by homosexuality in Western culture since the late nineteenth century." He goes on to claim that "Judaism and homosexuality (most intensely where they overlap, as in a Proust or a Wittgenstein)" are "the two main generators of the entire fabric and savor of urban modernity in the West."[63]

Well, Steiner's entitled to his opinion; however, in the case of the Cambridge traitors the "gay intellectual freemasonry" that sodomy had become in England is a more than adequate explanation. Jewishness is a virtually nonexistent factor in the equation. On a wider scale, it is more plausible to claim that there is only one generator of urban modernity in the West and that is sexual license, of which homosex is merely a subset, an important one albeit, but only part of the picture. Modernity, as the recent spate of revisionist biography is starting to reveal, is rationalized sexual license. Bloomsbury, as a subset of modernity, was just what they were saying it was—namely, the "Higher Sodomy". As such, there is an internal factor in the transition from immoralism to Marxism that needs to be explored. The classical explanations about why the intelligentsia became Marxist in the 1930s all had to do with economic crisis and the menace of fascism. With the new biographies a new explanation begins to emerge, one that has to do with sex and religion.

"The Communists of the thirties", Sinclair writes,

> felt even more moral superiority than the non-Communists. There was no question that they were the heirs of the puritans and the evangelicals, who wanted a new heaven on a new earth. They supported the only society which knew how to produce it materially, Soviet Russia, while all other societies were crashing to economic ruin. It was only two decades later that Bertrand Russell, in his essay "Why I Am Not a Communist", could state that he was at a loss to understand how some people who were both human and intelligent could find something to admire in the vast slave camp produced by Stalin. But at the time, it appeared to the left to be a laboratory forging a fresh human society. . . .[64]

The question raised by Russell is a valid one; unfortunately he lacks the intellectual and spiritual discernment necessary to answer it. How is it that the cream of the English establishment could end up in treason? Is there some document that will explicate treason from the inside in the same way that *Maurice* explicates homosexuality? Well, there is and there isn't. The documents are there. Philby wrote his own *Apologia Pro Defecto Suo,* as Malcolm Muggeridge called it, after he arrived in Moscow,

[63] George Steiner, "Cleric of Treason", *New Yorker* (December 8, 1980), p. 180.
[64] Sinclair, p. 43.

but since it was published with Moscow's imprimatur it is a worthless document.

Sir Anthony Blunt did much the same thing. In 1973 he wrote an article in *Studio International* entitled "From Bloomsbury to Marxism". Appearing six years before he was publicly denounced as a spy, Blunt's article tells us little more than we already knew. "I have never had the slightest desire to write my autobiography",[65] he tells us, and with the gift of hindsight it's not hard to understand why. We learn that at school he edited a magazine called the *Heretick*, whose motto was "Upon Philistia will I triumph",[66] another bit of information that gains added significance in light of subsequent events, but for the most part what he writes about himself could have been gleaned from any art history book or biography of the period. He confirms, for example, the influence of Bloomsbury in his intellectual development:

> Strachey on the Victorians justified our hatred of the Establishment. . . . Life at Cambridge was to an extraordinary extent for me an extension of life at Marlborough. The ideas that we had been absorbing in art and literature were really already based on Bloomsbury. . . . In Cambridge a great many of the Bloomsbury figures were regular visitors to Cambridge, particularly Forster and the Stracheys, and of course Keynes was there all the time in residence. . . . They affected us through the Society of the Apostles. The Apostles had been in the previous generation of dominant importance in Bloomsbury.[67]

Under their tutelage, especially that of Roger Fry and Clive Bell, Blunt and his contemporaries were rather insularly—according to his own description—raised on the theory of art for art's sake. "Then, quite suddenly in the autumn term of 1933, Marxism hit Cambridge", and "Cambridge was literally transformed overnight. . . . The undergraduates and graduate students were swept away by it and during the next three or four years almost every intelligent undergraduate who came up to Cambridge joined the Communist party at some time during his first year."[68]

Perhaps because of his years of leading a double life (in 1973 Blunt still had not been exposed), Blunt's explanation of what happened in Cambridge in the thirties covers up more than it reveals. It is especially good at obfuscating the personal motivation involved in the conversion to Marxism. The only time he really pulls back the veil—and then ever so slightly—is to speak in an especially cold-blooded way about the influence of the young John Cornford on Cambridge students:

[65] Anthony Blunt, "From Bloomsbury to Marxism", *Studio International*, November 1973, p. 164.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid., p. 166.
[68] Ibid., p. 167.

> It may sound a callous thing to say, but it was in a way appropriate though tragic, that he should have gone to Spain and been killed; he was the stuff martyrs are made of, and I do not at all know what would have happened to him if he had survived. He was a highly emotional character, and I strongly suspect that he might have gone back on his Marxist doctrine.[69]

Blunt tells the anecdote with the same chilling nonchalance that Freeman and Penrose note when he confides to Tar Robertson, former "Double Cross" team chief: "It has given me great pleasure to have been able to pass the names of every MI5 officer to the Russians."[70]

But of personal motivation, there is not a word. It is simply that in 1933 Marxism hit Cambridge, and Cambridge was transformed overnight.

Yet, in a sense, what can one expect of a man whose life was based on duplicity, a man who led any number of double lives. In such a life, everything becomes a cover for something else until shadows and realities merge into one inextricable lived lie. Blunt did attempt to write an autobiography after he was exposed but gave it up after thirty thousand words. Blunt's brother Wilfrid put the manuscript in a trust that can only be opened in fifty years, but assured Penrose and Freeman that they were missing nothing by not reading it.

Others, however, have been candid in Blunt's place. In his introduction to *The God that Failed,* a collection of stories of those who converted to communism in the thirties and then left disillusioned, Richard Crossman, M.P., describes the generation that was "willing to sacrifice 'bourgeois liberties' in order to defeat fascism. Their conversion . . . was rooted in despair—a despair of Western values . . . greatly strengthened by the Christian conscience. The intellectual, though he may have abandoned orthodox Christianity, felt its prickings more acutely than many."[71] Then, using a word that has gained significance since the book first appeared in 1949, Crossman adds "you can call the response *masochistic* [my emphasis] or describe it as a sincere desire to serve mankind",[72] apparently indicating that the two motivations might be related. Serving mankind in the English communist party certainly had a masochistic tinge to it.

Arthur Koestler describes his own conversion to Marxism using the same religious and moral vocabulary. "I developed", he wrote of his days in Germany before joining the party there,

[69] Ibid.

[70] Penrose and Freeman, p. 287.

[71] Richard Crossman, ed., *The God that Failed* (Salem, New Hampshire: Ayer Company, 1949), p. 6.

[72] Ibid.

> a strong dislike of the obviously rich, not because they could afford to buy things . . . but because they were able to do so without a guilty conscience. Thus I projected a personal predicament onto the structure of society at large. It was certainly a tortuous way of acquiring a social conscience.[73]

Koestler's motivation was essentially religious. He would even base his conversion on a passage from Scripture: "Woe for they chant to the sound of harps and anoint themselves, but are not grieved for the affliction of the people." But communism had the then seemingly magic power of calling forth large quantities of moral indignation along with a strong desire to chuck the moral code it appealed to. It was the lure of wanting to have one's cake and eat it too. "The historical relativity of institutions and ideals—of family, class, patriotism, bourgeois morality, sexual taboos—had the intoxicating effect of a sudden liberation from the rusty chains with which a pre-1914 middle-class childhood had cluttered one's mind."[74] "I was ripe to be converted", Koestler claimed, and the "common denominator" shared by others of his generation was "the rapid disintegration of moral values, of the pre-1914 pattern of life in postwar Europe, and the simultaneous lure of the new revelation which had come from the East."[75] The main attraction of communism was spiritual and moral. In describing his work as an agent, passing gossip from the publishing house where he worked on to his communist control, he writes "I was already reaping the reward of all conversions, a blissfully clean conscience."[76]

Guilt, then, was the engine that pulled the communist train. If homosexuals were more likely to want to subvert society, they were also more likely, because of the activity that ruled their lives, to be more burdened with guilt and, therefore, more in the market for a palliative for a troubled conscience. The danger of blackmail is in a sense misplaced. With greater public acceptance of homosexuality the danger wanes. However, the danger of blackmail by one's own conscience remains constant. In the contributions to *The God that Failed,* the role of guilt and bad conscience remains crucial if not primary.

Stephen Spender's contribution to the same book makes much the same point. In describing his own conversion to communism, he writes, "My arguments were re-enforced by feelings of guilt and the suspicion that the side of me which pitied the victims of revolution secretly supported the ills of capitalism from which I myself benefited. . . . For the intellectual of good will, Communism is a struggle of conscience. To understand this explains many things."[77]

[73] Ibid., p. 18.
[74] Ibid., p. 20.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., p. 33.
[77] Ibid., p. 238.

It explains many things indeed, most notably how the immoralism of the twenties led to the Marxism of the thirties just as inexorably as the loss of faith among the Victorians led to that immoralism in the first place. Communism in the thirties provided an engine to anesthetize conscience, and because of the way everyone had been behaving, most notably the Bloomsbury-Apostle-Cambridge crowd, that engine was in great demand. Spender is especially acute in explaining its attraction:

> This doubly secured Communist conscience also explains the penitential, confessional attitude which non-Communists may sometimes show toward orthodox Communists with their conscience anchored—if not petrified—in historic materialism. There is something overpowering about the fixed conscience. There is a certain compulsion in the situation of the Communist with his faith reproving the liberal whose conscience swings from example to example, misgiving to misgiving, supporting here the freedom of some writer outside the writer's Syndicate, some socially-conscienceless surrealist perhaps, here a Catholic priest, here a liberal professor in jail. What power there is in a conscience which reproaches us not only for vices and weaknesses but also for virtues, such as pity for the oppressed, if they happen to be the wrong oppressed, or love for a friend if he happens not to be a Party member! A conscience which tells us that by taking up a certain political position today we can attain a massive, granite-like superiority over our own whole past, without being humble or simple or guilty, but simply by virtue of converting the whole of our personality into raw material for the use of the Party machine![78]

That the Soviet conscience machine became the god that failed is the gist of Spender's and Koestler's testimony. However, it should be clear by now that that conscience machine met a demand. It should be equally clear by now that private acts have public consequences. As Anthony Blunt said in his statement to the press in 1979: "In the conflict between political conscience and loyalty to country, I chose conscience." Blunt uses the word conscience as a synonym for altruism. However, the word he chose has meaning beyond those that he intends.

The consequences of his choice of conscience may not be known for a long time. Sinclair quotes a Lieutenant Colonel Noel Wild, who "suspected that the Russians fed back to German intelligence details of the Allied manoeuvres in France near the end of the war to enable Hitler to counterattack in the Ardennes and delay the advance of the democratic armies so that the unchallenged Red Army could swallow up all of eastern Europe."[79] George Steiner feels that "by passing his findings on to his Soviet control," Blunt

[78] Ibid., p. 241.
[79] Sinclair, p. 112.

[illegible] more than thirty years "almo
[illegible] damage to his own country and may well have sent
[illegible] intelligence agents to abject de
[illegible] and helped track Blunt down,
[illegible] rhetorical questions. "Have you ever
[illegible] the mess that it's in? Why fifty years ago it

The value of Blunt's blessed legacy is the light it sheds on the presen
[illegible] remain constant. Those who commit evil
[illegible] and in their trouble they have only two alter
[illegible] their actions to the moral law or conform the
[illegible] The former case calls for repentance, the latter ratio
[illegible] a social activism in which those w
[illegible] through political means to make wrong right
[illegible] the engine that pulls the women's movement. Forster's
[illegible] its own political arm. Now as then, subversion is the go
[illegible] for those who choose sodomy and fail to
[illegible] English history has shown, for the country tha
[illegible] to the moral law.

Chapter 4

STANLEY AND JANE'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE: OR, WHY POLITICALLY CORRECT PROFESSORS HATE WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Stanley Fish was obviously an academic superstar. You could tell that the moment he walked into the classroom. Instead of baggy corduroy, he wore John Travolta-style suits and movie-star sunglasses, and (this was new back then) he carried a hand-sized cassette recorder, which he placed prominently in front of himself when he sat at the head of the table in his critical theory seminar. When I jokingly asked him if he had our permission to record what we said, he replied with a seriousness that bespoke either being offended or not getting the joke that he never taped what students had to say. The tape recorder was for the particularly copious insights that poured forth from the mind of Stanley Fish. If I had to align Fish with a character from the movies, it would be with the Alan Alda character in the Woody Allen film *Crimes and Misdemeanors.*

The critical theory class was also a superstar class. By the mid-seventies it wasn't enough just to teach people how to read a poem or a play or a novel. No, in order to feel good about yourself as a professor of literature, you had to teach a *Weltanschauung.* You had to have your own personalized "critical theory", which explained not only how to read *Hamlet* or *Little Women* in a particular way but also aspired to explain everything in the world as well, like how everything was impossible to know, or how we were all imprisoned in language or patriarchal or homophobic or Logocentric categories.

Stanley Fish's course was also heavily teleological in its orientation. That means it started off by demolishing critics Fish disagreed with and moved inexorably toward the Truth, or, as Stanley would have put it, the writings of Stanley Fish himself.

This particular brand of teleological approach had a peculiar effect on the student, or at least on this particular student. After one particularly strenuous session of critical demolition at the beginning of that particular semester,

Professor Fish asked me to see him after class. "Mr. Jones," he said, "I just want you to know that what you said in class today was brilliant." Being a young, impressionable graduate student at the time, I felt a mild sort of euphoria as I rode home on my bicycle that day. If Stanley Fish, the academic superstar, thought that what I had said was brilliant, why that meant that I might become a superstar like him one day, if I played my cards right.

But, alas, I was never very good at playing cards. Not at casinos and not at the intellectual casino that academe has become. So as we approached the Emerald City that was the thought of Stanley Fish, I began to feel that the real Wizard of Oz was just a little man hiding behind the curtains of his own rhetoric. In an academic game in which the right card played at the right time can land you a recommendation and perhaps a job, I made the mistake of telling the famous Professor Fish that he wasn't that much different from all the people we had been criticizing. And not only that, I made the mistake of saying so in his class. You see I had heard all these rumors about academic freedom, not understanding, of course, that all these considerations have to take a back seat to fostering one's career. And the first rule in that regard is that when a professor says you are brilliant, you reciprocate. Stanley, I learned from other students, was interested in reciprocal relationships. He would say you were brilliant and use his connections to get you a job, perhaps, if you would go off to that job promoting him in your own way, by mentioning his books in your articles, by inviting him to speak, etc., etc. It is the way academic reputations are made these days, but I had to learn the hard way.

After one class in which I tried to explain the similarities between Fish's theories and those of the critics we had just demolished, a change came over the classroom. Not only was I not brilliant anymore, but I found that I could not get recognized to ask questions any more. The discussion, what little there was, had to get along without me. One day after I had held my arm up in the air for what seemed like hours, Fish finally called on me, but he prefaced his remarks by saying, "Mr. Jones, you've wasted enough of this class' time; now, what is it?"

I found myself remembering this incident while reading an article in a recent issue of *Newsweek* on "Thought Police on Campus". There right in the middle of the discussion was a picture of a now-wizened (fifteen years in the academic fast lane seem to have taken their toll) Stanley Fish telling the *Newsweek* reporter that "Disagreement can be fun."[1]

That's not the way I remember it. It was not fun to disagree with Stanley Fish, at least not when you were a student in his class.

In spite of what he says to *Newsweek* reporters, Fish's attitude does little to

[1] "Taking Offense", *Newsweek*, December 24, 1990, p. 48.

foster a spirit of discussion. Fish's theory *du jour* was then known as Reader Response Criticism. Stated in its simplest form, a form Fish used to repeat *ad nauseam* in class, the theory posits that "you can only read what you've already read." Now one needn't be particularly "brilliant" to see that this formulation is self-contradictory and just generally dumb. How did one get to the point where one can only read *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* as opposed to *Finnegan's Wake* or "See Dick run", for that matter, if you can only read what you've already read? You can't learn anything new, if that's the case, which means you can't learn how to read. Or, as I said then:

> How did we get the ability to see what we now see at, let us say, point B in our lives, if at point A we could only see what we could already see at point A? How is it possible, in other words, that things change, that yesterday's New Critic is today's Reader Response Critic? Fish, it seems, has given us a dialectical theory of reading in which change is impossible. . . . [T]his is not only a flat contradiction of what he describes as the reader's progress from word to word through a line of poetry but a denial of all change and therefore all possibility of learning as well.[2]

That passage was taken from my final paper for the course. It also became the first article I had published; it appeared in *College English* in their October 1977 issue. I handed it to Professor Fish one morning at the end of the Fall 1976 semester and then went to my mailbox to see what I had gotten in the few days I had been away. Now I may have met someone in the hall and chatted a bit, but I didn't spend a whole lot of time in school that day, and so you can imagine my surprise when I found the paper in my mailbox already graded. I received an A-minus for the paper (and the course), and at the bottom of the paper was one comment: "I don't believe that anymore", Fish had written about his own theory. Fish, it seemed, had repudiated his own theory just as I was in the process of criticizing it, perhaps in the very moment after I had criticized it. I was both flattered and annoyed: flattered at having written such a devastating critique, annoyed that he hadn't told me that he no longer believed all those articles he had had me read.

I mention this because Stanley Fish was described in the already-mentioned issue of *Newsweek* as the creator of "an important critical theory that seeks a text's meaning in the reader's response to it". So maybe Stanley still believes in his theory after all. Or maybe he only believes in it when the reader is dumb enough not to see through it, as is the case with reporters from *Newsweek*. It's hard to say. The 1990s Fish has become a sort of critical chameleon. Professors today, he tells us in the same piece, must

[2] E. M. Jones, "Fish's Copernican Revolution", *College English* 39, no. 2 (1977), p. 204.

> retool about every 18 months. Just as you've finished mastering the last set of doctrines, another comes along. Structuralism had hardly been absorbed before there was poststructuralism. A lot of people still haven't come to terms with that, but it was replaced by postmodernism, radical feminism, new historicism, which slid into anthropological new historicism vs. cultural materialist new historicism. Now we're getting ecological criticism. Probably just around the corner is animal-rights criticism.[3]

And who knows? Maybe there will be a specific branch of animal-rights criticism known as Chameleon Crit. Chameleons are not only adept at changing color, their tails often break off in the grasp of those who attempt to catch them. Instead of the thing itself, you are left with a wriggling worm-like appendage.

Stanley, *Newsweek* tells us, is "a man who is accustomed to getting his own way".[4] This is, of course, the gist of his critical theory, according to which, *Paradise Lost* means pretty much what the reader, i.e., Stanley Fish, wants it to mean. Reader Response Criticism was a quintessentially seventies phenomenon. It was the literary hermeneutic of the Me Generation. Disagreement among readers was resolved by appealing to what Fish called the judgment of "interpretive communities", which again meant people like Stanley Fish. This critical theory coincided with books on psychology with titles like "How to Get What You Want through Intimidation", and things like that. Fish was bound to attract a following by giving expression in the literary profession to the crass pushiness that characterized so many professors of that particular generation.

It was clear that he was attracting a following back then too. One of them was a lady by the name of Jane Tompkins, who was then teaching me American literature, specifically Nathaniel Hawthorne. Jane knew a superstar when she saw one and so was auditing Stanley's course to bathe in that pallid glow. She was there when Stanley blew up at me for wasting the class' time.

"You're the only one who understands what's going on in that class", Jane told me at a cocktail party once. And since she was in the class, I assume that she was giving an accurate account of her grasp of critical theory. At the same time she intimated to me that there was some sort of "male territorial thing" involved in Fish's reaction. Stanley was the chief male gorilla in the critical theory seminar and my disagreeing with him was, I suppose, a challenge to his right to possess all the females in the room. That a feminist would say this sort of thing I found mildly amazing at the time, but graduate schools were full of

[3] "Learning to Love the PC Canon", *Newsweek,* December 24, 1990, p. 50.
[4] "Taking Offense", p. 48.

people who would say this sort of thing. If the theory was sexually based and materialistic, then it was okay even if it denigrated women.

Jane was a lady who had gone, as she put it, to "all the right schools". She was a pallid blonde with a permanently distracted air. During the mid-seventies, when she and I were at Temple University, she wore tweedy sport coats and a fat watch band that looked as if it belonged to her father. "The people who are teaching now", Jane told *Times* reporter James Atlas, "don't look the way professors used to look. Frank Lentricchia doesn't look like Cleanth Brooks."[5]

Well, maybe not, but Jane Tompkins sure did. At Temple University in the seventies, she looked like a female T. S. Eliot impersonator. To make the parody complete, she also smoked a pipe, which made her look a lot like Mammy Yokum too. If being chief male gorilla meant having the right to possess Jane Tompkins, then I was willing to have my rights taken away from me.

Since Temple is in the heart of the Philadelphia ghetto, we left classes together, and one night we all walked Jane to her motorcycle, which was locked up with a chain that could have anchored a battleship. Being good Germans on the sexual front, we left Jane to her motorcycle and walked on, only to hear when we had gotten about a half a block away a plaintive plea for help. Jane, it seems, couldn't get her motorcycle off its kickstand. So switching roles again, we big strong males went back and got her chain off and her kickstand up, and she went wobbling off to her *pied à terre* in Society Hill.

Since Jane was teaching Hawthorne, she had to teach *The Scarlet Letter.* One gets the impression that she would rather have not taught it, but in those days she was just lucky to be teaching literature at all. The grunts in the English Department made most of their money teaching remedial composition. The class on *The Scarlet Letter* provided, however, the high point of the course. For some strange reason, the topic of conversation during that class turned to adultery, and when it did, a pall of embarrassment settled over the class. One of the students was trying to get a fix on what the class thought about adultery.

"But isn't adultery wrong?", that student asked, committing an even larger *faux pas* than I had done in Stanley Fish's class.

Jane looked intensely uncomfortable. Answering a question like this was worse than having to jump start her motorcycle. And it's not hard to understand why. Jane was faced with two equally repugnant alternatives. First, there is the literary alternative. If she says, no, adultery isn't wrong, then she immediately trivializes *The Scarlet Letter* and virtually every other major piece

[5] James Atlas, "On Campus: The Battle of the Books", *New York Times Magazine,* June 5, 1988, p. 24.

of literature since Homer. If adultery is no big deal, then why did Hawthorne write a book about it, and why are Hester and Dimmesdale so upset about it?

If, on the other hand, Jane says, yes, adultery is wrong, then she condemns the mores of virtually all her colleagues and reveals herself as terminally unhip. Instead of choosing either of those repugnant alternatives, Jane tried to sail between Scylla and Charybdis. That adultery was wrong, she informed the class, was "Hawthorne's truth". That, of course, didn't make much sense, but then again neither did Reader Response Criticism. Whole careers in academe were based on saying things that didn't make much sense. Most importantly, this particular response was not going to damage anyone's career.

I mention all this because Jane has showed up in the mass media recently too. Jane is now at Duke with Stanley Fish, and like him she is a *New York Times*-certified example of a "politically correct" professor. In a 1988 *New York Times Magazine* article, she was listed as one of a

> new generation of scholars . . . whose sensibilities were shaped by intellectual trends that originated in the '60s: Marxism, feminism, deconstruction, a scepticism about the primacy of the west. For these scholars, the effort to widen the canon is an effort to define themselves, to validate their own identities. In the '80s, literature is us.[6]

Which is what we had always feared. Literature departments have become the academic equivalent of Toys Я Us.

But from my point of view, this was hardly the article's most startling revelation. Reading on, I discovered that in addition to all that stuff about intellectual trends, it turns out that Jane is now Stanley's wife. At the time of our critical theory seminar, both Stanley and Jane were married but to different people. Jane, whose maiden name was not Tompkins, had already left her first hubby to languish in the Temple University religion department as a distinctly non-superstar. She was, if I remember correctly, married to or living with someone else at the time. Their menage showed up in the style section of the local newspaper. I remember her referring to their apartment as distinctly Philadelphian "like a *vin au pays*", she said. In Philadelphia the only *vin au pays* I remember was Tiger Rose. At graduate-student wine-and-cheese parties, we used to drink Almaden Red, which was even worse. Jane had kept the name Tompkins, not because of any sentimental attachment to her first husband but because it was under that moniker that she had first broken into print. With all those articles in places like *College English,* she didn't want to lose her name recognition in the field. Besides, would anyone really want to be called Jane Fish? One of my professors told me that when she first arrived at

[6] Ibid.

Temple she didn't have a job. Her husband had the job. But the age being what it was and Jane being a woman and all and having gone to "all the right schools", that situation was quickly remedied. Jane, the same professor told me, used to show up at faculty parties wearing red hot pants and a white T-shirt.

"It's a sad comment on the profession", I sighed.

"Yep," he added, "the world's oldest profession."

Jane, James Atlas tells us in his already-mentioned *New York Times* article, is "an avid reader of contemporary fiction—on a shelf in her office I spotted copies of *Princess Daisy* and *Valley of the Dolls.*"[7] In addition to being a connoisseur of trashy novels, Jane is also a fervent opponent of Western culture—you know, things like *The Scarlet Letter.* (*Valley of the Dolls* was evidently written in Outer Mongolia.) In a book she wrote on American fiction, she recalls how she became aware of her position in a "male-dominated scholarly tradition that controls both the canon of American literature and the critical perspective that interprets that canon for society". Jane may not be the brightest person to grace the pages of the *New York Times,* but she is a quick learner. She may not have understood anything that was going on in Stanley Fish's class, but she understood that Stanley Fish was a man who was going places in the profession. What better way to make up for lost time than by taking a quick, intensive, "hands-on" course in Reader Response Criticism. It was a marriage made in Lit Crit heaven. If they do a movie version, they could call it *Valley of the Dolls* meets *PMLA.*

"The writers offered up as classics didn't speak to Tompkins", Atlas opines. "They didn't address her own experience."[8]

At this point, I would beg to differ. Nothing speaks to Jane's experience better than *The Scarlet Letter.* Unfortunately, every time Jane reads *The Scarlet Letter* she is confronted with the fact that Hawthorne thinks that adultery is wrong. This is why she doesn't like Hawthorne. This is why she finds *Princess Daisy* and the novels of Jacqueline Susann more congenial. They affirm her deepest feelings. They address her experience and that of her peers. Life in academe these days is much more like something out of *Valley of the Dolls* than it is like *The Scarlet Letter.* Anything that reminds them of the moral code that informs *The Scarlet Letter* must be banned in the interest of keeping uneasy consciences calm.

So Reader Response Criticism is correct—to a certain extent. It is a fairly accurate account of the sort of thing Jane and Stanley do when confronted with great literature. Instead of learning from it, they project their own needs

[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

onto it. But here is where the theory breaks down. It turns out that you don't just read what you've already read. If this were so, Jane would still be teaching Hawthorne. No, it seems that a little of the message rubs off after all, and the little that does rub off proves intolerable to the liberated professors. They hate making a living by teaching that adultery is wrong, even if they have to do it indirectly. So instead they seek to have the literary canon conform to the contours of their own personal lives.

Just as Dimmesdale, plagued by guilt, tries to expose the A on his chest on a darkened scaffold in the middle of night, so the politically correct professors try to calm their own consciences by banning any book in the Western tradition that takes adultery seriously. Which means banning the Western tradition. Their quarrel is not specifically with culture. It is with the moral law that is the basis of all culture. That is what is now in the process of being banned from this country's campuses. And that is so because of the lives that most professors lead. The attack on Western culture is an attack on Judeo-Christian morality; it is an attempt to revoke the Sixth Commandment. The one goes hand in hand with the other. Culture rises with morality, and it falls with it too.

"What they're demanding now", says Atlas of Stanley and Jane's politically correct English department at Duke, "is a literature that reflects their experience, a literature of their own."[9]

Precisely, but do we want our children taught by people determined to act out *Valley of the Dolls?*

[9] Ibid.

Chapter 5

THE CASE AGAINST KINSEY

Alfred Charles Kinsey, the collector of four million gall wasps and eighteen thousand sex histories, died in the mid-1950s, but the controversy surrounding his work lives on after him. It is, you might say, his legacy. June Machover Reinisch, the current director of the institute that Kinsey founded to a large extent from proceeds from his male and female reports, is now fighting for her job. After evaluating her performance over the past six and a half years, Indiana University has decided to ask her to leave. They allege incompetence. In February a former student of Reinisch claimed that she "should not have been listed as co-author because she made no contribution to the portion of his thesis published in the science journal *Nature*".[1] In March the National Institutes of Health announced that they were sending a team of investigators to Bloomington to conduct a preliminary study of Kinsey's grant records. In question is how millions of federal research grant dollars were spent by Reinisch. One of the things the funding agencies found intriguing was a joint bank account Reinisch opened in 1980 with a Danish psychiatrist. That this type of academic squabbling makes it into nationally syndicated news articles is a tribute to the work that Kinsey did and the name he made for himself and the field of sex research.

However, it is just as much an indication of the controversy that continues to surround the field of sex education. Those within the charmed circle of the sex industry like to explain this as having to do with the field of sexuality itself, which, they tell us, is very "controversial", controversial to the point of paranoia, one suspects. When I asked for a picture of Kinsey to accompany an article I was doing at the time, I was told by one of the functionaries at the Kinsey Institute that they would have to wait until Dr. Reinisch returned from Denmark to get her approval. When I expressed surprise at the institute's administrative style, I received a return call from that person's superior,

[1] Associated Press, "Reinisch's Thesis Help Disputed", *South Bend Tribune*, February 16, 1989.

reminding me how "controversial" work on Kinsey was and informing me that they "might not even have a picture to send me". It was almost as if I had asked for a picture of Kinsey himself *in flagrante delicto*. But it's just part of the curious double standard one gets used to when dealing with the Kinsey Institute for Research on Sex, Gender, and Reproduction. They profess not to bat an eyelash at the most hair-raising of sexual perversions but nonetheless become positively Victorian when the conversation moves in the direction of Kinsey himself.

"It's safe," said one sex educator dismissing abstinence as a way of avoiding both pregnancy and disease, "but is it sex?" The same sort of question comes to mind when one delves into the field of sex research. "It's sex," one is inclined to admit when confronted with the sixty-four thousand volumes of pornography, the thirty-five hundred three-dimensional objects, the twenty-five thousand pieces of "flat art" and the hundreds of films of sexual activity that comprise the Kinsey collection on the campus of Indiana University, "but is it research?" A recent AP article gives some insight into the scholarly credentials of the institute and the accuracy of its media apologists.

In an AP story dated December 11, 1988, AP news-features writer John Barbour recounted the fifty-year history of the Kinsey reports and Institute and the problems of the current director. In the course of the article the enormous Kinsey pornography collection was described as "the world's second largest repository of sexual publications, erotica and pornography, the largest being in the Vatican". The line had a sort of throw-away quality to it—as if it were either a misprint or meant as a joke. However, when I contacted him, Mr. Barbour was dead serious. He stood by the claim that the Vatican had more than sixty-four thousand volumes of pornography, etc. Having worked at the Vatican more than once, my curiosity was aroused.

"Can you tell me where it is?" I wondered, feeling certain that someone from one of our major news agencies certainly wouldn't make up something like that.

"I don't know", Barbour replied, "It's in some basement somewhere. I can't tell you exactly."

When I pressed him on the issue, Barbour admitted that he hadn't seen the collection himself. He said he got the information from the Kinsey Institute, "and then I think we at one time confirmed it with our Rome bureau. I don't recall exactly when. It's been used for a long time."

"In other words, the Kinsey people told you this?"

"That was the original source", Barbour replied.

"So you're saying that the Vatican has more than sixty-four thousand volumes of pornography?"

"I'm saying that that's true. Whatever the figure is, I can't remember. It's a long time since I've done that story. What is your problem?"

"I don't think it's true, to be honest with you", I said.

"Well, why don't you call the Vatican?" Barbour wondered, a tone of annoyance creeping into his voice.

Monsignor Thomas Herron is now head of the theology department at St. Charles Seminary in Philadelphia. Before his return to Philadelphia in the fall of 1988, Herron had lived in Rome and worked for the Vatican for nine years. For the last six years of his stay in Rome, he worked as one of the staff of six research assistants under Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. It was a job that entailed doing research not only in the Vatican libraries but also in archives open to no one but Vatican staff. When I asked Msgr. Herron about the Barbour statement, his answer was unequivocal.

"I can tell you that the statement is completely calumnious. It's absolutely without foundation. He cannot know it because it isn't so. It's a figment of his imagination."

"Now it seems to me", I replied, "that a collection like that would require a building of some size."

"I've worked over there about as closely as one can for the Holy See and in the offices of the Holy See and not only had access but the requirement of doing considerable research. There is absolutely nothing of the kind there."

"I called Mr. Barbour today, and he told me it was in a basement somewhere."

"It's absolute nonsense. Absolute nonsense."

Barbour, as I said, had never seen this collection himself, which, given its size, should be hard to miss, especially for people at AP's Rome bureau, so I asked him if he had ever spoken to anyone who had seen it.

"I mentioned it to a number of Catholic friends [some of Mr. Barbour's best friends are Catholic, I'll bet], and they said that they were not the least bit surprised. And we did ask our Rome bureau to check, and it was confirmed by them."

By now Barbour had reached the end of his patience.

"I think you really have some axe to grind, and that you might as well take it to some grindstone, sir. Goodbye."

With that Barbour hung up.

However, since Barbour mentioned the Kinsey Institute as his source, I decided to check with them. I asked to speak with Dr. Reinisch but got a Stephanie Sanders instead. She has a Ph.D., too, probably in sex research. She is a former student of Dr. Reinisch's.

"Well," she said after I read her the quote from the Barbour article, "I'll tell you what we usually say about that. We may have the largest. We are not Vatican scholars, though we had always believed that we were second. That

was passed down along the generations. Some Vatican scholars [Dr. Sanders gave no names] have said that they believe that we have a larger collection. And why does the Vatican have it? Well, because they have been in the business of restricting those materials for Catholics for years. And so they have archived those materials, but I've never been there so I wouldn't be able to speak to the Vatican collection."

When I asked how large the Vatican collection was, Dr. Sanders responded, "I have no idea. And I'm a Catholic. I've been to the Vatican. But I'm not a scholar. I've never been in their libraries."

Dr. Sanders was becoming defensive.

"I don't even know if they have anything at this point in time. That would still make us the larger collection."

Which is certainly true.

She then promised to consult with Dr. Reinisch and get back to me. After a few minutes she called to say that Dr. Reinisch, who "was running between meetings", said that "as far as she's concerned our collection is the largest collection."

"So you're saying that Barbour's statement is false then?"

"Absolutely. He interviewed with me and I know we would have said that we have the largest collection to our knowledge. Absolutely. Because we've got a lot of stuff."

"A monsignor who worked at the Vatican says there is no collection of pornography there", I responded.

"That wouldn't surprise me", said Dr. Sanders, leaving me to interpret that as best I could. "And then again I don't consider our collection to be a pornographic collection. It has materials that have been censored over time, um, and things like that. But they're here for a different purpose. They're not here for prurient interests. And that's a very important thing I want to convey to you."

So, contrary to what Mr. Barbour of the Associated Press claimed in his article, the Kinsey Institute is not the source of the claim that the Vatican has a huge collection of pornography, at least according to one version of what Dr. Sanders told me. Well, if so, where did the claim come from? If Dr. Sanders were more familiar with the history of the institute, she would have known that the claim came from Kinsey himself.

On p. 397 of Wardell Pomeroy's biography of Kinsey, *Dr. Kinsey and the Institute for Sex Research,* Pomeroy quotes a letter from Kinsey to Dr. Arthur L. Swift, Jr., a professor at Union Theological Seminary, in which he writes,

> I find it difficult to understand why a scholar should have to justify the accumulation of a library in the subject in which he is working. This is

> particularly strange considering that there is no such sex library anywhere in the United States, and probably nowhere in the world short of the Vatican.[2]

On p. 458 of the same book, Pomeroy, who was Kinsey's coworker and coauthored the male and female volumes with him, says of the Kinsey Institute pornography collection that "it would be outstanding as the largest collection of erotica in the world, larger than the British Museum's and presumed to be more extensive than the legendary Vatican collection."[3]

So the claim that the Vatican, like the Kinsey Institute, is in the business of collecting pornography has a long history there. In fact, it goes back to the founder of the institute itself. That the claim is baseless seems not to have prevented Kinsey from making it over and over again in his public lectures.

When I mentioned the Barbour article to Paul Gebhard, also a Kinsey coworker and previous director of the Kinsey Institute, he just laughed.

"Barbour ought to know better", he said. He then gave the history of the remark.

"The truth is that Kinsey had been fond of saying in his lectures that our collections were second only to the Vatican, or sometimes he would say that the Vatican was the second, but anyway he made this reference, and it always brought a big reaction from the audience. So he liked to do it. Some would gasp and say, 'I didn't know that.' And others would laugh. Mainly I think it was astonishment rather than laughter. But at any rate after his death, I got to thinking about it and I said, 'If the Vatican has such a vast collection, why am I not in communication with them to swap duplicates perhaps or make xerox copies?' So I wrote the Vatican library and inquired about the collections and in due time received back a postcard with the papal seal and all the rest. Unfortunately it was in Italian so I had to take it over and get it translated, and in essence it said, 'We don't have any such collection. Get lost.'

"So I went to one of my Jesuit friends and I said, 'Hey, I think the Vatican's covering up. What should I do about this?' And he said, 'Well, I have friends that have photographed and microfilmed the Vatican library. There's a big project located in St. Louis, where a bunch of priests microfilmed the Vatican library. I'll pass the word along to them that you're a legitimate inquirer and ask them about it.' So I did. I got in touch with them and they said, no. They said, if you're talking about confessors' manuals, yes, we're loaded with confessors' manuals. And I said, well I thought it went this way, that the local priest would snatch the dirty book from the hands of the parishioner and then

[2] Wardell B. Pomeroy, *Dr. Kinsey and the Institute for Sex Research* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 397.

[3] Ibid., p. 458.

get it to the monsignor, who would give it to the bishop, and it would finally end up at the Vatican. He said, 'No way. No bishop wants to be sending collections of porn to the Vatican library.'

"So then I was really baffled. So I wrote the American Library Association, and I said, 'Do you know anything about the Vatican library?' And they said, 'Yes, they have a big porn collection.' So I said, 'On what basis do you say that?' And they said, 'Kinsey said so.' "

At this point Gebhard burst out laughing again.

"All of a sudden I felt the circle close", he said. "So then I finally found out what happened. Many years before I joined the staff, somewhere about 1940 or so, old Dr. Robert Dickinson had just been at the Vatican and had visited Kinsey. At that time Kinsey had a bookcase about half full of porn, and Dickinson looked at it and said, 'Gosh, you've got quite a collection. You've got almost as much as the Vatican.' At that point Kinsey started making this remark."

The incident is instructive for a number of reasons. First of all, it gives some sense of the standards of scholarship that prevail in the field of sex research. Kinsey made the statement repeatedly throughout his career as the famous sex researcher, and no one ever challenged him on it, least of all the press. The American Library Association took it as a fact simply on his say-so alone. Toward the end of his life, Kinsey even visited Rome and seems to have made no effort to contact the Vatican. So there is every reason to believe that he continued to make the statement even knowing that it was false.

According to Gebhard, Kinsey made the statement just to get a rise out of his audience, but the dynamics involved in the claim go deeper than that. As Dr. Sanders said of the Kinsey Institute's pornography, "They're here for a different purpose. They're not here for prurient interest." The implication is clear, and it goes right to the heart of the double standard—one of the many double standards one finds in the sex research business. If the Vatican were to collect pornography, their interests would be clearly prurient. However, when sex researchers do the same thing they accuse others of, they do so only from the highest, scientific motives. The double standard bespeaks anti-Catholic bigotry more than anything else. But here as elsewhere even bigotry can be made to look respectable if cloaked in the mantle of science.

Beyond that, the whole incident shows how the mainstream press has run interference for Kinsey for over forty years. Not only do they pass on his calumnies without taking the time to check them out, they also become involved in the Kinsey disinformation network by claiming that the untruths have been verified. John Barbour not only passed on a little piece of anti-Catholic bigotry; he went even farther out on a limb by claiming that AP's Rome bureau had checked it out. It's an indication of the kind of forces that

have conspired to give sex research the air of legitimacy it has enjoyed for the past forty years. It also is a good indication of the type of ideology masquerading as science that has provided the perfect cover for the sort of thing that if done in another context—say, by prelates at the Vatican—would have been condemned as plain old prurience.

"You must know", said Dr. James Jones, professor of history at the University of Houston, who is currently writing a biography of Kinsey and someone who has done research on him off and on for the past twenty years, "that Kinsey had an abiding animus against Catholics". Kinsey opposed certain "aspects of Catholic dogma that were very repressive", according to Jones. Guess which aspects the sex researcher had in mind.

"Kinsey felt that the absence of birth control was responsible for some real friction in marriages and that unwanted pregnancy was a source of real friction. Kinsey was pretty much of a eugenicist in his thinking and in some instances thought that the wrong people were having too many babies. He was very much concerned about the WASP concern about differential fertility."

In Kinsey's own writings, the anti-Catholic bigotry gets portrayed as the scientist's struggle for the truth. In her adulatory biography, Cornelia Christenson, another Kinsey coworker, reprints an unpublished talk he wrote just before his death entitled "The Right to Do Sex Research", in which Kinsey claims that

> It is probably correct to say that our knowledge of the basic anatomy and physiology of human sexual response in the year 1940 was no better than our knowledge of the circulation of the blood in the early 1600s .... There were centuries, not too remote, in which any attempt to understand the structure of the universe, the nature of matter, physical processes, and biological evolution were condemned because they were considered an invasion of areas that should be left to philosophy and religion. The names of Galileo, Newton, Kepler, Pascal, and most of those who attempted to explore the physical realities of the universe appear in indices of prohibited books dating back not more than two or three centuries, and in some instances as recent as the last hundred years. How many persons would venture today to condemn all further physical research? It has been the history of science throughout the ages that ignorance has never brought anything but trouble to mankind, and that every fact, well established, has ultimately added to the happiness of our social organization.... The scientist's right to do research in these other fields involved the basic development of our right to establish knowledge as a source of our human capacity, and that is now a part of the written history. There is hardly another area in human biology or in sociology in which the scientist has had to fight for his right to do research, as

> he has when he attempted to acquire scientific understanding of human sexual behavior.[4]

These are fine sentiments, I suppose, but they ring a bit hollow coming as they did from the man who used to talk about an imaginary Vatican pornography collection just to get a rise out of the audience he addressed. The anecdote was classic Kinsey, though, because it allowed him to push for an ideological agenda against an institution he saw as the main impediment to enlightenment in the area that concerned him most while at the same time posing as the objective and unflappable scientist. It bespoke an interesting mixture of scientism and sexual ideology that was potent enough to throw two generations of Americans off the scent. In fact the tradition of enlightened inquiry and academic freedom always did have an Alice-in-Wonderland quality about it. There was something bogus about sex research from the beginning, and the tradition goes past Kinsey—to Freud, for instance—but it definitely takes a major turn for the worse with him.

Kinsey, as I have already indicated, did not start out to be a sex researcher. He began his scientific career as an entomologist, but he had to struggle with his family to do even that. Kinsey's father, according to the two biographies we have of him, was rigid, intolerant of views differing from his own and a strict Methodist who expected his family to attend three separate services on Sundays. The elder Kinsey had worked his way up to a position at the Stevens Institute in South Orange, New Jersey, and expected his son to follow in his footsteps. Young Alfred, however, was more attracted to things outdoors.

According to Cornelia Christenson's biography, which covers his earlier years in greater detail, Kinsey, whom she describes as "frail", "ranged the countryside [around South Orange] on Saturdays to collect botanical specimens. This hobby continued all through high school."[5] One classmate remembers a discussion she had with Kinsey on the Darwinian theory of evolution, he expressing a belief in it and both of them feeling daring at taking such a "radical stance at that time".[6]

Kinsey joined the then newly formed Boy Scouts in 1910 and was remembered as wearing his uniform frequently. He was also remembered as having little to no interest in members of the opposite sex. According to Christenson, Kinsey

> did not date or show any interest in girls. In fact, in his senior year the South Orange High School year book placed under his picture a quotation from *Hamlet:* "Man delights not me; no, nor woman either." A classmate recalls

[4] Cornelia Christenson, *Kinsey: A Biography* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), pp. 216–17.

[5] Ibid., p. 17.

[6] Ibid., p. 19.

> that he was "the shyest guy around girls you could think of". Kinsey senior did not approve of dating in any case, so socializing on young Alfred's part would have undoubtedly led to increased friction at home.[7]

The friction came anyway, even without the girls. Young Kinsey was, according to his father's wishes, to become an engineer but showed little aptitude or inclination for that profession. After two years at the Stevens Institute, there was a break with the family, especially the father, and Kinsey set off for Bowdoin College in Maine to study biology.

According to Christenson, "Alfred's family life might be described as unduly restrictive during his boyhood and adolescent years, but he was already reaching outside of his home into the beginning of his lifelong romance with nature and the out-of-doors."[8] On a trip as an undergraduate to the northern Maine woods to collect live animals for the Bowdoin Museum, he and his friends agreed to stop their watches as a way of being more in tune with the rhythms of nature. "This wish to be close to nature is a recurring leitmotif throughout Kinsey's life", Christenson adds.[9] He seems to have been fascinated by all sorts of animals, especially snakes; however, his first professional interest fell upon insects in general and the gall wasp in particular. Christenson gives an interesting explanation of what Kinsey found attractive about this particular insect:

> Their curious life history sometimes includes alternating generations, a rather rare biological phenomenon, in which offspring do not resemble their parents. One generation may be agamic—that is, able to reproduce without sexual union.[10]

After graduating from Harvard's Bussey Institution, Kinsey was given a Sheldon Travelling Fellowship, which allowed him pretty much to go where he wanted throughout the United States, collecting gall wasps and enjoying life outdoors. "I am more and more satisfied", the young Kinsey wrote to his high-school biology teacher, "that no other occupation in the world could give me the pleasure that this job of bug hunting is giving."[11]

Kinsey began his academic career at Indiana University in Bloomington in the fall of 1920. During his first year there he had his first date and married the woman a year later. He then settled down to the business of teaching, raising a family, and collecting gall wasps. In 1938—according to his own account,

[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., p. 20.
[9] Ibid., p. 28.
[10] Ibid., p. 32.
[11] Ibid., p. 39.

now disputed—he was asked to be one of the teachers for a noncredit marriage course. According to the two official biographies, he was appalled by the lack of "scientific" material on sexuality and tried to do some research on his own. The students he taught came to him for advice, and out of these conferences the project of accumulating sex histories was begun. Dr. Judith Reisman, who received her Ph.D. in communication from Case Western Reserve, disputes the official Kinsey Institute version of how Kinsey went from collecting bugs to investigating buggery.

"Kinsey spent at least a decade preparing the groundwork getting that course started", Reisman said. "He planned every step of the way. There was nothing coincidental about it." The fact that Kinsey ended up teaching the course was the result of "a long carefully structured strategy".

By mid-summer of 1939 Kinsey was deeply involved in getting sex histories, so much so that he was spending just about every weekend in Chicago, where he had gained entry into the homosexual demi-monde. Kinsey was interested in variation more than anything else—this was true both of wasps and sex, and this interest was to predetermine the results he eventually got.

Many people have remarked that starting off in entomology was a curious way to get involved in sex research, but virtually no one has commented on the connection in any depth or detail. Kinsey, however, did just that in an address he gave to the campus chapter of Phi Beta Kappa in 1939, one year after he had embarked on his project of collecting sex histories. Kinsey begins his talk by stating that for the past twenty years, he has been interested in "individual variation as a biologic phenomenon".[12] "Variability", he tells the group, "is universal in the living world",[13] so much so that "the failure to recognize this *unlimited non identity* [my emphasis] has . . . vitiated much of our scientific work."[14] What begins as a talk on biology soon shades over into a critique of human society, much like the allegory of the termites that one of his professors had given him in graduate school. "The moths at one point may be in reality not quite like moths at other points", leading Kinsey to conclude that "what is one caterpillar's poison may be the next worm's meat."[15]

> If biologists so often forget the most nearly universal of all biologic principles, it is not surprising that men and women in general expect their fellows to think and behave according to patterns which may fit the law-maker, or the imaginary ideals for which the legislation was fashioned, but which are ill-shaped for all real individuals who try to live under them. Social forms,

[12] Ibid., p. 3.
[13] Ibid., p. 4.
[14] Ibid., p. 5.
[15] Ibid., p. 6.

> legal restrictions, and moral codes may be, as the social scientist would contend, the codification of human experience; but like all other averages, they are of little significance when applied to particular individuals.... Prescriptions are merely public confessions of prescriptionists.... What is right for one individual may be wrong for the next; and what is sin and abomination to one may be a worthwhile part of the next individual's life. The range of individual variation in any particular case is usually much greater than is generally understood.[16]

"Continuous variation", Kinsey concludes, "is the rule among men as well as among insects."[17] He then goes on to draw sweeping conclusions about how society should be changed according to the lessons Kinsey has learned from studying the taxonomy of gall wasps.

> Under the laws of our own society, the decision between an acquittal and a ten-year sentence too often depends upon a theory that there are two classes and only two classes of people: acceptable citizens and law breakers. In ethical situations we commonly recognize right and wrong without allowance for the endlessly varied types of behavior that are possible between the extreme right and the extreme wrong.... Our conceptions of right and wrong, normal and abnormal, are seriously challenged by the variation studies.[18]

Right and wrong, according to Kinsey, are to be determined empirically. It is a curious way of thinking, but there is no doubt that this is what Kinsey believed. Like Alexander Pope, he could exclaim, "Whatever is is right." Well, not quite. Kinsey wasn't really all that consistent. Materialists tend not to be. So, for example, when it came to a conflict between moral laws, which have every bit as much ontological status as insect behavior, and sexual impulse, the latter was clearly to prove the model for changing the former.

Given this procrustean attitude, one wonders why Kinsey stopped only at moral laws dealing with sexual behavior. Why not set out to reform moral and legal strictures concerning human speech, for example? Kinsey, I suppose, could have interrogated people on whether they always told the truth. He probably would have found that lying was fairly common among the population. It seems fairly certain that most people do it at least sometimes. He then could have catalogued the various types of lies that people tell. And then? Could he have argued that the prohibition against lying is unfounded because empirical investigation shows that lying is a widespread practice? What about laws against perjury and fraud? Should they be struck down on the basis of people's behavior? What about theft? People steal all the time.

[16] Ibid., pp. 6–7.
[17] Ibid., p. 8.
[18] Ibid.

They have been doing this sort of thing for thousands of years. Does that mean that the laws against theft are "puritanical" and should be abolished? To be consistent, Kinsey would have to argue for this as well. But it seems that the only area where this type of thinking has any purchase on the modern mind is in the area of sex. Sex is an appetite of unusual power, especially when it is not properly controlled. It leads in these cases almost naturally to compulsive behavior, and compulsive sexual behavior is the antithesis of rationality. The human conscience is capable of recovering from almost any type of injury, but at a certain point in people's lives they tend to lose heart in the struggle against a particular vice. Since the sexual vices—or, to use a contemporary term, sexual addiction—can be particularly compulsive, people can tend to despair that they will ever conquer them. At this point a peculiarly modern temptation enters the picture—the temptation to make wrong right. The temptation to rationalize, the temptation to use the intellect, or "science", the modern's truncated form of rationality, as a way of delegitimatizing the norm or, something which is the same thing expressed differently, of making deviance the norm.

A careful reading of Kinsey's Phi Beta Kappa speech shows that this is precisely what he is up to. "Popular judgments of normality", he tells us,

> more often represent measures of departure from the standards of the individual who is passing judgment—an admission that "only thee and me are normal and thee, I fear, is a bit queer." The psychologist's more presumptuous labeling of the abnormal is, too often, merely an attempt to justify the mores, a reassertion of society's concept of what is acceptable in individual behavior with no objective attempt to find out, by actual observation, what the incidence of the phenomenon may be, or the extent of the real maladjustment that the behavior will introduce. Scholarly thinking as well as the laymen's evaluation still needs to be tempered with the realization that individual variations shape into a continuous curve on which there are no sharp divisions between normal and abnormal, between right and wrong.[19]

Once again one is tempted to ask if we are dealing with absolutes here. Is it always true that saying something is abnormal is simply an "attempt to justify the mores"? Is Dr. Kinsey exempt from his own injunction? Is his attempt to label this country's sex laws "abnormal" simply his own desire to justify his own mores or that of a group to which he feels a particularly close identification? If there is no right and wrong, by what right does he claim the mandate to change sex laws? A little bit of reflection will show that there is no consistency here and that what claims to be clear-headed empirical thinking is nothing more than an ideology for social change based on the prestige that science had among the common man in the late thirties. Kinsey is

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

attempting to use science to delegitimatize the norm and substitute deviance in its place:

> These individual differences are the materials out of which nature achieves progress, evolution in the organic world. Standardized, interchangeable genes in the primordial bit of protoplasm would have covered the earth with nothing but primordial bits of protoplasm. . . . In the differences between men lie the hopes of a changing society.[20]

Deviance clearly takes on a metaphysical if not downright theological role in Kinsey's philosophy. Kinsey concludes his lecture by hoping "that our university has not put any standard imprint on you who have gone through it. In fact, from what I know of some of you who are the newly elected members of Phi Beta Kappa, you are a strange assortment of queer individuals; and that is why I respect you and believe in your future."[21]

Queer individuals? Queer, as in deviant? Years later Kinsey would make the connection between homosexuality and evolution by calling his homosexual histories "the most marvelous evolutionary series".[22] Evolution had become the matrix for deviance, and both had become synonymous with scientific progress away from outmoded moral norms. Without the legitimatizing aura of Darwin, without evolution as a scientific justification of deviance, Kinsey would have been just one more middle-aged man obsessed with pornography. With them as his philosophical underpinning he could collect pornography with impunity and even flout obscenity laws in court. The scientist's lab coat became a more respectable version of the flasher's raincoat, and Kinsey could use science as the main club in bludgeoning this country's sexual mores into unconsciousness. Kinsey's philosophy was more than just moral relativism. If Lord Keynes came up with homosexual economics, then Kinsey's contribution to modernity is homosexual entomology. It is an ideology—constructed with the help of Darwin—in which deviance is the cause of all progress. Deviance is the engine that allows new things to happen. Without deviance there would be no human society, no human beings, no higher animals; there would be nothing but that primordial bit of protoplasm with its standardized genes. As a result of his immersion in Darwinian theory and the minutiae of insect taxonomy, Kinsey came up with a theory that allowed him to undermine the concept of the norm, both social and personal, in the area of sexual morality.

Because of Kinsey's fixation on deviance as the engine of social and biological progress, the outcome of Kinsey's survey was pre-programmed from the beginning. As previously mentioned, Kinsey's sex research grew out

[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid., p. 107.

of the conferences he had with students enrolled in his marriage course. If he had been interested in the nature of human sexuality or what most people did, he would have tried to gather a scientifically valid demographic sample of the population as a whole. Instead Kinsey moved in the opposite direction—toward deviance. In June of 1939—less than a year after he got started in the sex business—he made his first trip to Chicago. Why Chicago? According to Christenson, he went there

> primarily for homosexual histories, but along with them was a mixture of divorce cases made available to him by an investigator for a state committee, and also histories of big-city prostitutes. Of the homosexual histories he wrote that they were "the most marvelous *evolutionary* series [his emphasis]—disclosing as prime factors such economic and social problems as have never been suggested before, and a simple biologic basis that is so simple that it sounds impossible that everyone hasn't seen it before."[23]

During his entire career as a sex researcher, Kinsey remained fascinated by deviance: his favorite groups for information—the ones he kept returning to again and again—were homosexuals, prostitutes, and prison inmates. From Kinsey's point of view as a collector of sex histories, this is not hard to understand. Aside from any prurient interest on Kinsey's part—something we will take up later—the fact remains that these groups were more willing to talk about their sex lives than the population in general. Why this should be the case is not hard to understand. To begin with, prisoners are, if you'll pardon the expression, a captive audience. They have nothing else to do and, more importantly, no social status to lose by talking about the things that Kinsey was interested in hearing.

Similarly, sexuality for a prostitute is a business matter, and they talk about it in this fashion, although Pomeroy makes the fascinating observation that although prostitutes were willing to talk about their customers, they were unwilling to talk about their husbands and loved ones. With homosexuals the situation is even easier to understand. Homosexuals in the 1940s were, to use their own argot, almost exclusively "in the closet". They were part of a secret society, engaging in criminal activity. They were in many instances part of a criminal conspiracy. Such a life causes a great deal of psychic strain. Homosexuals then, once they felt secure that their confidentiality wouldn't be breached, would find the type of interview Kinsey conducted deeply cathartic. In fact, many wrote and told him exactly this. Here one could tell one's deepest secrets, not to a confessor who would expect that person to change his life, but to a sympathetic, nonjudgmental scientist, whose refusal to entertain moral concerns would in itself be deeply soothing to a troubled conscience. It is no

[23] Ibid.

wonder then that once Kinsey penetrated their *monde* homosexuals would flock to Kinsey to tell their stories. Kinsey for his part reciprocated by being deeply interested in the homosexual world, so much so that even the deeply sympathetic Pomeroy writes, "one of the chief complaints was that he compiled too large a portion of homosexual histories. There was some truth in this. . . ." [24]

The truth of this, however, raises troubling questions about the accuracy of the survey. When one purports to give a broad survey of sexual mores, the question of the nature of the sample becomes crucial. And in Kinsey's case, questions over the nature of the sample have plagued his research from the beginning.

In 1954 The American Statistical Association published its own analysis of Kinsey's reports in *Statistical Problems of the Kinsey Report on Sexual Behavior in the Human Male,* by Cochran, Mosteller, Tukey and Jenkins. They concluded that "critics are justified in their objections that many of the most . . . provocative statements in the book are not based on the data presented therein, and it is not made clear to the readers on what evidence the statements are based."[25] The ASA committee specifically mentioned concern about the unknown number of homosexuals causing "bias in the sample". When I asked Paul Gebhard what percentage of the sample were homosexuals, he deflected the question, saying "now we're going to get into the nasty problem of defining what is a homosexual."

Lewis Terman expressed similar doubts about Kinsey's sample in an article, "'Sexual Behavior in the Human Male': Some Comments and Criticism", which was published in the *Psychological Bulletin* in 1948. Terman faults Kinsey for "generalizing beyond the data". He finds examples of generalizations based on small samples and generalizations that are contradicted by the data given:

> On p. 567 Kinsey asserts in bold type, that "Not more than 62 percent of the upper level male's outlet is derived from marital intercourse by the age of 55." On checking back to table 85, p. 348, we find that there were only 81 upper-level married men above the age of 45 years upon whom data on source of outlet are given. From table 56, p. 252, we find that there were only 109 married men in the total population (all education levels) combined of ages 51–55 and only 67 above the age of 55. Surely bold type is hardly suitable for sweeping conclusions based on such limited data.[26]

[24] Pomeroy, p. 138.

[25] Cochran, Mosteller, Tukey, and Jenkins, *Statistical Problems of the Kinsey Report on Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1954).

[26] Lewis Terman, "Sexual Behavior in the Human Male: Some Comments and Criticism", *Psychological Bulletin* 45, no. 5 (1948), p. 455.

Kinsey bases his statement that orthodox Jews are the least sexually active of all religious groups in the United States on a sample of "59 orthodox Jews in the entire U.S., all of college level".[27] One of the most quoted statements in the male volume, "Among males who remain unmarried until the age of 35, almost exactly 50 percent have homosexual experiences between the beginning of adolescence and that age", is based on a sample of "68 for the 0–8 educational level, less than 50 for the 9–12 level, and 71 for the 13+ level . . . ", which leads Terman to conclude that Kinsey "does not hesitate to express judgments of evaluation and interpretation for which no data, or only inadequate data, are given."[28]

According to Pomeroy, Terman's article was "the one review that appeared to concern Kinsey most".[29] According to Pomeroy's reading of Kinsey, "Terman's review symbolized for him the moralism and prudery of so many of his worst critics, wrapped in a blanket of professional criticism. . . . Kinsey remained convinced that Terman had betrayed him, through jealousy and basic prudery."[30] So much for Kinsey's willingness to face the facts in a disinterested scientific manner.

More crucial, however, than how Kinsey generalized from his oftentimes surprisingly small samples was the question of who volunteered to be surveyed. According to Terman,

> One question regarding the representativeness of Kinsey's sampling is whether the subjects who volunteered, and who account for about three-fourths of his total population, tended to be of a special sort. One might suppose that persons most willing to talk about their sex lives would be, in a disproportionate number of cases, those least inhibited in their sexual activities. On p. 37 Kinsey says that many who volunteered did so because they were seeking information or help in connection with their personal problems.[31]

By comparing Kinsey's volunteer sample with what he claimed were his hundred-percent samples, Terman comes up with differences that range from two to one for premarital intercourse to four to one for homosexual contacts; that is, that volunteers were twice to four times as likely to have sexual activity as nonvolunteers.

> Differences of such magnitude confirm the suspicion that willingness to volunteer is associated with greater than average sexual activity. And since the volunteers account for about three-fourths of the 5,300 males reported upon in

[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., p. 456.
[29] Pomeroy, p. 290.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Terman, p. 448.

this volume, it follows that Kinsey's figures, in all probability, give an exaggerated notion of the amount of sexual activity in the general population.[32]

Abraham Maslow, the humanist psychologist, worked briefly with Kinsey in the forties and got him into Brooklyn College where he surveyed Maslow's students. In an article that appeared in *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* in April 1952, Maslow and Sakoda conclude that

> the bias introduced into a sex study by the use of volunteers is, in general, in the direction of inflating the percentage reporting unconventional or disapproved sexual behavior—such as masturbation, oral sexuality, petting to climax, premarital and extramarital intercourse, etc. The more timid and retiring individuals, evidently, are apt to be privately, as well as socially, conforming. They are likely, it seems, to refrain from volunteering for sex studies in which they are asked embarrassing questions. The present study would lead us to conclude that the percentages reported are probably inflated and that they should be discounted to some extent for volunteer-error until reexamined.[33]

Kinsey, who knew of Maslow's objections while he was still preparing his first volume, ignored the objections. In a letter written in 1970, Maslow said that he warned Kinsey about volunteer error, but Kinsey

> disagreed with me and was sure that his random selection would be okay. I put the heat on all my five classes at Brooklyn College and made an effort to get them all to sign up to be "interviewed" by Kinsey. We had my dominance test scores for all of them, and then Kinsey gave me the names of the students who actually showed up for the interviews. As I expected, the volunteer error was proven, and the whole basis for Kinsey's statistics was proven to be shaky. But then he refused to publish it and refused even to mention it in his books, or to mention anything else that I had written. All my work was excluded from his bibliography. So after a couple of years I went ahead and published it myself.[34]

Paul Gebhard now feels that "Maslow had a point, and it should have been analyzed." However, at the time, according to Gebhard, Kinsey "didn't believe that. . . .I think Kinsey's feeling was I've got enough to do without going off on a side tangent."

Once the male volume appeared, little was heard beyond the din created by the popular press. Kinsey had a policy of not allowing journalists to be present when he spoke. He also had a policy of requiring journalists to submit their

[32] Ibid., p. 449.

[33] Abraham Maslow and James M. Sakoda, "Volunteer Error in the Kinsey Study", *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 47, no. 2 (April 1952), p. 26.

[34] Dr. Judith A. Reisman and Edward W. Eichel, *Kinsey, Sex and Fraud: The Indoctrination of a People* (Lafayette, La: Huntington House, 1990), p. 221.

articles to him before publication; however, in spite of all that, the relationship between Kinsey and the press was for the most part a marriage made in heaven. The sweeping generalizations he made about sexual mores were guaranteed to stimulate reader interest, and if no one read the fine print, well, the journalists for the most part weren't going to complain. The entomologist from Indiana provided the perfect cover for the liberation from Christian mores and restraints, namely, science, which was probably at the height of its prestige as the validator of things real. No one knew about the infamous Tuskegee syphilis experiments yet, and the equally contemporaneous Nazi experiments were simply a part of the horror of World War II that hadn't been sorted out yet either. Hugh Hefner, no impartial bystander when it came to lobbying for the removal of restraints on sexual behavior, cited the Kinsey reports as justification for creating *Playboy*.

But behind it all, we have two entities that have never really been examined by anyone outside of the charmed circle of the Kinsey Institute or the sex research establishment. I'm talking about Kinsey himself and the data upon which his study rests. Why was Kinsey so interested in sex anyway? Are we to believe that it was simply pure, dispassionate thirst for the truth? Or were there other personal factors at work here? Given Kinsey's bias in collecting data, given his preference for deviance, is it not possible that his project, the "grand scheme", as Pomeroy would call it, was nothing more than the expression of deep-seated personal need if not compulsion? This is Paul A. Robinson's view of Kinsey's life as portrayed in both the Pomeroy and Christenson biographies. Writing a review of these two books for the May 1972 *Atlantic*, Robinson feels that

> Kinsey's great project originated in the discovery of his own sexual ambiguities. I also suspect that Pomeroy holds the same opinion but that for ethical reasons he is unable to say so. Soon after he joined the project Pomeroy deciphered the code Kinsey used to disguise the identity of the histories. He was thus able to read Kinsey's own history, as well as those of his wife and children. Furthermore, during the period of their association Pomeroy and Kinsey took each other's history every two years in order to test the consistency of their recall. In composing his biography, therefore, Pomeroy had access to all the details of Kinsey's sexual development, but he was bound to silence by the ground rules of the project which guaranteed confidentiality even in death.[35]

Robinson intimates "that Kinsey may have discovered in himself the homosexual tendencies he would later ascribe to a large portion of the population"[36]

[35] Paul A. Robinson, "The Case for Dr. Kinsey", *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1972, p. 101.
[36] *Ibid.*

as a result of his reading of the relationship that Kinsey had with a graduate student of his by the name of Ralph Voris. Voris, who died in 1940, was the first graduate student to receive his doctorate under Kinsey. Christenson claims that there was "a close bond between them" but doesn't go into details.[37]

When I asked Paul Gebhard, who has also seen Kinsey's sex history, if he would like to comment on Robinson's charges, he said, "Yeah, no comment."

"Do you think", I said, "that Kinsey's sex life was influential in his research?"

"It was a motivating factor. He had such a restrained childhood. He once said to me that he hoped that no other children would have to go through what he went through as a child. Sexual urges were inherently sinful. Masturbation would drive you mad—stuff like that. I think that was what gave him a little humanitarian devotion."

Or the desire to subvert sexual norms. It all depends, it seems, on where Kinsey himself stood. Even if Kinsey was not an active homosexual, he certainly seemed fascinated by what they did. One homosexual wrote in a memoir that Kinsey spent over seven hundred hours with him alone. This certainly bespeaks something other than scholarly objectivity, especially when Kinsey seemed so bent on collecting as many histories as possible. He could have collected at least five hundred in the time he spent with this man alone.

The question of Kinsey's homosexuality is a particularly tantalizing one because we know that the answer lies in the Kinsey archives. Like Freud, with whom he is so often compared, Kinsey liked to project the image of himself as the scientist interested in discovering the fact of the matter. Like Freud, he was obsessively concerned with preserving his privacy. Freud burned his private papers, not once, but twice during his lifetime. Kinsey told his staff photographer William Dellenback that he would destroy the institute's files and go to jail before he would let the FBI see them. This was to preserve their confidentiality; however, it is not hard to see that the most valuable instance of confidentiality is the one concerning the man whose project is at stake and whose objectivity would be compromised by evidence of a hidden sexual agenda.

Professor James Jones, who has seen the correspondence between Kinsey and Voris, is as evasive as Gebhard when asked to describe their relationship.

"If you will read in Christenson's book and in Pomeroy's book that's spoken to. The research that I've done beyond that is basically my research and I'm preparing a volume, and I think it's premature for me to say at this point what I'm going to write."

Ironies abound here. First of all we have a man who spent his life snooping into the private lives of thousands of people and proselytizing for the removal

[37] Christenson, p. 79.

of sexual prohibitions and laws, yet no one knows what this man's own sexual orientation was. Secondly, the institute that this man founded to disseminate information on human sexuality is aggressive in thwarting any research into the life of its founder. Wouldn't it stand to reason that a man who was as intensely interested in sexuality as Kinsey was would be motivated by his own sexual concerns? And if so, what were those concerns? And if not, why does the Kinsey Institute give the impression that it has something to hide? Talking to people like Dr. Gebhard, one is confronted with an inescapable double standard. The Kinsey Institute would claim that there is nothing wrong with any sexual practice that one finds stimulating. Yet alongside of this boundlessly progressive attitude toward sex in the abstract is a positively Victorian attitude toward the sexual habits of their founder in particular. Well, if committing sodomy is no different morally from collecting stamps or gall wasps, then tell us about Dr. Kinsey's sexual preferences. And if the institute can't tell us about their data, then they should not expect us to accept everything they or Kinsey had to say as scientifically proven. Verifiability, after all, is the essence of science. In the area of sex research, however, one is expected to accept things on blind faith. It is as if Leeuwenhoek had invented the microscope but then refused to allow anyone to look into it and claimed that whatever he saw we would have to accept on his say-so alone. Such is the scientific status of modern-day sex education.

In 1981 more serious charges were levelled against Kinsey. Judith Reisman, then a professor at the University of Haifa, Israel, gave a paper in Jerusalem that analyzed the data on child sexuality in the Kinsey report. Given the shocking nature of the data, it is surprising that no one questioned it until thirty-three years after it had been published. Tables thirty through thirty-four in chapter five of Kinsey's book *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* document the incidence of orgasm in pre-adolescents. One four-year-old was "specifically manipulated" for twenty-four hours around the clock.[38] This child achieved twenty-six orgasms in this time period. Another eleven-month-old infant had fourteen "orgasms", according to the Kinseyan definition, in a period of thirty-eight minutes, or one orgasm every 2.7 minutes. One thirteen-year-old was observed having three orgasms in seventy seconds, or one orgasm every twenty-three seconds.[39] Table thirty-two on p. 178 of the male volume documents "Speed of pre-adolescent orgasm", measuring those who took from "up to 10 sec." to achieve "orgasm" to those who took "over 10 min."[40]

[38] A. C. Kinsey, W. B. Pomeroy and C. E. Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1948), p. 160.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., p. 178.

In addition the Kinsey team making these observations noted various types of reaction on the part of the children involved. One of the six types of reaction involved:

> Extreme tension with violent convulsion: Often involving the sudden heaving and jerking of the whole body . . . gasping, eyes staring or tightly closed, hands grasping, mouth distorted, sometimes with tongue protruding; whole body or parts of it spasmodically twitching . . . violent jerking of the penis . . . groaning, sobbing, or more violent cries, sometimes with an abundance of tears (especially among younger children).[41]

The children in group five manifest "extreme trembling, collapse, loss of color and sometimes fainting. . . ." Those in group six become "pained or frightened at approach of orgasm". In addition,

> some males suffer excruciating pain and may scream if movement is continued or the penis even touched. The males in the present group become similarly hypersensitive [and] will fight away from the partner and may make violent attempts to avoid climax, although they derive definite pleasure from the situation.[42]

Reisman's paper asked a simple question. She wanted to know where Kinsey got the data described above. Given the data as Kinsey published it, there seem to be only two alternatives. Either Kinsey got the material anecdotally from pedophiles (or as Gebhard was to put it in a letter to Reisman, "parents, mostly college educated, who observed their children and kept notes for us") or Kinsey and his researchers got their data from actual experiments involving child/adult sexual contact. In the first case, the Kinsey data is hearsay and scientifically bogus; in the second instance it was obtained by criminal activity. Either way it doesn't look good for sex research in general or for Kinsey and Co. in particular.

Even sex researchers sympathetic to Kinsey have mentioned the problematic nature of the child sexuality data. John Gagnon, who was on the staff of the Kinsey Institute for ten years, wrote in his book *Human Sexualities* that "a less neutral observer than Kinsey would have described these events as sex crimes, since they involved sexual contacts between adults and children."[43] Gagnon urges caution in interpreting this sort of data, although he also feels that "the observations should not be ruled out simply because they emerged from illegal or stressful situations."[44]

[41] Ibid., p. 161.
[42] Ibid.
[43] John Gagnon, *Human Sexualities* (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1977), p. 84 n.
[44] Ibid.

> The dilemma here is that much of this information comes from adults who were in active sexual contact with these boys and who were interested in producing orgasm in them. The aggressive seeking by the boys may be an adult interpretation based on feelings of guilt. . . . [45]

Reisman draws the analogy between rapists and their victims. The rapist frequently claims that his victim enjoys being raped. However, he is hardly a neutral observer in this particular sexual transaction. The same caveats then would apply to Kinsey's child sexuality data. If it was obtained from pedophiles, it was scientifically worthless. If it was obtained from experiments, then the Kinsey staff was involved in criminal activity.

On p. 315 of his biography, Wardell Pomeroy gives some indication that Kinsey may have been involved in sexual contacts with children himself. According to Pomeroy, Kinsey

> believed that students in the field had all been "too prudish" to make an actual investigation of sperm count in early-adolescent males. His own research for the *Male* volume had produced some material, but not enough. He could report, however, that there were mature sperm even in the first ejaculation, although he did not yet have any actual counts.[46]

As Reisman was to say later, "You can only collect early adolescent ejaculate by being pretty close to the adolescent. You don't necessarily have to do anything, but what I'm saying is that it sounds like experimental activity. Early adolescent sperm 'material' is *not* collected by recall."

Reisman also concluded according to the testimony of pediatricians that the children were either forcibly restrained or restrained by drugs. She also surmises that the children came from ghetto areas.

In 1983 Patrick Buchanan published the charges in one of his syndicated columns. "If Dr. Reisman's charges stand up in the storm that is coming," he concluded, "Kinsey will wind up on the same ethical and scientific shelf now reserved for the German doctors who conducted live experiments on Jewish children. And he will belong there."[47]

The storm that came, if one could call it that, didn't last long. Harriet Pilpel, a lawyer long associated with both the institute and the ACLU, wrote a threatening letter to Buchanan alleging that his claims were "totally without foundation, libelous and malicious".[48] Miss Pilpel also claimed that "the archives of the Kinsey Institute contain no films of any human sexual experi-

[45] Ibid., p. 84.

[46] Pomeroy, p. 315.

[47] Patrick Buchanan, "Kinsey: Medical Pioneer or Criminal Fraud?" *Human Events*, July 2, 1983, p. 14.

[48] Ibid.

ments conducted by the institute."[49] The claim, of course, set her up for an easy rebuttal by Buchanan, who simply quoted Pomeroy's biography about the existence of films of sexual activity made specifically at Kinsey's direction and paid for by funds provided by Indiana University. With the publication of Buchanan's column responding to Pilpel's letter, the coming storm subsided almost as soon as it arose. Virtually nothing has happened since Buchanan responded to the Pilpel letter. The charges were never refuted, but then again they were never definitely substantiated either.

When I spoke with Paul Gebhard he remembered Reisman as "very obsessed with this matter".

"She got the idea", he continued, "that we were running a kind of Masters and Johnson experiment on children, and she telephoned me—that was shortly before I stepped down as director—and wanted to know about this. Where did we get this data? I said, well we got them from a diversity of sources. Some were from parents. We'd often ask parents about the sexual activity of their kids. Some of it we got from nursery school attendants who would tell us what they had observed, and some of it we got from pedophiles. We interviewed a number of pedophiles, particularly in prison. So we lumped that all together, and that's where we got the data. This distressed her. She decided that we were experimenting with children, and she's asked for an investigation. She has made all sorts of accusations, but nothing has ever come of it."

"You weren't experimenting with children?" I asked.

"No, of course not."

"Isn't there a stop watch used to time these experiments?"

"One parent used a stop watch, but we never did it. No, I can assure you we did not experiment with children."

"Do pedophiles use stop watches?"

"Not generally, no", Gebhard responded.

According to Dr. Jones of Houston University, both Gebhard and Reinisch expressed "outrage" at Reisman's charges against Kinsey.

"They felt that Kinsey had been unfairly accused and tried to figure out how they could respond without violating the confidentiality of the records."

Jones has had more access to the Kinsey files than anyone not in the charmed circle of sex researchers associated with the institute. Although if he is, as he claims to be, outside the circle, he is not far outside. Jones did his dissertation on Kinsey at Indiana University and has been in the past a member of the institute's scientific board of advisors.

According to Jones, "Kinsey to my knowledge was not involved in any

[49] Ibid.

abuse of human subjects. Whatever else I'm working on and trying to straighten out, I found no evidence of that. Kinsey was not doing experiments on human subjects as far as I know."

"What about getting people to come and perform sodomy?" I asked.

"I think there you'd have to ask other people. There are a lot of rumors now and basically what one has to do is try to separate rumor from fact. Reisman and Buchanan have made any biographer's task a very demanding one now because when you make those kinds of accusations someone is going to expect a serious scholar to straighten them out. And it's very hard to prove negatives."

In this case it is particularly hard because the Kinsey Institute has absolute control of the data. As a result, the question of Kinsey's involvement in illegal activities has reached a stalemate. The Kinsey Institute is in full control of the archives that would allow scholars or journalists to resolve the issue, but they will only let those sympathetic to the cause of sex research and sex education in to do research. And even there, the material available is rigorously censored.

Describing his own research at the Kinsey Institute, Jones says, "No one has impeded me." But before long he is putting qualifications on to his own statement. "Let's put it this way, I don't know what's in the archives and what's not there. I've been permitted to see everything that I've asked to see. I don't know whether there are inner sanctum materials that I don't know how to ask to see. I don't know if materials prior to Kinsey's death were removed. I don't think they were, but I don't know."

When I asked Dr. Gebhard what Jones was allowed to see, he gave a slightly different version. Jones, he said, "can see the stuff that's previously looked over. He got to see some of the correspondence, but I ran ahead of him and made sure to abstract anything that was confidential."

"Is Kinsey's sex history going to be available to historians?"

"No", Gebhard responded.

"Is it going to be available to Dr. Jones?"

"No."

"Is it ever going to be available?"

"Not as far as I know."

"Doesn't this pose problems for historians?"

"Yeah", Gebhard answered. "That's tough luck."

"All Kinsey Institute activities", we read in a glossy, two-color brochure put out by the institute,

> derive from the belief that social policy and personal decisions about sex, gender, and reproduction should be made on the basis of factual information rather than on ignorance. The Kinsey Institute continues its commitment to providing such information.

The ironies here are too large to ignore. The Kinsey Institute, it seems, following in the footsteps of its founder, has mastered the art of having its cake and eating it too. They get over $500,000 in state funds each year but have no public accountability. They call themselves an archive and yet consider their files as sacrosanct as the letters you wrote to your wife when you were engaged to be married. They get to agitate for the deconstruction of sexual mores and laws by basing their claims on "science" but refuse to let anyone see the basis of their data. When Kinsey puts forth his claim to be the quintessentially disinterested scientist, those of us outside the charmed circle of the institute are expected to believe this on the blindest of blind faith. It leads one to believe that the institute indeed has something to hide and that if free access were given to their archives or even to Kinsey's sex history, the whole edifice of sex research and sex education would come tumbling down like a house of cards. The sex researchers, like Kinsey himself, protest too much. Beneath all the high-sounding ideals, one detects the unsavory odor of hypocrisy and mendacity and, beneath that, sexual compulsion masquerading as scientific interest.

"Did you ever ask people to give performances before camera?" I asked Dr. Gebhard.

"No."

"Did you ever ask them to have sexual intercourse in front of camera?"

"Some people", Gebhard answered, contradicting his earlier statement. "These people were scientists, and they were very few in number. See, if you observe sexual activity, Kinsey pointed out, you can't look at all parts of the body simultaneously. The best we could do was choose a few scientists who were willing to cooperate and film them and then we could look at the films over and over again."

It just so happens that one of the "scientists" who volunteered to perform before the cameras wrote a memoir of his experiences that appeared in the November 13, 1980, number of *The Advocate*, a homosexual newspaper out of Los Angeles. Samuel A. Steward, the author of the article, was "teaching English at a second-rate sectarian university in Chicago"[50] when he first met Kinsey in 1949. He later became proprietor of his own tattoo parlor, which I'm sure is a scientific endeavor of some sort. His partner in crime—sodomy was and is illegal in the state of Indiana—was "a tall mean-looking sadist... with a crew-cut and a great personality".[51] The author's partner "was a free-lance artist doing fashion lay-outs for Saks and other Fifth Avenue stores,

[50] Samuel A. Steward, "Remembering Dr. Kinsey: Sexual Scientist and Investigator", *The Advocate*, November 13, 1980, p. 21.

[51] Ibid., p. 22.

and under the name of Steve Masters he produced many homosexual ink-drawings for the growing S/M audience."[52]

Kinsey brought these two "scientists" to Bloomington to be filmed while engaging in sado-masochism. According to Steward, Kinsey "never set up assignations of any kind—but his interest in sado-masochism had reached a point of intolerable tension. He knew that I experimented in that area, and he wanted to find out more."[53]

Steward, according to his own testimony, became an "unofficial collaborator" for the Kinsey Institute from 1949 until Kinsey's death in 1956. The relationship began with Kinsey taking Steward's sex history, after which Kinsey "looked at me thoughtfully and said: 'Why don't you give up trying to continue your heterosexual relationships?' "[54] It seems that the disinterested scientist wasn't above a little proselytizing after all. At any rate, Steward responded immediately: "I abandoned my phony 'bisexuality' that very evening", he said.[55]

Apparently Kinsey and Steward found each other fascinating. Both of them were sexual record keepers; both kept their records in code, although Steward concedes that Kinsey's code was much more sophisticated than his. Both were avid consumers of pornography. Kinsey was interested in the pornography Steward wrote as well as his "sexual action Polaroid pictures", which he sent to Institute photographer Bill Dellenback, who made 8 x 10 glossy reproductions. "Kinsey", Steward wrote,

> favored me in return with the most flattering kind of attention—never coming to Chicago without writing to me and trying to arrange a meeting. In the eight years of our friendship, I logged (as a record keeper again) about 700 hours of his pleasant company, the most fascinating in the world because all of his shop talk was of sex. . . . [56]

All of this attention—seven hundred hours is, after all, a long time to spend on one individual, especially when Kinsey was so pressed for time collecting sex histories that were to survey males and females in general—apparently got Steward to wondering about Kinsey himself and his own sexual motivations.

> In him I saw the ideal father—who was never shocked, who never criticized, who always approved, who listened and sympathized. I suppose I fell in love with him to a degree, even though he was a grandfather. Of course, there was never any physical contact between us except a handshake. Many

[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., p. 21.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.

> persons I knew would ask: "Is he queer?" I told him this. "And what do you answer?" he asked. "Well," I said slowly, "I always say, 'Yes he is—but not in the same way we are. He is a *voyeur* and an *auditeur.* He likes to look and listen.'" Kinsey laughed, but a moment later I caught him observing me thoughtfully. I may have hit closer to the truth than I realized.[57]

Was Kinsey queer? We may never know. Dr. Reisman claims that certain Kinsey Institute files were destroyed shortly after her accusations were made public. Kinsey's own personal sex history is presumably still available, but it would have to be decoded by either Pomeroy or Gebhard, both of whom have a vested interest in the outcome. According to Professor Jones, part of the reason Pilpel's letter to Buchanan was mere bluff was because the institute is afraid to become involved in litigation.

"No one at the institute wants to sue," he said, "because if you get into a court of law the issue of confidentiality on those records is joint because if the only way you can prove something is to go into the files then the court may order that. I don't think the institute wants a lawsuit for that reason. But I would not read that to mean that they couldn't win it in terms of what's in the files. It's just that if you are ordered by the courts to open those files then you've got a real quandary."

In terms of external evidence, homosexuality is the piece that completes the jigsaw puzzle that is Kinsey's life and legacy. It explains, for example, the "heterophobia" that Edward Eichel, who received his degree in sex education from New York University, has described as the "hidden agenda in sex education". Sex education's primary purpose is to break down the child's modesty and then his natural aversion to homosexual activity.

> For Kinsey, blurring of sexual identity—*bisexuality* (as opposed to heterosexuality)—was an essential step in opening up an unlimited range of sexual opportunities. Kinsey supported an ideology that might be called *pansexuality,* "anything goes" that provides excitement and pleasure. But in fact, it is an ideology that frowns upon monogamy and traditional concepts of normality, and considers intercourse between a man and a woman a limited form of sexual expression. (Pomeroy, in his article "The Now of the Kinsey Findings" [1972], refers to heterosexual intercourse as an "addiction".)[58]

The disparity between the little one needs to know to function sexually and the elaborate outlay of time and money involved in sex education curriculums can best be explained by the fact that sex ed is there to educate children away from their natural aversion to certain unnatural activities. Sex

[57] Ibid.

[58] Edward W. Eichel and J. Gordon Muir, *Heterophobia: A Hidden Agenda in Sex Education?* manuscript copy, p. 19.

education uses science as a legitimatizing device, just as Kinsey did in his own sex research. The protective mantle of science allows one to become involved in activity that everyone would otherwise condemn as depraved, activities like voyeurism and collecting pornography, while simultaneously maintaining a veneer of respectability. Science is the legitimator that allows sex educators to engage in smutty talk in front of children without being either fired or arrested. If science could serve as a permission slip for Josef Mengele, then why not for Alfred Kinsey?

Homosexuality also explains the phenomenon of the double life one finds all but ubiquitous in sex education curriculums. To put it simply, parents almost never get to see what their children see in the courses they take. The reason for this is obvious: the sex educators fear parental outrage. The Unitarian Universalist Association, publishers of *About Your Sexuality,* a sex ed program that shows to fourteen-year-olds, among other things, graphic films of anal intercourse, refused one parent permission to see the materials in the program because he "had not demonstrated open-mindedness and good faith". The program was created by Deryck Calderwood, who died in 1986 of AIDS. Calderwood was described in *The New York Tribune* article as

> a disciple of sex pioneer Alfred Kinsey [who] believed, with Kinsey, that no type of sexual behavior is abnormal or pathological. He crafted the ideology of the NYU program, which has been called by one former student, Edward Eichel, "a gay studies program for heterosexuals".[59]

The Rev. Eugene B. Navias, director of religious education for the Unitarian Universalists, "confirmed that the program forbids the children to speak to their parents about what is said by others in the group.... But this practice, he said, protects the sense of group trust that is essential if the children are going to be able to share honestly."[60] Which is reminiscent of what Kinsey and his successors had to say about the files of the Kinsey Institute. Academic freedom, it seems, is a one-way street headed in the direction of subversion.

Subversion is, of course, something Kinsey practiced with a vengeance, all the while claiming that he had no other agenda than the pursuit of scientific truth. In fact, the best way to achieve the former is by claiming the latter, something recognized by Paul Robinson when he reviewed the two Kinsey biographies:

> The critics were right in asserting that the Reports had been inspired by moral as well as scientific principles. At least implicitly, both the *Male* and *Female* volumes argued against existing sexual restrictions by showing that actual

[59] Chris Corcoran, "A Church-Backed Sex-Ed Program Stirs Furor Among Parents, Clergy", *New York City Tribune,* July 18, 1988, p. 5.
[60] Ibid.

> sexual behaviour bore little relation to these restrictions.... Whatever their motivation, the Reports were all the more effective polemically for their seeming disinterestedness. Instead, for example, of stating outright that premarital sex was desirable, Kinsey simply documented a high correlation between premarital sexual experience and sexual "adjustment" in marriage, leaving the reader free to opt against adjustment if his moral code so demanded.[61]

It is now fifty years since Kinsey started his sex research—time enough to step back and have some sort of reevaluation. And the best place to start is with the sex history of Kinsey himself. If the Kinsey Institute wants to keep his life a dark secret, that is their right, I suppose, although I don't see how they can go on accepting public money if they take this stance. If they choose to remain secretive, however, they should not be surprised if growing public scepticism is the response to their claims. The essence of science is verifiability. On that score sex research à la Kinsey is not immune to the verdict of history, which threatens as of now to rank its credibility just below that of phrenology.

[61] Robinson, p. 102.

Chapter 6

LIBERAL GUILT COOKIES

It was the kind of article you've seen a hundred times before on the women's page of the local newspaper. The only intriguing thing about it was its title—something about "guilt cookies". From the recipe that was given, they seem just like any other type of cookie; their name derives from the effect they are to have on the conscience of the mother, who bakes them because she is going on a business trip, "leaving everyone at home to eat the cookies and to wonder (you imagine) whether they will still love you after you've left them in the lurch for three whole days. A few dozen chocolate chips are all that stand between you and total abandonment."[1]

The author, you may have gathered, "doesn't like business trips", or at least so she says. I suspect that there's more ambivalence here than she is willing to admit. (In another column describing one of those business trips, she tells us, "I like the snap, crackle and pop of those momentary encounters. I wouldn't want them to become extinct. . . . I cheated some weeks ago on an airplane when I struck up a casual and friendly conversation about computers with the man across the aisle."[2] But to get back to her original column, she doesn't like business trips "because I have to leave my children, and when I call long distance the older one croons, 'Are you coming home tonight?' which breaks my heart."[3]

Now we think that mothers staying home with their children and eschewing the climb up the corporate ladder is a good thing. When it comes to moral issues, we are not exactly hypoactive. However, even admitting all that, we know of no sin involved in leaving one's children—provided they are well cared for—for three days. If the children are neglected as a matter of course, that is another matter. But a three-day trip? One wonders why the guilt, especially in an age that is so adept at rationalizing and shifting burdens and

[1] Anna Quindlen, " 'Guilt' Cookies Don't Make up for Being Gone", N.Y. Times News Service (October 1, 1988).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

making excuses, especially among the feminists, to which class our author belongs. When there are so many other things that are so wrong and so routinely condoned, why feel guilty for something like this? It was the sort of thing that is mildly puzzling and then soon forgotten amidst a welter of seemingly more important things. But then, as if the lady were insisting to answer a question you weren't really interested in asking in the first place, the answer came two weeks later in the same column.

The column this time was on abortion: "On abortion," we are told in case we were tending to think otherwise, "we really can't ever go back."[4] The occasion for writing this column was Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun's then recent statement that *Roe v. Wade,* the 1973 decision allowing abortion, would probably go down the drain during the court's next session. Needless to say, the author is not happy with that prospect, although as with most feminists these days, she can't wax enthusiastic about abortion anymore either: "Once you know the truth, you can never go back," she writes, quoting someone.[5] The phrase tells the truth, of course, but in a way the author doesn't intend.

And why isn't our author happy? After talking about how we really can't go back, she tells us that, "Millions of us have had them ourselves."[6] She is, of course, referring to abortion. Finally, at the end of the column, she writes, "I am one of a generation of women who, since the time they became sexually active, have had access to legal abortion to change those scenarios. We have discussed, we have agonized, we have changed our minds and changed our minds again. But I do not believe we can ever go back."[7]

Is our author—her name is Anna Quindlen—trying to tell us something? Most of what we hear in the realm of public discussion on the abortion issue seems curiously disconnected from personal biography. We are led to believe the furor over abortion is about something as abstract as rights, as if all of this were thought up in some seminar somewhere and then spread around by people who were ravished by the cogency of the logic involved. No, it turns out that in the real world things are different from that. People support abortion for much more mundane and understandable reasons. One of the main reasons is conscience. Supporters of abortion have often had abortions themselves. Political activism becomes a synthetic pain killer for pangs of conscience. It is to spiritual health what treating cancer with anesthesia would be to medicine.

[4] Anna Quindlen, "On Abortion: We Can't Really Ever Go Back", New York Times News Service October 15, 1988.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

That being said, however, there were still some puzzling things about the abortion column. Notable by its absence, for example, was any mention of guilt. Now it seems odd that a lady who is plagued by hyperscrupulosity when she takes a three-day business trip—so much so that she has to bake ritual "guilt cookies" to absolve herself—should be able to bang out an article on abortion without so much as a moral blip appearing on the screen of her conscience. But maybe it's not so odd at all. Maybe, I began to feel, the sort of ingratiating supermom of column one is related in a more profound way than we would initially think to the proabortion advocate of column two. The connection has to do with guilt. I have no doubt that Ms. Quindlen feels guilty. I just don't think this guilt has to do with three-day business trips. I know that there are people with scrupulous consciences (just as there are those whose consciences are lax), but in general people feel guilty because they have done something wrong.

Guilt is to the soul what pain is to the body. It is a sign that something is wrong. It is a sign that it is time to seek help. Now just as there are those who try to ignore what their body is telling them, because of fear of the doctor's diagnosis, there are those who want to ignore guilt, pretend that it isn't there, or there because of irrational psychological causes—anything, it would seem, rather than face up to the fact that they have done something wrong. Ms. Quindlen is involved in what has become a common phenomenon these days—plea bargaining with her own conscience. By pleading guilty to a lesser offense, she hopes to get off from a more serious one. Instead of facing the source of the guilt, she tries to make people like her, figuring, I suppose, that if enough people like her she can't be so bad and, therefore, the things that she has done that now trouble her conscience can't be that bad either. The upshot of this tortured moral logic is large doses of sentimental and desperately ingratiating self-absolution. "In airports," she tells us, "I make a pathetic figure, smiling at toddlers, offering to hold babies, worrying silently about whether children watching planes take off, their foreheads pressed against the observation windows, could possibly break through glass two inches thick."[8] A troubled conscience is a formidable social force. It can become the hidden engine that drives entire cultures. Like the devil himself, the more its existence is denied, the more powerful it becomes. People plagued by guilt really have only two choices: they can adjust their behavior to suit their morality, or they can adjust their morality to suit their behavior.

The first option is generally known as repentance. In the history of mankind, this option is rather new. It really only came into vogue with the advent of a man by the name of Jesus Christ, who lived in the Middle East

[8] Anna Quindlen, "'Guilt' Cookies".

some time ago. This man also claimed to be God, which is why he had the power to put some force behind the whole notion of repentance. Jesus Christ, according to those who knew him at the time, had a hard time convincing people of the time that he had this power, so to show them that he did he would produce some parallel visible sign, something like curing people of paralysis. Christ figured, I suppose, that if people could see the undoing of physical paralysis, they would extrapolate to the undoing of moral paralysis, a much more serious but less visible malady. The only requirement for forgiveness was belief in Jesus Christ and the admission that the person was sorry, which entailed the oftentimes unspoken admission that what one had done was wrong.

As the teachings of Jesus Christ caught on, this forgiveness became institutionalized in what the Church called a sacrament known as Penance or Confession or, in its latest appellation, Reconciliation. Whatever its name, the elements remained the same: faith in Jesus Christ as God coupled with the admission that the action one had committed was wrong—in the context of the sacramental arrangement of the Church—brought about the forgiveness of that sin and the removal of guilt. A certain sense of freedom followed that was unlike anything the world had ever known. If you want an idea of what the world is like without this possibility of forgiveness, study any primitive culture (as of, say, the beginning of this century), with its fears and taboos and propitiations to implacable gods and forces constricting these cultures into a cultural analog of the paralyzed man, before he was told to pick up his bed and walk. The ancient Greeks, a group close to us in culture if not in time, are a good example. They had a whole art form based on a world without forgiveness, which is to say, an unredeemed one. It was known as tragedy, the essence of which is that you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. If you want to be an upright guy, like Pentheus in *The Bacchae,* or Hippolytus in the play of the same name, and choose not to become sexually involved with, say, your stepmother, you inevitably offend some god or goddess, who arranges it so that you get trampled to death by your own horses or torn limb from limb by your mother's corybantic feminist friends. Such is life in a world not redeemed, which is to say, without Jesus Christ and the Church that he founded as the way to salvation for all men.

But as I was saying, repentance is not the only option, although it certainly was attractive enough to men to spread Christianity throughout the entire world. The primitive, pagan mode isn't much of an option anymore either. As Ms. Quindlen might say, "Once you know the truth, you can never go back." The third option is the option of the Antichrist. It is the satanic option. It is the option of rebellion, the attempt to turn deliberately away from the truth and make wrong right. I use the term advisedly. "Evil be thou my good" is the

quintessentially satanic attitude. Satan, if we can believe John Milton, said it himself. "Knowing good and evil", being "like gods" is something women have found attractive from the beginning. It is no wonder then that the women's movement should fasten on these goals now. But as Ms. Quindlen's columns indicate, Plan B doesn't quite work. This thing called guilt is an elusive but persistent commodity. If we repress it in one area of our lives, it pops up somewhere else. If we refuse to acknowledge the atoning power of Jesus Christ and the immutability of the moral law his Church propounds, we find ourselves, not free from guilt as the propagandists would lead us to believe, but enslaved by it, consumed by it, succumbing like the most ignorant and benighted savage to ritual acts of propitiation, things like baking guilt cookies and writing columns about it, trying to convince the world and yourself that you are a likable person.

Guilt, as Ms. Quindlen's columns indicate, is a powerful force in the world today. Someone, I believe, even came up with a term to describe its political application. The term is "liberal guilt". Just about everyone has heard of it, but no one seems to know where it came from. Ms. Quindlen—and we can be thankful to her for this—gives us some insight into the state of mind at its origin. Generally, it is assumed to be some sort of free-floating psychopathology; however, now that we know the true nature of liberalism, that explanation no longer suffices. Take the case of Ms. Quindlen, whose columns, by the way, have been collected into a book, *Living out Loud.*[9] She was born in 1950 Philadelphia and raised a Catholic, but by the time she graduated from Barnard College in 1974, she seems to have converted to the religion of the *Zeitgeist,* known then as now as Liberation. Liberation in this time frame came first as the sexual variety and then as the women's variety. In fact, the one led to the other.

It is my contention, backed up by evidence gleaned from Ms. Quindlen's columns, that the net result of any movement of this type of liberation has as its natural concomitant an ever-increasing pool of guilt. The reasons should be obvious, but let's deal with them in the chronology of the generation Ms. Quindlen represents. First of all, there is apostasy, the turning away from God, specifically Jesus Christ and the Church he founded. Such a turning away is the *raison d'être* of education at places like Barnard.

In fact, one might say that all modernity, all the creators of the intellectual artifice that is the modern age, were bent on nothing more than a rationalization of apostasy, with sexual rebellion as its vehicle. What do Margaret Mead, and Bloomsbury, and Picasso, and Sartre and Freud, and the various forms of socialism, and Paul Tillich, and any number of lesser lights have in common?

[9] Anna Quindlen, *Living out Loud* (New York: Random House, 1988).

Precisely that: rationalized sexual misbehavior construed as liberation. In reality, it was nothing more than an attack on God in general and the Christian sexual morality in particular. Like the rest of our generation, Ms. Quindlen stepped onto the slippery decks of Catholic education at the height of the storm. Like many of the rest of us, she was swept overboard.

Add to apostasy the sexual sin that follows almost automatically therefrom—modernity, as I said, is nothing but rationalized sexual mis-behavior anyway—and then add the abortion that follows naturally from the sexual revolution, and you have after a while a pretty impressive pool of guilt, one big enough to form the basis for a political movement. This is precisely what has happened over the past twenty years or so. Guilt has not only become endemic; it has become a powerful political tool. Liberalism, as currently practiced, is the politics of guilt. Guilt is the engine that pulls the liberal train. We all know that racism and anti-Semitism and misogyny are wrong: what we are interested in here is the political grammar of those ostensibly involved in righting these wrongs. All the liberal causes are orchestrations, in one way or another, of the pool of guilt that has been building throughout this century.

The Democratic Party is a good example of how all this gets brokered. The women blackmail the liberals, who feel guilty about the sexual revolution, and the feminist power block comes into existence. The homosexuals blackmail the feminists, who feel guilty about abortion and so compensate by allowing the homosexuals to become officially designated victims, so that the feminists won't have to face the real victims—their own aborted children. Guilt becomes the power base for each of these movements. It becomes the medium of exchange in the political marketplace. In order to play, you must first get yourself designated as a victim. That is like "passing Go and collecting your $200". After that, you're on your own. And why does it work? Well, ask Ms. Quindlen. It works in direct proportion to the number of people in our society who turn away from Jesus Christ, the one and only effective antidote to guilt. It is simple enough to be reduced to an equation: the politics of guilt and blackmail will increase in inverse proportion to the number of people who follow Jesus Christ and—we might add, as he would—do his will. All of this only makes sense because the need to escape from guilt remains a constant in the life of human beings. If people deliberately turn away from Jesus Christ and the Sacrament of Penance, they will be forced to seek release from guilt by ritual actions like baking cookies before business trips.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, who is not a Catholic, said much the same thing in a prophetic book published in 1970 called *The Politics of Guilt and Pity:*

> The reality of man apart from Christ is guilt and masochism. And guilt and masochism involve an unshakeable inner slavery which governs the total life

> of the non-Christian. The politics of the anti-Christian will thus inescapably be *the politics of guilt.* In the politics of guilt, man is perpetually drained of his social energy and cultural activity by his overriding sense of guilt and his masochistic activity. He will progressively demand of the state a redemptive role. What he cannot do personally, i.e., to save himself, he demands that the state do for him, so that the state, as man enlarged, becomes the human savior of man. The politics of guilt, therefore, is not directed, as the Christian politics of liberty, to the creation of godly justice and order, but to the creation of a redeeming order, a saving state. Guilt must be projected, therefore, on all those who oppose this new order and new age.[10]

In the interest of full disclosure, we add here that Ms. Quindlen is a publicly self-professed Catholic. She has even written a column called "I Am a Catholic"; however, the kind of Catholic she is doesn't really change in any significant way what I've already said. She is one of *that* kind of Catholic, the kind that Father Andrew Greeley feels confident endorsing (on the dust-jacket of her book, by the way). She is the kind of Catholic the *New York Times* would like us all to be.

But let her speak for herself:

> We are cultural Catholics. . . . Catholicism is to us now not so much a system of beliefs or a set of laws but a shared history. It is not so much our faith as our past. The tenets of the church which I learned as a child have ever since been at war with the facts of my adult life. . . . I could recite parts of the Baltimore Catechism in my sleep. Do I believe those words? I don't know. What I do believe are those guidelines that do not vary from faith to faith, that are as true of Judaism or Methodism as they are of Catholicism: that people should be kind to one another, that they should help those in need, that they should respect others as they wish to be respected.[11]

So from an intellectual perspective (which is important to someone who writes for a living, no?), Ms. Quindlen's orientation lies somewhere to the left of Unitarianism. "I find my religion within my heart," she tells us in another column, sounding a bit like George Fox, "not within the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church."[12] Actually, Ms. Quindlen is a number of things, as reading her columns will show. She is a feminist—"I would like to say that I became a feminist to make the world better for women everywhere, but in truth it was to make the world better for me"[13]—she is an employee of the *New York Times,* and she is a Catholic. The simplest way to explain how these

[10] Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Politics of Guilt and Pity* (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, 1978), p. 9.

[11] Quindlen, *Living out Loud,* p. 178.

[12] Ibid., pp. 186–87.

[13] Ibid., p. 193.

parts fit together is that, whenever something crucial to the first two categories contradicts something crucial to the third, the offending item in the third group gets lopped off and thrown away. She is Catholic insofar as being that remains inoffensive to the first two groups. So in "I Am a Catholic", she wonders,

> What does it [being a Catholic] mean now? For myself, I cannot truly say. Since the issue became material to me, I have not followed the church's teaching on birth control. I disagree with its stand on abortion. I believe its resistance to the ordination of women as priests is a manifestation of misogyny that has been with us much longer than the church has. Yet it would never have occurred to my husband and me not to be married in a Catholic church, not to have our children baptized.[14]

Ms. Quindlen is, in other words, a "liberal" Catholic, which means of course that liberalism is her prime intellectual coordinate. When it comes to issues that the world takes seriously—things like abortion, things that might threaten her status as a *Times* employee or a feminist in good standing—she sides with the world. This attitude is common enough; Jesus Christ knew about it too. There are many words one could use to describe it. Courage, integrity, and/or consistency are not among them, though. Ambivalence is the word that comes most readily to mind. It comes best to the fore in her attitude toward abortion. She tells us that, while a student at Barnard, she helped a fellow student procure an abortion. On the other hand, describing her own pregnancy, she writes, "I felt not that I had protoplasm inside, but, instead, a complete human being in miniature to whom I could talk, sing, make promises."[15] Perhaps Ms. Quindlen is of the opinion that only she carries a human being *in utero*. It's difficult to tell.

In the end, she decides that neither the prolife or proabortion view is satisfactory. She opts for—you will be expecting this—"something in the middle. And that is where I find myself now, in the middle—hating the idea of abortions, hating the idea of having them outlawed. For I know it is the right thing in some times and places."[16]

In the end, liberal Catholics are no different from just plain old liberals. In their picking and choosing what it is they will follow and what they won't, they become like the god that Eve wanted to be, "knowing good and evil". But the person who becomes his own god will have to provide his own salvation, too, and that, as Ms. Quindlen discovered on her guilt-ridden business trips, is a tall order. Which mortal can tell us which of the Ten

[14] Ibid., p. 177.
[15] Ibid., p. 210.
[16] Ibid.

Commandments is no longer operative? And having acted on that, which of these people can relieve his own guilt? The corollary to what we said above should be clear by now. The society that moves away from Christ will be guilt-ridden, masochistic and weak—in other words, liberal. Its politics will be the machinations of blackmailers masquerading as victims.

The same thing is true of Catholic liberals, those who pick and choose. Dissent is the politics of guilt and blackmail as pursued in the Church. The dynamics are the same. The liberal Catholic signs on by taking an exemption on the one aspect of the Catholic faith that sticks in his craw, usually something to do with the Sixth Commandment. This in turn creates a pool of guilt ready to be tapped by any theologian who is adept at handing out permission slips. The guilt creates a political opportunity. Guilt is the mobilizing factor behind dissent; out of guilt theologians get to build political empires. The transaction they are based on is quite simple. The theologian writes a permission slip for contraception, abortion, sodomy, etc., in exchange for the ability to harness your guilt to his political apparatus. The theologian will be happy to grant you a permission slip if you are willing to identify yourself as a "liberal Catholic", i.e., one of his followers.

The result in general is the religious equivalent of inflation; there's lots of religious currency out there, but it isn't worth anything. It's nice that a Catholic writer gets the audience that the *New York Times* commands, but if it's only to ratify the secular, liberal agenda, what good is it? Better no "Catholic" presence at all than one that leads people to believe that one can be Catholic and support abortion.

So Ms. Quindlen's writing epitomizes the triumph of guilt as a political tool—both in the Church, where the strategy is known as "dissent", and in society at large, where the state promises redemptive power, while at the same time succumbing to the machinations of those who are most adept at orchestrating guilt for political ends. Feminism, homosexualism, affirmative action: these are the debased coin with which we attempt to buy off bad conscience. Yet, as with all blackmail, payment doesn't make the threat go away; it only guarantees further threat. Social activism will not remove guilt; only God can do that. The only way out of the morass of spiritual blackmail that dominates political life in this country is by acknowledging that our sins—not our business trips—are the source of our guilt and that the confessional, not the Congress, is the proper place to deal with them.

Z,VI,4
Crayon Conte
La Corogne, 1893–1894

Chapter 7

CUBISM AS SEXUAL LOATHING: THE CASE AGAINST PICASSO

"I paint the way some people write their autobiography."

— Picasso, in *Life with Picasso* by Françoise Gilot

"Picasso's life . . . was, in a very real sense, the twentieth century's own biography."

— Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington, *Picasso: Creator and Destroyer*

" 'Painting is something you do with your balls.' "

— Picasso, in *Life with Picasso* by Françoise Gilot

If the twentieth century could be reduced to a representative image for which someone had to take credit or blame, the person responsible for creating that image would most probably be Pablo Ruiz Picasso. Born in Malaga, Spain, in 1881, Picasso, it was said, could draw before he could speak. As a child, he learned his trade from his father—the only teacher he ever had, he claimed—so well that, according to a legend that was partially self-propagated but also substantiated by some impressive drawings (cf. Zervos Catalogue, hereafter Z, VI, 4), Picasso could draw as well as Raphael by the time he was twelve years old. Before he was thirty, Picasso had revolutionized European painting, and, by the time he had run out of things to say, he had so mastered the modern publicity game that whatever he did was *ipso facto* a work of art. By the time he died in April of 1973, he had grown used to the sort of encomia one reads below—something, it should be noted, that was written seven years before his death:

Picasso's position among artists of the twentieth century is without parallel. By the invention of Cubism—made, of course, in collaboration with his friend Braque—he changed the whole course of art in France, in Europe,

> and finally throughout the world, and he has made vital contributions—though not always consciously or willingly—to other movements such as Futurism, Dadaism, and Surrealism. Moreover, the effects of the Cubist revolution have spread far beyond the bounds of painting; through the industrial arts it has penetrated to almost every aspect of daily life: the decorations of rooms, the covers of the packages in which our frozen foods are packed, the seats on which we sit in British Railways, the displays in shop windows at Christmas, as well as the advertisements in shiny magazines and the scarf-designs of fashionable *couturiers*, though in many cases the authors of such designs would probably be surprised to learn that they were pupils of Picasso.
>
> Within the field of art, strictly speaking, Cubism has changed our whole manner of seeing objects and of conceiving painting. Indeed it is hard to find a parallel for this revolution in the history of the other arts in the twentieth century. . . . With Picasso it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that all forms of painting in the last fifty years that have been both new and worthwhile have been affected by the invention of Cubism.[1]

The author of that quote was Sir Anthony Blunt, then Director of the Courtauld Institute of Art and keeper of the Queen's pictures, and on his way to becoming famous in another line of work. Shortly after he made the statement on Picasso, Blunt was exposed as one of the twentieth century's most famous traitors. Blunt grew out of the Bloomsbury crowd and the Cambridge Apostles, which was the first generation of modernity in England. Clive Bell introduced Picasso and modern art to the English public; Lytton Strachey's brother translated Freud, and Sir Anthony Blunt was recruited simultaneously into the communist and homosexual internationals. Unlike Blunt, Picasso was a heterosexual. Like Blunt, Picasso was a communist, although a much more public, if thereby less effective, sort. Like Blunt, Picasso used art as a cover for subversion, although here one would have to concede that Picasso was much more effective than Blunt. Like Picasso, Blunt would use both art and communism as effective covers for an agenda that was primarily sexual. Indeed, if an election were held for this century's representative man, one would be hard pressed to find two better candidates than Anthony Blunt and Pablo Picasso—ideologue, subversive, artist, sexual revolutionary. It is the century in a nutshell; the attack on life—cultural, moral, intellectual, and physical—went by the name modernity.

The attack, of course, was not recognized as such at the time. This was necessary for its effectiveness. During the first fifty years of its existence, Cubism was subjected to an exegesis that was almost unrelentingly formalist

[1] Anthony Blunt, *Picasso's Guernica*, The Whidden Lectures for 1966 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 1–2.

in its approach. It was described as the sudden emancipation from the representational—as if the appeal of this sort of liberation were comprehensible at face value. As of the dawn of the modern age, so the conventional explanation went, artists were no longer "bound" by the object; now they were "free" to dabble in the supposed purity of forms and color liberated from the visible world. Now they could be reassembled randomly on what everyone now recognized as nothing more than the opaque plane of the artist's canvas and not some imaginary window onto mimesis of nature. "Cubism", Robert Rosenblum tells us in 1959, giving the classical modern explanation,

> emerges clearly as one of the major transformations in Western art. As revolutionary as the discoveries of Einstein or Freud, the discovery of Cubism controverted principles that had prevailed for centuries. For the traditional distinction between solid form and the space around it, Cubism substituted a radically new fusion of mass and void. In place of earlier perspective systems that determined the precise location of discrete objects in illusory depth, Cubism offered an unstable structure of dismembered planes in indeterminate spatial positions. Instead of assuming that the work of art was an illusion of a reality that lay beyond it, Cubism proposed that the work of art was itself a reality that represented the very process by which nature is transformed into art.[2]

So, according to the formalist explanation, which dominated the modern art scene from its birth well into middle age, all of the excitement was due to "a radically new fusion of mass and void".[3] It was all those "dismembered planes in indeterminate spatial positions"[4] that swept people off their feet. The explanation, even when current, even when it was repeated like the art critic's version of the Apostles' Creed, was never terribly persuasive. It was a bit like a hormone-enhanced description of geometry class.

But if formalism was persuasive, it was because it had some epistemological sexiness programmed into it from the beginning. There was an agenda beneath the formalism that appealed to the modern consciousness in a way that honest formalism would not have. Formalism was really crypto-theology, operating as a front for anti-art. So a little later, we learn from Mr. Rosenblum that

> In the new world of Cubism, no fact of vision remained absolute. A dense, opaque shape could suddenly become a weightless transparency; a sharp, firm outline could abruptly dissolve into a vibrant texture; a plane that defined the remoteness of the background could be perceived simultaneously

[2] Robert Rosenblum, *Cubism and Twentieth-Century Art* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1966), p. 9.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

> in the immediate foreground. Even the identity of objects was not exempt from these visual contradictions.[5]

As the passage continues, formalism gradually takes on metaphysical implications. Cubism is an attack on fundamental things, like the identity of objects. It hopes to propose a visual alternative to the principle of non-contradiction. "In a Cubist work," Rosenblum continues,

> a book could be metamorphosed into a table, a hand into a musical instrument. For a century that questioned the very concept of absolute truth or value, Cubism created an artistic language of intentional ambiguity. In front of a Cubist work of art, the spectator was to realize that no single interpretation of the fluctuating shapes, textures, spaces and objects could be complete in itself. And, in expressing this awareness of the paradoxical nature of reality and the need for describing it in multiple and even contradictory ways, Cubism offered a visual equivalent of a fundamental aspect of twentieth-century experience.[6]

So Cubism was something more than sexy geometry. People were rushing out to the museums to see something more than shapes and colors after all. They were interested in something that "questioned the very concept of absolute truth or value". But, even here, if we consider the actual origins of Cubism, we're confronted with a description that seems suspiciously *ex post facto* and disarmingly abstract, for the painting that virtually all the historians concede heralds the birth of Cubism, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (Z, II, pt. 1, 18; this and subsequent works by Picasso are listed according to their ranking in the Zervos Catalogue, the definitive collection of his works), puts the whole question of "absolute truth or value" in a much more specific context than the critics—at least the formalist critics who functioned as the shock troops of modernity—would allow.

"The *Demoiselles*", according to Leo Steinberg's description of the way it was interpreted during the first half-century of its existence, "was a triumph of form over content; to see the work with intelligence was to see it resolved into abstract energies." The *Demoiselles,* which has been variously characterized as the "first painting of the twentieth century" and the beginning of modern art,

> came to be seen as the paradigm of all modern art, the movement away from "significance" towards self-referential abstraction. Even the violence of the depicted scene was understood as an emancipation of formal energies, energies no longer constrained by inhibiting content.[7]

[5] Ibid., p. 8.
[6] Ibid., p. 9.
[7] Leo Steinberg, "The Philosophical Brothel", *Art News* 71, no. 5, p. 20.

The formalist explanation seems determined to ignore, or at least minimize, the clues that Picasso himself gave us, for the painting depicts, first of all, lewdly posed young ladies, and the young ladies in the picture do not come from the French city that was the site of the papacy for a while. Rather they come from the *Carrer d'Avinyo,* the red-light district in Barcelona. All those "fluctuating shapes, textures, spaces and objects" turn out to be not only women but prostitutes, a fact that prompts Leo Steinberg to wonder about what by now seems the evasion at the heart of the formalist critique. "Those five figures in it—", he asks,

> did they have to be whores? Could the Cubist effects in the right half of the picture—the breakdown of mass and the equalizing of solids and voids—have been accomplished as well with a team of card players?[8]

Or was there some necessary connection between modern art, born out of Cubism, which was in turn born with *Les Demoiselles,* and the type of sexual disgust portrayed in the painting? Pierre Daix, taking the biographical tack of the most recent Picasso criticism, thinks there is.[9] According to Daix, who knew Picasso, the year the *Demoiselles* was painted, 1907, was a year of crisis for Picasso and his mistress of the time, Fernande Olivier. Picasso, who up until that time had had his sexual experience confined to Spanish whorehouses and quick promiscuous encounters in the sexually easy atmosphere of turn-of-the-century Paris, became infatuated with Olivier in the summer of 1904, an infatuation that was commemorated in a number of idealized drawings of the two (Z, I, 254) and a number of realistic portraits. According to the accounts of their relationship, Picasso was obsessively jealous and treated Olivier like an Odalisque in a harem, a position she found acceptable for a while since it corresponded with her native indolence—Huffington refers to her as "naturally lazy"—but only for a while. By 1907, she was posing for another artist resident of the Bateau-Lavoir, a fact that ignited Picasso's jealousy. "Picasso", according to Daix,

> who was so jealous that he forbade her to go out alone, found it difficult to comprehend that, unlike his previous conquests, Olivier had agreed to pose for another painter. Could this have sparked the quarrel that led to their separation later that year? Was this one of the sources for the hostility toward women we see so clearly in *Les Demoiselles?*[10]

In addition to the betrayal Picasso perceived in her posing for another artist, Daix cites the failed adoption of a thirteen-year-old girl by the name of Raymonde, which also took place in 1907: "The step betrayed the deepening

[8] Ibid.

[9] Pierre Daix, "Dread, Desire, and the Demoiselles", *Art News* 87, no. 6 (Summer 1988).

[10] Ibid., p. 134.

Z,II,Pt.1,18
Les Damoiselles d'Avignon
Paris, 1907

Z,I,254
Fernance Oliver. Peinture à l'huile
Paris, 1906

Z,III,40
Olga Picasso en Costume Espangnol
Barcelona, 1917

Z,III,36
Tête de Femme de Profil
Barcelona, 1917

Z,III,83
Olga Picasso dans un Fuateuil
Montrouge, 1917

Z,III,78
Olga Picasso
Montrouge, 1917

trouble in [Fernande's] relationship with Picasso, which centered around her inability to have a child. In his sketchbooks are tender portraits of Raymonde, the only exceptions to the violence of Picasso's art of this period." Fernande, it should be noted, could not have children as the result of a miscarriage suffered during a previous marriage. As a result, Daix sees

> remarkable chronological consistency between the unfolding of this personal drama and the final radicalization of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon.* Remembering the violence with which Picasso deformed images of women during the crisis in his marriage to Olga Khoklova after 1925, how can we doubt that it was Olivier's body he was demolishing in 1907, and her face that he turned into inhuman masks.[11]

Kahnweiler, Picasso's art dealer, also adds that Picasso gave all the figures in *Les Demoiselles* names, including one he dubbed Fernande. But then, as if reluctant to draw the conclusion that his research demands, Daix steps back and adds that "Obviously, it would be absurd to reduce a project so important to Picasso to the anger of a domestic quarrel."[12]

Would that be so absurd, or would it only be the logical conclusion to draw from the premises Daix himself has established? With *Les Demoiselles,* the art of the West did step over a line—virtually everyone admits that—which separated it from the art of the Impressionists, who in their way were still within the mimetic tradition. The distortions of *Les Demoiselles* are a frontal assault on that tradition. Picasso quite knowingly broke all the rules, but it has taken some time to see that the rules he was interested in breaking were more than merely formal. As the formalist critics implied, the rules of Western art were bound up with larger rules—rules of metaphysics, theology, and psychology, rules having to do with the inviolability of the person, rules that in this regard were as sexual as the content of the picture so intent on violating them. The fact remains that in and with the creation of *Les Demoiselles,* a pattern was established that would last Picasso for the rest of his life, one that would have a largely determinative influence on what came to be known as modern art. Violation of the visible world was tied with violation of a particular woman.

What begins in the glow of realist love (or at the very least infatuation) ends in the violent disgust of Cubist distortion. Picasso's love/hate relationship with the visible world was a visual expression of his love/hate relationship with the particular woman in his life at the time. Cubism, according to the evidence in Picasso's paintings, is less the abstract juggling of shapes and colors than an index of sexual disgust. What began as overtly sexual in *Les Demoiselles* was then tried out as a project for restructuring the world at

[11] Ibid., p. 136.
[12] Ibid.

large—in collaboration with people like Braque and others. But no matter what its aspirations at a particular time or what it came to mean to others, Picasso's Cubism was one that reverted time and time again to its sexual roots. The cycles of Picasso's creative life, as anyone who has taken the time to go through the Zervos Catalogue of his works can attest, are distinctly sexual in nature. The pattern of distortion in his work is a function of his relationship with his particular mistress or wife of the time. Realism denotes the beginning of the affair; Cubist distortion its end.

A striking example of this is the explosion of realism surrounding the advent of Olga Khoklova in the midst of an otherwise dreary sea of Cubist still lifes in 1917 (Z, III, 40). (In this instance, the Zervos Catalogue is not a completely accurate description of the simultaneous trajectories of Picasso's love and creative life. We learn from Mary Mathews Gedo in her *Picasso: Art as Autobiography,* for instance, that at the height of the Cubist period Picasso did an unfinished but realistic portrait of Eva Gouel that he kept from Zervos.)[13] For the most part Picasso's biographers have little good to say about Picasso's first wife. Huffington, who is generally sympathetic to anyone who goes to bed with Picasso, refers to her as "an average ballerina of average beauty, average intelligence and average ambitions."[14] Gedo refers to the already-cited picture as revealing "a personality apparently rigid, angry, and possessive".[15] The evidence in the painting, however, seems to contradict this, and her assertion seems to have more to do with Gedo's naive Freudianism than anything else. Gedo's book, while full of many valuable insights, seems bent on making motherhood into something sinister. But even given that point of view, she still has to come to grips with the realistic portraits Picasso did of his first wife, which, if anything, are more flattering than the photographs of Olga from the same period, something that Gedo herself admits. "In contrast to the oblique secret references to Eva that had appeared in Picasso's paintings a few years earlier," she writes,

> his portraits of Olga are realistic and detailed, emphasizing her good looks and varied hair styles (Z, III, 36, 78, 83). When one compares surviving photographs of Olga with these painted versions, one concludes that either she photographed badly or Picasso idealized her, creating an aura of beauty which was never hers in reality. . . . In his pictures of her from 1917–18 he often seemed more preoccupied with demonstrating his own facility as a draftsman than revealing Olga's personality.[16]

[13] Mary Mathews Gedo, *Picasso: Art as Autobiography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 102.

[14] Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington, *Picasso: Creator and Destroyer* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), p. 147.

[15] Gedo, p. 114.

[16] Ibid., p. 114.

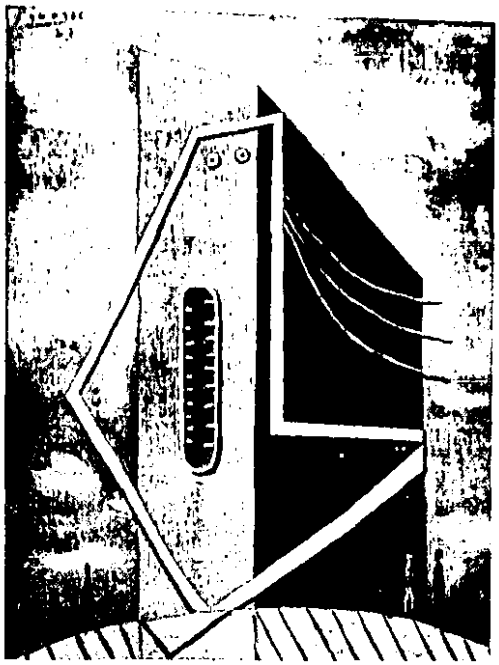
Z,III,125
Olga Picasso
Montrouge, January 27, 1918

Z,IV,438
La Femme de l'Artiste
Paris, 1992

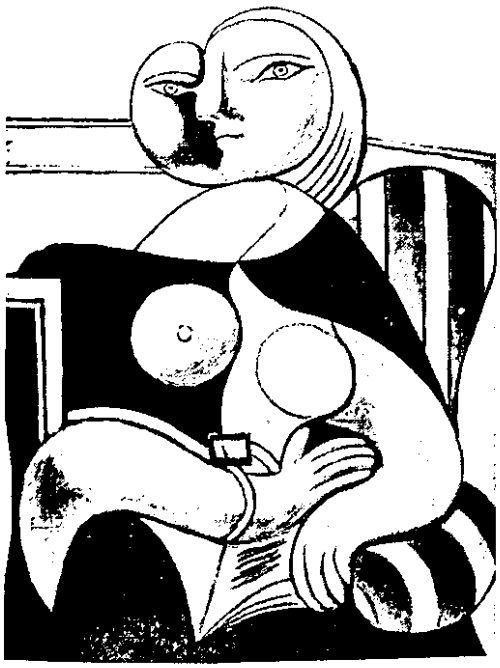
Z,XXX,265
Mere et Enfant
1921

Z,XXX,360
Mere et Enfant
Dinard, 1922

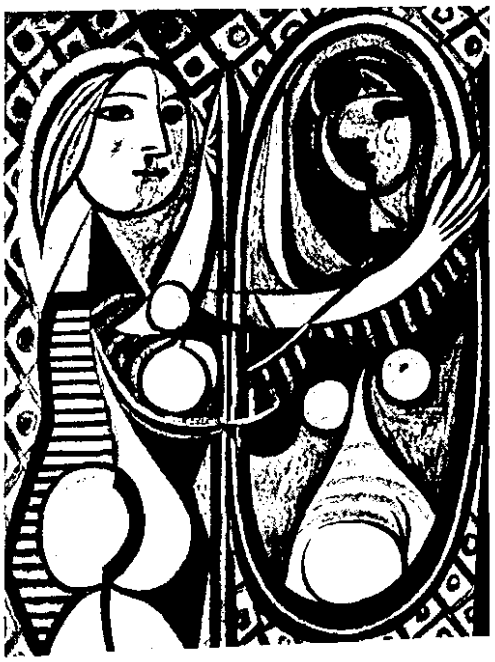
Z,V,460
Femme Assise, Huile sur Toile
1925



Z,VII,290
Monument: Tête de Femme
1929



Z,VII,358
La Lecture
January 2, 1932

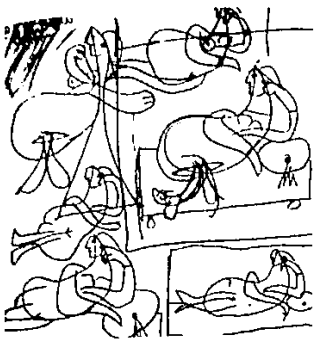


Z,VII,379
Jeune Fille Devant un Miroir
March 14, 1932

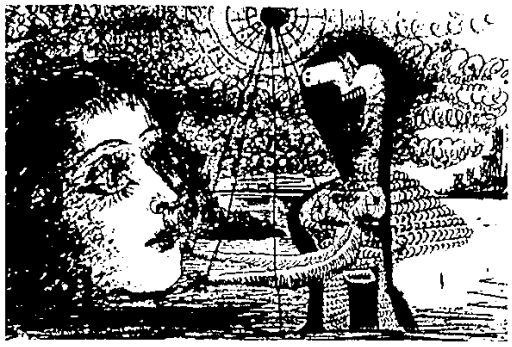
Z,VII,395
Femme dans un Fauteuil Rouge
1932

Z,VIII,70
Femme Tenant un Livre
1932

Z,VIII,147
Baigneuse au Bord de la Mer
1933



Z,VIII,236
Dessins à la Mine de Plomb
Boisgeloup
September 18, 1934



Z,VIII,339
Composition
Paris, February 10, 1937

Z,VIII,347
Portrait de Dora Maar
February 13, 1937

Beauty, they say, is in the eye of the beholder. In some of the photographs of her during the period 1917–18, Olga looks very attractive, in some less so, but how she appears to someone in a photograph seventy years after the fact is beside the point. The crucial issue is how she appeared to Picasso in the flesh when he met her, and the evidence in the paintings indicates that he was very taken with her. Whether he idealized her or whether he saw in her a beauty that others overlooked is beside the point. The fact is that he fell in love with her, enough in love to want to marry her after a series of sexual misadventures. Virtually all his biographers see the marriage as little more than Picasso's ladder into high society, but the evidence from the paintings does not support this conclusion. At least at the beginning of their relationship, Picasso saw in Olga a person worthy of love as a wife and mother. Given this, he portrayed her in the only manner appropriate to such feelings, which is to say, in the realistic manner of the classical tradition of Western art. Realism was, quite simply, a medium more appropriate to love than the Cubist still lifes he was producing during the same period. Realism conveyed the value of the object of love every bit as effectively as Cubist distortion conveyed the loathing of woman that comes from sexual disgust. That Picasso's love was mixed, impure, fickle, ephemeral, etc., no one would want to deny, least of all this writer; however, to deny that it was there is just as foolish. In order to give it expression, Picasso was quite content to submit himself to the exigencies of the object and the rules of the Western tradition. The two in fact go hand in hand. Even infatuation, at least at the beginning, has an element of love attached to it that demands the realistic approach. Describing a drawing Picasso did of himself and his infatuation of the moment, Gaby Lespinasse, in the mid-teens, Pierre Daix, one of the most perceptive of Picasso's critics, writes, "The drawing says with remarkable clarity that, at the moment, it is hell which is an abstraction, and pleasure which blossoms in a classicism barely touched by cubism."[17]

Daix here puts his finger on a pattern that will recur throughout Picasso's life. Realism is the visual language of love; when the affair turns sour, Picasso turns away from the object and reverts to Cubist distortions, which convey simultaneously lust, rage, and the desire to mutilate and destroy. Our century, as people like Sir Anthony Blunt and virtually all the other commentators on modern art have made clear, has taken these distortions born of lust and rage against the visual order of the created world as its visual paradigm. This cycle repeats itself time and time again throughout Picasso's long career.

So the relationship that Picasso took seriously enough to formalize by marriage was destined not to survive, succumbing to his inability to be

[17] Huffington, p. 138.

faithful and the jealous rage this inspired in his wife. Picasso, being Picasso, traced the trajectory of this disintegration in his paintings. The difference between the two realistic portraits of Olga (Z, III, 125, done on January 27, 1918, and Z, IV, 438) is profound. Olga, in the latter portrait described as "The artist's wife" (Z, IV, 438), done in 1922, shows an unmistakable sadness, as if his wife were prescient enough to know that love, like the realism of his portraits, was not going to survive the lust and that the consequent rage to distort would reassert itself before too long. Beyond that, her image is beginning to fade, a prelude to the Cubist distortions that will memorialize the de facto end of the marriage in the mid- to late twenties. In between one finds, not just realistic, but classical portraits of mother and child (Z, XXX, 265, 360) done in 1921 and 1922, commemorating the birth of Picasso's first child, Paulo. The portraits are some indication of how seriously Picasso took marriage and childbearing; they are classical, because that tradition took those things seriously as well. They recall the mother and child of 1905 that commemorated his relationship with Fernande, the end of which was associated with *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* and Fernande's decision to pose for another man. The sadness on Olga's face in Z, IV, 438, presages the end of the marriage; it presages disappearance, and, perhaps because the fact that it portrays a sadness he was instrumental in creating was too painful for Picasso, it presages escape from the world of mimesis into the world of projection and expressionistic distortion.

After its inception in the frankly sexual picture *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon,* Cubism took on a life of its own. Picasso, with the collaboration of his French contemporary Braque, projected his vision of sexual disgust in a quasi-scientific manner on the external world. Throughout the teens one notices a bifurcation in Picasso's work in which portraiture becomes increasingly realistic, while Cubism continues to work out its internal logic in a series of increasingly uninteresting still lifes and landscapes. Eva Gouel emerges in the Cubist period under the cryptic reference to a song, *"Ma jolie",* her first name, and a number of dismembered guitars. In 1925, however, coinciding with the break-up of Picasso's marriage to Olga, the two streams merge in the Cubist mutilation of the female form that characterizes *Femme assise* (Z, V, 460). What follows is a series of angular, dismembered female forms in which the mouth is turned ninety degrees into a threatening *vagina dentata.* In *Tête d'une femme,* (Z, VII, 290), done in 1929, the woman's head becomes a threatening monument before which the man to the left stands in insignificance. By 1930 Picasso was portraying women as having a female form with a preying mantis head. The face, which in the portraits is the part of the anatomy that most clearly expresses the individuality of the personality, has been transformed; it has undergone a Kafka-like metamorphosis into something insect-like and full of menace.

During this period of transformation from the possibilities of love and reason inherent in the human face to the threat implicit in humanoid insect mandibles, Picasso fell in love again—on January 8, 1927, to be precise—with a seventeen-year-old blonde girl emerging from the Metro. Her name was Marie-Therese Walter; her birth certificate stated "Father unknown", and now she was being accosted by a married man thirty years her senior. "He grabbed me by the arm and said, 'I'm Picasso! You and I are going to do great things together.' "[18] "For him," Huffington continues, "it was a moment of recognition and of surrender to a sexual passion unfettered by the conventions of age, matrimony, time and responsibility."[19] It was, as one has come to expect, the beginning of a new phase in Picasso's painting as well. Gradually the angular and knife-like shrieking women of the twenties are replaced by the curvaceous images of Marie-Therese. Marie-Therese, perhaps because she was underage at the time and because Picasso was a married man, makes her appearance into Picasso's *oeuvre* incognito. Like Eva, she appears in association with a musical instrument (something that Picasso can play?), her initials suspended over its strings. By 1932 she has emerged as one of the images that will dominate Picasso's paintings for the decade of the thirties. Unlike Olga she is rounded and full of voluptuous curves (Z, VII, 358, 379, 395; VIII, 70), but also unlike Olga she never fully emerges from the lust-inspired distortions that one associates with Cubism. The closest Picasso comes to realism in his treatment of her is the portraits he did of her and their daughter Maya in the late thirties.

Marie-Therese was the kept woman. As a result, she never emerged as a realistically portrayed person in his drawings in the way that Olga did before her. In both his sexual behavior and his art (since the latter was always a function of the former), Picasso was mounting what he saw as a frontal assault on the traditions of the West. In the final analysis, the formalists were right. There was a connection between Western art and Christian morals. Realism could not thrive in a climate that denied the transcendent value of the human person. Stanley Jaki made the same point with regard to Western science—both are predicated on a belief that the world was created good, a belief further bolstered by the fact that Christ thought enough of the goodness of the human being to become one himself. There is, in other words, no such thing as Aztec realism, nor could a society that was based on human sacrifice ever come up with such a thing. Why spend as much time as Ingres did on reproducing one likeness of a human face when that human being could be used as fodder in some obscene sacrifice a day later. Picasso's mutilations of the female body bespeak the modern version of human sacrifice; they presage

[18] Ibid., p. 188.
[19] Ibid.

simultaneously in a visual way the concentration camp, the abortion clinic, and the pornographic film, and may well have helped pave the way for all three. Picasso's war on representation was a war on the tradition that begot it as well, a tradition that saw the human being as possessing infinite value. In this it was unlike the modern ideologies that the modern arts found so congenial, which saw the human being as fodder for one sort of end or another and treated it accordingly. Picasso's predilection for pagan African sculpture in a frankly sexual painting like *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* had a cultural meaning as well. It was an attempt to throw off the value that the person had acquired as a result of the thousands of years of Western civilization, a development that was perfected by the Christian dispensation but not congruent with it. Erich Neumann's profound analysis of the Amor and Psyche myth shows clearly that the differentiation of personality is inextricably bound up with a repudiation of "the dark anonymous love that consisted only of drunken lust and fertility".[20] Realism depends on just this individuation, and individuation depends on taking the sexual drive and making it subservient to the demands of personhood, and not the opposite, which was Picasso's project in both the artistic and moral spheres. "The triumph of Psyche's love", Neumann writes,

> and her ascension to Olympus were an event that has profoundly affected Western mankind for two thousand years. For two milleniums the mystery phenomenon of love has occupied the center of psychic development and of culture, art and religion. The mysticism of the medieval nuns, the courtly love of the troubadours, Dante's love for Beatrice, Faust's Eternal Feminine—all reflect this never-resting mystery-like development of the psyche in woman and man. It has brought both good and evil, but in any event it has been an essential ferment of the psychic and spiritual life of the West down to the present day.[21]

By 1933, six years after Picasso met her, Marie-Therese is slipping back into grotesquerie (Z, VIII, 147), taking on the shape of a beach ball. None of Picasso's biographers claims that Marie-Therese was a great intellect; she was interested in sports and had an athlete's body, which is what seems to have inspired Picasso in the beginning, but this is also what inspired him to ridicule her when he got tired of her. In 1937 Picasso portrayed her as a monster skipping rope (Z, VIII, 236). On the same page in the Zervos Catalogue, in a portrait done one month after the rope-skipping monster, the face of Picasso's

[20] Erich Neumann, *Amor and Psyche: The Psychic Development of the Feminine,* A commentary on the Tale by Apuleius, translated from the German by Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 72.

[21] Ibid., pp. 139–40.

next lover, Dora Maar, begins to emerge from the surrounding chaos (Z, VIII, 339).

Picasso, we are told, chose Dora Maar on the rebound from Marie-Therese. Dora was dark and intelligent; she was a part of the Surrealist circle, and Picasso first noticed her stabbing a knife between her fingers and cutting herself in the process. By February 1937 she emerges in a full-blown realistic portrait (Z, VIII, 347); by October of the same year she had been reabsorbed into Cubist distortion in one of the most famous portraits of the century, *Weeping Woman,* one of the classics of Cubist distortion (Z, IX, 73). Picasso is in his fifties now; and the cycles of infatuation/disgust are becoming shorter and more violent. Thereafter, she was to epitomize to Picasso the suffering woman. In between the two, Picasso did his "political" masterpiece, *Guernica,* which Dora Maar dutifully photographed in its various stages. *Guernica* marked the birth of Picasso the committed political artist; he would join the Communist Party in 1944. Few of the people who found *Guernica* so inspiring at the time commented on its personal dimensions. "For those whose sympathies lay with the Spanish Government," Sir Anthony Blunt wrote thirty years later, "it became a symbol of all the evil which they associated with General Franco."[22] "It is hard for anyone" Blunt continued, getting about as autobiographical as he ever got,

> who was not grown-up at the time to realize the importance of the Spanish Civil War for intellectuals in Western Europe.... The Spanish War raised the issue of Fascism versus Democracy to a different plane; it brought it to Western Europe, and it gave it the form of an armed conflict instead of the persecution of a minority. Even for the most ivory tower intellectual it meant that the time of not taking sides was past. The conflict was too near and involved one's personal friends.[23]

The conflict depicted in *Guernica*—purportedly the battle between the communists and the fascists—certainly involved Picasso's personal friends and an equally personal iconography. The woman leaning out of the window is Marie-Therese; the screaming woman at the left of the painting resembles the weeping-woman portraits of Dora Maar. Beyond that there is the bull, which in Picasso's personal iconography, beginning especially with the minotaur etchings of the thirties, represented Picasso himself. There are two etchings that are virtually identical, Z, VIII, 112, done on June 24, 1933, in which the Picasso/minotaur is raping Marie-Therese, and Z, VIII, 296, done on September 1, 1936, in which the minotaur in virtually the identical picture is raping Dora Maar. In one particularly famous etching (Z, IX, 97), done in March of

[22] Blunt, p. 8.
[23] Ibid.

1937, which is to say a month before *Guernica,* the minotaur carries Marie-Therese off to a boat while Dora Maar watches.

In *Guernica,* we are led to believe that these personal concerns take on political significance—perhaps because of the title and size of the canvas. "The horse", writes Blunt, paraphrasing Picasso,

> . . . represents the people, and the bull brutality and darkness. When pressed by his interlocutor to say whether he meant that the bull stood for Fascism, he refused to agree and stuck to his original statement. This is important as an example of the fact that Picasso's symbols are never static.[24]

It's also an example of the fact that Picasso liked to deflect personal guilt onto a cosmic stage. In *Guernica,* one can see from Picasso's personal iconography how the political and the sexual meet. Communism, as Stephen Spender was to say later, becomes an anodyne for a troubled conscience. Sexual exploitation of the sort Picasso practiced is rendered palatable by being disguised beneath a political cause. So, depending on your point of view, *Guernica* is either a dishonest projection of personal sexual problems onto the political realm or an unutterably profound (if unconscious) depiction of the fact that war is a punishment for sin. Neither interpretation was available at the time of the painting. Then one got explanations of the following sort, written in Picasso's name, probably by Paul Eluard or some other party hack, in 1937:

> I have always believed and still believe that artists who live and work with spiritual values cannot and should not remain indifferent to a conflict in which the highest values of humanity and civilization are at stake.[25]

The statement was, of course, true, no matter how it was intended, no matter how it was used as communist propaganda. Picasso was involved in a conflict in which the highest values of humanity were at stake for his entire life, and except for brief moments he was all but unremittingly committed to supporting the enemies of those values. Subversion of all rules and values had become his metier; sexual seduction his *modus operandi;* sexual disgust his characteristic emotion. Cubism, born out of sexual disgust and dragging all modern art with it in this terrible birth, would reassert itself over Picasso's openness to truth and beauty and the nobility of the human form time and time again in a oft-repeated cycle of attraction, conquest, and disgust. Some of his conquests appeared briefly—for example, a realistic portrait of Nush Eluard (Z, XI, 122) appeared in May 1941, right about the time he had an

[24] Ibid., p. 14.
[25] Ibid., p. 56.

Z,IX,73
Femme en Pleurs
Paris, October 26, 1937

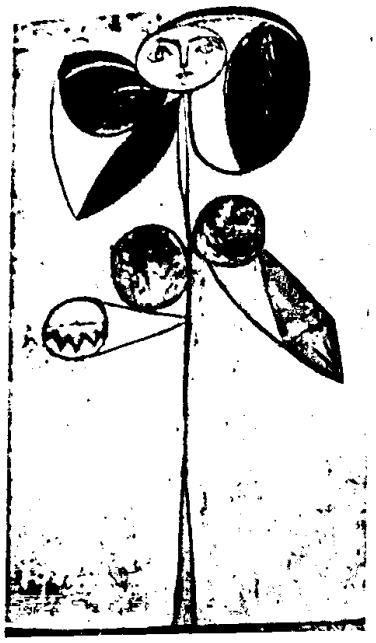
Z,VIII,112
Minotaure
June 24, 1933

Z,VIII,296
Composition
September 1, 1936

Z,IX,97
Baigneuse, Sirenes, Femme nue et Minotaire
Paris, March, 1937

Z,IX,122
Portrait de Nush Eluard
Paris, May, 1941

Z,XIV,36
Tête de Femme
July 28, 1944



Z,XIV,167
La Femme—fleur
May 5, 1946

Z,XVI,326
Jacqueline Les Jambres Replees
October 5, 1954

Z,XVI,485
Jacqueline
October 21, 1955

Z,XVII,330
Tête de Femme
February 14, 1957

Z,XVII,408
Portrait de Jacqueline
December, 1957

affair with her, but the infatuation didn't last long enough to go beyond a sketchiness that he really only transcended in rendering likenesses of his wife Olga.

Similarly, Françoise Gilot appears briefly in 1944 (Z, XIV, 36), to be metamorphosed into a flower two years later (Z, XIV, 167). By the end of the relationship she has been absorbed into a series of increasingly grotesque mother-and-child portraits, but by that time Picasso's new love interest, Jacqueline Roche, the woman he eventually married, has showed up in a number of realistic drawings. *Jacqueline les jambes repliées* (Z, XVI, 326) was done on October 5, 1954. By October of the next year the familiar pattern has reasserted itself (Z, XVI, 485), as the face gradually depersonalizes itself into a mask, and this is in turn followed by a series of increasing depersonalized portraits (Z, XVII, 330, done on February 14, 1957, and Z, XVII, 408, done roughly a month later). By the end of the 1950s Jacqueline recognizable as such has faded from view altogether to be replaced by a series of anonymous and lasciviously posed nudes, probably the best depiction of the effects of lust produced by Western art. At the end of his life, Picasso, much influenced by the increasing tide of pornography that was to inundate the West, became a master of the crotch shot. But it was porn à la Picasso. The crotches were drawn in the minutest realistic detail, but the faces remained Cubist masks.

Unlike Piet Mondrian, who wrote from Paris in 1914 that he was strongly influenced by Picasso's work, "which I admire very much", Picasso never made a clean break with the visible world. He set the entire world of modern art in motion but stepped back from following it to its logical conclusion. In describing the ideal of Cubist painting and why he never went from that into true abstraction, Picasso told Françoise Gilot

> *I want to give it a form which has some connection with the visible world even if it is only to wage war on that world. Otherwise a painting is just an old grab bag for everyone to reach into and pull out what he himself has put in. I want my paintings to be able to defend themselves, to resist the invader just as though there were razor blades on all surfaces so no one could touch them without cutting his hands.... I don't want there to be three or four thousand possibilities of interpreting my canvas. I want here to be only one and in that one to some extent the possibility of recognizing nature, even distorted nature, which is, after all, a kind of struggle between my interior life and the external world as it exists for most people.... I want that internal surge ... to propose itself to the viewer in the form of traditional painting violated.*[26]

[26] Françoise Gilot, *Life with Picasso* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 270.

According to Gilot, Braque once told Picasso, "In love you still go along with the tradition."[27] His break with the tradition was an index of his hatred not only toward the spiritual values of the West but toward the human body and spirit that the West prized as good. In the end, the only thing that Picasso portrayed realistically was the woman's crotch. Modern art had returned to its roots, and the gaping crotch was the only thing now that could keep the aging Picasso in touch with the real world.

[27] Ibid., p. 274.

Chapter 8

SIGMUND AND MINNA AND CARL AND SABINA: THE BIRTH OF PSYCHOANALYSIS OUT OF THE PERSONAL LIVES OF ITS FOUNDERS

True Confessions: Bremen, 1909

"The year 1909 proved decisive for our relationship", wrote C. G. Jung toward the end of his life.[1] The relationship in question was his with Sigmund Freud. The year 1909 was at once the high-water mark and the beginning of ebb tide in a relationship that has determined one of the main currents of intellectual life in the twentieth century, namely, psychotherapy and the revolution in the understanding of human nature that it engendered. It is fitting, then, that the incident at the heart of the changing tide should take place at a seaport.

In December of 1908 Sigmund Freud received an invitation from Stanley Hall, then president of Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, to give a series of lectures on the new psychology then emanating from Austria and Switzerland on the occasion of the university's twentieth anniversary. Hall was a psychologist himself and was in the process of writing a book that characterized adolescence as a period of universal *Sturm und Drang,* or storm and stress, as American anthropologists would translate the term that originated in German romanticism. That book would eventually send the then graduate student in anthropology at Columbia University, Margaret Mead, off to Samoa to write the book that would launch her career. As discussed above (Chapter 1), Mead, for reasons of her own, wanted to show that adolescence in the state of Nature, i.e., in Samoa, was a singularly tranquil affair in the absence of sexual prohibition.

Freud, however, was unable to accept the invitation. The travel allowance was inadequate. "America", he said in the first of many statements that bespoke a lifelong, and by some accounts neurotic, antipathy toward that country,

[1] C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Vintage, 1961), p. 156.

"should bring in money, not cost money."[2] In addition, the timing of the celebration during the first week of July meant that Freud would lose three weeks' consulting time and the revenues that accrued from them, something that he, as the father of six children and the head of a family establishment that included other dependent relatives and servants, could ill afford to do. So he reluctantly declined.

Not to be deterred, however, Hall made Freud another offer a few months later, one which this time he couldn't refuse. The travel allowance had been increased to $750, up from $400, and the celebration, if not of the university's twentieth anniversary, then of the arrival of psychoanalysis in the United States, was obligingly moved to the first week in September, a time when Freud was normally on vacation anyway. Freud not only accepted the invitation, he found himself increasingly excited at the prospect, an excitement that finds expression in his letters to his disciples Sandor Ferenczi, whom Freud invited along, and the young doctor from Zurich, Carl Jung, who in June was also invited to add his three lectures to the five that Freud was going to give.

Jung had come across the writings of Freud nine years earlier while at the Burghölzli, the psychiatric hospital outside Zurich where he was doing his residency. Eugen Bleuler, then director of the hospital, had given Jung a copy of *The Interpretation of Dreams,* which upon first reading left the young Swiss doctor unimpressed. Jung, however, was later to change his mind, and in 1906 the two men corresponded, and a short-lived but crucial relationship began for both men. Jung for his part saw in Freud the older master, the father figure in a very literal sense. Freud, on the other hand, saw in Jung the heir apparent, as well as the man who was the son of a Swiss Protestant minister and therefore someone who could rescue psychoanalysis from being an exclusively Jewish affair, which it had been up until that time, and which it would become again after the break with Jung.

So it was with a sense of excitement and anticipation that the three men converged on the north German port city of Bremen and the offices of Norddeutscher Lloyd for their passage to America on board the *George Washington.* It looked to be the beginning of their triumphal march into the Rome of academic respectability. Events, however, took an unexpected turn.

Ernest Jones, Freud's official biographer, claims that "Freud had a poor night on the train from Munich to Bremen."[3] However, he is the only one who mentions this and does so probably to prepare the way for the incident

[2] Gerhard Wehr, *Jung: A Biography,* translated from the German by David M. Weeks (Boston, Mass.: Shambhala Publications, 1987), p. 125.

[3] Ernest Jones, M.D., *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud,* vol. 2: *Years of Maturity (1901–1919),* (New York: Basic Books, 1957), p. 55.

that follows. When the three gathered at the Essighaus, a restaurant in a historic building in the town, both Ferenczi and Freud persuaded Jung to have some wine with lunch. Jung, who had become a teetotaler with his arrival at the Burghölzli, acceded to their wishes. In later life he was known to get boisterous when drinking. Whether this was a factor in what followed can only be conjectured now. At any rate, the conversation turned to the so-called "peat bog corpses", bodies of prehistoric men who had been found in sections of northern Germany. According to Jung's later account,[4] the bodies were either drowned or buried in marshes that contained humic acid, the effect of which was simultaneously to dissolve the bones and tan the skins of the men buried there, creating in the process slightly flattened and darkened but otherwise perfectly preserved mummies.

Perhaps it was the wine or the intoxication of what looked to be world-wide acclaim, but Jung grew insistent and "a bit muddled" confusing the bog corpses with the mummies in the lead cellars of Bremen. Either way Freud was becoming progressively more uncomfortable. The talk of mummies and corpses was starting to get on Freud's nerves. "Why are you so concerned with these corpses?" he asked Jung repeatedly.[5] He became increasingly annoyed during dinner and then, according to Jung's description of the incident almost fifty years later, "he suddenly fainted."

> Afterward he said to me that he was convinced that all this chatter about corpses meant that I had death-wishes toward him. I was more than surprised by this interpretation. I was alarmed by the intensity of his fantasies—so strong that, obviously, they could cause him to faint.[6]

It wasn't the only time that Freud fainted in Jung's presence. During the Psychoanalytic Congress in Munich three years later, conversation turned to the Egyptian pharoah Amenophis IV (Ikhnaton), who would later feature prominently in Freud's last work, *Moses and Monotheism,* and the alleged fact that he had removed his father's name from the state's monuments. Freud saw this as proof "that at the back of the great creation of a monotheistic religion there lurked a father complex".[7] Jung, however, remained insistently unconvinced, so insistently in fact that once again "Freud slid off his chair in a faint." With everyone else standing helplessly around, Jung picked up the elder Freud and carried him in to a sofa in the next room, where he could breathe. "As I was carrying him," Jung relates, again almost fifty years after the fact,

[4] Jung, p. 156.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., p. 157.

> he came half to, and I shall never forget the look he cast at me. In his weakness he looked at me as if I were his father. Whatever other causes may have contributed to this faint—the atmosphere was very tense—the fantasy of father-murder was common to both cases.[8]

The fainting incident in Bremen on August 20, 1909, proved to be an omen, both prophetic and inauspicious, for the sea journey that was to follow. Neither man had prepared the lectures he was to give in Worcester, leaving that for the leisure of the trans-Atlantic cruise. In addition, the three men were to take advantage of long walks on the ship's broad decks to analyze each other's dreams. "During the voyage," goes the orthodox version according to Jones, "the three companions analyzed each other's dreams—the first example of group analysis—and Jung told me afterward that Freud's dreams seemed to be mostly concerned with cares for the future of his family and of his work".[9] Jung, writing at around the same time as Jones but no longer a member of the Freudian sect, gives a different version of what happened during their voyage to America. Jung described a number of dreams he considered important to Freud, "but Freud could make nothing of them."

Then it was Freud's turn. He described a dream to Jung that involved Freud's wife and his sister-in-law, Minna Bernays. In *Memories,* Jung says, "I would not think it right to air the problem it involved." Jung attempted to interpret it as best he could in the light of the information he had, but when he suggested that "a great deal more could be said if he would supply me with some additional details from his private life", Jung ran into the psychic equivalent of a stone wall. Freud, who had become accustomed to drawing confidences of just this sort from his patients, became suspicious and refused point blank to go farther with Jung. "But I cannot risk my authority!" was Freud's response. The effect on Jung was immediate and permanent. "At that moment," Jung wrote almost fifty years later, "he lost it altogether. The sentence burned itself into my memory; and in it the end of our relationship was already foreshadowed. Freud was placing personal authority above truth."[10]

Jung rebuffed, however, did not give up. He continued their psychoanalytic sessions with a dream of his own, one which featured a cave and two skulls. Freud, he found, was chiefly interested in the two skulls. He wanted to know whose they were and what Jung thought of them.

> I knew perfectly well what he was driving at: that secret death wishes were concealed in the dream. "But what does he really expect of me?" I thought to myself. Toward whom would I have death wishes? I felt violent resistance

[8] Ibid.
[9] Jones, p. 55.
[10] Jung, p. 158.

to hear Freud's opinion. I wanted to learn from him. Therefore, I submitted to his intention and said, "My wife and my sister-in-law."[11]

In saying that the skulls represented his wife and sister-in-law, Jung told a deliberate lie. In his memoirs he gives a number of reasons why he lied, but none of them seems very convincing and all of them seem beside the point.

> I did not feel up to quarreling with him, and I also feared that I might lose his friendship if I insisted on my own point of view. On the other hand, I wanted to know what he would make of my answer, and what his reaction would be if I deceived him by saying something that suited his theories. And so I told him a lie.[12]

"I was quite aware that my conduct was not above reproach," Jung continued

> but *à la guerre, comme à la guerre!* It would have been impossible for me to afford him any insight into my mental world. The gulf between it and his was too great. In fact Freud seemed greatly relieved by my reply. I saw from this that he was completely helpless in dealing with certain kinds of dreams and had to take refuge in his doctrine. I realized that it was up to me to find out the real meaning of the dream.[13]

Jung later goes on to claim that the dream of the two skulls was his "first inkling of a collective a priori beneath the personal psyche",[14] but it is also clear that his response to Freud was also an attempt to probe deeper into Freud's psyche and resolve unanswered questions in Jung's mind about the curious triangular relationship between Freud and his wife and his sister-in-law.

Jung had reasons of his own to be curious. In his first meeting with Freud at the Freud household on the Berggasse in Vienna, Minna Bernays, Freud's sister-in-law, who had been living with the Freuds since 1896, told Jung that she had been having an affair with Freud. The incident is not without controversy. Jones mentions it in his book only to dismiss it as unfounded, "to say that she in any way replaced her sister in his affections is sheer nonsense".[15] Peter Gay in his recent biography of Freud mentions Jones' denial but finds it suspect because of its very vehemence: "Jones is emphatic enough on the matter to cause the suspicious to wonder whether he is not being a little

[11] Ibid., p. 159.
[12] Ibid., p. 160.

defensive."[16] Gay's position in his biography of Freud is ambivalent enough to warrant further attention. In the text, he writes that "Jung, claiming to know of an affair between Freud and his sister-in-law, linked the dream Freud would not elucidate to his presumed infidelity." Then in a note he waxes sceptical: "It seems quite improbable that Minna Bernays would have confided such an intimate matter to a total stranger", only to waver again when he says, "so Freud *may* have had an affair with Minna Bernays."[17] If psychoanalysis has taught us anything, it is surely that the presence of so much ambivalence on a given subject indicates that we are onto something important. Gay's mixed signals seem to confirm this fact.

In his note on the matter (is the fact that the discussion does not take place in the body of Gay's text a sign that it is being repressed?), Gay mentions the thesis of Peter Swales (which we will discuss in detail later), which had been in circulation for at least six years before the publication of Gay's book. There as elsewhere in Gay's discussion of Freud's relation to Minna, Gay moves toward and away from Swales' thesis, at one point saying, "he may of course be right."[18] In the end he places his hope in as yet unpublished archival materials:

> The Freud collection at the Library of Congress includes a packet of letters between Freud and Minna Bernays that are being scrutinized before being released. At this writing, they are (maddeningly) not yet available.... If dependable independent evidence (as distinct from conjecture and clever chains of inferences) should emerge that Freud did indeed have an affair with his sister-in-law and actually (as Swales has argued in some detail) took her to get an abortion, I shall revise my text accordingly.[19]

In January 1989 just that opportunity became available. The Freud/Minna Bernays letters were declassified by the Library of Congress, and Peter Gay, according to his own testimony, was first in line to get to read them, only to make a dismaying discovery. The letters covering the crucial period in Freud and Minna's life were missing. "There was something odd about the missing portions", Gay wrote in an article in the *New York Times* describing what he found,

> Someone had numbered the letters consecutively in pencil.... Someone, then, during the London years after Freud's death had taken the trouble to put Freud's correspondence more or less in order. But then why this gap in the numbering between a letter of April 27, 1893, and one of July 25, 1910? The letter of 1893 bears no number, but since it follows number 93 by a single day it was evidently number 94 in the series, and the next number is 161. What happened to numbers 95 to 160? ... The years 1893 to 1910 were

[16] Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time* (New York: Simon Schuster, 1988), p. 753.
[17] Ibid., p. 752.
[18] Ibid., p. 753.
[19] Ibid.

> the very years when an affair between Freud and his sister-in-law would have taken place, if it did.[20]

Gay then concludes his article by backing away, retreating step by step almost from the very conclusion the missing evidence seems to have led him to. "The missing letters", he concludes,

> are like Sherlock Holmes's famous dog that did not bark in the night. Probably those missing letters no longer exist.... Still if those letters ever did show up, I think it exceedingly unlikely that they would substantiate the rumor that Jung was the first to float. There are suggestive passages in Freud's writings about coming to terms with the thought of incest with one's mother or sister. But these refer to fantasies rather than actions.[21]

Well, Gay is certainly right about the passages on incest. In fact, Freud spent his entire psychoanalytic career obsessed with incest. The Oedipus Complex, which is the foundation of the Freudian edifice, (his oedifice, if you will) is built on incest. In his treatise "On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love", written in 1912, Freud writes

> It has an ugly sound, and it is also paradoxical, but nevertheless it must be said that whoever is to be really free and happy in love must have overcome his deference for women and come to terms with the idea of incest with mother or sister.[22]

Does the attitude behind this passage refer only to "fantasies rather than actions", as Gay claimed? Those who took the time to write letters to the editor in response to Gay's article seemed unconvinced. Paul Roazen, who has himself written on Freud, finds more than one inconsistency in Gay's account:

> [Gay] tells the reader in his second paragraph that he "expected no passionate passages" in the letters that Freud and his sister-in-law Minna exchanged. Yet in Mr. Gay's book "Freud" (1988) he told us that the creator of psychoanalysis "wrote some passionate letters to Minna Bernays". Does Mr. Gay not remember what he just published? ... Mr. Gay is such a devotee of psychoanalytic orthodoxy that he does not seem to realize the implication of critical missing portions of the Freud-Minna correspondence.[23]

The significance of the missing letters goes beyond any mere idle curiosity on Gay's part, or any presumed voyeurism, to use his word. The issue of

[20] Peter Gay, "Sigmund and Minna: The Biographer as Voyeur", *New York Times,* January 29, 1989, sec. 7, p. 1.

[21] Ibid., p. 44.

[22] Cf. Peter Swales, "Freud, Minna, and the Conquest of Rome: New Light on the Origins of Psychoanalysis", *New American Review,* I (Spring/Summer 1982), p. 1.

[23] Letters, *New York Times,* December 21, 1988, sec. 7, p. 36.

whether Freud had an affair with his sister-in-law goes to the heart of the Freudian system. According to Roazen,

> incest is a central theme in Freud's writings, and for that reason students of Freud have been preoccupied with his emotional involvement with Minna Bernays. But it seems to me peculiar for a historian to be so in quest of a scoop as to present the public with a superficial and inherently unsatisfactory account of the story.[24]

Other readers found Gay just as unpersuasive, especially when he gave as his reasons for discounting the affair that Minna was "unattractive" and that the story came from Jung. "Mr Gay", writes Phyllis Grosskurth, a professor at the University of Toronto, "shows contempt for the rumor because it emanated from Jung. Does the fact that Mr. Gay holds strong ideological views opposed to Jung inevitably make Jung a suspected source? I thought scholars were supposed to have open minds."[25]

Gay's response was doubly defensive. First of all because, in addition to responding to his reading of the missing Minna letters, he was also defending his own role in publishing a clearly fraudulent Freudian document—he later claimed it was a parody, but as of the printing of his response no one was laughing. But the more serious difficulty was that Gay was making a Freudian defense of the proposition that it ultimately made no difference whether Freud had in fact committed incest with his sister-in-law. To hear this coming from an orthodox Freudian, and Gay's biography is certainly that, is puzzling and disconcerting to say the least. After almost an entire century of hearing from Freudians about how important a person's sex life is in coming to understand that person's motives, we find ourselves hearing from Peter Gay, the orthodox Freudian, that Freud's sex life is irrelevant when it comes to understanding Freud.

Did Freud commit incest with his sister-in-law Minna Bernays? Peter Swales argues convincingly that he did. His argument is based on exhaustive biographical research, but his most convincing evidence is drawn from Freud's writings themselves. In what has to be one of the most brilliant pieces of Freudian analysis ever written, Swales argues that the passage in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* in which Freud deduces the word *"aliquis"* from an incompletely remembered line from Vergil recited by "a young man of academic background who . . . was familiar with some of my psychological publications" is nothing more than Freud talking about himself.[26] The young man tells Freud that he cannot remember a certain word and asks for Freud's help in remembering it. Freud, who evidently has all of the *Aeneid* on the tip

[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Swales, p. 4.

of his tongue, provides the word, *"aliquis"*, "someone", which the "young man breaks down into *"a-liquis"*. The young man is hoping something will liquify. A little more analysis draws in the miracle of St. Januarius and the liquifaction of the blood each year in Naples. This in turn brings forth the fact that the young man is having an affair with an Italian lady, whose period is now late. Thus all of the forgetting has to do with an issue fraught with anxiety for the young man. He is worried about the inconvenient appearance of offspring from an unexpected quarter. The deductions are so implausible that, in Swales' words, "to believe Freud's claim that there was another man involved requires the investment and gamble of a far greater act of faith than I now appeal for in arguing the 'young man' was actually Freud himself".[27] That Freud should do something like this should also not be surprising in light of what we know he had already done; we know, for example, that he disguised biographical material using the same technique in "Screen Memories" and that he was willing to lead Jung's patient Sabina Spielrein on, "Sherlock Holmes-like", in one of his letters to her. The logic of the case is on Swales' side. If, as everyone now concedes, Freud made use of the *Doppelgänger* in "Screen Memories" as a way of talking about himself in 1898, why shouldn't he use the same device in 1900, especially in light of the fact that no evidence indicating that there was such a man has appeared in the seven years since Swales published his thesis? It provided Freud with a way of simultaneously exposing and disguising something that was troubling his conscience. And if in the process he should appear to be a brilliant investigator, then so much the better.

The figure of Minna would have been invested (or cathected, to use the Freudian neologism) with all sorts of meaning through association with other people. First of all, Minna, in addition to being his wife's sister, was also the nanny to Freud's children. We know too that she had been employed as a governess previously in Brno, Moravia, where Sigmund spent the first three years of his life under the care of a Roman Catholic Czech nursemaid, whom he considered a second mother. Some speculate that she might have been more of a mother to him than his own biological mother, who was confined during a good part of Freud's early life with the birth of his younger sister, Anna. Swales speculates that Minna probably even knew some Czech nursery rhymes. By having sexual relations with Minna, Freud was also having relations with his nursemaid, which meant he was also having relations with his own mother. "Freud", as Swales formulates the proposition, "is Oedipus. In having taken Minna he conceives of himself as the mythical Oedipus having taken the mother".[28]

[27] Ibid., p. 6.
[28] Ibid., p. 18.

> Minna became in Freud's fertile fantasy-life a *revenant,* a reincarnation, a new edition of his childhood nursemaid, his own second mother. In other words, I contend that the childhood nursemaid, the second mother of the baby Sigmund, stood during Freud's 'self-analysis' primarily as a disguise—as "a mask and a symbol"—for Minna, the second mother of his own children; the corollary being that, in lusting after Minna's body and in thereby wishing to violate the incest-taboo, Freud saw himself on a par with Oedipus desiring his second mother. Hence . . . the Oedipus theory.[29]

Swales published his thesis in 1982—without, it should be remembered, any access to the Freud archives, something reserved for those safely within the Freudian fold. In closing his article he issues a challenge to those in charge of the documentation to prove him wrong. In the intervening years, however, nothing has come out that would disprove his thesis and much to substantiate it. Upon reading the Swales article, Anthony Stadlen, 1989 fellow at the London Freud museum, attempted to find out the identity of "the young man of academic background" that Freud ostensibly met in Croatia as described in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* but discovered nothing. Then there was Gay's discovery that the letters from Freud to Minna covering the period of the alleged affair had been deliberately removed from the file in the Library of Congress. That fact is evidence in support of Swales' thesis, not evidence against it. Finally, there was the new edition of the Freud/Fliess correspondence, which appeared in 1985, three years after Swales had published his paper. In pinning down the time when the affair was probably consummated, Swales relied on Jones' biography and the expurgated version of the Freud/Fliess letters, the only version available at the time. Jones based his account on a letter dated September 14, 1900. The unexpurgated version of the letter, which only became available in 1985, contains the following description of Freud and Minna's journey together that summer, a description omitted from both Jones and the earlier editions of the letters: "We finally stopped for five days at Riva, divinely accommodated and fed, luxuriating without regrets and untroubled. . . ."[30] The German original version of the last phrase is *"eine Schwelgerei ohne Reue und Trübung",* which could be translated "a debauch unclouded by remorse." The subsequent evidence, in other words, is all in Swales' favor, a fact that Freudians like Peter Gay seem reluctant to admit.

The issue is, however, even more embarrassing than that for the Freudians, for the controversy involves not only sexual activity but the morality of that sexual activity as well. Seventy-some years after the publication of *Totem and Taboo,*

[29] Ibid., p. 19.

[30] Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, ed., *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess (1887–1904)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1985), p. 423.

which proved—according to the Freudians at least—that all of morality has extra-moral roots, we, as good moderns, now find that the Freudians are constrained to defend the proposition, in the face of an increasing amount of evidence to the contrary, that Freud was a moral person and that, even if he wasn't, it doesn't make any difference anyway. "Surely", Gay writes in response to his critics,

> we are entitled to make moral judgments about the character and conduct of historical figures. But I insist that the greatness or failure of their work, the validity or invalidity of their ideas, however deeply influenced by their personal history, are nevertheless independent of it. Freud might have been a spotless gentleman and still developed a fatally flawed theory of mind; he might have been a consummate villain and yet tumbled onto profound truths about human nature. Hence the question about his possible affair with his sister-in-law has no bearing on the question of whether there is an Oedipus complex or not.[31]

Even in an age not dominated by Freudian thinking, this type of logic would make no sense. The Oedipus Complex, remember, postulates a universal wish in mankind to commit incest. Need we say that such a universally generalized wish is far from self-evident? Beyond that, are we to believe that the personal life of the person who makes such claims has no bearing on the claims he is making? Are we to believe that the issue of whether this man himself committed incest is irrelevant to his claim that it is a universal wish of mankind? Suppose Bonnie and Clyde told us that mankind had a universal compulsion to rob banks. Would we accept their verdict without inquiring into their own compulsions? In asking us to believe such a proposition, Gay strains his own credibility to the breaking point. But beyond that, in order to make his point about the irrelevance of whether Freud himself committed incest, Gay has to undermine the entire Freudian system. Gay has put himself, unwittingly it would seem, in a no-win situation. If a man's theories are completely independent of his sexual life, then the Freudian system is a huge mistake. If, on the other hand, a person's sexual life explicates his theories, then Freud himself cannot be exempt from what he claims is a universal law.

Rather than face up to the contradictions in his own ideology, Gay tries to have it both ways. The Freudian system can bring about the transvaluation of all values only if Freud himself is not exempt from his own law. If, on the other hand, he is not exempt, then his theory itself has no value. It is as undermined as anyone else's. Freud, according to Gay's basically dishonest analysis, is to be held exempt from the sexual analysis that undermines the credibility of everyone else. If theory is really independent of personal, i.e., sexual, history, as Gay claims in trying to defuse the whole issue of whether

[31] Letters, *New York Times*, December 21, 1988, sec. 7, p. 36.

Freud committed incest with his sister-in-law, then Gay has done nothing less than undermine the significance of the whole Freudian system.

Gay's dilemma is traceable to his predilection for the Enlightenment and the evidently a priori decision to make Freud into, in Gay's words, "the modern heir of the philosophes".[32] Once again Gay mixes his metaphors to come up with "a life for our time", the subtitle of his book, rather than an accurate biography. If the Enlightenment believed anything, it was that the mind and consciousness were synonymous. How then is it possible to place Freud, the discoverer of the unconscious, the discoverer, at least on his own terms, of the fact that we are motivated by factors that are inaccessible to reason, among the philosophes? "All thinking," Gay writes in describing the Freudian system, "including the most abstract and objective, can be shown to have nonrational sources."[33] The assertion is central to both Gay's thesis and the Freudian system, and it deconstructs both. If Gay really means "all thinking", then he must be speaking of Freudian thinking as well, in which case he has demolished his own ideology. If, on the other hand, all thinking has nonrational sources, then the Enlightenment is of no value either. It has been discredited by Freud's discovery of unconscious motivation.

It would seem then that there is no way out of the maze of self-contradiction. But there is a way. There is one thing that both the Enlightenment and Freud had in common, and that was their antipathy toward religion in general and the Catholic Church in particular. It is this mutually shared antipathy that becomes the basis for Gay's union of opposites. Gay, making use of the code word that has legitimatized that antipathy since the Enlightenment, makes "Science" the bridge between personal compulsion and intellectual respectability. Freud, we are told with a tendentiousness that suffuses Gay's entire biography, "sharply differentiat[ed] the scientific style of thought from the Illusion-ridden style of religious thinking".[34] Science, in reality the ideology of scientism, becomes the magic formula that allows him to claim that the proponents of reason and unreason have a common heritage, and in this he may be right. "Science", Gay tells us,

> is an organized effort to get beyond childishness. Science disdains the pathetic effort of the believer to realize fantasies through pious waiting and ritual performances, through sending up petitions and burning heretics.[35]

But here again Gay mixes his signals. "To diminish religion with psychoanalytic weapons", he writes, "then had been on Freud's agenda for many years".[36]

[32] Gay, *Freud*, p. 534.
[33] Ibid., p. 531.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., p. 534.
[36] Ibid., p. 526.

But this statement again raises more questions than it answers. Is Freud the disinterested scientist, or is he the ideologue of atheism? Gay can't make up his mind, and his effort to associate Freud with the philosophes is his way of covering the differences in his again contradictory approach. "There is no court higher than that of reason",[37] Gay continues, and "since religion has made men neither happier nor better, irreligion can only be an improvement."[38] The passage includes both the contradictions in Gay's analysis and the explanation for those contradictions. The contradiction should be by now clear enough. Freud, in Gay's reading, is the philosophe irrationalist who believes both that "all thinking . . . can be shown to have nonrational sources" and that "there is no court higher than that of reason." Antipathy to religion is the only thing that makes the contradiction in any way plausible because it is true that this is the one thing both the philosophes and the Freudians had in common. Antipathy to religion, then, determines the agenda in a basically hidden and dishonest and—dare we say—neurotic way. Gay himself admits the latter motivation but only to dismiss it in the same breath.

> Freud had an inkling that atheism, too, might prove vulnerable to ideology. . . . Typical of the adolescent is rebellion against his father. Those who quarrel with God may be reenacting in the sphere of religion the Oedipal battle they had failed to win at home. But Freud had no such quarrel; he would not fight with chimeras.[39]

Here again Gay's ideology forces him to do violence to the biographical material. Freud clearly had a quarrel with God for his entire adult life. His attitude toward God was also deeply affected by his attitude toward a father whom he himself described in *The Interpretation of Dreams* as disappointing. Paul Vitz covers this issue at length in his book *Freud's Christian Unconscious.*[40] Marianne Kruell covers the same territory in a book written from a radically different perspective.[41]

When Freud tells us that God is in reality an exalted father, this statement turns out to be true in a way that Freud most probably did not intend. In fact all the Freudian "truths" are in constant danger of transforming mysteriously into their opposites, of subverting themselves, of deconstructing, of ending up proving the opposite of what they ostensibly intend to prove. Freudian biography, in this regard, becomes the key determinant in the interpretation

[37] Ibid., p. 532.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., p. 534.
[40] Paul Vitz, *Sigmund Freud's Christian Unconscious* (New York: Guilford Press, 1988).
[41] Marianne Kruell, *Freud and His Father,* translated by Arnold J. Pomerans, preface by Helm Stierlin (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979).

of Freudian theory. This, then, is why the art of biographical interpretation has become so crucial to the exposition of the Freudian system. It is just as Freud said to Jung on their trans-Atlantic psychoanalytic cruise: "But I cannot risk my authority." "If the details of my biography were to become known" he seems to be telling Jung, "no one would take my theories seriously." Freud himself knew this so well, it would seem, that it prompted him to burn his letters and papers not once but twice during his lifetime. The orthodox Freudians know it as well. In the case of Jung, the discovery led him to stop being an orthodox Freudian. In the case of the true believers—people like Jones and Gay—it led to the suppression of evidence. In the case of the really true believer, someone like Freud's daughter Anna, the prime suspect in the case of the missing Freud-Minna correspondence, it probably led to the destruction of the Freud/Minna letters as a way of preserving Freud's authority and the authority of the system he created. One needn't be particularly Freudian to understand the motivation here. Anna Freud may have been inordinately attached to her father, as Gay and others maintain, but no one who makes a living from psychotherapy is going to be prone to bite the hand that feeds him, the hand that created the system that sustains his followers.

But it is not just any biographical material that is being suppressed. All of the suppressed material has to do with moral dereliction, specifically sexual morality. In fact one could go so far as to say that the entire Freudian system is one large morality play in which the central conflict is radically and—one could say neurotically—repressed. Since morality is so universally repressed, it returns to haunt the Freudian system. "I could tell you more, but I cannot risk my authority" becomes the *conditio sine qua non* of the Freudian system. It becomes the motto of the Freudian. It could serve as the epigraph of both Jones' and Gay's biographies. In order to believe in the Freudian system, the Freudian has to repress what he knows about Freud just as Freud had to suppress the details of his own life in order to gather followers around himself as well.

But life is not that simple. As Freud himself would tell us, reality cannot be repressed—not indefinitely anyway. The truths of the moral life, just like the principle of noncontradiction, are substantiated in the very denials of those who seek to undermine them. Since psychoanalysis is a complex system, it has to come to grips with this complexity. The dynamics of the psychoanalytic system are very much like the dynamics of the guilty conscience, which has at its heart a radical ambivalence—the simultaneous desire both to conceal and to reveal. Confession (and oftentimes rationalization as well) sits at the heart of what happens in psychotherapy, and therefore it is not surprising that it should rule the lives of its founders as well.

In this regard, Jung is no exception. In fact, his initial attraction to and ultimate alienation from the Freudian system correspond to a trajectory traced

by his own conscience, a fact that has only come to light as the result of recent biographical discoveries. "At the risk of boring you," Jung wrote in his second letter to Freud, which is to say at the very beginning of their relationship, "I must abreact my most recent experience. I am currently treating an hysteric with your method. Difficult case, a 20-year-old Russian girl student, ill for six years".[42] Thus begins a chain of events that would also find its resolution in the fateful meeting in Bremen three years later.

The case in question concerns a young woman by the name of Sabina Spielrein, born in Rostov-on-Don in 1885 and who arrived at the Burghölzli in 1905 with a severe neurosis. By the time Jung mentioned her in his letter of October 23, 1906, he had known Spielrein for over two years. Eventually Spielrein would not only be cured but would also become a psychoanalyst herself. Along the way she also became Jung's lover. In fact in Bruno Bettelheim's reading of the correspondence between Spielrein, Jung, and Freud over the next few years, Jung's letter to Freud (only the second he had written to him) corresponds with the shift in Spielrein's relationship to Jung from patient to lover. "At the time Jung wrote this letter," Bettelheim writes (*New York Review of Books,* June 30, 1983) in his review of the book on the Spielrein letters, *A Secret Symmetry,* by Aldo Carotenuto,

> he had known Spielrein for over two years, so it could not have been the nature of her past history (which he describes) that was the reason for his need to abreact, since it hardly constituted a recent experience. From what we know about Jung's intimate, probably sexual, involvement with Spielrein, it is reasonable to assume that it found its culmination just at the time when Jung sought a relationship with Freud by beginning his correspondence with him, since only then could it be a recent experience that needed abreaction.[43]

Troubled conscience, then, was the decisive factor that brought what would become the two leading figures in modern psychology together, just as qualms of conscience on Freud's part would drive them apart. Jung needed to talk to someone about his patient-cum-lover, and Freud as the father figure in the relationship seemed like the ideal confessor. Jung, in fact, was to make use later on in the affair of exactly this terminology. "My action", he wrote to Freud in the summer of 1909, two months before their voyage to American together, "was a piece of knavery which I very reluctantly confess to you as my father."[44]

[42] Aldo Carotenuto, *A Secret Symmetry* (New York: Random House, Pantheon Books, 1982), p. 159.

[43] Bruno Bettelheim, "Scandal in the Family", *New York Review of Books,* June 30, 1983, pp. 39–44.

[44] Carotenuto, p. 173.

The need to confess, however, was setting up what seemed to be a series of conscience-inspired chain reactions that were going off in the most unexpected quarters. The impetus to confess prompted Jung to take up corresponding with Freud. According to Bettelheim, "The Jung-Freud letters, in light of what we learn from this new material about the singular importance of Jung's relation to Spielrein, suggest strongly that this relation was probably what induced Jung to open relations with Freud."[45] This in turn led to Jung meeting with Freud in Vienna in March of 1907, on which occasion Minna Bernays, according to Jung's account, confessed to him that she was intimate with Freud. This admission in turn prompted Jung to push the relationship with Freud to the breaking point on their trans-Atlantic cruise, forcing Freud to draw back, saying his authority was threatened. Thus what was supposed to be a father/son relationship was plagued with moral ambivalence from the very beginning. Both Jung and Freud wanted their relationship to be on father/son lines but seemed unable to sustain it on those terms. The incident on the *George Washington* was simply the culmination of a process that had been taking place from the beginning. Jung was drawn to Freud as the surrogate father, as the father confessor in particular. He was drawn to his theories as a way of resolving personal guilt of a sexual nature. However, the more he got to know Freud, the less he could consider him a father. On his first meeting in the Freud household, Freud, the father confessor, the man who was supposed to resolve Jung's sexual conflicts, turns out to be having an affair with his sister-in-law. The Freud/Jung relationship survived these initial confessions, but it is also clear that Jung was storing the material and mulling it over, hoping to make use of it, or at least sense of it, at some later date. Either way it had a disconcerting way of breaking into their dealings with each other.

So after Jung's second meeting with Freud in March of 1909, Freud writes to him:

> it is strange that on the very same evening when I formally adopted you as eldest son and anointed you—*in partibus infidelium*—as my successor and crown prince, you should have divested me of my paternal dignity, which divesting seems to have given you as much pleasure as I, on the contrary, derived from the investiture of your person. Now I am afraid of falling back into the father role with you if I tell you how I feel about the poltergeist business.[46]

Freud is talking about the occult in general and a loud report in particular that emanated inexplicably from his bookshelf during a meeting with Jung in

[45] Bettelheim, p. 40.
[46] Wehr, p. 111.

his study. However, the incident did not occur in a moral vacuum. Just before that meeting, Jung's relation with Sabina Spielrein burst into crisis after lying dormant since his letter to Freud of 1906. "A woman patient," Jung wrote to Freud, referring to Spielrein in a letter written on March 7, 1909,

> whom years ago I pulled out of a very sticky neurosis with greatest devotion, has violated my confidence and my friendship in the most mortifying way imaginable. She has kicked up a vile scandal solely because I denied myself the pleasure of giving her a child. I have always acted the gentleman towards her, but before the bar of my rather too sensitive conscience I nevertheless don't feel clean, and that is what hurts the most because my intentions were always honourable. But you know how it is—the devil can use even the best of things for the fabrication of filth. Meanwhile I have learnt an unspeakable amount of marital wisdom, for until now I had a totally inadequate idea of my polygamous components despite all self-analysis.[47]

Judging from the anguish of Jung's letter, it seems almost certain that he and Freud discussed the Spielrein affair in the meeting that has become subsequently famous for the unexplained poltergeist in the bookshelf. Again the pattern repeats itself. Jung turns to Freud for relief from the pangs of his "rather too sensitive conscience". Freud, who is interested in Jung as the heir apparent who will carry psychoanalysis into the non-Jewish world, is only too happy to oblige but with ambiguous results; he ends up getting divested of his "paternal dignity". True confessions, psychoanalytic-style, produce ambivalence in the penitent and suppressed aggression against the father confessor. Jung on the surface is grateful for the salve to his conscience, but over the long haul episodes of resentment of the sort we have already noted continue to crop up. The relationship is charged with ambivalence.

Now with the publication of the Spielrein correspondence, the story can be told from a third point of view. In her letters to Freud, who replaced Jung as the father figure in their relationship, and in her diary entries of that period, Spielrein describes the relationship and the ensuing crisis in the spring of 1909 from her point of view. At sometime before March of that year, someone, most probably Emma Jung, wrote to Spielrein's mother informing her of the affair. Since Spielrein claims in the diary that she told no one of the affair, and since Jung writes that the affair confirmed his "polygamous components",[48] it is plausible to conclude that Jung told his wife himself. If so, this adds one more confession to the psycho-moral chain reaction going off at the beginning of psychoanalysis.

As a result of the letter, Spielrein's mother pleaded with Jung to break off

[47] Carotenuto, p. 159.
[48] Ibid.

the relationship, prompting him to write an unbelievably boorish letter in response in which he argued that he had done nothing wrong in seducing his patient because he hadn't charged a fee. "Therefore," he concludes,

> I would suggest that if you wish me to adhere strictly to my role as doctor, you should pay me a fee as suitable recompense for my trouble. In that way you may be absolutely certain that I will respect my duty as doctor under all circumstances. . . . My fee is 10 francs per consultation.[49]

Spielrein, who evidently got a copy of Jung's letter from her mother, described the incident in her diary in an entry dated June 11, 1909. "How terribly insulting that must have been for my mother," she wrote,

> for my parents never in their lives accepted presents, and though my mother did not know that Dr. Jung had the right to accept private patients, she did give him gifts in lieu of money, which were also supposed to express her friendly disposition toward him.[50]

In order to resolve the issue, Spielrein wrote to Freud, but Freud, at least initially, put her off, refusing to meet with her and keeping Jung abreast of developments. At the same time, Jung continued to rationalize his involvement in the affair. In a letter to Freud on June 4, he accused his former patient of "systematically planning my seduction, which I considered inopportune. Now she is seeking revenge. Lately she has been spreading a rumour that I shall soon get a divorce from my wife and marry a certain girl student, which has thrown not a few of my colleagues into a flutter."[51]

Freud, for his part, tells Jung that the whole affair is part of the risks associated with the profession. "They help us to develop the thick skin we need and to dominate 'countertransference', which is after all a permanent problem for us; they teach us to displace our own affects to best advantage. They are a 'Blessing in disguise'."[52] Freud wrote the last three words in the original English. In a letter written in mid-June, Freud congratulates Jung on his being invited to lecture at Clark University as well and speculates on how they will spend their time on board ship. At the same time, he informs Jung of how he is handling the Spielrein affair. "My reply was ever so wise and penetrating; I made it appear as though the most tenuous of clues had enabled me Sherlock Holmes-like to guess the situation (which of course was none too

[49] Ibid., p. 177.

[50] Ibid.

[51] William McGuire, ed., *The Freud/Jung Letters: The Correspondence between Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung,* translated by Ralph Manheim and R. F. C. Hull (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 228.

[52] Ibid., p. 231.

difficult after your communications) and suggested a more appropriate procedure, something endopsychic, as it were."[53] Freud's willingness to dissemble speaks volumes about a number of his earlier works, specifically the *"aliquis"* episode in *The Interpretation of Dreams,* where he "Sherlock Holmes-like" deduces all sorts of conclusions from the most unlikely material.

In his return letter three days later, Jung's facade of self-righteousness begins to crumble. He has found out that Spielrein is not the source of the rumor that he was about to leave his wife. Her decent behavior in the light of his of the opposite sort has stirred up his conscience once again:

> Although not succumbing to helpless remorse, I nevertheless deplore the sins I have committed, for I am largely to blame for the high-flying hopes of my former patient. . . . When the situation had become so tense that the continued preservation of the relationship could be rounded out only by sexual acts, I defended myself in a manner that cannot be justified morally. Caught in my delusion that I was the victim of the sexual wiles of my patient, I wrote to her mother that I was not the gratifier of her daughter's sexual desires but merely her doctor, and that she should free me from her. In view of the fact that the patient had shortly before been my friend and enjoyed my full confidence, my action was a piece of knavery which I very reluctantly confess to you as my father.[54]

Then as if to change to a more congenial topic, Jung begins the next paragraph by saying "I am looking forward very much to America." The next time the two met was in Bremen on August 20, the scene of Freud's fainting fit and the prelude to the dream analysis that Freud deliberately broke off because "I cannot risk my authority." In an interview later in his life, cited in Vitz' book, Freud claimed that "confession is liberation and that is cure. The Catholics knew it for centuries, but Victor Hugo had taught me that the poet too is a priest, and thus I boldly substituted myself for the confessor."[55] But as the denouement to their sea voyage showed, Freud was a confessor *manqué.* The net result of Jung's confession was a desire to know more about his "father", which led Freud to repress the biographical details that Jung suspected would confirm Freud in the same type of behavior he was intent on absolving in Jung. His refusal to give that information shattered the alliance at the heart of psychotherapy.

In his analysis of the Carotenuto book, Bettelheim concludes that the evidence there "suggest[s] that possibly all of the central Jungian concepts might be owed directly or indirectly to Spielrein". Bettelheim, quoting Carotenuto, writes:

[53] Ibid., p. 235.
[54] Ibid., p. 236.
[55] Vitz, p. 105.

> "It is not hard to imagine that in a curious way, the hypotheses of persona, shadow, and anima represent the distillation of these old experiences" (meaning Jung's experiences in relation to Spielrein). And further on: "Any attentive reading of the phenomenological description of the anima and the shadow takes us immediately back to those early years" (of the relation to Spielrein).
>
> Finally he quotes from one of the last known letters of Jung to Spielrein, dated September 1919: "The love of S. for J. made the latter aware of something he had previously only vaguely suspected, that is, of the power in the unconscious that shapes one's destiny, a power which later led him to things of the greatest importance." Thus whatever the specific contributions of Spielrein or Jung to the Jungian system, Jung asserts, and Carotenuto follows him in his opinion, that it was in their love affair that the system itself originated.[56]

If we combine Bettelheim's thesis with the events that took place following the climax of the affair in 1909 and the subsequent journey to America and what that revealed about Freud and his relation to his theories and the details of his own life, we can come up with a related but even bolder thesis. At the heart of psychotherapy, which is to say, at the heart of modern psychology, we find nothing more than the attempt to rationalize two illicit sexual relationships. Jung's attraction to Gnosticism, his attempt to resurrect alchemy in a psychological mode, his obsession with reconciling opposites as shown in his *magnum opus, Mysterium Coniunctionis,* all point to a common source. All the neo-Gnostic polarities one finds in Jung's psychology and the attempt to resolve them by finding the psychological equivalent of the philosopher's stone come about, to quote a particularly acute passage in Sabina Spielrein's diary, "because his soul is constantly torn between two women".[57] Spielrein eventually returned to Russia, where she practiced psychotherapy until nazi troops entered Rostov and rounded up that city's Jews. She was shot along with her two daughters in the fall of 1941. Jung, however, moved on to another mistress, Antonia Wolff, whom he kept until her death in the mid-1950s, two years before his eightieth birthday.

Similarly, the universal desire to murder the father and commit incest with mother and/or sister that has come to be known as the Oedipus Complex is nothing more than Freud's personal history disguised and writ large. Freud's most important writings, those surrounding the period when he repudiated the seduction theory and replaced it with the Oedipus Complex, are a complicated autobiographical dance in which he simultaneously reveals and conceals the source of his theories. It is an ambivalence worthy of the name Freudian and describes, in a way that subsequent Freudians have learned to

[56] Bettelheim, pp. 39–40.

[57] Carotenuto, p. 95.

deny, how exquisitely the trajectories of the psychoanalytic movement and that of the guilty conscience coincide.

The Dimmesdale Syndrome

The Scarlet Letter is a novel built around a scaffold. The scaffold in question is a large, raised wooden platform in the public square in Puritan Boston used to punish malefactors of various sorts. Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic piece of American fiction takes place around three scaffold scenes, which structure its plot. In the first, Hester Prynne is brought out into the daylight with her newborn baby Pearl and made to put on the Scarlet A that signifies she has been caught and found guilty of adultery. In the last scene, the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale ascends the scaffold seven years later with Hester and Pearl at his side and, ripping open his minister's robe, reveals that he is the child's father and Hester's partner in sin. It is not clear whether his guilt is removed, because he dies shortly after revealing his secret to the world. However, his daughter, who had avoided him up until that point, kisses him before he dies, and we are told "A spell was broken." The minister also escaped from the spell of the evil Roger Chillingworth, whose power over the minister was in direct proportion to the latter's repressed guilt. Chillingworth tried to stop Dimmesdale from making his public confession but was thwarted when Dimmesdale ascended the scaffold and "stood out from all the earth to put in his plea of guilty at the bar of Eternal Justice". In his tale "The Maypole of Merrymount", Hawthorne referred to the whipping post as the "Puritan Maypole". He could just as easily have described the scaffold in *The Scarlet Letter* as the Puritan confessional.

What concerns us here, however, is the second scaffold scene, as described in the chapter called "The Minister's Vigil". The scene occupies a middle position in terms of both plot and character development. Unlike the first scene, where Hester and Pearl stand alone before the crowd, Dimmesdale takes his place on the scaffold with Hester and his daughter. However in the pivotal middle scene, unlike the last one, Dimmesdale can only ascend the scaffold when no one can see him. He makes his public statement of guilt before a nonexistent public in the dead of night. His "confession" is, in other words, a gesture full of ambivalence. "The minister went up the steps", we are told, but "there was no peril of discovery."

> The minister might stand there, if it so pleased him, until morning should redden in the east, without other risk than that the dank and chill night air would creep into his frame and stiffen his joints with rheumatism and clog

> his throat with catarrh and cough, thereby defrauding the expectant audience of tomorrow's prayer and sermon. No eye could see him, save that ever-wakeful one which had seen him in his closet wielding the bloody scourge. Why, then, had he come hither? Was it but the mockery of penitence? A mockery, indeed, but in which his soul trifled with itself! A mockery at which angels blushed and wept, while fiends rejoiced with jeering laughter! He had been driven hither by the impulse of that Remorse which dogged him everywhere, and whose own sister and closely linked companion was that Cowardice which invariably drew him back with her tremulous gripe just when the other impulse had hurried him to the verge of a disclosure. Poor, miserable man! What right had infirmity like his to burden itself with crime? Crime is for the iron-nerved, who have their choice either to endure it, or, if it press too hard, to exert their fierce and savage strength for a good purpose, and fling it off at once! This feeble and most sensitive of spirits could do neither, yet continually did one thing or another which intertwined, in the same inextricable knot, the agony of heaven-defying guilt and vain repentance.[58]

The Scarlet Letter is a piece of fiction that is rooted in what one might call moral realism, which is to say, the belief that guilt is a real phenomenon based on transgression of the moral law and not some epiphenomenon arising out of an essentially nonmoral and therefore psychologically neurotic set of preconditions. This moral realism causes any number of embarrassing moments in the study of literature among those who are professionally involved in teaching it and just as passionately dedicated to the cause of sexual liberation. The belief that adultery is wrong was not only "Hawthorne's truth". It was Homer's truth, and Euripedes' and Flaubert's and Tolstoy's as well. In fact without the truth that adultery is seriously wrong and not just something on the order of getting a parking ticket or having books overdue at the library, the literature of the West, going back as far as Homer and the book of Genesis, e.g., the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, makes no sense whatsoever.

So according to "Hawthorne's truth", adultery is seriously wrong, and the commission of such acts results naturally in experiencing guilt. Such is the ground floor, so to speak, of moral realism. But Hawthorne goes farther than that. He understands the guilty conscience in a much more sophisticated manner. In fact, the staying power of *The Scarlet Letter* is predicated upon that sophistication. The book speaks volumes about the psychology of the guilty imagination, and not even the demolition derby that graduate schools in American literature have become can destroy its ability to speak to successive generations.

[58] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (New York: New American Library, 1961), p. 143.

Hawthorne's genius, then, resides in his ability to dramatize the forces that drive the soul that is tyrannized by guilt. The end result of these competing forces is ambivalence. Dimmesdale longs to confess but is unable to. Ambivalence, therefore, upon closer examination, resolves itself into two mutually antagonistic but equally irreducible forces. Since neither force can win, the only thing Dimmesdale can do is bring about compromises. The first force, then, in this parallelogram of psychic ambivalence is the need to confess. Guilt produces the need to confess. Dimmesdale was a pillar of the community and was universally admired as a man of God. He had nothing to gain from confessing his sin and yet was unable to keep himself from ascending the scaffold. His discovery there would mean his undoing, but he goes to the scaffold because "there might be a moment's peace in it", peace from his troubled conscience.

As the pool of guilt grows in any society, the need to confess will grow with it. One result of the sexual revolution in particular is the growing need to make public confession. These two premises are simply corollaries of the first principles of moral realism. Sin creates guilt, and guilt creates the need to confess. The liberal society creates much occasion for sexual sin, so, therefore, it will be a society full of the desire to confess. A quick survey of the contemporary scene will show that this is so. Two common manifestations of this genre of confessional literature are coming out of the closet for homosexuals—closely allied to this are the various gay pride marches held throughout the country—and the celebrity confessing her abortion story. Mary Travers, a member of a folksinging trio that was popular in the sixties recently climbed up onto the modern day equivalent of the Puritan scaffold and wrote an op-ed piece in the *New York Times,* claiming that the killing of her second child was "one of the pivotal decisions of my life".[59] So pivotal, in fact, that she still feels the need, ancient-mariner-like, to tell us about it thirty years later. The rest of the column beginning with the sentence "Having an abortion didn't seem to be a choice"[60] is, as we can expect from that sort of sentence, a long exercise in self-exculpation, complete with attacks on the moral insensitivity of those who object to the slaying of children in the womb.

This, of course, leads us to force two in the parallelogram of psychic ambivalence. Force one is, to use Hawthorne's term, remorse. Remorse forces the Dimmesdales of the world up onto moral scaffolds to proclaim their guilt. Force two—in Hawthorne's terminology, cowardice—insures that the impulse to confess will be subverted by some form of disguise. For Dimmesdale this

[59] Mary Travers, "My Abortion: Then and Now", *New York Times,* August 10, 1989, sec. A, p. 23, col. 1.

[60] Ibid.

meant mounting the scaffold in the dead of night when no one was there to see him. For those not as gifted with imagination as Hawthorne was, the disguise generally means rationalization. So generally we are treated to statements like "I committed adultery, but it was a growth experience." Or, "I aborted my child, but it saved my career, or made us all a much more close-knit family." In other words, "I confess, but I really didn't do anything wrong." In other words, we have here no confession at all. What we have is, to use Hawthorne's words, "a mockery of penitence. A mockery, indeed, but in which his soul trifled with itself."[61] In general the lady who goes public about her abortion doth protest too much. If it wasn't wrong, one might ask, why are you telling us about it? In this mockery of penitence we have a sort of overcompensation that is radically neurotic. In *The Interpretation of Dreams,* Freud tells the story of a man

> who was charged by one of his neighbors with having given him back a borrowed kettle in a damaged condition. The defendant asserted first, that he had given it back undamaged; secondly, that the kettle had a hole in it when he borrowed it; and thirdly, that he had never borrowed a kettle from his neighbor at all.[62]

"True confessions" of the public, exculpatory variety manifest just this neurotic desire to overcompensate. However, in attempting to cover all the bases, the true confessor negates the value of what, taken separately, would have been perfectly plausible excuses and in the process tells a story at odds with his conscious intentions.

Will Schutz, who as the popularizer of the encounter group, is in a sense an heir of Freud, explained in one of his books why couples would get in their cars after a week's hard work and drive for six hours to Esalen to take part in the encounter groups he was staging there. It was all because of the psychic energy that was spent repressing guilt, most commonly guilt at having committed adultery. Situations describing adultery would appear on the television or in a movie and the psychic tension would increase until the situation in their marriage became unbearable. Something had to happen, and that something was confession. It was admittedly the cheapened sort that could only take place in sensitivity sessions, but in a world of various poisons even junk food can be comparatively nourishing. "The pursuit of honesty", he writes in *Here Comes Everybody,*

> is begun by asking the couples to think of three secrets they have never told their mates and that would be most likely to jeopardize their relationship.

[61] Hawthorne, p. 144.

[62] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams,* translated from the German and edited by James Strachey (New York: Avon Books, 1965).

> During the course of the workshop they tell these secrets. The dominant secret is adultery, but the list also involves homosexual affairs. . . . The husband may reveal adultery only to find that his wife has the same secret. The outcome of this and related experiences is, in the large majority of cases, a refreshing new beginning for the couple.[63]

Moral realism is predicated upon moral absolutes, and one quickly comes to realize that one of the qualities of an absolute is that its effects are achieved absolutely, which is to say, without regard to the intentions of those who act on them. They are a bit like the absolute nature of the principle of noncontradiction. Those who deny it substantiate it in their denial. Absolutes have about them that trace of the divine omnipotence that we find only in God. "Even those who set themselves up against you", writes St. Augustine in his *Confessions,* "do but copy you in a perverse way."[64] So even the perverse copying of confession going on in encounter groups will not be without some effect.

Similarly, Dimmesdale achieves a measure of relief from guilt from the confession he makes in the final scaffold scene. We are told that "a spell was broken."[65] Whether he achieves salvation is a matter that Hawthorne leaves open, as a tribute, if to nothing else, then to his pessimism in moral matters. He did, after all, consider himself, if not a Puritan, then at least a son of the Puritans in such matters.

That his insights have been for the most part lost on his own cultural descendants is a left-handed tribute to the miseducation that takes place at virtually every institution of higher learning in this country and virtually every high school as well. It bespeaks the voracious intellectual imperialism so characteristic of our age. Instead of learning from Hawthorne, we have to remake him in our own image. We have to project on him our own desires and guilt. He becomes not the antidote to our illness but rather the anaesthesia for our own troubled consciences. So, to give just one example of the type of intellectual alchemy the American university system brings about, the gold of the intellectual tradition of the West, captured in the moral realism of *The Scarlet Letter,* is transmuted into the lead of modern ideology through the efforts of literary criticism. Frederick Crews accomplishes this feat in his book *The Sins of the Fathers.* Crews, who wrote *Sins* in the mid-sixties, has over the course of the next two decades become a passionate anti-Freudian. *Skeptical Engagements,* published in 1986, describes the trajectory of his conversion. *The Sins of the Fathers* then becomes an example, to use Crews' own words, of

[63] Will Schutz, *Here Comes Everybody: Bodymind and Encounter Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 39.

[64] St. Augustine, *Confessions* (Hamondsworth: Penguin, 1961), p. 50.

[65] Hawthorne, p. 238.

"how, in the inebriate moral atmosphere of our century, we came to befuddle ourselves with the extraordinary delusion of Freudian thought".[66]

Sins, in spite of the fact that it is now repudiated by its author, was an intellectual transaction typical of the twentieth century. This book is not only a Freudian reading of Hawthorne; it announces before one is through reading it that Hawthorne is a Freudian. "I hope", the author quickly and perhaps a bit defensively announces,

> that I need not insist at length on the propriety of using psychoanalytic terms to describe authors and works that antedate Freud. Revolutionary as his influence has been, Freud did not alter human nature; either we are entitled to use Freudianism retroactively or we must say that it is false.[67]

The claim is fair enough, I suppose. At least Crews is accepting Freud at his own evaluation. Freud felt that he had discovered the formula—the Oedipus Complex—that explained all of human nature or, as he put it in *Totem and Taboo,* the explanation "of social organization, of moral restrictions, and of religion".[68] Modesty was not Freud's strong suit. Nor should it be that of his followers, if they are true followers. Freud claimed to have discovered the secret of the human universe. And Crews is right in claiming that such a discovery is applicable retroactively. Of course, what he is really claiming is that there is such a thing as human nature and that man can know the truth about it—refreshing claims these, coming from academe. If this is the case— and I believe it is, although not in the way that either Crews or Freud believed it—then of course it is applicable retroactively to the creation and proactively to the Second Coming.

The only problem here is that the beliefs of Freud and Hawthorne are incompatible. Hawthorne, to state the case succinctly, was a moral realist: Freud was not. Hawthorne believed that Dimmesdale's guilt came from the fact that he committed adultery. Freud had a less straightforward view. According to the Freudian view, "everything derived from the ambivalent relation to the father."[69] Guilt is an acquired characteristic passed on genetically—à la Lamarck (don't ask how this happens; no Freudian knows)—to subsequent generations, who manifest it in the Oedipus Complex, which is the universal desire to kill the father and commit incest with either mother or sister.

[66] Frederick C. Crews, *Skeptical Engagements* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 72.

[67] Frederick C. Crews, *The Sins of the Fathers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 258–59.

[68] Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics,* translated by James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1950), p. 141.

[69] Ibid., p. 160.

According to Hawthorne, guilt arose from transgressions against the moral law. According to Freud, the moral law arose out of feelings of guilt. Guilt has nothing to do with morality, but morality has everything to do with guilt. "One day", Freud tells us,

> the brothers who had been driven out came together, killed and devoured their father and so made an end of the patriarchal horde. United, they had the courage to do and succeeded in doing what would have been impossible for them individually.... Cannibal savages as they were, it goes without saying that they devoured their victim as well as killing him. The violent primal father had doubtless been the feared and envied model of each one of the company of brothers: and in the act of devouring him they accomplished their identification with him, and each one of them acquired a portion of his strength. The totem meal, which is perhaps mankind's earliest festival, would thus be a repetition and a commemoration of this memorable and criminal deed, which was the beginning of so many things—of social organization, of moral restriction and of religion.... A sense of guilt made its appearance, which in this instance coincided with the remorse felt by the whole group.[70]

According to Crews, Hawthorne's "plots depict with incredible fidelity the results of unresolved Oedipal conflict". Furthermore, he tells us that "this conflict is reenacted everywhere in Hawthorne's fiction."[71] Hawthorne, in other words, is slain and eaten by Freud. He is subsumed into the Freudian system. The charge against Freudians has always been that they were reductive. Crews shows that they come by their reputation honestly. Like Ahab examining the doubloon in *Moby Dick,* Crews holds up Hawthorne and exclaims, "Everything is Freud."

In writing *Totem and Taboo,* Freud probably gave fullest expression to the Oedipus Complex, something that is first mentioned only briefly thirteen years earlier in *The Interpretation of Dreams.* However, in writing *Totem and Taboo* Freud took another and fateful step that he hadn't taken in his earlier writings, which were (to his later chagrin) based predominantly on personal experience. Freud made the mistake of locating the Oedipus Complex in a field where it could be verified or refuted according to the scientific status he claimed for it. In writing *Totem and Taboo,* Freud situated the Oedipus Complex in the field of anthropology and thereby brought about its undoing.

In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), when the Oedipus Complex was first proposed, it was suggested as little more than an interesting interpretation of a piece of Greek tragedy surely familiar to the educated audience Freud was writing for. Notice the qualifying words in Freud's exposition of it:

[70] Ibid., p. 141.
[71] Crews, *The Sins of the Fathers,* p. 262.

> It is the fate of all of us, *perhaps,* to direct our first sexual impulse towards our mother and our first hatred and our first murderous wish against our father. Our dreams convince us that that is so. King Oedipus, who slew his father Laius and married his mother Jocasta, merely shows us the fulfillment of our childhood wishes.[72]

By the time he gets around to writing *Totem and Taboo,* Freud's amalgam of literary criticism, dream analysis, and personal experience has hardened into an evolutionary-based anthropological law, having uncanny similarities with the Christian doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin. The Oedipus Complex is now predicated on the actual occurrence of parricide at the dawn of human history and the transmission of its effects to subsequent generations. As if that were not enough, it is also based on Freud's reading of a few notable evolution-inspired anthropologists of the late nineteenth century and a number of hypotheses drawn from their writings. So for example, the Oedipus Complex in *Totem and Taboo* is based on claims about primitive religions, specifically in Australia, the primacy of totemism in human development, and the connection between primitive and neurotic-modern behavior—all of which are claims that can be fairly easily verified both then and now. Freud, it turns out, was wrong on all counts, and this became evident within a few years of the publication of *Totem and Taboo.*

The man chiefly responsible for exposing the errors in Freud's anthropology was the Rev. Wilhelm Schmidt, a Divine Word priest and colleague of Freud at the University of Vienna. Freud mentioned Schmidt a number of times in his correspondence but had nothing good to say about him. In a letter cited in Jones' biography, Freud refers to Schmidt as "my chief enemy".

> That my chief enemy P. Schmidt has just been given the Austrian Award of Honor for Art and Science for his pious lies in ethnology I claim as my credit. Evidently he has to be consoled for Providence having let me reach the age of eighty.[73]

Vitz finds the passage peculiar, especially Freud's vehemence in referring to Schmidt as his "chief enemy", which he terms "a curious overstatement". Furthermore, he adds, "the notion that Schmidt needed to be consoled for Freud's reaching 80 is ludicrous."[74] However, if one looks at the critique of *Totem and Taboo* in Schmidt's *magnum opus, Der Ursprung der Gottesidee,* (a condensed version was published in English under the title, *The Origin and Growth of Religion*), whose first volume appeared almost contemporaneously

[72] Sigmund Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams,* p. 296.
[73] Jones, vol. 3: *The Last Phase (1919–1939)* (New York: Basic Books, 1957).
[74] Vitz, p. 199.

with *Totem*, the cause for animosity appears clear. Schmidt quite simply demolishes Freud's theory. Whatever else Freud might want to claim for the Oedipus Complex, he could not claim any anthropological or ethnological basis for it after the appearance of Schmidt's critique. Schmidt, who was at the time the world's greatest authority on native Australian cultures and languages, who would go on to prove the existence of the austric linguistic stock, a "discovery of genius" according to his biographer, comparable to the discovery of the interconnections between the Indo-European languages,[75] would expose Freud's location of the Oedipus Complex in anthropology as full of holes.

To begin with, totemism is not the predominant religion at the beginning of human culture. The oldest and ethnologically most primitive people, tribes like the Pygmies of Asia and Africa, the southeast Australians, the Eskimos, and the Tierra del Fuegans, know nothing whatsoever of totemism, and in fact their religion has striking similarities to both Judaism and Christianity in that these people tend to be monotheistic and monogamous, and even refer to God as "Our Father". Secondly, totemism "is not universal, nor have all peoples passed through it. Thirdly, the ceremonial killing and eating of the totem animal is not only not an invariable feature of totemism, it is found in only four of the hundreds of totemic races in the world, and four of the most modern totemic peoples at that." Fourth, according to Schmidt,

> The pre-totemic peoples know nothing of cannibalism, and parricide among them would be a sheer impossibility, psychologically, sociologically, and ethically. As to patricide, the authority of the father is firmly rooted among the oldest peoples in their social organization, their morals and their affections; and the murder of anyone, especially within their own clan, is something so rare that the thought of murdering a father could simply never enter these people's heads at all.[76]

Finally, the sexual mores of pretotemic peoples are not as Freud describes them either. The earliest known form of the human family was neither promiscuity nor group marriage, "neither of which, according to the verdict of the leading modern ethnologists, ever existed at all".[77] Freud's description of the primal horde was drawn from Darwin's extrapolations from the behavior of gorillas. This horde, so eagerly adopted by Freud and Atkinson, had no basis whatsoever in ethnological research into primitive peoples. "On the contrary," according to Schmidt, those people manifest "a clear, fully developed marriage in the proper sense, which is monogamous

[75] Ibid., p. 197.

[76] Rev. William Schmidt, S.V.D. *The Origin and Growth of Religion: Facts and Theories* (New York: L. MacVeagh, The Dial Press, 1931), p. 114.

[77] Ibid., p. 115.

among a large number of these peoples, moderately polygamous among some few."[78]

"All this", Schmidt concludes with an understatement that belies the force of his refutation, "certainly does not provide an atmosphere in which the Oedipus complex could spring up and flourish."[79] Schmidt then takes the direction that most significant Freud criticism has taken ever since; he wonders about the source of the theory and suspects that its roots lie, if not with Freud himself, then at least with his milieu.

> The picture which we thus get of the earliest men is certainly very different from that which Freud constructs in his theory. To bring such men into connexion with modern sex-ridden neurotics, as he would have us do, and from this connexion to deduce the alleged fact that all thought and feeling, especially subliminal, is founded on and saturated with sex, must remain lost labor. Thus Freud's hypothesis loses its last shadow of hope ever to corroborate or establish a single part of itself, for every part collapses in ruin.[80]

The Oedipus Complex, then, only makes sense when seen in the context of Freud's own life. Since it did not come out of the primitive tribes of Australia, it had to come out of Freud. And this leads us back to the transvaluation claimed by Crews with regard to Hawthorne in particular—namely, that Hawthorne was a Freudian—and the transvaluation of the Western tradition, specifically the moral tradition, that Freudianism brought about. Arnold Zweig, writing to Freud in 1930, claimed that psychoanalysis "has reversed all values, it has conquered Christianity, disclosed the Antichrist, and liberated the spirit of resurgent life from the ascetic ideal."[81] Freud certainly did nothing to discourage this interpretation, and it lies at the heart of Crews' desire to absorb Hawthorne and what he stands for—namely, the tradition of moral realism—into the Freudian system.

But did the Freudians succeed? In a sense they did. Their kind of people are holding down the jobs as the culture's self-interpreters, but the holding down, to emphasize the repressive nature of the enterprise, is becoming increasingly costly of late. The price one pays is the psychic energy necessary to repress any curiosity into Freud's own life. If one reads the evidence with an open mind, beginning with Schmidt's critique, which appeared almost contemporaneously with *Totem and Taboo,* and going right up to the disappearance of the Freud/Minna correspondence in early 1989, a different pattern begins to emerge. As Freud himself said to Jung, "I could tell you more, but I cannot

[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Vitz, p. 202.

risk my authority." The authority of the Freudian system can be maintained only by averting the eyes from the Freudian biography. This is so because the system, as Schmidt proved by showing that it had nothing to do with the anthropology of Australian primitives as Freud claimed, is based on Freud's biography. Freud's system is his life and the conflicts that life embodied projected onto mankind as a whole. Freud, like Dimmesdale,

> had extended his egotism over the whole expanse of nature, until the firmament itself should appear no more than a fitting page for his soul's history and fate.[82]

Guilty conscience culminating in projection was the common denominator that both Freud and Dimmesdale shared. So the transvaluation of all values continues apace, and, *The Sins of the Fathers* to the contrary, we find not that Hawthorne is a Freudian but that Freud is a Hawthornean. He is absorbed back into the tradition of moral realism he attempted to subvert. Instead of Hawthorne manifesting the Oedipus Complex in his writings, Freud, it turns out, manifests the Dimmesdale Syndrome in his. He climbs onto the scaffold; he confesses his moral faults, but cowardice confounds remorse, and he ends up disguising his faults in the very act of confessing them. When Dimmesdale looks up from the darkened scaffold, he, not surprisingly, "beheld there the appearance of an immense letter—the letter 'A'—marked out in lines of dull red light."[83] The meteor was there all right, "but with no such shape as his guilty imagination gave it; or, at least, with so little definiteness, that another's guilt might have seen another symbol in it."[84] The Oedipus Complex was no more a function of primitive man or the origins of civilization than the flaming "A" above Dimmesdale's head was a function of the solar system. Both were the creations of the eye that beheld them; both were projections. Both had only that existence which the guilty imagination gave them. Much of what Freud claims to be true of the mind in general is upon closer examination true of the guilty conscience in particular. Freud is a master at arguing from the particular to the general. Metonymy is his metier. The mind in general is not condemned to project its concerns on the outside world, but the guilty conscience is. Freud has a way of mistaking the part for the whole in a way that speaks volumes about his own personal needs.

The autobiographical nature of Freud's early writings has been public knowledge for some time now. In 1946 Siegfried Bernfeld published a paper in *The American Imago* that demonstrated conclusively that Freud's purported case history in his paper of 1898, "Screen Memories", was in fact disguised

[82] Hawthorne, p. 150.
[83] Ibid., p. 151.
[84] Ibid.

autobiography.[85] "The subject of this observation", Freud tells us, "is a man of university education, aged thirty-eight. Though his own profession lies in a very different field, he has taken an interest in psychological questions ever since I was able to relieve him of a slight phobia by means of psychoanalysis."[86] In a note now appended to the first sentence, the editors of the *Standard Edition* of Freud's works now inform us that "there can be no doubt that what follows is autobiographical material." In discussing the fact that the man in question is thirty-eight while Freud was forty-three at the time, Bernfeld explains bluntly that "here Freud resorts to outright lies. . . ."[87] At another point, Bernfeld says that "the man of 38 is no other than Freud himself, slightly disguised. . . . This case history contains the first information about an important period of Freud's life—otherwise completely unknown."[88]

The period in question lasted from 1896 to 1900. It is universally acknowledged by Freud scholars as the pivotal period in his intellectual life. During this period he abandoned what came to be known subsequently as the seduction theory, according to which he claimed to be able to trace the aetiology of all neurosis to sexual trauma, and adopted in its stead the Oedipus Complex, which was to become, in the words of one of his supporters, "the locomotive which has drawn Freud's triumphal car all around the globe".[89] Disguised autobiography was, in fact, Freud's genre for virtually all the writings of his classical period, from "Screen Memories" through *The Interpretation of Dreams* up to and including *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life.* This continued until he became famous and the details of his life become generally known, at which point the need for disguise overrode other considerations and Freud began to produce books of the kind that *Totem and Taboo* typifies. Bernfeld says as much in his account of "Screen Memories".

> In his *Interpretation of Dreams,* which appeared one year after the paper on "Screen Memories" was published, Freud started to reveal many details about himself and his past. And he continued to do so in later publications. From then on, the method of slight disguise used on Mr. Y would not have worked any more.[90]

That Freud was embarrassed by his early attempts at disguised autobiography is shown in that when he assembled his shorter writings on psychother-

[85] Siegfried Bernfeld, "An Unknown Autobiographical Fragment of Freud", *American Imago* 4 (1946), pp. 3–19.

[86] Freud, "Screen Memories", *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works* (Hereinafter *SE*), vol. 3, p. 309.

[87] Bernfeld, p. 16.

[88] Ibid., p. 3.

[89] Schmidt, pp. 112–13.

[90] Bernfeld, p. 17.

apy into one volume in 1906, "Screen Memories" was conspicuous by its absence. Given Freud's penchant for mystification and disguise, this is not surprising, for "Screen Memories", in addition to providing us with biographical information, provides us as well with the key as to how that information gets transmuted into the Freudian theory. "Screen Memories" is the Rosetta Stone for the Freud corpus in general. Since Freud was fond of seeing himself as an archaeologist of the mind, the comparison is not inapt.

The bulk of "Screen Memories" concerns an attempt to find the significance of the following memory:

> I see a rectangular, rather steeply sloping piece of meadow-land, green and thickly grown; in the green there are a great number of yellow flowers— evidently common dandelions. At the top end of the meadow there is a cottage and in front of the cottage door two women are standing chatting busily, a peasant-woman with a handkerchief on her head and a children's nurse. Three children are playing in the grass. One of them is myself (between the age of two and three); the two others are my boy cousin, who is a year older than me, and his sister, who is almost exactly the same age as I am. We are picking the yellow flowers and each of us is holding a bunch of flowers we have already picked. The little girl has the best bunch; and, as though by mutual agreement, we—the two boys—fall on her and snatch away her flowers. She runs up the meadow in tears and as a consolation the peasant-woman gives her a big piece of black bread. Hardly have we seen this than we throw the flowers away, hurry to the cottage and ask to be given some bread too. And we are in fact given some; the peasant woman cuts the loaf with a long knife. In my memory the bread tastes quite delicious—and at that point the scene breaks off.[91]

Now, according to Freud, the importance of a "screen memory" lies not so much in its relation to the content of the memory "but to the relation existing between that content and some other, which has been suppressed."[92] In a passage extremely reminiscent of Hawthorne's description of why Dimmesdale ascended the scaffold in the middle of the night, Freud describes the ambivalence with which such memories are fraught:

> One of these forces takes the importance of the experience as a motive for seeking to remember it, while the other—a resistance—tries to prevent any such preference from being shown. These two opposing forces do not cancel each other out, nor does one of them (whether with or without loss

[91] Freud, *SE*, vol. 3, p. 311.
[92] Ibid., p. 320.

> to itself) overpower the other. Instead, a compromise is brought about, somewhat on the analogy of the resultant in the parallelogram of forces. And the compromise is this. . . . What is recorded is another psychical element closely associated with the objectionable one.[93]

So to get to the heart of the matter, Freud first explicates the symbolism involved: the childhood scene provides a "screen" or disguise for some suppressed wish: "I see", the thirty-eight-year-old patient tells Freud, "that by producing a phantasy like this I was providing, as it were, a fulfillment of the two suppressed wishes—for deflowering a girl and for material comfort."[94] But since there is no thirty-eight-year-old patient, what we have here is Freud talking about himself and his own suppressed wishes.

Vitz acknowledges the autobiographical nature of "Screen Memories" in his study but still finds it puzzling. "What is odd", he writes

> is that Freud gave no really clear trauma or decisive event as hiding behind the screen. The theme of "deflowering" the little girl by stealing her flowers and the knife as a symbol of castration anxiety were mentioned, but there was no obvious trauma for the young Sigmund.[95]

As a result, Vitz concludes that the memory screened was the loss of Freud's nanny, an old Czech woman who raised Sigmund until he was about three and who represented the Catholic Church to Freud for the rest of his life. (Vitz traces Freud's ambivalence to the Church to his attitude toward this nurturing mother substitute who suddenly and painfully disappeared from his life. He also speculates that the nurse was a seductress and perhaps had him secretly baptized at one of the Catholic churches in Freiburg, the Moravian town where he was born and spent the first years of his life.)

> I propose, then, that Freud's screen memory covered or screened two things: the loss of his nanny, and a seduction (perhaps at a later time) to masturbate by a party unknown.[96]

Vitz is right in emphasizing the significance of both the loss of Freud's nanny and the possibility that he was seduced as a child. (In the most recent edition of his letters to Fliess, Freud hints that the seducer may have been his father.) However, his interpretation misses an important point: these screen memories are screens not for events that happened before the memory but for wishes that existed at the time the memory was remembered. No matter what the term came to mean later, in this paper Freud was referring to a situation

[93] Ibid., p. 307.
[94] Ibid., p. 318.
[95] Vitz, p. 134.
[96] Ibid., p. 135.

"where a childhood memory was accounted for by later experiences". The editors of the *Standard Edition* note the same thing:

> It is a curious thing that the type of screen memory mainly considered in the present paper—one in which an early memory is used as a screen for a later event—almost disappears from later literature. What has since come to be regarded as the regular type—one in which an early event is screened by a later memory—is only barely alluded to here, though it was already the one almost exclusively dealt with by Freud only two years later, in . . . *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. . . .[97]

Vitz, in other words, is looking for the wrong thing behind the screen. Instead of covering up a past trauma, the screen covers present—i.e., as of 1898—desire. The suppressed wishes all have to do with earnestly held unfulfilled desires in the present—not with painful incidents from the past, as Vitz implies. The screen memories in question deal not so much with something that was done to Freud in the past as something that he was planning to do in the present.

This corresponds in fact to the way the memory was first aroused. It came to our patient, i.e., to Freud himself, when he visited his native village as a teenager after a long absence. During the stay, the patient, which is to say, Freud himself, tells us "I must admit that there was something else which excited me powerfully."[98] The young Freud fell in love with a fifteen-year-old girl by the name of Gisela Fluss, while staying with the Fluss family on his visit. Gisela wore a yellow dress at the time, which called up the yellow color of the dandelions in the meadow he remembered as a child. The slice of bread and the flowers point to "the influence of the two most powerful forces—hunger and love".[99] Taking the flowers symbolized the young Freud's desire to deflower the then fifteen-year-old Gisela, and the slice of bread "corresponded to your phantasy of the comfortable life you would have led if you had stayed home and married the girl"[100] as opposed to the financial hardships that forced the Freud family to leave the idyllic Freiburg and move to the Jewish ghetto in Vienna.

"I see", says the grateful patient, which is to say, Freud himself,

> that by producing a phantasy like this I was providing, as it were, a fulfillment of the two suppressed wishes—for deflowering a girl and material comfort.[101]

[97] Freud, *SE*, III, p. 302.
[98] Ibid., p. 313.
[99] Ibid., p. 316.
[100] Ibid., p. 315.
[101] Ibid., p. 318.

But there is of course in the writing of this article, which is itself a kind of remembering, a further series of displacements involved, those that proceed from the time the article is written, a fact to which Freud himself draws attention at the end of the article.

> It may indeed be questioned whether we have any memories at all from our childhood: memories relating to our childhood may be all that we possess. Our childhood memories show us our earliest years not as they were but as they appeared at the later periods when the memories were aroused. In these periods of arousal, the childhood memories did not, as people are accustomed to say, emerge; they were formed at that time. And a number of motives, with no concern for historical accuracy, had a part in forming them, as well as the selection of the memories themselves.[102]

This passage is instructive for a number of reasons. First of all, it changes the motivating force behind the memory from what happened to Freud to what Freud was intending to do. Present desire and not past trauma becomes the chief motivating force. It changes Freud from victim, as he is portrayed in Vitz' book, to perpetrator. It reasserts the primacy of the moral—i.e., the realm of conscious activity—in Freud's life and theories. This is not to deny the reality of childhood trauma; it simply asserts that that trauma is always represented in the light of present desire, in the light of the urgency of certain suppressed but deeply desired unfulfilled wishes.

From what we know of Freud's life in the late 1890s we can see how the memory recalled in "Screen Memories" applied to his life at the time. Freud was, first of all, "struggling for [his] daily bread", to cite his own disguised description of himself in "Screen Memories". His practice had dwindled to next to nothing. He had been ostracized by the Vienna medical community. He had given up on the seduction theory, which was supposed to have made him rich and famous. In addition his father had just died, an event that he curiously described as the most difficult thing that can happen to a man. The delicious slice of bread given to him by the woman with the kerchief on her head corresponded to the then forty-three-year-old Freud's financial anxieties. The bread symbolized his desire for better material prospects.

But that is only half the story, as Freud tells us the memory symbolized two suppressed wishes: the bread stood for material comfort, but the flowers symbolized his ardent desire for "deflowering a girl". As Freud himself tells us, "It is precisely the coarsely sensual elements in the phantasy which explain why it does not develop into a conscious phantasy but must be content to find its way allusively and under a flowery disguise into a childhood scene."[103]

[102] Ibid., p. 322.

Just as the slice of bread corresponded to the death in 1896 of Freud's father, because his father was the reason Sigmund had to move away from Freiburg and material (i.e., maternal) comfort, so another recent event corresponds to the flower pole of the dream. In 1896—the same year that Freud's father died—his sister-in-law Minna Bernays moved in with the Freuds. "I always thought it very strange", wrote one of the Freud children, "Auntie Minna's bedroom was right next to theirs. She had to pass right through to get to her room. And at night, in her bedclothes, she would have to enter their room to get to the bathroom."[104] The death of the father and the arrival of the passionately desired sister-in-law both occurred in 1896, the year that marked the beginning of Freud's crisis, the end of which was marked by the creation of the Oedipus Complex in *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900. The death of the father and the incestuous desire for the sister-in-law correspond in an uncanny way with the Oedipus Complex itself as well as fulfillment of the two deeply desired but suppressed wishes that lay at the center of "Screen Memories", where "a childhood memory was accounted for by later experiences."[105] In "Screen Memories" Freud affirms his participation in the Dimmesdale Syndrome. He ascends the scaffold and simultaneously reveals and disguises his guilty desires. "He who has eyes to see and ears to hear", Freud wrote,

> becomes convinced that mortals can keep no secret. If their lips are silent, they gossip with their fingertips; betrayal forces its way through every pore.[106]

Jung, Faust, and the Gnostic Tradition

The break with Freud precipitated a major crisis in Jung's life, one that would precipitate what he would call "a state of disorientation" that would last for years. Looked at from a theoretical point of view, the break had to do with sex and religion. The opposing points of view are recorded in the two books that mark the break: *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (1912) by Jung (*Psychology of the Unconscious* in English) and Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (1913). In the first book, Jung argued that libido was more than just the sex drive. In the latter, Freud argued that religion and morality and social organization were reducible to guilt feelings that resulted from the slaying of the primal father. "Oppressed by their guilt," writes Gay, "the sons established the 'fundamental

[104] Linda Donn, *Freud and Jung: Years of Friendship, Years of Loss* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), p. 12.

[105] Freud, *SE*, vol. 3, p. 320.

[106] Gay, *Freud*, p. 254.

taboos of totemism, which had to correspond precisely with the two repressed wishes of the Oedipus Complex'—the killing of the father and the conquest of the mother. In becoming guilty, and acknowledging their guilt, they created civilizations."[107] Gay then goes on to give a Freudian interpretation to the publication of Freud's book: "The papers making up *Totem and Taboo* were weapons in Freud's competition with Jung. Freud was displaying in his own struggles an aspect of the oedipal wars often scanted—the father's efforts to best the son."[108] The paper that became the last chapter of *Totem and Taboo* "was sweet revenge on the crown prince who had proved so brutal to him and so treacherous to psychoanalysis".[109] It "would serve", in Freud's words, "to cut off cleanly everything that is Aryan-religious",[110] meaning anything having to do with Jung. In a letter written in 1915 to James Putnam, Freud described Jung as "someone who was sympathetic to me so long as he went along blindly and quietly as I did. Then came his religious ethical crisis with its high morality, rebirth, and Bergson, together with lies, brutality and anti-Semitic presumptions against me."[111]

One is at a loss to understand what Freud meant by brutality and anti-Semitism. However, it is clear from documents on both sides that the break between Freud and Jung did have to do with a "religious ethical crisis". In fact, *Totem and Taboo* retells the story in an interesting way. Morality, according to Freud, came about as a result of the guilt the primal horde felt at slaying the father. "Society was now based on complicity in the common crime; religion was based on the sense of guilt and the remorse attaching to it; while morality was based partly on the exigencies of this society and partly on the penance demanded by the sense of guilt."[112]

Upon reflection, Freud's ruminations correspond in an uncanny way to his break with Jung. In the split between Jung and Freud, which both men saw as an oedipal drama, morality doesn't arise as a result of guilt over the slaying of the father. The father—in this case Freud—is divested of his authority when he refuses to acknowledge the transcendent nature of morality. The idea of God, according to Freud, is an illusion, a projection of the guilty conscience in its attempt to deal with the guilt that arose from killing the primal father. "The psychoanalysis of individual human beings", Freud writes in *Totem and Taboo,*

[107] Ibid., p. 330.
[108] Ibid., p. 326.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Wehr, p. 160.
[112] Freud, *Totem and Taboo,* p. 146.

> teaches us with quite special insistence that the god of each of them is formed in the likeness of his father, that his personal relation to God depends on his relation to his father in the flesh and oscillates and changes along with that relation and that at bottom God is nothing other than an exalted father.[113]

In Freud's view morality arose from guilt over the slaying of the father. In the break between Freud and Jung, the father was overthrown because of his denial of the transcendent nature of both morality and religion. A number of commentators have discussed Freud's claim that "God is nothing other than an exalted father" in the light of Freud's relation to a father he considered weak and "a pervert".[114] God correspondingly becomes weak and therefore not worthy of either trust or honor. This, in effect, is a substantiation of the importance of morality in the maintaining of authority. Just as Freud lost respect for his father because of that man's supposed moral weakness and projected that loss of respect onto the exalted father, God, so he too lost his authority by revealing but refusing to admit his moral weakness to Jung. Psychoanalysis as the oedipal alternative to confession lost its authority when the father of psychoanalysis refused to confess his own sins. "But I cannot risk my authority", said Freud. "At that moment, he lost it altogether", was the response from Jung, the disillusioned son and heir apparent.

At about the time of the break, Jung had a dream about "an elderly man in the uniform of an Imperial Austrian customs official", which took place "in a mountainous region on the Swiss-Austrian border".[115] In analyzing the dream, Jung

> thought of the border between consciousness and the unconscious on the one hand, and between Freud's views and mine on the other. The extremely rigorous customs examination at the border seemed to me an allusion to analysis. At a border suitcases are opened and examined for contraband. In the course of the examination, unconscious assumptions are discovered. As for the old customs official, his work had obviously brought him so little that was pleasurable and satisfactory that he took a sour view of the world. I could not refuse to see the analogy with Freud.[116]

Freud, according to Jung, lost his authority because his neurosis prevented him from seeing that sexuality led beyond itself to the spiritual, which Jung would later term the collective unconscious. Freud's neurosis, however, was bound up with guilt and his connection with his sister-in-law, as Jung made clear in his recounting of the break.

[113] Ibid., p. 147.
[114] Masson, p. 222.
[115] Jung, p. 163.
[116] Ibid.

> I now realized why Freud's personal psychology was of such burning interest to me. I was eager to know the truth about his "reasonable solution", and I was prepared to sacrifice a great deal in order to obtain the answer. Now I felt that I was on the track of it. Freud himself had a neurosis, no doubt diagnosable and one with highly troublesome symptoms, as I had discovered on our voyage to America. Of course he had taught me that everybody is somewhat neurotic, and that we must practice tolerance. But I was not at all inclined to content myself with that; rather, I wanted to know how one could escape having a neurosis. Apparently neither Freud nor his disciples could understand what it meant for the theory and practice of psychoanalysis if not even the master could deal with his own neurosis. When, then, Freud announced his intention of identifying theory and method and making them into some kind of dogma, I could no longer collaborate with him; there was no choice for me but to withdraw.[117]

Jung knew that the publication of *Wandlungen* would destroy their friendship. However, he seems to hint that the connection is much more personal than previously suspected. "I knew in advance", Jung writes, "that its publication would cost me my friendship with Freud. For I planned to set down in it my own conception of incest. . . ." The immediate juxtaposition of loss of authority and the idea of incest is too obvious to overlook. Jung goes on to say

> To me incest signified a personal complication only in the rarest cases. Usually incest has a highly religious aspect, for which reason the incest theme plays a decisive part in almost all cosmogonies and in numerous myths. But Freud clung to the literal interpretation of it and could not grasp the spiritual significance of incest as a symbol.[118]

Why did Freud cling so tenaciously to the idea that everyone had a desire to commit incest? This was the heart of his neurosis, according to Jung, specifically as it related to the dream he refused to explicate on their trans-Atlantic voyage. By refusing to explain the dream, Freud, the father confessor, lost his authority in Jung's eyes. Religion had become the crucial issue. If Jung was right about the transcendent character of religion, then the Oedipus Complex referred to nothing more than Freud's own passionately held desires. If Freud was wrong about religion, then the Oedipus Complex could only be seen as evidence against him, which is precisely the conclusion Jung came to as a result of their trans-Atlantic voyage. In light of what Jung was finding out, the evidence was pointing insistently toward Freud. Freud refused to allow his own system to be applied to himself because of what that would in effect reveal about the system itself. Jung was smart enough to see that the Oedipus

Complex was rooted in Freud's own deepest wishes and that he clung to it because of the exculpation that it provided. The Oedipus Complex as recounted in *Totem and Taboo* is nothing more than an ingenious attempt on Freud's part to reassert the authority he lost because of his contact with Jung and religion. The father's theories about religion and morality turn out upon closer examination by the son to be nothing more than rationalizations for personal misbehavior. Jung saw the spiritual significance of this failing and in so doing lost faith in the Freudian system. Freud "clung to the literal interpretation" as a way of repressing the insight that his own grandiose theory, the oedipal explanation of the origin of religion, had no broader a base than his own personal behavior.

With the abandonment of the Freudian system, Jung was thrown back on himself. The shock of the break was in fact so great that he found himself regressing to his childhood, so literally in fact that he found himself reenacting things he had done as an eleven-year-old child. He went down to the lake shore and began gathering stones from which he began to build "cottages, a castle, a whole village".

> I went on with my building game after the noon meal every day, whenever the weather permitted. As soon as I was through eating, I began playing and continued to do so until the patients arrived; and if I was finished with my work early enough in the evening, I went back to building. In the course of this activity my thoughts clarified, and I was able to grasp the fantasies whose presence in myself I dimly felt.[119]

Given the insights that he had gained from his immersion in and subsequent repudiation of the Freudian system, Jung was in the position to make some serious discoveries in the realm of psychoanalysis. Given what he understood about Freud's neurotic repression of the transcendent aspects of sexuality and morality, he could have grounded the newly developing psychology firmly in a tradition that would link it up with philosophy and theology—with the whole human being, in other words. Jung, however, was not a moral *tabula rasa* any more than Freud was. He brought with him his own guilt and the psychological needs that it bespoke. In spite of its apparent candor, *Memories* says nothing about Jung's own sexual life, and in retrospect it seems that Jung was just as reticent on this matter as Freud was. Like Freud, Jung burned his letters too. In fact the Carotenuto book on Sabina Spielrein does not contain his response to what she wrote. His estate is just as careful as Freud's was to draw a veil of silence over his sexual life. But Jung's moral life left its imprint on his work just as indelibly as Freud's did on his. Jung gives

[119] Ibid., p. 174.

the impression that he abandoned just about everything during his period of crisis—his university position, his job at the hospital—and then gave himself over to the forces of "the unconscious" in a veritable orgy of mystical asceticism. However, this is not quite accurate. The one thing he did not abandon was his extramarital affairs. In one of his letters to Freud in 1910, Jung talks about his "polygamous components" in a way that shows he has no intention of relinquishing them. In apologizing for not writing sooner, he complains about being "plagued by complexes":

> this time it was not I who was duped by the devil but my wife, who lent an ear to the evil spirit and staged a number of jealous scenes, groundlessly. At first my objectivity got out of joint (rule 1 of psychoanalysis: principles of Freudian psychology apply to everyone except the analyser) but afterwards snapped back again, whereupon my wife also straightened herself out brilliantly. Analysis of one's spouse is one of the more difficult things unless mutual freedom is assured. The prerequisite for a good marriage, it seems to me, is the license to be unfaithful.[120]

Gerhard Wehr in his recent biography discusses the effect that Jung's "license to be unfaithful" had on the rest of his family and his work as well:

> Emma Jung, an extremely sensitive young wife and mother (some of her pregnancies fell during the time of the Spielrein affair), had a double burden to bear, especially with her knowledge of the tension that existed between Jung and Freud, which in loyalty to her husband she wished to help reduce. And just at this moment, when Sabina Spielrein had barely left the stage in Kuesnacht, a new arrival came on the scene, the 23-year-old Toni Wolff of Zurich (b. 1888), who became Jung's patient because of a severe depression after the sudden death of her father in 1909, and only two years later, of course, took part in the Weimar Congress of Psychoanalysts. But in the case of Toni Wolff it would certainly be a mistake to speak of a mere transference and countertransference in the analytical sense, or to proceed from the simple formula of *"cherchez la femme"*. Such a superficial view is precluded especially by the larger biographical context, although Jung did make it extremely difficult for his biographers to shed any light on this intimate relationship. He destroyed his letters to Toni Wolff, which were returned to him after her death in 1953, together with those she had written to him. On the other hand it is surely no coincidence that Emma Jung devoted a study to the anima- and animus-problem in men and women; certainly it was an opportunity for her to work out the difficulties in this regard which she faced in her own marriage.[121]

[120] McGuire, p. 289.
[121] Wehr, p. 95.

Jung's attempt to portray himself as the ascetic and mystic in *Memories* needs to be reevaluated in light of what we now know was also going on in his private life. The break with Freud coincided with the beginning of another affair with another patient. This affair would last for over forty years and would end only with Wolff's death in 1953. Beyond that, Wolff was also deeply involved in the type of psychic exploration that Jung's crisis period began. She was, to use a word that Jung appropriated from the Greek, his *hetaira,* a word that means both "other" and "prostitute". It was an expressive cord for both the psychic and sexual aspects of their relationship.

As Wehr and Bettleheim now concede, Jung's sexual entanglements were to have a decisive role to play in his intellectual development. Jung's subsequent theories could be plotted almost mathematically as the resultant of a parallelogram of forces not unlike those proposed by Freud and Hawthorne but which in Jung's case was made up of a combination of his "polygamous components" and his desire for spiritual experiences. Jung wanted to maintain his contact with the "unconscious", his synonym for the spirit world, and he wanted to maintain his right to extramarital affairs. His Gnosticism, with its arcane combination of the sexual and the spiritual, is only the logical outcome of the combining of those two desires. Unlike Freud, who in spite of pilfering the name for his key concept from Sophocles, considered himself *sui generis,* Jung was keenly aware of himself as a part of the Gnostic tradition and saw psychoanalysis, or analytic psychology, as he later termed it, as the incarnation of the shadow side of a tradition in the West that went back as far as Simon Magus, "the archetype of the heretic".[122] Gustav Richard Heyer, Jung's former pupil and analysand, likened his style to that of a medium, claiming that Jung had a "power of perception that could often be called mediumistic".[123]

However, the key figure in understanding the interaction between the psychic and the sexual in both Jung and Freud was the medieval magus-cum-scientist, Faust. More than one commentator has claimed that Freud made a pact with the devil. As anyone who knows his writings can testify, Freud was so impressed with Goethe's *Faust* that he cites it from the beginning to the end of his career in both his public and private writings, often building crucial passages around quotes from it. *Totem and Taboo*'s use of the quote *"Am Anfang war die Tat"* is just one example. Vitz covers the *Faust* material extensively in his recent book, citing parallels between Freud's life and Goethe's play. Faust for example drinks a magic/narcotic brew given to him by witches, which not only seals his pact with the devil but also gives him the power he needs to get what he wants. Shortly after drinking the magic potion, Faust

[122] Cf. Gilles Quispel, *Gnosis als Weltreligion* (Zurich: Origo Verlag, 1951), p. 52.
[123] Wehr, p. 8.

meets the virgin Margaret and eventually, with the help of Mephistopheles and another magic potion that unfortunately kills the girl's mother, succeeds in seducing her. Margaret eventually has a child by Faust whom she drowns.

In addition Vitz sees a connection between Freud's attraction to Faust and his use of cocaine. "Freud", he writes,

> took cocaine frequently, sometimes in heavy doses. It was an antidote to his frequent depressions, and provided increased physical strength and sexual potency. Like Faust, Freud was enamored of the idea of a drug-induced rejuvenation. Freud's initial involvement with cocaine thoroughly captured both his emotional and intellectual interests.[124]

According to research done by Swales, also cited by Vitz, Freud first took cocaine on *Walpurgisnacht,* the night of April 30, 1884, in liquid form, which Vitz claims was in clear imitation of the way Faust drank the magic potion in Goethe's play, which was also being performed in Vienna at the time. There is no direct evidence that Freud made a pact with the devil, but there is as well very little evidence from that period anyway, since Freud destroyed his papers and letters in 1885. As Swales points out, the model for Goethe's Mephistopheles was the great-grandfather of Emmanuel Merck, head of the drug company in Darmstadt from whom Freud ordered his bottle of liquid cocaine.

In a letter to Martha Bernays written on June 2, 1884, Freud referred to himself as "a big wild man who has cocaine in his body" and later to cocaine itself as "this magical substance". Vitz sees a connection between Freud's relation to his fiancée and Faust's relationship to Margaret:

> The Faust-Margaret relationship has certain important structural similarities to the Freud-Martha engagement period. The two adversaries with whom Freud had real conflicts over Martha were her very jealous mother, who was unenthusiastic about Sigmund, and Martha's brother Eli, who functioned as head of the house (the father having died several years earlier). Freud held the "heartless" mother responsible for Martha's leaving him and going to live near Hamburg. And of course Freud, who was so conscious of name similarities, must have been struck by phonemic parallels in the names of the two couples: Faust-Margaret and Freud-Martha.[125]

There are, however, parallels here of a different sort that Vitz omits. Faust, it should be remembered, did not go on to become an addict; he took his magic potion only once. Once taken, it conferred on him the power—with Mephistopheles' help of course—to get what he really wanted, which was a seduction. Faust is the intellectual who is sick of the intellect. As Mephistopheles

[124] Vitz, p. 110.
[125] Ibid.

tells him, playing on his deepest desires: *"Grau, teurer Freud, ist alle Theorie/Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum."* Like a middle-aged professor going through mid-life crisis, Faust gives a distinctly phallic interpretation to "life's gold tree". Faust wants to deflower a virgin, which, if we remember from Freud's autobiographical monograph "Screen Memories", was also a passionately held wish of Freud at the time. Taking "this magic substance" enables Faust to accomplish the seduction. It is a means to an end.

Interesting, then, in this regard is the fact that Freud stopped taking cocaine in the fall of 1896. He mentions this fact to Fliess in the same letter in which he announces his father's death and burial. Freud's father died during the night of October 23, 1896. "All of it", Freud writes describing the details of the death, "happened in my crucial period, and I am really quite down because of it.".[126] Then, "incidentally", he adds a line later, "the cocaine brush has been completely put aside."[127] In his preface to that book's second edition, Freud describes *The Interpretation of Dreams,* in which he formulates the Oedipus theory for the first time, as "a portion of my own self-analysis, my reaction to my father's death, that is to say, to the most important event, the most poignant loss, of a man's life."[128]

The death of Freud's father, however, was, as we have already shown, not the only significant event in Freud's life in the year 1896. During that year, his sister-in-law Minna also came to live permanently with the family. On a daily basis Freud was now reminded of the at times passionate attraction toward his sister-in-law—indeed, given the living arrangements as described by Freud's children, on a daily and intimate (especially given Victorian standards of modesty) basis. During this time, he like Faust had become disillusioned with his own intellectual theories and at the same time cherished, as we know from "Screen Memories", a disguised and, therefore, illicit desire to achieve material success *and* deflower a virgin. Thus, it seems that the more likely parallel to the Faust-Margaret relationship is the doubly illicit Freud-Minna relationship. Consummating that deeply held desire would involve Freud in both adultery and incest, the latter clearly being the more serious sin.

Aquinas, who discusses incest as one of the parts of lust, finds it "unbecoming to venereal union" primarily "because man naturally owes a certain respect to his parents and therefore to his older blood relations, who are descended in near degree from the same parents."[129] Incest would then be a diabolical inversion of the respect due to a father. Committing incest would be a way of wreaking revenge on a father for some wrong—real or imaginary—that he

[126] Masson, p. 201.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Freud, *SE,* vol. 4, xxvi. Cf. Masson, p. 201.

[129] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* II–II, q. 154, art. 9.

had done. It would be a way of destroying the authority of the father and, by extension, following the logic of *Totem and Taboo,* of destroying the authority of God, the "exalted father". The Oedipus Complex, which came into being during the period of Freud's life from 1896 to 1899, corresponds in an uncanny way with just these aspects of Freud's life.

Vitz, in concluding his discussion of Freud's connection to Faust and cocaine, cites the thesis of E. M. Thornton:

> Thornton's major claim is that Freud suffered from cocaine poisoning and from powerful drug-induced psychological states. In particular she claims that Freud's psychological theory was simply the natural consequence of excessive cocaine usage. It is well known that cocaine causes hallucinations, vivid dreams, and extensive fantasies in frequent users. Cocaine use can also cause sexual preoccupation to become obsessive. Other reliable psychological effects from taking too much cocaine are periods of elation, optimism and an almost messianic belief in having discovered the great secrets of life; these intervals are followed by periods of deep depression often accompanied by paranoia and murderous impulses toward friends.[130]

Freud felt clearly that in the Oedipus Complex he had discovered the great secret of life. The end of cocaine usage, the death of his father, the arrival of his sister-in-law, his passionately held desire to achieve material success and deflower a virgin, and the emergence of the Oedipus Complex out of the ruins of the seduction theory all converge on one three-year period in Freud's life. Once he passed through these shoals he would be in the clear for the rest of his life. However Freud, like Faust, in order to seize what he desired, would have to make use, as we shall see, of something other than a chemical substance, no matter how magic its properties.

As he makes clear in his autobiography, Jung was no stranger to the occult either. Other sources, if anything, not only confirm Jung's point but portray it in a more sinister light. Jung himself never really identified the "unconscious" with demons, although he certainly left the door open to such an interpretation. Through the lens of Sabina Spielrein, however, the image become clearer. "My Friend", she writes referring to Jung, "said . . . that I will write an excellent exam because at present I am in league with the devil."[131] "My friend and I", she continues, "had the tenderest 'poetry' last Wednesday."[132] "Poetry" is Spielrein's code word for sexual intercourse.

As a child Jung had two visions that convinced him of the reality of a world beyond that of everyday experience: one of a large penis in a room

[130] Vitz, p. 113.
[131] Carotenuto, p. 37.
[132] Ibid.

under ground, the other of a large turd falling on the Cathedral at Basel. These dreams had, he claimed, convinced him that "God alone was real—an annihilating fire and an indescribable grace."[133] The fact that he was remembering them as an old man forces us to consider the possibility that these dreams may have functioned as the early memories did for Freud in "Screen Memories", i.e., as disguises for passionately held present wishes. Both, but especially the latter, indicate a hostility toward Christianity and a connection between that hostility and sexuality. If nothing else the dreams indicate that the God Jung sought had little or nothing to do with Christianity, which he associated with his father's worn-out Protestant faith. His source of religious life was his mother, whom he described as having two personalities: "By day she was a loving mother, but at night she seemed uncanny."[134] His mother's family, the Preiswerks, had been involved in the occult, and his dissertation had been written on his cousin Helene Preiswerk's seances. Jung identified his father and Christianity with rationalism of the sort that was beginning to take its toll among Protestant clergy at the time. Thus when he broke with Freud and attempted to return to his roots, it is no coincidence that he would again become involved in the occult.

The breakthrough came on December 12, 1913. It involved "a voluntary confrontation with the unconscious as a scientific experiment". "Today", he added, "I might equally well say that it was an experiment which was being conducted on me."

> I was sitting at my desk once more, thinking over my fears. Then I let myself drop. Suddenly it was as though the ground literally gave way beneath my feet, and I plunged down into dark depths.[135]

The culmination of Jung's confrontation came with the arrival of his "guru", or spirit guide, a spirit by the name of Philemon, who "was a pagan and brought with him an Egypto-Hellenistic atmosphere with a Gnostic coloration".[136] Jung always leaves the reader with the possibility that Philemon is a creature of his imagination. Wehr takes this tack in trying to spruce up the obviously occult aspects of Jung's personality; however, a close reading of Jung's description leads one to believe that in dealing with Philemon he was trafficking in spirits. Philemon is certainly real enough. He was "an old man with the horns of a bull", whose picture Jung painted on the ceiling of his tower room at Bollingen.

> Psychologically, Philemon represented superior insight. He was a mysterious figure to me. At times he seemed to me quite real, as if he were a living

[133] Jung, p. 56.
[134] Wehr, p. 18.
[135] Jung, p. 179.
[136] Ibid., p. 182.

> personality. I went walking up and down the garden with him, and to me he was what the Indians call a guru. . . . I could have wished for nothing better than a real live guru, someone possessed of superior knowledge and ability, who would have disentangled for me the involuntary creations of my imagination. This task was undertaken by the figure of Philemon, whom in this respect I had willy-nilly to recognize as my psychagogue. And the fact was that he conveyed to me an illuminating idea.[137]

In addition to Philemon, Jung made the acquaintance of "yet another figure, whom I called Ka. . . . Ka's expression has something demonic about it—one might also say Mephistophelean", he wrote.[138] Throughout this crucial period following the break with Freud, Jung was getting messages from spirits that would prove to be determinative of his future writings. So one day in 1916 when Jung "had the strange feeling that the air was filled with ghostly entities", he received a series of messages, eventually published as *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos*", which began with spirits crying out in chorus, "We have come back from Jerusalem where we found not what we sought."[139]

"These conversations with the dead", he wrote in *Memories,*

> formed a kind of prelude to what I had to communicate to the world about the unconscious. . . . All my works, all my creative activity, have come from those initial fantasies and dreams which began in 1912, almost fifty years ago. Everything that I accomplished in later life was already contained in them, although at first only in the form of emotions and images.[140]

Jung, if anything, was more enamored of *Faust* than Freud. His attraction was just as visceral, but it was more intellectual than pharmacological. Quotations from *Faust* are a common feature of their letters both to each other and to others. In concluding his advice to Jung on the Spielrein affair, Freud cites the line from *Faust,* "In league with the devil and yet you fear fire?",[141] as if to say that romantic involvements with his patients were part of what Jung should consider the price of doing business. "Your grandfather said something like that", Freud half-jokingly added, referring to the Jung family legend that Jung's grandfather, the mason, was Goethe's illegitimate son.[142] The rumor has never been substantiated. The fact that Jung repeated it, often in the act of denying it, shows what a hold the notion of being one of Goethe's heirs had on him. It's not hard to understand why, because Faust, the magician and the

[137] Ibid., p. 183.
[138] Ibid., p. 185.
[139] Ibid., p. 191.
[140] Ibid., p. 192.
[141] McGuire, pp. 210–11.
[142] Ibid., p. 211n.

scientist, incorporates in one person the type of person the practitioner of Jungian psychology had to be.

Jung read *Faust* for the first time while still at the *Gymnasium* at the suggestion of his mother, or, as Jung puts it, at the suggestion of her "no. 2", or occult, personality. "You must read Goethe's *Faust* one of these days", he recounts his mother telling him in *Memories.*[143] The experience of reading Goethe's *magnum opus* remained with Jung for his entire life. His introduction to *Faust* through his mother, who represented the uncanny and spiritualistically adept Preiswerk family, corresponded to a simultaneous disillusionment with his father's Christianity. Not unlike Faust, Jung turns from a depleted and rationalistic version of the intellectual tradition represented by his father's books on Christian dogmatics:

> The weighty tome on dogmatics was nothing but fancy drivel: worse still, it was fraud or a specimen of uncommon stupidity whose sole aim was to obscure the truth. I was disillusioned and even indignant, and once more seized with pity for my father, who had fallen victim to this mumbo-jumbo.[144]

Faust, on the other hand, represented for Jung a simultaneous repudiation of reason, Christianity and the father who represented both in favor of the essentially feminine "unconscious", which is to say, anti-reason, sensuality, and the occult. Reliving as an old man his initial experience of reading *Faust,* Jung says,

> It poured into my soul like a miraculous balm. "Here at last", I thought, "is someone who takes the devil seriously and even concludes a blood pact with him – with the adversary who has the power to frustrate God's plan to make a perfect world."[145]

Later, while a student at the university, Jung claimed that his "no. 2" personality

> felt himself in secret accord with the Middle Ages, as personified by Faust, with the legacy of a past which had obviously stirred Goethe to the depths.[146]

"Faust", he goes on to say,

> meant more to me than my beloved Gospel according to St. John. There was something in Faust that worked directly on my feelings. John's Christ was strange to me, but still stranger was the Savior of the other gospels. Faust, on the other hand, was the living equivalent of No. 2, and I was convinced that he was the answer which Goethe had given to his times. This

[143] Jung, p. 60.
[144] Ibid., p. 59.
[145] Ibid., p. 87.
[146] Ibid.

> insight was not only comforting to me, it also gave me an increased feeling of inner security and a sense of belonging to the human community. I was no longer isolated and a mere curiosity, a sport of cruel nature. My godfather and authority was the great Goethe himself.[147]

"Faust", Jung says at another point,

> struck a chord in me and pierced me through in a way that I could not but regard as personal. Most of all, it awakened in me the problem of opposites, of good and evil, of mind and matter, of light and darkness. Faust, the inept purblind philosopher, encounters the dark side of his being, his sinister shadow, Mephistopheles, who in spite of his negating disposition represents the true spirit of life as against the arid scholar who hovers on the brink of suicide. My own inner contradictions appeared here in dramatized form; Goethe had written virtually a basic outline and pattern of my own conflicts and solutions. The dichotomy of Faust-Mephistopheles came together within myself into a single person, and I was that person. In other words, I was directly struck, and recognized that this was my fate. Hence, all the crises of the drama affected me personally. . . .[148]

Faust, then, occupies the crossroads in Jung's life where all its important themes converge. Faust is first of all the alchemist, and as Jung said, "I regard my work on alchemy as a sign of my inner relationship to Goethe."[149] Alchemy was for Jung the bridge that was to connect the religion of the Gnostics with the science of psychoanalysis. Jung was eventually to give some psychological meaning to all alchemy's symbols.

"The alchemists", Jung writes in his own *magnum opus, Mysterium Coniunctionis,*

> sought for that effect which would heal not only the disharmonies of the physical world but inner psychic conflict as well, the "affliction of the soul", and they called this effect the *lapis philosophorum.* In order to obtain it, they had to loosen the age-old attachment of the soul to the body and thus make conscious the conflict between the purely natural and the spiritual man.[150]

The dualism here is, as others have noticed about Jung's work in general, purely Gnostic. Jung's work is full of the peculiar activity of constantly discovering polarities and then trying to resolve them. In this his Gnosticism has a distinctly Hegelian tinge, which should come as no surprise since Hegel was part of the same tradition. The body is separated from the self and seen as

[147] Ibid.

[148] Ibid., p. 235.

[149] Ibid., p. 206.

[150] C. G. Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis: An Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy,* the *Collected Works of C. G. Jung,* vol. 14 (Princeton: Princeton

an impediment in the achievement of "wholeness" or integrity, a goal that Jung pursued compulsively throughout his entire life. Jung's obsessive search for integrity is, as we have already seen, a function of the moral life he was living. He was obsessed with polarities, "because", in the words of Sabina Spielrein, "his soul is constantly torn between two women." Because of the duplicitous nature of his sexual life, Jung was obsessed with images of wholeness. At various periods in his life he devoted himself to the study of mandalas and even UFOs simply because they were round and bespoke the reconciliation of opposites. Jung failed to see that the moral was in effect the unifier of opposites and spent his entire life in a futile effort, not unlike that of the alchemists of the Middle Ages, to find a nonmoral solution to what was essentially a moral problem.

In this he was not alone. In fact, as Quispel has pointed out, the entire countertradition of the West—i.e., Gnosticism—is involved in the same sort of quest. Like Simon Magus, its founder, and like Jung, its best-known exponent in the twentieth century, Gnosticism wants to have the benefits of Christianity without paying the moral price Christianity exacts. "Give me that same power", Simon Magus said to St. Peter, after offering the apostles money for the power of the Holy Spirit. In asking for power, he was only showing where his interests lay. Simon Magus is, as Quispel maintains, the archetypal heretic. He is also the archetypal Gnostic and like Jung wanted to have his cake and eat it too. He wanted spiritual experiences and he wanted an unencumbered sexual life. Tradition has it that Simon Magus travelled around with a prostitute by the name of Helen, who was supposed to be a reincarnation of Helen of Troy. It is Helen of Troy with whom Faust ends up in both Goethe's and Marlowe's play. "One thing, good servant," Marlowe's Dr. Faustus tells Mephistopheles,

> let me crave of thee,
> To glut the longing of my heart's desire—
> That I might have unto my paramour
> That heavenly Helen which I saw of late,
> Whose sweet embrace may extinguish clean
> Those thoughts that do dissuade me from my vow,
> And keep my oath I made to Lucifer.[151]

"Sweet Helen," Dr. Faustus says at another point, "make me immortal with a kiss."[152] It was a motto worthy of Jung and the entire Gnostic tradition, which sought salvation through art and without renunciation. Unlike Freud, who tried to destroy religion, Jung tried to subvert it and make it submissive—

[151] Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (New York: Gordian Press, 1966), p. 163.
[152] Ibid.

à la Simon Magus—to his own ends. "The Christian religion, he wrote in *Psychology of the Unconscious,* which marked his break with Freud,

> seems to have fulfilled its great biological purpose, in so far as we are able to judge. It has led human thought to independence, and has lost its significance, therefore, to a yet undetermined extent; in any case its dogmatic contents have become related to Mithraism. In consideration of the fact that this religion has rendered, nevertheless, inconceivable service to education, one cannot reject it "eo ipso" today. It seems to me that we might still make use in some way of its form of thought, and especially of its great wisdom of life, which for two thousand years has proven to be particularly efficacious. *The stumbling block is the unhappy combination of religion and morality* [Jung's emphasis]. That must be overcome.[153]

Psychotherapy, following in the steps of Gnosticism and the alchemy of the Middle Ages, was to be the final step in disconnecting religious experience from religious morality. The goal remains a constant for Jung. He states the project in *Psychology of the Unconscious,* one of his earliest works, and is still talking about bringing the project to fruition in *Mysterium Coniunctionis,* his last major work.

> Whereas the Christian belief is that man is freed from sin by the redemptory act of Christ, the alchemist was evidently of the opinion that the "restitution to the likeness of the original end, incorrupt nature", had still to be accomplished by art, and this can only mean that Christ's work of redemption was regarded as incomplete. In view of the wickedness which the "Prince of this World" undeterred goes on perpetrating as liberally as before, one cannot withhold all sympathy from such an opinion.[154]

C. S. Lewis in *The Abolition of Man* writes a passage that is virtually identical to Jung's in terms of the polarities it represents but diametrically opposed in terms of the values it puts on them:

> There is something which unites magic and applied science while separating both from the "wisdom" of earlier ages. For the wise men of old the cardinal problem had been how to conform the soul to reality, and the solution had been knowledge, self-discipline, and virtue. For magic and applied science alike the problem is how to subdue reality to the wishes of men: the solution is a technique; and both, in the practice of this technique, are ready to do things hitherto regarded as disgusting and impious—such as digging up and mutilating the dead.[155]

[153] C. G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 74.

[154] C. G. Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis,* p. 109.

[155] C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Collier Books, Macmillan Co., 1947), p. 88.

Salvation through art became the Gnostic and psychotherapeutic alternative to Christianity, which proposed salvation through the cross, which is to say, through participation in Christ's redeeming suffering. The attraction of Gnosticism is, as a result, obvious, especially to those who find comfort in the Christian milieu but who find Christian morality unappealing. In describing the doctrinal disarray among Catholic clergy in the latter decades of the twentieth century, Germain Grisez characterizes the new theology as essentially Gnostic and furthermore traceable to the sexual lives of its proponents. In people who are drawn to the spiritual life—and Jung was such a person—the presence of sexual sin leads the person who refuses to repent to adopt philosophies like Gnosticism that establish a dualistic denigration of the body in favor of a truly "spiritual" self that is unaffected by what the body does. "Those who are trying to live a spiritual life . . . ," Grisez writes,

> ordinarily have a strong sense of realities beyond immediate experience. When such persons accept pseudosex [i.e., when they rationalize sexual misbehavior] and try to integrate it into their lives, they are likely to experience a temptation of faith. God and heavenly things begin to seem less real. If this temptation is resisted, another arises: to develop the self-alienation involved in pseudosex [i.e., all sexual activity not within marriage and open to procreation] into an ideological dualism.[156]

If Freud succumbed to the first temptation, Jung succumbed to the second. Instead of repudiating religion, as Freud did, Jung strove to disconnect it from moral norms and thereby make it compatible with his own "polygamous components". The result was that Jung converted to Gnosticism, according to which, in Grisez' words,

> the real self is identified with one's spiritual self, and a new value is placed on individual subjectivity and religious experience. Community now becomes a source of experiences to be enjoyed by individuals rather than a reality to be faithfully maintained and built up by its members. The bodily self is extruded, alienated, regarded as a mere object and instrument.[157]

Jung as a result of the intellectual compromises he had to make in order to maintain an illicit sexual life placed himself in the unhappy position of forever recreating in himself the dualism that his art sought in vain to overcome. In this he recapitulated the futility of the alchemical tradition, which theorized *ad nauseam* about the philosopher's stone but never discovered it. Theirs is an admission that Jung himself was forced to make

[156] Germain Grisez, "Turmoil in the Church", *Homiletic and Pastoral Review,* November 1984, p. 13.

[157] Ibid., p. 14.

at the end of a long and, at least in terms of sheer volume, productive life:

> I observe myself in the stillness of Bollingen, with the experience of almost eight decades now, and I have to admit that I have found no plain answer to myself. I am in doubt about myself as ever, the more I try to say something definite. It is even as though through familiarity with oneself one became still more alienated.[158]

Wehr, Jung's biographer, comes to much the same conclusion. In describing the effect that Toni Wolff's unexpected death had on Jung in 1953, Wehr connects Wolff and Jung's life between her and his wife Emma to the intellectual products of his old age, claiming that "it is hardly possible to comprehend the writings that belong to this late work without reading with them the fate-runes of their author which lie hidden as it were between the lines of these books."[159] But even as sympathetic a reader as Wehr can also find only failure there. Jung, he writes,

> recalled the fate of some of the alchemists. It spoke well for their honesty that after years of continuing toil they were able to produce neither gold nor the highly praised philosopher's stone and openly admitted this. To these men, failures in the popular sense, Jung compared himself. He too had in the end been unable to solve the riddle of the *mysterium coniunctionis*.[160]

The Jungian system remained in the end a monument to the moral disintegration of its author. As St. Augustine wrote, speaking of God in particular but of absolutes in general, "Even those who set themselves up against you, do but copy you in a perverse way." So in Jung's life the idea of integrity was a vision that hovered in front of him but, like the horizon, receded before him. He never achieved it because he failed to see that integration came precisely through the living of a moral life, which is the only thing that integrates body and self into one person. If integration takes place through art, then it is only through the art of living well, which is morality. It was the tragedy of the alchemists to think that integration could be brought about by essentially technological means. It is an error that persisted with Jung but beyond his efforts into the twentieth century. The desire for wholeness but the neurotic repression of the only means to achieve it characterized Jung's work from beginning to end. There was no telling where it might pop up in his work. UFOs, for example, were "spontaneously appearing circular images of unity which represent a synthesis of the opposites within the psyche", to which Wehr adds solemnly, "they seemed to indicate an instance of psychic compen-

[158] Wehr, p. 416.
[159] Ibid., p. 407.
[160] Ibid.

sation. Indeed, such a compensation is called for by a world marked by powerful divisions in West and East...."[161] Compensation is even more called for when those divisions lie within one's self.

Why Freud Abandoned the Seduction Theory

According to the orthodox view of psychotherapy, Freud entered the cocoon of his own psychoanalysis shortly following the death of his father in 1896 and emerged a little over three years later with the discovery of the Oedipus Complex like a butterfly full blown. "In the summer of 1897," Jones tells us in his biography of Freud,

> the spell began to break, and Freud undertook his most heroic feat—a psychoanalysis of his own unconscious. It is hard for us nowadays to imagine how momentous this achievement was, that difficulty being the fate of most pioneering exploits. Yet the uniqueness of the feat remains. Once done it is done forever. For no one again can be the first to explore these depths.[162]

Jones goes on to describe Freud's efforts in distinctly Promethean terms. He was the first—from Solon to Montaigne, from Juvenal to Schopenhauer—to have attained the self-knowledge that the oracle at Delphi advocated but could not provide. In addition to all that, Jones tells us that Freud had been suffering "for 10 years or so ... from a very considerable psychoneurosis".[163] So in addition to being the psychologist who "knows himself", Freud was also the physician who healed himself—all in one Promethean effort during the summer of 1897. After a struggle worthy of the titans of ancient Greece, "there emerged", to give Jones' account, "the serene and benign Freud, henceforth free to pursue his work in imperturbable composure."[164] Freud's "self-analysis", according to Jones, "proceeded simultaneously with the composition of his *magnum opus, The Interpretation of Dreams,* in which he records many of the details."[165] It was an extraordinary three years, according to the official version of things; in addition to going where no man had dared go, Freud went there an emotional cripple and came back a healed man. To listen to Jones' account, it was a bit like discovering the North Pole and performing the first quadruple bypass operation on oneself, simultaneously.

[161] Ibid., p. 413.

[162] Jones, vol. 1: *The Formative Years and the Great Discoveries (1856–1900)* (New York: Basic Books, 1953), p. 319.

[163] Ibid., p. 304.

[164] Ibid., p. 320.

[165] Ibid., p. 321.

Others, however, have been less impressed. Writing at around the same time as Jones, without the benefit of his biographical knowledge of Freud's life, Jacques Maritain distinguishes between Freud's psychoanalytic method, where he "shows himself to be an investigator of genius", and Freud's philosophy, where "he seems almost like a man obsessed."[166] Maritain sees in Freud "an admirable penetrating psychologist, whose ideas, inspired by his astonishing instinct for discovery, are spoiled by a radical empiricism and an erroneous metaphysics that is unaware of itself."[167] Freud's main achievement, "whose importance in justice cannot be denied", is his discovery "that the cure of a neurosis is brought about precisely by the translation of the unconscious to the conscious".[168] The trauma that has been internalized in terms of an unconscious habit only accessible through certain disguised memories or dreams is "re-presented" through analysis in precisely the opposite way from how a musician learns to play his instrument. There a memory becomes a habit: "The pianist, the stenographer and the fencer are made by their automatisms. They are lost as soon as they want to analyze them."[169] In analysis, however, the opposite happens; a habit becomes a memory: "Cure by analysis consists essentially in dissolving morbid habits by reducing them to memory of the events that gave them birth."[170] By placing his emphasis where he does, however, Maritain gives a distinctly "un-Freudian" interpretation to the Freudian corpus. In fact, and in this he claims that Freud would agree with him, credit for this discovery does not belong completely to Freud. "As Freud himself maintained . . . , the credit for bringing to light the fundamental therapeutic principle of analysis, namely, the disintegration of habit by recollection, belongs to Breuer."[171] Maritain's study is basically analytical and not biographical or historical. However, looked at from the point of view of Freud's own development, virtually everything that Maritain finds praiseworthy in Freud was more or less repudiated by Freud himself. The rise of Freudian philosophy, which coincided with the creation of the Oedipus Complex and the emergence of the "serene" and "unperturbed" Freud of Jones' reading, coincided with the demise of Freud the clinician. It is not, as Maritain complains, that Freud was too empirical. After the publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams,* Freud the thinker and writer wasn't empirical at all. Each of his subsequent works suffers from the desire to lay reality on the

[166] Jacques Maritain, "Freudianism and Psychoanalysis", in *Scholasticism and Politics* (New York: Macmillan, n. d.), p. 145.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Ibid., p. 147.

[169] Ibid., p. 153.

[170] Ibid.

[171] Ibid., p. 154.

procrustian bed of the Oedipus theory. After 1900 everywhere Freud looked he saw Oedipus.

In a recent study, Marianne Kruell takes a view similar to Maritain's. Although on the surface the two studies have little in common, both agree that the earlier Freud was the better Freud. Maritain's study is not historical, but Kruell's is. In fact, like many of the later studies of Freud, Kruell became convinced that there was a "close connection" between Freud's theories and his "personal conflicts". Kruell feels that the renunciation of the seduction theory—what the orthodox Freudians feel was his "great achievement", which in turn paved the way for the discovery of the Oedipus Complex and therefore of psychoanalysis—was in fact a wrong turn. "In my view, Freud had developed a true psychoanalytical theory with his seduction theory—all he needed to do was rid it of its extreme fixation on *sexual* seduction."[172] In formulating the Oedipus Complex, Freud, "far from making an advance, took a step backward toward a mechanistic, biologistic model of human behavior".[173] Instead of being the key that unlocked the secret of human behavior to Freud, the Oedipus Complex "forced [Freud] to ignore many important connections that the seduction theory would have shown up".[174]

In addition, she contends that this wrong turn is traceable to factors stemming from his personal life: "Freud's entire scientific reorientation, whose outcome was psychoanalysis, was connected with his father."[175] "Freud himself", she continues, "preferred to leave his readers completely in the dark about these ties. He liked to keep his emotional and personal life secret, and on several occasions destroyed private notes and letters so as to keep them from posterity."[176]

According to Kruell's thesis, Freud had been seduced by his father as a child. The seduction had been suppressed but resurfaced as neurosis. With the death of his father and his subsequent self-analysis, which took place one year later, Freud was confronted with his father's misdeeds but unaccountably was unable to follow through in exposing them. Kruell cites a dream that Freud recounted to Fliess in which he was asked to "close the eyes" and interprets this as meaning that Freud is being admonished by his father not to reveal his sexual sins. Since Freud wanted to be the model son, he acquiesced to his father's wishes and suppressed the seduction theory in favor of the Oedipus Complex. In the interest of filial piety, Freud turned his theory inside out. Now, instead of parents being guilty of seduction, it was the children who were to blame. The Oedipus theory was an "ideal" solution, i.e., a compro-

[172] Kruell, p. 69.
[173] Ibid., p. 70.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid., p. 4.
[176] Ibid.

mise that kept everyone happy, including the conflicting voices and loyalties within Freud himself.

> The replacement of the seduction with the Oedipus theory thus enabled Freud to examine his own childhood without having to blame his parents for his neurosis. According to the new theory, that neurosis was caused by his own forbidden desires. Nor did he have to blame himself for these desires, for they were universal.
>
> The Oedipus theory exonerated Freud in more than one respect. It was a "creative solution"... by which he was able to reconcile the conflicting missions his father had given him: on the one hand to "close his eyes" to his father's transgression, and on the other hand nevertheless to solve the great enigma of [his] life. The Oedipus theory enabled him to do just that.[177]

Kruell's thesis is plausible in everything but motivation. Freud was hardly a model of piety, certainly not with regard to his father, whom he described as disappointing in *The Interpretation of Dreams* and as a "pervert" in one of his letters to Fliess. Freud's family life was so unusual, so fraught with sexual anomaly, that it seems unlikely to inspire any sort of loyalty. In fact the combination of seduction and betrayal that characterize Sigmund's early life seems almost determined to generate the *ressentiment* that characterized his later theories. Both Vitz and Kruell claim that the young Sigmund was eroticized as a young child by his Roman Catholic nanny. In addition to that, there was the sexually anomalous situation existing between Freud's elder brother Philipp and his mother Amalie, an attractive woman of about the same age. Freud recounts memories of his brother and mother that lead both Kruell and Vitz to believe that Freud may have caught them engaging in sexual intercourse. Beyond that, both Kruell and Vitz theorize that the disappearance of Sigmund's beloved nanny may have been related to the same cause. She caught them in a compromising situation, which led Philipp to frame her for a charge of theft—she spent ten months in prison—as a way of getting rid of her and protecting their secret. This would also explain the sudden removal of Philipp to England and the Freud family to Vienna, a move that Sigmund mourned for the rest of his life. The incident with Philipp and Amalie, his attractive young stepmother, creates an interesting context for Freud's subsequent interpretation of *Hamlet,* who "had meditated the same deed against his father because of passion for his mother". According to Kruell, "this situation—a son dwelling with impotent rage on the ruthlessness of his mother and his uncle—had parallels in Freud's own family childhood memories. . . ."[178]

Like Hamlet, Freud too had been given a task by his father that was giving

[177] Ibid., p. 68.
[178] Ibid., p. 63.

him fits of hesitation. Just as Hamlet couldn't proceed with the killing of Laertes, so Freud couldn't proceed with the symbolic killing of his father that the seduction theory entailed. It is at this point however that Kruell's thesis begins to lose its plausibility and her own ideological presuppositions begin to take over. There is no evidence that Freud ever thought of himself as a model of filial piety. Beyond that, Kruell's feminism gives the father a sinister and unwarrantedly numinous quality. It is true that "the premises of his Oedipus theory forced [Freud] to ignore many important connections that the seduction theory would have shown up"; however, the connections have more to do with Freud himself than with his relationship to his father, a fact that Kruell both sees and does not see, as in the following passage:

> It can be shown that many of his often violent reactions to criticism by his followers (Adler, Stekel, Jung, Tausk) occurred whenever he was asked, directly or indirectly, to be frank about himself, to interpret his own neurotic symptoms. Freud could not allow this to happen for to do so he would have had to break Jacob's taboo.[179]

We can readily acknowledge Freud's reticence on its own grounds here without any reference to his father. It is more plausible to assume that, rather than wishing to hide his father's sins, Freud was more interested in hiding his own. Freud, as we have seen in our discussion of his relation with Jung, was afflicted with a strange ambivalence about his personal life. He wanted to confess, which implies that he wanted his sins known, and yet he wanted his confessions to remain disguised, which implies that he simultaneously wanted them concealed. When someone like Jung pressed him to remove the disguise, Freud balked. The Oedipus Complex manifests precisely this ambivalence. It was both confession and disguise, and, as we have seen from Freud's paper "Screen Memories", which was written around the same time that the Oedipus theory was conceived, the memories or dreams surrounding this period are a function of present desire and not past trauma. So the abandonment of the seduction theory, like the dream in "Screen Memories", is an index of present desire, a deeply felt wish.

The best index of Freud's state of mind during this crucial period of his life is the series of letters he wrote to the Berlin ear, nose, and throat doctor, Wilhelm Fliess. Fliess is remembered now as a quack who disfigured and nearly killed a patient, Emma Eckstein, sent to him by Freud, by leaving half a meter of gauze in her nasal cavity after operating on her. Worse than that, Freud insisted throughout the episode that the bleeding that stemmed from infection was really an instance of hysterical longing on the patient's part.

[179] Ibid., p. 70.

Fliess' theories were partly based on numerology—he alleged a male "period" of twenty-three days, which Freud enthusiastically computed on himself and partly on an alleged connection between the nose and the sexual organs. Fliess was also, like Freud, an enthusiastic user and prescriber of cocaine. The letters of Freud to Fliess, originally published in 1954 as *The Origins of Psychoanalysis,* were not available in an uncensored form until Masson's edition of 1985. Freud had destroyed Fliess' responses to him and wanted his letters destroyed as well; however Princess Marie Bonaparte spent a good deal of money and effort to insure—contrary to Freud's wishes—that they were not. The letters, even more than the autobiographically based writings of his classical period, are a riddle-like combination of both revelation and concealment in which autobiography slips into clinical discussion and vice versa, everything revolving around—at least in the early 1890s—the belief that sexual practices other than normal intercourse led to neurosis.

According to Freud, masturbation led to neurasthenia in males, and anxiety neurosis derived from abnormal sexual practices like *coitus interruptus* and the use of contraceptives. Both noxae could be avoided in men if they were allowed unlimited sexual intercourse before marriage; however, this being unlikely (social convention proscribed it among eligible females, and fear of contracting disease contraindicated intercourse with prostitutes), both neurasthenia and neurosis were inevitable. Freud's theory of the sexual etiology of neurosis is by no means exhaustive, even though he gave the impression that he was onto something universal, referring at one point to "the key that unlocks everything, the etiological formula".[180] He did not, for example, deal at all with the problem of homosexuality, and this is so, according to Kruell, because homosexuality was not a problem for Freud:

> Freud's theory of actual neurosis is thus a theory of his own neurotic symptoms. I believe that this is the reason why he did not include any other forms of deviation from heterosexual intercourse in this theory—he was solely concerned with such "deviations" as affected him personally. In other words it was for his own symptoms that he developed the sexual theory which holds current sexual practices, not psychical causes, responsible for various disorders.[181]

Freud, however, was deeply and personally concerned with the problems of masturbation and contraception. He was the father of a large family and considered the only methods of birth control available to him—the condom and *coitus interruptus*—psychologically harmful. In fact, it is clear from his letters to Fliess that he is suffering from those symptoms himself. This was why he

[180] Masson, pp. 45–46.
[181] Kruell, p. 20.

devoted so much time to finding a cure for them and really never changed his opinion about them even though he abandoned the seduction theory, to which they were related. Kruell believes that the physician in this case was interested in healing himself. The explanation of Freud's interest in these things

> leads us inexorably to Freud's private life. From his letters to Fliess, we gather that he himself suffered from the symptoms he described as neurasthenia and anxiety neurosis. His personal life was thus deeply involved in this particular theory, since with its help he was trying to interpret and solve his own problems.[182]

Freud as a result finds himself in a bind. In a letter written in August of 1893 he announces that he and his wife "are now living in abstinence"[183] as a result of the quick succession of five pregnancies. The fact that his daughter Anna was born two years later leads one to believe that this was not a hard-and-fast rule. Freud's theories may have explained the cause of his illness, but they were no help in providing a cure: "For sexual need," he wrote in "Sexuality and the Aetiology of the Neuroses" (1898): "when once it has been aroused and has been satisfied for any length of time, can no longer be silenced; it can only be displaced along another path."[184] As a result, Freud is faced with two equally undesirable alternatives. He can go on having normal sexual intercourse and therefore children, which he doesn't want to have. Or he can abstain, which means he will end up making use of alternative means of sexual gratification, like masturbation, which means he will be more or less permanently subject to neurosis. Or he can make use of the means of contraception available to him, which means neurosis too. The only way out is an unobjectionable method of contraception, which seemed unlikely at the time. He wrote to Fliess at one point that he would be the most famous of men if he could come up with such a method.

Freud thus found himself in a peculiar situation as he approached middle age during the nineties. In discovering the sexual etiology of neurosis he felt that he had "touched upon one of the great secrets of nature".[185] However, it was a secret without effect. The only thing he gained from it was the small consolation that neurosis was inevitable. At another point he said that "neuroses are entirely preventable as well as entirely incurable";[186] however, the cure was at best theoretical; in his particular situation, the latter diagnosis applied. *Coitus interruptus* leads to anxiety neurosis; masturbation to neurasthenia. Use of the condom causes "alienation between the somatic and the psychic. It

[182] Ibid., p. 14.
[183] Masson, p. 54.
[184] Freud, *SE*, vol. 3, 275.
[185] Masson, p. 74.
[186] Ibid., p. 43.

would be the same as in the case of *coitus interruptus.*"[187] "The use of a condom is evidence of weak potency; being somewhat analogous to masturbation, it is a continuous causation of his [Freud's patient's] melancholia."[188] Melancholia, Freud goes on to say, "develops as an intensification of neurasthenia through masturbation."[189]

In the course of his letters to Fliess, it becomes clear that Freud was suffering from all these symptoms himself. As the decade of the nineties progressed, the consequences of his situation became more apparent to Freud. He had discovered "one of the great secrets of nature", but it was without any effect in his own life. He, as a result, slipped more and more into the grip of the neurosis he was able to diagnose but which he was unable to cure. In addition Freud became convinced during the same period that he was going to die of heart disease, another of his neurotic symptoms, although complicated no doubt by his addiction to cigars, an addiction he never overcame. By the middle of the nineties, Freud was making regular use of cocaine to get him out of his neurotic symptoms. On April 20, 1895, he wrote to Fliess that "I pulled myself out of a miserable attack with a cocaine application."[190] Less than a week later he writes that he has repeated the treatment. By June of the same year he tells Fliess "I need a lot of cocaine."[191] In May of 1896 Freud wrote that "I am as isolated as you would wish me to be. Word was given out to abandon me, for a void is forming all around me."[192] Later he adds, "this year for the first time my consulting room is empty, so that for weeks on end I see no new faces."[193] On June 4, 1896, he writes that "these times have brought me intellectually and morally, to the very point of losing my strength."[194] Then suddenly, in a passage already cited, Freud writes to Fliess on the occasion of his father's death that "the cocaine brush has been completely put aside."[195] It is as if a cure has been brought about, or if not a cure in actuality then at least the possibility of one seems to have emerged.

In the letter immediately following the one in which Freud announces that his father has died and that he has put the cocaine brush aside, Freud relates the dream about "closing the eyes", which is the central piece of evidence in Kruell's explanation of why Freud abandoned the seduction theory. "I must

[187] Ibid., p. 93.
[188] Ibid., p. 94.
[189] Ibid., p. 98.
[190] Ibid., p. 126.
[191] Ibid., p. 132.
[192] Ibid., p. 185.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid., p. 191.
[195] Ibid., p. 201.

tell you about a nice dream I had the night after the funeral", Freud writes to Fliess on November 2, 1896 (the dream is recounted in *The Interpretation of Dreams* as well but is shifted to the night before the funeral).

> I was in a place where I read a sign:
>
> You are requested
> To close the eyes
>
> I immediately recognized the location as the barbershop I visit every day. On the day of the funeral, I was kept waiting and therefore arrived a little late at the house of mourning. At that time my family was displeased with me because I had arranged for the funeral to be quiet and simple, which they later agreed was quite justified. They were also somewhat offended by my lateness. The sentence on the sign has a double meaning: one should do one's duty to the dead (an apology as though I had not done it and were in need of leniency), and the actual duty itself. The dream thus stems from the inclination to self-reproach that regularly sets in among the survivors.[196]

According to Kruell's analysis, Freud felt that through this dream his father was asking him "to shut his eyes to certain facts".

> In other words, this dream must have reminded Freud of an unspoken taboo Jacob had passed on to him in early childhood, namely, not to delve into his, Jacob's, past. I believe that the crisis in Freud's life which followed his father's death and lasted for nearly a year was the direct result of his wrestling with just that taboo. Several months later he found it was more than he could cope with, and he renounced his seduction theory.[197]

Kruell's case against Freud's father—that he seduced the young Sigmund—is stronger than Vitz' denial of it, especially in light of material that has emerged in the unexpurgated Freud/Fliess correspondence. In a letter of February 8, 1897, Freud associates "hysterical headaches" as "characteristic of the scenes where the head is held still for the purpose of actions in the mouth. . . . Unfortunately, my own father was one of these perverts and is responsible for the hysteria of my brother (all of whose symptoms are identifications) and those of several younger sisters." In May of 1897 Freud recounts another dream, "which shows the fulfillment of my wish to catch a Pater as the originator of neurosis."[198]

Freud, in this passage, is far from showing a desire to "close the eyes" on the misdeeds of the father. In fact in a letter written at the end of 1896, Freud indicated that the finding of the seducer was a possible cure for neurosis, including by implication his own.

[196] Ibid., p. 202.
[197] Kruell, p. 43.
[198] Masson, p. 249.

> It seems to me more and more that the essential point of hysteria is that it results from *perversion* on the part of the seducer, and *more and more* that heredity is seduction by the father. Thus an alternation emerges between generations:
>
> 1st generation—perversion
> 2nd generation—hysteria, and consequent sterility.[199]

According to this new formulation, "hysteria is not repudiated sexuality but rather repudiated perversion."[200] Freud then recounts the case of a patient "in whose history her highly perverse father plays the principal role". The father has seduced the son, and the son has, therefore, succumbed to neurosis. Significant for our purposes is the fact that in recounting this case Freud is pointing to a way to cure neuroses and "compulsive impulses". Just as the representation of the memory is the undoing of the habit, as Breuer claimed, so now Freud is claiming that the reenactment of the perversion is the undoing of the neurosis. "Neuroses", Freud claims in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality,* "are, so to say, the negative of perversions".[201] In order to cure the compulsion, then, all the son has to do is reverse the charge, so to speak, by adopting the perverse behavior of the father:

> The brother abhors all perversity, whereas he suffers from compulsive impulses. That is to say, he has repressed certain impulses which are replaced by others with compulsions. This is, in general, the secret of compulsive impulses. *If he could be perverse, he would be healthy, like the father* [my emphasis].[202]

In light of the preceding passage, the term "close the eyes" takes on another meaning. Instead of ignore, or overlook, it could also now mean "to condone". This is, by the way, closer to the official meaning that Freud wants to ascribe to the incident in the version that ended up being published in *The Interpretation of Dreams,* where the meaning is "to 'wink at' or 'overlook'."

But why would Freud be interested in condoning his father's behavior as a seducer? Not so much because he was interested in being a "model son", as Kruell maintains. He was not. A more plausible reason for this condoning is that he was interested in committing this sort of behavior himself. First of all, there is the deeply felt desire of the time, as recounted in "Screen Memories", to "deflower a virgin". This wish was strong enough and illicit enough to call

[199] Ibid., p. 212.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 1962), p. 31.
[202] Masson, p. 213.

up significant memories whose purpose was simultaneously to present the wish to the consciousness and disguise it. Beyond that, Freud the physician is slowly coming to the belief in the fall and winter of 1896–97 that a cure for neurosis is possible in the repetition of the perversion of the father. "If he could be perverse," he writes to Fliess, describing the situation of the neurotic, "he would be healthy, like the father." As time goes on, the two wishes coalesce into something numinous for Freud. He becomes obsessed by the connections that reveal themselves to him, all radiating out from that one passionately held but unfilled wish that becomes not only his deepest desire, it becomes as well his only hope for cure; it becomes so numinous in fact that it takes on the nature of something religious.

In his letter to Fliess of January 24, 1897, Freud announces that he is expanding his theory to include witches. "The broomstick they ride probably is the great Lord Penis."[203] In ordering a copy of the *Malleus Malificarum,* he is hoping to find some historical key that will explain the link between neurosis and perversion.

> I am beginning to grasp an idea: it is as though in the perversions of which hysteria is the negative, we have before us a remnant of a primeval sexual cult, which once was—perhaps still is—a religion in the Semitic East (Moloch, Astarte).... I dream, therefore, of a primeval devil religion with rites that are carried on secretly, and understand the harsh therapy of the witches' judges. Connecting links abound.[204]

In this passage, so redolent of connecting links itself, we get a first glimpse of the components in Freud's life that will eventually be assembled into the Oedipus Complex. The pact with the devil, the cure of neurosis, of which cocaine was the promise but not the fulfillment, and the solution to the sexual difficulties he was experiencing in his marriage, as well as the fulfillment of his deeply neurotic desire to dwell on the topography of Rome—all become focused on one act that keeps urging itself to his consciousness as a deeply felt but as yet unattainable wish, namely, the deflowering of a virgin. Perversion is not just the antithesis of neurosis and, therefore, its cure; it is an opening into the realm of religion as well. Since religion—at least Christianity and Judaism—is the antithesis of perversion, then perversion becomes, in the numinous way taking shape in Freud's mind at the time, the undoing of religion as well. The Oedipus project becomes a way of using the powers of the nether world to overcome those of above, precisely what he described as his project in *The Interpretation of Dreams,* whose epigraph is *"Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo."*

[203] Ibid., p. 227.
[204] Ibid.

In a short disquisition on the "Holy", written for Fliess in June of 1897, Freud explores just these connections:

> "Holy" is something based on the fact that human beings, for the benefit of the larger community, have sacrificed a portion of their sexual liberty and their liberty to indulge in perversions. The horror of incest (something impious) is based on the fact that, as a result of communal sexual life (even in childhood), the members of a family remain together permanently and become incapable of joining with strangers. Thus incest is antisocial—civilization consists in this progressive renunciation. Contrariwise, the "superman".[205]

Freud's reference to the "superman" refers to the influence of the final piece of the puzzle, namely, Nietzsche and the passage from *The Birth of Tragedy* that stands as a virtual model of the Oedipus Complex that Freud, according to the myths propagated by Jones and other hagiographers, created all on his own. In *The Birth of Tragedy,* Nietzsche refers to Richard Wagner as the new "Oedipus", who forced the Sphinx to divulge its secrets:

> with regard to the mother-wooing, riddle-solving Oedipus, an immediate interpretation comes to mind, that where through the oracular and magic powers the force of both present and future, the rigid law of individuation as well as the magic of nature is broken, the preconditioning cause is that beforehand a monstrous act against nature—something on the order of incest—must have taken place; then how is one to force nature to reveal her secrets other than by victoriously going against her, that is, through an act contrary to nature. I see this recognition sketched out in that hideous trinity of Oedipus's fate: the same man who solves the riddle of nature—that double-edged Sphinx—must also violate the most holy order of nature as both parricide and spouse of his mother. Indeed the meaning of the myth seems inescapable, that wisdom and especially dionysian wisdom is an unnatural horror, and that the man who through his knowledge plunges nature into the abyss of annihilation, experiences in his own being the disintegration of nature. "The point of wisdom turns against the wise; wisdom is a crime against nature."[206]

[205] Ibid., p. 252.

[206] "Im Hinblick auf den rätsellosenden und seine Mutter freienden Oedipus, sofort zu interpretieren haben, dass dort, wo durch weissagenden und magische Kräfte der Bann von Gegenwart und Zukunft, das starre Gesetz der Individuation und überhaupt der eigentliche Zauber der Natur gebrochen ist, eine ungehuere Naturwidrigkeit— wie dort der Inzest—als Ursache vorausgegangen sein muss; denn wie könnt man die Natur zum Preisgeben ihrer Geheimnisse zwingen, wenn nicht dadurch, dass man ihr siegreich wiederstrebt, d.h. durch das Unnatürliche: Diese Erkenntnis sehe ich in jener entzetzlichen Dreiheit der Oedipusschicksale ausgeprägt: derselbe, der das Rätsel der Natur—jener doppelgearteten Sphinx—löst, muss auch als Mörder des Vaters und Gatte der Mutter die heiligsten Naturordnungen zerbrechen.

The passage is seminal to the modern age. In it we see, down to the minutest details, where Freud got the Oedipus Complex. "Wisdom is a crime against nature." A crime like incest fit nicely into the Freud's compulsions at the time. His sexual desire for his sister-in-law dovetailed nicely with his desire to force nature to reveal her secrets and get his stalled career moving again. According to Nietzsche, only the man who is willing to commit some "terrible act against nature—something like incest"—can force nature to reveal her secrets. He who wants to know nature's secrets must be willing through the murder of the father and the taking of his mother as wife to smash the holiest order of nature.

By linking incest and perversion, Freud furnishes us with the final term in the equation. Incest becomes the perversion that will cure Freud of his neurosis. In committing an act of incest, Freud will not only cure himself, he will bring about the fulfillment of a whole host of other deeply desired ends. He will also avenge himself on the father who was the cause of the neurosis in the first place; beyond that, he will rob God, the exalted father, of his dominion as exercised primarily through the realm of morality. As with the Egyptian pharaohs, whom Freud mentions in *Moses and Monotheism,*[207] committing incest elevates the person who practices it to the level of a "god", which, according to the account of the Fall in Genesis, was also the aspiration of Adam and Eve when they acquiesced to the suggestion of the devil. Freud at this crucial period in his life conceives of a complicated religio-sexual system that will not only provide explanations for but the fulfillment of all his deeply held desires as well. It is a system that involves the conflation of love and evil. Even if it does not involve a pact with the devil, as a number of commentators have maintained, it is a system that of necessity incorporates diabolical elements. "It is", in Freud's own words,

> an intellectual hell, layer upon layer of it, with everything fitfully gleaming and pulsating; and the outline of Lucifer-Amor coming into sight at the darkest center.[208]

By now it should also be obvious that all the themes that we have mentioned are also found in the Oedipus Complex. The Oedipus Complex is

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Ja der Mythus scheint uns zuraunen zu wollen, dass die Weisheit und gerade die dionysiche Weisheit ein naturwidriger Greuel sei, dass der, welcher durch sein Wissen die Natur in den Abgrund der Vernichtung stürzt, auch an sich selbst die Auflösung der Natur zu erfahren habe. 'Die Spitze der Weisheit kehrt sich gegen den Weisen; Weisheit ist ein Verbrechen an der Natur.' " Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke,* vol. 1 (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1954), pp. 56–57.

[207] Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1939), p. 154.

[208] David Bakan, *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition* (Princeton, N.J.: Van

in effect simply a ratification of all the ramifications of meaning that radiate out from this one passionately held desire to commit incest. "The replacement of the seduction with the Oedipus theory . . . ", according to Kruell,

> enabled Freud to examine his own childhood without having to blame his parents for his neurosis. According to the new theory that neurosis was caused by his own forbidden desires. Nor did he have to blame himself for these desires, for they were universal.
>
> The Oedipus theory exonerated Freud in more than one respect. It was a "creative solution" . . . by which he was able to reconcile the conflicting missions his father had given him: on the one hand to "close the eyes" to his father's transgression, and on the other hand nevertheless to solve the enigma of (his) life. The Oedipus theory enabled him to do just that.[209]

Again Kruell, like Vitz, transposes the desires to childhood, when, especially in light of what Freud himself says in "Screen Memories", they should be read in just the opposite way, i.e., in terms of the time when the wish itself was expressed. So the Oedipus theory would then be an expression not so much of something Freud desired as a child but of a wish he felt at the time he created the theory. The two, it should be noted, are by no means mutually exclusive, as Freud himself said when he reassured his "patient" that the memory of the field and the flowers and the bread was in fact a real memory. It was, however, represented by present desire. So too would it be with the Oedipus Complex. It too is an indication of present desire. Freud did not invent his father's seduction of him, or his nurse's for that matter, he simply used these incidents as a way of justifying what he knew was going to be illicit behavior. This moral table-turning is a common psychological trait of the guilty conscience. The memory is called up as part of the process of exoneration that will be completed with the formulation of the Oedipus theory. All of this simply strengthens the exculpatory aspect of the Oedipus theory; beyond that, it applies the desire for exculpation where it makes the most sense, i.e., with Freud himself. Now Freud's illicit desires are "universal"; therefore, no blame can attach to them. Oedipus has, as a result, conquered guilt. If morality is God's hold on man's everyday life, then the Oedipus Complex, in severing that connection, puts man on God's level. He becomes the "superman", and the sign that he is such a "god" is his willingness to break the ultimate taboo, to commit incest.

In describing their stay in Riva in the late summer of 1900, in the same letter in fact in which he describes their time together as a "debauch unclouded by remorse" (*eine Schwelgerei ohne Reue und Trübung*), Freud refers to himself

[209] Kruell, p. 68.

and Minna as being "divinely accommodated", a phrase which brings out what for Freud was the religious significance of incest. It was something that raised him to the level of the Egyptian pharaohs, who were considered gods. In taking his children's nursemaid, Freud was taking the *revenant* of his own nursemaid, who was also his second mother. "This is the year of revenants", Freud wrote on July 1, 1900,[210] the same summer he "luxuriated without remorse" with Minna in Riva. As both Vitz and Swales have pointed out, Freud's nursemaid represented Roman Catholicism to Freud, but a Roman Catholicism fraught with ambivalence because the nanny, who was the beloved, had also abandoned young Sigmund. It was as if the salvation she had promised was too good to be true but at the same time too important to ignore. As a result it had to be fought and conquered, disproved as an "illusion". This, of course, is precisely what the Oedipus Complex purports to do. By undermining all morality and religion, Freud has in effect conquered Rome; he has proved that he was right in withdrawing all affection for what the nanny represented.

Both Swales and Vitz make much of Freud's neurotic inability to travel to Rome in this regard. From early on Freud considered himself an heir to Hannibal, the Semitic general who almost conquered Rome. In a letter to Fliess written on December 12, 1897, Freud writes:

> My longing for Rome is, by the way, deeply neurotic. It is connected with my high school hero worship of the Semitic Hannibal, and this year in fact I did not reach Rome any more than he did from Lake Trasimeno. Since I have been studying the unconscious, I have become so interesting to myself. A pity that one always keeps one's mouth shut about the most intimate things.
>
> *Das Beste was Du weisst,*
> *Darfst Du den Buben doch nicht sagen*
>
> (The best of what you know
> You dare not tell the boys.)[211]

Freud repeats the quote from Goethe's *Faust* in another letter written a few weeks later. This time in connection with a dream "which unfortunately cannot be published because of its background."

> Its second meaning shifts back and forth between my nurse (my mother) and my wife and one cannot really subject one's wife to reproaches of this sort [as a reward] for her labor and toil. Quite generally the best you know, and so on.[212]

[210] Masson, p. 420.
[211] Ibid., p. 285.
[212] Ibid., p. 299.

As Swales says, "Freud is an absolute master at the art of allusion and *double entendre.* So, henceforth, wherever you read the word *nurse* read *Minna.*"[213] In this respect, the dream that he refuses to discuss here with Fliess has uncanny similarities with the dream he refused to discuss with Jung, "because I would lose my authority". Both concern a triangle involving his wife and Minna; both conceal deeply held wishes that have to be kept secret and that if revealed would jeopardize the authority of his new system because of what they reveal about its author.

Freud eventually did reach Rome but only after the trip he spent with Minna, "luxuriating without remorse". Almost one year to the day after he wrote that passage, he wrote again to Fliess describing the effect of the trip to Rome.

> It was overwhelming for me too and, as you know, the fulfillment of a long-cherished wish. As such fulfillments are if one has waited too long for them, this one was slightly diminished, yet a high point of my life.[214]

Freud goes on to say that he found both modern and ancient Rome congenial; however, "I found I could not freely enjoy the second [medieval, Christian] Rome; the atmosphere troubled me. I found it difficult to tolerate the lie concerning man's redemption, which raises its head to high heaven—for I could not cast off the thought of my own misery and all the other misery I know about".[215]

Misery, they say, loves company, and the Oedipus theory, which claimed to conquer Rome's "lie concerning man's redemption", was to guarantee Freud the company he craved. In a footnote to the 1911 edition of *The Interpretation of Dreams,* Freud cites the "well-known" prophecy that the conquest of Rome would fall to the man who would "kiss the mother". Committing incest with Minna was the key that unlocked this door for Freud. Beyond that, it became the theoretical basis for the revolution in consciousness that he had been preparing and which would not have been served by the seduction theory. Kruell is right but only partially right. The Oedipus theory exonerated Freud, not so much of his desire to murder his father or sleep with his mother in any literal way, but of his desire to commit incest with his sister-in-law Minna, the consummation of which brought about the symbolic fulfillment of everything involved in the Oedipal Complex. Sex with Minna would be the key that would bring about everything else, the conquest of Rome, the overthrowing of the divine and moral order, the cure of his own neurosis, the transvalua-

[213] Swales, p. 19.
[214] Masson, p. 449.
[215] Ibid.

tion of all values, revenge on the father who was the source of those neuroses, and revenge as well on the nurse, the symbolic mother, who put into little Sigmund's head "the lie concerning man's redemption". Once perversion, i.e., incest, is conceived as the entry into "a primeval devil religion",[216] which implies both cure and the power accruing from a pact with the devil, the way has been paved away from the seduction theory and toward the Oedipus theory, which is, in effect, that "primeval devil religion" in practice. The seduction theory had to go because it was essentially a ratification of the moral nature of man. Sexual sin had serious psychic consequences: this was the only conclusion one could draw from Freud's observations from his medical practice. As a result the ratification of moral taboo implicit in the seduction theory, and not any purported loyalty to his father, was the chief obstacle that prevented Freud from achieving his increasingly and urgently desired goal. It was also the main reason why the seduction theory had to be abandoned in favor of the Oedipus Complex.

Significantly, when the seduction theory is abandoned, Freud's unconscious is flooded with a series of erotic dreams from his childhood. Freud wrote to Fliess on September 21, 1897, that "I no longer believe in my neurotica".[217] By October 3, he is deep into his self-analysis and has recovered the dreams and memories associated with his abrupt departure from Freiburg. He now identifies his nanny, "an ugly, elderly, but clever woman, who told me a great deal about God Almighty and hell and who instilled in me a high opinion of my own capacities", as the "prime originator" of his neurosis.[218] In the October 3 letter he also describes how "my libido toward *matrem* was awakened, namely, on the occasion of a journey with her from Leipzig to Vienna, during which we must have spent the night together and there must have been an opportunity of seeing her *nudam*."[219] No one that I know of has raised the issue, but it seems highly unlikely that Freud's mother would take off all her clothes during a train ride. This is not the practice now in sleeping compartments on European trains in a much more unencumbered age and with people who wear considerably fewer clothes, nor can one believe that it was the case with Freud's mother in the late 1850s. However, seeing someone "*nudam*" does correspond to what we know about the living arrangements in the Freud household. If Minna was living in such close proximity, it is more likely that Freud saw her *nudam* in their apartment in the mid-nineties than he saw his mother *nudam* in a train in the late fifties. These memories, I would contend, are screen memories, i.e., disguised representations, not of past

[216] Ibid., p. 227.
[217] Ibid., p. 264.
[218] Ibid., p. 268.
[219] Ibid., p. 219.

traumas, although they may be associated with that, but of present desires. Freud had always been attracted to his sister-in-law. After she moved in with the Freuds the intimacy of their contact increased and with that, we can only assume, the intensity of his desire. Swales feels that

> gradually during the course of the previous five years, in response to Freud's influence and almost against her will, Minna had fallen in love with the man. I suspect it was probably then in Trent that she finally forfeited her virginity—in the heat of the time, without any real opposition.... It was there, with its historic Council of Trent in the mid-1500s, that the Roman Catholic Church had consolidated its doctrine in line with the precepts of Early Fathers such as Origen and Augustine, after affirming among other things the very sanctity of marriage. In my understanding then—being after all Hannibal *redivivus*—it was precisely Freud's nature to want to flout Christian dogma right where it would hurt the most.[220]

The conflation of mother and nurse in the past are explained by Freud's obsession with Minna in the present. Freud's correspondence with Fliess is a complicated and disguised description of the barriers to the fulfillment of that deeply held wish dropping one by one and being replaced by the philosophy of exoneration that would eventually be formulated as the Oedipus Complex. As Freud says in concluding *Totem and Taboo, "Am Anfang war die Tat":* In the beginning was the deed. All of the elaborate intellectual machinery surrounding the Oedipus Complex is in reality nothing more than a justification, a rationalization of that one act.

The Moral Limits of Intellectual Discourse

By the time Freud wrote *Moses and Monotheism* he was a famous man, famous enough to enlist the help of the United States government in getting him out of nazi-controlled Austria in 1938 (not famous enough, though, to ensure safe passage for three sisters, who perished in concentration camps in the early forties). This change in status necessitated a change in strategy in writing as well. Freud's major writings were autobiographical in scope—either openly or covertly—and predicated on the fact that no one would know enough about his life to draw the necessary connections. However, as he became more and more famous, this approach would have to undergo some modifications. Even the orthodox Freudians have taken note of this in their way. Gay writes that "the Freuds' passion for privacy [is] quite in character for the nineteenth

[220] Swales, p. 15.

century bourgeois they were."[221] Other commentators have viewed the same aversion differently, noting a characteristic ambivalence about disclosure: "Freud shunned biography and autobiography, while basing his theory on it. . . . But Freud never denied that the sources of his theory were autobiographical. . . ."[222] Freud, because of the intimately personal nature of his theories, needed autobiography, but by the same token, in order to present these theories as universally valid scientific laws, he needed to disguise them as well. By the end of his life, the I-happened-to-meet-a-young-man-who-was-familiar-with-my-theories ploy would not work. As a result Freud did not abandon autobiography—he couldn't; instead, he adopted a new genre, what one might call autobiographical allegory. *Moses and Monotheism* is a good example of this type of work.

As with the earlier work on the Moses of Michelangelo, which was written after his break with Jung and was in effect a commentary on that break, Freud at first tried to publish his final work on Moses anonymously, then tried to claim that he published it that way because he feared the reaction of Church authorities in Austria, something that has struck a number of commentators as curious since he was looking to the Catholic Church for protection from the nazis. Then finally the whole work came out under his name while he was in England.

Moses, we are told, "was an Egyptian whom a people needed to make into a Jew".[223] By now we need no Rosetta Stone to interpret Freud's meaning here. What he really means to say is that Moses was a Jew whom Freud needed to turn into an Egyptian. Why he should feel such a need has been analyzed by one Jewish commentator on Freud, David Bakan, who feels "that the primary key to the understanding of Freud is contained in his concern with Moses".[224] According to Bakan, Freud "is filled with guilt for his defection from orthodoxy".[225] As a result, "turning Moses into a Gentile-Egyptian would seem to be a wish-fulfillment on Freud's part."[226] Bakan connects the wish fulfillment and the guilt to a long and complicated discussion of false messiahs in middle European Jewish history, which, he claims, Freud would have known because of his connection with Jewish oral history. This may or may not be the case; as even Bakan admits, there is no written evidence to support such a thesis.

[221] Gay, *Freud,* p. 614.
[222] Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Freud* (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1965), p. 18.
[223] Freud, *Moses,* p. 16.
[224] Bakan, p. 121.
[225] Ibid., p. 129.
[226] Ibid.

Why was Freud interested in "excommunicating" Moses? Because, according to Bakan, of Moses' unique role as lawgiver. If he were simply interested in depriving the Jews of a founder of their religion, Freud could have attempted to prove that Abraham was a Chaldean. Instead he wanted to strike at the ethical heart of Judaism, the law, because Judaism was the ethical heart of the West, including Christianity. In "killing" Moses, Freud was striking out not so much at the Jews as at the moral law that came to the West through the Jews. Freud, according to Bakan, was trying to get out from underneath "the burden of Mosaic morality".[227]

Psychoanalysis, then, becomes the "fulfillment of the Sabbatian ethos".[228] Freud is another false Messiah preaching another specious escape from the moral law and the guilt that comes from violating that law. It is a law that people have found intolerable. "Modern psychoanalysis", Bakan writes,

> plays a "religious" role in people's lives, especially with respect to their "sins" as sins are defined by the Mosaic code. The deepest violation of the Mosaic code—aggression, murder, sexuality, incest, etc.—are the very subject matter of psychoanalysis.[229]

In place of the implacable Moses, Freud gives us the psychoanalyst, the "nonpunishing superego". The psychoanalyst listens to the patient's discussions of his deepest 'sins' and does not blame. As a matter of fact, if there is any blame . . . , it is directed against the parents of the patient in their treatment of him when he was a child."[230]

The liberation proposed by the psychoanalytic false Messiah, then, is essentially a liberation from the Mosaic, i.e., moral, law, "particularly", Bakan adds, "in the prescriptions and prohibitions with respect to sexuality".[231]

> The figure of Moses is the link between the prevailing conditions of contemporary society and history, for the moral ethos of the whole Judeo-Christian tradition, in its restrictive aspects at least, may be traced to the Moses image. . . . In Freud's avowal and acceptance of the Oedipus Complex he attempted to rewrite the Law of Moses in a way which would be more compatible with the prevailing spirit of liberty. He was trying to remake and rework our conception of morality. Hence it is necessary for Freud to kill Moses.[232]

Freud becomes a "Jewish hero" by freeing his people from guilt through psychoanalysis. In this regard, he becomes not only a new Moses, in the sense

[227] Ibid., p. 157.
[228] Ibid., p. 158.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Ibid., p. 166.
[232] Ibid., pp. 166–67.

of being a liberator, he also becomes a new Christ, a man who has come to abolish the old law and bring about a new dispensation. Or, looked at another way—and Bakan, remember, is one of those who first proposed Freud's pact with the devil—Freud becomes simultaneously anti-Moses and Antichrist. In commenting on Freud's assertion that psychoanalysis could only have been created by a Jew, Bakan adds, "If the Jews represent the authority of the Law, only a Jew can declare the Law is dead",[233] which has a curiously Christian ring to it. St. Paul would probably have agreed, and so would have Sigmund Freud, but not in the same way. Freud, in bringing about the symbolic murder of Moses, brings about the fulfillment of his deepest wishes. Just as Minna-mother-nurse represented the sexual side of the Oedipus Complex, the desire to have sexual relations with the mother, so Moses represented its paternal/aggressive side, the desire to kill the father. The latter is necessary in order to accomplish the former; however, throughout Freud's life the two aspects of the Oedipus Complex would take on a cyclical nature. So, *"Am Anfang war die Tat."* At the beginning there was the deed—committing incest—but in order to do the sexual act, Freud needed justification. As a result, the "killing" of the law was the logical outcome of intercourse with the "mother".

At the end of Freud's life there is no longer a sexual impulse for the killing; however, the effects of the sin remain on his conscience. So in order to preserve the deed, guilt has to be followed to its source and another murder, this time of Moses, has to take place. In the end all Freud's theories become a touching testimonial to the ineradicable power of his conscience to disturb him. He ends up by telling the truth in his fantastic allegories, but only the truth about himself and his own deeply felt but ultimately unfulfilled wishes. The irony of course is that Freud, who claimed to be Oedipus, who would solve riddles and gaze on the truth even if it would destroy him, ends his life by piling rationalization upon rationalization. By the time he gets around to writing *Moses and Monotheism,* a particular fact is true simply because Professor Freud wants it to be true. By the end of his life, he had enough prestige to insist on having his own way, whether reality conformed to his wishes or not. So over twenty years after the assumptions underlying *Totem and Taboo* had been shown to be baseless, Freud can write:

I still adhere to this sequence of thought. I have often been vehemently reproached for not changing my opinions in later editions of my book, since more recent ethnologists have without exception discarded Robertson Smith's theories and have in part replaced them by others which differ extensively. I would reply that these alleged advances in science are well known to me. Yet I have not been convinced either of their correctness or of Robertson

[233] Ibid., p. 159.

> Smith's errors. Contradiction is not always refutation; a new theory does not necessarily denote progress. Above all, however, I am not an ethnologist, but a psychoanalyst. It was my good right to select from ethnological data what would serve me for my analytic work. The writings of the highly gifted Robertson Smith provided me with valuable points of contact with the psychological material of analysis and suggestions for the use of it. I cannot say the same of the work of his opponents.[234]

St. Augustine lists one of the sins against the Holy Spirit that leads to final impenitence as "rejection of the known truth".[235] Freud, who insisted not only on Robertson Smith's discredited ethnology but on a Lamarckian ability to pass on acquired characteristics like the memory of the slaying of the primal father, which even the usually docile Jones couldn't swallow, shows in these beliefs his reabsorption into the tradition he claimed to subvert. The moral absolutes that Freud felt he abolished with the symbolic slaying of Moses proved more resilient than he knew. In attacking them he substantiated the absolute nature of their power in an uncanny way.

Augustine also lists obduracy as another step along the moral trajectory leading to final impenitence. According to Grisez's account,

> If there is a family member, a friend, a co-worker, a teacher, or someone else who reminds the sinner of his or her state, the reminder is resented, and the sinner looks for a reason to find fault with and condemn this person. This reaction is the beginning of the sin of envy of the grace which others enjoy. Moreover, the sinner looks to a new morality . . . or to some other rationalization in an effort to deny its sinful character without repenting. . . . This self-blinding rationalization is the beginning of the sin of rejection of the known truth.[236]

Grisez is talking about no one in particular here; however, his description fits Freud's attitude to Moses in an uncanny way. Moses had come to represent the moral law to Freud; the moral law in turn reminded Freud of his own guilty conscience. In a situation like this, Freud, or anyone else for that matter, is faced with only two alternatives: he can conform his desires to the moral law or he can conform the moral law to his desires. Freud, as is obvious by now, chose the latter course. He chose a frontal attack on the entire law as personified in the figure of Moses. In succumbing so radically to the deeply held desire to discredit the one man who reminds him most of his own

[234] Freud, *Moses*, p. 169.

[235] Germain Grisez, *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983), p. 442.

[236] Ibid., p. 443.

conscience, Freud cuts his theory off from any contact with reality, so that it becomes in the end a neurotic representation of the same wish over and over again. Everything becomes evidence for the Oedipus Complex because the Oedipus Complex is the neurotic defense Freud's psyche throws up when confronted with moral reality, which is ubiquitous. Just as moral reality is ubiquitous, so the Oedipus Complex becomes Freud's ubiquitous defense against that reality. Freud's primal sin was intellectual and not sexual. It was in effect the creation of the Oedipus Complex as a justification for his deeply felt wish to commit incest. In doing this he committed an act of intellectual self-mutilation, which he was then compelled to repeat (in the absence of repentance, of course) for his entire intellectual career. As time went on the ante increased. He was condemned by his own impatience to find the Oedipus Complex everywhere and, when confronted by the lack of evidence, to say that it didn't matter, to substitute prestige and "dogma" and demands of loyalty from his followers for simple corroborating evidence. The sin against the Holy Spirit that the Oedipus Complex was requires further intellectual sin of the sort we have just discussed in order to justify it. Along the way the man who could have made a real contribution to psychology as the creator of the seduction theory became instead the ideologue of atheism. Atheism became, to use Paul Vitz' term, "Oedipal wish fulfillment".[237]

If the ultimate sin here is not sexual, it has a sexual component to it, just as the Oedipus Complex does. Only a materialist or a Manichean would maintain that sexual activity *per se* could plague the conscience. Freud flirted with materialism of both the sexual and the pharmacological variety throughout his career. His flirtation with cocaine as the miracle drug during his early years is well known. At the end of his life he still clung to the idea "that the time might come when chemical substances would alter balances in the mind and thus make psychoanalytic therapy, now the best available treatment for neuroses, quite obsolete".[238] Freud similarly speculated that sexual acts *per se* created reactions in both mind and body that could lead to neurosis; however, the really subversive—at least from his point of view—insight of the seduction theory was that the morality of the action determined the trauma, since all the acts of seduction were *per se* immoral. It was precisely this insight that had to be repressed in favor of the essentially condoning doctrine of the Oedipus Complex. To admit that sin caused neurosis was a dangerous admission for someone contemplating incest. It was something that would have to be repressed in favor of something more conducive to the commission of the act: *"Am Anfang war die Tat."*

[237] Cf. Vitz, pp. 166ff.
[238] Gay, *Freud*, p. 634.

The consequences of Freud's decision to adopt the Oedipus Complex were devastating for Freud's intellectual growth. With it he went from being a man who could, and in fact did, learn from reality to a man who could do nothing but impose his intellectual schema on reality instead. In casting his lot with ideology, Freud lost not only the psychological subtlety one can discern in Augustine's and Grisez's account of the guilty conscience, he also lost the clinical eye he had demonstrated in his earlier works. In choosing incest, Freud performed on himself an act of intellectual castration. The father became the reminder that Freud was intellectually sterile and, therefore, took the blame for this self-imposed castration, just as Moses took the blame for his guilty conscience. From the time he rejected the seduction theory, Freud the physician became Freud the monomaniac, the psychological Ahab, according to whom the doubloon, and the mountain, and everything else were nothing more than Oedipus. In choosing the Oedipus Complex he chose to suppress what he knew about the connection between the moral and the psychological, and that suppression would return to haunt him. Morality would become the return of the repressed. It was a ghost he would try to exorcise in vain, as *Moses and Monotheism* attests, up until the very end of his life. Freud was more like Oedipus than he knew. In choosing incest he brought about an act of self-mutilation that resulted in intellectual blindness.

Lust and intellectual blindness are not unrelated, as Pieper shows in his discussion of the four cardinal virtues. Pieper makes it clear that the connection between blindness and lust is no *ens per accidens;* the two belong together:

> This blindness is of the essence of unchastity itself, which is by its very nature destructive. It is not its outward effect and consequence but its immanent essential property.[239]

This is so because lust violates reason, and reason is of the essential nature of man. It is only when he acts in accord with reason that man keeps himself in himself. Abandoning reason in this crucial area of life causes a state of paralysis in the soul.

> Unchaste abandon and the self-surrender of the soul to the world of sensuality paralyzes the primordial powers of the moral person: the ability to perceive, in silence, the call of reality, and to make, in the retreat of this silence, the decision appropriate to the concrete situation of concrete action. This is the meaning inherent in all those propositions which speak of the falsification and corruption of prudence, of the blindness of the spirit, and of the splitting of the power of decision.[240]

[239] Josef Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 1966), p. 160.

[240] Ibid.

Pieper goes on to emphasize the moral dimension of his thesis. It is not sexuality *per se* but the improper use of sexuality that causes intellectual blindness. Lust leaves a person "incapable of seeing objective reality".

> An unchaste man wants above all something for himself; he is distracted by an unobjective "interest"; his constantly strained will-to-pleasure prevents him from confronting reality with that selfless detachment which alone makes genuine knowledge possible. St. Thomas here uses the comparison of a lion who, at the sight of a stag, is unable to perceive anything but the anticipated meal. In an unchaste heart, attention is not merely fixed upon a certain track, but the "window" of the soul has lost its "transparency", that is, its capacity for perceiving existence, as if a selfish interest had covered it, as it were, with a film of dust. (We cannot repeat too often: only he who is silent hears, only the invisible is transparent.)[241]

Perception is distorted by craving, and eventually it is replaced altogether by projection, projection of want, of desire—think of Freud's description of "Screen Memories"—or need, as in the need to escape from the pangs of conscience. The lustful man eventually loses contact with reality. He still tells the truth in a way, but not the truth about reality. He can only tell the truth about himself, in spite of himself, in a way that he himself is condemned not to understand. He can only talk about his own distorted perceptions and his own projections. As with Dimmesdale, his conscience becomes the only thing that is real for him.

None of these moral actions exists in a vacuum. Each is committed by a person who is in turn the creation of what he does. We are not talking about any Sartrean *tabula rasa* here. Essence does precede existence. The realm of possibility is not infinite; in fact it is limited to two options—one open-ended, the other not. In both cases, biography is destiny. This is the heart of the moral realism of the West; it is in both Moses and Aristotle. It was the heart of the tradition that Freud chose to subvert but that only caught him in his own self-contradictions in the end. "The way we think as we act depends on the kind of person we are," writes Ralph McInerny in a recent formulation of the central tenet of this ancient tradition,

> That is, the thinking that guides our choice is essentially dependent on our moral character.
>
> Like so many points made by Aristotle, this one is easily seen to be true. The reason we do not expect a coward to act bravely is that his way of assessing the circumstances in which he must act is colored by his past craven behavior. Isn't this what we mean by "rationalizing"? So too the sensualist

[241] Ibid., p. 161.

> sees the arena in which he must act through the lens of his disordered appetites.[242]

"The virtuous life", he says at another point, "is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the successful theoretical use of the mind."[243] In the absence of virtue, the mind will not stop functioning, it will only stop functioning in contact with reality. Living the virtuous life allows the open-ended intellectual alternative, contact with reality leading to some explication of the truth. The absence of virtue in the thinker predetermines the other option. In this case the mind does nothing more than project its desires and fears and needs onto reality. Reality becomes the raw material that is fashioned into idols of the self. In the first instance we have wisdom, philosophy, and science: in the second neurosis, ideology, and magic.

"Do you not know that I am the Devil?" Freud asks, revealing the psychotherapist in his role as anti-Moses and Antichrist.[244] C. S. Lewis was right. The antithesis of the wise man who seeks to conform the soul to reality is Faust, the ideologue magician, who seeks power through magic so that he can seduce a virgin. For those who refuse to repent, for those who set themselves up in opposition to the moral law that lies at the basis of their contact with reality, there is only the second alternative. In choosing the latter, Freud found that what they say about the devil is true; the gold he gives turns into excrement. Freud in the end finds that he can no longer understand; he can only discern Oedipus in everything he sees. There is a further irony of course; in only projecting himself onto reality he remains forever a mystery to himself. Freud made his bargain with the devil to gain knowledge, power, and the chance to deflower a virgin, "a suppressed wish", according to "Screen Memories". But in the end he can only ask leading questions. "Why", he wonders as an old man,

> should it be such a specially hideous crime to commit incest with a daughter or sister, so much more so than any other sexual relations? When we ask for an explanation we shall surely be told that all our feelings cry out against such a crime. Yet all this means is that the prohibition is taken to be self-evident, that we do not know how to explain it.
>
> That such an explanation is illusory can easily be proved. What is reputed to offend our feelings used to be a general custom—one might say, a sacred tradition—in the ruling families of the ancient Egyptians and other peoples. It went without saying that each Pharaoh found his first and foremost wife in his sister, and the successors of the Pharaohs, the Greek Ptolemies, did not

[242] Ralph McInerny, *Art and Prudence: Studies in the Thought of Jacques Maritain* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 1988), p. 106.
[243] Ibid., p. 5.
[244] Bakan, p. 181.

> hesitate to follow his example. So far we seem to discern that incest—in this case between brother and sister—was a prerogative forbidden to ordinary mortals and reserved for kings who represented gods on earth.[245]

At the end of his life, Freud can only discern Freud when he looks at reality, that and his inordinate sexual desire for his sister-in-law projected back onto the Egyptians and transmuted into a cheap vehicle for apotheosis. Incest was supposed to be the universal wish of mankind, and Freud the first one to discover that fact, which was to herald a new dispensation of life without guilt through—not repentance and forgiveness—but psychotherapy. In the end things turned out differently though. The man who guarded his private life so jealously will end up being known only for inadvertent self-revelation; the man who thought he found mankind's secret wish ended up only revealing his own; the man who thought that by committing incest he would become like a "god", only managed to bring about his own Fall. In the beginning was the deed; in the end things turn out differently than we plan.

[245] Freud, *Moses,* pp. 154–55.

Chapter 9

LUTHER'S ENDURING LEGACY

The Ragamuffin Gospel is an inspirational book.[1] You can tell that by looking at the back of the dust jacket. Right above the ISBN number and right below the picture of the author, for the convenience of those who have to figure out which shelf to stack it on, there is the helpful designation "Inspirational/Personal Growth". The meaning of the term inspirational has varied with the ages. At one time it would have been inspirational to tell an audience aspiring to piety that "The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you and is dreadfully provoked." That was Jonathan Edwards' idea of inspiring an eighteenth-century American audience as expressed in the sermon "Sinners in Hands of an Angry God".

But nowadays people who aspire to inspire don't use that kind of language. Nowadays inspiration means explaining to people, not that they have been too easy on themselves, but how they have been too hard. Suddenly in the midst of life's struggle, the whistle blows and we are told that everyone is a winner and we can all go to the showers for the post-game celebration—I am paraphrasing a passage from *The Ragamuffin Gospel* here. The solution to the trials of life is to tell us that there really are no trials, that it's all been taken care of by God, that we have no need to worry.

There is, of course, a sense in which this is profoundly true. We do have no need to worry about life's vicissitudes separating us from God's love. Nothing can do that, not even the prince of the world and all his powers and principalities. We should also not worry about the things of this world—money, what we should wear, what we eat—because God provides all those things. We are told to seek first the kingdom of God and let God take care of the rest. But in that very admonition there is some indication that we should be concerned about at least one thing, namely, seeking the kingdom of God. St. Paul tells us that we work out our salvation in "fear and trembling".

Brennan Manning's attempt to inspire us is based on a deep-seated confu-

[1] Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel* (Portland, Ore.: Multnomah Press, 1990).

sion between just these two types of concern. "Do you live each day", he asks toward the end of his book,

> in the blessed assurance that you have been saved by the unique grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? After falling flat on your face are you still firmly convinced that the fundamental structure of reality is not works but grace? Are you moody and melancholy because you are still striving for the perfection that comes from your own efforts and not from faith in Jesus Christ? Are you shocked and horrified when you fail? Are you really aware that you don't have to change, grow, or be good to be loved?[2]

After reading this passage, one wonders why the author didn't finish on the same note with which he began. God, of course, loves everything and everyone, even the damned. But the significant fact for the damned is not so much that God loves them—they couldn't care less—but the fact that they have separated themselves from that love. They are damned for all eternity. That's a long time, as we used to say, to think about something, especially something unpleasant. So, yes, God loves everyone, but that love doesn't prevent them from exercising their free will in rejecting God's love. So the crucial question is whether "you don't have to change, grow or be good" in order to be saved.

In Christianity there are two fundamentally different answers to that question. "Freedom of the will", St. Augustine tells us, "isn't taken away because you have been helped by grace, rather you have been helped because it hasn't been taken away." In differentiating his own position from that of the Pelagians, St. Augustine adds: "We too teach the freedom of the will. It's not because of this that you are Pelagians, but rather because you remove from that freedom the support of grace in good and meritorious actions." The Catholic Church has always defended the freedom of the will against those both ancient and modern who sought to deny it. The desire to deny free will is, like the poor, always with us, but we will call the two alternatives the Catholic and the Protestant, with the caveat that the term Protestant here is being used not in its contemporary but in its original sense. There are thousands of different Protestant denominations now with probably as many positions and distinctions on grace and free will, but they all derive in some sense from Martin Luther's rebellion against the Catholic Church, and at the heart of that rebellion was Luther's doctrine of the enslaved will.

So according to the Catholic position, the will is free to respond to or reject grace freely offered by God. The Catholic position is rooted in Scripture and based on the teaching of Jesus Christ, as evidenced in the Parable of the Wedding Feast (Mt 22:1–14). "The kingdom of God", we are told, "may be compared to a king who gave a feast for his son's wedding. He sent his

[2] Ibid., p. 204.

servants to call those who had been invited, but they would not come." Unlike the Pelagians, Catholics believe that salvation comes as a result of grace. Unlike the Lutherans, Catholics believe that the will is free to accept or reject the grace that God offers.

The position of Luther is simple. "Whatever God has made", he writes in *De Servo Arbitrio,* his classic attack on the idea of free will, "he moves, impels and urges forward (*movet, agit, rapit*) with the force of his omnipotence, which none can escape or alter; all must yield compliance and obedience according to the power conferred on them by God."[3]

Martin Luther, the one-time Augustinian priest, is resolutely at war with the notion of free will. His rejection of free will lies at the heart of his system. When he was asked later in life about all that he had written, he said that all but two of his works were insignificant: those two were his Catechism and *De Servo Arbitrio.* According to that latter work, either God or Satan rules mankind. "The case is simply thus," he writes, "if God is within us, the devil is not there and we can only desire what is good. But if God is absent, the devil is present, and then we can desire only what is evil."[4]

In an image from *De Servo Arbitrio* that has become famous, Luther writes, "The human will stands like a saddle horse between the two. If God mounts into the saddle, man wills and goes forward as God wills. . . . But if the devil is the horseman, then man wills and acts as the devil wills. He has no power to run to one or the other of the two riders and offer himself to him, but the riders fight to obtain possession of the animal."[5]

So the Lutheran position is quite simple. It degrades man to the level of a beast; it contradicts Scripture, which should be accounted a serious fault for a thinker who espoused *"sola scriptura"* as one of his prime principles; it flies in the face of human experience, which is faced every day with choices not only of the mundane sort but between those involving good and evil that will have profound and lasting effects on our lives here and in the world to come. Lutheranism, insofar as it is true to its founder's vision, is based not only on a radical contradiction of Scripture and human nature but on radical self-contradiction as well. It condemns sin and yet at the same time asserts that the will is not free to resist sin or do virtue. Such assertion entails, as one writer puts it, "the death of ethics"; it also contradicts the whole of civilized life. And yet in spite of all this, the Lutheran ideology attracted and continues to attract adherents. In this regard it is a bit like scepticism—the belief that one can be sure that nothing is certain. Scepticism is inherently self-contradictory, and yet

[3] Hartmann Grisar, S.J., *Martin Luther: His Life and Work* (Westminster, Md: The Newman Press, 1950), p. 300.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

academe is full of sceptics. Similarly, the world still contains Lutherans—Brennan Manning is in fact one of them—but that doesn't change the radically self-contradictory nature of their beliefs. A Lutheran inspirational book is something like a book on the Christian Scientist's view of brain surgery. Just what are we inspired to do?

Brennan Manning bumps into this contradiction early on in his book. "I believe", he tells us,

> the Reformation actually began the day Martin Luther was praying over the meaning of Paul's words in Romans 1:17. "In the gospel this is what reveals the righteousness of God to us.... It shows how faith leads to faith, or as Scripture says: the righteous shall find life through faith." Like many Christians today, Luther wrestled through the night with the core question: how could the gospel of Christ be truly called "Good News" if God is a righteous judge rewarding the good and punishing evil?[6]

I have been confronted by many tough questions in my life; however, this is not one of them. The good news is compatible with a God who rewards the good and punishes evil if it explains to us how to be good and gives us the power to carry out those instructions. Conversely, if we are conscious of ourselves as powerless to resist evil, well, then, maybe the gospel as Christ taught it isn't such good news after all. The crux of the matter seems to be our understanding of the moral life and our ability to live according to God's word.

The author's misunderstanding of the moral life and its relation to salvation is born out by another passage in *The Ragamuffin Gospel.* "In Luke 18," Manning writes,

> a rich young man comes to Jesus asking what he must *do* to inherit eternal life. He wants to be in the spotlight. It is no coincidence that Luke juxtaposes the passage of Jesus and the children immediately preceding the verses on the young aristocrat. Children contrast with the rich man simply because there is no question of their having been yet able to merit anything. Jesus' point is this: there is nothing that any of us can do to inherit the Kingdom.[7]

Well, this is, as they say, an interesting interpretation. And it is typically Lutheran; however, it flies in the face of the Gospel passage it sets out to interpret. According to Luther, what Jesus should have said was, "*Do?* What must you *do?* Hey, you don't have to do anything to be saved. It's all *sola fide,* baby, justification by faith alone. Don't do anything, just believe." (Whether believing is an action is another matter. Faith used to be called an assent of the

[6] Manning, p. 17.
[7] Ibid., p. 24.

will, which implies that it too is an action, a work, if you will, but we will let that pass just as Luther did.) According to Scripture, what Jesus actually said was, "You know the commandments." He then goes on to enumerate the prohibitions against theft, adultery, lying, and killing, implying, of course, that those who do not follow them will not inherit eternal life. For the especially dull-witted, those who like their implications spelled out, there is the passage recounting the same parable in Matthew 19, in which Jesus says, "If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Mt 19:18).

So it turns out, according to Scripture at least, that we do have to *do* something in order to be saved after all. And it turns out that the rich young man of the parable has been doing all those things since his youth: "I have kept all these since I was a boy", he replies in Luke's account. But he wants to do more. He wants a surer way to eternal life. And Jesus, far from negating what he has said before about the necessity of following God's law, tells him "Sell all you have and give it to the poor. You will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me" (Lk 19:22). The rich young man, however, was very attached to his possessions. He couldn't give them up, and as a result "he went away sad" (Mt 19:22).

Interestingly, the later part of the account of the encounter between Jesus and the rich young man gets omitted from Manning's account. It's not hard to understand why. The emphasis on what one has to do to gain eternal salvation flies in the face of the message Manning and Luther are preaching. But the omission of the second part of the passage is interesting for another reason as well. The passage about selling all you have and giving it to the poor is traditionally known as the evangelical counsels. According to the earliest Christian tradition, and that continued by the Catholic Church, those who are looking for the best way to follow Jesus should, in addition to keeping the commandments, freely adopt the threefold renunciation involved in vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—the vows one takes upon entering the religious life.

It's easy to see why Manning the Lutheran would want to omit the passages about keeping the commandments, but why does the author omit the evangelical counsels as well? Well, that may be because they are relevant to his life in the same way they were to Martin Luther's. Brennan Manning was ordained a Franciscan priest in May of 1963. In 1982 Father Manning got married without being laicized, just as Father Luther did in 1525. The ideology of justification by faith alone culminating in the enslaved will answers the same psychic need in both men; it allows both men to rationalize their own culpability in a losing struggle against sensuality, drunkenness, and broken vows.

The Ragamuffin Gospel is full of anecdotes that sketch out Manning's own

personal spiritual odyssey. As a matter of fact, all his books are. So after becoming a Franciscan priest, Manning (whose real first name is Richard; he claims to have adopted the name Brennan from a buddy in a foxhole in Korea after that man fell on a hand grenade and died; one source, however, says the man in question was only wounded) went to teach at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, got a graduate degree, took a leave of absence to live with the Little Brothers of Jesus in Europe, became a Charismatic in 1970 (June 6, to be exact, as he recounted in a tape of a retreat he gave in Virginia), woke up in an alcoholic fog in Fort Lauderdale in 1975, went to a rehab, went to a rehab again, met a divorced woman at a retreat in Morgan City, Louisiana, and married her in 1982. As a result, he incurred, according to the new code of canon law, *latae sententiae,* suspension and interdict. As he now puts it, the attempted marriage made him "*persona non grata* in the eyes of the Church", and as a result he chose a career as a "vagabond evangelist", which he is pursuing now, giving retreats to "mainline Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist, and nondenominational churches all over the place."

Given the tangled skein that is Manning's personal life, is there any one thread we can pull on to unravel it into some meaningful pattern. How does a Franciscan priest who had achieved a modicum of fame for his preaching end up being a "vagabond evangelist" espousing Lutheran ideology? Did all that alcohol soften his brain? Is there something intellectually defective about the Franciscans? Did the Charismatic Renewal, with its emphasis on ecumenical sensitivity, provide a convenient exit from the Catholic Faith and a rationale for breaking solemn vows? Or, least likely of all, after dispassionate study, was he intellectually convinced of the rightness of Luther's thinking? Or did all the above work together in some arcane spiritual alchemy that still needs to be explicated? Is there some negative philosopher's stone that transformed Father Manning from the gold of a Franciscan priest into the lead of a "vagabond evangelist" espousing Lutheran ideology?

Those who know him seem at a loss to explain the change. Ralph Martin, who knew Manning from the Charismatic Renewal, tried to make some link between doctrine and marriage but without much success.

"I never heard from either of them", he said, referring to Manning and his wife, "any theological justification for what they were doing. It seemed that it was always presented like they should be married. At least at the beginning there was never any doctrinal content."

What about, then, the Charismatic Movement as an escape hatch into Protestantism? "Do you think the Charismatic emphasis on ecumenism helps these people leave the Church?" I ask.

"I don't know", Martin answers. "It's possible that having a first-hand experience of a reasonably vital Christian life in places other than the Catholic

Church is a factor. But that's just kind of off-the-top-of-my-head speculation. I think that a number of the Catholics in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal have had their sights raised on what they felt they should be experiencing in their parish. And because they haven't, some of them have gone where they feel they can experience more support in evangelical churches. They're not finding in their experience of local Catholicism something vital enough to get them committed."

In the January 1991 issue of *New Covenant,* the Catholic Charismatic monthly, Julia Duin writes that "Many of America's large nondenominational charismatic churches have built their membership on disaffected Catholics, many of them with previous involvement in the Catholic charismatic renewal."[8] She goes on to quote the Rev. Vinson Synan as saying that "Catholics leave because they find more spiritual nourishment elsewhere."[9]

So did Manning break his vows to find spiritual nourishment? Answering the question is complicated by the fact that Manning still considers himself a Catholic in good standing. "I'm still a Catholic", he hastens to add. "I attend a Roman Catholic Church here in New Orleans. I live an active sacramental life in the Catholic Church." This active sacramental life includes receiving the Holy Eucharist, which makes it not only active but sacrilegious as well, at least according to canons 1331 and 1332.

Someone who knew Manning probably as well as anyone was the Rev. Michael Scanlan, T.O.R., also a Franciscan and a Charismatic and now president of the University of Steubenville, where Manning taught in the sixties. Scanlan met Manning in 1958 when both were seminarians. When asked if he ever thought about how Manning got from point A to point B on his spiritual odyssey, Scanlan responded, "Yeah, I have. It's . . . ", then the priest hesitated as if he had come up with an explanation but decided not to share it.

"I would hope he'd talk about it", he continued. "I think that's just something deep in him. He's a great idealist and he always wanted to go for the best, for perfection, whatever the cost to do it. I think it comes out of his family background way at the beginning. I think a lot of people become very strong dreamers, and I think he dreamed at a high level for achieving the perfect life and I think he kept pursuing that."

"In referring to the perfect life, the gospel mentions the counsels of perfection—the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—but apparently he wanted to go beyond that", I countered.

"Well, he always believed in a more perfect Jesus-centered life than was available within his reach. And he was very much striving to find that kind of

[8] Julia Duin, "Inactive Catholics", *New Covenant,* January 1991, pp. 9–14.
[9] Ibid., p. 10.

thing. And that's why [he joined] the house of prayer and the Little Brothers of Jesus. He inspires a lot of other people to want to find a more perfect life committed to Jesus as opposed to emphasizing church or ecclesiology."

"It implies not being faithful to vows you took", I replied.

"That's the part I wouldn't agree with."

"So was it a flaw in his training with the Franciscans?"

"I think the training was fine", said Scanlan, who went through the same regimen.

Manning in his tapes and books mentions the influence of the Charismatic healer Francis MacNutt, also a former priest who left to get married. MacNutt officiated at Manning's wedding, and Manning baptized two of the MacNutt children.

"Is it too much to say that he followed Francis MacNutt out of the Church?"

"Yeah, it's too much to say that," Scanlan responded. "He was highly independent of Francis and never came under Francis' tutelage. There are a lot of people who have followed Francis, and Brennan wouldn't be one. As a matter of fact it's very unusual for Brennan to follow anyone."

As the interview progresses we gradually run out of threads to pull. "Does the Charismatic Movement provide a way out of the Church for these people?"

"Only if you create new associations through it", Scanlan answered enigmatically. "I think that what the Charismatic Movement did for Brennan is give him an opportunity, an opening for the kind of preaching and writing that he wanted to do that was very much accepted. Some of the things he was doing before the Charismatic Renewal came along fit in with Charismatic conferences, and he was very much in demand, and so it created a lot of opportunities.

"I definitely wouldn't say it was that", said Scanlan, referring to the Charismatic Renewal. "He didn't change that much. Anybody who knew him would say there was nothing that you could pick up that was different in him before and after the Charismatic Renewal. He just found a whole group that responded to the things he had been doing before. He just found a fit and a match. This guy used to fill the church to overflowing crowds at midnight Mass on this campus in the late sixties because he was the most dynamic preacher anybody could hear anywhere. And it caused the concern of local pastors because everyone would go to hear him midnight Saturday. They just loved it, and it was highly motivational and highly inspirational—full of stories and all the stuff in his books. And when he went into Charismatic circles he just did the exact same thing he had been doing, whereas most other people I know changed. I think you gotta go back."

On Holy Saturday in the year 1523, Leonhard Koppe, a city councilman from the nearby town of Torgau, drove an ordinary looking covered wagon of the kind that usually transported goods in medieval Germany up to the gate of the Nimbschen Convent. The nuns at Kloster Nimbschen were generally sisters who had entered the Cistercian convent near Grimma without a particular occupation or those who had been sent there because of advanced acedia and/or an inability to keep their vows. It was a convent that was festering for change in a time when the Church in this particular part of Germany was being turned upside down by the Protestant Revolt. The nuns, of course, were as aware of the upheaval as anyone and, given their spiritual state, probably more so than most. They had already established contact with Martin Luther, then in nearby Wittenberg, who had requested that the nuns be sent to him, only to run into a flat refusal from the convent's superiors. So as a result, he plotted their abduction with the help of Koppe and two other citizens of the town of Torgau.

Koppe was no stranger to this sort of activity. On Ash Wednesday of the same year (he seems to have had a penchant for "liberating" nuns on high holy days) he and sixteen other members of the Protestant party stormed the Franciscan convent in Torgau, throwing the few brothers who were there to defend the convent off the walls and smashing up the place in general in the process. The abduction from the Nimbschen convent was a far less dramatic affair. The covered wagon usually arrived to deliver food, and so it aroused no suspicion when Koppe drove it up to the gate. Once inside, the twelve apostate nuns who wanted out lost no time in getting under the wagon's tent-like covering, and Koppe drove them out of the religious life and back to Wittenberg, where Luther celebrated this farcical escape as analogous to the Resurrection. Just as Jesus Christ, the man who rose from the dead was a glorious robber who stole the possessions from the prince of this world, Luther wrote in an open letter explaining his part in the abduction, so Leonhard Koppe, the nun abductor, could also be termed a "holy robber". Then, as if to insure the good conscience of all involved, he added with a particularly Lutheran flourish that "you should be quite certain that God foreordained what happened and that it is not a result of your own actions or plans."[10]

Luther's peculiar version of liberation theology, as published in the open letter *"Ursache und Antwort, dass Jungfrauen Kloester göttlich verlassen mögen"*, was, like the latter-day variety, only tangentially concerned with liberation. The real purpose behind getting the nuns out of the convent became apparent

[10] Hartmann Grisar, S.J., *Luther* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersche Verlagshandlung), vol. 1, p. 439 (my translation).

in a letter written by Amsdorf to Spalatin on April 4. All twelve nuns, Amsdorf writes, were "good-looking, and all of them are aristocrats, and not one of them is in her fifties."[11] Amsdorf praises their patience and gaiety and then gets down to business by offering the ex-priest Spalatin one as a wife. Amsdorf had in mind the not-so-young sister of Staupitz, Luther's former superior in the Augustinians. However, if Spalatin had a younger model in mind, he should have no fears on Amsdorf's account. "If you want a younger one," he adds, "you'll get your pick of the best-looking ones."[12] Such was the women's liberation practiced by the Protestant Party in Germany in the sixteenth century. Actually, since it involved the programmatic breaking down of sexual restraints, it was not much different from its twentieth-century variety.

Not too much later, three more nuns arrived at Wittenburg from Nimbschen, and then another sixteen arrived from Kloster Widerstett, of whom five were taken in by Count Albrecht of Mansfeld. Trafficking in nuns had become one of the chief ecclesial transactions of the Reformed party in Germany, and throughout the 1520s Wittenberg became one of their favorite meeting places. Luther spent much of his time writing to various priests and clerics urging them to marry and thereby break the solemn vows they had made. His motives in urging marriage on apostate nuns and priests were clear. Once that spiritual transaction had been accomplished, the apostate priest was firmly in the Lutheran camp, a fact that Luther exploited for its maximal political effect. Libido culminating in broken vows was the engine that pulled the Reformation train. It was a uniquely effective way of organizing ex-clergy in opposition to the Church. Once they had made two contradictory sets of solemn vows, there was no way out. Damned if you do and damned if you don't is one way of putting it. The marriage vows were, of course, invalid; however, in the natural order of things, especially after children arrived, they seemed every bit as compelling. "Within me", one unhappy priest who succumbed to the trap writes to a brother who is still a monk, "a constant conflict rages. I often resolve to mend my course, but when I get home and wife and children come to meet me, my love for them asserts itself more mightily than my love for God, and to overcome myself becomes impossible for me."[13]

"No paramour", wrote one contemporary, "is as lascivious as our erstwhile nuns",[14] and the gospel of Christian freedom and justification by faith alone was having predictable effects among an already heavily corrupted clergy. Sexual corruption was a large part of Catholic life in Germany at the time.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid. ("Wiltu aber ein jüngere haben, so soltu di Wal under den schonsten haben.")

[13] Heinrich Denifle, *Luther and Lutherdom* (Somerset, Ohio: Torch Press, 1917), p. 3.

[14] Ibid., p. 116.

Large numbers of priests lived in concubinage. Some bishops allowed it for the payment of a fee. Luther evolved the brilliant strategy of railing against what he termed corruption in his opponents and rationalizing the same behavior on the part of those who were his followers. Those followers, former priests and nuns for the most part, were following the siren song of Lutheran theology and coming to Wittenberg to act out the new gospel with other like-minded Religious. The effects were predictable. "How many of the pious runaway monks and nuns has your excellency found", writes one German prince to another, "who have not become common whores and rascals?" "It was these people", comments Denifle, "who read in their fleshly lust a God-given sign by which they were called to marriage."[15] "Luther's counsels", claimed one priest who had lived as part of the evangelical party and then returned to the Church, "had been carried out to such a degree that there is absolutely more chastity and honor in the married state in Turkey than among evangelicals in Germany."[16] "For it is manifest that no one", wrote Johann Mensing, "(not gulled out of simplicity) takes refuge in the Lutheran sect to become more pious and of better mind, but that he may live free and unpunished and without reserve to do all that he pleases."[17]

The longing of the renegade priests in Germany in the sixteenth century, according to Denifle, "centered on a free life and a wife. Those, especially the secular priests, who had already been living in immorality (which Luther and his fellows had so often charged against them while they were still under the papacy) went over to him not to put away their concubines, but to be able to continue living with them with a conscience freed by Luther."[18] "Oh, what a grand doctrine that was," writes Wicel, explaining how the Lutheran ideology spread among the decadent German clergy of the time, "not to be obliged to confess any more, nor to pray, nor to fast, nor to make offerings, nor to give alms."[19] The Lutheran ideology unleashed libido to achieve its political and ecclesial ends, and Luther, like Hugh Hefner, discovered that the only way to make use of libido effectively was to create for his contemporaries an escape from the guilt that accompanied its satisfaction. The sixteenth-century equivalent of the Playboy Philosophy was justification by faith alone, culminating in the doctrine of the enslaved will. *De Servo Arbitrio,* it should be remembered, was published in the same year that Luther married. Luther, in creating his doctrine of the enslaved will, became the first modern man, and Lutheranism became the first modern ideology. Its primary attraction to the hordes of

[15] Ibid., p. 12.
[16] Ibid., p. 298 n.
[17] Ibid., p. 358.
[18] Ibid., p. 364.
[19] Grisar, *Martin Luther,* p. 224.

apostate priests and nuns who flocked to Wittenberg to follow him lay in its ability to rationalize sexual license and broken vows.

"Be a sinner and sin stoutly," Luther preached, "but trust in Christ much more firmly . . . even should you practice whoredom a thousand times a day or deal just as many death-dealing blows."[20] Judging from contemporary accounts, Luther's followers were only too willing to take him up on his offer. Luther would go farther still, claiming that "there were no difference between the married state and whoredom, were not God willing to close his eyes to it."[21]

Given human nature and the power of the sexual urge, it is not surprising that his doctrines would soon have a similar effect on Dr. Martinus himself. Luther was to write in later life that if anyone could have gotten to heaven by monkery that he should have been the one, implying severe fasts, vigils, etc. However, his own account of his life at the time belies later distortions. In 1516 Luther wrote to Lang at Erfurt, "I ought to have two secretaries, for I hardly do anything the livelong day, but write letters. . . . Seldom does full time remain for my reading the hours (of the divine office) and for celebrating Mass. Besides, there are my own temptations of the flesh, the world and the devil."[22] "I am inflamed with carnal desire," he writes of the period in the Wartburg, "while I ought to be fervent in spirit. I am on fire with the great flame of my unbridled flesh and sit here in leisure and laziness neglecting prayer."[23] Throughout the second decade of the sixteenth century. Luther became involved in a spiritual downward spiral in which, as is the case with an embodied spirit, spiritual laxity led to sensuality, which in turn led to intellectual rebellion against the discipline of the Church, which led to further sensual decline and further rage against the Church that upheld the standards he soon felt no longer capable of keeping. Luther's ideology of justification by faith alone culminating in his doctrine of the enslaved will was the doctrinal and intellectual component of his moral decline. It was the rationalization that made this spiritual decline tolerable to his conscience.

It was a spiritual decline that did not go unnoticed by Luther's contemporaries. In 1522 the Catholic Count Hoher von Mansfeld wrote to Count Ulrich von Helfenstein, explaining that he "used to be a good Lutheran, but found out that Luther was a first-class scoundrel [*ein lauter Bube*] because he drinks like a fish [*er ersaufe sich voll*] as is usual in Mansfeld, likes to have good-looking women around him, plays the lute a lot, and leads a generally

[20] Denifle, p. 366.
[21] Ibid., p. 290.
[22] Ibid., p. 35.
[23] Ibid., p. 12.

wanton life."[24] As a result of Luther's behavior, the count got disillusioned with the evangelical party and left.

In 1522 Jacob Ziegler wrote to Erasmus relating a conversation with a bishop in Rome in which "the opinion was expressed that Luther was given to whoremongering and boozing." Another account charged him with "trafficking with prostitutes, playing dice and hanging out in bars".[25] On June 11, 1523, Wolfgang Rychardus wrote to Johannes Magdenbuch, another doctor who was treating Luther at the time for a fever, saying that "if the pain of the French disease disturbs his sleep" [*et si cum hoc dolores mali Franciae somno impedimento fuerint*], he should apply a plaster of wine, mercury, and earth worms as a palliative. Grisar comments on the passage by saying that "no doctor would talk this way about a patient who didn't have symptoms of syphilis" but adds that this is the only document in the Lutheran corpus that mentions this disease.[26]

Numerous sources confirm, however, that Luther's uninhibited relations with the apostate nuns in Wittenberg were causing tongues to wag and that the talk threatened to jeopardize the whole cause of the Reformation. In a letter written on June 16, 1525, to Camerarius in Greek to evade prying eyes, Melanchthon complains about Luther's "buffoonery" (*bomoloxia*) with the apostate nuns in Wittenberg. Luther, he continues, is too "accessible to the nuns", who "craftily ensnared him".[27] As a result of his intercourse with them, Luther was "weakened and enflamed".[28] Melanchthon said that Luther's behavior lacked dignity and that he and other friends often had to reproach him for his buffoonery. Perhaps because of the delicate nature of Melanchthon's concern, Camerarius severely expurgated the letter, which only appeared in its original version in 1876, over 350 years after it was written.

Luther himself confirms what others had been saying about him. "The whole world is looking at us", Luther said in a sermon in 1524. "The devil has his eye on me so that he can cast suspicion on my teaching."[29] In a letter of November 30, 1524, he writes that "it's not as if I don't feel my own flesh and sexuality, because I'm not made of wood or stone; however, I don't feel inclined to marry."[30] In subsequent months, however, the pressure increased, both internally in terms of his own concupiscence and externally in terms of the impression that his traffic with the apostate nuns was having on public opinion. On April 16, 1525, Luther wrote to Spalatin in a now famous letter:

[24] Grisar, *Luther,* vol. 2, p. 435.
[25] Ibid., p. 436.
[26] Ibid., p. 462.
[27] Ibid., p. 297.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid., p. 437.
[30] Ibid., p. 441.

> you shouldn't be surprised that I, who am such a famous lover [*famosus amator*], don't get married. It is even more surprising that I who so often write about marriage and who have such relations with women [*sic misceor feminis*] haven't become a woman myself, much less haven't taken one as my wife. In the meantime, if you need my example, you have the mightiest possible; because I had three wives at the same time [*tres simul uxores habui*], and I loved them so fiercely that I lost two, who got married to other men. The third one I can hardly hold onto with my left arm, and this one will perhaps also soon be taken from me. But you, you apathetic lover, you don't even have the guts to marry one woman. So, in the meantime, watch out that I don't beat you to the altar after all, because that's how God works, bringing about just what you least expected.[31]

Luther ends his letter by saying "All joking aside, I'm telling you this in order to force you where you want to go anyway [namely, to the altar]."[32] It leads one to believe that Luther could have had a serious point in mind when he was joking. Just what that serious point is in relation to Luther himself remains controversial. Is he referring to rumors about his unseemly relations with the runaway nuns when he calls himself *"famosus amator"*? Is he referring to his unfulfilled desires? Is he referring to flirtations that were not consummated? Is he referring to affairs he had with the first two "wives"? "Later generations, in the wake of confessional polemics", the Protestant biographer Bornkamm writes recently, "humourlessly took Luther's joking to be an admission of a lively love life."[33] Grisar admits that Luther was joking in his letter but is not as sure that he can dismiss the subject matter of the joke. He chides Luther for "inappropriate humor" and for the fact that in describing his relations with the nuns he chose "an extremely ambiguous mode of expression, for *misceor feminis* in the passive form and in contexts similar to the one above means as much as to say 'sexual intercourse with women', and the writer does nothing to dispute this."[34]

Luther's third "wife", the one he could hardly hold onto with his left arm, was an aristocrat by the name of Catherina von Bora. She was one of the twelve nuns he had helped abduct from Kloster Nimbschen approximately two years before. Two months after his letter to Spalatin and without consulting his friends on the matter, Luther married her, a step he described in typically Lutheran fashion: "The Lord suddenly and while my thoughts were elsewhere plunged me into matrimony" [*Dominus me subito alique cogitantem*

[31] Ibid., p. 442.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther in Mid-Career 1521–1530* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983),

coniecit me in coniugium].[35] Luther expresses himself in typical fashion here. Whenever he makes a momentous decision, one that will also carry with it the burden of culpability, he ascribes to his own will the working of God and attempts to convey the impression that he was powerless to resist. Of his complicity in putting down the Peasant Revolt at around the same time as his marriage and the culmination of his thinking on the enslaved will, he writes,

> I, Martin Luther, have slain all the peasants at the time of their rebellion, for I commanded them to be killed; their blood is upon me. But I cast it upon our Lord God; He commanded me to speak as I did.[36]

With free will goes culpability. In order to obliterate his culpability for the death of the peasants, for the breaking of solemn vows, for the sins of the flesh, for the fracturing of the unity of Christendom, Luther must obliterate free will. For if in fact the will were free, he would have to answer for what he had done before God. Luther's doctrine of the enslaved will flows directly from his troubled conscience. The doctrine of the enslaved will that lies at the heart of the Lutheran ideology is at heart the admission of a man who struggled against evil and then failed, and then tried to rationalize the failure by claiming that there was no struggle. "I have often attempted to become good," Luther said in a sermon he gave in 1524, "however the more I struggle, the less I succeed. Behold then, what free will is."[37]

Unresisted libido, broken vows, and hatred for the Church are all individual pieces that go into the making of the mosaic that was Luther's doctrine of the enslaved will. "Chastity", writes Denifle,

> was oppressing him from 1519 and his confession about the lusts of his unbridled flesh . . . dates precisely from the year 1521 in which he wrote his treatise on the vows. Luther became the spokesman of that society whose supreme principle it was that natural instinct cannot be resisted, that it must be satisfied.[38]

By neglecting the spiritual duties appropriate to his state in life, Luther allowed the powers of the flesh to gain the upper hand in his spiritual life, and once he recognized his powerlessness over them, the system of the enslaved will, which made moral effort unnecessary because it was impossible, began to grow in significance. Moral corruption proceeded step by step with doctrinal innovation. The one fed on the other. Luther married, he said later, "to shut

[35] Grisar, *Luther*, vol. 2, p. 471.
[36] Grisar, *Martin Luther*, p. 284.
[37] Grisar, *Luther*, vol. 2, p. 448.
[38] Denifle, p. 73.

the mouths of those who slandered me with Bora."[39] Luther felt driven to marriage by both internal and external forces, and his capitulation took on the trappings of his doctrine of the enslaved will as well. "I've been woven into the braids of my whore" [*Ich bin meiner Metze in die Zöpfe geflochten*], he wrote to another priest who had also married a nun.[40] The term *"Metze"* was not pejorative at the time; however, the theme of subjugation to the female is evident without the pejorative meaning as well.

Luther referred to his wife, whose nickname was Käthe, as his *"Kette"*, the German word for chain. It was a pun he would carry over into Latin as well, calling her also his "Catena". One week after his marriage Luther writes to Wenzeslaus Link, former vicar of the Augustinians, who had also married a woman named Catherina: "Greetings to you and your Catena (chain) from my Catena (chain)."[41] It was a joke that two fallen-away monks would find especially funny.

It's not difficult to see why Luther would consider his wife a chain. First of all, his marriage was the sign of his final capitulation to libido. Melanchthon lists the pull of nature in the already-cited letter to Camerarius. More importantly, his marriage entailed the violation of his solemn vows as a priest. In 1518 Luther wrote, "In religious the violation of a vow is the gravest sacrilege, for freely did they consecrate themselves to God, and now they again withdrew themselves from him."[42] Notice the use of word freely, by the man who would later become the author of the doctrine of the enslaved will. Seven years later, after his marriage to the apostate nun, he concluded that the will was not free, explaining "man necessarily entertains this or that desire, as God gives it to him."[43] Luther's doctrine of the enslaved will arose from a series of increasingly serious defeats on the moral front. Luther's wife was a "chain" not only because she symbolized his inability to resist the temptations of the flesh but also because, by binding himself to her, he was now destined to be in violation of one or the other set of solemn promises he made.

Before final profession of vows, the prior in the Augustinian order in Germany customarily said:

> You have now to choose one of two things, either to depart from us or to renounce the world and wholly consecrate yourself, first to God and then to the Order; for, let it be well observed, once you have so offered yourself it is no longer permitted you, on any ground, to shake off your obedience,

[39] Grisar, *Martin Luther,* p. 295.
[40] Grisar, *Luther,* vol. 2, cf. pp. 444ff. and pp. 469ff.
[41] Ibid., p. 479.
[42] Denifle, p. 92.
[43] Grisar, *Martin Luther,* p. 300.

> which it was your desire, after so protracted deliberation freely to take upon yourself, although you were quite free to reject it.[44]

The essence of the evangelical counsels has always been freedom; the vows one takes involve a free choice above and beyond the call to obey the commandments, which is binding on everyone. Luther took those vows freely, and he freely violated them, and his system of the enslaved will was an attempt to cover over the culpability that went with this violation of solemn vows. St. Augustine, the founder of Luther's order, "teaches that those who have freely chosen continency have made it a necessity, so that they may no longer part from it without condemnation".[45]

The Lutheran system, then, becomes a parody of Catholic religious orders. In the first instance, the aspiring priest or nun freely binds him or herself to renunciation of good things in order to follow Jesus Christ more perfectly. In the Lutheran parody of the evangelical counsels, an already bound nun or priest gives himself over to the "enslaved will" as a rationalization of sensual indulgence and broken vows by claiming that God is author of his sensuality and apostasy. "The doctrine of determinism," Grisar writes, "like [Luther's] whole system, grew out of personal motives and was patterned after his own abnormal mental states."[46]

The doctrine of the enslaved will satisfied a deep need in assuaging Luther's troubled conscience. There was no free will, because Luther willed it so. "Without this doctrine," Luther himself writes,

> I believe I would be constantly tortured by uncertainty and compelled to expunge all my work. My conscience would never enjoy certain ease.... If free will were offered to me, I would not accept it at all. I would not want anything to be placed within my power, so as to give a practical proof of my salvation, because I would nevertheless fear that I could not withstand the spiritual dangers and the attacks of so many devils.[47]

Given all of this, it is not hard to understand why Brennan Manning would find Lutheran theology attractive. He, like Luther and his followers, is a priest who has broken solemn vows by attempting marriage. Like Luther's followers in the sixteenth century, he needs a theological justification for what he has done. Similarities abound.

Like Father Manning, Luther too was a heavy drinker. It would be anachro-

[44] Denifle, p. 92.
[45] Denifle, p. 93.
[46] Grisar, *Martin Luther,* p. 301.
[47] Ibid., p. 302.

nistic to call him an alcoholic, since the term originated in the twentieth century, but he did write to a friend in 1531 saying that he hoped some of the beer he just got would relieve the hangover he had from drinking too much wine.

Father Manning likes to recount an experience at a rehabilitation center for alcoholics in Hazelden, Minnesota, in 1975, in which one of his fellow inmates "collapsed on all fours and sobbed hysterically" after his facade of respectability was stripped away by the group's counselor. He likes recounting it so much, as a matter of fact, that he did it twice. The same account is in Manning's 1975 book, *The Gentle Revolutionaries.*[48] In the fact that Manning felt compelled to repeat the story and in the account itself, one notices a certain resentment against a life lived within the bounds of morality or, as he puts it, in *Ragamuffin,* "the shell of edifying behavior".[49] One gets the impression that prostitutes and alcoholics are the only people who live authentically. "Something is radically wrong", he writes at another point,

> when the local church rejects a person accepted by Jesus: when a harsh, judgmental and unforgiving sentence is passed on homosexuals; when a divorcee is denied communion; when the child of a prostitute is refused baptism; when an unlaicized priest is forbidden the sacraments.[50]

The examples Manning gives range from moral common sense, the case of the unlaicized priest (which not coincidentally is Manning's own case), to bathetic fantasy, but all involve sexual sin and the unspoken assumption that sexual sinners are the really authentic types among us and that those who hew to the Sixth Commandment are unregenerate hypocrites and Pharisees. This *ressentiment* bespeaks an ongoing grudge against sexual morality and the Church's desire to uphold it. "Rule-ridden perfectionism" is the way Manning puts it at one point in *Ragamuffin.*[51]

"Prior to my encounter with Jesus," Manning writes, describing an encounter that evidently took place after he made solemn vows as a Franciscan priest, "my personal life was riddled with guilt, shame, fear, self-hatred, and [worst of all] low self-esteem. You see, growing up Catholic in the late 1930s and 1940s and 1950s, my central preoccupation was sin. Sin was everywhere. It consumed us and dominated our consciousness."[52] Manning follows up this assertion with an account of masturbating in June 1947 and then racing to confession at the

[48] Brennan Manning, *The Gentle Revolutionaries* (Denville, N.J.: TOR Dimensions books, 1976), p. 9.
[49] Manning, *Ragamuffin,* p. 134.
[50] Ibid., p. 26.
[51] Ibid., p. 34.
[52] Ibid., p. 44.

local church. "Being a Catholic in those days", Manning concludes, "meant a life-long struggle to avoid sin, mortal and venial".[53]

Well—let's break this to Father Manning as gently as possible—being a Catholic in these days means exactly the same thing. The only alternative to a life-long struggle against sin is capitulation to sin and the adoption of one of the many modern ideologies that rationalize sinful behavior. The Lutheran ideology of the enslaved will was the first among many. In fact it ushered in the modern age. Judging from Father Manning's book, the appeal is still there—at least to apostate priests. "Justification by grace through faith", Manning writes, "means that I know myself accepted by God *as I am.*"[54] At moments like this, the arrogance of the apostate breaks through all the false humility and romanticizing of sexual sin. This is a man who identifies with his sins and wants God to love what God abhors. Lutheran grace, which covers over but does not eradicate sin, is the epitome of cheap grace; it is the cheapest grace there is because all it creates is the illusion that God tolerates sin.

Yet beneath all the wallowing in embarrassing personal revelations of the sort better confined to Alcoholics Anonymous (why do you think they stress anonymity?) meetings and the confessional is the sense that sin is not all that bad. God doesn't mind it nearly as much as we do. In fact, the only really authentic people are people who consistently fail in their ability to curb their appetites. Father Manning most probably does not feel this way about the sin of drunkenness (nobody does), but our society somehow fails to extend the same feeling to sexual sin—perhaps because it is so spectacularly unsuccessful in controlling it.

Sexual sins are not the worst sins; however, when left unchecked they invariably lead to worse sins. God is always willing to forgive, but at a certain point in the struggle against sins of the flesh people reach a moral threshold of a different sort. At a certain point they stop asking for forgiveness and start looking for rationalizations that will allow them to continue sinning. As with syphilis, so with the moral life: what starts between the legs often ends up infecting the brain. Just as pride brings on sexual sin—sodomy in particular (cf. Romans 1) as a punishment—so sexual sin leads to the pride that refuses to repent. This spiritual trajectory is evident in Manning's writings as much as it is in Luther's.

In 1975, in *The Gentle Revolutionaries,* Father Manning the Franciscan priest and Catholic in good standing—a man at least theoretically open to the possibility of sacramental confession—wrote:

> The woman caught in adultery was not even asked if she were sorry. He did not demand a firm purpose of amendment. He did not lecture her on the

[53] Ibid., p. 46.
[54] Ibid.

> harsh consequences of future infidelity. . . . He looked at the woman, loved her, forgave her, and told her not to sin anymore.[55]

Fifteen years later, Manning the Lutheran recycles the same anecdote in a slightly different fashion:

> Jesus didn't ask her if she was sorry. He didn't demand a firm purpose of amendment. He didn't seem too concerned that she might dash back into the arms of her lover. She just stood there, and Jesus gave her absolution before she asked for it.[56]

Eight years after his attempted marriage, after Manning has crossed the divide that separates those inside the ark of salvation from those placed under interdict by it, he tells us that "forgiveness precedes repentance. The sinner is accepted before he pleads for mercy. It is already granted. He need only receive it. Total amnesty. Gratuitous pardon."[57]

This is the language of capitulation. In the struggle against sin, this is the white flag of cheap grace.

There is a sense, of course, in which God's grace precedes everything, including our repentance. However, he in no way coerces it, nor will he violate our free will by granting forgiveness without it. But one also gets a sense that Father Manning isn't pleading for mercy either. In a telling footnote, Manning informs the reader that "The law says an ordained priest cannot marry. While I disagree with the law, I vigorously defend the church's right to require mandatory celibacy for ordained clergy. With equal vigor I reject the ecclesiastical verdict that Roslyn and I are living in adultery. Once again, a man-made law attempts to supersede divine law."[58]

At the heart of all the posturing about grace, one detects in this apostate priest the cold, hard tumor of pride that will only accept that grace on his own terms. Not for him the means of salvation established by Christ in his Church. His is the theology of Frank Sinatra. Father Manning does it his way. He wants the gospel on his own terms, just as Martin Luther did. "Are you alone wise?" was the thought that plagued Luther in his days at the Wartburg. We can hope that Father Manning comes to a better answer and a better end than Father Luther did so long ago.

[55] Manning, *Revolutionaries,* p. 72.
[56] Manning, *Ragamuffin,* p. 173.
[57] Ibid., p. 188.
[58] Ibid., p. 146.

EPILOGUE

MORAL REALISM: THE ULTIMATE DECONSTRUCTION

> "The spiritual man . . . can appraise everything, though he himself can be appraised by no one."
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> I Corinthians 2:15

In his book *The Flight from Woman,*[1] the Jewish-Catholic psychologist Karl Stern describes the reductionism he finds characteristic of virtually all twentieth-century social science. Those who in another age would have been representatives of what had been known as humane letters became so enamored of the successes of the physical sciences that they decided almost en masse to imitate their methods. "With the victories of the experimental science in full view," Stern writes, "the philosophers went to their laboratory benches and proceeded to boil things down", with the result that "all that remains is a little psychological or economic or sociological residuum at the bottom of the flask."[2]

There is certainly an element of truth to what Stern says. The major moderns all positively lusted after the designation of "scientist" as a way of placing themselves in positions of power. Science, meaning the physical sciences, was the only guarantor of authenticity in the realm of knowledge, and anyone who wanted to have himself taken seriously had to put on the white lab coat before he did anything else. This is true of the proto-moderns, of people like Freud and Marx; but it is true of the epigoni as well. Kinsey and Mead are just two examples that come to mind. In the new and reformed scientific university, psychology took the place of theology as the queen of the sciences. When it came to things human, the main tool in reduction to material causes was psychology: As Stern notes,

> The most striking and dramatic aspect of the psychoanalytic method is that metaphysics seem to be reduced to psychological mechanisms. This approach is not entirely new with Freud, and has its roots in nineteenth-century German philosophy. Thinkers as disparate as Schopenhauer and Feuerbach, Nietzsche and Marx, began to scrutinize things of the spiritual order as to

[1] Karl Stern, *The Flight from Woman* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1965).
[2] Ibid., p. 65.

> their natural origins. Once the natural determinant, usually psychological, was ferreted out, the spiritual was shown to be spurious. Or this, at least, was implied.[3]

What gives us pause is not Stern's description of the trajectory of modernity. What gives us pause is the naiveté with which he accepts their presuppositions, if not their conclusions. Stern is no reductionist, but he does have a problem in dealing with the people who are. He has this unfortunate habit of projecting his own basically decent motives onto people whose desires were quite different from his. So, he tells us, "those who looked into the motives 'behind' faiths and philosophies were often moved by a need for purity and truthfulness.... Their ruthlessness was the ruthlessness of the prophets." Writing in the sixties, at the high noon of the modern age, Stern quite simply makes a mistake here because he knows too little about the biographies of the people whose books he has read. One can say many things about the moderns. To claim, however, that they were motivated by "a need for purity and truthfulness" is, in the light of what we know from current biography, quite simply preposterous. The people Stern describes were not motivated by truth and certainly not by purity; they were motivated by desire.

In the intellectual life, there are two and only two basic transactions. One can subordinate truth to desire, or one can subordinate desire to truth. The moderns, perhaps more than any other group in the intellectual history of the West, fell into the former category. Desire was the prime intellectual coordinate for people like Nietzsche and Freud and the hordes of epigoni who took over virtually all our cultural institutions. Reductionism of the sort Stern describes was simply the intellectual bulldozer that removed the obstacles between the thinker and his desire. The main obstacle, of course, was religion's sanction of the moral order. Debunking of this sort was simply a palliative for the troubled conscience, and the more troubled the conscience, the more the dosage of the palliative had to be increased. At the beginning of the century, Freud, following Nietzsche, began by debunking religion. The Oedipus Complex was the anesthetic Freud applied to his own troubled conscience. It was such a powerful intellectual drug that it narcotized Freud's gifts as a therapist and thinker as well. *Totem and Taboo,* his attempt to locate this complex in history through anthropology, was a laughable attempt that was refuted almost at the very moment it appeared, but one that he held onto until the end of his life. By the end of this century, the reductionist impulse had been extended to include all of meaning. It went by the name of deconstruction. Like Freudianism, it too derived from Nietzsche.

But with the arrival of deconstruction as the dominant reductionist herme-

[3] Ibid., p. 60.

neutic of the late twentieth century in academic life, two curious things began to happen. The first was that the more metaphysical the assertions of the deconstructors became, the more they began to deconstruct themselves. This should not be surprising. Those who set out to contradict the principle of non-contradiction can only succeed by contradicting themselves and deconstructing their own premise. The second is that the biographies of the deconstructors began to appear. First there was the Paul de Man scandal. After attacking their opponents regularly as fascists, it turns out that one of the prime deconstructors spent World War II writing propaganda for a pro-nazi Belgian newspaper. Then, before the dust had settled on that scandal, the furor over the biography of Michel Foucault began to appear on the horizon. Foucault, it seems, was a homosexual and a sado-masochist who died of AIDS in 1984. The supporters of deconstructionism are upset that the author of the new biography makes connections between Foucault's personal life and his intellectual life. Jason Miller, the author of the book on Foucault, considers himself a "cultural radical", but his radicality does not go far enough to suit people like Wendy L. Brown, associate professor of women's studies at the University of California at Santa Cruz, who felt that Miller's temerity in looking for a connection between Foucault's sado-masochism and his deconstructionism was " 'unscholarly and irresponsible' in light of current debates about AIDS and gay rights". "What does it mean," Professor Brown wonders,

> in the context of contemporary political and academic debates about homosexuality and poststructuralism, to write a book which pejoratively links them to each other, as well as to terrorism, political street violence, fascism and nihilism?[4]

What indeed? Other than that this lady is made intensely uncomfortable by the thought that there may be a connection between what people do and what people think, and that the connection may not be the best thing in the world for fostering her personal and political agenda.

But the protestations of the homophilic and poststructuralist professorate notwithstanding, we do seem to be on the verge of a breakthrough of sorts. Modernity has exploded itself, first of all, by the intellectual overreaching of the deconstructors who have rehabilitated metaphysics by their attacks on it. Once the moderns extended the methodology of debunking to its ultimate extension, to encompass metaphysics, they ended up debunking themselves. Commenting on those who wanted proof for first principles, Aristotle commented in the *Metaphysics* that

[4] Scott Heller, "New Foucault Biography Creates Scholarly Stir", *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 30, 1992, p. A13.

> Some, indeed, from lack of education, demand that this principle [i.e., the principle of non-contradiction] too be demonstrated, for it is a lack of education not to know that it is necessary to seek demonstration of some propositions and not of others. For there cannot be a demonstration of everything altogether. There would then be an infinite regress, and hence there would still be no final demonstration. But if there are propositions of which it is necessary to seek a demonstration, then those who refuse to admit ours ought to say what principle they would rather accept.[5]

So it turns out that the rise of deconstruction was the result of, more than anything else, lack of education. A similar claim could be made about modernity: Its rise was predicated on our ignorance of the lives of its proponents. At one point Stern claims that "it is conceivable that Newton, in demolishing ancient physics, was under the influence of an unresolved father complex, but nobody in his right mind would use this as an argument against Newtonian physics."[6] This is true, but the same argument cannot be made for the Oedipus Complex or Mead's doctrine of cultural relativism as based, as she would have it, on the mores of teenagers in Samoa. As he did earlier, Stern misstates the case. If Newton's doctrine is true, then the biographical details about its development are irrelevant. If it or any other theory is not true, then that material becomes much more relevant. If the theory can be shown to be a deliberate falsification, then the biographical material becomes all-important. It becomes the only possible way to make sense of an otherwise inexplicable theory.

What we see arising from the wreckage of modernity is what we might call the doctrine of moral realism, which specifies that guilt is the natural result of transgression of the moral law and so has its root in the moral real world (yes, there are psychologically conditioned exaggerations of conscience). A further corollary of this moral law concerns the relationship between intellectual life and moral life. Far from being two mutually exclusive compartments hermetically sealed off from each other, the intellectual life turns out to be a function of the moral life of the thinker. Apprehension of the truth can only take place when the clamoring of the passions has died down. The mind is like a window. It is transparent only when it is clean. If it, through strenuous effort, catches some glimpse of the truth, then it is the truth that shines forth in that system and not the personality of the thinker. If the thinker is, on the other hand, dominated by desire, then that desire will be the surest explicator of that person's thought. Just as the True was the ultimate debunker of the deconstructor's attack on metaphysics, so the Good, as delimited by the moral law, becomes the ultimate deconstructor of psychological determinism. We can

[5] Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* translated by Richard Hope (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1978), pp. 68–69.

[6] Stern, p. 63.

formulate that in the following way: We can only know what our moral lives allow us to know. Only the pure of heart shall see God. Or as St. Paul puts it, "The spiritual man . . . can appraise everything, though he himself can be appraised by no one." We find in St. Paul the ultimate deconstruction of the deconstructor, the ultimate reduction of the reductionists. Those who set out to debunk the moral and spiritual order were in the end debunked by their own lives. Since they chose desire over truth, the explication of their desires debunked their entire intellectual system. The residue at the bottom of the flask was ultimately their unrepented sins, the desires that became so important they overwhelmed everything else, including their desire to tell the truth and their ability to make sense. Unlike the moderns, the spiritual man and his theories remain undebunkable because the mind of this sort of thinker is a more or less (there are always imperfections) transparent window onto the truth. The final debunking of modernity has taken place; the moderns and their theories were debunked by their own dissolute lives.

This doctrine was known in classical philosophy as the doctrine of connaturality. It is the basis of the education of children, who must first be taught to live in a certain way before they can apprehend the truth. It flies, we need not be reminded, in the face of all the materialisms of our culture, which seem to talk about the intellectual life as a simple function of "intelligence", which can be reduced to a number that is known as our IQ. Our intelligence, our mind, all our faculties are all at the beck and call of the will, which can choose to use or abuse what it has at its disposal. A mind clouded by passion is like a window covered with dirt. It is not transparent; it is aware only of itself. Virtually all the artistic breakthroughs of the modern age (stream of consciousness comes most immediately to mind) are a function of the mind turned away from truth and focused on its own desires instead. The turning away from the truth at the behest of disordered passions does not mean that the mind will stop functioning; it only means that that mind will not perceive the truth. And after a period of laboring in the dark, the mind can choose disorder over order and create for itself idols that it will serve instead of the truth placed in the universe by the Creator who is synonymous with truth. So the rebellion with which this century began is now over, although it most certainly continues. What is over is the pretense that some sort of intellectual breakthrough is imminent. The only breakthrough we got was the suicide of thought brought about by people who were willing to risk anything to gratify their illicit sexual desires. AIDS is a fitting epitaph for our century. What started out in rebellion ended in death. The rebellion against the moral law succeeded, and we overthrew ourselves. In the end modernity was debunked by its own biographies.