Sexuality and its Deviations in the Post-Modern World

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As the modern world oscillates between powerful contrasts and profound discords, while promoting an individualistic relativism and placing excessive value on the biological life, seen as the only means towards fulfillment for a human existence reduced almost exclusively to the material plane, as the modern secularist views dispute Christian spiritual values more and more, the Church is called to adopt a new type of ministry. The Creed of the post modern society is the “transvaluation of all values”, which questioning and criticizing everything that offers stability to a society by anchoring it to history and tradition. Therefore, pornography, homosexuality, abortion, licentiousness and divorce have become everyday realities promoted through media and elevated to the level of a mandatory normality. Sex is now not only a commodity, but also a means to controlling the person. To overcome this real social crisis of the modern secularized society, the Christians of the 21st century are called to rediscover their liturgical vocation and the true meaning and power of the Worship with all its eschatological, ecclesiological, ascetical and cosmic dimensions and content.

Keywords: Sexual liberation, Sexual revolution, Pornography, Christian ethics, Addiction, Eroticism

As the modern world oscillates between powerful contrasts and profound discords while promoting an individualistic relativism and placing excessive value on the biological life which is seen as the only means towards fulfillment for a human existence reduced almost exclusively to the material plane and as the modern secularist views dispute Christian spiritual values more and more, the Church is called to adopt a new type of ministry. Its missionary discourse should be alive, dynamic and relevant to the contemporary man, focused on the man's initiation in the mysteries of the life to come and into his sampling of the grace of the Heavenly Kingdom. In this respect, a key role is taken on by the pastoral missionary activity of the Church, which is summoned to break free from the “Babylonian captivity” of stereotypes, empty expressions, routine and of the lack of relevance for the realities of the contemporary world.

The modern consumerist world is demanding more and more attention and allegiance from the consciousness of each person, by pushing a new

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world and life view that questions all the traditional Christian values and pervades the society with new self-created opinion trends that are completely opposite to the Romanian Christian ethos. The newly industrialized and excessively urbanized world is quite vocal about its creed, 'believing without belonging'¹, i.e. unleashing from any religious affiliation and refusing any form of regulated religion in favour of creating a personal religion. This is the definition of the 21st century man's religiosity.

Those who adhere to this "non-denominational" denomination are the ones who were transformed by the big corporations' bureaucracy and by the stress of an entirely materialistic existence into anonymous individuals who lack the will-power and have forgotten how to relate to God and to their fellow humans in a personal way. Being a Christian implies this very personal relationship, and that is why Christianity is more and more pushed aside and replaced by a pseudo-religion, and by a type of "Christian mutant". "Religious life - like so many other features of post-industrial or postmodern society - is not so much disappearing as mutating, as Grace Davie states, for the sacred undoubtedly persists and will continue to do so, but in forms that may be very different from those which have gone before".²

Modern studies in sociology show that what is happening from a religious point of view in the post-modern societies is a completely new and unique phenomenon. There are more and more opinions expressed about redefining the condition of human existence which must be removed from under the hegemony of traditional values. The secularized post-modern societies have since become home for a cultural Marxism, whose objective is to question and criticize all the institutions that offer stability to a society by anchoring it to history and tradition.

The post-modern society is thus a grand post-Bolshevik experiment. The current cultural Marxism, a much more aggressive and dangerous trend than the classical one, has borrowed from Nietzsche the so-called "transvaluation of all values", which nowadays transfigures everything the traditional societies used to condemn as vice or sin into virtues, and labels what used to be called virtue as reprehensible behaviour or deed. Therefore, pornography, homosexuality, abortion, licentiousness and divorce have become everyday realities promoted through media and elevated to the level of a mandatory

¹ Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain Since 1945: Believing Without Belonging*, Oxford, 1994, p. 226.

² *Ibidem*, p. 198. The author of the book cites a statistic analysis from Great Britain, which shows that in the UK only 60% of the population is nominally Christian, but only 14% have declared their affiliation to a specific Christian denomination (p. 143).

normality. Sex is now not only a commodity, but also a means to controlling the person. Pornography, which is now promoted via a continually upgrading technology, has turned into a real instrument of brainwashing or of directing human behaviour toward wrong paths.³

Through the artistic revolution and the social movement that negated any value, the passage to sexual revolution was swiftly done. With all ethical and moral values being denied, sexual deregulation was just a switch of mindset away, and then it was only a matter of time until wild sexuality became the norm, which caused the abortion rate to rise to a new high. The emergence of contraceptive pills and of treatment possibilities for most of the sexually transmitted diseases has also contributed to an alarmingly inflating sexual liberalism. While during the first half of the past century, sexual perversions were considered and enlisted as mental disorders, from the 1970s onward, most of them have been removed from the psychiatric illnesses inventory. For the post-modern society, exhibitionism and voyeurism do not constitute mental disorders. The majority of newspapers and television stations are brimming with exhibitionism, voyeurism and pornography.

Sex is now a highly profitable business. In 2004, the world welcomed a total of 3,500 classic films, while the pornographic industry produced 11,000 movies during the same year. And things are spiralling down, from bad to worse; yet for the devil that is steering that wheel, they are working better and better, because, while in 1983 the turnover for the porn industry had been 6 billion dollars, in 2005 it reached the whopping sum of 40 billion dollars.⁴

Sexual revolution spread like a brain virus, and the sex industry developed by abusing the natural sexual instinct that is inscribed in the structure of the human being. The contemporary man, devoid of religiousness and fallen prey to individualism, solipsism and to metaphysical and moral egoism, refuses any quest for God and consequently encloses himself within the destructively selfish and autonomous confines of “humanism”, i.e. within the strictly earthly and human ideals, ignoring thus the heavenly values that belong to God-the Man.

Left to his devices alone, completely open to visual and sexual stimuli, entrapped in the passions and weaknesses of the fallen human nature and hardly able to manage his own sexual impulses, the post-modern man rebelled against the restrictions imposed by the Christian ethics and ethos.

³ Restian Adrian, *Preface to Virgiliu Gheorghe's, Pornografia, maladia secolului XXI / Pornography, the malady of the 21st century*, Prodromos Publishing House 2011, p. 11.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

The pervading cultural Marxist infestation also determined the emergence of the expression “the exit from religion”, which denotes not an exit from a religious faith, but the exit from a world in which faith has a structuring destiny, a world that is connected to traditions and based on hierarchies and interpersonal relationships. “The exit from religion represents the passage from a universe wherein religions continue to exist, albeit inside a political form and collective order that they cannot determine anymore... The exit from religion is, at its core, the transformation of the old religious element into something else than religion... an overall re-composition of the human world through re-absorption, re-melting and re-elaboration of everything it ever carried in it for thousands of years, of the very image of its religious alterity...”⁵

Sexuality and the control over people

Unlike prostitution, which is also a transaction benefiting from compulsion, pornography is closely bound up with technology, specifically the reproduction and transmission of images. Just as the history of pornography is one of progress (technological, not moral progress, of course), so the exploitation of compulsion has been explored in more and more explicit form during the past two hundred years of this revolutionary age. What began as the bondage of sin eventually became financial control and what became accepted as a financial transaction has been forged into a form of political control. Sexual revolution is contemporaneous with political revolution of the sort that began in France in 1789. This means we are not talking about sexual vice when we use the term *sexual revolution*, as much as the rationalization of sexual vice, followed by the financial exploitation of sexual vice, followed by the political mobilization of the same thing as a form of control. Since sexual “liberation” has social chaos as one of its inevitable sequelae, sexual liberation begets almost from the moment of its inception the need for social control.⁶

It is a fact now that lust is a form of addiction. Any current regime in the post-modern society knows this and exploits this situation to its own advantage. In other words, sexual “freedom” is really a form of social control. “What we are really talking about is a Gnostic system of two truths. The exoteric truth, the one propagated by the regime through advertising, sex education, Hollywood films, and the university system - the truth, in other

⁵ Marcel Gauchet, *Ieșirea din religie. Parcursul laicității/The Exit from Religion. The path of laity*, translation from French into Romanian by Mona Antohi, Bucharest 2006, p.9.

⁶ E. Michael Jones, *Libido Dominandi. Sexual Liberation and Political Control*, St. Augustin's Press, South Bend, Indiana 2000, p. 2.

words for general consumption – is that sexual liberation *is* freedom. The esoteric truth, the one that informs the operations manual of the regime - in other words the people who benefit from “liberty” – is the exact opposite, namely, that sexual liberation is a form of control, a way of maintaining the regime in power by exploiting the passions of the naive, who identify with their passions as if they were their own and identify with the regime which ostensibly enables them to gratify these passions.”⁷

Like *laissez-faire* economics, the first tentative ideas of how to exploit sex as a form of social control arose during the Enlightenment as well. From there the idea was born that the man who controlled passion controlled man. That is why the dogma that is promoted today is that sexual license is liberating, and that the quest for liberation is its own justification, so even if a few people get hurt (or killed) in the process, it is generally worth it after all.

So, today people everywhere just want to be free and so the sexual revolution that started after 1965 (the so called Sexual Big Bang) was made in the name of freedom and human rights. The sexual revolution was not a grassroots uprising; it was not the coalescing of “particles of revolt and enlightenment”; it was rather a decision on the part of the ruling class in France, Russia, Germany and the United States at various points during the last 200 years to tolerate sexual behavior outside of marriage as a form of insurrection and then as a form of political control.⁸

It is a proven fact that controlling people is possible through their passions, without the knowledge of the person being controlled. And of all the passions, the sexual passions are the most effective when it comes to controlling men.

Given the wounded state of human nature after the Fall, flooding a country with pornography means getting a certain number of people hooked on it, just as flooding a country with drugs will result in a certain percentage of addiction.

Pornography – deviated sexuality, deviant behaviour

In this society that hails entertainment and self-sufficient egocentrism, sexuality has become a commodity, something that can be sold and something through which man can be governed. The use of sexuality in any other purposes than the Creator had intended, leads to grave deviations and to the alteration of the human person. Sociology studies show that pornography and the addiction that creates it have a disintegrating and mutating effect

⁷ *Ibidem.*

⁸ *Ibidem.*

on post-modern society. In a state like the USA, 25 million people spend between 1 and 10 hours a week watching pornography online, and another 4.7 million dedicate over 11 hours a week to watching porn sites. Most of these are young people and teenagers, and statistics have it that more than 70% of the American males visit at least one pornographic site per month.⁹

According to statistics, the worst thing in this day and age is that sex addiction is responsible for more victims than the drug and alcohol addictions combined, and that points to it as one of the most troubling mental illnesses of the future.

Until the dawn of the Internet, the pornographic industry used to be rather limited in its effects, because of social and psychological hindrances. Nowadays, due to the accessibility, availability and anonymity provided by the virtual experience, the production and consumption of pornography have proliferated exponentially.¹⁰ Consequently, over four million of all websites (12%) are dedicated to pornography (420 million webpages); there are 65 million search hits for pornography in America every day (25% of the total Internet searches per day), and about 2.5 million emails with sexual content are being sent every day.¹¹

Statistical data takes a tragic turn when indicating the fact that once pornography has acquired this digital dimension that makes it available to anyone, anywhere and at any time, it has become a real menace for children and adolescents. Thus, the data provided by Family Safe Media Statistics are utterly disheartening: the average age of the first visual contact with pornography in America is 11, 90% of the children with ages between 8 and 16 have watched pornography online, and children between 15 and 17 years of age are the largest group of visitors of pornographic Internet sites.¹²

According to the EU Kids Online II study, in Romania¹³, 19% of the children have been exposed to online pornographic images. However, if we consider that 85% of the Romanian children have Internet access in their own rooms, it is very likely that the number of children and teenagers that consume pornography is much bigger than that. And this happens while the

⁹ Further information and statistical data can be found in: Mary Eberstadt, Mary Anne Layden (eds.), *The Social Costs of Pornography: A Collection of Papers*, Princeton, N.J. 2010.

¹⁰ V. Gheorghe, *Pornografia...*, p. 15.

¹¹ <http://Internet-filter-review.toptenreviews.com/Internet-pornography-statistics-pg4.html>

¹² Family Safe Media Statistics. Qtd. at *Alabama Policy Institute*. „Internet Pornography: Facts and Figures.” Web. 3 Dec. 2009. < <http://www.alabamapolicyinstitute.org/issues/gti/issue.php?issueID=311&guideMainID=21>.

¹³ <http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/Home.aspx>.

same data states that 28% of the Romanian children have confessed to having been sexually harassed via SMS, and 52% of the children involved in the study have admitted to having been abused on the Internet or in real life.¹⁴

Medical studies point to the difficulties experienced by children that consume pornography. Given that they are psychologically, hormonally and organically unprepared to understand sexuality, the pornographic images remain recorded on the amygdala of their emotional brain like mute patterns. Consequently, when they mature, they tend to appropriate and exhibit sexual attitudes and behaviours that resemble those that are already inscribed in their memory, despite them probably being highly traumatizing. Most of the time, however, the children do not become addicted to pornography. Instead, through masturbation, they infix their deviant sexual behaviours, that had been previously planted into their brains via the pornographic images they watched.¹⁵

Discernment-wise, things do not look up for adults, either. This is because the pornographic message possesses the ability to bypass the neocortex, i.e. the centre of higher mental functions, and to act directly upon the emotional brain. Therefore, sexual arousal is stimulated before the neocortex gets the chance to have a rational response of retreat, and dictate the shunning of such a dangerous neuropsychological enemy.

This is the main concern for most researchers: pornography undermines the freedom of conscience and the consent of the individual, through its forceful ability to excite and increase the degree of anxiety, until it reaches that level, where any reasonable control of the behaviour becomes almost impossible to manage. The man is then governed by the irrational impulses of the unconscious, and by the force of his defence and reproductive instincts. As a matter of fact, this is the very fundamental mechanism that pornography sets in motion: it deviates the sexual energy which, according to human nature, should be invested solely in the emotional relationship with the spouse, and have a procreative purpose. Instead, pornography induces a euphoric state like that produced by a drug. This is a true statement, as pornography targets the same cortical areas that cocaine and heroin affect, and thus it creates addiction¹⁶. In the absence of pornography induced sexual arousal, the states of withdrawal - depression and anxiety, headaches, restlessness and irascibility - are experienced more and more intensely. The man

¹⁴ V. Gheorghe, *Pornografia...*, p. 19.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ Childress Anna Rose, Ehrman Ronald et al., *Prelude to Passion: Limbic Activation by „Unseen” Drug and Sexual Cues*, *PLoS ONE*, No. 3(1), 2008, p. 1506.

feels less and less motivated by behaviours other than those that produce sexual excitement, which is most frequently the consumption of pornography. Thus, caught in the chains of addiction, the pornography user is psychologically and organically constrained to continue his consumption, even if he notices that it has ruined his health, family and life.¹⁷

Pornography is, however, much more harmful than the drug, because it not only gives the user an addiction and a set of organic disorders, but it also generates an assortment of serious mental deviations. In just a few weeks - laboratory experiments prove - the mere watching of pornographic movies can bring about alterations in mindsets, attitudes and behaviours that have been acquired throughout an entire life.

Why is it that, despite the enormous damages that the legislation of pornography brings, it is still not completely banned in so many places on Earth? The answer is clear: the tremendous persuasive force, with which the erotic message entices the human psyche, increases the sale of any product. Eroticism is one of the best catalysts of world commerce. Furthermore, the business of selling pornography worldwide, if we were to consider only the visible side of this trade, generates a revenue of 57 billion dollars a year. In America alone, the proceeds from pornography surpass the ones coming from professional football, baseball and basketball combined, and they are almost twice as hefty as the sum of the profits made by ABC, CBS and NBC.¹⁸

The greatest ally of pornography propaganda though, a mammoth bigger than the commercial interest itself, is the neglect of how it affects people. The contemporary man is inevitably a victim of the sexual revolution mentality. As his conscience is being permanently fed by the media with an obsessive eroticism, he ignores the hazards of pornography, which is already heralded as the most widely spread addiction and illness of all times.

This brief analysis of a few deviations and mismanagements of sexuality that go against the natural order cannot be completed without posing the question: what is a man to do to escape the luring maze of a deviant behaviour and regain the normalcy that the Creator of all has planted in his nature?

Religious life - man's way back to normality

Deviant sexual behaviours are an immediate consequence of the value reversal that modern world secularism tries to inoculate the contempo-

¹⁷ V. Gheorghe, *Pornografia...*, p. 21.

¹⁸ <http://Internet-filterreview.toptenreviews.com/Internet-pornography-statistics.html>.

rary man with. "Even those who set themselves up against you," Augustine writes, when addressing the Almighty in the Confessions, "do but copy you in a perverse way." The same could be said of the modern society, which wants to liberate the man but turns almost overnight against him and becomes controlling. The Church Fathers have the solution to this problem: fighting the passions can bring real freedom to the human being. A man has as many masters as he has vices. By promoting vice, the society promotes slavery, which can be fashioned into a form of political control. The best way to control man is to do so without his awareness that he is being controlled, and the best way to do that is through the systematic manipulation of the passions, because man tends to identify his passions as his own. In defending them he defends his "freedom," which he usually sees as the unfettered ability to fulfil his desires, without understanding, for the most part, how easy it is to manipulate those passions from without. It took the evil genius of this age to perfect a system of financial and political exploitation based on the insight that St. Paul and St. Augustine had into what they termed the "slavery of sin."

The only chance the modern man has to escape this enslavement to sin, is to draw closer to God through dispassion. To make all this possible, the Son of God became incarnate and took upon Himself the human nature and all its weaknesses and filled it with the power of His divinity. After His Resurrection and Ascension, having become Spirit by His humanity as well, Christ the Saviour did not desert the man. Through the descent of the Holy Spirit at Holy Baptism, He dwells in the soul of each Christian, whom He fills with the power of His sacrificial offering and with the gifts of His restored humanity. Through the Holy Mysteries, the man receives the whole strength of Christ's deified humanity, and thus he returns to the natural normal state he has lost through sin and wrongdoing. When men partake of this new life "in Christ", as Holy Apostle Paul writes, the new life of the Holy Body of Christ, the Son of God, penetrates all the limbs of those who then become "planted together with" Christ, and generates a completely responsible reaction from them, one that leads them to express the presence of Christ in themselves through their every deed. Christ becomes, hence, the unseen life, the divine sap that flows through the renewed being. Yet this life does not automatically bring forth fruit in the man, but rather grows since it is assimilated by men, or better yet, inasmuch as men are assimilated to it, through a conscious and free act, through the observance of the holy commandments, through a clean conscience, and a life of asceticism and self-restraint. This is how to "live in Christ".

Conclusions

The crisis of the post-modern world is more acutely visible today through the wilful destruction of all human values in the name of humanism. While modern humanism was meant to be just an aggressive and militant ideology, its post-modern guise displays rather the facades of compli-
ance, of an agonising interminable “end” of man, reason and cultures in a generalized mediatic apokatastasis. Sex and the culture of pleasure have become the ultimate goal of human existence, which is thus manipulated by having all its primordial values transformed into a marketable commodity.

The greatest and “last” enemy of man, history and civilizations proves to be no other than the man himself who, by departing from God, has also departed from the reasons he was created for and therefore his entire life has lost meaning. Death and nonsense undermine violently or swiftly all ideologies, cultures and plague all the current individual and social human projects. To have an authentic purpose when faced with the pervasive ubiquitousness of death and nothingness, the post-modern man has no other chance than to graft himself once more on Him Who has defeated sin, death and nothingness, by asserting, through His Incarnation and Resurrection, the eternal value of the human being.