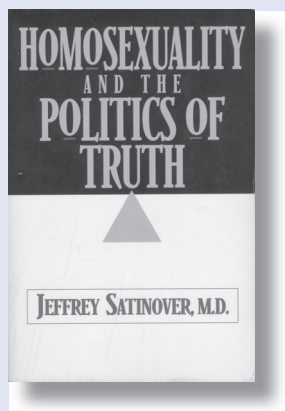


The Pagan Revolution

Jeffrey Satinover, M.D.

This article is taken from Satinover's book:



A major question has hovered unasked over the preceding discussion: How have we as a culture come so close to abandoning the long-held consensus on sexual mores that discourages homosexuality? Of course, this change in attitude toward homosexuality is merely a piece of a larger change pertaining to sexuality and family life as a whole, and this in turn is but a piece of an even more sweeping change in our general worldview. This massive change in attitude appears to have occurred within the space of a mere twenty or thirty years.

But this appearance of suddenness is an illusion. Profound changes have been germinating and growing within Western civilization for far longer than a mere three decades. The 1960s' counterculture was only the first full populist flowering of these changes, among which changing attitudes toward sexuality are central. We cannot understand the dramatic transformation in sexual attitudes that is now upon us unless we grasp the largescale perspective of history within which these changes fit. For these alterations are the consequences of a sea change in the domain of the human spirit, which has been underway for centuries. Put differently, the changes in our attitudes toward sexuality are only the indicator of far more important spiritual changes that affect every aspect of our lives.

More specifically, four hundred years of growing religious skepticism among our elites and of stupendous technological progress in which faith appears irrelevant has laid us open to *alternative spiritualities*. For a time, it seemed as if the materialistic worldview would triumph; that as

we rested on the material comforts it secured for us, we could set aside our longings for spirit and meaning as the wistful fantasies of our collective childhood.

But in fact this spiritual desert did not produce a sense of mature comfort and spiritual abstinence; instead it generated an intense new thirst for the spiritual – any spirit that would slake our thirst. Thus the emerging, dominant spirit of our age is not the skeptical one that denigrates all religion, but rather a profoundly and perennially religious spirit that stands opposed to the ethical monotheism of the Christian faith and of Orthodox Judaism. The tenets of this newly emerging religion, whether articulated deliberately or merely at work tacitly in the background, are coming swiftly to dominate our public morality. But the religion itself is not really new, neither are its theological beliefs. It is simply the reemergence of paganism, and its beliefs are gnosticism. What these ancient terms mean today is the focus of this article.

Clearly this reemerging paganism is not merely a belittling of religion. Nor is it merely the religion of humanism, even though humanism is a visible and prominent aspect of it. For its followers the pagan spirit offers not only a meaningful answer but a *better* answer than Judaism or Christianity to the crisis of meaning that has followed the rise of the materialistic, scientific worldview. Part of paganism's appeal stems from the fact that pagan spirituality makes few moral demands on the individual, and is thus more "tolerant" of human differences – that is of "diversity." (In Joseph Campbell's words, "Follow your bliss.") But the reverse side is paganism's deficient

concept of evil. It therefore lacks a way to distinguish between will and compulsion, between conscious intentionality and unconscious instinctive drive.

By contrast, a cardinal tenet of the Judeo-Christian tradition for thousands of years has been that *sin* is the central explanation for human suffering. In this view, our absolute need for God seems equally apparent. But for us now to turn away from exclusively scientific and humanistic principles on the one hand and from a “new age” multiplicity of differing cultural standards on the other to the unitary ancient biblical ones would seem to most moderns as a kind of regression. This is so in spite of neither science nor humanism bringing us closer to that for which we most deeply yearn – meaningfulness, serenity, love.

The commonplace answer to the question “How did we get here?” is thus “progress”. This progress is at once scientific and yet has moral implications; the two are entangled in the modern worldview as detailed in previous chapters. Further, we see this confusion carried forward by the seemingly opposing, but in fact mutually reinforcing, claims of scientific analysis on the one hand and “new” spirituality on the other.

The Many versus the True One

What is called ethical, or radical, monotheism was introduced into the pagan culture of the ancient Near East by a single people, the Jews. The rather dry term “ethical monotheism” conveys two essential points concerning Judaism as a religion. First, that there is only one God, and because there is only one God, he is therefore the God of all men; second, that the central concern of this God, and therefore of his people, is morality and goodness. To the Hebrew mind the most distinctive feature of the character of God was not his philosophical attributes but his *holiness*. Thus, as we see in the Bible, the living God is so “utterly transcendent” that merely to glance directly at his glory and goodness is instant death.

But it was through Christians, not Jews, that ethical monotheism decisively influenced the pagan world. Or we might say, through the

Christian faith as a variant of Judaism. As Franz Rosenzweig, an eminent Jewish man of letters, put it, “Christianity is Judaism for the Gentiles.” As this ethical monotheism spread, it toppled many pagan dominions with astonishing force and speed and established a moral order that reigned until the Renaissance. What are the essentials of the paganism that ethical monotheism replaced, and that is now, in turn, rivaling it?

1. Paganism is *polytheistic*. Each individual (or group) feels himself subject to his own god or goddess. At a practical level this means that the distinctive set of values, standards, goals, and laws of each deity governs the lives of that deity’s worshipers.

2. Pagan society is therefore *polyvalent*. No single moral standard governs the lives of men, and except by the power of force, no god, and no corresponding set of human values, is superior to any other.

3. Consequently, pagan societies tend to become *inegalitarian*. Different standards to different groups lead inevitably to factional competition, and in time the will to power becomes the only rule. Might makes right and soon displaces the rule of law; Zeus rules because he is strongest, and for no other reason. He is certainly not the wisest; neither has he even a conception of fairness.

4. Pagan society is *pantheistic* or *animistic*. Gods and goddesses inhabit the natural world and are one with it; nature itself is therefore worshiped as divine; there is no serious distinction between creature and Creator. Again, on a practical level, this means that men worship not only the nature “out there” but also their own nature “in here” – their instincts, including hunger, sex and aggression, and more generally, pleasure. In short, they worship themselves.

5. In thus spiritualizing the instincts, pagan worship therefore tends naturally to the *violent*, the *hedonistic*, and the *orgiastic*. Pagan religious ritual arouses the instincts to the keenest possible pitch, especially sexuality and aggression. In

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gratifying these instincts, the greatest possible pleasure is achieved and therefore the highest level of religious ecstasy. Violent intoxication, temple prostitution, the ritual slaughter of enemies, self-mutilation, and even child sacrifice: All these can be understood from within this worldview not as pathological but as predictable results of the unfettering of human nature. Are such practices ancient and utterly alien? We need only look to television, or to the abuse literature of the present, or a few years back to the Holocaust, or to the swiftly rising incidence of violent crime, or to our comfort in disposing of unwanted children before they are born to understand how entirely unexceptional they are. The dark nightlife of the gay “walk on the wild side” (in the words of a popular song from a rock star celebrated for his “androgyny”) is celebrated in pop culture; it is but one piece of this pagan transformation of the modern West.

6. In all of this, paganism is *idolatrous*. The pagan takes what is found within his own human nature as the measure of what is good and makes of it a god: man as the measure of all things. Is this unfair to the humanist credo? We should remember that the worst human sacrifices in history were performed on explicitly humanistic soil: in France, Russia, Germany, and China.¹ The startling juxtaposition of modern humanism with ancient paganism becomes entirely unexceptional once we recall that humanism in its scientific mode – the understanding of man by science – ends by eliminating man qua man, and reducing him to mere mechanism. Ethical monotheism stands opposed to all of these beliefs and practices. Unlike paganism, it is utterly *unnatural*. Its appearance over four thousand years ago, and its subsequent flowering in a uniformly pagan world, is beyond historical explanation. Frederick the Great of Prussia, a man tormented by his inability to sustain religious faith, once challenged his chaplain to point him toward God. The Bishop replied that he could do so with but a single word. “And what single word can possibly carry the burden of such illumination?” asked Frederick. His chaplain replied, “Israel.”

To emphasize the contrasts:

1. Monotheism in *monotheistic*. There is one God and there is no God but

God. Thus every individual and group, however different by nature, however different inclined, gifted, or handicapped, is accountable to the one God.

2. A monotheistic society is therefore *univalent*. At a practical level this means that all men are accountable to one overarching set of values, goals, and laws. Before the God who establishes this uniform law all men are treated as equal, whether it is to their immediate gain, as they see it, or to their detriment.

3. Monotheistic societies therefore tend rather to be *egalitarian*, not in outcome, but in process. The monotheistic God is no respecter of persons or of offices and ranks.

4. Monotheism is *theistic*. It asserts a critical distinction between the Creator and the creation, and thus also between the Creator and his creatures, including man. Man, too, as man – not as biomolecular machine – is perceived to contain within himself an utterly unnatural capacity for spirit, and this spirit is not of the world, though in it. This means that man is a dual creature. He cannot be comprehended solely in terms of prior causes; and in some measure his moral choices stand opposed to his instinctive nature. Though monotheists recognize the value of every instinct, instinctive pleasure must be submitted to a single, overarching higher purpose – sanctified – and thereby modulated, restrained, and at times, eschewed altogether.

5. Monotheistic worship leads *away from the violent, hedonistic, and orgiastic*. Because instincts are creaturely and not divine, they must not be elevated as final arbiters of individual and social mores. In other words, instincts are not worshiped. The history of ancient Israel as laid out in the Old Testament is in large part the two-thousand-year struggle of the worship of the one LORD against all the various forms of pagan instinct worship that dominated the ancient Near East. Supremely, it is the story of the fight of God against Baal, the god of sacred sexuality – heterosexual, homosexual, and bestial; against his sacred consort Anath/Astarte/Ashtoreth, the virgin-

whore who copulates and conceives, but does not give birth; and against Molech, the god to whom the unwanted offspring of these practices were sacrificed.

6 Finally, monotheism is *anti-idolatrous* and *anti-humanistic*. Out of faithfulness to the one, true God, it refrains from making idols – whether of the wood and stone or of the purely mental variety – of the elements of human nature.

Monotheism observes that although the satisfaction of instinctive drives gives pleasure, by itself it ultimately does not give joy. It knows, rather, that we are so constituted – because of our dual nature – as to require something that goes beyond mere pleasure; that the pursuit of pleasure apart from God leads inevitably to emptiness and despair; that to worship pleasure is ultimately to court despair and thus to seek death.

From this perspective, all our human longings for instinctive gratification point beyond themselves to something else, something that is neither found in nor reducible to mere humanity. This longing is so great that, when we are unable to attach it to its proper, eternal object and attach it instead to some form of instinctive gratification, the pursuit becomes compulsive, even addictive, and ultimately monstrous. In drugs the drug addict, in alcohol the alcoholic, in sex the philanderer, in winning the gambler, and in food the compulsive eater all seek the one God and know it not; all thus become idolaters.

The relentless opposition of the God of Israel and his prophets to idolatry and pagan worship must seem to the modern at best a strange archaic obsession, at worst an offensive manifestation of a nationalism and chauvinism that we are well off without. In the antiseptic conditions of modernism, it makes perfect sense to replace such monomania with the endlessly accommodating syncretism that now passes for “spirituality” in an ever-growing number of churches and synagogues.

Paganism’s Theology: Gnosticism

The conflict between monotheism and paganism is neither recent nor merely natural; it is a recurring, age-old battle for the soul of man that

has never ceased. We can trace a historical line that connects the pagan religions of the ancient Near East (including Canaan) to pre- and early Christian gnosticism, to the Manichaeism of the late Roman and Aryan Empires, to certain schools of medieval Kabbalah and Alchemy, through the transforming matrix of Renaissance Neoplatonism with its combined emphases on magic, humanism and science. From there, it is but a short step to the modern reduction of spirit to psyche that has allowed the present pagan resurgence.

C.G. Jung, unaware of his own role in it, nonetheless clearly saw what was coming in the pagan revolution. Surveying the decadent conditions following World War I, he wrote in 1918:

“As the Christian view of the world loses its authority, the more menacingly will the ‘blonde beast’ be heard prowling about in its underground prison, ready at any moment to burst out with devastating consequences. When this happens in the individual it brings about a psychological revolution, but it can also take a social form.”²

As apocalyptic as was Jung in this reading of pagan transformation that was overtaking the German-speaking world, his prophetic power was less than that of the German-Jewish poet and convert to Christianity Heinrich Heine, who had warned in 1892:

“It is to the great merit of Christianity that it has somewhat attenuated the brutal German lust for battle. But it could not destroy it entirely. And should ever that taming talisman break – the Cross – then will come roaring back the wild madness of the ancient warriors of whom our Nordic poets speak and sing, with all their insane Berserker rage. That talisman is now already crumbling, and the day is not far off when it shall break apart entirely. On that day the old stone gods will rise from long-forgotten wreckage, and rub from their eyes the dust of a thousand-year sleep. At long last leaping to life, Thor, with his giant hammer, will crush the Gothic cathedrals! ... And laugh not at my forebodings, the advice of a dreamer who warns you away from the Kants and Fichtes of the world, and

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from our philosophers of Nature. No, laugh not at the visionary who knows that in the realm of phenomena comes soon the revolution that has already taken place in the realm of spirit. For thought goes before deed as lightning before thunder. ...There will be played in Germany a play compared to which the French revolution was but an innocent idyll."³

Gnosticism, as we have said, is paganism's theology. To the gnostic, salvation is neither the undeserved gift of God (as it primarily is in Christianity) nor the fruit of consistent moral effort (as it primarily is Judaism). It is rather a Faustian prize achieved through "secret knowledge" (the definition of the Greek *gnosis*). The gnostic is granted this secret wisdom in relation to one of the many gods or demigods accessible, in an intellectualized version of pagan worship, through mind and imagination. The temper of gnosticism is spiritual and ascetic and it appealed directly therefore mostly to the intellectual classes of the Roman Empire. But in time its implicit divinization of the instincts led it into a relativization of good and evil, and into a fierce opposition to the Jewish, monotheistic ethos being propagated by the Christian faith. There is therefore no irony in the asceticism of the early gnostic sects degenerating so quickly into license. In fact, the development was predictable, and has been followed by gnostics throughout history – down to our day.

Over the centuries gnosticism has continued to lead a clandestine existence as a kind of perpetual spiritual counterculture. Now and then erupting into the open, it has always provided a secretive, psychic, man-oriented, polytheistic, and morally relativistic counterpoint to the God-oriented ethical monotheism carried forward by the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Despite its ever-shifting forms, gnostic thought has many common motifs. Chief among them are:

- The conviction that through gnosis – special knowledge available only to the initiated – the human mind becomes sufficient to solve its problems by itself, especially those of its suffering and of its own evil inclinations, and thereby to attain to the prerogatives of the gods.

- The conviction that the great events of the Judeo-Christian tradition, especially the Incarnation, have no significant material reality and are to be understood at most as spiritual (or symbolic, psychological, or psychic) events.

- From these motifs, therefore, has flowed the rejection of *atonement sacrifice* as necessary for "mental and spiritual health" – salvation. For if the gods are but manifestations of the mind, then there is no absolute basis for guilt or sin.

- Consistent with all this, therefore, is the conclusion that good and evil have either no significance, or – what is in practice the same thing – merely symbolic significance, unrelated to the ethical requirements and sacrifices of daily life; in either case they are balanced opposites.

There is a striking irony in this latter point, for gnostic thought is well-known for the attention it gives to the nature of evil. In its Manichean variant, gnosticism's latent tendency to overrate and divinize evil became explicit in making Good and Evil the two eternal principles of reality. One is reminded of C.S. Lewis's admonition: "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialistic or a magician with the same delight."⁴

When Evil and Good are placed on the same plane, in the form of dualism, two things inevitably follow: First, on a theological level, we succumb to the dangerous fantasy that Good and Evil will be reunited in a higher oneness. Second, on a psychological and behavioral level, we tend to relativize good and evil and hence to increase our propensity to *choose* evil, considering *it* to be our good, since it often *feels* good.

At the sophisticated level modern gnostic philosophies such as Jung's emphasize the first point while inadvertently facilitating the second. At a more popular level, occult philosophies make the second point concrete and explicit. Both provide a theology of moral relativism. Because of his great influence in propagating gnostic philosophy and morals in churches and synagogues, Jung deserves a closer look. The moral relativism that released on us the sexual revolution is rooted in an outlook of which he is the most brilliant contemporary expositor.

C. G. Jung: A Self-Proclaimed Prophet

Modern depth-psychology in both the Freudian and Jungian schools has played the same role in relation to modern, materialist, instinct-driven culture as ancient gnosticism once played to pagan society. By collapsing nature and meaning into one they provide the philosophical underpinnings to an amoral view of life. It could even be argued that the real purpose of gnostic theologies – then as now, wittingly or otherwise – is to provide an aura of respectability for what is at heart unbridled sexual expression.

Jung, in particular, blended psychological reductionism with gnostic spirituality to produce a modern variant of mystical, pagan polytheism in which the multiple “images of the instincts” (his “archetypes”) are worshiped as gods. He presented his purportedly scientific theories as an updated and improved version of Christianity synthesized with the instincts. To an ever increasing extent, that is precisely how his theories have been accepted.

Jung perceived his own role in the development of this new, world-embracing religion as prophetic. Max Zeller, one of his followers and a Jungian analyst in Los Angeles, told Jung of a dream he had of people all over the world building a temple, himself included. Jung responded:

“That is the temple we all build on... all over the world. That is the new religion. You know how long it will take until it is built?”

Zeller responded, “How should I know? Do you know?”

“I know... About six hundred years.”

“Where do you know this from?” Zeller asked.

“From dreams. From other people’s dreams and from my own. This new religion will come together as far as we can see.”⁵

Commenting on this exchange, Murray Stein, Jungian analyst and author of *Jung’s Treatment of Christianity: The Psychotherapy of a Religious Tradition*, notes:

“From this report, it is unclear whether Jung foresaw this new religion as a transformed version of Christianity or as a completely new world religion embracing, or supplanting, all other religions. But insofar as Jung... regarded

himself a Parsifal... and a bringer of the Holy Grail back to Christendom, he would have hoped that the new religion would represent... partially Christianity’s “child” and partially something quite different from it, its own unique religious tradition.”⁶

Jung’s direct and indirect impact on mainstream Christianity – and thus on Western culture – has been incalculable. It is no exaggeration to say that the theological positions of most mainstream denominations – in their approach to pastoral care as well as in their doctrines and liturgy – have become more or less identical with Jung’s psychological/symbolic theology.

To the end of his life Jung maintained that an accommodation between “matter” and “spirit” could be worked out; that the “dark side” of human nature needed to be “integrated” into a single, overarching “wholeness” in order to form a less strict and difficult definition of goodness; that true illumination was not shone by a holy God into a darkened world, but rather that it was clever, brilliant “Lucifer” who was himself the true source of wisdom, the font and origin of “gnosis”, or higher knowledge.

For Jung, Good and Evil evolved into two equal, balanced, cosmic principles that belong together in one overarching synthesis. This relativization of good and evil by their reconciliation is the heart of the ancient doctrines of gnosticism, which also located spirituality, hence morality, within man himself. Hence the “union of opposites.” What poet William Blake called “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell,” Jung called the “Self” – capital “S” to indicate its “divinity.”

Jung explicitly identified depth-psychology, especially his own, as heir to the gnostic tradition, especially in what he considered its superior handling of the problem of evil. He claimed: “In the ancient world the Gnostics, whose arguments were very much influenced by psychic experience, tackled the problem of evil on a much broader basis than the Church Fathers.”⁷ But in fact, the gnostics fell quickly into the embrace of the very evil they thought themselves to be tackling, inevitably the consequence of an inclusivist position toward it:

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“There can be no doubt that the original Christian conception of the imago Dei embodied in Christ meant an all-embracing totality that even includes the animal side of man. Nevertheless the Christ-symbol lacks wholeness in the modern psychological sense, since it does not include the dark side of things but specifically excludes it in the form of a Luciferian opponent.”⁸

To embrace such a vision of God is to lay oneself open to moral blindness. Even though Jung believed that his form of depth-psychology would become the “new” gnostic child of Christianity, he was not entirely ignorant of the problems inherent in a gnostic worldview. Thus, on the one hand, Jung could say, “If anyone wants to know what are the ethical consequences of intellectualism pushed to the limit and carried out on a grand scale, let him study the history of Gnostic morals.”⁹ Yet on the other, for all his brilliance and prophetic insight, Jung was unable to foresee the dire consequences of the pagan awakening that was fuelling Nazism. He thus did not come to renounce the menace of Hitler until long after many of his less gifted contemporaries had done so; indeed, not until people were actually dying at Nazi hands.

It is not surprising that with this kind of theology as its foundation, within one generation Jungianism should have wholeheartedly embraced sexual revolutionaries of every stripe. In spite of Jung’s comment about gnostic morality, for example, Jung himself maintained an extramarital relationship with one of his patients for years. The primary aim of such ideas seems to be the removal of barriers to sexual expression of every type and to justify the consequent behavior in the language of the mystery religions. Such characterizations lend these ideas an aura of “spirituality” that effectively obscure their fundamental tendency toward hedonism and amorality.

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hat is bizarre is how many Christian thinkers and writers have been in the vanguard of popularizing Jungian ideas throughout the church – for example, Rev. Morton Kelsey has made a career of such compromise. Not surprisingly, Kelsey’s latest

book, *The Sacrament of Sexuality*, specifically addresses homosexuality from the “pluralistic” perspective.¹⁰ He approvingly cites the 1973 APA decision to normalize homosexuality and skirts the issue of homosexual change, instead saying that such change is “extremely rare.”¹¹

But more importantly, Kelsey’s Jungianism, implicit in his title, directly relates to our discussion, not just with reference to homosexuality, but to all forms of sex outside of marriage. For from the Judeo-Christian perspective, sexuality – an aspect of nature – cannot itself be “sacramental.” It partakes of sacramental reality and is thereby elevated (sanctified) only in the context of the “sacrament of marriage.” Sacramental sexuality, on the other hand, is the very essence of pagan worship.

Thomas Moore, Episcopal Priest and Jungian analyst wildly popular with a new generation of soul-seekers, was interviewed by *NetGuide*, a popular magazine for Internet users. After having noted that, given his own personal definition of “soul,” William Blake was “its most eloquent spokesperson,” he was asked to comment on the fact that:

“There’s lots of pornography on the Internet. There are bondage newsgroups, group for bestiality, you name it... Is this good, bad, healthy, unhealthy?”

Moore responded:

“Can we stop categorizing sex, and moralizing about it...? Can we ask, “is sex, any kind of sex, deeply satisfying? Is it soulfully enjoyable...”? So forget right or wrong, they don’t pertain.”¹²

Nowadays even explicitly pagan ideologies and theologies are everywhere. They are replacing orthodox theologies in divinity schools; television shows presenting them in visual form are wildly popular; churches are rewriting their liturgies to accommodate them; books espousing their point of view are regular best-sellers. As I began this book, two such, written by Jungian analysts, were on the *New York Times* best-seller list. Yet another is entitled *The Sacrament of Abortion*, dedicated to the goddess Artemis. The author and Jungian analyst Ginette Paris makes fully explicit the link between modern morality and ancient paganism:

"It is time to call back the image of Artemis, the wild one, who despite her beauty refuses marriage and chooses to belong only to herself... When we are constantly paying attention to another person, to a group, to relatives, colleagues and friends, how much time, energy and space are left... for being present to one's self? ...When the Artemis myth manifests itself in our lives, it can be recognized by a sense of no longer belonging to a group, a couple, or a family; it represents a movement away from... fusion with others, the most extreme example of fusion being the connection between a mother and her young children. Artemis... invites us to retreat from others, to become autonomous."

In a chapter entitled, "The Cure for Guilt," the author continues:

"Our culture needs new rituals as well as laws to restore to abortion its sacred dimension... I've heard women address their fetus directly... and explain why it is necessary to separate now. Others write a letter of farewell and read it to a friend, a spouse, or indeed to their whole family. Still others invent their own farewell ritual, inspired perhaps by rituals from other cultures, like offering a little doll to a divinity as a symbol of the aborted fetus.

... the pro-lifers see the spiritual dimension but keep it imprisoned within official orthodoxies, as if no other form of spirituality existed. What if my religious beliefs are pagan?"¹³

These bizarre-sounding ideas are not as distant as they might seem. In deliberately regressing to archaic modes of thought, morality, and behavior, they lead us along the descent of nature: They describe the dark practices into which human beings inevitably sink if left to their own devices.

Which Spirit?

All who read the Bible will be well aware that other gods and other forms of spirituality exist. The Scriptures record Israel's often losing battle against seduction by these other forms of spirituality, which have been with us for thousands of years. To people reacting to the dryness of secularism, it seems that all forms of spirituality are good, and that all offer a sense of

meaning to fend off the fear of life as machine. But, in fact, the crucial question is not "whether spirit?" but "which spirit?"

You will recall the tiny, empty point at the apex of the triangle of causality, "the still point of the turning world" referred to in an earlier chapter in our discussion of the will. And remember the second, inverted triangle above it. At the intersection of time and eternity turns the unnatural question of individual moral choice. With laser-like intensity, at every moment of our existence, the question of "Which spirit?" is aimed at the invisible apex of our being.

In answering this question repeatedly over a lifetime, in thought, word, and action, people discover who they are – and in this sense alone are co-creators with God of themselves. The Bible says, in effect, that the spiritual dimension of reality has little to do with "magic," altered states of consciousness, healthy ego-development, the goddess, *n*-dimensional parallel universes, the earth as God's body, or archetypes or instincts that have been turned into gods. It claims rather that the overarching principle of existence is the character of God and his revealed moral law.

The spirituality that developed under gnostic influences in the ancient past and is being redeveloped in our own time is marked by an absence of belief in the primacy of the moral dimension as presented in the Judeo-Christian tradition. But once this moral dimension is removed, relativized, or transposed to a cosmic sphere, the intense spirituality of gnosticism shades easily into an overtly amoral materialism. As it does so, worship of its many gods devolves into the quest for its many pleasures, regardless of cost.

Thus the Apostle Paul cried out to all those in the Roman empire who would listen, calling them away from the sexual worship of their many gods to the worship of the Holy One of Israel. These "gods" were but the multicultural variants of the same Baal and Astarte and Molech against whose worship the earlier Israelite prophets had similarly cried out to the Jewish people, making clear the link between idolatry and unconstrained sexuality.

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The modern change in opinion concerning homosexuality, though presented as a scientific advance, is contradicted rather than supported by science.

Leviticus 18:22 and 19:13 describe homosexual relations as *toevah*, “detestable” (NIV) or as an “abomination” (KJV). This Hebrew word is mostly used, however, to condemn ritual prostitution, magic, divination, and idolatry, as well as violations of specifically Jewish requirements (such as desecration of the Sabbath). Paul, presenting the same unpopular message, makes the same connection:

“Although they climbed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to the sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is for ever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.” (Romans 1:22-27)

Twelve Concluding Propositions

As we have seen, the subject of homosexuality is enormously complex, touching on many aspects of human existence: biological, psychological, and spiritual. Nonetheless, we can present our conclusions on the form of twelve propositions. These are:

1. The general condition “homosexuality” is a loosely defined aspect of the overall polymorphism of human sexuality.
2. Given the present state of human nature, sexual polymorphism is natural.
3. Each individual's homosexuality is the likely result of a complex mixture of genetic, intrauterine, and extrauterine biological factors combined with familial and social factors as well as repeatedly reinforced choices. These create a particular blend of impulses. The role of genetic influence is small, and in any event

means very little in terms of compelling an individual to become homosexual.

4. The godly standard of moral sexual behavior is much more narrowly defined than the great variety and natural polymorphism of human sexuality. *Sexuality in the state of nature* is therefore commonly sinful. Sanctified, it is one of God's greatest gifts.

5. Homosexual behavior is difficult to modify because, like the other forms of compulsive behavior, it involves innate impulses and reinforced choices by which sinful activities become embedded in the brain (“engraved on the heart”).

6. Ethical demands require homosexuals, like all people, to resist their natural sinful impulses.

7. Homosexuality is not a true illness, though it may be thought an illness in the spiritual sense of “soul sickness,” innate to fallen human nature. Its treatment thus opens directly into the domain of the “cure of souls.”

8. Because deeply engraved behaviors are so difficult to modify, homosexuals, like all people, have two choices: to capitulate to the behavior and its consequences or to depend on others, and on God, for help.

9. Secular programs that modify homosexual behavior are more numerous and more effective than popular opinion is led to believe.

10. Spiritual programs that lead people into dependence on God, and support them there, are even more effective. The best of these integrate into their spiritual approach the best that is offered by the secular approaches as well.

11. A pastoral understanding of the “cure” of a soul, which unfolds progressively over a lifetime, is more than the alleviation of particular symptoms; it consists of growing ever more closely toward the divinely ordained configuration that God intended for us from the beginning – and which is largely “unnatural,” not only in the area of sexuality. This process is without question a reality; it is a reality that occurs in secular settings as well as in

religious ones. It is a reality no less pertinent – and life-giving – to every person, whatever his particular brokenness, than to those struggling with homosexuality.

12. The modern change in opinion concerning homosexuality, though presented as a scientific advance, is contradicted rather than supported by science. It is a transformation in public morals consistent with widespread abandonment of the Judeo-Christian ethic upon which our civilization is based. Though hailed as “progress,” it is really a revision to ancient pagan practices supported by a modern restatement of gnostic moral relativism

For individual homosexuals, for each of us in our own circle of brokenness, as well as for our civilization as a whole, the choices today are as clear as they were for the Jewish nation living amidst their pagan neighbors centuries ago:

“This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers.”
(Deuteronomy 30:19-20)

Notes

- 1 *Between 1920 and 1960 the explicitly anti-religious regimes of Germany, Russia, and China killed, respectively, 12 million, 30 million, and 50 million innocents.*
- 2 Jung, C.G., *Wotan, Civilization in Transition, Collected Works, vol. 10, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1918, p. 13.*
- 3 Heine, H., *The Works of Heinrich Heine, vol. V, William Heinemann, London 1892, p. 207-209. The passage as cited is my own translation.*
- 4 Lewis, C.S., *The Screwtape Letters, Macmillan, New York 1964.*
- 5 Zeller, M., *The Task of the Analyst, Psychological Perspectives 6, no. 1, 1975, p. 74-78, cited in: M. Stein, Jung's treatment of Christianity, Chiron, Willmette, Ill. 1985, p. 188.*
- 6 Stein, *Jung's Treatment of Christianity, p.188-189.*
- 7 Jung, C.G., *Aion. Collected Works, vol. 9,2, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1959, p. 41.*
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 Jung, C.G., *Psychological Types, Collected Works, vol. 6, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1920, p. 17.*
- 10 Kelsey, M.T. and B. Kelsey, *The Sacrament of Sexuality: The Spirituality and Psychology of Sex, Element, Rockport, Mass. 1991.*
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 191.
- 12 Berger, B., *The Soul and the Machine, NetGuide, February 1995, p. 19.*
- 13 See Paris, G., *The Sacrament of Abortion, Spring Publications, Dallas 1992.*

The modern change in opinion concerning homosexuality is a transformation in public morals consistent with widespread abandonment of the Judeo-Christian ethic upon which our civilization is based.