

Opinion

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About the Options for Freedom in Sexuality

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Freedom in Sexuality as the Rule of Eros

"Dialectics of Enlightenment" as a study is perceived in the context of the so-called critical theory of the Frankfurt School and its authors, M. Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno state the key proposition at the very beginning to explain the term enlightenment. This proposition is worth quoting in full owing to its crystal clarity and significance: "Enlightenment, understood in the widest sense as the advance of thought, has always aimed at liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters. Yet the wholly enlightened earth is radiant with triumphant calamity [1]". Herbert Marcuse is perceived in the context of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School and the above quote also serves as a key to his interpretation of the world. The rationality of enlightenment finally leads to and escalates in the theory of a single-dimensional man and the deepening repressiveness of masterdom in the current society, with masterdom being depersonalised at the same time [2].

Marcuse is perhaps an overly uncritical admirer of the late Sigmund Freud. His studies openly build on Freud's late work, in particular *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*. Similar to Freud, Marcuse bases his studies on the notion that libidinous powers are anarchist, antisocial and result in interchangeability of the "subject of love" owing to their instinctiveness. However, libidinous powers make the repressive principle of reality socially acceptable and the price to be paid is the fact that an individual cannot achieve full erotic satisfaction in the culture, or more precisely that this satisfaction is always constricted and anxious. In addition, the culture requires an increasing degree of sublimation, i.e. diverting sexual energy to non-sexual purposes. However, desexualisation of the originally

sexual energy subsequently releases destructive instincts originally bound and therefore moderated by the sexual energy. Therefore, Marcuse in his work does not question the existence of Thanatos, the death instinct, although this instinct presents a major problem for the future of the culture as such. In this aspect, Marcuse differs from Freud's direct continuators in psychoanalysis.

How is it therefore possible to achieve freedom in sexuality? According to Marcuse, this is possible rather through a theoretical concept involving development of sexuality into the rule of Eros. Establishing the rule of Eros requires the application of non-repressive principle of reality, which changes the overall strategy of the impact of instincts on the culture. Does Marcuse strive to describe the characteristics of the rule of Eros from aspects falling within the scope of medical and psychological sciences? Does he study, for example, the issue of fidelity between partners or the topic of free love? In fact, he cannot do so. The concept of the rule of Eros as the creative free sexuality of a new type enabled by a revolutionary change of the reality principle or social arrangement is barely feasible. However, it can be concluded that the rule of Eros in a non-repressive culture does not lead to the application of the principles of free love in the sense of communising concepts of sexuality, according to which everyone belongs to everyone. Marcuse states: "The vision of a non-repressive culture, which we have left from margin trend in mythology and philosophy, aims at a new relation between instincts and reason....the instincts tend toward free and lasting existential relations – they generate a new reality principle [3]".

The stakes are high here: according to Marcuse, the ruling Eros is virtually the only alternative from the long-term perspective for preventing Thanatos from being released due to the increasing demand for sublimation of sexual energy and the society increasingly saturated with depersonalised masterdom. Once released, Thanatos would destroy the civilisation once and for all with its massive gust. Extrapolation of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis to civilisational scales pursued very resourcefully and without any prejudices by Herbert Marcuse results in rather deep pessimism as regards long-term civilisational outlook. According to Marcuse, the consumerist anticultural society and mass propagandism fanatisms are two sides of the same coin. It is a fateful situation of primarily the western civilisation. Let's add that the current western porn culture can be described through the thought structure mentioned above as follows: repression in reality principle is more thorough and omnipresent, yet at the same time depersonalised and submerged in the world of entirely depersonalised instruments.

The vision of the rule of Eros as the authentic freedom in sexuality is abolished entirely and the shadow of Thanatos increasingly looms against the backdrop of events, as it is released from the dual interconnection between sexuality and death, as anticipated by the Freudian psychoanalysis. Depersonalised supervision that has evolved into the omnipresent monitoring drives so much of the natural sexual energy into sublimation that there is nothing left to bind Thanatos. The death instinct leaps for its prey, first deforming sexuality into the strangest and sometimes even horrific forms and subsequently destroying the civilisation.

Wearing the Horns with Honour as the Freedom in Sexuality

While libertinism is historically perceived as an entitlement to delight, including sexual delight, as a space of "free love", the momentum of true freedom in sexuality is reflected in something entirely different from "free love" according to libertinism as a comprehensive philosophical system. It is reflected in the notion how to manage jealousy or cuckoldom. From the perspective of the history of philosophy, libertinism builds on the Greek philosophers Democritus and Epicurus and is associated with encyclopaedically educated personalities, such as Pomponazzi and Gassendi. It reveals "harmful religious prejudices" and stresses disinterest in politics, which is typical for epicureanism. Naturally, it emphasises hedonistically oriented epicurean delights, yet their understanding varies greatly: the renowned deliberate profligate and drunkard, the dramatist Tristan l'Hermite and the great dramatist Molière are both perceived as libertines. Although Molière as a libertine is haunted by his desire for erotic adventures, yet at the same time is affected by fierce jealousy, he embodies the basic theme libertinism adopted from Epicurus: "Sober judgement is what makes life pleasant. Sober judgement seeks reasons for each choice, each rejection, and banishes deceitful surmises that most often lead to the confusion of the soul. Rationality is the starting point of all this and the ultimate good. This is why rationality has greater value than philosophy itself [4]".

According to Molière, jealousy can be managed by recognising it, assuming a practical and rational attitude to it and critically evaluating jealousy as an individual aspect of the overall fate. The motto inspired by Molière in the sense of "wearing horns with honour" as the only feasible solution to jealousy only touches on a single aspect of sexuality and naturally does not address the overall ontological freedom in the general biological pressure of sexuality. A monologue by Chrysalde in *L'École des femmes* shows how one can be free in sexuality, i.e. how jealousy can be managed with rational judgement: "Be persuaded that a man of honour may have a less serious notion of cuckoldom; that as none is secure from strokes of chance, this accident ought to be a matter of indifference; and that all the evil, whatever the world may say, is in the mode of receiving it. To behave well under these difficulties, as in all else, a man must shun extremes".

Freedom in Sexuality as Tenderness

To describe tenderness as freedom in sexuality, the author proceeds to quote some motifs from his work *Tenderness between Ars Erotica and Scientia Sexualise* (inspired by the philosopher Michel Foucault) [5].

Tenderness as such, which can be assumed, yet naturally cannot be empirically documents, does not arise according to the concepts of the classical psychoanalysis from "diversion from the objective" or sublimation of sexual energy, but is tenderness from its very beginning in the sense general understood by all of us. Tenderness as such does not remain locked in itself. It needs to be able to develop into functional tenderness, which fully expresses the human love culminating in the physical act of sexual nature associated with reproduction of the mankind. Tenderness as such shows that healthy physical sexuality needs to be made complete with a constituent of non-sexual nature. While love culminates in the physical sexual act, it contains love as its subtle, yet essential component. Love as an exclusive emotion that cannot be reduced to anything natural and that is reflected externally almost invisibly, perhaps with a small gesture.

Let's assume that a paraphilic's tenderness as such is dysfunctional, paralysed, which means that not even functional tenderness is triggered. More specifically, a paraphilic also bypasses this stage and sexuality is expressed without any tenderness, strangely, in a socially unacceptable manner or even through a crime. Although a paraphilic does not enter sexuality through the gateway of tenderness as such, which was to develop into functional tenderness, such person is aware of this option, yet they reject it. A paraphilic also yearns for love but does not seem to know how to find it. Their fate is tragic, because instead of mere mechanic and regularly indifferent sexuality, violence, violation of human rights and crime becomes the alternative to tenderness in general and the subsequent functional tenderness. The current sexology admits that the aetiology of paraphilias remains unknown [6]. Perhaps tenderness in general as the non-sexual constituent in sexuality is the key to its understanding.

A paraphilic does not enter sexuality through the gateway of tenderness in general, as they cannot see sufficient evidence in the society that the others would do the same. This perceived social deficit weakens their volition control so much that they are not able to control their paraphilic phantasies stemming from their sexual motivation system. If violence is the opposite to the presence of tenderness in general, a paraphilic may feel – without accepting false rationalisation or intellectualisation involved in such person's protective mechanisms – as an instrument of the drastic truth of the world, an instrument that carries out in full extent something others only speak of. To summarise, it is possible to state that tenderness in general, tenderness as freedom in sexuality is the foundation stone of healthy sexuality. However, it subsequently needs to be able to blend with necessity and serve the purposes of reproduction of the mankind. Sexuality can never be separated from the society and its problems. On the contrary, these problems are reflected in sexuality very intensively.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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