

Jindřich Štyrský • Emilie  
Comes to Me in a Dream

Prague

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This edition was produced to accompany an exhibition at Ubu Gallery (March 6 – May 3, 1997) of the original 1933 edition of *Emilie přichází ke mně ve snu* (Emilie Comes to Me in a Dream) by Jindřich Štyrský and the original collages which were the maquettes for the photo-montages contained therein.

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Emilie is fading from my days, my evenings and my dreams. Even her white dress has darkened in my memory. I no longer blush as I recall the mysterious marks of teeth I glimpsed one night below her little belly. The last traces of dissimulation impeding the emotion I was ready to feel have disappeared. That troupe of girls is lost forever, smiling uncertainly and with indifference as they remember how their hearts were torn by passion and by half-treacherous humility. Even her face has been exorcised at last, the face I modeled in snow as a child, the face of a woman whose compliant cunt had consumed her utterly.

I think of Emilie as a bronze statue. Marble bodies, too, are not bothered by fleas. Her heart-shaped upper lip recalls an old world coronation; the lower lip demanding to be sucked arouses visions of harlotry. I was moving slowly beneath her, my head in the hem of her skirt. I had a close-up view of the hairs on her calves, flattened in all directions under her lace stockings, and I tried to imagine what kind of a comb would be needed to smooth them back into place. I fell in love with the fragrance of her crotch, a wash-house smell mingled with that of a nest of mice, a pine needle lying forgotten in a bed of lilies of the valley.

I began to suffer from optical illusions. When I looked at Clara her body merged into the outline of Emilie's with the tiny heel. When Emilie felt like sinning, her cunt gave off the aroma of spice in a hayrick. Clara's fragrance was herbal. My hands are wandering under her skirt, touching the top of a stocking, garter knobs, her inner thigh—hot, damp and beguiling. Emilie brings me a cup of tea wearing blue mules. I can never again be completely happy, tormented as I am by women's sighs, by their eyes rolling in the convulsions of orgasm.

Emilie never tried to penetrate the world of my poetry. She looked at my garden from over the fence, so that everyday fruit and ordinary berries seemed the awesome apples of some prehistoric paradise. I moved foolishly along the paths, like a half-wit, like a useless dog with its nose in the grass tracking down death and fleeing its own destiny. I was crazy, seeking to find again that moment when shadows fell across a paved square somewhere in the south. Leaning on the fence, Emilie sped on through life. I can see her so clearly: getting up in the morning with her long hair loose, going to the lavatory to piss, sometimes to shit, and then washing with tar soap. Her crotch made fragrant, she hurried to mingle with the living, to rid herself of the feeling that she was at a fork in the road.

Emilie's smile was a wonderful thing to watch! Her mouth seemed a dried-out hollow, but as you drew near to this upper lode of pleasure, you could hear something trembling down inside her. As she parted her lips for you, a knob of red flesh burst from between her teeth. Age fondles time lovingly. Morality is only safe at home in the arms of abandonment. Her eyes—which never closed at the height of her pleasure—would take on a gleam of heavenly delight and looked ashamed of what her lips were doing.

In the corners where I seek my lost youth, I come upon golden curls carefully laid away. Life is one long waste of time. Every day

death nibbles away at what we call life and life constantly consumes our longing for trivialities. The idea of the kiss dies before ever the lips meet and every portrait pales before we can look at it. In the end, worms will eat through this woman's heart too and grin in her entrails. Who could swear then that you had ever existed? I saw you with a lovely naked girl of astonishing whiteness. She lifted her hands and the palms were black with soot. She pressed one hand between your breasts and placed the other over my eyes so that I was looking at you as through torn lace. You were naked under an unbuttoned coat. That single moment revealed your life to me in its entirety: you were a plant, swelling and budding. Two stems rising from the ground grew together and from that juncture you began to wilt. But your body was already taking shape, with a belly, two breasts and a head where two entrancing pink weals swell up. At that moment though, the lower part of your body began to wither and collapsed. And I groveled before you, grunting with love such as I had never known. I do not know whose shadow it was. I called it Emilie. We are bound together forever, irrevocably, but we are back to back.

This woman is my coffin and, as she walks, I am hidden in her image. And, so as I curse her, I damn myself and yet love her, falling asleep with a cast of her hand on my cock.

On the first of May, you'll go to the cemetery and, there in Section Ten, you'll find a woman sitting on a gravestone. She will be waiting for you to tell your fortune from the cards. You will leave her and look for explanations on the walls of boardinghouses for young ladies. But the girls' faces in the windows will turn into budding buttocks and tulip arses and will quiver as a lorry drives past. You will be crazed with fear that they're going to fall down into the street—fear that is close to the pleasure you felt at your first boyish erection and close to the terror you felt when your sister taught you to masturbate with a *hand of alabaster*.

Who do you think can console you now? Emilie is fragmented, torn scraps of her likeness have been borne away by the wind to places beyond your knowledge, and that is why you cannot call on her to be the medium of your calming. And anyway you have long ago learned not to mourn moments of farewell.

The sky slumbers and somewhere behind the bushes a woman molded of raw flesh is waiting for you. Will you feed her on ice?

Clara always sat on the couch, wearing little and expecting to be undressed. One day she took my revolver from a drawer, took aim, and fired at a picture. The cardinal's hand went to his chest and he fell to the ground. I felt sorry for him and later on, whenever I visited brothels on the outskirts of the city and paid the whores for their skills, I was always aware that I was purchasing a moment of eternity. Any man who once tasted the salt of Cecilia's cunt would sell his rings, his friends, his morals and all the rest just to feed the insatiable monster hidden beneath her pink skirt. Oh, why do we never distinguish the first moments when women treat us as playthings from the time when we drive them to despair? I woke up one night in the early hours, at the time flowers drop their petals and birds begin to sing. Martha was lying by my side, a treasure house of all ways of making love, a hyena of Corinth, lying with her cunt spread open to the dawn. She caught the disgust in my eyes and surely wanted nothing better than to see me nauseated by the filth of her. I watched her sex

swelling and pouring out of her cunt, over the bed and on to the floor, filling the room like a stream of lava. I got out of bed and fled madly from the house, not stopping until I reached the middle of the deserted town square. As I looked back, I saw Martha's sex squeezing out of the window like a monstrous tear of unnatural color. A bird flew down to peck at my seed and I threw a stone to drive it away. "You will be lucky, you will repeat yourself over and over again," a passer-by spoke to me and added, "your wife is just giving birth to a son."

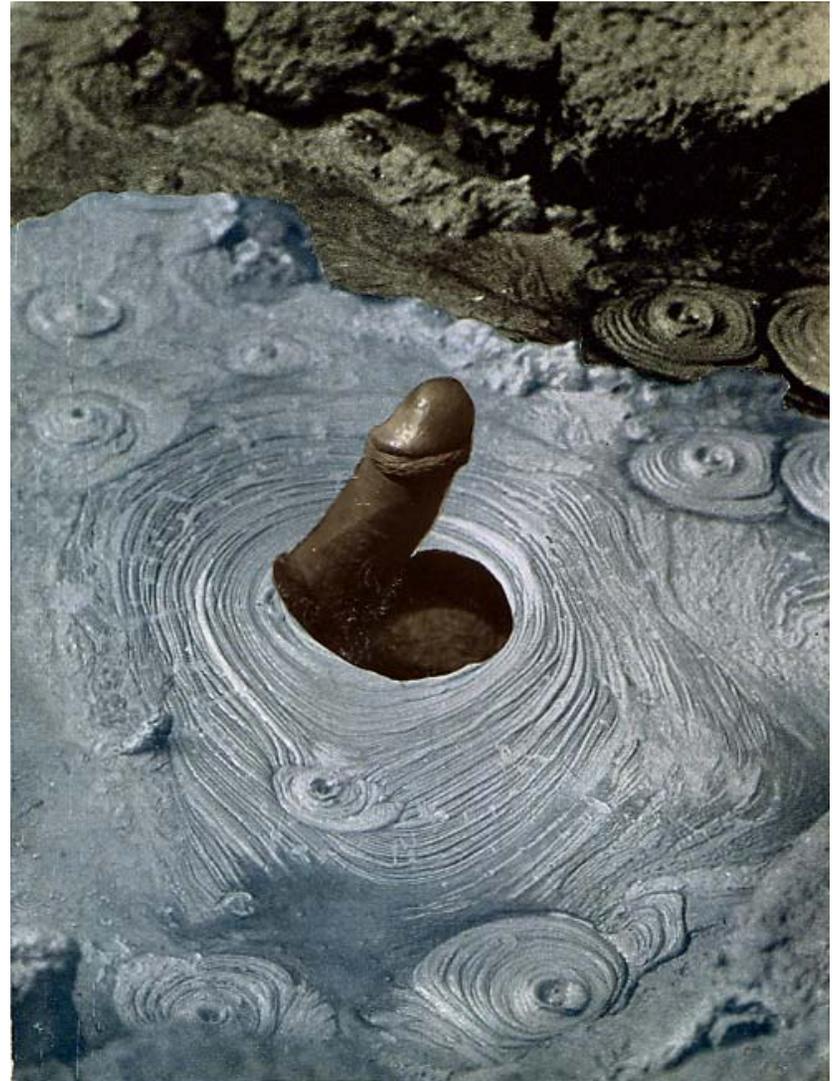
Two little sparrows kept rendezvous every noon behind the pale blue corsage of Our Lady of Lourdes. I was innocent when I entered the catacombs. The row of square boxes naturally aroused my curiosity. There were a few boys hanging by their bound feet from the tops of the olive trees, flames roasting their curly young heads. In the next room, I found a bunch of lovely naked girls entwined in a single monstrous living creature like something from the Apocalypse. Their cunts were opening and closing mechanically, some empty, some swallowing their own slime. One in particular caught my eye, the lips moving as though trying to speak, or like a man whose tongue has turned to stone trying to crow like a cock. Another was a smiling rosebud that I'd recognize to this day among a hundred specimens. It was my dead Clara's cunt, dead and buried, with nobody to wash her body with the mint-scented lotion she loved. Sadly, I brought out my cock and stuck it aimlessly into the writhing mass, uncaring and indifferent, telling myself death always brings debauchery and misfortune together.

Then I put an aquarium on my window sill. I had a golden-haired vulva in it and a magnificent specimen of a penis with a blue eye and delicate veins on its temples. As time went on, I threw everything I had ever loved into it: broken cups, hairpins, Barbara's slippers, burnt-out bulbs, shadows, cigarette butts, sardine tins, all my letters and used condoms. Many strange creatures were born in that world. I felt myself to be a Creator and I had every right to think so. When I had the aquarium sealed up, I gazed contentedly at my moldering dreams until there was no seeing through the mildew on the glass. Yet I was sure that everything I loved in the world was there inside.

I still need fodder for my eyes. They gulp down all they get, greedily and roughly. At night, asleep, they digest it. Emilie scattered her shocked scorn generously, arousing desire in all she met, provoking visions of that hairy maw.

I still remember something that happened when I was a boy. I'd just been expelled from high school and nobody would have anything to do with me. Except my sister. I would go to her secretly in the night. Lying in each other's arms, legs entwined, we slowly dreamed ourselves into the dulled state of all those who lie on the knife-edge of *shame*. One night we heard soft footsteps and my sister nudged me to hide behind the armchair. Our father came into the room, shutting the door quietly behind him, and climbed into her bed without a word. That was when, at last, I saw how one makes love.

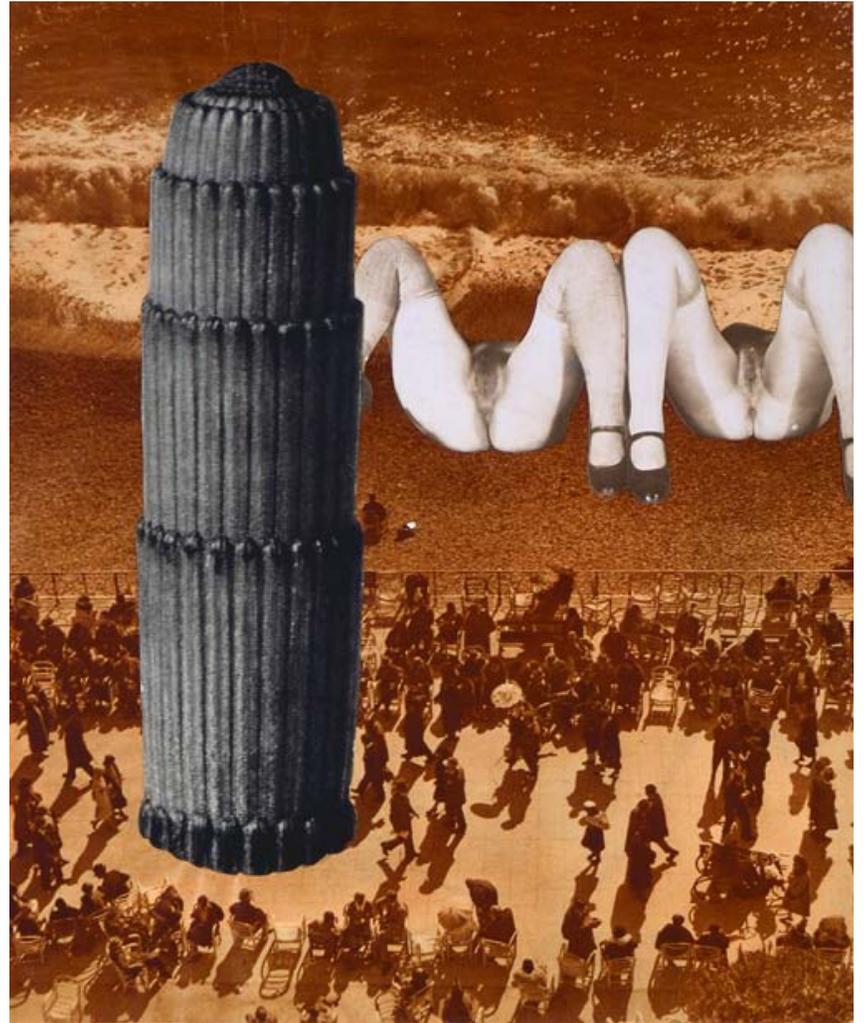
Emilie's beauty was not meant to fade, but to rot.



6 Jindřich Štyrský  
Collage #1, 1933  
24.5 x 18.5 cm  
Collection of Adam J. Boxer, Courtesy of Ubu Gallery



8 Jindřich Štyrský  
Collage #2, 1933  
22 x 19.5 cm  
Collection of Jean-Jacques Lebel, Courtesy of Galerie 1900 - 2000



10 Jindřich Štyrský  
Collage #3, 1933  
29 x 23.8 cm  
Collection of Adam J. Boxer, Courtesy of Ubu Gallery



12 Jindřich Štyrský  
Collage #4, 1933  
27 x 21.6 cm  
Collection of Adam J. Boxer, Courtesy of Ubu Gallery



14 Jindřich Štyrský  
Collage #5, 1933  
20.9 x 17.7 cm  
Collection of Adam J. Boxer, Courtesy of Ubu Gallery

16

Jindřich Štyrský  
Collage #6, 1933  
24 x 19.5 cm

Collection of Thomas Walther, Courtesy of Ubu Gallery





18 Jindřich Štyrský  
Collage #7, 1933  
26.7 x 21.7 cm  
Collection of Adam J. Boxer, Courtesy of Ubu Gallery



20

Jindřich Štyrský  
Collage #8, 1933  
24.2 x 19.4 cm

Collection of Adam J. Boxer, Courtesy of Ubu Gallery



22 Jindřich Štyrský  
Collage #9, 1933  
30.5 x 25.9 cm  
Collection of Adam J. Boxer, Courtesy of Ubu Gallery



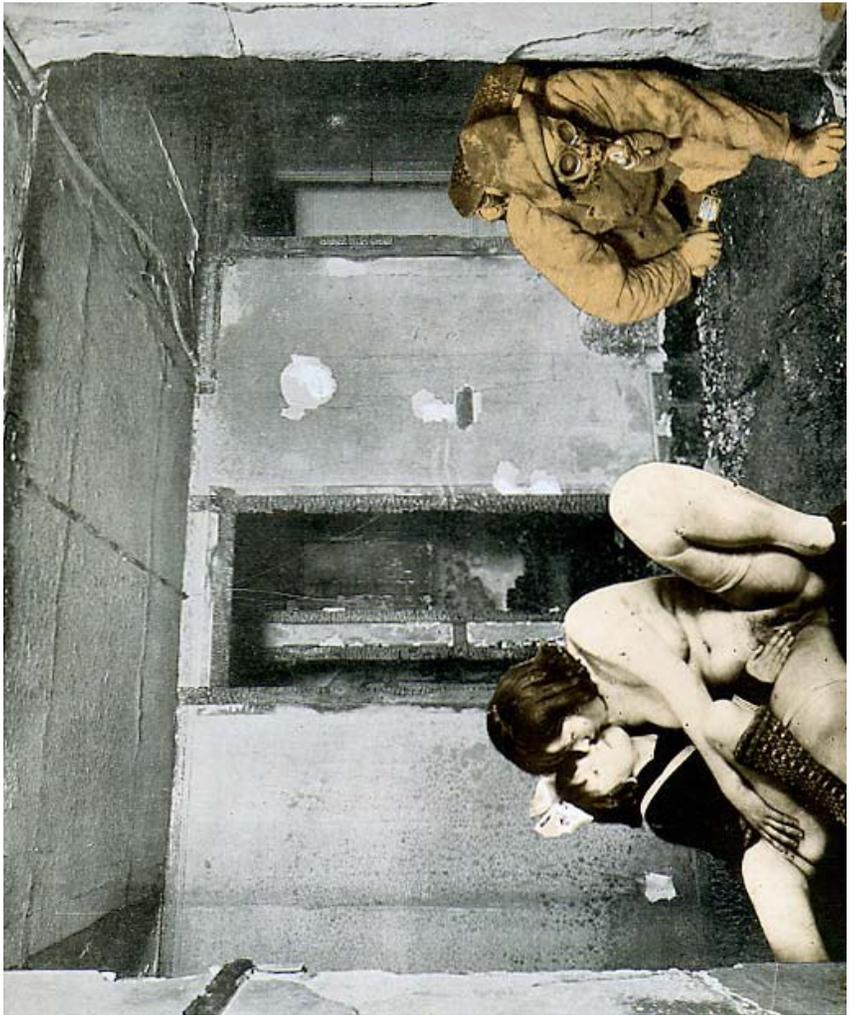
24

Jindřich Štyrský  
Collage #10, 1933  
28.5 x 22 cm

Collection of Jean-Jacques Lebel, Courtesy of Galerie 1900 - 2000



26 Jindřich Štyrský  
Collage #11, 1933  
28.6 x 25 cm  
Collection of Adam J. Boxer, Courtesy of Ubu Gallery



28

Jindřich Štyrský  
Collage #12, 1933  
19.8 x 24 cm

Collection of Adam J. Boxer, Courtesy of Ubu Gallery

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People who hide their sexuality despise their innate capacities without being able to rise above them. They deny their mortality. However, they are unable to extricate themselves from the sad merry-go-round of life which is produced and guaranteed by the human genitals, and thus to reach the immortality of mythological Gods. Even though they maintain the illusion of immortality and rid their behavior and psyche of the sexual element, they will never be able to free themselves of the physical evidence of their animality. Their body insists on demonstrating the human fate of mortality. Therefore, any suggestion of animal nature in humans makes uneasy precisely those who dream so strenuously about the opposite. Any allusion to their animality, not only in life, but also in science, literature and art, wounds them because it disturbs their day-dreaming, exasperates their rationalist airs and their social conceits. Each and every forced awareness of excremental and sexual acts demolishes their superhuman fantasies and renders vain their effort to extricate themselves from the power of nature, which, due to their mortality, has armed them with sexuality and with an irrepressible need to satisfy sexual hunger.

Nothing may depress those elevated above the materiality of the body so much as when their animality involuntarily announces itself. Just imagine how dispiriting it must be for the hero during a triumphant conquest to feel the signs of an uncontrollable urge to shit or how bitterly the nabobs endure their lust for a disdained subordinate. Their own bodies drag these imperious persons back to animality and destroy the illusion of their superhuman self-esteem. The bodily processes of which they cannot rid themselves are their Achilles' heels, whose vulnerabilities have been ingeniously recognized by pornophiles.

Pornophilia has at its foundation a militant and sadistic character. Through their activities, pornophiles attack the imperious persons who feel above and untainted by any animalistic nature. By calling attention to human nature, pornophiles do away with all kinds of artificially created inequality. However, due to this new criterion, they create new castes at the same time that, though not differentiated by social criteria, are distinguished by vital potency. Pornophilia thus destroys the illusion of the conceited about their God-like qualities and, at the same time, puts on trial their lack of physical prowess and the inferiority that they alone bring on themselves through the loathing of their bodies. The body constitutes the ultimate recourse of those who are unjustly neglected and slighted. For, with the body, they demonstrate without any discussion the groundlessness of all social distinctions in the face of the power of the nature. Through the body, pornophiles not only destroy the social barriers among people; they also rise, in prowess and wholeness, above those others who, from their different perspectives, loathe them. It is precisely from this position that pornophilia may become above all an expedient weapon of the socially weaker—the materially and culturally oppressed—who can exert, at least in this manner through the potency of their healthy bodies, their significance and power. It is therefore understandable that those who succumb to pornophilia are individuals with revolutionary inclinations. It is unlikely that pornophilia would become a passion of those who dwell in the prejudices of the withering bourgeoisie.

Pornophiles attack sadistically the arrogant psyche of the ruling snobs. The targeted then react to the attacks that demolish their dreams in the same manner: with a sadistically motivated prudishness, with puritan persecution of the allegedly immoral degenerates. You may yourself experience the motivation for the origin of pornophilia when, in the company of arrogant snobs, you have a pressing urge to interrupt the prevailing, idiotic idyll with a thunderous scream: "Shit! Fuck!"

The original reason for the engagement with obscenity is impossible to discount even in the primitive manifestations of the cavemen in their representations of vaginas and penises, notoriously reproduced, even to this day, on our urban walls. The sadistic character of these productions is not aimed at the arrogant snobs, but at women—at the inferiority of their penisless sexual organ—whom they threaten to punish with penises depicted in huge drawings and sculptures. Nowadays pornophilia, whose psychological value consists in the disclosure of obscene works and manifestations rather than their meticulous concealment, has also become a weapon against those of the same sex—those unjustifiably arrogant individuals—so, that in the place of misogynist characteristics, it has acquired misanthropic ones.

Since, after all, the consequences of the biological effects of sexuality affect the pornophiles annoyingly too—who, like all humans, do not want to acknowledge their mortality—the pornophile's predilections acquire a special veil which conceals the general unpleasantness evoked by the reminder of our animality. The obscene content of a work, depending on its treatment, may then serve as a surrogate satisfaction of sexual needs, of direct sexual arousal, or it may be treated artistically. It is true that the latter still retains its aggressive character, although in a special sense. The sadistic nature of a work with pornophile character, and particularly of an artwork, is of course usually latent, hidden in the creator's unconscious, without ever becoming conscious, and it is the same with the ferocious rejection of it by the puritans. Both for the pornophiles and the puritans, the true motivation of their actions is unknown and therefore wrongly understood. The sadistic sense of pornographic works indeed has no bearing on their aesthetic value and in no way constitutes a more unconventional motive for creation than the mimetic motivation associated with more traditional genres.

In a pornographic work of an artistic nature, sexuality is dissociated from its actual biological function and is conceived solely from the hedonistic point of view; it is therefore devoid of its reproductive consequences. That is to say, such an artwork does not point out the animality of the arrogant, but rather assaults the relative inferiority of their animality. The artist does not provoke the puritans for their transience and mortality, to which he himself is also subject, but rather for the impotence and sexual inferiority that they bring on themselves in their unwise desire to be superhuman, thereby letting their sexuality degenerate. Pornography as art does not attempt to hide the sadistic character of pure obscenity; it only curbs the mode of its aggressiveness by excluding the biological aspects of sexuality and excretion from its content. In art motivated by pornophilia, one combats arrogance not with the biological sense of sexuality, but with its hedonistic sense; so that what is mainly targeted is the less than perfect humanity of the arrogant, rather than their imperfect deity. The desire for immortality can be mocked merely for its adverse

consequences—sexual degeneration. Art therefore weakens the sadism of the pornophile only with regard to the biological aspect of sexuality, which is as unpleasant for the pornophile as for the pornophobe.

When we also encounter an inclination to pornophilia in those who are actually threatened by it, they usually have a predilection for the kitsch variety whose function is sexual arousal. That is to say, pornographic garbage—through its treatment rather than content—completely suppresses the sadistic motives of pornographic works, by which it makes them accessible precisely to that caste of people against which pornophilia at its essence aims. Pornophilia tends to immorality only in the eyes of puritans, who persecute combative, sadistic pornophilia, and to which they ascribe the same meaning that pornographic literature and pictures have—to be hidden carefully in closed drawers for the use of occasional arousal which their usually frumpy wives cannot provide anymore. This is the only branch of pornophilia that does not need an audience. On the contrary, it keeps it away because the vast majority of people, and not only the puritans, have difficulty in reaching orgasm in the company of others.

Free of all prejudice, we prize solely the artistic value of pornographic works. If for some the obscene content in itself diminishes the value of the works, they could as easily reject the art of Strindberg or Tolstoy for its misogyny. Pornophilia cannot be accused of pathology, for it is as pathological as other cultural manifestations and no more so than the sadistic puritanism of its adversaries. To the extent that a work of art is pornographic, it is as much of a cultural phenomenon as humanistic art. If it restricts itself purely to libidinal manifestations unconnected with other cultural or economic values, pornophilia is as much neurotic as a petty compassion. In a purely pathological way, pornophilia can manifest itself in erotomania and scatology, or as anthropophilia in the masochism of the martyrs. Our humanity, culture and civilization are a mere qualitative sublimation of our neurotic conflicts and therefore, to the extent that our pathology gives birth to works of value, we cannot be reproached for this characteristic. Sublimation of the neurotic libido is creative, while the normal libido leads only to playfulness. Both types of libido then participate in obscenely-motivated creativity. The neurotic libido determines the content of creations, while the form of its treatment depends on the normal libido. If the normal libido looks for the surrogate of direct sexual satisfaction, it produces kitsch from the obscene material. If its demands are sublimated, however, it leads to the work of art.

The arousing, kitschy treatment of pornography has no other function and value than that of an artificial doll made for masturbation. Such works are geared to real sexual acts and cannot dissociate themselves from the air of secrecy unless they cease to perform their function, which consists in fantasizing a real partner and copulation. On the other hand, the artist whose work is not bound in the same manner to reality does not need to have naked women urinating into a chamber pot. He may choose to hold out an Alpine valley to them. Not bound to letting the semen perish in the yellowish stain on the sheet, he may choose to split a Gothic dome with it, having transformed the ejaculate into lightning. He may replace the lovers' bed with a universe and under the woman's ass he may choose to place a globe. From her genitalia let then the sun rise; it will make the most resplendent abortion.

The artist, unrestricted by the rational coordination of representations, liberates sexuality through genuine proportionality and syntax from its biological function—the breeding of new generations. This function is evoked all too awkwardly in pornographic kitsch, whose purpose is mere arousal and which ends with the orgasm. Pornography as art is never to be looked upon ironically or labeled cynically as a real sexual act or its representation, with their associations of sheets and bed.

If in other places they have arrived long ago at a new evaluation of art, the censorship of the puritans has impeded the explicit treatment of sexual motives, since the obscene content arouses and provokes them insofar as it provides evidence of a healthy sexuality. Their sexuality has been pitifully wasted away under their flies. They become aware, even though unconsciously, of their sexual inferiority and they envy the mighty penises and healthy asses of others, while their own have been deformed by hemorrhoids. Therefore, a work of art with an obscene content torments them much more than pornographic kitsch, as the artist has expanded the reign of sexuality to cover the world. The kitschy pornophile remains within the realm of the secret alcoves. The artist, on the other hand, has spread himself over the entire earth. He lets the oceans urinate, the Himalayas shit, the cities undergo a birth, and the factory chimneys masturbate. Nothing is too sacred for him; everywhere he establishes sexual associations.

His pansexualism has a double meaning. First, it attacks the impotent puritans; second, it dissociates sexuality from its reproductive function. It conceives of sexuality from a purely aesthetic point of view, from the principle of pleasure. He does not spoil the pleasures provided by the libido with the banal truthfulness of everyday realism. The created erotic scenes neither begin nor end in depressing everyday commonality. However, the ordinariness and dumbness of sexual gratification cannot be removed through perverse fads. These too are simple-minded and banal. For libidinal games, it is necessary to find an environment which deflects our senses from the sad post-coital state and which restrains the rational speculation that poisons our pleasure. Our eroticism must be delivered from the depressing association with fat wives and the marital beds underneath which chamber pots hide.

It is true that poetry constitutes an art of discovering the exotic in the quotidian. Yet, it is not necessary to reject ordinary objects, but only ordinary situations. This is possible to do by means of subjective evaluation of objects and actions, by extricating them from their usual arrangement. Poetry, by negating the biological and economic sense of reality, disturbs its rational coherence and, with the help of a new syntax, endows the old content with a new meaning, a new plot. The ordinary, the awkward, thus becomes the unexpected, the emotive. Poetry is the art of finding the emotive perspectives of everyday life. The art of living is the art of where and when to drink a cup of coffee or, in the field of sexuality, the art of where and when to ejaculate. If the puritans want to call this a pathology, we will help them. It is a situational partialism.

The modern artist makes his way from the realm of dreams and hallucinations to that of the most delirious lunatics who, exhausted by the adventure to which they were taken by their reason, have renounced it and made do with the adventure that the liberated libido provides for them through the liberation of the senses. The adventure of reason, of

rationalism, is pathologically enclosed by psychosis, which negates the intellect and which, through autistic isolation, deprives people of rational evaluation of their perceptions and actions. The liberated libido can manifest itself freely in this pathological state. Psychosis puts an end to the raging neurosis in a negative way, through a gradual impediment of psychic and bodily functions. When psychosis limits itself to the negation of rationality and does not impede perception and movement, then the natural modes of our behavior and our emotional, aesthetic and non-rationalistic perception finally come forth.

The realm into which the lunatics have arrived through the benumbing of their spirits, the artist has reached while sane insofar as he has managed to harness artistically the natural, purely pleasurable attitude towards reality. If ancient art is analogous to neurosis, modern art can best be likened to the creations of psychosis. From the realm of dreams, hallucinations, alcoholic deliria and exuded, forced symbolic phantasms, the contemporary artist has arrived at a natural, purely emotive evaluation and perception of reality that itself creates phantasms which were not dreamt of by ancient art. Modern poetry has spread a magical, dream-like studio atmosphere all over the external world. It has enabled the artist to disparage the socioeconomic values of life and to think and perceive exclusively from the hedonistic point of view. The liberated senses and psyche can thus perceive the whole world in its emotive state, no matter how fleeting and transient. In artistic conceptions, the pornographic work provides life pleasures detached from everyday ends. The artist frees our bodily acts from their biological purpose and lets us enjoy fully what has been granted to us by nature, while having carefully alleviated our animality from the depressing vision. Asceticism and any kind of shunning of the reminders of sexuality make no sense. Let us experience and enjoy everything of which we are capable—for every human being comes to the world as an appendix of the umbilical cord and, ultimately, will turn necessarily into dust.

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Thomas Walther

This edition is dedicated to the memory of Emily J. Boxer.

This edition is limited to 1,000 copies, of which 69 are deluxe numbered copies.