

Psycho-Sexual Nature of the Feminine
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“We proceed through a series of psychosexual stages: oral, anal, urethral, phallic, a latency period (usually), and genital.”¹

“When considering the feminine in analytical psychology we are inevitably confronted by the contradictions in his attitude. The concept of contrasexuality is at the centre of Jung's understanding of the human psyche.”²

“To Adler, however, sexual behavior is merely another form of striving for superiority.”³

“As a natural euphoriant, sex is vital to humanity's mental well-being.”⁴

By comparing Western personality theories that began approximately 100 years ago in the Victorian Era with Eastern Taoist sex wisdom recorded during the time of the Yellow Emperor over 6000 years ago, we can get a greater scope of the feminine and female sexuality. The great personality theorists, such as Freud, Jung, Alder and Maslow, paved the way for modern psychology through offering views on women that were based on the

¹ Page 72 - An Introduction to Theories of Personality by Robert B. Ewen; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998

² Page 282 - Controversies in Analytical Psychology by Robert Withers; Brunner-Routledge, 2002.

³ Page 132 - An Introduction to Theories of Personality by Robert B. Ewen; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998

⁴ Page 11 – The Tao of Sexology, The Book of Infinite Wisdom by Dr. Stephen T. Chang; Tao Publishing, 1995

current societal norm of the feminine. These instrumental men unavoidably provided a male dominated perspective on female sexuality.

In comparison, 6000 years ago, a man known as the Yellow Emperor desired to have longevity to extend the length of his rule. After his extensive training and education from three female Taoist sages, the Yellow Emperor wrote a famous text known “Shu Nu Ching” (Tao of Sex Wisdom) which uses the wisdom of the feminine to attain great health and harmony through cultivating sexuality. How do personality theorists contribute to our understanding of female sexuality? How does Taoism view female sexuality? What are the new perspectives on female sexuality and its role in a woman’s healthy psyche? Can combining the wisdom of the past with the clarity of modern research bring a more complete understanding of female sexuality and the role of sex in psychology?

How do personality theorists contribute to our understanding of female sexuality? “Freud also regards the clitoris as an inferior possession that has permanent negative effects on a woman's character, and concludes that a woman's place is in the home.”⁵ Western society’s relationship to female sexuality began to evolve from a purely medical (physical) model to a more holistic (physical & psychological) model with the founding work of Sigmund Freud. One of the glitches in psychoanalysis is in regards to Freud’s view that women were inferior to men. For example, his theory that a girl’s “penis envy” stimulates the Oedipus theory and that women tend to be more neurotic than men due to

⁵ Page 41 - An Introduction to Theories of Personality by Robert B. Ewen; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998

their sexual inferiority are clearly no longer accepted as useful theories. Although Freud's theories have now been found to be overly sexist, psychoanalysis did contribute to expand on the role of sexuality through showing how deeply intertwined sexuality is with our human motives. Freud viewed sexuality as having a direct influence on a person's psyche. His definition of the libido as being psychic nature with regards to a person's sexual instinct and labeling this instinct as 'Eros', Freud succeeded in expanding sexuality beyond the definition of intercourse into including the entire body as being an erotogenic zone.

“What I seek is to set bounds to the rampant terminology of sex which vitiates all discussion of the human psyche, and to put sexuality itself in its proper place. . . . Eros is certainly always and everywhere present . . . but the psyche is not *just* [that]. . .”⁶ Jung agreed with Freud insofar that sexuality contributed to the human experience, however, he felt that sexuality did not permeate every motivation. Jung did explain that when some individuals redirected their entire attention and creativity into their careers that they could become sexually impotent. This insight was significant insofar as it demonstrated how sexuality is inseparable from the rest of the human experience and how it is impacted by the whole of human life experience. Jung's analytical psychology further contributed to the evolution of understanding sexuality's role in people's lives by providing a more positive outlook on sexuality. Modern Jungian psychologists continue to make contributions through reawakening the ancient archetypes of the feminine and giving women a new relationship with femininity.

⁶ Page 85 - An Introduction to Theories of Personality by Robert B. Ewen; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998

“And he (Alder) relates many unhappy marriages and personal miseries to the myth of sexual inequality... That woman must be submissive is . . . [a] superstition.”⁷ As psychology blossomed from its budding stage of overtly sexual and negative point of view of Freudian psychology into the Jungian’s more positive, less intrinsic view of sexuality, it is easy to track the pattern of repressed sexuality into a more integrated view on sexuality. However, with the development of individual psychology, we find that Alder moves further away from sexuality being at the core of all human motives and into a more egalitarian view on men and women. He found that if children were co-educated, they would experience more harmony and cooperation between the sexes. Alder’s perspective achieved desexualizing his personality theory in hopes to create more equality between the sexes and to show how social structure impacted the psyche. Had Alder considered the Tao of Sex Wisdom that states “correct sex spreads happiness among individuals, their progeny and society.”⁸ he may have understood that harmonious sexual dynamics between men and women could lead to healthier social structures.

“Self-actualizers regard sex as meaningless without love, and may temporarily opt for chastity rather than accept opportunities that are devoid of genuine affection.”⁹

Humanistic psychology, and more specifically Maslow’s self-actualization theory, continued to evolve the more positive view on sexuality. In his theory, Maslow stressed the importance of profound life experience as well as added a dimension of love and deep

⁷ Page 142 - An Introduction to Theories of Personality by Robert B. Ewen; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998

⁸ Page 13 - The Tao of Sexology, The Book of Infinite Wisdom by Dr. Stephen T. Chang; Tao Publishing, 1995

⁹ Page 426 - An Introduction to Theories of Personality by Robert B. Ewen; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998

connection to sexuality. He felt strongly that peak experiences whether derived through love, sex or other life experience were what made life worth living.

“Self-actualization is not altogether general, it takes place via *femaleness or maleness*, which are prepotent to general humanness . . . one must first be a healthy femaleness -- fulfilled woman -- or maleness -- fulfilled man -- before general human self-actualization becomes possible.”¹⁰ Humanistic psychology looks at the process of self-actualization to be one that involves both men and women to become fulfilled within themselves. This viewpoint reflects the ancient Taoist concept that men and women greatly benefit from learning how to harness their innate energies to become a whole person. It is from this goal of wholeness that Taoist explore how to harmonize the different rhythms of sexual energy between men and woman.

“The Tao of Sex Wisdom is a refreshing solution to reconcile people’s common dilemma between their sexual instincts and their spiritual aspirations.”¹¹ How does Taoism view female sexuality? The ancient “Shu Nu Ching” was said to contain within it the idea that a man must first honor and respect a woman’s before being able to benefit from the exchange of sexual energy. The intention of Taoist sexology is to manage the physical, orgasmic response of the body in order to slow down enough to become aware of the emotional bond of lovemaking. This viewpoint considers it of utmost importance for men to place a woman’s sexual needs ahead of their own goal of ejaculation. With this ability to respect a woman’s need for sensitivity, slowness, gentleness and awareness comes the

¹⁰ Page 35 - The Future of Women by Rona M. Fields; General Hall, 1985.

¹¹ Page 296 – The Great Tao by Dr. Stephen T. Chang, Tao Publishing, 1994.

result of greater harmony between the couple and is thought to lead to greater inner peace for both the man and the woman. Psychology and Taoism agree that people are made of both sexual and emotional energy, however, they have different methods in which to understand and work with harmonizing people's psycho-sexual nature.

What are the new perspectives on female sexuality and its role in a woman's healthy psyche? "The sexuality of women has been surrounded with more publicity -- and more ignorance -- than almost any other area of human life."¹² As pharmaceutical companies continue to enlist both medical doctors and sexologists to establish credibility in their newest "enhancement of women's sexuality drugs", the role of psychologists play a very important counter-balance to this movement. It is necessary for psychologists to establish a clear understanding of feminine sexuality that goes beyond historical medical and personality theory definitions.

"There is no new crisis here, only a constantly escalating one, with each year more sexologists joining medical and surgical departments and studying sexuality only through the medical paradigm."¹³ Current studies have revealed that most of the existing thoughts and conclusions about female sexuality are biased both from a dominant male and medical perspective. To counter this phenomenon there are organizations often lead by women researchers who have the core purpose to redefine women's sexuality from a female and non-medical paradigm. One of the core findings of this research looks at how

¹² Page 67 - The Future of Women by Rona M. Fields; General Hall, 1985.

¹³ Three Crises Facing Sexology - Journal article by Leonore Tiefer; Archives of Sexual Behavior, Vol. 23, 1994.

women's sexual response is intimately connected to her emotional nature. This new finding actually echoes the ancient Taoist wisdom were "they believed that love expressed through sexuality was the most potent medicine..."¹⁴ Perhaps a study of Taoist sexual practices could assist in creating a new model for sexuality; one that views sexual energy as sacred, powerful, healing and thoroughly enhanced when blended with the emotional energy of love and kindness.

Can combining the wisdom of the past with the clarity of modern research bring a more complete understanding of female sexuality and the role of sex in psychology? "In that sense, sexuality can be fashioned as a medicine for the spirit and is therefore sacred."¹⁵

Bringing back the sacred to sexuality is an important step to reconstructing the new paradigm of female sexuality. As women attempt to redefine femininity according to their own terminology and experience, it is natural that the first phase of this would be to rebel or push against the established norm, especially when that norm defines most sexuality through the profane and the exploitive. By accessing ancient feminine archetypes, women today may choose reorient their outlook on themselves and their femininity according to standards that were created in a time when women were revered.

"A woman's issues of soul cannot be treated by carving her into a more acceptable form as defined by an unconscious culture, nor can she be bent into a more intellectually acceptable shape by those who claim to be the sole bearers of consciousness."¹⁶

¹⁴ Page 120 – The Multi-Orgasmic Man by Mantak Chia & Doug Abrams, 1996.

¹⁵ Page 345 – Women Who Run With the Wolves – Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype by Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Ph.D., 1992

As new definitions are sought to empower the feminine psyche, a harmonious and wise methodology would include respecting the work of past pioneers such as Freud and seeing beyond his sexist bias into the wisdom of his offered that our libido involves the entire body. This whole body sexuality is analogous to our modern concept of female sexuality. What both personality theorists and the feminist movement have left out of their construct is the capacity for men and women to assist each other to attain greater harmony. This concept was one of the basic foundations of the ancient Taoist wisdom; instead of comparing and separating, it addressed the existing differences between the sexes and worked to enhance the harmony in the relationship between men and women.

“It [Shu Nu Ching] contains secrets which help humanity enjoy life, love life and benefit from life. Specifically, it provides methods which heighten, intensify, and prolong lovemaking to strengthen the bond of love between a couple, so that the nucleus of the family may be strengthened.”¹⁷ The ancient wisdom of the three Taoist women reflected in the Yellow Emperor’s sexual wisdom book may provide women with a renewed understanding of their innate value and power as equal beings. As women redefine their understanding of themselves and their sexuality and the role it plays in their lives.

However, this work is not just up to women, it is also important that men assist women to find new ways to explore and express themselves. Men and women alike must understand that their sexuality is a powerful resource that not only be harnessed, but matured. The concept that sexuality can be something that is cultivated as well as utilized to deepen the

¹⁶ Page 6 – Women Who Run With the Wolves – Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype by Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Ph.D., 1992

¹⁷ Page 11 - The Tao of Sexology, The Book of Infinite Wisdom by Dr. Stephen T. Chang; Tao Publishing, 1995

bond between couples is not yet one that has been thoroughly examined by western psychology.

“An additional and very important factor in the situation is that women have adapted themselves to the wishes of men and felt as if their adaptation were their true nature.”¹⁸ A modern psychoanalytic concept understands that the existing paradigm of femininity has been and continues to be shaped by the powerful viewpoints of Freudian psychologists. Women who desire to learn about their own true nature may find the ancient Taoist concepts to be a useful contrast to modern ideas of femininity. Instead of rebelling against the foundational work of past personality theorists and perhaps adopting an ancient paradigm, psychologists and women alike would be served to explore the full spectrum feminine definition as well as deepening their own unique sense of what is true for them.

“It’s not by accident that the pristine wilderness of our planet disappears as the understanding of our own inner wild [feminine] natures fades.”¹⁹ What we have done with both the schools of psychology and medicine is that we have become overly focused on what the experts think and say and forget to rely on own inner guidance and wisdom. Without a healthy relationship with the feminine and its sensual and intuitive nature, both the world and more specifically human beings will remain out of balance. To regain balance, we must reclaim and redefine a feminine that is in harmony with the masculine.

¹⁸ Page 109 - *Female Sexuality: The Early Psychoanalytic Controversies* by Russell Grigg, Dominique Hecq, Craig Smith, 1999.

¹⁹ Page 3 - *Women Who Run With the Wolves – Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype* by Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Ph.D., 1992