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**THE REPRESSION OF SEXUALITY AND SCAPEGOAT THEORY:
THE EXPERIENCE OF 'OTHERNESS'**

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Abstract. This paper examines the impact of the repressed sexuality on persecution of outsiders. Taking into consideration Michel Foucault's framework, his insights were connected with psychoanalytic theory. The frustrated libido, it is argued here, results in the manifestations of aggressiveness directed towards particular groups of people – 'scapegoats'. Discrimination and persecution effected by the repressed sexuality of Victorian morality is examined in a light of investigating the examples of chosen 'scapegoats' throughout the human history – the witches, the homosexuals and the Jews.

Keywords: repressed sexuality; scapegoat; discrimination; psychoanalysis.

In the XX century the social science tradition acquired and developed a number of concepts which have important meanings in the cultural and social realm. Among them, the hypothesis of repressed sexuality, presented by Michele Foucault, is one of the key concepts in contemporary discourse on sex, love and eroticism. Sexuality itself covers a wide range of meanings and comprises various elements such as body, desires, practices, identities and institutions. Sexuality is a natural and a cultural construct, which in addition, is gendered to a large extent. Moreover, as some of the sexologists suggest, "it may have hegemonic patterns, but these patterns in turn are usually defined by excluded others" [14, p. 35]. The presence of 'others' is, thus, significant for defining sexuality in general and repressed sexuality in particular. In the context of this work, the experience of sexuality and 'otherness' is explored in relation to the 'scapegoat' theory – the process of blaming and even persecuting an innocent

group of people as a proposed solution to a crisis. The main argument here will be that the pattern of a collective violence expressed towards outsiders can be considered as an effect of a repressed sexuality.

What we intend to do in this article is to begin with an interpretation of Foucault's repressive hypothesis in connection to the psychoanalytical theory of the frustrated libido. Then, based on this analysis, we propose, first to regard repressed sexuality as a destructive force for the manifestations of violence. Second, we proceed with the illustrations of case studies presenting the examples of the chosen 'scapegoats': the witches, the homosexuals, and the Jews.

Having thus explained the main assumptions on which this work is based, one must make a few observations which may shed some light on the understanding of the concept of sexuality in general.

Sexuality as it was mentioned earlier is considered to be both a cultural and natural

phenomenon by most social scientists. The main function of the sex is the reproduction of the human life and in this sense it is linked with a natural and innate characteristic of an individual. Obviously, sex is a product of nature due to the fact that humans are not the only ones who reproduce themselves. However, sex is an equally cultural phenomenon which came into being by separating the reproductional function of sex from pleasure. As a result, according to Zygmunt Bauman, two cultural strategies were formed for the treatment of sexuality by a society. The first strategy is comprised of romanticism and connects sex with love. The second one, “officially promoted and supported by the legislative powers of the state and ideological powers of the Church and School”, was the strategy of promoting reproductive functions and establishing restrictions on sexual experience [1, p. 20].

This attitude of the Victorian bourgeoisie towards sexual practices was clearly identified by Michel Foucault (1976) in his famous book “The History of Sexuality” [4].

The repression of sexuality, Foucault argues, in a history of this discourse consists of two major mechanisms. The first one, was taken place in the XVII century, while the second one can be considered a XX-century phenomenon. In the context of the present work, the second period of repressed sexuality when it became an essential element of power, is not the primary focus. However, the first period which was marked by great prohibitions imposed on sexuality in the Victorian age is especially relevant for the current analysis. The promotion of marital sexuality as well as various restrictions resulted in the abolition of the topic of sex. The latter, Foucault characterizes thus: «Sexuality was carefully confined; it moved into the home. The conjugal family took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction. On the subject of sex, silence became the rule» [4, p. 3].

Even though it seems that the discourse on sexuality disappeared and became a taboo,

it does not mean, however, that sexuality ceased to exist. What is more, certain tendencies in the history of this discourse suggest that close attention was devoted to that subject. According to Foucault (1990, [1976]), four strategies in a treatment of sexuality were invented as a consequence of a repression: (1) a hysterization of women’s bodies; (2) a pedagogization of children’s sexuality; (3) a socialization of reproductive function, and (4) a medicalization of perversions [4, pp. 104–105]. These strategies testify to the notion of the obsession with the topic of sexuality during that period.

This preoccupation with sex in a Victorian society was further developed and emphasized by Sigmund Freud in his theory of libido. Sexuality is seen by Freud as the core of the human experience. Libido, thus, is a driving force in the history of a mankind. The abolition and reduction of the sexual desires, according to Freud, result in manifestations of aggressiveness. As he suggests: “There still remains prerogative in the field of sexual relationships, which is bound to become the source of the strongest dislike and the most violent hostility” [5, p. 71]. The relationship between sex and aggressiveness, feelings of hostility and hatred are complex and ambiguous. On the one hand, sexuality and hatred in some cases can be regarded as polar dimensions; on the other hand, they are strongly connected to each other: “love and hatred became dependent on one another and together described a relationship which differed from friendship” [9, p. 71]. In other words, sexuality is bound with hatred, violence and aggressiveness in a close but contested fashion. As we will see below, these issues are interrelated even more closely than it would seem.

The hypothesis of the possible connection between violence and sex allows us to pose further questions: in what way is sexuality repressed by the societal and cultural norms? To what extent do those restrictions influence the projection of violence? The most important for our analysis is the notion of a mo-

nogamous marriage, which is perceived to be the only way of the expressing one's sexuality in a Victorian society. Monogamous marriage limits the sexual desires and passions, thus, making the object of desire forbidden and dangerous, yet very attractive. In this sense, the sexual object becomes taboo and, as a result, a person is full of ambivalent emotions. In fact, some researchers argue that monogamous marriage "serves to develop authoritarian traits of character" [7, p. 162]. Therefore, the restrictions imposed on libido by monogamous marriage can produce aggressiveness. The former can be transformed into the sublimation or can be directed towards own ego as it is indicated in psychoanalytical theory. Yet, the alternative way of venting inner aggressiveness is open violence. The restrictions imposed on a person can result in individual acts of violence, but if put on the mass scale, violence can take various, unpredictable forms. Whatever forms it takes, however, it is important to remember that the action itself presupposes the existence of an object to which this force will be directed. This brings the question of a 'scapegoat' to the issue of a repressed sexuality.

Accusing the others for something that is not their fault when confronted with difficulties is often regarded as 'scapegoating'. This term became frequently used in social science after the appearance of the book "Scapegoat" by Rene Girard. Based on the analysis of historical and religious works, he proposed the existence of the relationship between the tension of human experience and projected violence towards victims – 'scapegoats'. The ancient Hebrew's tradition was a founding source for this concept. A priest recited the sins of the people while having his hands placed on the head of a goat. The symbolic meaning of this ritual was in the transformation of the evil from people to the goat. Afterwards, the goat was allowed to escape, thus cleansing the community of sin. In modern theory, the process of scapegoating reflects the psychological condition of human nature. Indeed, one cannot disagree

with the fact that it is easier to blame an innocent outsider than to take the responsibility for the problems. This characteristic of human nature was clearly indicated by Rene Girard (1986): "rather than blame themselves, people inevitably blame other society as a whole, which costs them nothing, or other people who seem particularly harmful for easily identified reasons" [8, p. 14]. Finding a victim is another task that has to be accomplished. A scapegoat must be visible, clearly recognizable and vulnerable. In addition, the victim has to be an outsider. These are the main features of the 'scapegoats' which fulfill the function of the reconciliation of the community after the ritual action is done. Yet, the image of a 'scapegoat' is somewhat ambiguous because "the victims become monstrous and display fantastic power" [8, p. 54]. This ambiguity of a scapegoat is evident in all of the cases of the real victims in the history of a civilization.

For example, in the witch-hunting that took place in Medieval Europe witches were claimed to possess supernatural powers. The choice of the victims, meaning, witches, is highly gendered and provides the objective link between sexuality and projected violence. Witch-persecution, evidently, is a persecution of women who have become victims of male violence generated by repressed sexuality. The ambivalent emotions toward the figure of a witch is expressed by psychoanalysts in the following way: a witch "involves a repressed desire to return to the pre-Oedipal union with the mother, and at the same time shivers with horror evoked by that desire" [13, p. 80]. Witch as an object of desire and fear becomes a taboo. In order to deal with the ambivalent emotions aroused by the image of the sexually promiscuous and powerful female, men found ways to persecute witches blaming them for what was not their fault. One may argue that in the context of this work the example of witches of Medieval Ages as 'scapegoats' may seem irrelevant due to the historical discrepancies. Indeed, Foucault's chronology of the repressed sexu-

ality dates back only to the XVII century. However, while the majority of witch-trials occurred in Medieval Europe, several were present in XVII century such as a famous Salem trial in Virginia described in Arthur Miller's drama "The Crucible". One must also take into the consideration the notion of Christianity in general and institution of Church in particular in Foucault's analysis when constructing and promoting restrictions. It is equally significant for the witch-hunting analysis due to the role of Inquisition as a major tool of religious persecution.

In many ways religious structures were used to justify oppression of the various groups which became the objects of intolerance. Homosexuals, among them, were believed to undermine the Christian morality. Moreover, homosexuality was seen as evil, unnatural and non-reproductive behavior. Later on, in the XIX century, homosexuality became a medical category after the appearance Westphal's famous article. As one of the effects of a repressed sexuality, "homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transformed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of inferior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul [4, p. 43]. From the moment homosexuals came to be seen as species, they were easily transformed into a 'scapegoat'. Thus, the threat they posed to society needed to be eliminated, and one of the most widely known practices toward the persecution of this group of outsiders can be found in Nazi Germany.

Homosexuals along with habitual criminals and insane people were blamed for the lack of control over their passions. The Nazi ideology, taking into consideration Lombroso's criminal physiology, accused those groups of people and made them objects of medical studies. The solution for homosexuals was found in curing them from their 'disease' through hard work. However, if they did not change, they were exterminated. The Nazis' attitude toward outsiders can be juxtaposed with their perception of sexuality. The family, home and discipline were central

features of this ideal which to some extent resembles the typical Victorian bourgeoisie's respectability. Dignity and self-control over sexual passions are essential for a 'good' German at that time: "For true men, sexuality plays a secondary role" [12, p. 145]. In contrast to that, all groups of excluded others had no moral sense and were not able to control their desires. Jews, for examples, were a constant danger for society due to their presumably obscene behavior.

There is no need to elaborate more on the well-known fact that Jews were persecuted based on the Christian, political and economic types of anti-semitism. It is useless to question all the reasons which led to the Holocaust – the mass murder of the Jews in Nazi Germany. In the context of the present analysis, however, it is worth pointing out the particular elements of the Nazi ideology towards the major chosen 'scapegoats' – the Jews. At first, the Jews were accused of directing their sexual desires toward German women, and because of this they were able to prevent the birth of healthy children. Then, the creation of birth control as a destroying force of the Aryan race was seen as a Jewish invention. Besides, the Jews were accused of spreading homosexuality among 'descent' Germans [12, pp. 140–144]. In general, the stereotype of a Jew consisted of a great number attempts to identify them as particularly dangerous to society due to their sexual behavior.

The Nazis' attitude toward Jews and the proposed Final Solution – extermination – is closely related to the attitude of fascists toward sexuality in general. The Nazi ideology worshiped masculinity and even women were seen an inferior group of people. Men, the ruling elite, were the best part of Aryan race. As a result of this masculine domination, women were supposed to be cured in order "to give them back their own dignity and self-control" [12, p. 145]. The Jews, however, could not be cured and were not the objects of medical treatment in the same sense as German women. They had to be eliminated, and the solution was found in extermina-

tion. The method chosen by the Nazis has a deep meaning because “those whom they attempted to exterminate were precisely those whom bourgeois society had always regarded as threatening, who knew neither how to live nor how to die” [12, p. 150]. Thus, in the act of exterminating the Jews, the Nazis demonstrated the symbolic attitude toward the death of outsiders.

Clearly, the Jews were not the only ones who suffered from the Nazi ideology of a bourgeois society. As it was mentioned above, homosexuals, criminals, and insane people were also the objects of discrimination and even persecution. In addition, the Roma and disabled people were stigmatized groups of ‘others’. In the history of a mankind, different minority groups were playing roles of the ‘scapegoats’ at the service of a community. Various reasons can be claimed for that. However, the attempt here was to show how the repressed sexuality influences the projection of violence in its different forms.

Overall, this work has argued that the persecution of outsiders was the consequence of long-term repressed sexuality. Taking into consideration Foucault’s framework, his insights were integrated with psychoanalysis and the ‘scapegoat’ theory. It has been emphasized throughout the discussion of different examples of scapegoats (witches, homosexuals and Jews) that Victorian bourgeois morality influenced the type of attitude toward sexuality that produces feelings of hatred, hostility and manifestations of aggressiveness toward outsiders. Repressed sexuality and the frustrated libido coexist as possible explanations for certain behaviors, namely, discrimination and persecution. Finding a ‘scapegoat’, as it was shown, has been easier in certain periods of human history. When faced with a crisis, people have to release their destructive forces of repressed sexuality by means of accusing, persecuting, and final-

ly, sentencing an outsider to death. In contemporary discourse on sexuality, it seems that a lot has changed. Still, the question remains: Does the modern attitude toward sexuality indicate that the possibility of persecution directed toward ‘others’ has been reduced? The answer to this question depends upon how the ambiguous conflict between norms posed by society and sexuality can be successfully resolved in a present-day world.

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