

Isn't Christianity Homophobic and Transphobic?

Where are we and how did we get here?

Understanding the Roots of the Revolution

The Triumph of the Erotic

The Triumph of the Therapeutic

The Accusation in Context: Homophobic and Transphobic

A Christian Response

An affirmation of Identity

A place for boundaries

Set free to Love

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Where are we?

- A Picture in Words

- Individualism
- Materialistic
- Hedonistic
- Sexually Obsessed
- Progressive

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Where are we?

- Naming the Picture: Expressive Individualism

“Each of us has his/her own way of realizing our humanity, and that it is important to find out and live out one’s own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside of society, or the previous generation, or religious or political authority.”

Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*

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Where are we?

The wrong side of history?

- Post-Christian
- Mimetic vs. Poietic
 - Mimetic: The world has a given order (God). We find our identity by discovering our place in that given order. I have roles. I have callings.
 - Poietic: The world lacks intrinsic meaning and purpose. I must make my meaning out of the world. My Identity is hidden within and must be released and expressed.
- Post-Modern

We are in a struggle over the direction of the culture.

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How did we get here?

A picture formed by Philip Rieff

- Cultures are defined by what they forbid.
- Cultures survives principally by the power of its institutions to bind and loose people in the conduct of their affairs with reasons which sink so deep into the self that they become commonly and implicitly understood.
- Cultures historically have directed people outward
- A picture of History: Political Man → Religious Man → Economic Man → Psychological Man/Expressive Individualism

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How did we get here?

- Hume/ Darwin/ Nietzsche: The Loss of God/Transcendence
 - God is not necessary is to explain the physical universe
 - God is not necessary to explain the origin of life
 - God is dead, and all stuff of religion needs to be swept away as mistakes of the past.
 - Morality is an illusion. It has no objective basis(morality). Be whoever you want to be and do whatever works for you.

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How did we get here?

- Jean-Jacque Rousseau: Man is born free and everywhere is in chains. My problems are out there! (the emergence victimhood).
 - Humanity begins in a state of perfection but society trips us up.
 - What really matters is the inner-self
 - The human is at his/her best when they act according to their nature.
 - "The only slave is the man who does evil, for he always does it in spite of himself. Free is found in no government; it is in the heart of the free man. It takes him everywhere. The vile man takes his servitude everywhere."

Rousseau, *Emile*

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How did we get here?

- Romanticism: Wordsworth, Shelley, and Blake (what is really real is what I feel)
 - From philosophy to society as a whole, the arts are a helpful ally.
 - To find our true self, we must turn inward/ personal experience which will help us discover the universal truths, be true to our inner impulses. *Society has parted man from man, Neglectful of the universal heart.*
 - Feelings over reason
 - Freedom from Religion, and freedom for erotic love
 - External, socially constructed constraints militate against this authenticity of self in a manner that leads to the loss of freedom. For Blake and Shelley, Christianity was the worst offender.

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How did we get here?

- The Plausibility of Self Creation: Nietzsche, Marx, and Darwin
 - Self-creation: I can be who or whatever I want to be.
 - Material Roots: Industrialization/Capitalism/Consumerism
 - Nietzsche—claims to truth are not ultimately claims about objective reality but claims about preference, how you want the world to be. The most disgusting form of truth claims are Christian. Thus, be suspicious of all truth claims as grabs for power and the fundamental position that religion is distasteful.
 - The big mistake of humanity is assuming that we have an assigned human nature. Freedom means being free from any sense of essential purpose and free for self-creation.

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How did we get here?

- The Plausibility of Self Creation: Nietzsche, Marx, and Darwin
 - For Marx – progress was not about ideas where new old ideas are countered by new ideas and then a new synthesis is born that makes something better (Hegel). It is the material conditions of the world that need to be remade, only then will the ideas begin to shift. Marx saw the way the industrial revolution was changing society. In his thought, human nature is merely molded by the economic forces of society.
 - In Marx, “everything becomes profoundly political, from the laws of the land to the moral codes by which a society regulates itself to organizations that, on the surface, would not appear to have political significance.” – Carl Trueman
 - If your dialogue partner says “everything” is always about power than “everything” will have political implications.

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How did we get here?

- **The Plausibility of Self Creation: Nietzsche, Marx, and Darwin**
 - In Marx other than practical differences between men and women, all are essentially workers. When technology can help alleviate those differences, there is no societal value in maintaining them.
 - For Marx, religion and moral codes all help maintain the status quo, which need to be undone, so that humanity can move into a better system (socialism).
 - “The critical spirit, the suspicion that metaphysical claims are not as innocent or as morally neutral as they may appear, thus finds a philosophical foundation in in Marx’s dialectical materialism, as it does in Nietzsche’s psychology.” – Karl Trueman

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How did we get here?

- The Plausibility of Self Creation: Nietzsche, Marx, and Darwin
 - Darwin cutoff any metaphysical/theological claims of human exceptionalism. Humanity is just one more accident of evolutionary development.
 - While other Evolutionist (e.g., Lamarck) continued to hold to teleological (God directed) process of evolution, Darwin provided a purely materialist account of the origin of life.
 - If there is no designer than we are not predetermined to fit a certain mold.

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How did we get here?

- Why Sex is the answer: Sigmund Freud
 - From the Romantics we are told that happiness is really about an inner (psychological)state. For Freud, happiness needs to be focused more precisely: happiness is sexual pleasure.
 - *“Man’s discovery that sexual love afforded him the strongest experience of satisfaction and in fact provided him the prototype of all happiness, must have suggested to him that he should continue to seek the satisfaction of happiness in his life along the path of sexual relations and that he should make genital erotism the central point of his life.*
 - Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*

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How did we get here?

- Why Sex is the answer: Sigmund Freud
 - Rousseau saw unhappiness as the result of the corrupting power of civilized society, by moralizing self-love, which prevented people from being true to themselves and forcing them to follow artificial conventions. Freud stands in congruity, but he sexualizes and darkens it.
 - The problem is that we have natural sexual desires that will lead us to be happy and "civilized" society restricts us from fulfilling those desires. Further, the natural man is dark, violent, and irrational. Thus, we gave up our happiness for security. We forfeited true happiness, free sexual expression, so that we could be safe.

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How did we get here?

- Why Sex is the answer: Sigmund Freud
 - If sexual satisfaction is central to who we are, what about children?
 - Freud offers a scientific justification for the sexualization of children.
 - Freud normalize childhood sexuality by normalizing childhood masturbation, which helped to solidify his claims that sex was central to what it means to be human.
 - Religion, as it expresses moral taboos, is an infantile neurosis of human civilization, carrying out childish hopes and fears into adulthood. The way forward will be beyond religious belief, looking to science and doing all you can to fulfill your sexual desires.

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How did we get here?

- **Why Sex is the answer: Sigmund Freud**
 - For Freud, there is no objective moral standard. All morality is merely personal preference placed upon children who come to believe they must be subject to these preferences.
 - Morality inflicts people with shame, so that people will maintain the status quo.
 - While in his early writing, Freud believed God was dead, morality was only justified by God, and while morality had played an important part of curbing chaotic human forces, the way forward would be through science and psychoanalysis.

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 - While in his early writing, Freud believed God was dead, morality was only justified by God, and while morality had played an important part of curbing chaotic human forces, the way forward would be through science and psychoanalysis. In his later writings, we see a frustrated compromise of repressing the sex drive so that humans can survive in society.

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How did we get here?

- **Why Sex is the answer: Sigmund Freud**
 - Understanding the attraction of Freud
 - The idiom of science – appearance of persuasion
 - Id, Ego, and Superego are speculations not rooted in empirical evidence.
 - Similarly, the stages of sexual development: oral, anal, phallic, and genital has the appearance of scientific rigor but was really more armchair pontificating
 - If sexual fulfillment in the essence of human happiness, we do not have to wait for ultimate fulfillment, it is available today.
 - Religion and morality are infantile neurosis born out of a wish fulfillment, to make our helplessness tolerable. Freud “gives scientific respectability to the idea that religious belief represents some form of mental deficiency or emotional immaturity.”

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How did we get here?

The Revolution Begins: Critical Theory

- Understanding Critical Theory
 - Marx was mostly right – the world is divided up between those who have power and those who do not.
 - The dominant Western narrative of truth is really a way of those with power to keep their power.
 - Marx underestimated the power of Capitalism to lull the masses, so what was needed was an “organic intellectual” group that would shape the political consciousness of “masses/proletariat.”
 - Critical Theory married the “socialist/optimistic” view of Marx with the “individual/pessimistic” focus of Freud.

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How did we get here?

The Revolution Begins: Critical Theory

- Understanding Critical Theory
 - If there needs to be a revolution to get society right, if happiness is tied to sexual gratification, if we repress sex to form society, who is to say that this tradeoff is necessary?
 - Reich: Current repressive sexual codes are intimately connected to the exploitation of labor. "The interlacing of the socio-economic structure with the sexual structure of society and the structural reproduction of society take place in the first four or five years and in the authoritarian (patriarchal) family. The church only continues this function later. Thus, the authoritarian state gains an enormous interest in the authoritarian family. It becomes the factory in which the state's structures and ideologies are molded." --Wilhelm Reich, *Mass Psychology*

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The Revolution Begins: Critical Theory

- Understanding Critical Theory
 - Reich's premise that the traditional family unit is the vehicle of oppression stands inline with both some of the Romantics and Marxists thinkers. What Reich does is radicalize and psychologize this notion by using Freud to explain it. The family makes people weak to authoritarian figures.
 - Thus, for many Marxist thinkers now influenced by Critical Theory, the dismantling and abolition of the nuclear family are essential if political liberation is to be achieved.
 - In this system: Working-class people must be disabused of their commitment to the bourgeois sexual codes that make the traditional family an unquestioned and necessary good.
 - Reich wrote *the Sexual Revolution*, in 1936. In it he outlines that f

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The Revolution Begins: Critical Theory

- Understanding Critical Theory
 - Reich wrote *the Sexual Revolution*, in 1936. In it he outlines that Freud was correct in seeing the sexual repression as a basis for civilization but was incorrect in generalizing this to all cultures. It is merely the problem of the authoritarian/patriarchal families.
 - What needs to happen is sex education for children and adolescents that liberates them from their parents control allows them to explore their inherent sexual freedoms.
 - Reich believed that the state must be used to coerce families and even punish those who dissent from the sexual liberation being proposed.
 - In marrying these ideas with Freud and indicating that the oppression is psychological, it becomes both much more subjective and arbitrary.

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How did we get here?

The Revolution Begins: Critical Theory

- Understanding Critical Theory
 - From Marx their needs to be a revolution, but Critical Theory reverses the emphasis from ECONOMIC oppression to OPPRESSION—economic, sexual, racial, gender, and identity.
 - What you do in the bedroom is no longer private, it is social and political. “Patterns of private sexual behavior are not simply private; they are public and political because they constitute a significant part of how our culture things of identity... To outlaw gay sex or to merely tolerate a certain identity. Both are ultimately forms of oppression.” Reich anticipates this thinking.
 - Reich believed that sociopolitical reform without sexual liberation is impossible: freedom and “sexual health” are the same thing.

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How did we get here?

The Revolution Begins: Critical Theory

- Understanding Critical Theory
 - Where Reich most to loosening all sexual mores (or nearly all), Herbert Marcuse argued that some repression is necessary, but as civilization advances you need less repression. But if civilization is not where you want it, you will need some repression to get where you want to go.
 - To struggle to form the right form of political consciousness or psychology means that things such as education and speech need to be carefully regulated in order to ensure the correct outcome.
 - Because Oppression is now primarily psychological/identity/internal – words and ideas are the most powerful weapons—for good or ill. (Words are powerful, but who decides what is verboten?)

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The Revolution Begins: Critical Theory

- Understanding Critical Theory
 - Critical Theory now weaves its way into feminism, humanities, sociology, education, and race.
 - Sexual freedom becomes political freedom
 - Modesty and sexual codes need to be abolished.
 - The power and influence of the family need to be undone.
 - Sexual morality cannot in this worldview cannot be removed from the question of human identity.

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How did we get here? Overview

- The Loss of God/ Transcendence – Hume/ Darwin/ Nietzsche
- The emergence of Victimhood – Rousseau
- Expressivism: what is really real is what I feel – the Romantics
- The Plausibility of Self-Creation – Nietzsche, Marx, Darwin
- Sex is the key to human happiness – Freud
- The Roots of the Sexual Revolution: All that had gone before and Critical Theory

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The Triumph of the Erotic

Sex now pervades every aspect of life, from elementary education to commercials, to how we write laws (SOGI) to the rulings of the Supreme Court.

Two Key movements that moved it from theory to reality.

- Surrealism – the unconscious is the guide to truth and individual authenticity. The decisive battle against Christianity must be fought only at the level of the sexual revolution. It opened the door of making pornography not just acceptable but seen as a positive good.

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The Triumph of the Erotic

Two Key movements that moved it from theory to reality.

- The Pornification of Mainstream Culture
 - Playboy, Hollywood, and the Internet
 - Pornography as an individual actor, detaching sex from real bodily encounters.
 - Sex is all about the individual and what personal satisfaction and pleasure he or she can derive from it without reference to the other—this corresponds with the focus of psychology and the focus inward.
 - Sex gets detached not just bodily but from all interpersonal narrative. Thus, it is an isolate event with no other inherent meaning than the satisfaction of the moment. Thus, the pornification of the culture leads to the trivialization of sex.

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The Triumph of the Therapeutic

- A new understanding of personhood – Supreme Court
 - At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life. Beliefs about these matters could not define the attributes of personhood were they formed under the compulsion of the state.

Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey

- Sexual Freedoms tend to triumph over other freedoms
 - Abortion rights, Homosexual Rights, and Redefining of Marriage

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The Triumph of the Therapeutic

- Sexual Freedoms tend to triumph over other freedoms
 - Abortion rights, Homosexual Rights, and Redefining of Marriage
 - The ruling and arguments for (homosexual marriage) are absolutely connected, and indeed dependent on, the changes in thinking of selfhood, human nature, sexuality, and the nature of oppression and liberty. It is assumed by the majority, the only possible motivation for limiting marriage is because of personal animus, irrational hate.

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The Triumph of the Therapeutic

- Free Speech is simply a license to oppress others with hateful language and arguments.
- Everything is assumed to be grounded first in emotion. And thus, when someone disagrees with me, it must not be because of a rational argument but irrational hate.
- Underlying this transformation is a rejection of our history as merely a story of oppression that is used to keep the status quo.

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The Question: Isn't Christianity Homophobic or Transphobic?

Why are we talking about phobia?

- While we have good arguments that Christianity is not Homophobic or Transphobic, these questions, whether those asking them know or not, are built on a worldview that assumes: there are no objective morals, religion and especially Christianity are part of the problem, what is most important to my identity is what I feel, and anything that limits my personal sexual expression is repressive. Further, it will be dismissive that any rational answer can exist because rationalism is part of the problem.

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The Question: Isn't Christianity Homophobic or Transphobic?

A Way forward:

- **Build Bridges**
 - The affirmation of personal identity and Jesus Christ
 - Coercive oppression is not the way toward human flourishing
 - Neither Capitalism nor Socialism are the biblical ideal
 - You may be surprised but the Bible has a lot of positive things to say about making love.
- **Ask questions and listen – this is not a uniform movement.**
 - The goal is friendship and dialogue is essential

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- **Ask questions and listen – this is not a uniform movement.**
 - The goal is friendship and dialogue is essential
 - Never be afraid of truth, even if others reject it.

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The Question: Isn't Christianity Homophobic or Transphobic?

A Way forward:

- Remove Barriers
 - We almost all agree that some barriers are necessary when it comes to sex relations, what and how to we determine the appropriate sexual boundaries.
 - The Christian conviction, the teaching of Jesus on sexual boundaries leads to true human flourishing.
 - While there are problems out there, we all of are broken. While Christians can sometime confuse the message of Jesus to moralizing and judgmentalism, the true message of the cross is God's great love for all people, who all need His help.
- With Sex in its proper place, we are Set free to Love.