A PRIMER ON C. G. JUNG’S WRITINGS AND PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUAL CONCERNS AND THEIR TREATMENT

On Human Instincts:
- One encounters sexuality everywhere; thus in anything one is involved, their sexuality will appear too
- No instinct rivals the spirit as strongly as the sexual instinct
- Essential to give instincts their rightful place
- Pressures to conform or deny natural instincts creates psychological splits between inner needs versus outer demands
- Natural sexual instincts are reduced to widespread denial and repression
- Psyche is formidable, hostile, and can even thwart one’s will; sexual instinct is often beyond human ability to expressly control or direct
- Some psychic contents have an autonomous nature

On the Nature of Complexes:
- Fear of complexes is a deeply-rooted prejudice; complexes are normal and basic parts of the psyche
- Complexes are signposts to the unconscious
- The erotic complex is omnipresent in the psyche, acausal, and paradoxical in nature
- An erotic complex can dominate at the expense of other psychic material, then everything becomes sexualized and geared toward the sexual purpose
- Every important affective event becomes a complex
- The strongest feelings and symptoms are connected with the most powerful complexes
- Denial of instincts and complexes increases power of the unconscious
- Complexes and struggles manifest in places where one is most weak or less developed
- The presence of an erotic complex is certain even if denied by the patient
- Must expect powerful emotions and difficulties to congregate around sex because it is where adaptation is least complete and where one faces the most challenges to natural expression
**On Individuation:**
- Individuation and a new level of consciousness are possible through integration of the erotic complexes
- Goal of wholeness is achieved through the union of conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche
- Struggle in reaching wholeness is rooted in the conflict between instinctual nature and civilization
- Must work out the problems of our moral aspects or risk repression

**On Cultural Issues:**
- Cultural pressures are to blame for making struggles with sex difficult and universal
- Best opportunity for society is for each person to be in possession of one’s own personality
- Culture must unburden itself from the erotic shame and guilt carried from previous centuries
- Jung’s own contradictory statements demonstrate the challenges of overcoming cultural and moral biases, which are mostly unconscious

**On Phenomena:**
- Essential to penetrate the deeper layers of the psyche common to all humans
- Sexual struggles are deep driving forces that seek expression
- How things are expressed by the psyche are not as important as what needs to be expressed
- Repellent things belong to the psyche and are natural
- Must place greater value on the roots of psychological problems than on surface expressions of symptoms
- Psyche is purposive and directed
- Should always search for the meaning of psychological phenomena
- Disregarding psychological phenomena creates consequences, such as a split personality or loss of consciousness
- Psyche communicates through powerful experiences, images, and symptoms
- Sexual phenomena have multiple layers and meanings beyond universal or simple explanations
- Psyche cannot be defined by categories or labels
- The conscious psyche is always the smaller circle within the greater circle of the unconscious

**On Spiritual Dimensions:**
- Spirituality and sexuality cannot be excluded from each other
- Sexuality is a creative power equal to the spirit
- Grave consequences for ignoring the spiritual side of sex; one becomes unconsciously driven by instinct and it hinders individuation and development
- Sexuality has numinous aspects
- Numinous experiences simultaneously elevate and humiliate
- Concerned with engaging the numinous not with the treatment of neuroses; the numinous ultimately helps release one from the curse of pathology
- Sexuality is both divine and hellish; it compels one to experience forces beyond ordinary domains

**On Treatment of:**
- Illnesses affecting patients are mostly unconscious attempts to cure themselves
- Analytic approach is symbolistic
- All-simplifying theories serve an injustice to the patient and the soul
- No single theory to explain the human psyche; no general criterion of judgment
- There is no single method of treatment; it is not mechanical or procedural work
• Profound experiences and conflicts, like sexual ones, evoke deep parts of the psyche, which explains the cautionary approach to engaging sexual issues in therapy
• One can thrive and feel harmony only when instinct and spirit are balanced, otherwise imbalance creates one-sidedness and veers one toward neuroses or pathology
• The main concern in treatment is being non-reductive toward the psyche; viewing the psyche as complex
• There is a breaking point for the suppression of instincts that creates a split or neurotic individual, which is not usually conscious and requires support for realization and integration
• Shadow aspects might produce violent responses from conscious positions of patients
• The treatment goal is integration and rebalancing of inner conflicts through conscious awareness
• Every situation requires the context of the individual
• Expect high patient resistance, difficulty of treatment, and prevalence of sexual material; the unconscious erects significant barriers to treatment
• Most patients are highly resistant to disclosure and create insurmountable obstacles to exploration
• The patient senses something repellent in their own psyche; the shadow is a difficult moral challenge to ego consciousness
• This work places extreme difficulties on the patient and the therapist; therapy is painful and challenging to both
• Analyst or therapist must be appropriately trained and prepared by examining their own psychic contents
• First duty is to keep close to the patient’s psychic material and not allow prejudice and subjectivity to distort emerging psychological phenomena
• Important for therapists to open themselves to deeper and unknown experiences
• A patient’s deviation into sex is sometimes used to escape one’s true problems
• Therapists must first know how symptoms help and serve patients
• Can never know beforehand what is what
• Sexual issues may not have direct sexual aspect or direct means of treatment
• Avoid attitude of a missionary out to cure patients and eradicate symptoms
• Requires emerging crystallization of goals and a direction originating from the patient
• Requires conscious attitude of cooperation and dialogue or the unconscious can be driven into opposition

Implications of a Depth Perspective for Patients:

Potential Benefits:

• Reduce the labeling of sexual dysfunctions and the pathology of categorically defined symptoms
• Help patients view their symptoms as potentially deeper aspects of the psyche or soul; remove stigmatizing perspectives regarding the surface expressions of psychopathology
• Open up possibilities for viewing symptoms as important aspects of psychic expression calling for healing or attention from the unconscious
• Provide a view of the numinous or spiritual aspects in the psyche expressed through sexual symptoms
• Assist development and growth through the process of integration and individuation by becoming conscious of inner struggles and conflicts raging within
• Develop understanding of deeper cultural and universal layers of the psychic situation
• Provide an approach to understanding the root causes of sexual issues that are beyond symptomatic appearances
• Develop greater awareness and consciousness of self and spiritual dimensions
• Engage in mysteries of sexual expressions and desires by viewing them through wider perspectives
• Recognize how diverse aspects belong on a spectrum of human complexity
• Work toward integration with the shadow and unwanted aspects to foster a greater sense of wholeness
• Understand how disunity of the self creates psychic suffering and split personalities or dissociation
• Potentially reduce reliance on pharmaceutical solutions or medical interventions
• Provide individualized treatment approaches tailored to patients’ unique psychological positions
• Offer archetypal, imaginal, and mythological perspectives to help patients understand layers of the psyche and to add collective context to the repellant or unknown elements of the psyche
• Allow more room to explore a range of potential affective causes and how the unconscious is purposive and directed in its expressions of suffering

**Potential Challenges:**
• Some might not be ready for or welcome the challenges of the depth approach
• Some patients might wrestle with a lack of answers or the uncertainty of a direction or method, which can increase frustration and impatience with the process
• Difficulty coping with their own challenging psychic material, which creates feelings of confusion and more entanglement with the unknown
• Experiencing greater vulnerability and feeling exposed on a level for which one’s conscious mind or ego is unprepared
• Making the problem feel worse and more complex than originally thought
• Having resistances and avoidance of sexual issues brought into awareness
• Facing the possibility of intensifying a patient’s resistance, which drives the unconscious into greater opposition and fuels increased symptoms

**Jung and Sex: Re-visioning the Treatment of Sexual Issues**
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