

Erotic Intelligence

By Esther Perel

A few years ago, I attended a presentation at a national conference, demonstrating work with a couple who had come to therapy in part because of a sharp decline in their sexual activity. Previously, the couple had engaged in light sado-masochism; now, following the birth of their second child, the wife wanted more conventional sex. But the husband was attached to their old style of lovemaking, so they were stuck.

The presenter took the approach that resolving the couple's sexual difficulty first required working through the emotional dynamics of their marriage and new status as parents. But the discussion afterward indicated that the audience was far less interested in the couple's overall relationship than in the issue of sado-masochistic sex. What pathology, several questioners wanted to know, might underlie the man's need to sexually objectify his wife and her desire for bondage in the first place? Perhaps, some people speculated, motherhood had restored her sense of dignity, so that now she refused to be so demeaned. Some suggested the impasse reflected long-standing gender differences: men tended to pursue separateness, power, and control, while women yearned for loving affiliation and connection. Still others were certain that couples like this needed more empathic connection to counteract their tendency to engage in an implicitly abusive, power-driven relationship. After two hours of talking about sex, the group had not once mentioned the words *pleasure* or *eroticism*, so I finally spoke up. Was I alone in my surprise at this omission? I asked. Their form of sex had been entirely consensual, after all. Maybe the woman no longer wanted to be tied up by her husband because she now had a baby constantly attached to her breasts,

binding her more effectively than ropes ever could. Didn't people in the audience have their own sexual preferences, preferences they didn't feel the need to interpret or justify? Why automatically assume that there *had* to be something degrading and pathological about this couple's sex play?

More to the point, I wondered, was a woman's ready participation in S & M too great a challenge for the politically correct? Was it too threatening to conceive of a strong, secure woman *enjoying* acting out sexual fantasies of submission? Perhaps conference participants were afraid that if women *did* reveal such desires, they'd somehow sanction male dominance everywhere—in business, professional life, politics, economics? Maybe, in this era, the very ideas of sexual dominance and submission, conquest and subjugation, aggression and surrender (regardless of which partner plays which part) couldn't be squared with the ideals of fairness, compromise, and equality that undergird American marital therapy today.

As an outsider to American society—I grew up in Europe and have lived and worked in many countries—I wondered if the attitudes I saw in this meeting reflected deep cultural differences. I couldn't help wondering whether the clinicians in the room believed that the couple's sexual preferences—even though consensual and completely nonviolent—were too wild and “kinky,” therefore inappropriate and irresponsible, for the ponderously serious business of maintaining a marriage and raising a family. It was as if sexual pleasure and eroticism that strayed onto slightly outre paths of fantasy and play—particularly games involving aggression and power—must be stricken from the repertoire of responsible adults in intimate, committed relationships.

After the conference, I engaged in many intense conversations with other European friends and therapists, as well as Brazilian and Israeli

colleagues who'd been at the meeting. We realized that we all felt somewhat out of step with the sexual attitudes of our American colleagues. From these conversations, it became clear that putting our finger on what was culturally different wasn't easy. On a subject as laden with taboos as the expression of sexuality, each of us is inevitably thrown back on our own experiences.

What struck most of the non-Americans I talked with was that America, in matters of sex as in much else, was a goal-oriented society that preferred explicit meanings, candor, and “plain speech” to ambiguity and allusion. In America, this predilection for clarity and unvarnished directness, often associated with honesty and openness, is encouraged by many therapists in their patients: “If you want to make love to your wife/husband, why don't you say it clearly? . . . And tell him/her exactly what you want.” But I often suggest an alternative with my clients: “There's so much direct talk already in the everyday conversations couples have with each other,” I tell them. “If you want to create more passion in your relationship, why don't you *play* a little more with the natural ambiguity of gesture and words, and the rich nuances inherent in communication.”

Growing up in Belgium, a traditionally Roman Catholic society that carries a mixture of Germanic and Latin traditions and influences, I gravitated toward the warmth and spontaneity of the Latin features of the culture. I came here to further my education, and never used my return ticket. Ironically, some of America's best features—the belief in democracy, equality, consensus-building, compromise, fairness, and mutual tolerance—can, when carried too punctiliously into the bedroom, result in very boring sex. Sexual desire doesn't play by the same rules of good citizenship that maintain peace and contentment in the social relations

between partners. Sexual excitement is politically incorrect, often thriving on power plays, role reversals, unfair advantages, imperious demands, seductive manipulations, and subtle cruelties. American couples therapists, shaped by the legacy of egalitarian ideals, often find themselves challenged by these contradictions.

What I'd characterize as a European emphasis on complementarity—the appeal of difference—rather than strict gender equality has, it seems to me, made women on the other side of the Atlantic feel less conflict between being smart and being sexy. In Europe, to sexualize a woman doesn't mean to denigrate her intelligence or competence or authority. Women, therefore, can enjoy expressing their sexuality and being objects of desire, can enjoy their sexual power, even in the workplace, without feeling they're forfeiting their right to be taken seriously as professionals and workers.

Susanna, for example, is a Spanish patient who has a high-level position with an international company in New York. She sees no contradiction between her job and her desire to express her sexual power—even among her colleagues. As she puts it, “I expect to be complimented on my looks and my efforts to look good. If compliments are given graciously, they don't offend, but make clear that we're still men and women who are attracted to one another, and not worker-robots. If a man indicates he likes the way I look, I don't feel he thinks anything less of my professional abilities because of it, any more than I think less of him because I find him handsome.”

Of course, American feminists achieved momentous improvements in all aspects of women's lives. Yet without denigrating those historically significant achievements, I do believe that the emphasis on egalitarian and respectful sex—purged of any expressions of power, aggression, and transgres-

sion—is antithetical to erotic desire, for men and women alike. I'm well aware of the widespread sexual abuse of women and children. I don't mean to offer the faintest sanction to any coercive behavior. Everything I suggest here depends on receiving clear consent and respecting the other's humanity. The writer Daphne Merkin writes: “No bill of sexual rights can hold its own against the lawless, untamable landscape of the erotic imagination.” Or as Luis Bunuel put it more bluntly: “Sex without sin is like an egg without salt.”

The Lure of Fantasy

Many in our field assume that the intense fantasy life that shapes the early stages of erotically charged romantic love is a form of temporary insanity, destined to fade under the rigors of marriage. Might not fantasy, though, and particularly sexual fantasy, actually enhance and animate the reality of married life? Clinicians often interpret the lust for sexual adventure and the desire to cross traditional sexual boundaries—ranging from simple flirting to infatuation, from maintaining contact with previous lovers to cross-dressing, threesomes, and fetishes—as fears of commitment and infantile fantasies. Sexual fantasies about one's partner, particularly if they involve intense role-playing or scenarios of dominance and submission, are often regarded as symptoms of neuroses or immaturity, erotically tinged romantic idealization that blinds one to a partner's true identity. Our therapeutic culture “solves” the conflict between the drabness of the familiar and the excitement of the unknown by advising patients to renounce their fantasies in favor of more rational and “adult” sexual agendas.

Therapists typically encourage patients to “really get to know” their partners. But I often tell my patients that “knowing isn't everything.” Eroticism can draw its powerful pleasure from fascination with the hidden, the mysterious, the suggestive.

Terry had been in therapy for a year, trying to come to terms with the shock he'd experienced in the transition from a two- to a four-person household, from being one half of a couple involved erotically to being one quarter of a family with two children and no eroticism at all. He began one session by announcing: “All right, you want to hear a real midlife story? You're going to get one. My wife and I recently hired this young German au pair to work for us during vacation. It's ended up that every morning, she and I take care of my daughters together. She's lovely—so natural, full of vitality and youth—and I've developed this amazing crush on her. You know how I've been talking about this feeling of deadness, my energy dropping, my body getting heavier? Well, her energy has wakened me up. I want to sleep with her and I wonder why I don't. I'm scared to do it and scared not to. I feel foolish, guilty, and I can't stop thinking about her.”

As I listened to him, I thought that what was happening to him was an awakening of his dormant senses. The question was how could he relish this experience without allowing the momentary and exhilarating intoxication to endanger his marriage?

I didn't discourage Terry from his “immature” wishes or lecture him. I didn't try to talk reason into him. I didn't try to “explore” the emotional dynamics beneath this presumably “adolescent” desire. I simply valued his experience. He was looking at something beautiful; he was fantasizing. I marveled with him at the allure and beauty of the fantasy, while also calling it by its true name: a fantasy.

“How beautiful and how pathetic,” I said. “It's great to know you still can come to life like that. And you know that you can never compare this state of inebriation with life at home, because home is about something else. Home is safe. Here, you're trembling, you're on

shaky ground. You like it, but you're also afraid that it can take you too far away from home. I think that you probably don't let your wife evoke such tremors in you." As he left, I told him to keep that thought in mind over the next week.

A few days later, he was having lunch in a restaurant with his wife and she was telling him of her previous boyfriend. "I'd been thinking hard about what we talked about," he told me. "And, while we were sitting at the table, I had this switch. Normally, I don't like hearing these stories of hers—they make me jealous and irritated. But this time, I just let myself listen and found myself getting very turned on. So did she. In fact, we were so excited we had to look for a bathroom where we could be alone."

I suggested that perhaps the experience of listening to a fresh young woman was what enabled him now to listen to his wife differently—as a sexual woman in possession of her desirability. He was viewing his familiar wife from a new distance. I invited Terry to permit himself the erotic intensity of the illicit with his wife: "This could be a beginning of bringing lust home," I said. "These small transgressions are acceptable; they offer you the latitude to experience new desire without having to throw everything away."

Reviving Sexual Imagination

It always amazes me how much people are willing to experiment sexually *outside* their relationships, yet how tame and puritanical they are at home with their partners. Many of my patients have, by their own account, domestic sex lives devoid of excitement and eroticism, yet are consumed and aroused by a richly imaginative sexual life beyond domesticity—affairs, pornography, prostitutes, cybersex, or feverish daydreams. Having denied themselves freedom and freedom of imagination in their relationships, they go outside, to reimagine themselves with dangerous strangers.

Yet the commodification of sex—the enormous sex industry—actually hinders our potentially infinite capacity for fantasy, restraining and contaminating our sexual imagination. The explicitness of sexual products undermines the power of mystery, the voyeuristic pleasures of the hidden. Where nothing is forbidden, nothing is erotic. Furthermore, pornography and cybersex are ultimately isolating, disconnected from relations with a real, live, other *person*.

A fundamental conundrum in marriage, it seems to me, is that we seek a steady, reliable anchor in our partner, and a transcendent experience that allows us to soar beyond the boundaries and limitations of our ordinary lives. The challenge, then, for couples and therapists, is to reconcile the need for what's safe and predictable with the wish to pursue what's exciting, mysterious, and awe-inspiring. That challenge is further complicated when the partners are on opposite sides of this divide.

When Mitch complains about the sexual boredom in his marriage, he points at Laura's lack of imagination. "She always does the same thing. It's so predictable, it doesn't even really arouse me. She doesn't kiss me, she has so little imagination. She doesn't know that the mind is the most important sexual organ."

"So what do you do with your mind?" I ask. "Do you go off into the imaginary when you're with your wife?"

"You mean think about other women?" he asked.

"That," I said, "or it could be about yourself when you were younger, or any other places you may go."

"No," he declared, "that would be accepting that she's not enough and that I need to compensate."

"You're talking about reality. I'm talking about fantasy. Fantasies

open up the erotic realm. You complain that she's passive, but you're passive, too. You can be wherever you want in your own head, your wife is whoever you perceive her to be. The preservation of autonomy and mystery allows both of you to be apart in your fantasies, and together in your bodily experiences. It's *your* ability to go off on your own that enables both of you to maintain your interest in each other."

What I was saying to Mitch is that separateness is a precondition for connection. Sex is vulnerable and risky; in this sense, there's no "safe sex." There's a powerful tendency in long-term relationships to favor the predictable over the unpredictable. Erotic passion is defiant and unpredictable, unruly and undependable—which leaves many people feeling separate and vulnerable. As Stephen Mitchell, a New York analyst, used to say, "It is not that romance fades over time. It becomes riskier."

Challenging the idea that security is inside the relationship and adventure outside means pointing out that the familiarity we seek to impose on the other kills desire. What would happen if we allowed ourselves to see our partner from a distance, with a wide-angle lens instead of a zoom? Of course, that distance isn't without risk: it also means stepping back from the comfort of our partner and being more alone. Maybe the real paradox is that this fundamental insecurity is a precondition for maintaining interest, desire, and intimacy in a relationship—bringing adventure home.

The irony is that even the predictability in the marriages of the dullest couples is an illusion. As Mitchell says, "Safety is presumed, not a given, but a construction." The conviction that one's partner is both safe and dull is an invention that both have tacitly agreed to and that give a false sense of security. People often end up in affairs to break from what they imagine is

predictable boredom. Often, when the “dull partner” ends up having an affair, the other is surprised. This is because the supposedly familiar partner is in fact mysterious and unknown.

The ongoing challenge for the therapist is to help couples find ways to experience small transgressions, illicit strivings, and passionate idealizations in the midst of their predictable, safe lives. Adam Philips, an English analyst, underscores the point in his book *Monogamy*: “If it is the forbidden that is exciting . . . then the monogamous . . . have to work, if only to keep what is always too available sufficiently illicit to be interesting.”

More Intimacy, Less Sex

It’s often assumed that intimacy and trust must exist before sex can be enjoyed, but for many men and, yes, even women, intimacy actually sabotages sexual desire. When the loved one is invested with the fruits of intimacy, such as security and stability, he/she can become desexualized, no longer evoking the desire to pursue the fruits of passion.

Martha and Philip are trying to rekindle that spark they once had. When they met, Martha was the winning prize for Philip. “She was smart, beautiful, sexy. I couldn’t believe she was interested in me. I coveted her and we had a strong sexual connection—until I was introduced to her family, that is,” he recalls. “Something changed when I became accepted. I didn’t tell her about this. In fact, I tried to deny to myself that anything was different. But pretty soon, I couldn’t really get turned on by her and I immersed myself in anonymous bar-sex, masturbation, and porn.” Needless to say, Martha was very disturbed by the loss of heat in their sex life, and she blamed it mostly on herself. Never very confident about her own sexuality, she, too, had been amazed by Philip’s attraction for her, and now

assumed he’d simply lost interest in her.

When I ask Philip for a sexual image that includes Martha, he conjures a picture of the two of them kissing romantically in the sunset. He adds that he has difficulty imagining her in a passionate, erotic way. He tells her openly, “I just can’t see you in my mind anymore as a sexual object, and I feel bad about it, but it’s just the truth.”

To understand Philip’s sexuality, one has to follow the direct link to his father, whose multiple sexual adventures hurt everyone in the family. “My father pursued pleasure without regard to others. It made me feel that life was out of control and not safe. My mother needed me for emotional support, and in order not to upset her any further, I became an asexual wunderkind. I was intensely moralistic and judgmental, but, somehow, that actually seemed to fuel my obsession with pornography and the urge to break the rules of what’s considered proper. Sex, objectification, and transgression became as one for me.”

Martha plays her part in the construction of this crucible. She avoids expressing sexual desire for fear of embarrassment and rejection. While Philip seeks affirmation on the outside, Martha’s self-affirmation rests solely upon him and his response to her. Martha highlights a common way women order their sexuality, in that she makes him—and his desire for her—the centerpiece of her erotic and sexual identity.

When Martha does get up the courage to make advances to Philip, he feels pressure to be responsive and to take care of her. He fears the aggression in his desire, is ashamed of his need for anonymous, objectified sex, and feels guilty that he can’t be more emotionally and erotically involved with his wife. It’s his caring for Martha that stands in the way of his sexual desire for her. In the dis-

tancing and objectification, Philip seeks to create a separation between woman and mother, the erotic and the familial. After all, who wants to have sex within the family?

I point out the narrowness of their sex lives, combined with Philip’s sexual adventures outside their relationship. I ask, “How about if you could bring some of the transgression and objectification into your erotic life at home?” They look shocked—they didn’t expect this from a marriage therapist! “Martha, can you open yourself up to the eyes of other men, so that Philip isn’t the sole source of your sexual validation?”

I suggest that they begin an e-mail correspondence to each other about their sexuality—their thoughts, conflicts, memories, fantasies, and seductions. This can elicit curiosity, intrigue, and a kind of wholesome anxiety. The built-in distance of e-mail allows space for fantasy and anonymity—a glimpse into the possibility of bringing adventure and unpredictability into the home.

Martha begins to practice seductiveness. She’s playful and funny, not only with Philip, but with other men. Philip is intrigued by the new way she talks to him, “her new voice,” a voice that sexualizes her in his eyes.

Martha starts off the next session by telling me, “Your urging me to get a sense of myself from other men besides Philip has been very good for me. I’ve started doing things with other men—going to concerts and galleries with male friends, and generally been more flirtatious. Nothing big, you know, but it’s been fun to engage in these harmless encounters. And now, Philip’s every word or look is no longer the most important thing in my life.”

Martha also talked about her extremely conflicted feelings about Philip’s extramarital sex life. “I was

really hurt and angry about it, for sure,” she said, “angry at him and angry at me. But at the same time, I also have to admit that when he had the affairs, I lusted after him more, because he wasn’t necessarily mine. The anger at what he did and the fact that I know I could leave him—even though I don’t want to—gives me more freedom and confidence. When I initiate sex now, I can feel almost brazen—and I like that. *You want this, Philip? Take it!* It doesn’t have to be romantic or even particularly personal. I feel free, knowing that I choose to stay with him and, yes, knowing that he could leave me, too. That has freed us up.”

Sex in Transition and Motherhood

Susan and Jenny came to see me about their sexual relationship. Susan, a longtime lesbian, set out to seduce Jenny right after she met her. Jenny responded, though it was her first lesbian relationship. They moved in together just as Susan was waiting for the arrival of a baby she was adopting. As soon as they were a threesome, Jenny thought they were a wonderful family, but completely lost any sexual interest in Susan. For this couple, sex was too weighted with meaning; eroticism and sexuality had been undermined by the need to build a safe, secure family unit that would endure. Jenny, already in some conflict about her lesbianism, couldn’t be a second “mom” to the new baby, family builder, companionate spouse, and passionate lover all at once.

I said, “If you can divorce the fate of your relationship from having sex, then you may actually be able to have enjoyable sex, which will improve your relationship. Both of you are now mothers for the first time—Jenny is also a mother to Susan’s child—and both of you are trying to be sexual with a partner who’s a mother. And you’re both trying, for the first time, to have sex with a mother as a mother.

“The transition to motherhood can

have a desexualizing effect on women,” I added. “The mother isn’t an erotic image in our culture. ‘Mom’ is supposed to be caring, nurturing, loving, but, frankly, rather asexual—she’s certainly not supposed to be overtly arousing. She represents the reproductive nature of sexuality, not the pleasure principle of eroticism.

“Being new parents can be pretty overwhelming. But can you try to add making love to the list of all the other things you enjoy doing together to unwind and relax?” I asked. “The idea is to make each other feel good. That’s an offer you can’t refuse.”

At the next session, Jenny reported: “That really loosened us up. We can talk about it, laugh and not be instantly scared.” Susan added: “I actually felt excited for the first time in a long time.” As the session neared its end, I quoted a passage from Adam Philips’s book and asked that they reflect on it together: “A sexual relationship is like learning a script neither of you has read. But you only notice this when one of you forgets your lines. And then, in the panic, you desperately try and remember something that you haven’t really forgotten. You hope the other person will prompt you. You start to hear voices off-stage. You bring on another character.”

A Second Language

Physical pleasure offers a unique haven for many men and women; the soothing powers of the body make it the place for freedom of expression. It’s only during sex that they’re able to escape their anxieties and obsessive ruminations. The physical pleasure tunes out the numbing stress of the everyday. It provides solace and self-revelation, along with a sense of connection.

Returning to Mitch and Laura and their sexual boredom, I see all the drawbacks of their timid sexual imagination. Both describe their own and each other’s sexual selves

in stereotypical language. Mitch sees himself, and is seen by Laura, as the classic sex-obsessed man, demanding his rights regardless of how she feels. Laura, who is strong-willed and sometimes domineering in their everyday interactions, sees herself, and is seen by Mitch, as a sexually shy, inhibited woman, repeatedly rejecting his advances from some unfathomable feelings of disgust or contempt.

For Laura, sex is the sum of all the personal, cultural, and familial taboos, restrictions, and inhibitions she absorbed as a child. Her mother repeatedly warned her that sex wasn’t for “nice girls.” And the only comments about her body she remembers from her father were about her developing breasts. As an adult, she wears concealing clothes, including turtlenecks in the summer. Compliments or comments on her sensuality feel demeaning. Sexuality evokes fear in her; she’s never been able to enjoy the pleasures of her body.

For Mitch, on the other hand, sex was always the place where he could feel utterly free, uninhibited, at peace. But in his marriage, he’s come to feel awful about something he’d always experienced with confidence and pleasure. Meanwhile, Laura has come to feel completely deficient, ungenerous, and guilty.

In couples therapy, Mitch hears her story and understands for the first time that her alienation from her own body, her own pleasure, has nothing to do with *him*. This eases his sense of rejection, his anguish about being unable to please her. For her part, Laura learns something equally crucial about Mitch—that when the language of words fails him, as it invariably does in the realm of emotion, he communicates with his body. Mitch needs physicality to voice his vulnerability and delight, his yearning to connect; only in sex can he feel emotionally safe.

Laura, as she hears him, begins to

realize, for the first time, how important the body can be as a medium for free, creative, and deeply personal expression. She'd always felt that Mitch's desire for sex had little to do with her; it was just crude physical release for him. For instance, when I ask him to say what he'd like and he says, "I want to sit on the edge of a hot tub and have Laura suck me," she recoils. "It's too raw, too coarse," she says. "It has nothing to do with *me*." I remind her that it's her he wants to do it with—only her—and it's, for him, a very intimate act. "He's never gone anywhere else; it's you he wants."

By permitting him to speak only in her nonphysical language, rather than in his sensual language, Laura has blocked not only his ability to really "speak" to her, but her own view of her husband as he really is. She can see only the bully, not the yearning lover. And every time he opens his mouth, that bully reinforces her fears. He's reduced to his second, far less fluent, language of words. Meanwhile, her experience has robbed her of the capacity to speak and understand the body's language. For every person, the physical language is the original mother tongue.

As Laura tries to grasp Mitch's erotic fantasies, I try to steer her attention to herself. What are her erotic choices? Can she let her body communicate its wants to Mitch? Can she dare break through the vigilance, the guilt, and the disavowal that surround her sexual desires and the ideas and feelings associated with pleasing her own body? Can she look her mother straight in the eye and still maintain a sense of her sexual self, indulge in her own experience of eroticism without sacrificing her self-image as a "nice" or "respectable" girl?

Like many women, Laura battles the age-old repressions of female sexuality that have trapped a woman into passivity and dependence on men to seduce and initiate her into sexuality, to intuit what

she likes and to bring her to fulfillment. Economic and professional independence notwithstanding, Laura remains sexually dependent.

Together, Laura and I expose the tortuous conflicts between desire and denial, wanting and not having, fulfillment and repression. I invite her to engage with her fantasies, to own her wanting, and to take responsibility for her sexual fulfillment. I remind her that sex often evokes unreasoning obsessions rather than clear judgment, selfish desires rather than thoughtful consideration.

I suggest to Mitch and Laura that they're trapped in a language with too little imagination, a language too limited to contain their erotic life. Mitch bursts into tears. "I'm not angry," he says of all the times that his frustration has led to mean, hurtful words. "I'm heartbroken." I ask Laura to just hold him and I leave the room for a few minutes to give them the chance to connect through the pure language of physical touch. I think of my two boys, and how often they want me to hold them. No words can match touch; a hug can melt away many ill chosen words.

Laura's challenge—and that of many women—is to be able to eroticize and desire a man who's present, reliable, and needs her. The vulnerability and dependency that she accepts in her children have a desexualizing effect for her in Mitch. She associates potency and sexuality with the strong, aloof, unavailable man/father. Paradoxically, the erotic realm offers Mitch—and many men—a restorative experience of his softer, more dependent, side.

For Mitch and Laura, the issues that generate conflict in their relationship—control, power, dependency, and vulnerability—can yield sexual desire and mutual pleasure when eroticized. Mitch often resents Laura's overpowering personality in daily life, but would like very much to see its erotic expres-

sion. Laura, angered by Mitch's apparent "insensitivity," his power ploys, can find this sexuality erotically appealing when she realizes that sex is a language he wants to speak only with her—that it's she who touches him most deeply and personally.

So many of the couples who come to therapy imagine that they know everything there is to know about their mate. In large part, I see my job as trying to highlight for them how little they've seen, urging them to recover their curiosity and catch a glimpse behind the walls that encircle the other. Eroticism is the fuel for that curiosity, the experience of desire transfigured by the imagination.

As Mexican essayist Octavio Paz has written, eroticism is "the poetry of the body, the testimony of the senses. Like a poem, it is not linear, it meanders and twists back on itself, shows us what we do not see with our eyes, but in the eyes of our spirit. Eroticism reveals to us another world, inside this world. The senses become servants of the imagination, and let us see the invisible and hear the inaudible."

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Annotated Resources

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