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## Foreword

In 1976, Michel Foucault publishes—under the title *La volonté de savoir*<sup>1</sup> [The Will to Know]—the first volume of a *Histoire de la sexualité* the back cover of which announces a coming series in five volumes, entitled respectively 2. *La chair et le corps* [The Flesh and the Body]; 3. *La croisade des enfants* [The Children's Crusade]; 4. *La femme, la mère et l'hystérique* [The Wife, the Mother, and the Hysteric]; 5. *Les pervers* [The Perverts]; 6. *Population et races* [Population and Races]. None of these works will see the light of day. The Foucault archives<sup>2</sup> deposited in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Département des manuscrits) reveal, however, that at least two titles (*La chair et le corps*<sup>3</sup> and *La croisade des enfants*<sup>4</sup>) had already been the object of substantial first drafts. In 1984, shortly before Foucault's death, volumes 2 and 3<sup>5</sup> of this *History of Sexuality*, begun eight years before,<sup>6</sup> were published, but their content is very far from the initial project, as is announced both in the chapter "Modifications" of *The Use of Pleasure* ("This series of investigations is appearing later than I had anticipated and in a completely different form . . ." <sup>7</sup>) and a "Please insert" slipped into the volumes at the time of their publication. The plan to study the modern biopolitical *dispositif* of sexuality (sixteenth through nineteenth century)—partially treated in Foucault's courses at the Collège de France—was dropped in favor of the problematization—through a rereading of the philosophers, physicians, and orators of Greco-Roman antiquity—of sexual pleasure from the historical

perspective of a genealogy of the desiring subject and under the conceptual horizon of the arts of existence. Volume 4, devoted to the problematization of the flesh by the Christian Fathers of the early centuries (from Justin to Saint Augustine), forms part of this new *History of Sexuality*, displaced by a full dozen centuries from the initial project and finding its point of gravitation in the construction of an ethic of the subject. The “Please insert” of 1984 concludes as follows:

Hence, finally, a general recentering of this vast study on the genealogy of desiring man, from classical antiquity to the first centuries of Christianity. And its distribution into three volumes, which form a whole:

- *The Use of Pleasure* studies the way in which sexual behavior was reflected by Greek thought [. . .]. Also how medical and philosophical thought elaborated this “use of pleasure”—*krêsis aphrodision*—and formulated several themes of austerity that would become recurrent on four major axes of experience: the relation to the body, to the wife, to boys, and to truth.
- *The Care of the Self* analyzes this problematization in the Greek and Latin texts of the first two centuries of our era, and the inflection it undergoes in an art of living dominated by the preoccupation with oneself.
- *Confessions of the Flesh* will deal, finally, with the experience of the flesh in the first centuries of Christianity, and with the role played in it by the hermeneutic, and purifying decipherment, of desire.

The genesis of this ultimate work is complex. One needs to recall that in the *Histoire de la sexualité*, “plan one,” the Christian practices and doctrines of confession of the flesh were to form the object of a historical examination in a volume titled *The Flesh and the Body*.<sup>8</sup> It was then a matter of studying “the evolution of the Catholic pastoral and of the sacrament of penance after the

Council of Trent.”<sup>9</sup> A first overview of this research had been presented during the lecture of February 19, 1975, at the Collège de France.<sup>10</sup> Rather quickly, though, Foucault decided to go back to the very beginning of the age to recapture the point of origin in Christian history, the moment of emergence of a ritualized truth obligation, of an injunction of verbalization by the subject, of truth-telling about oneself. In this way, as early as the years 1976–1977, there accumulated a certain number of reading notes about Tertullian, Cassian, and others.<sup>11</sup> Daniel Defert writes concerning the month of August 1977: “Foucault is at Vendevre. He’s writing about the Church Fathers and attempting to shift his history of sexuality by several centuries.”<sup>12</sup> In the framework of a study of “governmentalities” at the Collège de France (lectures of February 15 and 22, 1978<sup>13</sup>), he takes advantage of these first readings of the Fathers to characterize the Christian moment of “pastoral governmentality”:<sup>14</sup> “truth acts” (telling the truth about oneself) hinging on practices of obedience. These results will be taken up and synthesized in October 1979 in preparation for the first of two presentations in the framework of the Tanner Lectures at Stanford University.<sup>15</sup>

The year 1980 constitutes a decisive moment in the development of studies leading to the manuscript of the *Confessions*. Foucault presents at the Collège de France, in February and March 1980, without ever indicating that they have their place in a history of sexuality, a series of precise and documented historical inquiries relative to the Christian truth obligations in the preparation for baptism, the rites of penance, and monastic direction between the second and fourth centuries of our era.<sup>16</sup> In autumn of the same year, in the United States, he gives, at the University of California, Berkeley, and at Dartmouth College, two lectures setting out these same themes in their grand conceptual generality,<sup>17</sup> and above all, in the context of a seminar in New York with Richard Sennett, he presents, again in a schematic way of course, many of the articulations of what will become the *Confessions of the Flesh*.<sup>18</sup> Indeed in this seminar one finds expositions on Clement of Alexandria’s doctrine of marriage, the Christian art of virginity (its evolution from Saint Cyprian to Basil of Ancyra, going by way of Methodius of Olympos), as well as Foucault’s examination of the basic mean-

ing that, with Saint Augustine, the concept of *libido*—after the fall and in marriage—has assumed in our culture.<sup>19</sup> So one can say not only that, as early as the end of 1980, Foucault has a strong intuition of the architecture and the main arguments of the *Confessions of the Flesh*, but also that he has already accomplished a substantial investigation of the sources, at least for the study of the rituals of penance and the principles of monastic direction.

The definitive drafting of the text of the *Confessions* can be situated in the years 1981 and 1982. In an issue of the journal *Communications*,<sup>20</sup> Foucault offers in May 1982 what he presents as “an excerpt from the third volume of *The History of Sexuality*.”<sup>21</sup> However, in parallel fashion, in his courses at the Collège de France, Foucault carries out, in an ever more massive way, his “turn” to antiquity. To be sure, the Greco-Latin moment had not been completely neglected up to then, but from 1978 to 1980, it was reduced to the role of a counterpoint, invaluable above all for determining the points of irreducibility of the Christian practices of veridiction and governmentality (that is, the differences between the government of the city-state and pastoral governmentality, the direction of existence in the Greco-Roman philosophical sects and that practiced in the first monasteries, the Stoic and Christian examination of conscience, and so on). Thus, what was only a simple counterpoint will become more and more its own consistent and insistent object of research. The tendency is marked as early as 1981: the course at the Collège de France offered that year is completely dominated by classical references (problems of marriage and the love of boys in antiquity<sup>22</sup>), whereas the cycle of lectures given at the University of Louvain in the month of May still tries to maintain a balance between the ancient and Christian references.<sup>23</sup> In 1982, the specifically Christian style of truth obligations and other austerities is no longer foregrounded in his great cycles of lectures in North America (“Telling the Truth About Oneself” at the University of Toronto in June;<sup>24</sup> “Techniques of the Self” at the University of Vermont in October<sup>25</sup>), while in his courses at the Collège de France, it is evoked only in a marginal way, as a simple vanishing point.<sup>26</sup>

One can say, then, concerning the process since *La volonté de savoir* (1976), that as early as 1977–1978 the project of a history

of modern sexuality (sixteenth through nineteenth centuries) is abandoned for the sake, in a first phase (1979–1982), of a recentering in the direction of a historical problematization of the Christian flesh—through the principal “truth acts” (exomologesis and *exagoreusis*), the arts of virginity, and the doctrine of marriage in the Christian Fathers of the first centuries—and then, in a second phase (1982–1984), of a decentering toward the Greco-Roman arts of living and the place occupied by the *aphrodisia* within them.

It must have been in the autumn of 1982 that the manuscript on the Christian conception of the flesh—along with the corresponding typescript—was delivered to Gallimard.<sup>27</sup> Pierre Nora recalls that on this occasion Foucault lets him know that this doesn’t mean the publication of the *Aveux de la chair* will be imminent, however, because he’s decided, encouraged by Paul Veyne, that this book that he’s just had transcribed will be preceded by a volume devoted to the Greco-Roman experience of the *aphrodisia*. The extent of the investigations that we’ve just noted will be such that Foucault will add to that book the two volumes that we are familiar with: *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*. The work on and drafting of these two volumes—ongoing even as he is launching yet another new field of research at the Collège de France: a study of *parrêsia*<sup>28</sup>—will delay him in his rereading of the *Confessions of the Flesh* and will possibly dissuade him from undertaking a rewrite. From March to May 1984, as he is finishing the editorial work around volumes 2 and 3, exhausted and gravely ill, he takes up the correction of the typescript of the *Confessions of the Flesh*. Hospitalized on June 3 following a physical breakdown, he dies at the Salpêtrière on June 25, 1984.

To establish this edition, we have therefore drawn on the manuscript written in Foucault’s hand, together with the typescript.<sup>29</sup> This typescript, which was established in turn by Éditions Gallimard on the basis of the manuscript, then conveyed to Michel Foucault for correction,<sup>30</sup> is rather faulty—it could not be entrusted, for reasons of unavailability, to the secretary who usually typed his texts and was very familiar with his handwriting.

We thus returned to and prioritized the original text,<sup>31</sup> while taking into account the corrections to the typescript that Foucault had had the time to make, at least within the first two parts of the

text.<sup>32</sup> We altered the punctuation to make reading of the text more fluid, we homogenized the modalities of referencing and applied the editing codes established for volumes 2 and 3 of *The History of Sexuality (The Use of Pleasure, The Care of the Self)*. We have verified (and corrected where necessary) the citations. The brackets that appear in the printed text refer to interventions on our part.<sup>33</sup> These interventions are of several types: drafting notes when the manuscript carries only a simple footnote number without any content;<sup>34</sup> adding notes and numbers when citations are given without referencing; supplying missing words, rectifying grammatically shaky, incorrect, or obviously faulty phrases; correcting errors of proper names; adding a translation to passages cited directly in Greek, Latin, or German;<sup>35</sup> adding chapter titles when they are missing. For the titles, we have opted for descriptive restraint, except perhaps for the chapter “The Libidization of Sex,” but Foucault himself speaks in the body of the text of a “libidization of the sexual act.” For the chapters, we have preserved the divisions present in the manuscript. The titles “The Laborious Baptism” and “The Art of Arts” are Foucault’s. One finds them in a projected plan (box 90, second page of folder 1).

For this editing work, we sought assistance from the archive boxes containing his own reading notes relating to the first Christian Fathers of the first centuries.<sup>36</sup> The quality of Michel Senellart’s work<sup>37</sup> rendered us immense service, as did Philippe Chevallier’s thesis.<sup>38</sup> I am grateful to Daniel Defert and Henri-Paul Fruchard for their patient and productive rereading of the text. The final bibliography was fashioned according to the editorial principles of *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*: it contains only works mentioned in the body of the text. It must be emphasized, however, as the archive boxes of Michel Foucault’s reading notes regarding the Christian Fathers show,<sup>39</sup> that the works cited represent only a small part (especially for modern writers) of the read and processed references.<sup>40</sup> At the request of the rights holders, the text does not include any editor’s notes that would consist of commentary, references internal to Foucault’s work, or erudition. Our work is limited to the editing of the text.

We have added to the end of the text four appendices, which have a different status than the main text. The first three corre-

spond to pages held in separate folders and physically placed in Foucault's manuscript, at the end of the first part of the *Confessions*.<sup>41</sup> Appendix 1 is a simple and brief reminder of general objectives ("What is to be demonstrated . . .") and may correspond to a projected introduction or perhaps to a clarification for personal use.<sup>42</sup> Appendix 2 consists of a critical examination of the relations between *exomologesis* and *exagoreusis*. This study fits into the strict continuity of the last developments of the first part of the text, but it's not possible to know if Foucault wrote these pages and ultimately decided not to include them or if he drafted them after his manuscript was transcribed. Appendix 3 is an expansion on an evaluation that appears in a tighter form in chapter 3 ("The Second Penance") of Part I, concerning Cain's curse, which would be tied above all to his refusal to acknowledge the crime. Appendix 4 corresponds to the last exposition of the manuscript and the typescript. We've chosen to place it among the appendices because it announces thematics that are in fact developed earlier. One notes that the book's closing paragraphs, once this shift has been made, have a conclusive look and feel.

Michel Foucault's heirs agreed that the moment and the conditions were right for the publication of this major unpublished text. Like the preceding volumes, it is appearing in the *Bibliothèque des Histoires* series edited by Pierre Nora.

The "Please insert" of 1984 indicated

Volume 1: *La Volonté de savoir*, 224 pages

Volume 2: *L'Usage des plaisirs*, 296 pages

Volume 3: *Le Souci de soi*, 288 pages

Volume 4: *Les Aveux de la chair* (forthcoming)

This has now been accomplished.

*Frédéric Gros*



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# PART I

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## *The Formation of a New Experience*

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## Creation, Procreation

The *apbrodisia* regime, defined in terms of marriage, procreation, a disqualification of pleasure, and a respectful and intense bond of sympathy between spouses, was formulated, it seems, by non-Christian philosophers and teachers, and their “pagan” society thought of it as an acceptable code of conduct for everyone—which doesn’t mean it was actually followed by everyone; far from it.

One finds this same regime, essentially unmodified, in the doctrine of the second-century Fathers. Those theologians, in the view of most historians, would not have found their basic principles in the early Christian communities nor in the apostolic texts—with the exception of the markedly Hellenizing letters of Saint Paul. These principles would have migrated, as it were, into Christian thought and practice, from pagan milieus whose hostility Christians needed to disarm by displaying forms of conduct that pagans already recognized and valued highly. It is a fact that apologists like Justin or Athenagoras assure the emperors they are addressing that in regard to marriage, procreation, and the *apbrodisia*, Christians base their practice on the same principles as the philosophers. And to emphasize this sameness, they employ, with scant alterations, those aphoristic precepts whose words and formulations readily indicate their origin. “For our part,” says Justin, “if we marry, it is only that we may bring up children; or if we decline marriage, we live in perfect continence.”<sup>1</sup>

Speaking to Marcus Aurelius, Athenagoras uses references of

a Stoic sort: control of desire\* —“for us procreation is the measure of desire”;<sup>2</sup> rejection of any second marriage—“whoever repudiates his wife to marry another is an adulterer,” “every remarriage is an honorable adultery”;<sup>3</sup> negativity toward pleasure—“we despise the things of this life, even to the pleasures of the soul.”<sup>4</sup> Athenagoras doesn’t make use of these themes to indicate traits of Christianity that are distinct from paganism. It’s a matter of showing instead how Christians don’t deserve the reproaches of immorality that have been aimed at them, and how their life is the very realization of a moral ideal that the wisdom of the pagans has long recognized.<sup>5</sup> Above all, he underscores the fact that the Christians’ belief in eternal life and their desire to unite with God constitute a strong and profound reason for them to truly follow these precepts in their actions—and better still, to keep their intentions pure and to banish the very thought of the actions they condemn.<sup>6</sup>

The work of Clement of Alexandria, at the end of the second century, offers a much ampler testimony concerning the *apbrodisia* regime as it seems to have been incorporated into Christian thought. Clement evokes the problems of marriage, sexual relations, procreation, and continence in several texts, primarily in the *Paedagogus*, chapter 10 of book 2, and also (though in a more cursory way) chapters 6 and 7 of the same book and [chapter 8] of book 3; and in the second *Stromata* book, chapter 32 and the whole third book. I will analyze the first of these texts here, clarifying it when necessary by the others. There is a reason for this: the large text of the third book of the *Stromata* is devoted essentially to a polemic against different gnostic themes. It is developed on two fronts: first, Clement wanted to refute those for whom the disqualification of the material world, its identification with evil, and the certainty of salvation for the chosen ones made obedience to the laws of this world irrelevant, when they did not make such transgressions obligatory and customary; second, he also sought to distance himself from the numerous Encratist tendencies that, aligning themselves more or less closely with Valentinus or Basilides, wished to deny marriage and sexual relations to all the faithful, or at least to those who intended to lead a truly saintly life.

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\* Typescript: childbirth as desire’s reason for being.

These texts are obviously crucial for understanding, through the question of marriage and self-restraint, the theology of Clement, his conception of matter, of evil and sin. The *Paedagogus*, though, has a very different purpose: it is addressed to Christians after their conversion and their baptism—and not, as has sometimes been said, to pagans still making their way toward the Church. And it offers these new Christians a precise, concrete code for daily living.<sup>7</sup> It is a text whose objectives are comparable to the advice on behavior that the Hellenistic philosophers might give and consequently the comparison between them should be worthwhile.

Doubtless these life precepts don't cover all the obligations of Christians and will not lead them to the end of the road. Just as, before the *Paedagogus*, Clement's *Protrepticus* had the purpose of exhorting the soul to choose the right path, after the *Paedagogus*, the teacher will still need to initiate the disciple into the higher truths. In the *Paedagogus*, then, one has a book of exercise and advancement—the guide for an ascension toward God, which subsequent instruction will have to carry to completion. But the intermediary role of this art of living in the Christian manner doesn't warrant relativizing it: if it is far from saying everything, what it says never becomes inoperative. The more perfect life, taught by another tutor, will reveal more truths, but it will not obey different moral laws. To be very precise, the precepts dispensed by the *Paedagogus* concerning marriage, sexual relations, and pleasure do not constitute an intermediate stage appropriate to a middling life, and which might be followed by a more rigorous and purer stage, suited to the existence of the true gnostic. The latter, who does see what the simple "student" is not able to, does not have to apply different rules in these matters of everyday life.

This is something one can see in the *Stromata*, in fact, where, apropos of marriage, Clement never suggests different precepts for the "true gnostic" and the *Paedagogus*. If he absolutely refuses to condemn marriage—to see a *porneia*, a fornication, in it as some do, and even to regard it as a difficult obstacle impeding a genuinely religious life—he doesn't make an obligation of it either: he leaves the two paths open, recognizing that each of them, marriage and chastity, has its burdens and obligations,<sup>8</sup> and in the course of reflection or discussion he in turn underscores

the greater merit of those who meet the responsibility of having a wife and children, or points out the value of a life without sexual relations.<sup>9</sup> What one reads in the *Paedagogus* regarding the life of a man with his wife does not therefore constitute a provisional condition: these are common precepts that hold for all who are married, whatever their degree of progress toward the gnosis of God.\* And moreover, what the *Paedagogus* says about its own teaching reflects the same idea. The “Educator” is not a temporary and imperfect instructor: “He resembles his Father, God [. . .] He is without sin, without blame, without passion of soul, God immaculate in the form of man, accomplishing His Father’s will, God the Logos, who is seated at the right hand of His Father, with even the nature of God.”<sup>10</sup> The Educator is therefore Christ himself; and what he teaches, or more precisely what is taught through him and what is taught by him, is the *Logos*. As the Word, it teaches God’s law; and the commandments it formulates are the universal and living reason. It is the second and third parts of the *Paedagogus* that are devoted to this art of conducting oneself in a Christian manner, but in the last lines of chapter 13 of the first part, Clement explains the meaning he gives to these lessons to come: “Man’s duty, consequently, is to cultivate a will that is in conformity with and united throughout his life to God and Christ, properly directed to eternal life. The life of the Christian, which we are learning from our Educator, is a unified whole made up of deeds in accordance with the Logos; that is, it is the unailing practical application of the truths taught by the Logos, an accomplishment which we call fidelity. The whole is constituted by the Lord’s precepts, which have been prescribed as spiritual commandments, useful both for ourselves and for those near to us.” And among these necessary things, Clement distinguishes those concerning life here below—which one will find in the subsequent chapters of the *Paedagogus*—and those concerning heavenly life, which can be deciphered from the Scriptures. An esoteric teaching? Perhaps.<sup>11</sup> But it remains clear that in these laws of every-

\* Translator’s note: To clarify, Clement was not himself a gnostic, but apparently that brand of dualism was popular in his day and he used some of its vocabulary to appeal to its adherents.

day existence, we must see a teaching of the *Logos* itself; in the behavior that submits to it we must recognize *the right action* that leads to *eternal life*, and in these right actions which are in keeping with the *Logos*, we must recognize *a will united with God* and with Christ. These words that Clement uses as he is about to present his rules for living are quite significant. They clearly indicate the double register to which they must be referred: according to the Stoic vocabulary, these rules for living do define right behavior (*kathêkonta*), but also those rationally justified actions in which the man who performs them merges with universal reason (*katorthômata*); and according to the Christian thematic, they define not only the negative precepts that allow one to be accepted in the community, but the form of existence that leads to eternal life and constitutes their faith.<sup>12</sup> In sum, what Clement offers in the teaching of the *Paedagogus* is a prescriptive corpus in which the level of “right actions” is only the visible aspect of the virtuous life, which in turn is the journey toward salvation. The omnipresence of the *Logos*, which commands right actions, manifests right reason, and saves souls by uniting them with God, ensures the cohesiveness of these three levels.<sup>13</sup> The “practical” books of the *Paedagogus*, which begin immediately after this passage, teem with minor precautions whose concern with pure and simple propriety may be surprising. But they must be placed within the overall intention, and the details of the *kathêkonta*, where Clement’s recommendations often seem to get lost, should be deciphered in terms of this *Logos* which is at the same time the principle of right action and the movement toward salvation, the rationality of the real world and the word of God calling one to eternity.

A reading of the *Paedagogus*, II, X, calls then for a number of preliminary remarks.

1. The common practice is to pick out explicit or implicit citations of pagan moralists found in that text, Stoics in particular. Musonius Rufus is undoubtedly one of those used most often, although he is never named there. And it’s a fact that on four or five occasions at least, Clement transcribes sentences of the Roman Stoic, and on essential points, almost word for word. Thus, Musonius is cited on the principle that a legitimate union



must desire procreation;<sup>14</sup> on the principle that seeking pleasure by itself, even in marriage, is contrary to reason;<sup>15</sup> on the principle that one must spare one's wife any form of indecent relations;<sup>16</sup> and on the principle that if one is ashamed of an action it's because one knows it is wrongful.<sup>17</sup> But it would be a mistake to conclude that in this chapter Clement has only interpolated a teaching he has borrowed from a philosophical school without really trying to give it a Christian meaning. In the first place, it should be noted that here, as in many other texts by Clement, the references to pagan philosophers are very numerous. One can discover silent borrowings from Antipater, from Hierocles, and no doubt sentences by Sextus as well. Aristotle, who is not cited either, is used often, as are naturalists and physicians. Finally—and again, this is not unusual in Clement—Plato is one of the rare authors cited by name and the only one to be cited widely.<sup>18</sup> But it should also be noted that none of the great prescriptive themes evoked by Clement are presented without the accompaniment of scriptural citations: Moses, Leviticus, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Sirach. Rather than a massive, barely altered borrowing from late Stoicism, we must see in this chapter the attempt to integrate the precepts prescribed by the moralists of the era into a triple reference: that of the naturalists and physicians, which shows how nature grounds them and manifests their rationality, testifying in this way to presence of the *Logos* as this world's organizing principle; that of the philosophers, especially Plato, the philosopher par excellence, who shows how human reason can recognize and justify the precepts, attesting that the *Logos* inhabits the soul of every man; and lastly that of the Scriptures, which show that God has explicitly given men these commandments, these *entolai*, affirming in this way that those who obey him will unite with him, will be of the same will: either in the form of the Mosaic law, or in the form of the Christian gospel.<sup>19</sup>

Each of these major precepts, which this chapter 10 of the second book formulates, comes under a principle of “triple determination,” therefore: by nature, by philosophical reason, by the word of God. Of course, the content of the teaching, the codification, as to what it permits, forbids, or recommends is absolutely consistent, apart from a few details, with what was taught in the philosophical schools, the Stoic ones in particular, starting in the

preceding centuries. But all of Clement's efforts involve inserting these well-known and current aphorisms in a complex web of citations, references, or examples that gives them the appearance of prescriptions of the *Logos*, as it declares itself in nature, human reason, or the word of God.

2. The second and third books of the *Paedagogus* are thus a code for living. Underneath the apparent disorder of the chapters—after the matter of drinking, it is a question of luxury in furnishings; between the precepts for living together and the correct use of sleep, there is talk about perfumes and crowns, then shoes (which should be simple white sandals for women), then diamonds, with which one must avoid being fascinated, and so on—one can recognize a depiction of “regimen.” In the medical-moral literature of the epoch, these models were presented in different forms. For example in the form of an *agenda*, following almost hour by hour the course of the day as it unfolds: thus the regimen of Diocles, who takes up a man from the very first gestures to be performed upon waking and leads him to the moment of falling asleep, then indicates the modifications to be applied according to the season, and finally gives opinions about sexual relations.<sup>20</sup> Or also the enumeration of Hippocrates, which for some constitutes a canonical table: exercises, then food, then drink, then sleep, and lastly sexual relations.<sup>21</sup>

Quatember<sup>22</sup> has suggested that Clement, in his rules of daily life, follows the cycle of daily activities, but starting with the evening meal, and hence with advice about food, drink, conversations, and table manners; then he goes to the nighttime, to sleep and the precepts having to do with sexual relations. The views concerning clothing and appearance that follow would relate to the morning toilette, and most of the chapters of book 3 would correspond to daytime life, to domestic servants, the baths, physical exercise, and so on.

As to chapter 10, concerning marital relations, despite the apparent disorder of the text, which more than one commentator has noted, here too Quatember suggests a simple and logical design. In his view, after having determined the goal of marriage—namely procreation—Clement condemns unnatural relations;

then, proceeding to relations internal to marriage, he considers in turn pregnancy, unfruitful relations, and abortion, before setting out the principles of moderation and propriety to be observed in marriage relations. Through many detours and interlacings, one does find approximately this succession of themes. But at the same time one can recognize another concatenation that in no way excludes this first schema.

The type of explicit or implicit citations that Clement foregrounds by turns can serve here as a guiding thread. Not that he isn't careful, throughout the text, to interweave the authority of the Scripture, the testimony of philosophers, and the claims of physicians and naturalists, following the principle of triple reference. But in a noticeable way, the accent constantly shifts, the coloration of the references changes. First the lessons of farming and natural history are invoked (the right way to sow seeds, the "metamorphoses" of the hyena, the bad morals of the hare) to explain Mosaic law.<sup>23</sup> Then there are borrowings above all from the medical and philosophical literature, regarding the human body, its natural impulses, and the need to maintain control of the desires and avoid the excesses that exhaust the body and disturb the soul.<sup>24</sup> Finally, in the last pages of the chapter, the citations from the Scripture, which had never been absent from the text and served as a counterpoint to the other references, become predominant (not without one or two explicit returns to Plato and implicit ones to Musonius).

Let us say that in this complex text, there is, superimposed on one another, a "thematic" composition (which goes from condemnation of unnatural relations to recommendations of reserve in the use of marriage) and a "referential" composition that gives another dimension to these prescriptions of "regimen." This shifting of references allows one to hear in turn the different voices through which the *Logos* speaks: that of the figures of nature, that of the reason which must preside over the human configuration, that of God speaking directly to men in order to save them (it being understood that the first two are also the *Logos* of God but in a different form). This succession thus makes it possible to establish the same prescriptions and the same prohibitions (which are repeated several times in the text) at three different levels: that

of the order of the world, as it has been set by the Creator, and to which certain “unnatural” animals bear witness; that of human moderation, as taught by the wisdom of the body itself and by the principles of a reason that desires to remain master of itself;<sup>25</sup> and that of a purity that gives access to incorruptible existence beyond this life. Perhaps here one should recognize, albeit in a shrouded way, the tripartition, important in Clement’s anthropology, between the animal, the psychical, and the pneumatic. Even if this is not the underlying schema, the chapter clearly follows an upward movement that goes from examples deposited in nature as lessons to appeals that assign Christians the objective of a “God-like” existence. And it’s over the whole length of this road that the economy of sexual relations will be determined.

3. The leading question raised by the pagan philosophers’ moral treatises or diatribes concerned the advisability of marriage: *Ei gamêteon* (Should one marry?). Chapter 10 of the *Paedagogus* deals with this question elliptically: Clement indicates within the first lines that he will speak for married people; then, after an exposition in which there is the question of sexual relations during pregnancy and the illnesses that may be caused by their excess, he again elides the question, saying that this theme is discussed in the treatise *On Continence*. Is this a separate work? Or texts that appear in the *Stromata*? Two sections in the *Stromata* can be supposed to constitute this treatise, or at least to reproduce its content: book 3 in its entirety, which as we’ve seen is a long discussion around Encratism, common to several gnostic tendencies, or about certain “licentious” forms of dualist morality; and more probably the thirteenth and final chapter of book 2 of the *Stromata*, which introduces the reader to book 3 and in fact presents itself as being an answer to the traditional question in traditional debates of practical philosophy: should one get married?<sup>26</sup> And it’s precisely to the analysis of this question that the *Paedagogus* refers.

The answer given by this passage of the second book of the *Stromata* doesn’t present any departures from the philosophical morality of the time. If it tries to set itself apart, this is not relative to the philosophers’ general principles but rather to their real attitude, whose laxity is not corrected by the theory. In the *Stromata*

and the *Paedagogus*, Clement declares the purpose of marriage to be the procreation of children.<sup>27\*</sup> On the basis of this link between the value of marriage and the procreative finality, Clement can define the major ethical rules that should govern relations between spouses: the bond between them must not be owing to pleasure and sensuality but to the “*Logos*”;<sup>28</sup> one mustn’t treat one’s wife like a mistress,<sup>29</sup> or scatter seed to the winds;<sup>30</sup> and the principles of restraint must be observed—rules that the animals themselves respect.<sup>31</sup> This bond must not be broken; if it is, one must forgo remarriage as long as the partner is still living.<sup>32</sup> Finally, adultery is forbidden and should be punished.<sup>33</sup>

Most of these points—and particularly those concerning relations between spouses—are also found in the *Paedagogus*, but treated much more fully there. The continuity and homogeneity between the two texts is obvious, with this difference: that the *Stromata* texts speak of marriage and its value in terms of procreation, whereas the *Paedagogus* speaks of procreation as a principle of discrimination for sexual relations. In one case it’s a matter of procreation as the ultimate aim of marriage; in the other it is a matter of this same procreation in the economy of relations and sexual acts. The main interest of this chapter 10 and its novelty—at least in the Christian literature, if not in all the moral literature of antiquity—is its interweaving of two types of questions, two traditional debates: that concerning the right economy of pleasures—the *aphrodisia* theme—and that of marriage, of its

\* Passage crossed out by Foucault in the typescript: “And according to a completely Stoic type of procedure, starting from this definition by finality, Clement considers in turn: the question whether one should marry, in general, and the conditions that may modulate this obligation, preventing one from giving it one answer valid for everyone all the time; the opinions of the different philosophers on this subject; what makes a marriage a good: namely that by giving man descendants, it perfects and completes his existence; it provides citizens for his homeland; in the event of illness, it ensures the solicitude and care of his wife; it provides help when old age comes. To which is added, as a negative proof, the fact of not having children is either penalized by the laws or condemned by morality. Clement’s reasoning consists in deducing the positive value from what perfection or utility there may be in having offspring. Which shows very clearly that the latter are *the* end of marriage in the strong sense of the expression—its *raison d’être* and justification; but also that procreation can constitute a good worthy of being pursued as an end only if it occurs within marriage.”

value and of how to conduct oneself within it, given that marriage is justified by procreation and on that basis one can define in what sense it can be a good (a thesis developed in the second book of the *Stromata* and recalled in the *Paedagogus*). Of course, this was not the first attempt at defining the kind of sexual conduct spouses should practice, but it appears to be the first regimen of sexual acts developed not in terms of wisdom or individual health but from the standpoint of rules intrinsic to marriage. There had been a regimen of sex and an ethics of marriage: they overlapped, quite obviously. But here, in this text by Clement, one has a merger of the two points of view. What goes on between spouses, and what the moralists of antiquity treated, if not obliquely, then at least briefly and from some distance—they were content simply to enumerate rules of decency and carefulness—is becoming an object of concern, intervention, and analysis.

Under the somewhat enigmatic title “What must be distinguished regarding procreation,” chapter 10 of the second book of the *Paedagogus* deals in fact with a relatively precise question. It is the one that’s formulated as early as the first line of the text and that reappears in the last line: the question of the right moment, the right occasion, the opportuneness—*kairos*—for sex between married persons.<sup>34</sup> Insofar as it applies to a regulation of days and nights, this term *kairos* does have the narrow meaning of “opportune time.” But that is far from being the only meaning. In the philosophical and above all the Stoic vocabulary, *kairos* refers to a set of conditions that can make a merely permitted action into an action that effectively has a positive value. *Kairos* doesn’t characterize an exercise of caution, avoiding the risks and dangers that might make a neutral action a bad one; it defines the criteria that a concrete action will need to satisfy in order to be good. Whereas law separates the permitted from the prohibited among all the positive actions, *kairos* establishes the positive value of a real action.

So the question that will be addressed in this chapter of the *Paedagogus* is that of setting the conditions that give a positive value to sexual relations between married people. The fact that it is *this* question that is given such attention in this book of conduct has its importance: in it one sees that, relative to a process that

we have noted in the pagan authors of the preceding epochs, the question of sexual relations, of the *aphrodisia*, is now very much subordinated to the question of marriage; it has lost its independence to such a point that the term *aphrodisia* doesn't appear in this text by Clement. It is procreation, or rather the procreative union, that constitutes the general theme under which the whole chapter will be placed. Further, we have here undoubtedly the first text in which marital sexual relations are themselves considered in detail, and as a specific and important element of conduct. Once again, the philosophers had already formulated most of the precepts that Clement spells out, but they had situated those precepts within an overall ethics of relations between spouses, in a regulation of the way to live together when one is married. Plutarch's *Conjugalia praecepta* gives advice for the proper general functioning of that community of two which the couple constitutes; views concerning sexual relations are only one element for this life, which marriage should not prevent from being philosophically sound. The *Paedagogus* says little about the couple, but it treats sexual relations between marriage partners as an important and relatively autonomous object. We can say that, in this, it offers the first example of a genre, or rather of a practice that will have a considerable importance in the history of Western societies—the examination and analysis of sexual relations between spouses.

Finally, the question of the *kairos* of marital relations allows one to see how Clement integrates a code that he has effectively received from the Hellenistic philosophies (and no doubt also from a whole social movement) into a religious conception of nature, the *Logos*, and salvation. His is a very different solution, as we shall see, from that proposed by Saint Augustine—and it is Augustine's that will be retained by the institutions and doctrine of the Western Church. In Clement's reflection on the *kairos*, it would be a mistake to see simply a graft, more or less skillful, of elements borrowed from the prevailing morality and merely rendered a little more demanding or austere. The *kairos* of the sexual relationship is defined by its connection to the *Logos*. Let us not forget that for Clement the *Logos* is called Savior, because this *Logos* has invented for men "the remedies that give them a just moral sense and lead them to salvation," and this by seizing the right "occasion."<sup>35</sup>

Clement starts from the proposition that sexual relations have procreation as their end. A completely ordinary thesis for his time. One finds it in the physicians.<sup>36</sup> One finds it in the philosophers, either in the form of a linkage among three terms—no sexual relations outside of marriage and no marriage that shouldn't find its end in its offspring<sup>37</sup>—or in the form of a direct condemnation of any sexual act that doesn't have procreation as its object.<sup>38</sup>

In this, then, there's nothing peculiar in Clement of Alexandria. Just as there's nothing new about his general distinction between the "goal" or "objective" (*skopos*) of an action and its "end" (*telos*). On the other hand, it does seem that his application of this difference to the domain of sexual relations—while in the "spirit" of the Stoics and within the logic of their analyses—had not been frequently done before, to say the least. And in fact the use of this distinction in Clement's text leads to a result that at first glance may appear to lack any fertile meaning. The "objective" would be *paidopoia*: making children, progeny in the strict sense. The end, on the other hand, would be *euteknia*, which is sometimes translated as "fine children" or "a large family." Actually, though, the word should be given a broader sense: it refers to finding a plenitude and a satisfaction in the descendants one has, in their life and happy fortune.<sup>39</sup> So the objective (*skopos*) of the sexual relation would thus be the existence of the progeny; the end (*telos*) the positive relation to this progeny, the accomplishment they constitute. Two considerations that Clement immediately adds may allow us to clarify the value of this distinction.

Clement first compares the sexual act to sowing seeds. A traditional metaphor. One finds it in Athenagoras and in the Apologists. It seems to have been common in the philosophical diatribes, where it served to illustrate the rule that seeds must be deposited in the furrow where they could germinate. But Clement also uses it to better mark the distinction between what the "goal" of sexual relations should be and what their "end" should be. The goal of the grower, when he sows: to procure something to eat. His end: "to have a harvest," says Clement's text simply—meaning, no doubt, to see the seeds through to their point of nat-



ural accomplishment, when an abundance of fruits is produced. This comparison with sowing remains rather elliptical; but presumably it allows one to consider as the “goal” this procreation of children, which was so often shown by the philosophers to be useful to parents—for ensuring their status or securing support in their old age—and to consider as “ends” something much more general and less utilitarian—namely the human accomplishment that having descendants constitutes.<sup>40</sup> And since it’s this end that Clement wants to bring out in this chapter, by analyzing the *kairos* of sexual relations, it is understandable that he would devote little attention to the personal advantages and social benefits that might come of having children.<sup>41</sup>

That this non-utilitarian end is indeed Clement’s theme here is shown by the idea that he immediately links to the metaphor of the sower. Man doesn’t plant “because of himself”; man must plant “because of God.” By this, Clement doesn’t mean the end that directs the action, but rather the principle that permeates and sustains it throughout.<sup>42</sup> The act of [pro]creation must be performed “because of” God, in the sense that, first of all, it is God who prescribes it by saying “Increase and multiply,” but also because by procreating, man is the “image of God,” and he “collaborates,” for his part, “in the birth of man.”<sup>43</sup>

This proposition is important for Clement’s whole analysis, since it establishes in human procreation a relation to God that is close and complex at the same time. That by procreating, man is the “image of God” should not be interpreted on the assumption of an immediate likeness between the creation of Adam and procreation by his descendants. Doubtless, as Clement explains elsewhere,<sup>44</sup> God, who was content to give an order to make the animals appear on earth, had molded the first man with his hands, thus marking an essential difference and a greater proximity between him and that being who was created in his image. But this doesn’t mean for Clement that the Creation transmitted to man something of the essence of the nature or power of God: there is nothing in us that “matches up” with God.<sup>45</sup> And yet one can speak of a “resemblance” to God—the resemblance evoked in the Genesis narrative. This resemblance was that of man before the fall, and it can, it must become his again. It is realized not through the body, but through the spirit and through reasoning;<sup>46</sup>

it is ensured by obedience to the law: “The law says [. . .]: Walk behind the Lord [. . .] The law, in fact, calls it a walking after; and this makes them similar, as much as it is possible.”<sup>47</sup> So it is not procreation in itself and as a natural process that is “in the likeness” of Creation—it is procreation insofar as it is accomplished in the right way and by “following” the law. And if the law prescribes conformity with nature, this is because nature obeys God.<sup>48</sup>

In this progression toward resemblance, a “synergy” of man and God thus finds its possibility. In fact, God created man because he was “worthy of his choice,” worthy consequently of being loved by him. If there had to be a reason for man’s creation, it consists in the condition that without man, “the Demiurge would not have been able to prove his goodness.”<sup>49</sup> So the creation of man is as much a manifestation of God’s goodness as it is of his presence. Man, in return and as a result, offers, by being worthy of being loved, the possibility of demonstrating his goodness. By procreating, man thus does something much more and altogether different than “imitating,” as some might imagine, the capacities of the demiurgic act. For all his humanness, he partakes in the power and “philanthropy” of God. Man procreates, along with God, human beings who are worthy of being loved with a love whose manifestation was the “cause” of the Creation, and later the Incarnation. The “synergy” of man with God in the procreative act<sup>50</sup> doesn’t just consist in the support of God in human generation—it’s a matter of fulfilling what a formula predating Clement said: “God receives from man that which he had created: man.”<sup>51</sup>

Chapter 10 of the second book of the *Paedagogus* thus devotes its analysis of “the distinctions to be made regarding procreation” to the complex and fundamental relations between Creator and creatures. The content of the very “quotidian” precepts that Clement offers on the subject may be nearly identical to the teaching of the pagan philosophers, but this doesn’t imply a relinquishment of the regulation of sexual relations to a Stoic or Platonic wisdom that is accepted and certified by a rather broad consensus. Undoubtedly, Clement has taken up the codification and the rules of conduct that were formulated moreover by the philosophy that was contemporaneous with him, but he has rethought them and integrated them into a conception that he is careful to recall in

a few sentences at the beginning of this chapter, and that brings into play, in procreation, the relations of man to his Creator, of God to his creatures. But a word of caution: Clement does not in any way attribute, by this means, a spiritual value to the sexual act (even in the framework of marriage, even if it is for procreative ends alone). What is meaningful, according to him, for the relationship between man and God, is not the sexual act in itself, but the condition that in performing it one follows the teaching, the “pedagogy,” of the *Logos* itself. It’s the observance of the “commandments” that God has prescribed through nature, its examples, its forms, and its arrangements, through the organization of bodies and the rules of human reason, through the teaching of the philosophers and the words of the Scripture. Obedience to these different lessons can give the procreative conjugal relationship the value of a “synergy” with God.

One can better understand the seemingly rather arbitrary distinction that Clement introduces between the generation of progeny, which must be the “goal” of sexual relations, and the value of having descendants, which must be its “end.” The latter definitely constitutes a completion—*teleiôtes*—for the procreator, as the Stoics said: it completes what nature has made and what connects him, through time, to other men and to the order of the world. But Clement shows that this “beautiful posterity” which with God’s help man has given birth to, constitutes for God an object worthy of love and an opportunity to manifest his goodness. Subordinated to the “goal” of “making children,” and, beyond that, to a purpose that accords with that of the whole Creation, sexual relations must be subject to a “reason,” a *Logos* that, present in all of nature and even in its material organization, is also the word of God. Placed at the head of his analysis, the distinction and articulation between goal and end allow Clement to firmly inscribe the rule of sexual relations in a great “lesson of nature”: “We must learn from nature and observe the wise precepts of its pedagogy for the right time of union.”<sup>52</sup> A lesson of nature that is in the very teaching of the *Logos*. The “logic,” one could say, of a nature that should be understood in the very broad sense, and in its different guises: the “logic” of animal nature, the “logic” of human nature and of the relationship of the rational soul with the body,

and the “logic” of Creation and of the relationship with the Creator. These are the three logics that Clement develops in turn.

1. The lessons that Clement borrows from the logic of animals are negative ones.<sup>53</sup> The hyena and the hare teach what mustn't be done. The hyena's bad reputation stemmed from an ancient belief—one found it in Herodorus of Heroclea\*—that every animal of this species had two sexes and played the role alternately of male and female, from one year to the next. As for the hare, it was thought to acquire an extra anus every year and to make the worst use of these added orifices.<sup>54</sup> Aristotle had rejected these speculations and subsequently few naturalists gave them any credence. This doesn't mean, however, that people had stopped seeking moral lessons from the natural history of these animals. In the Hellenistic and Roman age, natural history was effectively subjected to two apparently contradictory processes: a screening of knowledge in terms of the strictest observational rules; and the increasingly pronounced interest in drawing lessons from this nature into which, according to the philosophers, the human individual has a duty to integrate. But an increased concern with exactness and the search for moral lessons could go hand in hand. Thus, the alternating hermaphroditism of the hyena and the yearly perforations of the hare became mere legends, but the naturalists could still read lessons of conduct into the behavior of these animals. As Aelian said, the hyena “shows,” not through speech [but] through actions, “how contemptible Tiresias was.”<sup>55</sup>

The manner in which Clement, in his turn, refutes the legend but gleans the moral lesson is interesting for his conception of the relations of nature with what is contrary to nature. The hyena, he says, doesn't change sexes from one year to the next, because once nature determines what an animal is, it cannot be changed. To be sure, there are many animals with traits that change with the seasons. The hot and cold seasons modify the voices of the birds or the coloring of their plumage,<sup>56</sup> but this is the effect of physical and external actions. The nature of the animal is not transformed for all

\* Cf. *infra*, n. 4, p. 17. Foucault notes: IV, 192, without one's knowing what this corresponds to.

that. What about the sex, then? An individual cannot change sexes, or have two of them, or a third one that would be intermediary between male and female: these are chimera that men imagine but that nature doesn't allow. Here Clement is referring, in an implicit but clear enough way, to a discussion that was "classic" at the time. In the eyes of the Epicureans, the possibility of metamorphoses—maggots born out of cadavers, little worms materializing in the mud, or bees formed on a steer carcass—constituted proof that these bodies were not of divine origin; as they saw it, these transformations were the result of "autonomous" mechanisms.<sup>57</sup> By carefully differentiating between species' "stability" and the mechanical alteration of certain traits, Clement joins with the position of all those—Aristotelians, Stoics, Platonists—who wanted to maintain the stamp of a creative reason, or the continuous presence of a *Logos*, in the specifications of the animal world.<sup>58</sup> But it is very likely, too, that Clement is thinking of the problem he evokes in chapter 4 of the first book of the *Paedagogus*: namely the status of the difference of the sexes with regard both to eternal life and to life on earth. The solution proposed by Clement is simple, even if it presents a certain difficulty: in the world to come, there will be no differences of sex. "It is only here on earth that the feminine sex is distinguished from the masculine." It is a difference based consequently on the *Logos* that governs the order of this world, but one that does not prevent us from applying the name *human beings* to men and women alike. The same prescriptions hold for both sexes, and the same form of life: "one assembly, one morality, and one modesty; shared nourishment, a shared conjugal bond; everything is the same: respiration, sight, hearing, knowledge, hope, obedience, love."<sup>59</sup> It is to this "life in common," this common kind, beyond the differences of the sexes but not nullifying them, that grace is directed; it is this humankind that will be saved and will meet again in eternity, all differences of sex erased. In rejecting the idea of the hyena's alternation of sexes, Clement reiterates this principle of the "naturalness" of the male-female difference within the framework of specific entities. Man and woman are, and hence must remain, according to the *Logos* of nature, distinct from one another, which does not prevent them from belonging to the same humankind, nor from waiting for the next world to liberate them from the "duality of their desire."<sup>60</sup>

There does exist, however, a peculiar trait in the hyena that is not found in any other animal. Clement describes it by following Aristotle, almost word for word.<sup>61</sup> It involves an outgrowth of flesh that traces a form below the tail very similar to a female sex, but a quick inspection will show that this cavity does not open into any canal leading toward the womb or the intestine. But Clement doesn't treat this anatomical feature as Aristotle does. The latter uses it to explain how hasty observers let themselves be misled by the ambiguity of appearance: they thought they saw two sexes on the same animal; he sees this only as a case of human error of interpretation. But Clement sees in this anatomical peculiarity an element that has a relation of both effect and instrument to a moral fault. If hyenas have a body that's arranged in such an odd way, this is because of a defect. A defect "of nature," taking "nature" to mean the characteristic traits of a species, but a defect that is nonetheless utterly similar to a moral fault found in men: lasciviousness. And it's in view of this defect that "nature" has devised a supplementary cavity in these animals for them to use for their equally supplementary sallies. In sum, to the "excessive" natural propensity for pleasure that characterizes the hyena, nature has responded with an excessive anatomy that enables "excessive" relations. But, in this, nature shows that it's not only in terms of quantity that one must speak of excess: since the hyenas' surplus pouch is not connected by any channel to the organs of generation, the excess is "useless," or more precisely cut off from the end that nature has assigned to the organs of generation, to sexual relations, to semen and its emission—that is, procreation. And since this finality is disrespected in this way, it is a counter-natural activity that this tendency to misbehavior, both natural and excessive, permits and encourages. So we have a whole cycle that goes from nature to contrary-to-nature, or rather a constant intertwining of nature and counter-nature that gives hyenas a blameworthy trait, excessive inclinations, extra organs, and the means to use them "for nothing."<sup>62</sup>

The example of the hare is analyzed by Clement in the same manner. This time, however, it has to do with an excess not in connection with sterility, but with fertilization itself. Clement moves on from the fable of the hare with the annual anus, replacing it with the idea of superfetation. So licentious are these animals that

they tend to copulate constantly, not even respecting the period of gestation and nursing. Nature has given the female a womb with two branches that allows it to conceive with more than one male even before giving birth. The natural cycle of the womb—which, according to physicians, calls for fertilization when it is empty and refuses sexual coupling when it is full—is thus disturbed by a disposition of nature that makes it possible to juxtapose pregnancy and heat in a completely “counter-natural” way.

Clement’s long detour through the lessons of the naturalists may appear enigmatic, if one compares it for example with the *Epistle of Barnabas*. The latter does also evoke the cases of the hare and of the hyena—to which he adds other animals such as the kite, the crow, the moray eel, the polyp, the cow, and the weasel, but only in connection with the dietary prohibitions of Leviticus. He gives an immediate exegesis of those prohibitions, one that was common in that period.<sup>63</sup> The behavior that these animals manifest or symbolize is what is in fact condemned: the birds of prey signify the eagerness to despoil others, the hare signifies the corruption of children, the hyena adultery, the weasel oral relations. Clement, too, recalls the dietary prohibitions of Leviticus; he too claims to see in these dietary prescriptions the symbolism of laws dealing with conduct. Yet he doesn’t confine himself to that exegesis, invoking it only at the beginning and end of his long excursion through natural history.<sup>64</sup> But he makes sure, first, to challenge the explanation that he himself calls “symbolic”<sup>65</sup> and replace it with a serious anatomical analysis. And he emphasizes, at the end of the exposition, that only these considerations of natural history can account for the prophet’s “enigmatic” prohibitions.<sup>66</sup> For Clement, it’s a matter of showing that the same *Logos* that Moses transmitted succinctly as law is manifested in detail by nature, in figures that one can analyze. By placing before his eyes the example of all these blameworthy animals, nature shows man that as a rational individual he need not model himself on beings that have but an animal soul. It also shows him the counter-natural point to which every excess can lead, according to a law which comes from nature itself. Finally, it makes it possible to base general prohibitions, which one finds in pagan philosophers and Christians alike—no adultery, no fornication, no corruption of children—on considerations of nature. For this is

undoubtedly one of the most remarkable features of Clement's entire chapter, and of this passage about the hare and the hyena in particular. The philosophers had never ceased to remind people that the law governing the use of the *aphrodisia* was nature's law. But most of the considerations they put forward concerned the nature of man as a rational and social being (the need to have children for the day when one would be old, the usefulness of a family for one's personal status, the obligation to provide citizens to the state, and men to mankind). In this text, Clement eliminates everything having to do with man's social being; he instead develops naturalist points to bring out what is undoubtedly the core of his argumentation:

*a.* Nature indicates that the procreative intention and the sexual act must be exactly coextensive.

*b.* Through the counter-natural games that it organizes, nature shows that this principle of coextension is a fact that can be read in the anatomy of the animals and a requirement that condemns those who fail to observe it.

*c.* So this principle forbids, first, any act that would be committed outside the organs of fertilization—"principle of the hyena"—and, second, any act that would be added on to the accomplished fertilization—"principle of the hare."

Though the philosophers had sought to place the *aphrodisia* under the law of nature and to exclude what was contrary to nature, never had they placed their analysis under the sign of nature to this degree—nature understood as what naturalists read in the animal world.

2. Clement also places his next exposition under the sign of nature, but this time of man's nature as a rational being. And this time he will stitch together, through the voice of Moses<sup>67</sup> and the example of Sodom,<sup>68</sup> the teaching of the masters of pagan wisdom, all those who endeavored to regulate the relations of the soul and the body—the Stoic philosophers, the physicians, and



Plato above all: Plato, who is even assumed to have read Jeremiah and his imprecations against men “resembling lusty stallions,” since he also speaks of the soul’s unruly steeds.<sup>69</sup>

What Clement submits here is the principle, familiar to the philosophers, of “temperance,” with its two correlative aspects: the soul’s control over the body, which is a natural prescription, since it is the nature of the soul to be superior and the nature of the body to be inferior as indicated by the location of the belly, which is like the body of the body (“one must dominate the pleasures and also command the belly, as well as what is below it”<sup>70</sup>); and the restraint, the moderation with which one must satisfy one’s appetites after becoming their master. Quite logically, he correlates the adjective *aidoios* (shameful), which is applied to the sex organs, with the noun *aidôs*, to which he gives the meaning of restraint and right measure: “it seems to me that if this organ has been called a shameful part (*aidoion*), this is above all because one must use this organ with restraint (*aidôs*).”<sup>71</sup> This restraint is therefore the rule that should govern the exercise of the soul’s control over the body. Now, in what does this consist? “Doing in the order of lawful unions only what is fitting, what is useful and decent.”<sup>72</sup> The first of these adjectives refers to what belongs by nature to this kind of relation, the second to its outcome, and the third to a quality that is moral and aesthetic at the same time. And what is thus designated is what is recommended by nature itself. So it gives exactly the same lesson here as before with the animal figures: positively, to “desire” procreation; negatively, to avoid the fruitless sowing of seeds.<sup>73</sup> Thus, Clement restates exactly the basic propositions that he had selected and justified in the terms of natural history. But this time, the spiral of exposition having done a spin around itself, he takes them up again at the level of the human order. He repeats them nearly element for element, but in a context where the terms *Nomos* (law), *Nominos* (lawful), *Paranomos* (unlawful), *Themis* (justice), *Dikaïos* (just), and *Adikos* (unjust) are utilized.<sup>74</sup> It’s not that it’s a matter here of counterposing the human order to that of nature, but rather of showing how nature is manifested therein. “Our entire lives can be lived in observance of nature’s laws, if we master our desires.”<sup>75</sup> The mastery that reason prescribes and that defines the lawful forms of behavior is yet another way of attending to the *Logos* that rules nature.

To this restraint, which demonstrates reason's control of the appetites, Clement gives four principal forms.

*a.* The first restricts sexual relations to the woman to whom one is joined by marriage. Plato said it ("refrain from plowing in every female field"), borrowing, says Clement, from Leviticus ("You shall not have intercourse with your neighbor's wife to defile yourself with her," 18:20). But the *Paedagogus* gives a different justification for this rule than Plato: in monogamy, the *Laws* found a means of limiting the ardor of the passions and the humiliating servitude in which they could keep men;<sup>76</sup> as for Clement, he sees in it the assurance that semen—which he said contained the "ideas of nature,"<sup>77</sup> making fertilization part of the relations between God and his creatures—will not be wasted someplace without honor. A certain value of semen in itself—what it contains and what it promises, the synergy that it calls for, between God and man, in order to attain its natural end—makes it unlawful and "unjust" to bestow it on anyone other than the wife with whom one is united.

*b.* Another principle of restriction: abstaining from sexual relations during menstruation. "It is not in keeping with reason to defile with the impurities of the body the most fertile part of the sperm, which may soon become a human being, to drown it in the murky and impure flow of matter: this is to steal the possible germ of a blessed birth from the furrows of the womb."<sup>78</sup> Here we have a prescription of Hebraic origin. But Clement situates the prohibition within both a set of implicit medical references and his general conception of semen. For him, the menses are indeed an impure substance.<sup>79</sup> But further, as the physician Soranus said, "semen is diluted in the blood and expelled by it."<sup>80</sup> So it carries away the semen that is intermixed with it, separating it from its goal, which is the womb, and from its end, which is procreation. Since "for reasons of nature" semen constitutes a material receptacle and since it has potentials that, developed in their rational

order, will give birth to a human being, it does not deserve to be exposed to contact with defilements or delivered over to a brutal expulsion.

c. The prohibition of relations during pregnancy constitutes the reciprocal of the preceding principle. For if it's necessary to protect semen from any impure evacuation, it is likewise necessary to protect the womb once it has received the semen and undertaken its activity. One must respect the rhythm that Clement evokes thus: when empty, the womb desires to procreate, it seeks to welcome the semen and therefore the mating cannot be considered a sin, since it responds to that legitimate desire.<sup>81</sup> Here again Clement is echoing a current medical teaching: "every moment is not favorable to the semen projected into the uterus by sexual coupling"; it's once the menstrual flow stops and the womb is empty that "women are inclined to the venereal act and desire it."<sup>82</sup> This alternation in the body's dispositions shows very clearly, according to Clement, the reason that presides over its nature, defining the correct limits of moderate conduct. But the *Paedagogus* shifts the meaning of both this rhythm and the rule of moderation that is derived from it. The physicians advised against sexual relations during pregnancy, the last months especially, for such relations "set the whole body in motion" and "are dangerous during the entire pregnancy" due to the shocks they give to the uterus.<sup>83</sup> Clement himself appeals to the fact that if the womb closes up during pregnancy this is because it "is busy making the child," and it is accomplishing this labor "in synergy with the Demiurge."<sup>84</sup> As long as this elaboration and collaboration is in progress, any new delivery of semen will appear excessive: a "violence" that cannot "rightly" be imposed on it. During pregnancy, anything coming in addition will be "in excess."

d. But if the woman's nature dictates such a strict economy, how do things stand with the man? Position-