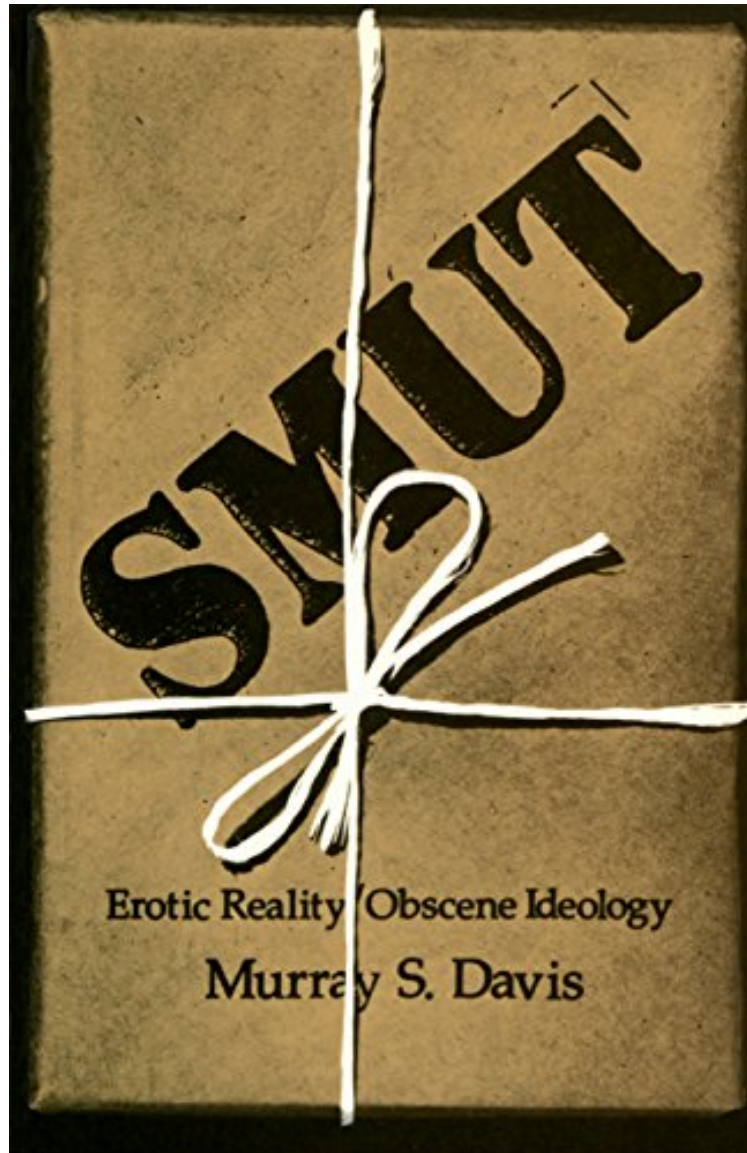


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## Smut: Erotic Reality/Obscene Ideology

*Murray S. Davis*

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**Murray S. Davis : Smut: Erotic Reality/Obscene Ideology** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Smut: Erotic Reality/Obscene Ideology:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy MemosDelivered as promised.11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. The three ideologiesBy A CustomerThis is the most profound book, both philosophically and psychologically, that I have yet seen on the subject of human sexuality. Mr. Davis explores the division between "everyday reality" and "erotic reality" in our experience. He then analyzes the three primary approaches that we take toward this. In a nutshell: The "Naturalist" minimizes this cleavage, sees sexuality as simply a harmless release of

tensions. The "Jehovanist" sees sexuality as a dangerous building up of tensions, as a threat to the social or cosmic order or "everyday reality", which must be suppressed or restricted as much as possible. The "Gnostic" also sees sexuality as a dangerous building up of tensions -- and revels in the danger, seeing "everyday reality" as essentially false and "erotic reality" as the essentially true, as "nobly evil". Mr. Davis explores the many ramifications of these three fundamental ways of looking at the sexual experience, and the complex relations between these. I strongly recommend this book to anyone interested in this complex and controversial subject and what it means to us. 10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. One of the very best. By Kimble James Greenwood. Only Georges Bataille's *Death and Sensuality* is comparable to the depth and profundity of Davis's elucidation of the darker tensions, meaning and power in sexuality. His division of the three attitudes taken toward sexual energy--Gnostic, Jehovanist and Naturalist--should be common knowledge, everyday language. I've gathered many books on this subject, but have never been instructed to the extent Davis has taught me. And in such "light" prose--perhaps even too light if I'm to press for any objection to this excellent work. A shame that it isn't in print.

*Smut* investigates sex in a way that differs from nearly all previous books on the subject. Drawing on a wide variety of literary forms, including the work of novelists, poets, and even comedians, resources ranging from the most sublime theologians to the most profane pornographers, Murray S. Davis goes beyond those who regard sex merely as a biological instinct or animal behavior. He recaptures sex for the social sciences by reemphasizing the aspects of it that are unique to human beings in all their rich perplexity. In part one, Davis employs a phenomenological approach to examine the difference between sexual arousal and ordinary experience: sexual arousal, he argues, alters a person's experience of the world, resulting in an "erotic reality" that contrasts strikingly to our everyday reality; different perceptions of time, space, human bodies, and other social types occur in each realm. Davis describes in detail the movement from everyday into erotic reality from the first subtle castings-off to the shocking post-orgasmic return. In part two the author employs a structuralist approach to determine why some people find this alternation between realities "dirty." He begins with a meditation on the similarity between sex and dirt and then asks, "How must someone view the world for him to find sex dirty?" Normal sex can be disliked, Davis concludes, only if it violates a certain conception of the individual; perverted sex can be despised only if it further violates certain conceptions of social relations and social organization. Davis ends part two with a "periodic table of perversions" that systematically summarizes the fundamental social elements out of which those who find sex dirty construct their world. Finally, in part three Davis considers other conceptual grids affected by the alternation between everyday and erotic realities: the "pornographic," which conceives of the individual, social relations, and social organizations as deserving to be disrupted by sex; and the "naturalistic," which conceives of them in a way that cannot be disrupted by sex. Throughout history these ideologies have contested for control over Western society, and, in his conclusion, Davis offers a prognosis for the future of sex based on these historical ideological cycles.