MADONNA IN FREE FALL

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When Madonna burst onto the scene in the 1980s, her all-around talent made her an overnight sensation. Her ability to shock was powerful, especially her vile anti-Catholic antics. Now she is in free fall, having become an old lady who likes to be masturbated on stage by her lesbian friends.

In 2015, Billboard noted that "Anyone who's watched Madonna's revealing 1991 documentary *Truth or Dare* remembers the unforgettable scene where Madge, despite warnings from local police, simulates masturbation while singing 'Like a Virgin' on her Blond Ambition Tour."

The cops have since checked out. She could have sex with a dog on stage and no one would complain except for PETA.

One media outlet, outkick.com, described the senior citizen's performance last weekend at Brooklyn's Barclays Center as proof that "the old girl is not only still alive and kicking, it also seems as if her lesbian sex drive is still as strong as ever." But she also needs the cash.

"Madonna still has to pay bills and if suburbanites are willing to pay her to go have simulated sex with one of her dancers six months after she nearly died [she spent days in the ICU following a serious bacterial infection], then get after it girlfriend."

Another media source, mamamia.com, put it this way: "Don't be alarmed, but right now there's a 65-year-old woman simulating masturbation on stage in front of 20,000 people. Not only that. She's getting lapdances from all comers. She's being touched and rubbed and pulled and groped, tied up, even. A man in a jockstrap, bottom exposed, is pretending to perform oral sex on her."

Here's the clincher. "Oh, and her children are watching. Participating, sometimes. Some of them are adults, some of them are kids. It's a family show that is very definitely not a family show." As the Daily Mail noted, "The singer, 65, shared a kiss with a topless dancer while donning satin lingerie, before she was joined onstage by her daughter Estere, 11, once again."

What does Madonna say when asked about the propriety of sexualizing children? She answered that a few years ago while performing in Lisbon, Portugal. After first auctioning off a Polaroid photo she had just taken of herself on stage (which she then pushed between her legs to "develop"), she turned to the crowd and said, "I see some children in the audience and don't want to offend anyone but, you know that, this is my p***y."

Madonna's inability to shock is not a healthy sign. It suggests cultural numbness, a condition born of relentless acts of deviance to the point of being normalized. When right and wrong become blurred—what sociologists call anomie—outrageous behaviors of all sorts are met with aplomb.

That is exactly what happened during the Weimar Republic in Germany. Moral anarchy has a short shelf life, and in the German case along came a man who was heralded for totally transforming society.

Totalitarianism is not assured once anomie settles in, but normlessness is never a healthy cultural sign.