

STUDIES IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX, VOLUME VI

Sex in Relation to Society

by

HAVELOCK ELLIS 1927

PREFACE.

In the previous five volumes of these Studies, I have dealt mainly with the sexual impulse in relation to its object, leaving out of account the external persons and the environmental influences which yet may powerfully affect that impulse and its gratification. We cannot afford, however, to pass unnoticed this relationship of the sexual impulse to third persons and to the community at large with all its anciently established traditions. We have to consider sex in relation to society.

In so doing, it will be possible to discuss more summarily than in preceding volumes the manifold and important problems that are presented to us. In considering the more special questions of sexual psychology we entered a neglected field and it was necessary to expend an analytic care and precision which at many points had never been expended before on these questions. But when we reach the relationships of sex to society we have for the most part no such neglect to encounter. The subject of every

chapter in the present volume could easily form, and often has formed, the topic of a volume, and the literature of many of these subjects is already extremely voluminous. It must therefore be our main object here not to accumulate details but to place each subject by turn, as clearly and succinctly as may be, in relation to those fundamental principles of sexual psychology which--so far as the data at present admit--have been set forth in the preceding volumes.

It may seem to some, indeed, that in this exposition I should have confined myself to the present, and not included so wide a sweep of the course of human history and the traditions of the race. It may especially seem that I have laid too great a stress on the influence of Christianity in moulding sexual ideals and establishing sexual institutions. That, I am convinced, is an error. It is because it is so frequently made that the movements of progress among us--movements that can never at any period of social history cease--are by many so seriously misunderstood. We cannot escape from our traditions. There never has been, and never can be, any "age of reason." The most ardent co-called "free-thinker," who casts aside as he imagines the authority of the Christian past, is still held by that past. If its traditions are not absolutely in his blood, they are ingrained in the texture of all the social institutions into which he was born and they affect even his modes of thinking. The latest modifications of our institutions are inevitably influenced by the past form of those institutions. We cannot realize where we are, nor

whither we are moving,
unless we know whence we came. We cannot understand the
significance of
the changes around us, nor face them with cheerful
confidence, unless we
are acquainted with the drift of the great movements
that stir all
civilization in never-ending cycles.

In discussing sexual questions which are very largely
matters of social
hygiene we shall thus still be preserving the
psychological point of view.
Such a point of view in relation to these matters is not
only legitimate
but necessary. Discussions of social hygiene that are
purely medical or
purely juridical or purely moral or purely theological
not only lead to
conclusions that are often entirely opposed to each
other but they
obviously fail to possess complete applicability to the
complex human
personality. The main task before us must be to
ascertain what best
expresses, and what best satisfies, the totality of the
impulses and ideas
of civilized men and women. So that while we must
constantly bear in mind
medical, legal, and moral demands--which all correspond
in some respects
to some individual or social need--the main thing is to
satisfy the
demands of the whole human person.

It is necessary to emphasize this point of view because
it would seem
that no error is more common among writers on the
hygienic and moral
problems of sex than the neglect of the psychological
standpoint. They may
take, for instance, the side of sexual restraint, or the
side of sexual
unrestraint, but they fail to realize that so narrow a
basis is inadequate

for the needs of complex human beings. From the wider psychological standpoint we recognize that we have to conciliate opposing impulses that are both alike founded on the human psychic organism.

In the preceding volumes of these Studies I have sought to refrain from the expression of any personal opinion and to maintain, so far as possible, a strictly objective attitude. In this endeavor, I trust, I have been successful if I may judge from the fact that I have received the sympathy and approval of all kinds of people, not less of the rationalistic free-thinker than of the orthodox believer, of those who accept, as well as of those who reject, our most current standards of morality. This is as it should be, for whatever our criteria of the worth of feelings and of conduct, it must always be of use to us to know what exactly are the feelings of people and how those feelings tend to affect their conduct. In the present volume, however, where social traditions necessarily come in for consideration and where we have to discuss the growth of those traditions in the past and their probable evolution in the future, I am not sanguine that the objectivity of my attitude will be equally clear to the reader. I have here to set down not only what people actually feel and do but what I think they are tending to feel and do. That is a matter of estimation only, however widely and however cautiously it is approached; it cannot be a matter of absolute demonstration. I trust that those who have followed me in the past will bear with me still, even if it is impossible for them always to accept the

conclusions I have
myself reached.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

Carbis Bay, Cornwall, England.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE MOTHER AND HER CHILD.

The Child's Right to Choose Its Ancestry--How This is
Effected--The Mother
the Child's Supreme Parent--Motherhood and the Woman
Movement--The Immense
Importance of Motherhood--Infant Mortality and Its
Causes--The Chief Cause
in the Mother--The Need of Rest During Pregnancy--
Frequency of Premature
Birth--The Function of the State--Recent Advance in
Puericulture--The
Question of Coitus During Pregnancy--The Need of Rest
During
Lactation--The Mother's Duty to Suckle Her Child--The
Economic
Question--The Duty of the State--Recent Progress in the
Protection of the
Mother--The Fallacy of State Nurseries.

CHAPTER II.

SEXUAL EDUCATION.

Nurture Necessary as Well as Breed--Precocious
Manifestations of the
Sexual Impulse--Are they to be Regarded as Normal?--The
Sexual Play of
Children--The Emotion of Love in Childhood--Are Town

Children More
Precocious Sexually Than Country Children?--Children's
Ideas Concerning
the Origin of Babies--Need for Beginning the Sexual
Education of Children
in Early Years--The Importance of Early Training in
Responsibility--Evil
of the Old Doctrine of Silence in Matters of Sex--The
Evil Magnified When
Applied to Girls--The Mother the Natural and Best
Teacher--The Morbid
Influence of Artificial Mystery in Sex Matters--Books on
Sexual
Enlightenment of the Young--Nature of the Mother's Task--
-Sexual Education
in the School--The Value of Botany--Zoölogy--Sexual
Education After
Puberty--The Necessity of Counteracting Quack
Literature--Danger of
Neglecting to Prepare for the First Onset of
Menstruation--The Right
Attitude Towards Woman's Sexual Life--The Vital
Necessity of the Hygiene
of Menstruation During Adolescence--Such Hygiene
Compatible with the
Educational and Social Equality of the Sexes--The
Invalidism of Women
Mainly Due to Hygienic Neglect--Good Influence of
Physical Training on
Women and Bad Influence of Athletics--The Evils of
Emotional
Suppression--Need of Teaching the Dignity of Sex--
Influence of These
Factors on a Woman's Fate in Marriage--Lectures and
Addresses on Sexual
Hygiene--The Doctor's Part in Sexual Education--Pubertal
Initiation Into
the Ideal World--The Place of the Religious and Ethical
Teacher--The
Initiation Rites of Savages Into Manhood and Womanhood--
The Sexual
Influence of Literature--The Sexual Influence of Art.

CHAPTER III.

SEXUAL EDUCATION AND NAKEDNESS.

The Greek Attitude Towards Nakedness--How the Romans Modified That Attitude--The Influence of Christianity--Nakedness in Mediæval Times--Evolution of the Horror of Nakedness--Concomitant Change in the Conception of Nakedness--Prudery--The Romantic Movement--Rise of a New Feeling in Regard to Nakedness--The Hygienic Aspect of Nakedness--How Children May Be Accustomed to Nakedness--Nakedness Not Inimical to Modesty--The Instinct of Physical Pride--The Value of Nakedness in Education--The Æsthetic Value of Nakedness--The Human Body as One of the Prime Tonics of Life--How Nakedness May Be Cultivated--The Moral Value of Nakedness.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VALUATION OF SEXUAL LOVE.

The Conception of Sexual Love--The Attitude of Mediæval Asceticism--St. Bernard and St. Odo of Cluny--The Ascetic Insistence on the Proximity of the Sexual and Excretory Centres--Love as a Sacrament of Nature--The Idea of the Impurity of Sex in Primitive Religions Generally--Theories of the Origin of This Idea--The Anti-Ascetic Element in the Bible and Early Christianity--Clement of Alexandria--St. Augustine's Attitude--The Recognition of the Sacredness of the Body by Tertullian, Rufinus and Athanasius--The Reformation--The Sexual Instinct Regarded as Beastly--The Human Sexual Instinct Not Animal-like--Lust and Love--

The Definition of
Love--Love and Names for Love Unknown in Some Parts of
the World--Romantic
Love of Late Development in the White Race--The Mystery
of Sexual
Desire--Whether Love is a Delusion--The Spiritual as
Well as the Physical
Structure of the World in Part Built up on Sexual Love
The Testimony of
Men of Intellect to the Supremacy of Love.

CHAPTER V.

THE FUNCTION OF CHASTITY.

Chastity Essential to the Dignity of Love--The
Eighteenth Century Revolt
Against the Ideal of Chastity--Unnatural Forms of
Chastity--The
Psychological Basis of Asceticism--Asceticism and
Chastity as Savage
Virtues--The Significance of Tahiti--Chastity Among
Barbarous
Peoples--Chastity Among the Early Christians--Struggles
of the Saints with
the Flesh--The Romance of Christian Chastity--Its Decay
in Mediæval
Times--_Aucassin et Nicolette_ and the New Romance of
Chaste Love--The
Unchastity of the Northern Barbarians--The Penitentials--
-Influence of the
Renaissance and the Reformation--The Revolt Against
Virginity as a
Virtue--The Modern Conception of Chastity as a Virtue--
The Influences That
Favor the Virtue of Chastity--Chastity as a Discipline--
The Value of
Chastity for the Artist--Potency and Impotence in
Popular Estimation--The
Correct Definitions of Asceticism and Chastity.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PROBLEM OF SEXUAL ABSTINENCE.

The Influence of Tradition--The Theological Conception of Lust--Tendency of These Influences to Degrade Sexual Morality--Their Result in Creating the Problem of Sexual Abstinence--The Protests Against Sexual Abstinence--Sexual Abstinence and Genius--Sexual Abstinence in Women--The Advocates of Sexual Abstinence--Intermediate Attitude--Unsatisfactory Nature of the Whole Discussion--Criticism of the Conception of Sexual Abstinence--Sexual Abstinence as Compared to Abstinence from Food--No Complete Analogy--The Morality of Sexual Abstinence Entirely Negative--Is It the Physician's Duty to Advise Extra-Conjugal Sexual Intercourse?--Opinions of Those Who Affirm or Deny This Duty--The Conclusion Against Such Advice--The Physician Bound by the Social and Moral Ideas of His Age--The Physician as Reformer--Sexual Abstinence and Sexual Hygiene--Alcohol--The Influence of Physical and Mental Exercise--The Inadequacy of Sexual Hygiene in This Field--The Unreal Nature of the Conception of Sexual Abstinence--The Necessity of Replacing It by a More Positive Ideal.

CHAPTER VII.

PROSTITUTION.

I. The Orgy:--The Religious Origin of the Orgy--The Feast of Fools--Recognition of the Orgy by the Greeks and Romans--The Orgy Among Savages--The Drama--The Object Subverted by the Orgy.

II. The Origin and Development of Prostitution:--The

Definition of
Prostitution--Prostitution Among Savages--The Conditions
Under Which
Professional Prostitution Arises--Sacred Prostitution--
The Rite of
Mylitta--The Practice of Prostitution to Obtain a
Marriage Portion--The
Rise of Secular Prostitution in Greece--Prostitution in
the East--India,
China, Japan, etc.--Prostitution in Rome--The Influence
of Christianity on
Prostitution--The Effort to Combat Prostitution--The
Mediæval Brothel--The
Appearance of the Courtesan--Tullia D'Aragona--Veronica
Franco--Ninon de
Lenclos--Later Attempts to Eradicate Prostitution--The
Regulation of
Prostitution--Its Futility Becoming Recognized.

III. The Causes of Prostitution:--Prostitution as a
Part of the Marriage
System--The Complex Causation of Prostitution--The
Motives Assigned by
Prostitutes--(1) Economic Factor of Prostitution--
Poverty Seldom the Chief
Motive for Prostitution--But Economic Pressure Exerts a
Real
Influence--The Large Proportion of Prostitutes Recruited
from Domestic
Service--Significance of This Fact--(2) The Biological
Factor of
Prostitution--The So-called Born-Prostitute--Alleged
Identity with the
Born-Criminal--The Sexual Instinct in Prostitutes--The
Physical and
Psychic Characters of Prostitutes--(3) Moral Necessity
as a Factor in the
Existence of Prostitution--The Moral Advocates of
Prostitution--The Moral
Attitude of Christianity Towards Prostitution--The
Attitude of
Protestantism--Recent Advocates of the Moral Necessity
of
Prostitution--(4) Civilizational Value as a Factor of
Prostitution--The

Influence of Urban Life--The Craving for Excitement--Why
Servant-girls so
Often Turn to Prostitution--The Small Part Played by
Seduction--Prostitutes
Come Largely from the Country--The Appeal of
Civilization Attracts Women
to Prostitution--The Corresponding Attraction Felt by
Men--The Prostitute
as Artist and Leader of Fashion--The Charm of Vulgarly.

IV. _The Present Social Attitude Towards Prostitution:_
-The Decay of the
Brothel--The Tendency to the Humanization of
Prostitution--The Monetary
Aspects of Prostitution--The Geisha--The Hetaira--The
Moral Revolt Against
Prostitution--Squalid Vice Based on Luxurious Virtue--
The Ordinary
Attitude Towards Prostitutes--Its Cruelty Absurd--The
Need of Reforming
Prostitution--The Need of Reforming Marriage--These Two
Needs Closely
Correlated--The Dynamic Relationships Involved.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONQUEST OF THE VENEREAL DISEASES.

The Significance of the Venereal Diseases--The History
of Syphilis--The
Problem of Its Origin--The Social Gravity of Syphilis--
The Social Dangers
of Gonorrhoea--The Modern Change in the Methods of
Combating Venereal
Diseases--Causes of the Decay of the System of Police
Regulation--Necessity
of Facing the Facts--The Innocent Victims of Venereal
Diseases--Diseases
Not Crimes--The Principle of Notification--The
Scandinavian
System--Gratuitous Treatment--Punishment For
Transmitting
Venereal Diseases--Sexual Education in Relation to
Venereal

Diseases--Lectures, Etc.--Discussion in Novels and on the Stage--The "Disgusting" Not the "Immoral".

CHAPTER IX.

SEXUAL MORALITY.

Prostitution in Relation to Our Marriage System--
Marriage and
Morality--The Definition of the Term "Morality"--
Theoretical Morality--Its
Division Into Traditional Morality and Ideal Morality--
Practical
Morality--Practical Morality Based on Custom--The Only
Subject of
Scientific Ethics--The Reaction Between Theoretical and
Practical
Morality--Sexual Morality in the Past an Application of
Economic
Morality--The Combined Rigidity and Laxity of This
Morality--The
Growth of a Specific Sexual Morality and the Evolution
of Moral
Ideals--Manifestations of Sexual Morality--Disregard of
the Forms of
Marriage--Trial Marriage--Marriage After Conception of
Child--Phenomena in
Germany, Anglo-Saxon Countries, Russia, etc.--The Status
of Woman--The
Historical Tendency Favoring Moral Equality of Women
with Men--The Theory
of the Matriarchate--Mother-Descent--Women in Babylonia--
Egypt--Rome--The
Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries--The Historical
Tendency
Favoring Moral Inequality of Woman--The Ambiguous
Influence of
Christianity--Influence of Teutonic Custom and
Feudalism--Chivalry--Woman
in England--The Sale of Wives--The Vanishing Subjection
of
Woman--Inaptitude of the Modern Man to Domineer--The
Growth of Moral

Responsibility in Women--The Concomitant Development of Economic Independence--The Increase of Women Who Work--Invasion of the Modern Industrial Field by Women--In How Far This Is Socially Justifiable--The Sexual Responsibility of Women and Its Consequences--The Alleged Moral Inferiority of Women--The "Self-Sacrifice" of Women--Society Not Concerned with Sexual Relationships--Procreation the Sole Sexual Concern of the State--The Supreme Importance of Maternity.

CHAPTER X.

MARRIAGE.

The Definition of Marriage--Marriage Among Animals--The Predominance of Monogamy--The Question of Group Marriage--Monogamy a Natural Fact, Not Based on Human Law--The Tendency to Place the Form of Marriage Above the Fact of Marriage--The History of Marriage--Marriage in Ancient Rome--Germanic Influence on Marriage--Bride-Sale--The Ring--The Influence of Christianity on Marriage--The Great Extent of this Influence--The Sacrament of Matrimony--Origin and Growth of the Sacramental Conception--The Church Made Marriage a Public Act--Canon Law--Its Sound Core--Its Development--Its Confusions and Absurdities--Peculiarities of English Marriage Law--Influence of the Reformation on Marriage--The Protestant Conception of Marriage as a Secular Contract--The Puritan Reform of Marriage--Milton as the Pioneer of Marriage Reform--His Views on Divorce--The Backward Position of England in Marriage Reform--Criticism of

the English Divorce Law--Traditions of the Canon Law
Still Persistent--The
Question of Damages for Adultery--Collusion as a Bar to
Divorce--Divorce in France, Germany, Austria, Russia,
etc.--The United
States--Impossibility of Deciding by Statute the Causes
for
Divorce--Divorce by Mutual Consent--Its Origin and
Development--Impeded by
the Traditions of Canon Law--Wilhelm von Humboldt--
Modern Pioneer
Advocates of Divorce by Mutual Consent--The Arguments
Against Facility of
Divorce--The Interests of the Children--The Protection
of Women--The
Present Tendency of the Divorce Movement--Marriage Not a
Contract--The
Proposal of Marriage for a Term of Years--Legal
Disabilities and
Disadvantages in the Position of the Husband and the
Wife--Marriage Not a
Contract But a Fact--Only the Non-Essentials of
Marriage, Not the
Essentials, a Proper Matter for Contract--The Legal
Recognition of
Marriage as a Fact Without Any Ceremony--Contracts of
the Person Opposed
to Modern Tendencies--The Factor of Moral
Responsibility--Marriage as an
Ethical Sacrament--Personal Responsibility Involves
Freedom--Freedom the
Best Guarantee of Stability--False Ideas of
Individualism--Modern Tendency
of Marriage--With the Birth of a Child Marriage Ceases
to be a Private
Concern--Every Child Must Have a Legal Father and
Mother--How This Can be
Effected--The Firm Basis of Monogamy--The Question of
Marriage
Variations--Such Variations Not Inimical to Monogamy--
The Most Common
Variations--The Flexibility of Marriage Holds Variations
in
Check--Marriage Variations _versus_ Prostitution--
Marriage on a Reasonable

and Humane Basis--Summary and Conclusion.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ART OF LOVE.

Marriage Not Only for Procreation--Theologians on the
_Sacramentum
Solationis_--Importance of the _Art of Love_--The Basis
of Stability in
Marriage and the Condition for Right Procreation--The
Art of Love the
Bulwark Against Divorce--The Unity of Love and Marriage
a Principle of
Modern Morality--Christianity and the Art of Love--Ovid--
-The Art of Love
Among Primitive Peoples--Sexual Initiation in Africa and
Elsewhere--The
Tendency to Spontaneous Development of the Art of Love
in Early
Life--Flirtation--Sexual Ignorance in Women--The
Husband's Place in Sexual
Initiation--Sexual Ignorance in Men--The Husband's
Education for
Marriage--The Injury Done by the Ignorance of Husbands--
The Physical and
Mental Results of Unskilful Coitus--Women Understand the
Art of Love
Better Than Men--Ancient and Modern Opinions Concerning
Frequency of
Coitus--Variation in Sexual Capacity--The Sexual
Appetite--The Art of Love
Based on the Biological Facts of Courtship--The Art of
Pleasing Women--The
Lover Compared to the Musician--The Proposal as a Part
of
Courtship--Divination in the Art of Love--The Importance
of the
Preliminaries in Courtship--The Unskilful Husband
Frequently the Cause of
the Frigid Wife--The Difficulty of Courtship--
Simultaneous Orgasm--The
Evils of Incomplete Gratification in Women--Coitus
Interruptus--Coitus

Reservatus--The Human Method of Coitus--Variations in
Coitus--Posture in
Coitus--The Best Time for Coitus--The Influence of
Coitus in Marriage--The
Advantages of Absence in Marriage--The Risks of Absence--
-Jealousy--The
Primitive Function of Jealousy--Its Predominance Among
Animals, Savages,
etc, and in Pathological States--An Anti-Social Emotion--
-Jealousy
Incompatible With the Progress of Civilization--The
Possibility of Loving
More Than One Person at a Time--Platonic Friendship--The
Conditions Which
Make It Possible--The Maternal Element in Woman's Love--
The Final
Development of Conjugal Love--The Problem of Love One of
the Greatest Of
Social Questions.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SCIENCE OF PROCREATION.

The Relationship of the Science of Procreation to the
Art of Love--Sexual
Desire and Sexual Pleasure as the Conditions of
Conception--Reproduction
Formerly Left to Caprice and Lust--The Question of
Procreation as a
Religious Question--The Creed of Eugenics--Ellen Key and
Sir Francis
Galton--Our Debt to Posterity--The Problem of Replacing
Natural
Selection--The Origin and Development of Eugenics--The
General Acceptance
of Eugenic Principles To-day--The Two Channels by
Which Eugenic
Principles are Becoming Embodied in Practice--The Sense
of Sexual
Responsibility in Women--The Rejection of Compulsory
Motherhood--The
Privilege of Voluntary Motherhood--Causes of the
Degradation of

Motherhood--The Control of Conception--Now Practiced by
the Majority of
the Population in Civilized Countries--The Fallacy of
"Racial
Suicide"--Are Large Families a Stigma of Degeneration?--
Procreative
Control the Outcome of Natural and Civilized Progress--
The Growth of
Neo-Malthusian Beliefs and Practices--Facultative
Sterility as Distinct
from Neo-Malthusianism--The Medical and Hygienic
Necessity of Control of
Conception--Preventive Methods--Abortion--The New
Doctrine of the Duty to
Practice Abortion--How Far is this Justifiable?--
Castration as a Method of
Controlling Procreation--Negative Eugenics and Positive
Eugenics--The
Question of Certificates for Marriage--The Inadequacy of
Eugenics by Act
of Parliament--The Quickening of the Social Conscience
in Regard to
Heredity--Limitations to the Endowment of Motherhood--
The Conditions
Favorable to Procreation--Sterility--The Question of
Artificial
Fecundation--The Best Age of Procreation--The Question
of Early
Motherhood--The Best Time for Procreation--The
Completion of the Divine
Cycle of Life.

CHAPTER I.

THE MOTHER AND HER CHILD.

The Child's Right to Choose Its Ancestry--How This is
Effected--The Mother
the Child's Supreme Parent--Motherhood and the Woman
Movement--The Immense
Importance of Motherhood--Infant Mortality and Its
Causes--The Chief Cause

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

