

Anarchist library
Anti-Copyright



Manuel Devaldès
War in the Sexual Act
1936

Retrieved on 5 March 2011 from www.marxists.org
Source: *Les Cahiers Pensée et action*. No 7–8. June–Nov, 1957;
Translated: for marxists.org by Mitchell Abidor;
CopyLeft: Creative Commons (Attribute & ShareAlike)
marxists.org 2004.

en.anarchistlibraries.net

War in the Sexual Act

Manuel Devaldès

1936

We know that war has over-population as its primordial cause. Consequently, a new object offers itself to our investigative spirit in the search for the true cause of war: the true cause of overpopulation.

Overpopulation, on one hand, results from the fertility of woman, which is expressed by the humanity's capacity of reproduction in a geometric progression. On the other hand, the progression in multiplication of foodstuffs is much slower, from which is born the disequilibrium between population and subsistence goods, a biological situation that generates war. But this doesn't penetrate deeply enough into the study of the causes of war. If we remain at this level we see only a superficial phenomenon. In order to attain to reality we must descend until we reach man's mentality, until penetrate into the domain of psychology. We must proceed to the psychological analysis of human- and especially male-sexuality.

In sexual life we distinguish between two functions: the voluptuary and the generative. For it is quite clear that these two functions are independent in the human spirit. Phrased differently, it is only on rare occasions that men and women, when they are having sexual relations, have generative designs in view. Ordinarily, their

sole goal is to feel voluptuousness. ...Nevertheless, physiologically these two functions are connected, and they remain so as long as the two partners allow nature to follow its course.

It is thus false that at the basis of sexual relations can be found, as the sociologist O. Lemarié says, in “the generative instinct,” which necessarily leads the human couple to reproduce. The “imperious demand for perpetuation,” the “fundamental need for the perpetuation of the species” which he speaks of, he and his like, are, in generalizing as he does, subject to discussion and various interpretations... It is possible that a moralist, placing himself from a finalist point of view, finds it correct to make this assertion, though he knows it to be totally false, if only thanks to the criterion of his own conduct, but the truth is exactly the opposite.

In reality, what is at the basis of the sexual act is the particularly powerful desire of the male to enjoy a being of a different sex, of a complementary sex, taking only the norm into account here. Proof of non-finalism in this affair is, among other things, that this same voluptuousness can be sought and obtained with a being of the same sex which in the first place excludes, it goes without saying, any idea of generation, and then any idea of universal finality.

In a word, there is a sexual instinct, but there is no generative instinct.

At work in male sexuality, then, can be found this selfish desire for physical satisfaction, most often manifested without any concern for what the consequences might be for the partner. In order to feel the intense pleasure of a moment a man doesn't hesitate to impose on a woman a physical burden that lasts nine months and put the life of that “beloved” woman in danger. The selfishness in this case is flagrant. It is at the base of masculine sexual activity. A “complete” sexual education would cast a light on this reality, but for various self-interested reasons men don't want this, especially for women. As for the latter, who would be liberated from many ills by an education of this kind, they too want nothing of it. Have we ever seen a feminist, except perhaps a Nelly Roussel and one or

two of her kind, call for it? This is so because their intelligence is atrophied by the ideas inculcated in them by masculinist society.

What is more, if we continue this analysis we discover in the sexuality of the male a violent impulse, an aggressiveness and a cruelty, and finally a will to domination which demands not only exclusivity in the possession of a woman, in the use of her body, but also the obedience of the slave bearing constant testimony to her adoration of her master.

It should be noted that these characteristics of the masculine sex act, selfishness, aggressiveness, cruelty and domination become, under the pen or in the mouth of a moralist, “virtues” when said act has generative consequences. It is these “virtues” that lead us to war which, incidentally, also has the more or less categorical approbation of the moralist.

And so, the sexual act is entirely impregnated with violence, and the woman is an adversary for the man, whom he vanquishes in various ways, as much in the fact of imposing his embrace on her as in the generative consequences that this act might have. René Benjamin, in mocking a pacifist, could with reason write: “Poor man! It’s true he has no children. In order to have any he would have had to be violent.”

An admission that should be remembered.

But even more. If we investigate the nature of the sexual act and that of the act of murder, if we go back to the impulse that opens the road to their accomplishment for both of them, we note that there exists a certain similarity between the impulse that leads the murderer to kill and that which leads the male to the sex act...

We should be grateful to the psychologists of sexology for having clarified the vocabulary of sexual psychology. Until their arrival the word “love” designated contradictory sentiments, opposing acts. Fortunately they introduced the word “libido,” which consecrates a distinction in fact between a sentiment, love — which when it exists and manifests itself to one or the other of two beings of different sexes, ennobles their sexual life and their associ-

ation whatever its duration: an hour or a life; and which, through far reaching consequences, if it were to be generalized, would contribute to social and international peace — which is ego-altruistic, and the sentiment that can be qualified as the contrary, the libido, which is more or less inferiorly selfish and which, in the same circumstances, has completely opposite effects...

We can say that sexuality, in its natural course, is the plague of humanity. It gives it intense joys which are not always, from the point of view of the aesthetics of life, among the most noble. But to an infinitely greater degree it assures humanity's unhappiness.

In summary, humanity's unhappiness is derived from the pleasure felt by the two sexes in the reciprocal rubbing of the mucosae of their genital apparatuses.

Small cause, great effect.

For I repeat, except in the case of the planned child (planning that can result from various completely opposed motives and which bioethics could qualify as noble or ignoble) conception is not the intention: the intention is voluptuous enjoyment.

But here, as in every manifestation of life, egoism plays a role, and it plays it to the maximum and in its least noble aspect.

Egoism acts to a great degree in the struggle for existence: humans pitilessly wrest food from each other, but the action of egoism in this case is in a sense extended, diluted in time. Because of this the acuity of its exercise is only noticeable to the attentive observer, be he a spectator of the lives of others or of his own.

In the struggle between man and woman for voluptuousness the amount of time during which egoism exercises itself to the maximum is narrow, but its acuity is infinitely greater than in the preceding case. Male libido demands the most absolute of satisfactions. What is more, it is exclusive, because of its very potency demanding that the individual be occupied at that moment only with its satisfaction and that he be indifferent to the consequences. The number of men who in these circumstances preserve the mastery of themselves is extremely limited.

This is why we shouldn't count on the male for the use of a means of guaranteeing against conception, a usage whose generalization would constitute the prevention of overpopulation and, as a result, of war. The libido is master in this domain, from which it chases reason. To be sure, there are exceptions, men who even at such a moment preserve, according to the beautiful expression of Leonardo de Vinci, self-mastery, but we know they are few in number. These exceptions confirm the rule, and the geometric populating powers of humankind are so rapid that the exceptions to this rule, who don't exercise much influence, are negligible.

If overpopulation, if war, if the unhappiness of humanity result from the conditions that rule over the satisfaction of the libido, its happiness might flow from preventive procedures whose application must, by virtue of the above mentioned masculine sexual facts, be above all the affair of women. For science places at the disposal of the latter methods that are practically certain for avoiding maternity. But humanity is voluntarily and jealously held in the most complete sexual ignorance by those who govern it, by its educators — who in this way fail in their mission and, what is more, need to be educated — and in general by all those who dispose of some authority over it. And the stupidity of the masses is such that in this question, which is the most important in life, it allows itself to be maintained in this intellectual and sexual slavery, from which all other slaveries proceed. To a certain extent two countries are exceptions to this rule: Great Britain and the USSR — but to a certain extent only. In the others, sexual ignorance is carefully organized... France, by this means, and elsewhere by other analogous ones, ensures, at the cost of biological rotting through dysgenism and the mutilation of women by abortion — which are also the consequences — the most abundant overpopulation a country can arrive at; the most abundant overpopulation and the war that follows it like a shadow.