

## Sex and Culture

Summary quotes by J.D. Unwin

The following 26 pages contain a series of selected quotes from J.D. Unwin's book *Sex and Culture*. Words or phrases that are inserted are coloured in blue font. Page numbers in brackets indicate the page where the quote begins. This should not be used by itself to critique Unwin's analysis, as it does not contain anything from his chapters 2 and 3, in which he presents the data and discussion of individual cultures. No summary of those chapters can be presented without badly underrepresenting the details of his data and discussion.

### **Preface:**

When I started these researches I sought to establish nothing, and had no idea of what the result would be. With care-free open-mindedness I decided to test, by a reference to human records, a somewhat startling conjecture that had been made by the analytical psychologists. This suggestion was that if the social regulations forbid direct satisfaction of the sexual impulses the emotional conflict is expressed in another way, and that what we call 'civilization' has always been built up by compulsory sacrifices in the gratification of innate desires. (vii)

In all I discuss eighty uncivilized societies, and from the nature of their cultural behaviour make my first induction. (viii)

I view with alarm the current habit, deplorably widespread among historians and antiquarians, of assuming that the regulations and conventions that prevailed in a century of which we have direct knowledge prevailed also in a preceding or in a succeeding century, of which we may have no direct knowledge at all. Whenever our knowledge is complete, we find that in any vigorous society the method of regulating the relations between the sexes was constantly changing; and, unless there is direct evidence, it is wrong to assume that in any such society social laws were ever static and unchanging, even for three generations. (ix)

My inductive survey of civilized societies is limited to the Sumerians, Babylonians (to twentieth century B.C.), Hellenes, Romans, Anglo-

Saxons, and English. (ix)

I hope that the second and third chapters will be useful for the purpose of reference. There is certainly no need for any one to read them from beginning to end. They, as well as the bibliography and index, are designed to help those who wish to study human societies as dynamic units. I doubt if a comparative student will get much assistance from them; but if he browses in the notes he may find something to suit him. (x)

In my fifth chapter I present my final conclusions and place the cultural process in what seems to be its proper relation to the biological and universal processes. (xiii)

To a mind that is unaccustomed to the methods of scientific research, the facts, as presented, may appear over-simplified. The reason is that I have refused to publish them until I felt that I understood them. ... If an alleged truth appears complicated, the probability is that we understand it imperfectly. (xiv)

#### **For those who wish only for a good summary ...**

To assist a reader understanding than would be gained by reading the book from the beginning to the end, I have not hesitated to summarize, and even to repeat, the argument in what I considered to be the appropriate place. My suggestion is that after reading the first chapter, and so much of the second and third chapters as may be necessary to understand the technique of the inquiry, the reader will find it easier to study para. 152, (page 298) and then to proceed straight to the end, returning afterwards to study the details of the evidence. Para. 158 also is a useful summary for those who wish to take a still shorter cut. But one point must be emphasized: in considering the contents of the last chapter it is vital to distinguish between what I have called the first and second primary laws (paras. 160, 174). (xiv)

Briefly stated, my final conclusion is that the cultural behaviour (as defined) of any human society depends, first, on the inherent nature of the human organism, and, secondly, on the state of energy into which, as the result of its sexual regulations, the society has arrived. According to the amount of continence they compelled, the sexual regulations

adopted by human societies in the past divide themselves into six classes. These have produced six distinct states of energy, three lesser, three greater. All the uncivilized societies were in one or other of the three states of lesser energy; civilized societies have always been in one or other of the three states of greater energy. (xiv)

## Chapter 1

Among both civilized and uncivilized peoples there is a close relation between sexual opportunity and cultural condition, and I have thought it worth while to conduct a detailed inquiry into the matter. (1)

I am conscious not only of the voluminous nature of the evidence which I shall ask the reader to examine, but also of the established opinions which are current to-day in regard to sexual regulations. These opinions may be said to be either dogmatic or theoretical. Those who adhere to dogmatic opinions claim that their conclusions are founded upon a supernatural sanction; but since this supernatural sanction is not recognized by all men, it follows that those who hold the dogmatic opinions cannot speak with authority except to those who, by recognizing the sanction, inevitably subscribe to those opinions already. The theoretical opinions are held by those who have rebelled against the dogmatism of the former party ; they substitute an alleged rationalism for the supernatural sanction of their opponents. Yet their conclusions have no greater validity, for they do not always succeed in excluding the personal factor from their submissions; and when they attempt to justify their opinions by a reference to human records they have a tendency to substitute conjectural hypotheses for rational inductions, and to submit a collection of apt illustrations as proof of their individual theories. In dealing with such subjects as sex and culture these methods are disastrous; so I have endeavoured both to devise a technique by means of which the personal factor may be avoided, and to adopt a procedure which will approach, so far as possible, the methods of the chemist and the physicist. (1)

According to the terminology which is adopted in this treatise, the cultural condition of a society is determined by its answers to two questions:

1. What powers manifest themselves in the universe ?

2. What steps are taken to maintain a right relation with those powers?

We have seen that it is impossible to accept the answers which have been given to the first question. We are compelled, therefore, to base our definitions on the answers to the second question ; that is to say, the only reliable method is to classify human societies not according to their ideas but according to their behaviour. (13)

There are four great patterns of human culture: (1) zoistic, (2) manistic, (3) deistic, (4) rationalistic. Only a few civilized societies have been in the rationalistic cultural condition. All uncivilized societies can be placed in one or other of the remaining three classes. Before defining them I must explain that the words zoism, manism, and deism will not and cannot be used to denote the 'beliefs' of those societies which were in the zoistic, manistic, and deistic cultural conditions. The conceptions of uncivilized people cannot be simplified in that manner. (13)

### THE FRAME OF CULTURAL REFERENCE

(UNCIVILIZED PEOPLES)

Society	Cultural condition	Treatment of affliction			Method of weather control		Treatment of ghosts			Temples and priests
		Magic	Transference and/or exorcism	Priest	Magician	Priest	Controlled by magic	Tendence	Cult	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

It must be remembered that the chart merely reveals the general pattern of a culture. As I have said, there is always a variety within the pattern. Every human society has a character of its own; its culture is a unique product. (21)

I consider that it is inadmissible to speak of any society as 'primitive', or 'more primitive', or as 'civilized', 'more civilized', or 'less civilized', for all these terms lack precise meaning. There is only one way out of the difficulty caused by their rejection. First, we must publicly deprive them of any meaning at all ; then we must adopt other words to take the place they used to occupy. In most of those contexts in which it is customary to use the epithet 'primitive' I shall employ the word 'uncivilized'. When I speak of 'civilized' societies I refer only to the following sixteen historical peoples: Sumerians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Assyrians, Hellenes (3), Persians, Hindus, Chinese, Japanese, Sassanids, Arabs (Moors), Romans, Teutons, and Anglo-Saxons (i.e. ourselves). According to my terminology any society not included in this list was 'uncivilized'. It is a rough, arbitrary classification. The cultural condition of some uncivilized societies was, of course, higher than that of some of the civilized peoples. (23)

The Meaning of 'Higher' and 'Lower'. On the grounds that a rationalistic society has more control over its environment than a society which is in any other cultural condition, I call the rationalistic cultural condition the 'highest' cultural condition. Since all those societies which have been rationalistic were deistic in the years immediately previous to the change in their cultural condition, the deistic condition occupies the second position in the cultural scale. A number of deistic peoples also carried out some form of tendance and/or cult. The manistic cultural condition is therefore higher than the zoistic cultural condition. But it is possible for a zoistic society to become deistic without being manistic, and changes may take place from any one condition to any other condition without reference to a determined order. (23)

I have not been able to find a satisfactory definition of 'marriage', but submit the following: Marriage is an economic and sexual relationship between one or more men and one or more women, based on those customs which the members of a society have seen fit to adopt in order to regulate the relations between the sexes. (25)

Definition of Sexual Opportunity. By 'sexual opportunity' I mean the opportunity which is afforded to a man or a woman to gratify a sexual desire. Sometimes the sexual regulations prevent such satisfaction; the

impulse must be checked or the offender will be punished. The sexual opportunity has then been limited. (27)

The Completed Frame of Reference. Let us summarize the position. The sexual opportunity of uncivilized men and women can be assessed by the answers which are received to eight questions:

1. Was there a demand for the tokens of virginity when a girl was married ?
2. Was a betrothed girl compelled to confine her sexual qualities to her future husband?
3. Was pre-nuptial fatherhood punished?
4. Were the boys and girls sexually free (outside the exogamic regulations and /or the prohibited degrees) ?
5. Did other men share the sexual qualities of a man's wife?
6. Was a wife compelled to confine her sexual qualities to one man through her life ?
7. Was a husband granted access to his wife's sisters?
8. Was a widow sexually free? (33)

THE FRAME OF REFERENCE (UNCIVILIZED PEOPLES)															
Society	Cultural condition	Treatment of affliction			Method of weather control		Treatment of ghosts			Temples and priests	Sexual regulations				
		Magic	Transference and/or exorcism	Priest	Magician	Priest	Controlled by magic	Tendence	Cult		Pre-nuptial chastity	Wife's sexual qualities shared	Sexual rights over wife's sisters	Wives limited to one man	Widows sexually free
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

That is to say, among these eighty societies the three great patterns of uncivilized culture invariably accompanied the three patterns of

prenuptial sexual opportunity. Thus:

1. If a society permitted pre-nuptial sexual freedom, it was in the zoistic cultural condition. Conversely, all the zoistic societies permitted prenuptial sexual freedom.
2. If a society adopted such regulations as imposed an irregular or occasional continence, it was in the manistic cultural condition. Conversely, all the manistic societies had adopted such regulations as imposed an irregular or occasional continence.
3. If a society insisted on pre-nuptial chastity (in my sense of the term), it was in the deistic cultural condition. Conversely, some of the members of all the deistic societies demanded the tokens of virginity as proof that a girl was *virgo intacta* when she was married.

My submission is that on such evidence a social scientist is compelled to induce that there is a close relation between sexual opportunity and cultural condition among uncivilized peoples. (35)

The fourth chapter will be devoted to an analysis and assessment of this evidence. Then, in order to make sure that my interpretation of the facts is a likely one, I shall quote the opinions of competent psychologists in regard to the psychological effect of a reduction of sexual opportunity. We shall see that their conclusions, based not on cultural but on psychological data, support the suggestions I shall have made. In the fifth chapter I shall state the whole conclusion in general terms, including within the survey the customs and culture of the most developed historical societies. (36)

## Chapter 4

I have said (para. 24) that after considering the evidence contained in this Chart a social scientist is compelled to induce that among uncivilized peoples there is a close relation between sexual opportunity and cultural behaviour. (235)

There is one point, however, which I wish to emphasize again: a change in opinion is never uniform throughout a society. When a society ascends in the cultural scale, some sections of the people retain their old opinions and remain in the lower cultural condition. Then the society is divided into two cultural strata. Indeed, the higher a society ascends the

greater is the difference in the culture of the various strata, the number of those strata depending on the nature of the rise of the society. (239)

**Summary conclusion of para. 152, (recommended by Unwin):** If, therefore, there is any causal relationship between a reduction of sexual opportunity and cultural condition, the continence must have caused the thought which produced the change in ideas, and so the cultural change. The contrary cannot have been the case. (302)

When a desire is compelled to remain unsatisfied, strong mental tension occurs; the emotional energy is compressed. According to Dr. Rivers, 'the energy arising out of the conflict is diverted from some channel which leads in an asocial direction and turned into one leading to an end connected with the higher ideals of society. . . . Many lines of evidence are converging to show that all great accomplishments in human endeavour depend on processes which go on outside those regions of the mind of the activity of which we are clearly conscious.' To this diversion Dr. Freud applied a word which has been translated 'sublimation'. It is not a satisfactory word ; indeed it has almost disappeared from technical literature ; but I shall retain it, for it occurs in the simple text-books from which I am quoting. Dr. Rivers defines it thus: 'By sublimation is meant a process in which an instinctive tendency, more or less fostered by experience, which would normally find expression in some kind of undesirable conduct, has its energy diverted into a channel in which it comes to have a positive social value.' Dr. Freud says: 'We believe that civilization has been built up by sacrifices in gratification of the primitive impulses, and that it is to a great extent for ever being recreated as each individual repeats the sacrifice of his instinctive pleasures for the common good. The sexual are amongst the most important of the instinctive forces thus utilized: they are in this way sublimated, that is to say, their energy is turned aside from its sexual goal and diverted towards other ends, no longer sexual and socially more valuable.' (313)

**(Here is an example of how Unwin takes pains to filter out any so-called divine revelation for proper behavior.)** ... I am aware that in this special case one party goes farther, and maintains that the indissolubility of the marriage tie is not an opinion concerning the 'best' method of regulating the relations between the sexes but a law



of a creative deity, the knowledge of which was revealed to men under special and peculiar circumstances. Yet still it remains an opinion, for before a man can admit the existence of the divine law he must be satisfied that the alleged revelation took place. This, however, is not admitted by all men, and, since it is a matter of opinion whether or not the revelation was made, it follows that the laws based upon it are also opinions. Moreover, other alleged revelations have taken place which conflict in important details. (314)

In other words, psychological researches reveal that the placing of a compulsory check upon the sexual impulses, that is, a limitation of sexual opportunity, produces thought, reflection, and energy.

Now the evidence is that a cultural advance has been caused by a factor which produces thought, reflection, and social energy (paras. 149-51) and that it occurs only when the sexual opportunity has been limited. I submit, therefore, that the limitation of the sexual opportunity must be regarded as the cause of the cultural advance. (317)

**Concluding remarks for para. 158 (recommended by Unwin):** if these conclusions be applied to any particular society which, according to other evidence, is undoubtedly capable of displaying social energy, compulsory continence must be regarded as the immediate cause of a cultural advance. Any extension of sexual opportunity must always be the immediate cause of a cultural decline.

In no sense can the compulsory continence be regarded either as the final or as the ultimate cause of either advance or decline. From a study of competent psychological authorities we discovered also that in a developed society the conscious mind of any individual is dominated by an unconscious element, the latter being formed in early childhood. This led to three conclusions:

- (a) that under the chance circumstances which hitherto have prevailed in human affairs a cultural change cannot have been completed in less than a century, or, to put the matter in another way, the extension or limitation of sexual opportunity, either in society as a whole or in a class within the society, cannot have its full cultural effect for a hundred years;
- (b) that culturally the sexual opportunity of the females is a more important factor than that of the males;
- (c) that scientifically an individual cannot be considered apart from

the society of which he is a member, the dominating Unconscious being of a social character.

Further we perceived that the possession by an individual of free will, whether it be an illusion or not, does not vitiate a deterministic conclusion in regard to the cultural process. (326)

## Chapter 5

The notion of an ever-increasing cultural process has been encouraged by our own attitude to our own peculiar culture. There is reason to believe that in some ways our own culture is incomparably richer than that of any previous known culture. This well-recognized but usually exaggerated fact, combined with a pardonable egocentricity, has produced an irrational attitude towards the changes in our own cultural condition. As rationalists we are conscious of changes in the cultural condition of our own society and in that of the various cultural strata into which our society is divided. Then, convinced that the cultural process is a progressive development and that our own culture is the most developed of all cultures, we assume that every change in our cultural condition is evidence of higher cultural development.

Anything which is subsequent in time is regarded as more enlightened and more developed. Culturally, twentieth-century white man is assumed to be more 'evolved' than nineteenth-century white man; twenty-first century white man will be more evolved than twentieth-century white man; and so on.

It is a quaint and comfortable doctrine ; yet until it is dispelled we shall understand neither our own culture nor that of any other society. It vitiates many of our historical judgements and plays havoc with our efforts to understand the culture of societies which have passed away. (328)

Sometimes we find that an ancient society introduced a reform which recently we ourselves have adopted. We call attention to this strange phenomenon, and condescendingly observe how civilized those ancient men were. We forget that there is another point of view; a more disinterested spectator might remark that only recently have we become as civilized as they were. Admittedly the vague use of the word 'civilized' is responsible for some of this woolly thought; (329)

If we are to arrive at an intelligent understanding of the cultural process, we must adopt a frame upon which the culture of any society at any time can be fitted, and we must place our own culture upon it by the side of other cultures, recording the observed changes in our cultural condition according to the definitions we adopt. For this reason I entitled my first chapter 'The Frame of Reference'. In that chapter I defined the standards by which I should assess the culture of the societies which I proposed to discuss. (330)

According to the amount of their energy, too, these vigorous societies change their opinions on every conceivable subject. At one time they have faith in one opinion, at another time in another; at one time they adopt one method of behaviour, at another time they adopt another. The new opinion is always hailed as the most enlightened; the people are always convinced that their new way is better than their old way ; but actually they have merely exchanged one convention for another convention, the nature of the new convention depending upon the amount of their mental and social energy. Indeed sometimes we can watch the changes in their opinion and behaviour, and observe the manner in which first they have faith in one method, then in another, and then again in the one which they had discarded as superficial and uncultivated. (333)

Thus the cultural condition of any society in any geographical environment is conditioned by its past and present methods of regulating the relations between the sexes. This is the first primary law which operates in all human societies. (340)

161. Seven Classes of Sexual Regulations. According to the continence they compelled, the sexual regulations adopted by human societies in the past may be divided into seven classes. Three refer to pre-nuptial, four to post-nuptial, conduct. (341)

**Pre-nuptially** (1) men and women may be sexually free, (2) they may be subject to regulations which compel only an irregular or occasional continence, (3) under pain of punishment and even death the women may have to remain virgins until they are married. (341)

In reference to the four types of **post-nuptial regulations** I employ the

terms modified monogamy, modified polygamy, absolute monogamy, absolute polygamy, which I define as follows:

**Modified monogamy**—the practice or circumstance of having one spouse at one time, the association being terminable by either party in accordance with the prevailing law or custom;

**Modified polygamy**—the practice or circumstance of having more than one wife at one time, the wives being free to leave their husbands on terms laid down by law and custom;

**Absolute monogamy**—the practice or circumstance of having one spouse at one time, but presupposing conditions whereby legally the wife is under the dominion of her husband and must confine her sexual qualities to him, under pain of punishment, for the whole of his or her life;

**Absolute polygamy**—the practice or circumstance of having more than one wife at one time, these wives being compelled to confine their sexual qualities to their husband for the whole of their lives.

I must beg that the significance of these terms be remembered. The post-nuptial regulations adopted in the past by any human society, civilized or uncivilized, fall into one of these categories. (342)

1. Modified monogamy or polygamy—neither party is compelled to confine his or her sexual qualities to the other for his or her whole life;
2. Absolute polygamy—the female knows only her husband, but the male is free to have other sexual partners;
3. Absolute monogamy—the female knows no man but her husband, the male is confined to one woman for so long as she obeys the social ordinances. (343)

The evidence is that post-nuptial regulations are not a productive factor unless the society insists on pre-nuptial chastity. Thus in the past the compulsory continence suffered by human societies has been of six different intensities, according as they

1. permitted pre-nuptial sexual freedom (outside the exogamic regulations and prohibited degrees),
2. insisted on an irregular or occasional pre-nuptial continence,
3. compelled a woman to be virgo intacta when she joined her husband,
4. permitted a modified monogamy or polygamy,

5. insisted on absolute polygamy,
6. instituted an absolute monogamy.

The sexual regulations of the eighty uncivilized societies fall into one of the first three classes. Those of the ten societies which insisted on prenuptial chastity also fall into (4). None of them insisted on absolute polygamy or on absolute monogamy, but there is some evidence that in the past some of them may have adopted the former. (343)

Generally speaking, in the past when they began to display great energy (as opposed to the lesser energy of uncivilized peoples), human societies were absolutely monogamous. There is only one example of a polygamous society displaying productive social energy, that of the Moors; but in their case the women whom the men took to wife had been reared in an absolutely monogamous tradition. The energy of the Moors faded away when the mothers spent their early childhood in a less rigorous tradition. With this exception, the energy of the most developed civilized societies, or that of any group within them, was exhibited for so long as they preserved their austere regulations. Their energy faded away as soon as a modified monogamy became part of the inherited tradition of the whole society. No group of human beings, however, has ever been able, or at any rate has ever consented, to tolerate a state of absolute monogamy for very long. This is not surprising, for it is an unequal bargain for the women ; and in the end they have always been freed from their legal disadvantages. To express the matter in popular language, they have been 'emancipated'. (343)

I mention the matter now because, owing to the egocentricity in our historical outlook, to which I have already referred (para. 159), it is often supposed that female emancipation is an invention of the modern white man. Sometimes we imagine that we have arrived at a conception of the status of women in society which is far superior to that of any other age; we feel an inordinate pride because we regard ourselves as the only civilized society which has understood that the sexes must have social, legal, and political equality. Nothing could be farther from the truth. A female emancipating movement is a cultural phenomenon of unfailling regularity; it appears to be the necessary outcome of absolute monogamy. The subsequent loss of social energy after the emancipation of women, which is sometimes emphasized, has been due not to the emancipation but to the extension of sexual opportunity which has

always accompanied it. In human records there is no instance of female emancipation which has not been accompanied by an extension of sexual opportunity. (344)

A secondary law is a particular formulation of a primary law which is couched in general terms only. The first secondary law is this:

Any society in which complete pre-nuptial sexual freedom (outside the exogamic regulations and prohibited degrees) has been permitted for at least three generations will be in the zoistic cultural condition.

It will also be at a dead level of conception if previously it has not been in a higher cultural condition.

The words 'has been permitted for at least three generations' are important. If pre-nuptial freedom has been permitted only for one generation, some members of the society may have inherited a different tradition. (347)

163. Cultural Effect of a Compulsory Irregular or Occasional Continence. If the social regulations compel an irregular or occasional continence, a small amount of mental and social energy is produced by the emotional conflict (para. 155), and there is a slight modification of these zoistic ideas. The society becomes manistic. (348)

164. Cultural Effect of Compulsory Pre-nuptial Chastity. If the sexual regulations are of the third type (para. 161), the pattern of the culture changes again, and becomes deistic, whether previously the society has been zoistic or manistic. (355)

Thus it seems to be true that, just as a decrease of sexual opportunity produces a cultural advance, so an increase results in a cultural decline. (365)

167. Cultural Effect of different Post-nuptial Regulations; Christian Marriage. If pre-nuptial chastity be the rule, the amount of social energy displayed by any society depends on the rigour of its post-nuptial regulations. We have seen (para. 161) that of the four types of post-nuptial regulations which have been adopted in the past, a modified monogamy and a modified polygamy compelled the least post-nuptial continence. Thus the energy of the ancient societies which adopted them was less than that of absolutely polygamous or absolutely

monogamous societies. Indeed it is rare that a society remained deistic after modifying its monogamy, for usually it ceased to demand pre-nuptial chastity. (368)

So far as the production of social energy is concerned, the sexual opportunity of the female is of more importance than that of the male. Thus, if the male members of an absolutely polygamous society mate with the females of an absolutely monogamous society, the new generation display a greater energy than that displayed by the sons of women born into a polygamous tradition. That is why, I submit, the Moors in Spain achieved such a high culture. Their fathers were born into a polygamous tradition; but their mothers were the daughters of Christians and Jews, and had spent their early years in an absolutely monogamous environment. The sons of these women laid the foundations of rationalistic culture ; but soon the supply of Christian and Jewish women was insufficient, so the incipient rationalism failed to mature greatly. The Moors in Spain, however, could never have advanced up the cultural scale if they had not mated with women who had been reared in a more rigorous tradition than their own. They would simply have remained deistic, as other Mohammedans have done. As it was, the quality of their wives was such that a rationalistic culture was almost created. This tradition, however, was not preserved after all the mothers of a new generation had spent their early years in an absolutely polygamous environment. (368)

In the records of history, indeed, there is no example of a society displaying great energy for any appreciable period unless it has been absolutely monogamous. Moreover, I do not know of a case in which an absolutely monogamous society has failed to display great energy. In the past different societies have risen up in different parts of the earth, flourished greatly, and then declined. In every case the society started its historical career in a state of absolute monogamy, manifested great energy while it preserved its austere regulations, and relaxed after a less rigorous tradition had been inherited by a complete new generation. (369)

The only type of post-nuptial ordinance which I shall discuss in detail is that of absolute monogamy. It is not only the most interesting but also the most important. (370)

We must always remember that the social energy which is displayed at any time by any society depends not only upon the sexual opportunity it enjoys but also upon that enjoyed by the two preceding generations. It takes at least three generations for an extension or a limitation of sexual opportunity to have its full cultural effect ; and if we happen to observe a society which is beginning, or has just begun, to extend its sexual opportunity, the full effects of the change have not yet been felt. The society still displays an energy which corresponds in some part to its old regulations. (370)

Now in the past, as I have said, sexual opportunity has been reduced to a minimum only by the adoption of absolute monogamy; a complete reduction of sexual opportunity has never taken place unless the females have been subjected to the domination of their husbands. (374)

Paul spent his early years in a Romano-Jewish environment; the ideas he absorbed from contact with the dominating Roman element in his native town were confirmed by what he learnt from Gamaliel. In each case the ideas were those of absolute monogamy ; and in this manner some implications of absolute monogamy have been petrified in a Christian ideal. (375)

In modern times a form of Catholic Christianity is being widely disseminated throughout the uncivilized world; and, though Christians may dislike it, the effect of their teaching upon uncivilized societies is not to tighten but to loosen the sexual regulations. The reason is that the Christians merely forgive and forbid those sexual lapses which under native rule were effectually prevented. (376)

168. The Institution of Absolute Monogamy. When absolute monogamy is the rule, marriage is a means whereby a man secures domestic labour and heirs of his blood. A wife and her children are under the domination of her husband; in the eyes of the law he alone is an entity. The wife is taught to submit to her husband in all things ; it is her duty to serve him and to obey him. No woman may have sexual relations with any other man than with him whom she marries as a virgin. When she is married, she is not permitted to withhold conjugal rights. In an absolutely monogamous society female chastity becomes desirable for its own



sake, for after a while the women accept as a point of honour the restraint imposed upon them by their lords. Over his children also a man has complete power. In its full rigour this institution has never been tolerated for very long. Indeed all those human societies which have adopted it were constantly revising their methods of regulating the relation between the sexes. Moreover, the reforms which they introduced always conformed to the same pattern, being apparently designed to correct a state of affairs in which women and children were legal nonentities. (379)

From a superficial study of the available data it might be thought that the questions of female subjection and parental power are indissolubly allied to that of female continence ; but actually their alliance in the past has been due to the chance factor that sexual opportunity has never been reduced to a minimum except by depriving women and children of their legal status. It is historically true to say that in the past social energy has been purchased at the price of individual freedom, for it has never been displayed unless the female of the species has sacrificed her rights as an individual and unless children have been treated as mere appendages to the estate of the male parent; but it would be rash to conclude that sexual opportunity cannot be reduced to a minimum under any other conditions. The evidence is that the subjection of women and children is intolerable and therefore temporary; but we should go beyond the evidence if we were to conclude from this fact that compulsory continence also is intolerable and therefore temporary. (381)

In my survey of the facts the points I wish to make are:

1. that when they began to display great social energy the societies had reduced their sexual opportunity by the adoption of absolute monogamy;
2. that in each case the society was dominated by the group which displayed the greatest relative energy;
3. that as soon as the sexual opportunity of the society, or of a group within the society, was extended, the energy of the society, or of the group within it, decreased and finally disappeared;
4. that whatever the racial extraction of the people, and whatever the geographical environment in which they lived, the manner in which they modified their absolute monogamy was the same in every

case. (382)

**174. Human Entropy.** Such, in brief but sufficient outline, were the postnuptial regulations of these vigorous societies ; such were their methods of regulating the relations between the sexes. In each case they reduced their sexual opportunity to a minimum by the adoption of absolute monogamy; in each case the ensuing compulsory continence produced great social energy. The group within the society which suffered the greatest continence displayed the greatest energy, and dominated the society. When absolute monogamy was preserved only for a short time, the energy was only expansive, but when the rigorous tradition was inherited by a number of generations the energy became productive. As soon as the institution of modified monogamy, that is, marriage and divorce by mutual consent, became part of the inherited tradition of a complete new generation, the energy, either of the whole society or of a group within the society, decreased, and then disappeared. (411)

It is in this manner that the behaviour of these societies was controlled by their methods of regulating the relation between the sexes. In no case was sexual opportunity reduced to a minimum unless married women, and usually unmarried women also, were compelled to suffer legal and social disadvantages. The manner in which the marital and parental authorities were modified was the same in each society. In every case the same situations arose ; the same sentiments were expressed ; the same changes were made; the same results ensued. The history of these societies consists of a series of monotonous repetitions ; and it is difficult to decide which aspect of the story is the more significant: the lamentable lack of original thought which in each case the reformers displayed, or the amazing alacrity with which, after a period of intense compulsory continence, the human organism seizes the earliest opportunity to satisfy its innate desires in a direct or perverted manner. Sometimes a man has been heard to declare that he wishes both to enjoy the advantages of high culture and to abolish compulsory continence. The inherent nature of the human organism, however, seems to be such that these desires are incompatible, even contradictory. The reformer may be likened to the foolish boy who desires both to keep his cake and to consume it. Any human society is free to choose either to display great energy or to enjoy sexual freedom ;

the evidence is that it cannot do both for more than one generation. (412)

If I were asked to define a sophist, I should describe him as a man whose conclusion does not follow from his premise. Sophistry is appreciated only by those among whom human entropy is disappearing; they mistake it for sound reasoning. It flourishes among those people who have extended their sexual opportunity after a period of intense compulsory continence. (413)

Conversation, literature, drama, art, science, cookery, furniture, architecture, engineering, gardening, agriculture—these and all other human activities are winnowed by its gentle breeze. (413)

Now I can formulate the second primary law which operates on all human societies. ... It is this:

*No society can display productive social energy unless a new generation inherits a social system under which sexual opportunity is reduced to a minimum. If such a system be preserved, a richer and yet richer tradition will be created, refined by human entropy.*

There is no need for the whole society to suffer the same continence. So long as the sexual opportunity of one social stratum is maintained at a minimum, the society will display productive energy. (414)

### **175. Conclusion. (415)**

If we observe the human organism, we notice that it possesses at least three attributes that appear to be lacking in all other mammals. ... Its exclusive possession of three attributes, however, is attested and undeniable. These are the power of reason, the power of creation, and the power of reflecting upon itself. I define the cultural process as the series of events for which these powers are responsible. Human energy, as I use the term, consists of the use of these powers, which are potential in all human organisms. (417)

Likewise I have been content merely to note the apparent existence, and do not discuss the final meaning, of a Direction in the Cultural Process. In its connexion, however, there is one general truth which may be stated here. In the past, as we have seen, the amount of energy displayed by any human society has varied from century to century.

Moreover, some of its social strata have displayed a greater energy than other strata; and the amount of this energy also has varied from time to time. Thus the cultural state of the society, and that of its component parts, has changed, and changed again. (418)

The evidence is a little scanty, but, if I have read it correctly, the creations of the most energetic stratum of a vigorous society have always changed in a direction which the creators regarded as refinement, elegance, and exactitude. In them there was an urge towards these things; and as we look back we see that this urge was sometimes satisfied. Then, according to my terminology, human entropy appeared. There is no question, of course, of our intruding our opinions on them. We must not compare the Parthenon with Salisbury Cathedral or Broadcasting House, and judge which is the more elegant. The point is that in the Parthenon there was present an element that was absent from the Athenian buildings of a previous epoch. In human records this element seems to appear if the energy of the most energetic stratum is great enough, and lasts long enough; and it disappears when the energy decreases. If another stratum then begins to dominate the society, and if its energy is less than that of its predecessor, the element is absent ; but it reappears if the energy of the new stratum increases. I conclude, therefore, that this is the Direction of the Cultural Process, and that if a society were to display great energy for an extended period its cultural tradition would be continually refined and augmented. (419)

In a similar manner the cultural state of any human society depends not on the behaviour of the majority (who often are almost completely controlled by their unconscious minds) but on that of a small minority who display their inherent powers. (420)

If, however, the unsatisfied requirements are those of sex, and if these cannot be directly satisfied, some satisfaction must be sought elsewhere. And the evidence is that the effect of this dissatisfaction is to awaken the potential powers to which I have referred, and to create what I have called human energy. As a result of a display of this energy, uniquely human, the society rises in the cultural scale. No such rise occurs, or apparently can occur, unless a sexual requirement is unsatisfied; but as soon as there is any sexual dissatisfaction (biological fitness being assumed, para. 160), a rise in the cultural scale must occur.

Conversely, if, after a period of dissatisfaction, complete direct satisfaction becomes the rule, the energy of the society begins to decrease, and the society falls in the cultural scale. We do not know why this should be so. (424)

I will now take an inert, inactive human society, and then energize it in such a way as to create the six states of energy which in the past have been produced by the seven classes of sexual regulations with which we are familiar (para. 161). This inert society is the nucleus with which we begin when we wish to draw an impressionistic picture of the cultural process. The society is in the zoistic cultural condition and at a dead level of conception. Diagrammatically it can be represented either by a black circle or by a thick black line (Fig. A). (425)

If a human society is in an inert, inactive condition, its behaviour is such that this inherent nature expresses itself without any appreciable modification. A zoistic (dead level of conception) culture is the result. Now let us energize the society by checking the satisfaction of its prenuptial impulses to an increasing extent. Soon a number of energetic individuals begin to change their ideas concerning the cause of an unaccountable affliction and to credit a newly dead magician with still possessing the same magic power as he had possessed when he was alive. ... The people also begin to decorate the places where they make their offerings to the ghosts of these powerful dead men. Small huts are erected over their graves. Similar huts are erected in a place where the power in the universe is manifest. It is not the custom for zoistic societies to do these things, and by behaving in this manner the individuals responsible for the innovations separate themselves from their zoistic brethren, and form a manistic belt around the zoistic nucleus (Fig. B). The cultural state of the society can also be represented by a monistic cone, with a level zoistic base (Fig. B). (425)

If the pre-nuptial sexual impulses of the females are not satisfied at all, still greater energy is produced. Then the huts over the graves, and in other sacred places, assume the dignity of temples; and to uprising generations the powers manifest therein appear as gods who have charge of all human and natural activities, and rule them in an arbitrary and personal manner. A sense of the past arrives in the consciousness of the most developed stratum; and, separating themselves from their manistic and zoistic brethren, the individuals of that stratum form a

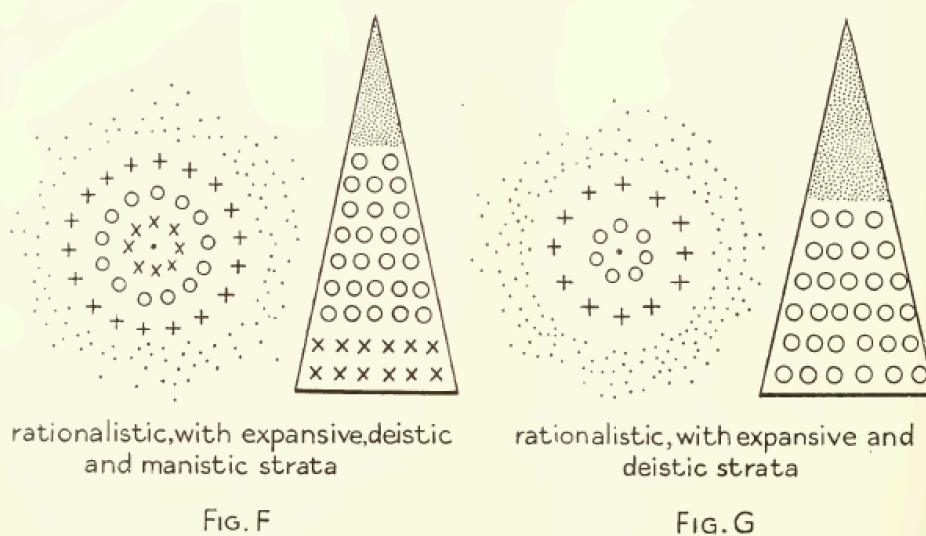
deistic belt outside the manistic belt, so that the society now consists of three cultural strata (Fig. C). (427)

This is what would happen if we energized the society gradually. If we excite it quickly by introducing pre-nuptial chastity suddenly, without any such preparatory steps as compel only an irregular or occasional continence, the behaviour of the society conforms to the same pattern but it has no manistic stratum. ... So, instead of a number of different powers, the most energetic individuals think of one power only; their temples are erected to that power alone (para. 164). These individuals separate themselves from their zoistic brethren, and form a deistic belt around the zoistic nucleus (Fig. D). The cultural state of such a society can also be represented by a deistic cone, with a zoistic base (Fig. D). (427)

All these processes are reversible. If a deistic society, with a manistic stratum, ceases to insist on pre-nuptial chastity but retains such regulations as compel an irregular or occasional continence, its deistic stratum disappears; but in the cultural tradition there probably remain some cultural items which were produced during the period of greater energy. (428)

Similarly, if a manistic society ceases to demand even the irregular or occasional continence which at one time it compelled, its manistic stratum disappears, and the society becomes zoistic again; but in the cultural tradition there probably remain some cultural items which were produced during the manistic period. (428)

## DIAGRAMS OF THE CULTURAL STATES



● Zoistic    x manistic    o deistic    + expansive energy    :::: rationalistic

*N.B.* These diagrams are intentionally over-simplified. Actually the divisions between the strata (or belts) are never rigid and defined, as they appear, but loose and undefined.

A human society is a dynamic unit, but it may be an inert, inactive one. If it is active, as generation succeeds generation individual persons continually leave the stratum (or belt) into which they were introduced as babes, and join another. After two generations a stratum (or belt) may disappear. Alternatively, a new one may be created.

If a society comes within the field of force of another and more energetic society, its cultural state may be warped and distorted. See para. 174.

The diagrams only reveal the cultural patterns. Within the patterns there is an intense variety. Culture-contact increases this variety.

Now let us return to the experimental society with which we began. We

left it energized to such an extent as to bring it into the deistic cultural condition. If we wish to energize it to a greater extent, we must reduce its post-nuptial sexual opportunity, thereby introducing some post-nuptial dissatisfaction. If we merely give it a modified form of polygamy, it simply exists as a deistic unit while it retains its demand for pre-nuptial chastity ; but if the male as well as the female is compelled to confine himself to one sexual partner the society begins to display some expansive energy. It bursts over the boundaries of its habitat, explores new countries, and conquers less energetic peoples. Such energy does not create a cultural change ; expansive energy is the form of behaviour adopted by societies which have reduced their sexual opportunity to a minimum. (428)

If, after suffering such limitations of their post-nuptial opportunity, the males are permitted to have more than one sexual partner, the society ceases to display expansive energy, but so long as it continues to demand pre-nuptial chastity it remains deistic. It also enjoys the fruit of its conquests for so long as it possesses a greater energy than the societies which desire to rob it of its possessions. If a man's wives are compelled to confine their sexual qualities to their husband for the whole of their lives, or for so long as he wishes, the energy of the society is greater than it would be if the wives could leave their husband of their own free will. In the former case the society is in the absolutely polygamous condition. The energy of an absolutely polygamous society is greater than that of any other society except an absolutely monogamous one; so if, after displaying expansive energy, the society becomes absolutely polygamous, it is likely to preserve its conquests as well as its culture. If, however, it relaxes its sexual regulations to a further extent, it collapses. (428)

We must remember that no change in the sexual opportunity of a society produces its full effect until the third generation (paras. 157, 162, 167). Thus when a society appears in the pages of history it is displaying an energy produced in the two previous generations. In order to see the effect of the sexual opportunity it enjoys when we first hear of it, we must search the records of the next century. (429)

So far we have energized it by a complete reduction of its pre-nuptial opportunity, first in two stages, then in one stage, and by placing



varying limitations on its post-nuptial opportunity. In order to make it display expansive energy, we reduced its sexual opportunity to a minimum. Now let us retain that opportunity at a minimum for at least three generations. The society now begins to display such energy as the world has seldom seen. Indeed, among the societies we have discussed, there are only three indisputable instances of such behaviour. I refer to the Athenians, Romans, and English. (430)

We begin with a number of individuals locked together by their uniform ideas and behaviour. The first energizing, painful though it is (para. 163), produces few cultural results; with subsequent energizings cultural effects become more noticeable ; under the influence of still greater sexual checks, the society bursts its boundaries, conquers, slays, subdues, and explores; but, if this intense continence remains part of the inherited tradition for two generations, the energy increases abundantly, changes its form, and displays attributes which up to now remained hidden. The energy increases, indeed, in what seems to be geometrical progression. The society expands in all its multifarious activities, exhibits a terrific mental energy that is manifest in the arts and sciences, refines its craftsmanship, changes its opinions on every conceivable subject, exerts considerable control over its environment, and manifests its potential powers in the loftiest forms yet known. Its inherited tradition is augmented by the products of its abundant energy, and refined by human entropy. A rationalistic stratum separates itself from the main body and forms another belt outside the deistic one (Figs. F, G). The cultural state of such a society can also be represented by a cone, with a rationalistic top, a deistic centre, perhaps a manistic stratum too, and a zoistic base (Figs. F, G). (431)

Such is the manner in which human energy seems to be produced and exerted. In the past no human society has displayed great energy for an extended period. Moreover, societies which have displayed it have always been dominated by the stratum which manifested the greatest relative energy. No society has ever aimed at displaying energy for its own sake; every burst of energy seems to have been fortuitous. Furthermore, no man has yet proved that human energy is a desirable thing. All we know is that in the past it has been displayed in uneven quantities, and that the amount displayed by any society has varied from time to time. In the past, too, the greatest energy has been

displayed only by those societies which have reduced their sexual opportunity to a minimum by the adoption of absolute monogamy (para. 168). In every case the women and children were reduced to the level of legal nonentities, sometimes also to the level of chattels, always to the level of mere appendages of the male estate. Eventually they were freed from their disadvantages, but at the same time the sexual opportunity of the society was extended. Sexual desires could then be satisfied in a direct or perverted manner; no dissatisfaction demanded an outlet; no emotional stress arose. So the energy of the society decreased, and then I disappeared.

It is difficult to express any opinion with complete confidence, but as, at the end of my task, I look back along the stream of time, it seems to me that it was the unequal fate of the women, not the compulsory continence, that caused the downfall of absolute monogamy. No society has yet succeeded in regulating the relations between the sexes in such a way as to enable sexual opportunity to remain at a minimum for an extended period. The inference I draw from the historical evidence is that, if ever such a result should be desired, the sexes must first be placed on a footing of complete legal equality.

In the future, it seems, a human society may continue its fortuitous career, and reflect, both in its cultural behaviour and in its structure, the amount of energy it chances to possess ; but, if any society should desire to control its cultural destiny, it may do so by decreasing or increasing the amount of its energy. Such decrease or increase will appear in the third generation after the sexual opportunity has been extended or reduced. A lesser energy is easily secured, for the force of life seems to flow backwards, and the members of the society will not be slow to take advantage of any relaxation in the regulations. If, on the other hand, a vigorous society wishes to display its productive energy for a long time, and even for ever, it must re-create itself, I think, first, by placing the sexes on a level of complete legal equality, and then by altering its economic and social organization in such a way as to render it both possible and tolerable for sexual opportunity to remain at a minimum for an extended period, and even for ever. In such a case the face of the society would be set in the Direction of the Cultural Process ; its inherited tradition would be continually enriched ; it would achieve a higher culture than has yet been attained; by the action of human entropy its tradition would be augmented and refined in a manner which surpasses our present understanding. (431)