

Selected Essays of
D. H. Lawrence



Sex Appeal

It is a pity that sex is such an ugly little word. An ugly little word, and really almost incomprehensible. What is sex, after all? The more we think about it, the less we know.

Science says it is an instinct; but what is an instinct? Apparently an instinct is an old, old habit that has become ingrained. But a habit, however old, has to have a beginning. And there is really no beginning to sex. Where life is, there it is. So sex is no "habit" that has been formed. Again, they talk of sex as an appetite, like hunger. An appetite; but for what? An appetite for propagation? It is rather absurd. They say a peacock puts on all his fine feathers to dazzle the pea-hen into letting him satisfy his appetite for propagation. But why should the pea-hen not put on fine feathers, to dazzle the peacock, and satisfy her desire for propagation? She has surely quite as great a desire for eggs and chickens as he has. We cannot believe that her sex-urge is so weak that she needs all that blue splendour of feathers to rouse her. Not at all. As for me, I never even saw a pea-hen so much as look at her lord's bronze and blue glory. I don't believe she ever sees it. I don't believe for a moment that she knows the difference between bronze, blue, brown or green. If I had ever seen a pea-hen gazing with rapt



性 感^①

真可惜，性竟成了一个丑陋的字眼儿，一个小小的丑陋字眼儿，甚至叫人无法理解的字眼儿。性到底是什么？我们越想越不得其解。

科学说，它是一种本能。可本能又是什么？很明显，本能，就是某种古而又古的习惯变得根深蒂固后成了一种习性。一种习惯，即使再老，也是有个开头的。可性却没有开端。有生命的地方就有它。所以说性绝非是从“习惯”而来。人们又把性说成欲望，像饥饿一样。欲望，什么欲望？繁殖的欲望吗？真叫荒唐。他们说，雄孔雀竖起他全部漂亮的羽毛来，令雌孔雀眩惑，从而雌孔雀会让他满足一下繁殖的欲望。可为什么雌孔雀不这样表现一下去眩惑雄孔雀从而也满足她的繁殖欲？她肯定同他一样对蛋和幼雀充满欲望。我们无法相信，她的性冲动太弱，竟需要雄孔雀来展示那蓝色羽毛的奇景，以此激起自己的欲望。绝不是。反正我从没见过哪个雌孔雀注意过她的丈夫展示其黄蓝相间的光彩。我不信她注意过这个。我一点也不信她能辨别黄、蓝、褐或绿这几种颜色。如果我见过雌孔雀凝神注意过她男人的花花

^① 本文的标题一直按照《劳伦斯杂文集》翻译为《性与美》。现根据剑桥版的劳伦斯文集恢复作者最初的标题为《性感》。



attention on her lord's flamboyancy, I might believe that he had put on all those feathers just to "attract" her. But she just never looks at him. Only she seems to get a little perky when he shudders all his quills at her, like a storm in the trees. Then she does seem to notice, just casually, his presence.

These theories of sex are amazing. A peacock puts on his glory for the sake of a wall-eyed pea-hen who never looks at him. Imagine a scientist being so naïve as to credit the pea-hen with a profound, dynamic appreciation of a peacock's colour and pattern. Oh highly-aesthetic peahen!

And a nightingale sings to attract his female. Which is mighty curious, seeing he sings his best when courtship and honeymoon are over, and the female is no longer concerned with him at all, but with her young—Well then, if he doesn't sing to attract her, he must sing to distract her, or amuse her while she's sitting.

How delightful, how naïve theories are. But there is a hidden will behind them all. There is a hidden will behind all theories of sex, implacable. And that, strangely enough, is the will to deny, to wipe out the mystery of beauty. Because beauty is a mystery, You can neither eat it nor make flannel out of it—Well then, says science, it is just a trick to catch the female and induce her to propagate. How naïve. As if the female needed inducing. She will propagate in the dark, even—so where then is the beauty trick.

Science has a mysterious hatred of beauty, because it doesn't fit in the cause-and-effect chain. And society has a mysterious hatred of sex, because it perpetually interferes with the nice money-making schemes



风采,我会相信雄孔雀竖起羽毛是为了“吸引”她。可她从来不看她。只是当他扑棱一下用他的羽毛碰到了她,就像风暴穿过树丛那样,她才似乎有了点生气,这才瞟他一眼。

这类性理论真叫人吃惊。雄孔雀竖起羽毛风光一番却原来是为雌孔雀,可雌孔雀的眼睛却从不看他。你就想象一个科学家有多么幼稚吧,他甚至赋予雌孔雀一双深邃灵活的目光去欣赏雄孔雀的色彩与造型。哦,多么会审美的雌孔雀啊!

还有一说是,雄夜莺歌唱是为了吸引雌夜莺。可让人好奇的是,求偶期和蜜月都过了,雌夜莺也不再对雄夜莺感兴趣,而只顾起幼莺来。这时那雄的还唱得那么欢是为什么呢?看来他唱歌不是为了吸引雌的,而是要分她的心,逗正在抱窝的她一乐。

理论是多么令人高兴又是多么幼稚!可这些理论背后隐藏着一种意愿。所有性理论背后都藏有一个不可饶恕的意愿,那就是否定并要抹杀美的神秘。因为美就是一种神秘。你既不能吃又不能用它来做法兰绒。于是,科学说,追求女性并引诱她繁殖,这是一种美的诡计。好不幼稚!好像女性需要勾引。她甚至可以在黑暗中繁殖。那么,哪里有关美之诡计呢?

科学对美怀有一种神秘的仇恨,因为美无法适应科学的因果之链。社会对性怀有一种神秘的仇恨,因为它永远有悖于社会的人



of social man. So the two hatreds made a combine, and sex and beauty are mere propagation-appetite.

Now sex and beauty are one thing, like flame and fire. If you hate sex you hate beauty. If you love living beauty, you have a reverence for sex. Of course you can love old dead beauty and hate sex. But to love living beauty you must have a reverence for sex.

Sex and beauty are inseparable, like life and consciousness. And the intelligence which goes with sex and beauty, and arises out of sex and beauty, is intuition. The great disaster of our civilisation is the morbid hatred of sex—what, for example, could show a more poisoned hatred of sex than Freudian psycho-analysis?—which carries with it a morbid fear of beauty, “alive” beauty, and which causes the atrophy of our intuitive faculty and our intuitive self. The deep psychic disease of modern men and women is the diseased condition of the atrophied intuitive faculties. There is a whole world of life that we might know and enjoy by intuition, and by intuition alone. This is denied us, because we deny sex and beauty, the source of the intuitive life and of the insouciance which is so lovely in free animals and in plants.

Sex is the root of which intuition is the foliage and beauty is the flower. Why is a woman lovely, if ever, in her twenties? It is the time when sex rises softly to her face, as a rose to the top of a rose-bush.

And the appeal is the appeal of beauty. We deny it wherever we can. We try to make the beauty as shallow and trashy as possible. But first and foremost, sex appeal is the appeal of beauty.

Now beauty is a thing about which we are so uneducated, we can hardly speak of it. We try to pretend it is a fixed arrangement: straight



(social man)之美妙的赚钱计划。于是这两者联手把性与美说成仅仅是繁殖的欲望。

其实,性与美是同一的,就如同火焰与火一样。如果你恨性,你就是恨美。如果你爱**活生生**的美,那么你就会对性报以尊重。当然你尽可以喜欢陈旧、死气沉沉的美并仇视性。但是,只要你爱活生生的美,你必然敬重性。

性与美是不可分的,正如同生命与意识。与性和美同在、源于性和美的智慧就是直觉。我们文明造成的一大灾难,就是仇恨性。举个例子说,还有什么比弗洛伊德的精神分析法更恶毒地仇视性?它同样极端恐惧美,活的美。它使我们的直觉官能萎缩,使我们直觉的自我萎缩。现代男女之心理顽症就是直觉官能萎缩症。本来有一个完整生命世界是可以靠直觉去认知、去享受的,而且只能靠直觉。可我们丢了这直觉,因为我们否定了性与美——这直觉生命与悠然生命的源泉,它在自由的动物与植物身上显得十分可爱。

性是根,根之上,直觉是叶子,美是花朵。为什么女人在二十来岁时显得可爱?因为此时性正悄然爬上她的脸,正如一朵玫瑰正爬上枝头一样。

这就是美感。我们竭尽全力否定它,我们尽可能试图让这美变得浅薄,变成废品。可说到底,性感就是美感。

美这东西,咱们受的美育太浅,几乎谈不出个所以然。我们试图



nose, large eyes, etc. We think a lovely woman must look like Lilian Gish, a handsome man must look like Rudolf Valentino. So we think. In actual life, we behave quite differently. We say: She's quite beautiful, but I don't care for her—Which shows we are using the word beautiful all wrong. We should say: She has the stereotyped attributes of beauty, but she is not beautiful to me.

Beauty is an experience, nothing else. It is not a fixed pattern or an arrangement of features. It is something felt, a glow, or a communicated sense of fineness. What ails us is that our sense of beauty is so bruised and blunted, we miss all the best. But to stick to the film—there is a greater essential beauty in Charlie Chaplin's odd face, than ever there was in Valentino's. There is a bit of true beauty in Chaplin's brows and eyes, a gleam of something pure. But our sense of beauty is so bruised and clumsy, we don't see it, and don't know it when we do see it. We can only see the blatantly obvious, like the so-called beauty of Rudolf Valentino, which only pleases because it satisfies some ready-made notion of handsomeness.

But the plainest person can look beautiful, can be beautiful. It only needs the fire of sex to rise delicately, to change an ugly face to a lovely one. That is really sex appeal: the communicating of a sense of beauty. And in the reverse way, no-one can be quite so repellant as a really pretty woman. That is, since beauty is a question of experience, not of concrete form, no-one can be as acutely ugly as a really pretty woman. When the sex-glow is missing, and she moves in ugly coldness, how hideous she seems, all the worse for her externals of prettiness.



装懂,把它说成某种固定的安排:高鼻、大眼儿什么的。我们认为一个可爱的女人一定要长得像莉莲·基什^①;英俊的男人必定要像鲁道夫·瓦连蒂诺^②。我们就是这么想的。可在实际生活中我们却不这样。我们会说:“她挺美,可我不拿她当一回事儿。”这说明我们用错了美(bautiful)这个字眼儿。我们应该这样说才对:“她有美的固定特征,可在我眼中她并不美。”

美是一种**体验**,而不是别的。它不是某种一成不变的特征与模式,它是某种被感受到的东西,是一道闪光或通过美感的传导获得的感受。我们的毛病在于我们的美感受了挫伤,变迟钝了,我们错过了一切最好的东西。就说电影吧,查理·卓别林那张怪模怪样的脸上透着比瓦连蒂诺多得多的美。卓别林的眉毛和眼睛里有一种真切的美,一种纯洁的光芒。可是,我们的美感大受挫伤,迟钝至极,以至于我们看不到这美,看到了也不懂。我们只能看到那些明显的东西,如所谓的鲁道夫·瓦连蒂诺的美,它令人愉快因为它满足了某种固有的关于英俊的看法。

可是那些最普通的人也可以看上去是美的,可以是美的。只需性之火微微上升,就可以使一张丑脸变得可爱。那才是真正的性吸引力:美感的传导。相反,再也没有比一个真正标致的女人更令人生厌的了。这是因为,既然美是体验而非具体的形式,那么,一个最标致的女人肯定是十分丑陋的了。当性之光芒在她身上失去以后,她以一种丑恶的冷漠相出现,那模样该多么可恶。外表的标致只能使她更丑。

^① Lilian Gish (1896~1993), 美国早期女影星。

^② Rudolph Valentino (1895~1926), 美籍意大利电影明星, 20世纪20年代的“伟大情人”偶像。



What sex is, we don't know, but it must be some sort of fire. For it always communicates a sense of warmth, of glow. And when this glow becomes a pure shine, then we feel the sense of beauty.

But the communicating of the warmth, the glow of sex is true sex appeal. We all have the fire of sex slumbering or burning inside us. If we live to be ninety, it is still there. Or, if it dies, we become one of those ghastly living corpses, which unfortunately are becoming more numerous in the world. Nothing is more ugly than a human being in whom the fire of sex has gone out. You get a nasty clayey creature whom everybody wants to avoid.

But while we are fully alive, the fire of sex smoulders or burns in us. In youth it flickers and shines, in age it glows softer and stiller, but there it is. We have some control over it; but only partial control. That is why society hates it. While ever it lives, the fire of sex, which is the source of beauty and anger, burns in us beyond our understanding. Like actual fire, while it lives it will burn our fingers if we touch it carelessly. And so social man, who only wants to be "safe", hates the fire of sex.

Luckily not many men succeed in being merely social men. The fire of the old Adam smoulders. And one of the qualities of fire is that it calls to fire. Sex-fire here kindles sex-fire there. It may only rouse the smoulder into a soft glow. It may call up a sharp flicker. Or it may rouse a flame: and then flame leans to flame, and starts a blaze.

Whenever the sex fire glows through, it will kindle an answer somewhere or other. It may only kindle a sense of warmth and optimism. Then you say: I like that girl; she's a real good sort. It may



性是什么,我们并不知道。但它一定是某种火,因为它总传导一种热情与光芒。当这光芒变成一种纯粹的光彩,我们就感到了美。

不过,热情的传导即性的光芒是真正的性感。我们体内都有性之火,不同的是有的火不着,有的则燃烧着。假如我们活到九十,那火依然在。如果它熄灭了,我们就变成了可怖的行尸走肉。不幸的是,世界上的行尸走肉是越来越多了。没有什么比一个性火熄灭了的人更丑的了。人人都想躲避这样一个讨厌的泥人。

可当我们勃勃有生气的时候,性之火就在我们体内文燃或烈燃。年轻时,这火星星星点点,光焰四射。上了年纪,这火燃得柔和了、平缓了,但它仍然存在。我们可以控制它,但只能是部分地控制,因此社会仇恨它。性火是美之源泉,也是怒之源泉,它在我们体内燃烧着,我们的智力是无法理解它的。正像真火一样,当它燃烧时,我们的手指不小心碰上它就会被灼痛。正因此,那些只想“安全”的社会人仇恨性之火。

幸运的是,并没有太多的人能成功地仅仅做一个社会人。老亚当之火在文燃。这火的一个特点是它会点燃别的火。这里的性之火会引燃那里的性之火。它会使文火变成微火。它会点亮一星耀眼的火花或引燃一团火焰,火焰与火焰相遇就会引燃一场大火。

无论这性之火何时燃起,它都会得到这样那样的回应。它唤醒的只能是热情与乐观。当你说:“我喜欢那姑娘,她真是个好样儿的。”此



kindle a glow, that makes the world look kindlier, and life feel better. Then you say: She's an attractive woman, by Jove, I like her—Or she may rouse a flame that lights up her own face first, before it lights up the universe. Then you say: She's a lovely woman. She looks lovely to me. Let's say no more—

It takes rather a rare woman to rouse a real sense of loveliness. It is not that a woman is born beautiful. We say that to escape our own poor, bruised, clumsy understanding of beauty. There have been thousands and thousands of women quite as good-looking as Diane de Poitiers or Mrs. Langtry or any of the famous ones. There are today thousands and thousands of superbly good-looking women. But oh, how few *lovely* women!

And why? Because of the failure of their sex-appeal. A good-looking woman only becomes lovely when the fire of sex rouses pure and fine in her, and flickers through her face and touches the fire in me. Then she becomes a lovely woman to me, then she is in the living flesh a lovely woman: not a mere photograph of one. And how lovely, a lovely woman! But alas, how rare! How bitterly rare, in a world full of unusually handsome girls and women.

Handsome, good-looking, but not lovely, not beautiful. Handsome and good-looking women are the women with good features and the right hair. But a lovey woman is an experience. It is a question of communicated fire. It is a question of sex appeal, in our poor, delapidated modern phraseology. Sex appeal! —applied to Diana de Poitiers! —or even, in the lovely hours, to one's own wife! Why it is a libel and a slander in itself.



时性之火会燃起一团火焰,让这世界看上去更友善,让人感觉生活更好。于是你就会说:“她是个迷人的女人,我喜欢她。”或许她会用自己的火焰先燃亮自己的脸庞,然后去点燃宇宙。那时你会说:“她是个可爱的女人,我觉得她美。”

能真正激起别人美感的女性并不多见。一个女人绝不是天生就美。我们说女人的美是天生的,这样说是为了掩饰我们对美的理解有多么可怜,不承认我们的美感受到了挫伤,变迟钝了。曾有成千上万个女人像戴安娜·德·波依蒂厄斯^①或兰特莉夫人^②这样的名女人一样容貌姣好。今天又有成千上万容颜闭月羞花的女人,可是,唉,美的女人却太少了。

为什么?因为她们没有性感。一个美貌女子,只有当性之火在她体内纯洁而美好地燃烧并透过她的脸庞点燃我体内的火时,她才算得上一个美人。她在我眼中成为一个美女,是因为她是个活生生的血肉之躯,而不是一张相片。一个美的女人是多么可爱!可是这样的人又是那么难觅!这世上非凡美丽的女性太少了,这真叫人伤感!

漂亮,姣好,但不可爱,不美。漂亮和姣好的女子有着好看的面容和好看的头发。可是,美的女人只能是一种体验,她意味着火之传导,意味着性感。我们现代人的词汇太贫乏,只能用这个词儿了。性感这个词适用于戴安娜·德·波依蒂厄斯。甚至适用于每个人的老婆最美的时候——哦,这么说倒像是在诽谤和侮辱了。

① Diane de Poitiers (1499-1566), 法国佛兰西斯一世和亨利二世的情妇。

② Mrs. Lantry (1853-1929), 英国著名佳丽和演员, 爱德华七世的情妇。



Nowadays, however, instead of the fire of loveliness it is sex appeal. The two are the same thing, I suppose, but on vastly different levels. The business-man's pretty and devoted secretary is still chiefly valuable because of her sex appeal. Which does not imply "immoral relations" in the slightest. Even today, a girl with a bit of generosity likes to feel she is helping a man, if the man will take her help. And this desire that he shall take her help is her sex appeal. It is the genuine fire, if of a very mediocre heat. Still, it serves to keep the world of "business" alive. Probably, but for the introduction of the lady secretary into the business-man's office, the business-man would have collapsed entirely by now. She calls up the sacred fire in her, and she communicates it to her boss. He feels an added flow of energy and optimism, and—business flourishes. That is perhaps the best result of sex appeal today—business flourishes.

There is, of course, the other side of sex-appeal—it can be the destruction of the one appealed to. When a woman starts using her sex-appeal for her own advantage, it is usually a bad moment for some poor devil. But this side of sex appeal has been overworked lately, so it is not nearly so dangerous as it was. The sex-appealing courtesans who ruined so many men in Balzac no longer find it smooth running. Men have grown canny. They fight shy even of the emotional vamp. In fact, men are inclined to think they smell a rat the moment they feel the touch of feminine sex appeal today.

Which is a pity, for sex appeal is only a dirty name for a bit of life-flame. No man works so well and so successfully, as when some woman has kindled a little fire in his veins. No woman does her



可如今,可爱之火没了,取而代之的是性感,这两者可能是一回事,但层次却差得远了。商人的女秘书标致而忠心耿耿,她的价值主要取决于她的性感。这样说一点也不含有“不道德关系”的意思。甚至今日,一个有点慷慨的女子总愿意感到她是在帮助一个男人(如果这男人接受她的帮助)。希望他接受她的帮助,这愿望本身就是她的性感。这是一团真正的火,即便热量极小。但它有助于使“买卖”活跃。或许,若没有女秘书进入商人的办公室,商人早就全然垮了。是女秘书唤起体内的圣火并将之传达给她的老板,老板感到浑身能量倍增,感到更为乐观,于是生意兴隆。

当然了,性感亦有其另一面,它对被吸引者也可以是一种毁灭力量。当一个女人开始利用自己的性感捞好处时,此时就有某个可怜的男人倒霉了。性感这一面最近已经用滥了,已经不止像以往那样危险了。巴尔扎克笔下那些毁了许多男人的性感交际花,现在会发现干这行没那么容易了。男人现在变狡猾了,他们会躲避动了情的妓女。事实上,现在的男人一感到女性的性感,就认为这里面有问题。

真可惜,性感成了生命火焰的肮脏代名词了。任何男人,只有当某个女人在他的血管中燃起一团火时,他才能工作有成。任何女人,



housework with real joy unless she is in love—and of course, a woman may go on being quietly in love for fifty years, almost without knowing it. If only our civilisation had taught us how to let sex appeal flow properly and subtly, how to keep the fire of sex clear and alive, flickering or glowing or blazing in all its varying degrees of strength and communication, we might all of us have lived all our lives in love, which means kindled and full of zest, in all kinds of ways and for all kinds of things. Whereas what a lot of dead ash there is to life now!



除非她在恋爱着，否则她就无法真正快活地干家务——一个女人可以默默地爱着，一爱就是五十年甚至还不曾意识到自己是在爱。真希望我们的文明教会我们如何使性感适度微妙地释放，如何令性之火燃得纯洁而勃发，以不同程度的力量和不同的传导方式溅起火花，闪着光芒，熊熊燃烧，那样的话我们每个人或许都可以一生在恋爱中度过。这意味着我们应该被这火点燃，浑身充满热情，对一切报以热情。可在眼前的生活中，却是满眼的死灰。