



Sexing the Citizen: Morality and Masculinity in France, 1870-1920

Judith Surkis

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How did marriage come to be seen as the foundation and guarantee of social stability in Third Republic France? In *Sexing the Citizen*, Judith Surkis shows how masculine sexuality became central to the making of a republican social order. Marriage, Surkis argues, affirmed the citizen's masculinity, while also containing and controlling his desires. This ideal offered a specific response to the problems of individualism, democratization, and rapid technological and social change associated with France's modernity.

This rich, wide-ranging cultural and intellectual history provides important new insights into how concerns about sexuality shaped the Third Republic's pedagogical projects. Educators, political reformers, novelists, academics, and medical professionals enshrined marriage as the key to eliminating the risks of social and sexual deviance posed by men—especially adolescents, bachelors, bureaucrats, soldiers, and colonial subjects. Debates on education reform and venereal disease reveal how seriously the social policies of the Third Republic took the need to control the unstable aspects of male sexuality.

Surkis's compelling analyses of republican moral philosophy and Emile Durkheim's sociology illustrate the cultural weight of these concerns and provide an original account of modern French thinking about society. More broadly, *Sexing the Citizen* illuminates how sexual norms continue to shape the meaning of citizenship.

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