

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *After The History of Sexuality: German Genealogies With and Beyond Foucault* by Scott Spector, Helmut Puff and Dagmar Herzog

Review by: Harry Oosterhuis

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pieces in this volume examine issues related to the historical experience of the middling groups that are located between the lower layer of society and the bourgeoisie. But for other articles, 'middle class' is synonymous with 'bourgeoisie' or even 'élite'. And this is not just a matter of terminology. Michael West's piece on Zimbabwe deals with the making of a national élite in a colonial context. David Parker analyses the life of clerks, officers, liberal professionals lacking fortune and prosperous artisans in Chile and Peru. The fact that both of them chose the label 'middle class' to define their object of study does not mean that they are talking of a comparable historical experience. If one wants to compare, Parker's little men would be closer to the lives of those left behind by West's rising élite, squeezed – so to speak – between the higher and the lower layers and with no prospect of becoming a ruling class. As noted by Guillaume and suggested by Robyn Muncy in this volume, if the translatability problem is not dealt with, any comparative effort is destined to be unreliable (unless the 'middle class' is considered a purely rhetorical device, something that the editors of this volume reject). This critique notwithstanding, the volume undoubtedly represents a step forward in the development of a field of middle-class studies. The insights of the introduction, the intelligence of the commentaries and afterword, and the variety of methods at play and of issues dealt with in each individual article will surely make of this book a fundamental read for scholars to come.

Ezequiel Adamovsky

University of Buenos Aires/CONICET

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Scott Spector, Helmut Puff and Dagmar Herzog (eds), *After The History of Sexuality: German Genealogies With and Beyond Foucault* (2012), 310 (Berghahn Books, New York and Oxford, \$95.00/£60.00, paperback, \$29.95/£18.75).

The original French edition of Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York, 1978) was published in 1976. This rather slim volume, which Foucault merely intended to be an introduction to a series of historical studies and which historians have criticized for its lack of a solid empirical basis, has managed to dominate research and discussions on the history of sexuality to this very day. Foucault's provocative thesis is well known: sexuality is not some natural essence that can be either repressed or liberated, but a modern, western social construction. As such, it is entrapped in the disciplining effects of an inexhaustible will to know and discuss the desires of the flesh.

This new collection of seventeen articles about the history of sexuality in Germany covers a wide period – from the Middle Ages to the present – and takes Foucault's perspective as a source of inspiration, but at the same time the authors question, refine and go beyond it. Their contributions turn away from many of the more one-dimensional historical studies of sexuality appearing in the 1980s and 1990s, which tended to follow his

example by emphasizing the disciplining effects of power and knowledge in nineteenth- and twentieth-century medical sexology, psychiatry, psychology and other scientific and therapeutic fields. Foucault himself, however, also pointed to the part played by sexual emancipation, ethics and subjectivity in the social construction of sexuality. He redirected his historical-philosophical study to the relation between sexuality and ethical self-formation – what he called ‘the care of the self’ – in ancient Greece. The authors in this collection reassess his work in the light of three basic themes that correspond to the three parts of the collection: historical periodization, sexual subjectivity and emancipation, and sexual politics and ethics.

Early modern historians have criticized Foucault’s periodization, in particular his suggestion of a drastic rupture in the understanding of sexuality during the last four decades of the nineteenth century: the shifting focus from criminal and sinful sexual acts to abnormal sexual orientations and identities. The emergence of the modern homosexual, replacing the traditional figure of the sodomite, was the prototypical example of this paradigmatic break. The four chapters in the first part of the volume, on the early modern period, also question such a binary between pre-modern and modern sexuality. In his analysis of a poem about a woman’s extramarital love affairs by the medieval German poet Walther von der Vogelweide, Andreas Krass shows that it can be read as an example of the playful *ars erotica* that Foucault ascribed to non-western cultures and contrasted to the Christian confessional framework. Merry Wiesner-Hanks argues that the experience of sexuality as the essence of the self-reflective individual, which Foucault and many other scholars situated in the nineteenth century, originated in the sixteenth-century Lutheran Reformation. The idea of homosexual orientation and identity as a late nineteenth-century medical fabrication and of sodomy as its pre-modern precursor is put into perspective by Helmut Puff. He argues that both temporally and geographically same-sex experiences were much more intricate and multifarious. Robert Tobin demonstrates that the early nineteenth-century apology for same-sex love by the Swiss writer Heinrich Hössli, although referring to the ancient Greek model, was inspired by enlightened, liberal as well as Romantic, views and that it foreshadowed modern sexual emancipation.

The volume’s second part centres on the confounded and ambivalent relation between disciplinary structures and emancipatory efforts that would shape the modern experience of sexuality. Three chapters address female and lesbian sexuality, a subject that Foucault largely ignored. Kirsten Leng offers a micro-analysis of the life and works of the early twentieth-century lesbian activist Anna Rüling, highlighting her strategic effort to delineate lesbian subjectivity from the dominant models of female heterosexuality and male homosexuality. In her analysis of lesbian love stories published during the Weimar era, Marti Lybeck uncovers the unresolved tension between lesbian emancipation on the one hand and the painful renunciation of sexual desire on the other. Julia Roos describes how prostitutes in the Weimar Republic actively participated in debates about the ways in which their profession was controlled by medical and police regulation in several German cities.

The three other studies in the second part of the volume deal with homosexuality and transsexuality. Robert Beachy argues that the intensive police surveillance of

homosexuals in early twentieth-century Berlin should not be exclusively seen in terms of repression. To a large extent the vice squad's 'homosexual bureau' tolerated, nurtured and facilitated the homosexual subculture, not only to control it, but also to provide (upper- and middle-class) homosexuals some protection against blackmailers. In his article on the discussions about the assumed involvement of soldiers in homosexual prostitution, Jeffrey Schneider shows how, in the German Empire, the military system not only triggered erotic fantasies among homosexuals but also among the public at large. Militarism, with its public display of youthful and physical masculinity dressed in smart uniforms, unintentionally nourished a sexual image of the army. Based on his analysis of a popular Swiss advice column from the 1980s, Philipp Sarasin questions the way Foucault presented transsexuality in his description of the famous early nineteenth-century case of Herculine Barbin. Whereas Foucault tended to idealize gender ambivalence as a possible escape from the rigid hetero-homosexual dichotomy, Sarasin's conclusion is more pessimistic: the case of the transsexuals contacting the advice column about their being imprisoned in a body incongruent with their mind demonstrates that they could only take the position of a sexual subject by conforming themselves to the dominant heterosexual pattern, in which sexual attraction goes hand in hand with a polarization of masculinity and femininity.

The third part of the book, focusing on ethics and politics, covers the twentieth century up to present-day concerns. Tracie Matysik explores the efforts of the early twentieth-century feminist and sexual activist Helene Stöcker to formulate an emancipatory sexual ethics which linked individual freedom and social responsibility. Before Hitler's rise to power such programmes were already being thwarted by a reverse, right-wing politicization of sexuality. Andreas Pretzel depicts how the emergence of a self-consciously liberal programme of sexual rights in Weimar Germany came up against a conservative and Christian 'moral-national' backlash. In their contributions on sexual counselling and medical sexology (in particular the work of the endocrinologist Günter Dörner) in the German Democratic Republic, Florian Mildener and Erik Huneke offer a refined insight into the sexual politics of the post-war communist regime in East Germany. They argue that these policies implied a subtle form of social control that produced unpredictable liberating effects.

In the concluding chapters, Massimo Perinelli and Dagmar Herzog examine the ambivalent legacy of the sexual revolution in Germany in the 1960s and 1970s. In his detailed yet long analysis of a radical new-left periodical, Perinelli shows how the potentially liberating connection of sexual pleasure and leftist politics very soon disintegrated into misogyny, sexism and homophobia. The turn to dogmatic Marxism and violent strategies, subordinating the personal to the political, pushed aside many of the more thoughtful ideas about sexuality, which were expressed by women in particular and which differed from the later, more negative and defensive attitudes in the feminist movement. Herzog, who presents her postscript to the volume as a comment on the sexual revolution's 'melancholic, conflicted, ennui-ridden aftermath' (286), claims that Foucault was sceptical about sexual liberation with good reason. Although western democracies in general and Germany in particular tend to support individual self-determination and emancipation today (thus making a stand against a supposedly

misogynistic and homophobic Islam), sexual liberation has simultaneously become inversely politicized in these countries. The feminist focus on sexual abuse and sexist pornography, the spread of AIDS, increasingly negative responses to prostitution and other forms of sex in public, worries about the dissolution of steady relationships and families, and the ongoing scare about paedophilia and incest rather highlight the dangerous and detrimental sides of sexuality and cast a chill over its liberation.

All in all this volume offers an array of interesting, well-researched, well-written and thought-provoking articles, which enrich our knowledge of the history of sexuality in Germany. The editors have ensured a unified and consistent volume: all the authors address Foucault's perspective and most productively reconsider and move beyond the parameters he set for sexual history.

Harry Oosterhuis
Maastricht University

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Elizabeth Edwards, *The Camera as Historian: Amateur Photographers and Historical Imagination, 1885–1918* (2012), xvi + 326 (Duke University Press, Durham and London, \$99.95/£77.00, paperback \$29.95/£20.99).

Among the lesser noticed aspects of the vogue for images of 'Old England' in the late Victorian and Edwardian period is the photographic survey movement, now given its definitive treatment in a sumptuous book by Elizabeth Edwards. The true extent of the movement proves difficult to determine. Although there were a number of county organizations and even a national one, their actions were poorly co-ordinated and there may have been many more local manifestations that have left no trace. Edwards has laboriously accumulated evidence of seventy-three separate surveys, and studied closely the seventeen which have left anything substantial, in the form either of surviving photographs or at least a paper trail. Even so, Edwards has found a thousand amateur photographers and tracked down 55,000 photographs – though only by riffling through hundreds of thousands in archives and libraries and museums.

In certain respects the photographic survey movement accords with well-worn stereotypes about a surge of 'rural nostalgia' in the decades before the Great War. The National Photographic Record Association (NPR) was founded in 1897 by a Tory industrialist and MP, Sir Benjamin Stone, who sought to mark the Diamond Jubilee with a great patriotic venture, a scrupulous photographic record of national antiquities. Stone aimed both at fixing the national history and in cultivating popular piety for it, assembling a photographic pyramid, the base of which was formed by myriad local historic buildings and the apex provided by Stone's own photographs of the Mother of Parliaments. The apple of the movement's eye was a vision of 'Old England' rooted in the rural village community, centred on what Edwards calls 'devotional sites' such as the