

After The History of Sexuality: German Genealogies With and Beyond Foucault by Scott Spector, Helmut Puff and Dagmar Herzog (eds.) Berghahn Books, July 2012, 318 pages. ISBN: 978-0857453730, Hardcover, £60.

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Long overdue is a collection of critical essays plotting local German histories against the quasi-global but really provincially-French export of Foucauldian historiography. While such progressive thinking with (and beyond) the interaction of Theory and History has already penetrated deep into the curricula of North American and Asian academies, the Anglophone production of Germanic histories within and without that of sexuality awaits a serious reassessment, which is especially urgent given its current teleological epistemology as instantly evident from the line-up of the contents in this compilation. In addition to its topical weight tending towards the mostly urban populace of the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries, Foucault's magna opus is oftentimes relegated to discursive heterotopias amidst the micro-histories. Otherwise, the organisation of this anthology is systematic and rigorous. Framed by an introduction and a postscript by Scott Spector and Dagmar Herzog respectively, the chapters are divided into three parts on the periodisation of history, the agencies of subjectivity and the politics of ethics. The three editors introduce their respective parts succinctly in a couple of pages each and footnotes are provided at the end of each chapter before an integrated bibliography and index.

Diving directly into the challenges Foucault's intervention has imposed upon historians of Germanic sexualities, Spector lays out a swift exposition on the origins of the term 'homosexual' and explains the current multifarious perspectives with and against Foucault's methodology. Subsequently, Helmut Puff provides a global summary of similar incongruence between and among scholars and scholarship of sexualities. He manipulates an extensive repository of sexual events and identities against categorical binaries – ontological, temporal, geographical, and material – to prove that social relations, gender differences and periodic divisions can be deliberated with more contingency. Merry Wiesner-Hanks investigates the differences in temporal conceptions of *Frühneuzeit* or 'early modern' vis-à-vis the interpersonal exchange of ideas and actions. Unexpectedly, this chapter and those that follow are pitched as cursory literature reviews of the implications perpetuated by Anglophone research on Anglo-American and Mediterranean understanding of sexuality with respect to the social, conjugal and religious nexus within the Germanic history of sexuality.

While Ulinka Rublack discusses the Protestant regulation of mostly female sexuality between the fifteenth- and seventeenth-centuries, Robert Deam Tobin traces an intricate genealogy of the literary genesis in an early nineteenth-century text by a Swiss proto-'PFLAG' entrepreneur on same-sex inclinations. Yet, their trajectories overlap rather uncannily with substantial portions devoted to the perceived self-righteousness of the Germanic people, the persecution of witchery and the pervasive anti-Semitism throughout Europe. While Tobin is meticulous in clarifying that the stratified narratives is a result of differing notions of *Sexualität* used by post-Enlightenment Romantics, Rublack adopts a heteronormative presupposition towards gender and the conservatism of sexual

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mores, which is representative of New Historicist revisionism. Drawing on similarly aristocratic material, Andreas Krass's Queer comparison of two medieval song lyrics reveals categorical tensions between the clericalism of Christology and the eroticism of courtships. Yet, his imagination of expressive travesty could be more convincing with either historical or musical support.

Part two of the volume explicates the public lives of diverse identities, who were involved with the invention of homosexuality as law and order in the first third of the twentieth-century. If the *Urninde* had been a subject of resistance for Anna Rüling's 1904 presentation to the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, then this sexual inversion has likewise become a similar subject for Kirsten Leng, who suggests that the third sex as a tactical model at the fin-de-siècle has returned to contest the 'monovalent' limit of Foucault's method. Based on stories and diaries by visiting dignitaries and tourists, Robert Beachy furnishes the historiography with a cultural geography of the Berliner entertainment circuit and its affiliated crimes. With the creative panopticon of the Police Department of Blackmailers and Homosexuals, this chapter is a good historical supplement to the 1919 film *Different from the Others* (*Anders als die Andern*), which is otherwise not mentioned at all.

Jeffrey Schneider frames soldier prostitution as a Žižekian fantasy of 'defenceless' soldiers succumbing to the aggressive attacks of homosexual solicitors. Correspondingly, Julia Roos argues for how registered female prostitutes have internalized the 'regulationist discourse' as a political form of subjective resistance and activist organising. In both cases, the subaltern gains self-autonomy and reverses the power hierarchy. Likewise, as akin to the renunciation and reversal of a Foucauldian repressive hypothesis, Marti M. Lybeck reads the post-Romantic intensification of affects in short stories and essays in women periodicals and directs shame as a *dispositif* that generates pleasure. How Philipp Sarasin then complements Lybeck is by providing readers' perspectives albeit from a sexual advice column in a Swiss tabloid published half a century later. He shows how such a Foucauldian technology makes discursive the transsexual subject position, which has erstwhile been 'symbolised' by a gendered Lacanian Law that is non-corporeal and apathetic.

The final part centres on the politics of sexual ethics and the concise translations of three essays from the original German by William Seth Howes and Erik Huneke deserve a mention. That said, this group of essays appears to be the least coherent of the three. For one, Tracie Matysik's portrayal of the 'sexual emancipationist' Helene Stöcker and her advocacy for a practical freedom of sexual reproduction meanders from Foucault to traces of Nietzsche, Schleiermacher and Freud before losing momentum in the last five pages. For another, Andreas Pretzel's quasi-Gramscian account of the political-religious attitudes towards homosexuality and other sexual ethics in the 1930s is interpreted anachronistically as a 'homophobic modernisation of hegemonic masculinity'. Better are the next two essays that investigate the biopolitical intersections between the personal and the political. While Florian G. Mildener charts the fifty-year research and reception of the endocrinologist Günter Dörner as a Socialist interventionist who alters the sexuality of animals and human beings via eugenics, Erik Huneke exposes the varying levels of trust and loyalty among the staff and patrons of the marital, family and sexual counselling centres in the German Democratic Republic.

Attempting a Germanic Julian Bourg via underground print media, Massimo Perinelli creates an assemblage on how different West German youths in the years after the 1968 revolution were influenced by Freudo-Marxist ideology in subsuming leftist politics as sexual reforms. Rounding up the collective, Dagmar Herzog compares the coeval status of sex with other European polities and temporalities. If she proclaims that German culture today like that of a century ago is the most liberal and 'sex-positive', then the same is true for this book as representative of Germany today for

being the most “race-negative”. As testified in the recent work by Jinthana Haritaworn and Fatima El-Tayeb, the ‘Aryanised’ tropes of shame and perversity have once again been inflicted upon Germans of colour. In the spirit of Herzog’s optimism for sexuality, maybe tomorrow Germany will be good again.