What Incredible Yearnings

Human Beings Have

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'The human being does not need any prohibitions and also no injunctions. He needs nothing but free spaces. That is actually also what I fight for in my research. In my findings, I sense what incredible yearnings human beings have; how much they want not to put a brake on their feelings, but rather develop them; how they want to make themselves vulnerable, because it is a beautiful thing to be vulnerable, and not be wounded; because it is completely wonderful if one is allowed to have feelings that are chaotic; when one is permitted to be weak; when the tender one has more chances than the brutal one. And societies have to be organized so that human beings are protected, so that they can live all this out.'

Kurt Starke, the leading empirical sexuality researcher in the former German Democratic Republic, in a post-unification interview with the journalist Uta Kolano,1995¹

I was preoccupied by a number of puzzles during the time I was researching and writing Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History. Among other things, I was interested in the puzzle of historical causation. I was curious to use the tools of comparative history as well as the study of transnational flows of people and ideas, and of market forces and wars and diplomatic pressures, to understand what particular conjunctions of multiple factors may have caused sexual cultures (including laws, behaviours, and values) to move either in more liberal-progressive or more neotraditionalist-conservative or overtly repressive directions. At the same time, and throughout, I was all too acutely aware that 'sexuality' - that elusive and contested 'it' – was and is precisely one of those realms of human existence that continually defy and confuse our assumptions about what exactly constitutes restriction or liberation. I was thus also especially interested to reconstruct as well as possible, using the broadest range of types of sources, how exactly people in the past expressed how they imagined and experienced whatever they thought sexuality was and, in addition, how they battled over the ethics of sexual matters. On the one hand, sexuality like faith or work – is one of those phenomena in which representations and reality are inevitably inextricable, and I was constantly fascinated with how people grappled

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¹ Kurt Starke (in conversation with Uta Kolano), 'Ein Romantisches Ideal', in Uta Kolano, ed., Nackter Osten (Frankfurt/Oder: Frankfurter Oder Editionen, 1995), 103–4.

with that inextricability, in all its complex manifestations. After all, not only what was considered appropriate or normal or good (in the eyes of God, or the neighbours, or the doctors, or the activists, or the popular advice-writers), but also what was considered (or even physiologically *felt*) as anxiety-producing or immoral and/or – not least – as sexually thrilling or deeply satisfying has clearly varied considerably across time and place. On the other hand, I was particularly interested in the recurrent and remarkable gaps between lived experiences and personal, private insights, and that which was perceived to be publicly, politically defensible. The gap between the quietly lived and the openly articulable could be stark; it often took tremendous courage to defend sexual freedom, in dictatorships certainly, but also in democracies. I therefore also paid special attention to how those defences were framed, in each place and moment, and with what intended and unintended effects. So while the twentieth century in Europe is often called 'the century of sex' and seen as an era of increasing liberalisation, I was convinced of the need to complicate the liberalisation paradigm.

Taking the century as a whole, there is no question that we have seen the erosion of the double standard, the greater acceptance of premarital sex and the eroticisation of marriage, the decriminalisation and mainstreaming of homosexuality, and the saturation of the public sphere with sexual imagery and talk. Without a doubt, the twentieth century witnessed a vastly intensified obsession with sexual matters (a preoccupation which Michel Foucault famously made great and pointed fun of as early as 1976, in the opening pages of *The History of Sexuality*, Volume I: *An Introduction*, and an obsession which has rightly been seen as potentially just as normative and restricting and detrimental as many a punitive law). Nonetheless, *both* the standard paradigm of liberalisation *and* the reductive version of Foucauldianism, which insists on seeing all defences of sexual liberties as either deluded naivety, coercive and conformist oversexualisation, or just another excuse to sell yet another product or therapy, conceal a much larger other story.

Three issues thus seemed especially important for me to keep in mind. The first had to do with the recurrent *backlashes* against liberalisation. Some of the most significant aspects of sexual rights, including access to contraception, or freedom from persecution for homosexual sex, were for extended periods extraordinarily fragile. The backlashes were sometimes coordinated at the state level. Here we can think of National Socialism in Germany and Austria, Fascism in Italy, Spain or Portugal, or Stalinism in the Soviet Union. Recurrently they were promoted by the churches. But they were also often carried by popular movements from below. And such movements have returned with unexpected force in the last twenty-five years. Foucault, after all, was writing *before* the conservative backlash against that sexual revolution he was so brilliantly mocking had appeared on the horizon. The question

² Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. I: An Introduction, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1980), esp. 6–7.

³ Dagmar Herzog, 'The Politics of Sexual Ethics', in Scott Spector et al., eds, After The History of Sexuality: German Genealogies With and Beyond Foucault (New York: Berghahn, 2012), 183–4.

of what various complex dynamics can make conservatism popularly appealing is thus not only a historical but also an ongoingly pressing one, and we are far from answering it adequately.

A second matter was just as essential for me, and it had to do with the *problems* often embedded within what were thought to be liberalizing efforts. In some cases, we can look back and see what contemporaries could not, or did not care to, see – for example, the horrifically disdainful discrimination against disabled people and against people of colour in many lands that was used for much of the twentieth century to justify the promotion of contraceptives. To express either vituperative or subtle racism was apparently often far easier than to defend publicly the idea of women's rights to sexual pleasure without reproductive consequences. In other cases, we ourselves today remain challenged to make sense of such matters as the increasing commercialisation of sex. Is the sexing of sales and the selling of sex emancipating and empowering or corrosive and destructive? Here there are as many answers as there are people. And in yet other cases – for example over the connections between sex and love, or (remarkably often) the lack thereof – the disputes over how best to organise sexual politics remain ongoing.

And third, there was the related matter of ambivalences. Sex - pace the glowing accolades perpetually being churned out by the advice industry of all ideological stripes - evidently does not always make people deliriously happy. Quite apart from the recurring dark sides of sexuality in the form of rape, abuse, exploitation, hurt and harassment - which also have their important histories, both with regard to what human beings have done to each other but also with respect to the campaigns fought against such pain and against the conditions that facilitate it - also sex that was mutually willed could and can, it turns out, be the site of many conflicting feelings: explosive, transformative ecstasy, delight and excitement; serene security, satisfaction, status confirmation, the pleasures of conformity to norms; anguished longing, vulnerability, insecurity, jealousy; or habit, duty, boredom, even repulsion. These emotions matter profoundly. I was surprised myself to what extent the book ended up being a contribution also to the history of emotions, but the sources were full of emotions – ugly ones, beautiful ones, contradictory ones. And ultimately this also gave me a key to answering at least in part the classic historians' questions about causation, periodisation, and interpretation that had driven my research in the first place. It is among other things not least because sexual matters evoke complicated feelings that human beings are, apparently, so politically and socially manipulable in this area - although historians have too rarely reflected openly on this complicatedness when trying to explain why and how sexual cultures change.

There is much that remains to be understood, as the eminent commentators gathered in this forum make clear. Considering their comments together, thinking about how my research has pulled me in new directions since the book was completed, and mulling where future research will ideally go, I want to home in briefly on three general areas of inquiry. One involves opening the aperture to the *global picture* of the twenty-first-century present. A second involves *reversing the gaze* on the western parts of Europe by accumulating and analysing far more empirical evidence on those

regions that, from 1945 to 1989, were referred to as the 'Eastern bloc'. And a third concerns theoretical-conceptual approaches.

Despite its subtitle, my book deliberately took the story of sexuality in Europe up to the year 2010 – traversing such issues as: the sexual politics-saturated conflicts over European Islam currently roiling the parliaments and publics of many nations and often informing the terms of debate over European citizenship and Europe's boundaries; the recent spate of scandals over child sexual abuse by clergy, school administrators, and parents in prior decades now being addressed at the highest levels of European government cabinets as well as by victims' rights groups; the marvellous, unanticipated but decisive, revival of romantic liberality in the midst of the supposedly so jaded era of Viagra, vibrators and the Internet; the peculiarly postmodern cast of new homophobic ventures, especially in post-communist Eastern European nations, but also the increasingly pro-gay consensus informing politics and culture in much of the European Union; and the painful ambiguities and impasses ensuing as the so infinitely precious and hard-won but still precarious achievements of disability rights activists are suddenly, abruptly, being pitted against women's rights to reproductive self-determination.⁴

Yet as we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century, sex appears to be increasingly central to a whole raft of globe-girdling public policy matters as well. All the interpretive dilemmas confronting us in the prior century have returned with a vengeance. However, they have often returned in novel forms, forms for which the explanations or activist strategies previously worked out are proving frighteningly insufficient. I can think of at least seven examples; I am sure there are more. One has to do with the ongoing scourge of HIV/AIDS, now mastered at least to some extent within the West, but still causing untold suffering across many lands in what used to be called 'the Third World', especially on the African continent but also in Asia. Here the US in particular has played an intensely ambiguous role, providing affordable antiretrovirals for those already infected, but wreaking havoc in prevention programmes, among other things by aggressively promoting sexual abstinence at the expense of condom distribution.⁵ Another has to do with the steady regression and retreat from the international consensus on the importance of women's reproductive and sexual health and self-determination first asserted at the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994 and affirmed at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Already as of 2002, sexual and reproductive health was not included

⁴ On this final point, see also Dagmar Herzog, 'Christianity, Disability, Abortion: Western Europe, 1960s–1970s', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 51 (2011), 375–400.

⁵ Sonia Corrêa, Richard Parker and Rosalind Petchesky, Sexuality, Health and Human Rights (New York: Routledge, 2008); Dagmar Herzog, 'Missionary Positions', in Sex in Crisis: The New Sexual Revolution and the Future of American Politics (New York: Basic, 2008),127–61; Jennifer Hirsch et al., The Secret: Love, Marriage, and HIV (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2009); Ida Susser, AIDS, Sex, and Culture: Global Politics and Survival in Southern Africa (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell. 2009); Justin O. Parkhurst, 'Understanding the Correlations between Wealth, Poverty and Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection in African Countries', Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 88 (2010), 519–26.

in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and as of 2012, the muchawaited Rio+20 conference in Brazil saw further explicit setbacks to the cause of women's reproductive and sexual rights.⁶ A recent United Nations Population Fund report noted that '222 million women in developing countries are unable to exercise the human right to voluntary family planning . . . In 2010, donor countries fell \$500 million short of their expected contribution to sexual and reproductive health services in developing countries. Contraceptive prevalence has increased globally by just 0.1% per year over the last few years'.⁷

Yet a third immensely complicated and delicate matter is the situation of LGBT rights worldwide. British prime minister David Cameron's announcement of October 2011 that he intended to tie development aid monies to progress on homosexual rights in economically stressed nations and to withhold money from countries that criminalize homosexuality was met with fury by numerous African leaders, and was clearly ill considered in view of the devastating role of neoliberal structural readjustment policies in exacerbating both resentment against the North's notions of sexual rights and the quite concrete deterioration within developing nations of the education, health and social welfare services on which the poorest of the poor depend. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's declaration in Geneva in December 2011 that her State Department would make the promotion and securing of LGBT rights a global priority needs, on the one hand, to be seen as a major achievement of LGBT rights activism; on the other hand, to promote LGBT rights in a nation such as Pakistan (to take just one example) without acknowledgment or consideration of the open secret of the US's ongoing drone warfare in the region was unquestionably short-sighted.⁸ Both of these incidents, moreover, cannot be separated from a more

⁶ To track the growing backslide, see: (on Cairo 1994) http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/ shalev.htm (last visited 29 Jan. 2013); (on Beijing 1995) http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/ beijing/platform/health.htm (last visited 29 Jan. 2013) and http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/ geninfo/women/womrepro.htm (last visited 29 Jan. 2013); and (on Millennium Development Goals 2002) Anne Glasier et al., 'Sexual and Reproductive Health: A Matter of Life and Death', The Lancet (Oct. 2006), 1595-1607. Glasier et al. document the history of regression since 1994, and remark summarily that 'The eight Millennium Development Goals fatally omitted sexual and reproductive health', and document in detail the damages caused by this omission (2). On Rio+20 in 2012, see: http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/impact/media-center/ news-releases/163-2011/1996-rio20-a-blind-eye-towards-women (last visited 29 Jan. 2013) and http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/news/2012/06/21/11804/assault-on-reproduc tive-rights-and-gender-equality-at-rio20/ (last visited 29 Jan. 2013). Meanwhile, for an impressive alternative vision which formulates sexual and reproductive rights within the framework of existing international human rights legislation while sensitively attending to the particularities of local settings and thoughtfully avoiding reductiveness and essentialism in discussions of sexual and gender orientation and expression, see the Yogyakarta Principles developed by an international group of human rights experts in 2006: http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles_en.htm (last visited 29 Jan. 2013).

⁷ UNFPA, 'By Choice, Not by Chance' (2012), available at http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/publications/pid/12511 (last visited 29 Jan. 2013). See as well the newest initiative by Melinda Gates (also in 2012) to name and address systematically the catastrophic extent of the crisis: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/video/2012/jul/11/melinda-gates-catholic-contraceptives-video?INTCMP = SRCH (last visited 29 Jan. 2013).

Statement Of African Social Justice Activists On The Threats Of The British Government To "Cut Aid" To African Countries That Violate The Rights Of LGBTI People In Africa', A Paper Bird:

general problem of powerful governments using the fig leaves of pretending to advance women's rights or gay and lesbian rights in order to achieve geopolitical aims that actually have to do with quite other matters – like economic investments, access to natural resources or labour power, military strategy and/or broad-scale neo-imperial dominance of certain regions; the invocation of the need to protect women's rights to legitimize the recent and ongoing wars of the US in Iraq and Afghanistan are just the most transparent instances of this wider phenomenon.⁹

Two further pressing topics of global concern involve trafficking in human beings and the surging of sexual violence in interstate and civil wars and genocides. In both cases, activist efforts to promote awareness of these crises, to stem their spread and to care for their victims, have all too often been either ineffectual or terribly misplaced. While the framework of international law around trafficking is exemplary (and includes attention to other forms of trafficking not involving sexual labour, such as trafficking into agriculture, domestic service or factory work), much of the recent melodramatic alarmism driving international policy implementation has been harmful, as it centres on simplistic tales of villains and victims of sexual exploitation, actively erases the important differences between voluntary and involuntary prostitution, ignores the wider contexts of harsh immigration policies and global economic inequities, fixates on unrealistic and unhelpful fantasies of rescue, and works at cross-purposes with the strategies of decriminalization of prostitution, economic development, and provision of health education and services that would actually be concretely helpful.¹⁰ Along related but different lines, sensationalist accounts both of the mass-scale routineness of rapes in numerous conflict zones and of the inventively grotesque over-the-top taboo-breaking sexual violence ubiquitous in crisis areas have done little to stop the recurrence of these crimes of war and crimes against humanity and, again, often neglect the larger political dynamics – such as conflicts over territorial governance or over access to mineral rights - that are fuelling the violence.11

Sex, Rights, and the World, (28 Oct., 2011), available at: http://paper-bird.net/2011/10/31/african-activists-on-human-rights-and-aid/ (last visited 29 Jan. 2013); Scott Long, "A Constellation of Conversations": Hillary and Barack and LGBT Rights', A Paper Bird: Sex, Rights, and the World (6 Dec., 2011), http://paper-bird.net/2011/12/06/a-constellation-of-conversations-hillary-and-barack-and-lgbt-rights/ (last visited 29 Jan. 2013); and Scott Long, 'More on Hillary and Barack', A Paper Bird: Sex, Rights, and the World (9 Dec., 2011), http://paper-bird.net/2011/12/09/more-on-hillary-and-barack/ (last visited 29 Jan. 2013).

- ⁹ Lila Abu Lughod, 'Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?', *American Anthropologist*, 104, 3 (Sept. 2002), 783–90; Vivienne Walt, 'Marked Women', *Time*, 19 July 2004, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,665048,00.html (last visited 29 Jan. 2013); Leila Ahmed, 'Debating the War on Women', *Foreign Policy*, 24 April 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/24/debating_the_war_on_women?page = 0,5 (last visited 29 Jan. 2013).
- ¹⁰ Carole S. Vance, 'Thinking Trafficking, Thinking Sex', GLQ, 17, 1 (2010), 135–43; Carole S. Vance, 'Innocence and Experience: Melodramatic Narratives of Sex Trafficking and Their Consequences for Law and Policy', History of the Present: A Journal of Critical History, 2, 2 (Fall 2012), 200–18.
- Alice M. Miller, 'Sexuality, Violence Against Women, and Human Rights: Women Make Demands and Ladies Get Protection', Health and Human Rights, 7, 2 (2004), 17–47; Carol Harrington, 'Governing Peacekeeping: The Role of Authority and Expertise in the Case of Sexual Violence and Trauma', Economy and Society, 35, 3 (Aug. 2006), 346–80; Elisabeth Jean Wood, 'Sexual Violence during War:

Other transformations are more subtle, and often under the radar of explicit daily mass media attention, but no less significant. One has to do with the proliferation of interest in and the rising technological sophistication of a variety of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) for conceiving or carrying a child to term. Travel of body parts and of their donors, as well as the travel of questing couples across national but also legal and theological borders in search of reproductive technological assistance, including surrogacy, is a rapidly escalating phenomenon globally, one which raises complex issues of safety, privacy, expertise, quality and availability of gametes, legality, faith, and ethics - but which also demonstrates with vividness what extraordinary human intensities can assert themselves the moment technology makes their assertion possible. The desire for parenthood is not universal. But it can clearly be a powerful motive force - inseparably enmeshed both with an individual's own existential feeling and with the lived connectedness between two people and the relationship between their expectations and dreams of futurity and their sense and experience of their coupledom. Some of the most important theological and pragmatic innovations, interestingly, are happening within the Muslim world. 12 At the same time, in many of the post-fascist, partly secularized but still notionally Christian nations of Europe – but especially in Germany, with its mass-murderous past - the possibility of ART and its consequences for how the potential prospect of disabled progeny might best be handled, is, like second-trimester in utero testing before it, dividing human rights activists, prompting heated medical and philosophical debate, and involving the highest courts of the land. 13

- Toward an Understanding of Variation', in Ian Shapiro, Stathis Kalyvas and Tarek Masoud, eds, *Order, Conflict, and Violence* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Elisabeth Jean Wood, 'Armed Groups and Sexual Violence: When is Wartime Rape Rare?', *Politics and Society* 37, (March 2009), 131–61; Carol Rittner and John K. Roth, eds, *Rape: Weapon of War and Genocide* (St. Paul: Paragon House, 2012).
- Daphna Birenbaum-Carmeli and Marcia C. Inhorn, eds, Assisting Reproduction, Testing Genes: Global Encounters with the New Biotechnologies (New York: Berghahn, 2009); Marcia C. Inhorn and Soraya Tremayne, Islam and Assisted Reproductive Technologies: Sunni and Shia Perspectives (New York: Berghahn, 2012)
- ¹³ On the German debates, see the important remarks of Protestant theologian Richard Schröder, 'Auch die Pille ist künstlich', Der Spiegel, (10 Dec., 2001), http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-20960960.html (last visited 29 Jan. 2013); Richard Schröder, 'Schriftliche Stellungnahme bei der öffentlichen Anhörung des Bundestagsausschusses für Gesundheit am 25. Mai 2011', Deutscher Bundestag, Auschuss für Gesundheit, Ausschussdrucksache 17 (14) 0134 (4) gel. ESV zur Anhörung am 25.2.11 PID; feminist historian Gisela Notz, 'Guter Tag für Lebensschützer', SoZ-Sozialistische Zeitung, 6 (2009), 6; journalist and disability rights lawyer Oliver Tolmein, 'Das Kind als Zeitbombe - Behinderung im "Spiegel" der Nichtbehinderten', Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung Online (28 June 2009), http://faz-community.faz.net/blogs/biopolitik/archive/2009/06/28/ein-kind-ist-keinezeitbombe-spiegel-und-behinderung.aspx (last visited 29 Jan. 2013); reproductive technology specialist Dr Ulrich Hilland quoted in 'Gentests an Embryonen: "Es gibt keinen Dammbruch", Spiegel Online, 13 July 2010; Daphne Hahn of Pro Familia in its press release on the high court decision on pre-implantation diagnostics: 'Pro Familia begrüßt Klärung der Präimplantationsdiagnostik durch BGH-Urteil Frankfurt' (15 July 2010), http://www.openpr.de/news/448342/pro-familia-begruesst-Klaerung-der-Praeimplantationsdiagnostik-durch-BGH-Urteil.html (last visited 29 Jan. 2013); and former Green and now Linke Party political activist Uwe-Jürgen Ness, 'Zugriff auf die conditio humana - zum Urteil des BGH zur "Präimplantationsdiagnostik" (PID) ... eigentlich bin ich zum

Finally, in the very midst of the belated and much-to-be appreciated ascendance of disability rights as an international agenda, we are witnessing a broad-scale privatization of social services and the dismantling of the welfare state even across the privileged nations of the North and West. Government funding for education and for services like eldercare, childcare, and disability care is increasingly being cut, while the burden of care for the dependent and vulnerable is being returned to 'families' – at precisely the same moment that job security and workers' rights are eroding dramatically. A tiny but telling instance involved the US Congress' inability, in December 2012, to endorse the United Nations' Disabilities Treaty – as a majority of Republican senators (and this despite the wheelchair-ensconced and pro-Treaty presence of the formidable former Republican Senate leader Bob Dole) concocted the patently ludicrous but revealing excuse that to support disability rights might undermine 'parents' rights' to 'choose' home schooling for their disabled children rather than expect government support for their children's education and care.¹⁴

In short, in these and other ways, we are living in an era of 'the geopoliticization of sex and gender', and the best take-home messages are not easy to discern. The idea that sexual rights are human rights is of recent vintage, and manifestly contested and under assault. At the same time, the very concept of sexual rights – like the larger concept of human rights of which it is a subset – can be, indeed regularly is, misused for political purposes that are disingenuous rather than honest, and very often deeply problematic. ¹⁵ But as appropriately sceptical and self-critical as Foucault's and others' reflections have made us in the face of grandiloquent, starry-eyed, pleasure-promising programmes for emancipation, as salutary and important as it is to be a bit chagrined and self-conscious when using terms like 'individual rights' and 'sexual self-determination', as attuned as we are to the historicity of the very notion of the autonomous individual subject and about the very idea that there is any such thing as 'sex', and as sensitive to cultural differences as we are continually reminded to be, the fact that the notions of rights and freedoms are hopelessly imbricated with relations of power does not somehow make them dispensable. We are caught between backlashes

Gänsehüten geboren' (22 July 2010), http://www.uweness.eu/pageID_9988083.html (last visited 29 Jan. 2013). On France, see Carine Vassy, 'From a Genetic Innovation to Mass Health programmes: The Diffusion of Down's Syndrome Prenatal Screening and Diagnostic Techniques in France', Social Science and Medicine, 63 (2003), 2041–2051; Carine Vassy, 'How Prenatal Diagnosis Became Acceptable in France', TRENDS in Biotechnology, 23, 5 (May 2005), 246–9; and Joëlle Vailly and Cécile Ensellem, 'Informing Populations, Governing Subjects: The Practices of Screening for a Genetic Disease in France', in Bernhard Wieser and Wilhelm Berger, eds, Assessing Life: On the Organization of Genetic Testing (Munich: Profil, 2010), 225–54.

¹⁴ Lisa Baldez, 'Next Time, US Senate Should Ratify UN Disabilities Treaty', *Christian Science Monitor* (14 Dec. 2012), http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2012/1214/Next-time-US-Senate-should-ratify-UN-disabilities-treaty (last visited 29 Jan. 2013).

¹⁵ James Peck, Ideal Illusions: How the U.S. Government Co-opted Human Rights (New York: Metropolitan, 2010).

both subtle and severe and the immense – interconnected and overdetermined – complexity of the global present; this is our challenge for the future.¹⁶

There also remains much that we do not understand about the past, and, as noted, it would be especially helpful to be able to reverse our gaze on the western parts of Europe by seeing them from the vantage point of developments in the eastern parts - in addition to the value of grasping more about the East on its own terms. At present, there is outstanding scholarship emerging on the early twentiethcentury history of sexuality in these regions. This includes differentiated studies of prostitution in Austro-Hungarian Cisleithania and the territory that is now Poland, as well as an important new exhibit on early twentieth-century trafficking (with tens of thousands of Jewish women, as it turns out, fleeing pogroms and above all poverty in the Ukraine, Romania and Austria-Hungary only to end up in the brothels of Western European and Latin American capitals, especially in Buenos Aires).¹⁷ It includes nuanced and conceptually highly sophisticated research on sexual exchange and exploitation within the concentration camp of Terezín and in the death factories of Poland.¹⁸ It includes as well brilliant new work on gay life in eastern and central European capitals; Budapest, for instance, was not only a far queerer but in general far wilder and freer example of sexual modernity than any specialist on Paris or London or Berlin might have guessed.¹⁹ And there has long been fantastic work done on the sexual history of both fin-de-siècle Russia and the early Soviet Union.²⁰ In addition, there are new studies of everything from sex education in the early twentieth century to longue-durée studies (soon to be translated) of homophobia and homosexual experiences and activism in Czech lands, and (based also on oral

- ¹⁶ See the excellent recommendations in Luis Abolafia Anguita, 'Aid Conditionality and Respect for LGBT People Rights', in *Sexuality Policy Watch*, http://www.sxpolitics.org/?p=7369 (last visited 29 Jan. 2013).
- ¹⁷ Keely Stauter-Halstead, "'A Generation of Monsters": Jews, Prostitution, and Racial Purity in the 1892 L'viv White Slavery Trial' and Nancy Wingfield, 'Echoes of the Riehl Trial in Fin-de-Siècle Cisleithania', both in *Austrian History Yearbook*, 38 (2007), 25–35 and 36–47; Michael Wuliger, "'Der gelbe Schein'': Vom Schtetl ins Bordell: Eine Ausstellung zu Prostitution und Mädchenhandel 1860 bis 1930', *Jüdische Allgemeine*, 16 Aug. 2012, http://www.juedische-allgemeine.de/article/view/id/13755 (last visited 29 Jan. 2013).
- ¹⁸ Anna Hajkova, 'Sexual Barter in Times of Genocide: Negotiating the Sexual Economy of the Theresienstadt Ghetto', Signs, 38, 3 (2013), 503–33; Robert Sommer, Das KZ-Bordell: Sexuelle Zwangsarbeit in nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2010).
- ¹⁹ Anita Kurimay, 'Sex in the "Pearl of the Danube": The History of Queer Life, Love, and its Regulation in Budapest, 1873–1941' (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 2012).
- Laura Engelstein, The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Eric Naiman, Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Dan Healey, Homosexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia: The Regulation of Sexual and Gender Dissent (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Frances Lee Bernstein, The Dictatorship of Sex: Lifestyle Advice for the Soviet Masses (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007); Dan Healey, Bolshevik Sexual Forensics: Diagnosing Disorder in the Clinic and Courtroom, 1917–1939 (Northern Illinois University Press, 2009). See also the amazing essay on the later Soviet decades: Anna Rotkirch, "What Kind of Sex Can You Talk About?": Acquiring Sexual Knowledge in Three Soviet Generations', in Daniel Bertaux et al., eds, Living Through the Soviet System (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2004), 93–119.

histories) in Croatia.²¹ Meanwhile, focused on the end of the communist era, there is a burgeoning and excellent body of scholarship on the unravelling of the socialist regimes and the difficulties of the transition to capitalism. As it happens, conflicts over matters of sex and reproduction – from pornography to abortion, and again also including sex education and homosexuality – are often central themes in the insurgent anti-Western nationalisms as in the imaginative rewritings of the socialist past.²²

Yet we are only beginning to amass scholarship specifically on the post-1945, pre-1989 history of these lands. The German Democratic Republic has been the best studied.²³ And there are bits of information in the interstices of other projects, for example, on the sex life of youth in the high-rise housing estates like those surrounding the Vladimir Lenin Steelworks of Nowa Huta in communist Poland, or in other Stalinist industrial megalopolises.²⁴ There are doctoral students doing remarkable work on everything from the hippie counterculture to the role of nudism in politically dissenting artistic communities in Romania and Yugoslavia.²⁵ But only

- ²¹ Karla Huebner, 'The Whole World Revolves Around It: Sex Education and Sex Reform in First Republic Czech Print Media', Aspasia, 4.1 (2010), 25–48; Jan Seidl, Od žaláře k oltáři: Emancipace homosexuality v českých zemích od roku 1867 do současnosti (Rok vydání, 2012) and see also http://www.ffi.sk/en/jan-seidl-from-prison-to-altar (last visited 29 Jan. 2013); Zvonimir Dobrović and Gordan Bosanac, eds, Usmena povijest homoseksualnosti u Hrvatskoj: dokumentiranje svjedočanstava o privatnom i javnom djelovanju seksulanih i rodnih manjina preteča LGBT pokreta u Hrvatskoj (Zagreb: Domino, 2007) currently being translated by Dean Vuletic.
- Joanna Goven, 'Gender Politics in Hungary: Autonomy and Antifeminism', in Nanette Funk and Magda Mueller, eds, Gender Politics and Post-Communism: Reflections from Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union (London: Routledge, 1993), 224–40; Susan Gal, 'Gender in the Post-Socialist Transition: The Abortion Debate in Hungary', East European Politics and Societies, 8, 2 (Spring 1994), 256–86; Agnieszka Graff, 'The Return of the Real Man: Gender and E.U. Accession in Three Polish Weeklies' (2005), http://www.iub.edu/~reeiweb/events/2005/graffpaper.pdf (last visited 30 Jan. 2013); Agnieszka Graff, 'We are (Not All) Homophobes: A Report from Poland', Feminist Studies, 32, 2 (Summer 2006), 434–49; Kateřina Lišková, 'Defining Pornography, Defining Gender: Sexual Citizenship in the Discourse of Czech Sexology and Criminology', in Elzbieta H. Oleksy, ed., Gender and Intimate Citizenships: Politics, Sexualities, and Subjectivity (New York: Routledge, 2009), 147–56; Dan Healey, 'Active, Passive, and Russian: The National Idea in Gay Men's Pornography', Russian Review, 69 (April 2010), 210–30.
- Dietrich Mühlberg, ed., Differente Sexualitäten, special issue of Mitteilungen aus der kulturwissenschaftlichen Forschung, 18, 36 (1995); Dagmar Herzog, 'The Romance of Socialism', in Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 184–219; Paul Betts, 'Intimacy on Display: Getting Divorced in East Berlin', in Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 88–115; Josie McLellan, Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Uta Kolano, Kollektiv d'Amour: Liebe, Sex und Partnerschaft in der DDR (Berlin: Jaron, 2012); Erik Huneke, 'Sex, Sentiment, and Socialism: Relationship Counseling in the GDR in the Wake of the 1965 Family Law Code', in Spector et al., After The History of Sexuality, 231–47. Two important doctoral dissertations by Scott Harrison (University of Illinois) and Heike Sommer (University of Jena) are in the works now on the GDR's marital and sexual counselling centres.
- ²⁴ Dagmara Jajeśniak-Quast, 'Soziale und politische Konflikte der Stahlarbeiter von Nowa Huta während der Sozialistischen Transformation', Bohemia: Veröffentlichungen des Collegium Carolinum, 42, 2 (2001), 244–68.
- Madigan Andrea Fichter, 'Cultures of Dissent: Hippies, Leftists, and Nationalists in Romania and Yugoslavia, 1965–1975' (PhD underway at New York University); Irina Costache, 'From the Party to the Beach Party: Nudism and Artistic Expression in the People's Republic of Romania' (PhD underway at Central European University in Budapest).

very few scholars, for example, have begun systematically to utilize the sexological research conducted during the Soviet era, although it is a tremendously rich source. Doing so would serve at least four purposes: first, to reconstruct the intricacies of the daily-life history of sexuality under communism, about everything from contraceptive strategies to expectations of romantic love; second, to help us grasp the unique situation of sometimes conservative, but quite often strikingly liberal, progressive and cosmopolitan experts within dictatorial and intrusive-repressive regimes; third, to understand what connections across the Iron Curtain were sustained by these socialist government-approved experts on sex-related matters, from the individuals involved in International Planned Parenthood conferences to the individuals who brought the sex therapy of Masters and Johnson to the East; and fourth, and building on the first three, to deliberately disorient ourselves and challenge our assumptions about modernity and postmodernity in the West by seeing the West through the looking-glass of the alternate modernity and postmodernity developed within the East.²⁶

Numerous questions would have different answers if we had more basic data. How do sexual cultures change in the absence of those two forces, consumer capitalism and the Christian churches, which were most instrumental in keeping sexual topics at the forefront of the public mind in Western nations? What rights – like reasonably secure access to abortion - were taken for granted for multi-decade stretches in not all but most Eastern nations, and with what consequences? What factors drove youth experimentation or spurred political dissent around sex-related matters among citizens of all ages? What ideals of comradeship or of socialist versions of eugenics inflected the aspirations and anxieties of couples and of individuals? What pleasures were most prized? Initial research on sexological scholarship and advice literature surrounding expectations of sexual intimacy in communist Czechoslovakia, at least, suggests that developments in the Eastern bloc need to be periodised quite differently than they typically are in the West, with the late 1940s to early 1960s in some ways a more sexually liberal period than the era of 'normalization' which succeeded it in the 1970s.²⁷ In other words, in some cases the trajectory was the exact opposite of that followed in the West. In many instances, however, what is most striking is the strong parallelism between trends in West and East.²⁸

²⁶ See especially the work of the leading sexuality researcher in Poland, the sociologist Mikołaj Kozakiewicz of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw and also President of the Polish Family Development Association (and, from 1985 to 1989 a deputy to, and from 1989 to 1993 a member of the Polish Sejm and eventually the marshal of the Sejm, 1989–1991). Kozakiewicz was affiliated with the International Planned Parenthood Federation, promoted a liberal attitude towards youth sexuality, and advocated for homosexual rights. Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, 'Zu einigen Veränderungen des Sexualverhaltens der Jugend in Polen', *Informationen des wissenschaftlichen Beirats 'Die Frau in der sozialistischen Gesellschaft*', 6 (1976), 54–8.

²⁷ Kateřina Lišková, "'Against the Dignity of Man": Sexology Constructing Deviance during "Normalization" in Czechoslovakia', in Mark Casey and Yvette Taylor, eds, Queer Presences and Absences: Time, Future and History (Basingstoke: Palgrave, forthcoming 2013).

On East and West both, see Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, 'Einführung der Sexualerziehung in den Schulen der europäischen Länder: Bericht der IPPF', in Informationen des Wissenschaftlichen Rates 'Die Frau in der sozialistischen Gesellschaft', 4 (1985), 63-70. On Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union, see Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, ed., The Family Life

Finally, what can be said about theoretical-conceptual approaches that could help break us out of some of our current interpretive impasses, whether our aim is to understand the 'it' that sexuality has been and is in human beings' lives or the ever-changing relationships of sexual to other kinds of politics or both? Scrambling our own prematurely secure presumptions about the sex of others is always a good thing. One of the most valuable effects of studying the history of sexuality is the way it unhinges conventional expectations about so many matters, including the ways yearnings and delights, attachments and preferences, orientations and practices, intimacies and ecstasies both large and small, have been organized and interpreted and lived in past times and places.²⁹ The exhilarating impact of Foucault's work lay not least in his encouragement to denaturalize the present, to emphasize the historicity not just of ideas but also of bodily experiences, and to challenge, over and over, what counts as 'natural' or 'true'.³⁰ After all, 'the purpose of history . . . is', as he once put it, 'not to discover the roots of our identity but to commit itself to its dissipation'.³¹ But a multitude of irksome theoretical-conceptual perplexities remain.

'The more I make love, the more I make revolution.' So went the popular slogan in France at the height of the student revolts in 1968, when radicals also plastered the

- and Sex-Education in Socialistic Countries (Warsaw: Polish Family Development Association, 1981). On Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, and the Soviet Union, see Kurt Starke and Günter Roski, eds, Ehe-Familie-Sexualverhalten: Vorbereitung auf Ehe und Familie, Sexualverhalten Jugendlicher: III. Seminar sozialistischer Länder der Sektion Ehe und Familie der Gesellschaft Sozialhygiene der DDR, gemeinsam veranstaltet mit dem Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung, 19. bis 21. Oktober in Leipzig (Leipzig: Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung, 1983).
- ²⁹ Especially important, paradigm-shifting contributions include: Robert J. Stoller, 'Sexual Excitement', Archives of General Psychiatry, 33 (Aug. 1976), 899-909; Ann Laura Stoler, 'Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race, and Morality in Colonial Asia', in Joan W. Scott, ed., Feminism and History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 209-66; David M. Halperin, 'Active and Passive Sexuality', in Robert A. Nye, ed., Sexuality (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 23-6; Lauren Berlant, 'Intimacy: A Special Issue', in Berlant, ed., Intimacy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1-8; Denise Riley, 'The Right to be Lonely', differences, 13, 1 (Spring 2002), 1-13; Ruth Mazo Karras, 'Sex and the Middle Ages', Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others (New York: Routledge 2005), 1-27; Don Kulick, 'Four Hundred Thousand Swedish Perverts', GLQ, 11, 2 (2005); Afsaneh Najmabadi, 'Types, Acts, or What? Regulation of Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century Iran', in Najmabadi and Kathryn Babayan, eds, Islamicate Sexualities: Translations across Temporal Geographies of Desire (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 275-96; JoAnn Wypijewski, 'Through a Lens Starkly', The Nation, 29 April, 2009, www.thenation.com/article/through-lensstarkly (accessed 29 Jan. 2013); Wypijewski, 'Weiner in a Box', The Nation, 15 June, 2011, www.thenation.com/article/161449/weiner-box# (accessed 29 Jan. 2013); Robert Beachy, 'The German Invention of Homosexuality', Journal of Modern History, 82, 4 (Dec. 2010); Gayle S. Rubin, Deviations (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Massimo Perinelli, 'Longing, Lust, Violence, Liberation: Discourses on Sexuality on the Radical Left in West Germany, 1969-1972', in Spector et al., After The History of Sexuality, 248-81.
- Wendy Brown, 'Jim Miller's Passions: A Review', differences 5, 2 (1993), 140–9; Scott Spector, 'After The History of Sexuality? Periodicities, Subjectivities, Ethics', in Spector et al., After The History of Sexuality, 1–14.
- 31 Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', in D. F. Bouchard, ed., Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 162.

walls of Paris with signs demanding 'Orgasm without Limits'. 32 Or as a West German saying from the era had it, 'Pleasure, sex and politics belong together'.33 There were so many ways that sex and politics could be theorized together. In some instances, the argument was that sex itself was a political activity. 'Our assholes are revolutionary', argued gay activists.³⁴ Or the point was made that sex enhanced politics: in the cult classic WR: Mysteries of the Organism, Yugoslav filmmaker Dušan Makavejev's heroine Milena declared forthrightly: 'Socialism without fucking is dull and lifeless'.35 At some moments, sexual activity and political activity were conceived as nicely parallel. As the West German New Left advice suggested, the best way to be was: 'Tough on cops, tender in bed'. 36 Alternatively, the police themselves could shift their purpose. The anarchist Provos in the Netherlands, for instance, called for 'the policeman to become the disarmed social worker of the future', distributing chicken drumsticks and oranges to the hungry and contraceptives to all.³⁷ Sometimes the passionate defence of the moral value of sexual pleasure was made by analogy: 'Chastity is no more a virtue than malnutrition'. 38 And sometimes the argument was more a pedantic reminder to care about politics as much as about sex: 'Brothers and sisters/ whether queer or not/combating capitalism/ is a duty we've got'. 39 Young members of the counterculture and New Left activists strove to theorize, in numerous variations, just how politically significant sexual liberation would be. 'Make Love Not War', the most popular slogan of the era, was not solely a recommendation for a more decent and pleasurable activity than slaughtering other human beings while risking one's own life - in Vietnam or elsewhere. It was also a theory of human nature, an earnest and deeply held conviction that those who made a lot of love simply would not be interested in hurting or killing others.

These views seem hopelessly quaint in retrospect. They express an intensity of yearning that personal and political transformation would be mutually reinforcing. But they proved to be insufficient for explaining such enduring riddles as the persistence of pleasure in cruelty evinced by human beings in wars and peacetime alike. This particular riddle had already been raised in 1963 by one of the New Left's

³² Quoted in Tamara Chaplin, 'Orgasm without Limits: May 68 and the History of Sex Education in Modern France', in Julian Jackson et al., eds, May 68: Rethinking France's Last Revolution (London: Palgrave, 2011).

³³ Quoted in Gernot Gailer, 'Eine Traumfrau zieht sich aus', Ästhetik und Kommunikation, 40-1 (September 1980), 84-5.

³⁴ Quoted in Frédéric Martel, The Pink and the Black: Homosexuals in France since 1968 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 17.

³⁵ Milena in the film by Dušan Makavejev, W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism (1971).

³⁶ Günter Amendt quoted in Dieter E. Zimmer, 'Schlamperei', Die Zeit, 15 Sep. 1978, http://www.zeit.de/1978/38/schlamperei (last visited 29 Jan. 2013).

³⁷ Provos quoted in Richard Neville, Play Power: Exploring the International Underground (New York: Random House, 1970), 28.

³⁸ Alex Comfort quoted in Richard Acland, 'Chastity or What?' in Richard Sadler, ed., Sexual Morality: Three Views (London: Arlington Books Publishers Ltd., 1965), 20; the slogan was later used by West German gay rights activists as well.

³⁹ Quoted in Rosa Geschichten, Eine Tunte bist du auf jeden Fall: 20 Jahre Schwulenbewegung in Münster (Münster: Schnelldruck Coerdestrasse, 1992), 16.

most important teachers, the Frankfurt School philosopher and sociologist Theodor Adorno. In his essay, 'Sexual Taboos and Law Today' (Sexualtabus und Recht heute), Adorno criticized a profoundly repressive proposal for criminal law reform that was at that moment under consideration by the West German Bundestag. But the bulk of the essay was dedicated to wondering at the peculiar fact that in a supposedly sexually liberal society – one in which premarital sex was routine and everyone was cheerfully urged to have a healthy sex life (in the German-language original, the term was retained in American English for sarcastic emphasis) – there was also nonetheless such an immediate outpouring of vindictiveness and punitive affect by the public in the face of anyone (prostitutes, homosexuals) who gave off the slightest whiff of that 'element of indecency' that Sigmund Freud had many decades earlier seen as one of the essential elements of the specifically sexual. Adorno lamented what he identified as 'a desexualisation of sexuality itself' and 'the disappearance of grand passion'. Sex was standardized and marketed, treated as a hygienic necessity, but 'that which cannot be integrated, the actual spiciness of sex, continues to be detested by society'. Why was it that in existentially insecure times it was so especially easy to mobilize the public against sexual minorities? How was it possible for outdated, practically obsolete taboos to be so effortlessly reawakened? What indeed was the appeal of cruelty towards the marginalized? Famously, Adorno declared: 'In an unfree society, sexual freedom is hardly any more conceivable than any other form of freedom. Sexuality is disarmed as sex, as though it were a kind of sport, and whatever is different about it still causes allergic reactions.' In contrast to a predecessor theorist like Wilhelm Reich, who thought sadism and meanness were the fairly direct result of 'erotic privations', Adorno was convinced that the connections between frustration and aggression were more circuitous and indirect but therefore no less powerful. 'The rage exploited by the demagogy of morality', he surmised, might just as conceivably be 'a reaction to the entire constitution of contemporary life ... the disproportion between the overpowering institutions and the miniscule scope of action granted . . . the individual'.40

These meditations were very much a product of their time, but they remain relevant in 2013 as well. Adorno never stopped being a passionate romantic: 'It's a nice bit of sexual utopia not to be yourself, and to love more in the beloved than only her: a negation of the ego-principle.'⁴¹ But few understood better than he just how much ugliness human beings were capable of, and he kept struggling to articulate how and why it could be that in the midst of seeming freedom, demands for intensified repression could become so palpably popular. Few reflections could be more pertinent to the situation of our global present.

Importantly, moreover, Adorno never allowed his disgust at the ubiquitous marketisation and therapeutisation of sex – phenomena which have only gone on to expand exponentially in the half-century since – to stop him from defending

⁴⁰ Theodor Adorno, 'Sexual Taboos and Law Today', in Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005) 72–3, 77.

⁴¹ Ibid., 75.

the embattled idea of sexual rights. He was all too conscious that it made him seem like an eccentric oddball. 'In view of the actual and potential damage that at present can be wreaked upon humankind by its administrators, the need to protect sexuality has something crazy about it. But those who dare to say so openly are even fewer in number than those who protest against such prestigious social institutions as bacteriological and atomic warfare.' Somehow he nonetheless found the courage to take that risk.

⁴² Adorno, 'Sexual Taboos', 81-2.