

SEXUALITY IN EUROPE: A TWENTIETH-CENTURY HISTORY

“Everything you always wanted to know about the ‘century of sex’ – here it is, beautifully written, admirably strong in its analysis, compelling in its plea for different narratives that add ambivalences, conflicts and shadow lines to what at first sight appears as a clear-cut story of liberalization.”

Ute Frevert, Director of the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin.

“A masterly synthesis of sexuality’s most extreme century. From prostitution to porn, from eugenics to abortion, from homophobia to the gay liberation movement, or from ‘sexual reform’ in the 1920s to the return of romance in a post-AIDS age, Dagmar Herzog’s book convincingly demonstrates that sex is anything but ‘natural.’ This virtuoso account always links sex to politics, but its real merit is to give emotions, bodies, and pleasures a history.”

Philipp Sarasin, Professor of Modern History, University of Zurich

“Licit and illicit, gay and straight, it's all here, in Dagmar Herzog's bold and productive overview of a century of sexual behaviors and beliefs. Both the politicization of desire and the relation of sex to cardinal values including love, consent, toleration, and personal autonomy figure in her canny treatment of national similarities and differences in Europe. There is no better comparativist than Herzog to illuminate the unexpected twists and turns of this composite history – a landmark in European synthesis and a must-read for all historians of sexuality.”

Nancy F. Cott, Jonathan Trumbull Professor of American History, Harvard University

“Herzog develops a sweeping analysis of the central role of sexual practices, cultures, politics, and violence in a century of war, mass mobilization, and wrenching social conflict and change. Her synthesis of the last generation of historical research is especially valuable because of the significant new insights she derives by considering together the histories of East and West, heterosexuality and homosexuality, and sexual liberalism and conservatism. A model of both comparative and transnational history.”

George Chauncey, Professor of History, Yale University