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Introduction

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Although questions about sex and sexuality preoccupy almost everyone these days, we are offered few intellectual strategies for incorporating our concerns and obsessions into a larger historical context. This is especially true when historical perspective takes on global proportions. In the contemporary world, our own sexuality and our sense of the sexualities of others color all aspects of contemporary life, from interpersonal relations to foreign affairs. We literally cannot imagine our world or make sense of our place in it without referencing sexuality. Those of us who write and teach history thus have an obligation to help our readers and students understand how sexuality "works"—to help them understand how our most intimate concerns intersect with complex global and historical processes. This obligation (which is also a pleasure) is the driving force behind *A Global History of Sexuality*. To that end, the book seeks to provide not a titillating catalog of past sexual practices (although sex is clearly an important part of our story) but rather an accessible synthesis of the best recent research into what sexuality has meant across the past three centuries in the everyday lives of individuals; in the imagined communities formed by the powerful bonds of shared religion, ethnicity, language, and national citizenship; and on the turbulent global stage of cultural encounter, imperialist expansion, transnational migration, and international commerce.

Humans have obsessed about sex and it implications for reproduction, morality, intimacy, social stability, and so on since the beginning of the

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historical era (and certainly long before that), but the history of sexuality—as a recognizable subfield of the discipline of history—is relatively recent. This is not to suggest that until the late twentieth century scholars had avoided the subject out of academic prudishness, fear of ridicule, lack of interest, or because they considered it trivial. Indeed, an influential generation of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century (mostly) European "sexologists" went to great lengths to collect and synthesize everything they could find on past and present human sexual attitudes and behaviors. Some scholars used this impressive body of historical evidence to demonstrate considerable variations in human sexual expression across time and across cultures—at times with the worthy goal of promoting greater understanding and tolerance of sexual difference in their own societies and at other times in order to articulate racist colonial norms that justified and reinforced social inequalities. Despite their efforts to document human sexual diversity, early sexologists had little interest in analyzing the particular historical and social conditions that had produced these diverse expressions (Phillips and Reay 2002, p. 13; Cocks and Houlbrook 2005, p. 4). Moreover, the rising tide of psychoanalytic thought, especially founding father Sigmund Freud's insistence on ascribing sexual behavior to universal human "drives" and "taboos" that transcended cultural and historical differences, further discouraged scholarly inquiry into the historical particularities of human sexuality.[1]

Throughout the 1960s and afterward, most scholars in the social sciences and humanities—anthropologists, sociologists, historians, literary critics, etc.—followed the lead of sexologists (collecting examples of sexual customs) or psychologists (finding evidence of universal drives and taboos) or some combination of the two approaches. Although studies of sexuality per se remained marginalized in many disciplines, anthropologist Kath Weston argues that:

> from the beginning, assumptions about sexuality infused social science concepts such as normality, evolution, progress, organization, development and change. Likewise, judgments about sexuality remain deeply embedded in the history of scholarly explanations for who acquires power, who deserves it, and who gets to keep it. The same can be said for a multitude of theories about cognition, reciprocity, gender, race, and many other stock concepts in social science. (Weston 1998, p. 20)

Although historians typically operate at the humanistic edge of the social sciences, in this instance, their reliance on the "sexuality infused social science

concepts" identified by Weston for the social sciences in general supports a similar interpretation of their work.

By the early 1970s, the intellectual tide had begun to turn as "social constructionists" such as philosopher–historian Michel Foucault developed compelling critiques of "essentialist" notions of human sexuality and noted its central role in producing and maintaining social inequalities of power and privilege. Social constructionist critics rejected the essentialist idea

> that beating at the centre of [the varieties of sexual experience] was a core of natural sexuality, varying in incidence and power, no doubt, as a result of chance historical factors, the weight of moral and physical repression, the patterns of kinship, and so on, but nevertheless basically unchanging in biological and psychological essence. (Weeks 2000, p. 30)

Instead, they insisted that human sexuality at any given moment in time was the product of distinct and changeable social circumstances, especially discourses around sexuality, which determined the "nature" of all sexual experience. This emphatic rejection of an essential human sexual nature had political repercussions, including for sexual rights advocates who feared that the denial of the natural roots of sexual differences would undermine their efforts to promote sexual variation as "normal" and thus worthy of protection rather than persecution (through efforts to reprogram homosexuals for example). And some scholars objected to what they considered an unwarranted denial of biological factors in sexuality, arguing that basic sexual orientations such as hetero, homo, and bisexuality, firmly grounded in human biology, have characterized all societies, albeit under different names (Cocks and Holbrook 2005, pp. 9–10).

In response to these objections, sexuality scholars (including historians) have begun to challenge the sharp binary that characterized the essentialist–social constructionist debate, arguing that the physiological aspects of human sexuality shape its social construction and vice versa in a continual spiral between natural influences on one hand and cultural influences on the other. Nonetheless, most historians of sexuality would agree that social constructionist scholarship on human sexuality provided the intellectual foundation for most subsequent histories of sexuality and for its recognition as a viable, important, and vibrant subdiscipline of history. While the authors included in this book have gone to considerable trouble to avoid a doctrinaire approach to the subject—as the very different histories of sexuality reflected in each chapter will attest—we are still deeply indebted to

the work of social constructionists. In his 2000 book, *Making Sexual History*, historian–sociologist Jeffrey Weeks summarized the basic elements of a social constructionist approach with "five broad categories of social relations, which are both constructed around and in turn shape and reshape sex and gender relations":

> First, there are the kinship and family systems that place individuals in relationship to one another, and constitute them as human subjects with varying needs and desires, conscious and unconscious. Second, there are the economic and social organizations that shape social relations, statuses and class divisions, and provide the preconditions and ultimate limits for the organization of sexual life. Third, there are the changing patterns of social regulation and organization, formal and informal, legal and moral, populist and professional, religious and secular, unintended consequences as well as organized and planned responses. Fourth, there are changing forms of political interest and concern, power and policies. Finally, there are the cultures of resistance which give rise to oppositional subcultures, alternative forms of knowledge and social and sexual movements. (Weeks 2000, p. 132)

Nearly fifteen years later, these five general categories of social relations continue to ground most histories of sexuality, including those in this book.

What distinguishes this present volume from previous histories of sexuality is its synthetic approach to the *global* history of sexuality. By and large, the most influential histories of sexuality that have come out in recent years have focused—as Foucault did—on the West, defined as beginning with Greco-Roman antiquity and continuing to the present day. Many of those histories have taken even more narrow regional, national, and local approaches. Other parts of the world have sometimes entered the historical frame as Western attitudes toward sexuality spread through imperial conquest. And edited volumes of scholarly essays that include non-Western case studies in the history of sexuality have appeared with increasing frequency. Still, we believe that this book represents the first attempt to produce a truly global history of sexuality in the modern era aimed primarily at a general audience.

Writing a global history of sexuality that would be accessible to a general readership involved making choices, some of them quite complicated. One of the most difficult to resolve was the book's title. Given the breadth of the subject matter, the decision to avoid the authoritative "the" in favor of the more modest (and truthful) "a" was simple. Everyone involved in this project has struggled mightily to synthesize and frame the material as

clearly and conscientiously as possible, but none of us would contend that our respective chapters or this book as whole represent *the* global history of sexuality.

If the decision to write *a* global history was easy, decisions about the rest of the title were more tricky. Our collective debt to *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1*, philosopher and historian Michel Foucault's (1978) seminal study of sexuality in modern Western societies, will be obvious to fellow academics, and is openly acknowledged in several chapters. So it made sense to add "global" to his famous title both as an act of homage and to point out the difference between our project and his. But the debt runs deeper than a borrowed title. Like Foucault, we have taken the eighteenth-century rise of the nation-state in the "West" and elsewhere as our starting point—even through Foucault himself went on to write histories of sexuality in ancient Greece and Rome, and despite convincing arguments from fellow historians for including the histories of premodern sexualities (Foucault 1998, 1990; Canaday 2009, pp. 1253–4).

The obvious reason to start with the eighteenth century was to keep things manageable in terms of length for our readers and in terms of conceptual framework for our authors. Less obvious to those unacquainted with Foucault's periodization, but crucial to the conceptualization of this book, is the profound sea change in the meanings ascribed to sexual behavior that occurred, especially but not exclusively in the "West," during this period. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault illustrates this radical shift with an apparently innocuous anecdote about a simple-minded French farmhand who is arrested by local authorities on reports that "he had obtained a few caresses from a little girl, just as he had done before and seen done by the village urchins round about him." In answer to the rhetorical question "What is the significant thing about this story?" Foucault responds:

> The pettiness of it all, the fact that this everyday occurrence in the life of village sexuality, these inconsequential bucolic pleasures, could become, from a certain time, the object not only of a collective intolerance but of a judicial action, a medical intervention, a careful clinical examination, and an entire theoretical elaboration. (Foucault 1978, p. 31)

The chapters that follow, then, explore in different ways and in different contexts (individual, cultural, institutional, etc.) "a constant optimization and an increasing valorization of the discourse of sex . . . meant to yield

multiple effects of displacement, intensification, reorientation, and modification of desire itself," a process that began in earnest in the eighteenth century and has yet to run its course (Foucault 1978, p. 23).

In sum, beginning sometime in the eighteenth century in the "West" and occurring at different times and in different ways in other parts of the world, the formation of the "modern" nation-state, in particular new notions of national belonging and citizenship, led to an increased focus on sex that produced what Foucault calls "multiple effects." Societies became structured in large part through sexual and intimate norms, which were not everywhere and always the same yet almost invariably privileged sexuality channeled into childbearing within male–female marriage among the dominant group while generating continually changing specifications of "perversions" and dangers against which society had to guard. The radical shift theorized by Foucault, with its "constant optimization and . . . increasing valorization of the discourse of sex," has meant that in modern times concerns about sexuality have become central to apparently nonsexual domains of social life (displacement), become more acute in all domains of social life (intensification), taken on new meanings (reorientation), and changed the ways in which we experience desire (modification). As anthropologist Gayle Rubin points out, sex "at any given time and place" has always been in some sense political, "but there are also historical periods in which sexuality is more sharply contested and more overtly politicized" than others (Rubin 1984, p. 267). Our premise is that the eighteenth century marks the beginning of just such a historical period—and so our story starts there. At the same time, the production of sexuality in the West was inseparable from European colonial projects in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Anthropologist Ann Stoler reminds us that imperial governance required "natural" social categories such as colonizer/colonized, European/non-European, white/nonwhite, categories that were secured, contested, and remade "through forms of sexual control" that linked colonial projects with nation building at home (Stoler 2002, pp. 42–7).

With regard to the book's title, the most difficult decision of all involved the apparently innocuous word "global." In recent years, scholars have hotly debated the proper term for histories that "break out of the nation-state or singular states as the category of analysis, and . . . eschew the ethnocentrism that once characterized the writing of history in the West" (Bayly et al. 2006, pp. 1441–2). That debate has produced at least five viable candidates—comparative, international, world, global, and transnational history—each of which has taken on different methodological and ideological connota-

tions. Our problem was that, in the methodological sense at least, every chapter in this book engages to a greater or lesser extent with each of the five frameworks: each chapter includes explicit comparisons between countries and regions, each addresses international relations among nation-states, each takes a world view, each explores global processes, and each examines "flows" of capital, people, technology, media, and ideas (Appadurai 1996).

For our purposes, the methodologies of comparative and international history seemed too narrowly focused on comparisons or relations between nation-states to describe the book as a whole. And world history seemed too vague. That left us with global and transnational history, methodologies that emphasize "flows" that circulate within and across national boundaries and geographical regions in ways that undo and remake multiple inequalities. Despite their conceptual similarities, the two terms have gotten caught up in ideological debates among scholars and policymakers over the neoliberal policies that have dominated the world economy since the end of the Cold War. Those who promote globalization—the preferred stand-in term for neoliberal economics—for its undeniable capacity to generate immense wealth despite serious negative "side effects" have rendered the term "global" untenable for many activists and critics, including in academia (Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Parisi 2011). Moreover, some scholars argue that global history by definition ignores regional transnational flows that "do not claim to embrace the whole world" (Bayly et al. 2006, p. 1448; see also Alexander and Mohanty 1997).

Although we share these concerns, we have opted to describe this project as a global history for three reasons. First, the book is indeed global in scope even through many of the case studies deal with regional rather than global flows. Second, we want to ensure the widest possible audience for what we think is a very important and timely topic, and the term global, despite its unfortunate appropriation by globalization proponents, seems less polemical and for that reason more welcoming to uninitiated readers than the more academic-sounding transnational. Third, as the alert reader will quickly discover, we (and our authors) have also struggled to find the proper terms to distinguish political, economic, social, and cultural inequalities among countries and regions around the world. In this instance, most of us settled on Global North and Global South—despite the obvious geographical problems presented by relatively wealthy southern-hemisphere countries such as Argentina, Australia, Singapore, and Taiwan—in order to avoid the value judgments inherent in comparisons between First, Second,

and Third World countries and between developed, developing, and underdeveloped countries.

The seven densely packed chapters that follow raise any number of important themes in the global history of sexuality. All of them, however, are organized around four interrelated processes: *the formation of sexual identities* around notions of femininity, masculinity, normality, and abnormality; *the regulation of sexuality by societal norms* including patriarchy, heterosexuality, racism, religious beliefs, and customary practices; *the regulation of sexuality by institutions* such as family, community, organized religion, law, and the state; and *the intersection of sexuality with global/transnational processes* such as cultural exchange, biological transmission, trade, migration, and imperial expansion. To illustrate and complicate these general processes, each chapter provides a range of case studies, integrated into the larger narrative in some chapters and analyzed in distinct subsections in others. These case studies are intended to help the reader see the different ways that the general processes outlined above play out at different times and in different places around the world.

Our global history of sexuality begins with Sabine Frühstück's chapter on SEXUALITY AND THE NATION-STATE. Chapter 2 builds on the well-established claim that nation-building efforts around the world have been permeated with sex talk, and that sex talk has been permeated with concerns about nation building—both at home and abroad. Although the general contours of this link between sexuality and modern nation-state formation look much the same all over the world, a closer look at the cases of Japan, the United States, and South Africa reveals important and often unexpected variations on a common theme. In early twentieth-century Japan, for example, nation building prompted an obsession with all things modern (including the perceived need to modernize sexual attitudes and behaviors) and a rejection of backwardness (including traditional sexual attitudes and behaviors) whether at home or in the colonies of the nascent Japanese empire. While never blindly in thrall to Western ideas, Japanese policymakers, scientists, and educators nonetheless understood the vital importance of intellectual exchange with their counterparts elsewhere, and thus produced a "sexual regime" as modern, yet recognizably Japanese, as any in the world. The intersection of racial difference and sexual deviance was mostly a colonial concern for Japanese social engineers. For their US counterparts, however, this troublesome intersection was at the heart of national "reconstruction," especially during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the country struggled to recover from a devastating

civil war, settle its western territories, assimilate foreign immigrants, and make sense of unruly colonial subjects in faraway places such as Puerto Rico and the Philippines. Whether validated by religious morality, manifest destiny, social Darwinism, or eugenic science, interlinked notions of white racial supremacy and moral superiority (defined as sexual continence) have provided the ideological underpinnings of the national "imagined community" up until the present day. In contrast to Japan and the United States, nation building in late twentieth and early twenty-first-century South Africa has centered on controversies over sexual and racial inclusiveness. Setting the new nation apart from its segregationist, white-supremacist past meant constructing an imagined community grounded in multicultural, multiracial, and multisexual tolerance. Progressive legislation advanced by a self-consciously modern state, however, has not necessarily translated into widespread cultural acceptance of same-sex marriages or nonnormative sexual identities, although it has altered (but not supplanted) "traditional" sexual categories.

The focus shifts from modern nation-states to modern empires in Chapter 3, SEXUALITY AND MODERN IMPERIALISM. In this chapter, Mytheli Sreenivas analyzes the central importance of sexual encounters and sexual intimacies—some coerced, others consensual, most contentious (especially for colonial authorities)—to the forging and maintenance of modern empires. In order to make sense of these encounters and intimacies, Sreenivas teases out three distinct themes in imperial understandings and governance of colonial sexualities: the intersection of sexuality and race in the imperial imagination, colonial authorities' efforts to regulate intimate relations between colonizer and colonized, and imperial interventions in the sexualities of colonized populations. To illustrate these themes, the chapter draws from a range of imperial experiences including the Dutch in the East Indies, the British in India and Africa, the French in Indochina (Vietnam), the Germans in Southwest Africa (Namibia), and the United States in Puerto Rico and the Philippines. In each instance, imperial understandings, regulations, and interventions with regard to everything from prostitution to concubinage, interracial marriage, and nonnormative sexual practices impacted groups and individuals in the metropole as well as in the colonies. And in each case, they met with a combustible mixture of acceptance, negotiation, and resistance that transformed sexualities all over the world.

With Chapter 4, the historical narrative shifts from links between sexuality and political structures—as embodied in nation-states and empires—to the multifaceted problem of sexually transmitted diseases. Laura

McGough and Katherine Bliss's historical overview of SEX AND DISEASE FROM SYPHILIS TO AIDS exposes the ways in which the biological becomes political (and vice versa) through moral panics around the transmission of these two deadly epidemic diseases, associated in the popular, scientific, and official imagination with sexual promiscuity and social degeneration. As the chapter makes clear, the stigma and shame prompted by sexually transmitted diseases "are embedded in wider social processes of power, domination, and social inequality" that often take the shape of public health campaigns aimed at marginalized populations including prostitutes, foreigners, the poor, and racial/ethnic minorities. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) have been around since the beginning of recorded history (and before), but state-directed public health campaigns to prevent their spread are a relatively new phenomenon that accompanied the rise of the nation-state and then spread quickly throughout the world either through direct colonization or as imported "technologies of power" purporting to represent the latest advances in medical science. A wide range of examples from Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, North America, and Latin America illustrate the global impact of epidemic STDs, the moral panics they induced, and the scientific-bureaucratic technologies developed to counter their deadly effects. Two concluding case studies of successful HIV/AIDS-prevention initiatives in Brazil and Uganda remind us that, despite the checkered history of state-driven public health campaigns and their complicity in perpetuating social inequalities, they do sometimes help prevent the spread of epidemic diseases.

Chapter 5, SEXUALITY AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION, examines a different sexualized global flow, the movement of people across national borders, including from poorer countries in the Global South to wealthier countries in the Global North. As Eithne Luibhéid explains, sexuality has been "a crucial site where the interplay between agency, subjectivity, and structural hierarchies of power get contested and remade through struggles over migration possibilities." These powerful links between sexuality and migration intensified with the rise of modern states and their obsession with delineating and policing fixed national borders. Although prompted by a wide range of circumstances, migration across national borders has involved an intensive selection process that favors immigrants deemed "desirable" by the host country and seeks to exclude those deemed "undesirable." In most instances, politicians, immigration officials, prospective employers, and other interested parties have preferred immigrants who

conform to an "idealized heterosexual marriage norm . . . crosscut by racial, cultural, class, and gender hierarchies"—a preference expressed in various ways, including through family-reunification immigration policies, labor preferences for married men, fears of hyperfertile women, and the exclusion of LGBTQ folk. In the face of these pressures, Luibhéid demonstrates that "migrants continually remake their identities, cultures and communities including through challenging—or hewing to—sexual norms in their own and other communities."

Chapter 6 explores the most explicitly sexual of all global flows, SEX TRAFFICKING. Robert Buffington and Donna Guy open the chapter with a brief history of media-driven moral panics over sex trafficking from the anti-white slavery campaigns of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to their latest incarnation in early twenty-first-century global initiatives to end "modern-day slavery." In the pages that follow, the authors attempt "to navigate the distortions put forth by politicians, law enforcement, journalists, and antitrafficking organizations (including the United Nations) in order to produce a historical overview of sex trafficking in the modern era that is as complicated, perplexing, and disturbing as the phenomenon itself has always been." Case studies of three long-standing sex trafficking routes—Nepal to India, the Philippines to South Korea, Central and Eastern Europe to Western Europe and the Americas—reveal the complex interplay of local, regional, national, and global forces that produce sex trafficking, in particular historic economic disparities between sending and receiving countries. Of note, especially in the first two cases, is the prominent role of imperial governance and "friendly" military occupations in fostering the conditions under which sex trafficking has flourished. The third case highlights the potent mix of contemporary geopolitics combined with a long history of political and economic instability that has driven the latest wave of sex trafficking out of Central and Eastern Europe.

Chapter 7, on SEXUALITY AND MASS MEDIA, shifts our attention from the transnational movement of peoples through immigration and trafficking to the global circulation of sexual culture via mass media. In this chapter, Hai Ren explores three central themes in the relationship between sexuality and mass culture: the way media shapes understandings of sexuality around the world; the way it helps "to regulate sexuality as normal or abnormal, permissible or prohibited, and pleasurable or risky"; and the way "powerful links between sexuality and mass culture on a global scale work to affirm some sexual norms and moralities while challenging others." These themes

play out in distinct ways in four case studies drawn from different historical periods, different parts of the world, and different media. The first case looks at early twentieth-century advertisements for cosmetics and toiletries directed at "modern girls" in North America, Latin America, Africa, and Asia. The second case involves mid-twentieth-century sex education debates provoked by widely disseminated advice columns in the United States. The third examines the youth culture that developed around manga comic book art, especially the "beautiful fighting girl" figure, in post-1960s Japan. The fourth analyzes the controversies surrounding social media, including "sexting," in contemporary China. Taken together, these four cases reveal the profound impact that mass media has had on the ways in which modern societies have represented, understood, and regulated human sexuality.

Chapter 8, SEXUALITY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD: GLOBALIZATION AND SEXUAL RIGHTS, examines the contentious sexual politics of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, especially the growing global prominence of local, national, transnational, and international sexual rights movements. In this chapter, Richard Parker, Jonathan Garcia, and Robert Buffington argue that the struggle to define sexual rights as part of our essential political, economic, and civil rights is especially important in the contemporary world because sexual norms are increasingly understood to play a role as central as gender, race, ethnicity, poverty, and class discriminations in circumscribing human rights around the world. To highlight the complex interplay between international initiatives that advocate for "universal" (if sometimes hotly contested) sexual rights and local social movements that operate on behalf of specific constituencies, the chapter includes case studies on four grassroots organizations from the Global South: Criola, a black women's group in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Inner Circle, a Muslim queer rights group in Cape Town, South Africa; Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC), a collective for female, male, and transgender sex workers in Kolkata, India; and El Closét de Sor Juana, a lesbian activist group in Mexico City. In all four instances, the authors argue, local groups formed in response to local issues have leveraged religious and secular discourses of sexual rights to legitimize their advocacy efforts in their home communities *and* to link their local struggles to national and international initiatives aimed at large-scale social transformation.

So where do these seven interlaced histories of modern sexuality leave us? In his *History of Sexuality*, Foucault famously insists that for historians:

> The central issue . . . is not to determine whether one says yes or no to sex, whether one formulates prohibitions or permissions, whether one asserts its importance or denies its effects, or whether one refines the words one uses to designate it; but to account for the fact that it is spoken about, to discover who does the speaking, the positions and viewpoints from which they speak, the institutions which prompt people to speak about it and which store and distribute the things that are said. (Foucault 1978, p. 11)

Foucault's charge to *account* for sex as a "discursive fact"—as an undeniable reality of social life despite its myriad and mercurial meanings—is something each author has taken to heart with full knowledge that we too are contributing to the obsessive "putting into discourse of sex" that continues to characterize our world (Foucault 1978, pp. 11–12).

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Note

1 Freud and his followers also posited an evolutionary trajectory for human sexuality that culminated in heterosexual desire expressed through intercourse and branded other forms of sexual expression as perverse, immature, or atavistic (primitive). The work of sexologists in England, Germany, Japan, and the United States is discussed at length in Chapter 2.

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