

Men were by nature  
polygamous and  
inclined to sexual  
snacking( herzog,30)  
essay s...

[Parts of the World](#), [Europe](#)



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Sexuality has been approached from a wider viewpoint and control of sexuality have become a more common topic of investigation. A world without categories for gender or sex categories would be a very different world. Debates over sex have been more open in Central Europe. Men were considered inferior to women because of their slavery to their sexual instinct and were at the mercy of their genitals. The paper looks into how heterosexuality and homosexuality came out in the open during and after the world wars, blurring the line of genders and overlapping sexuality.

Female sex reform activists were not sure of men's ability to combine physical passion and enduring affection. The central Europe was the ground for research on sex and sex reforms. According to Freud, it might be useful to segregate sexual object – the person and sexual aim – the activity. The concept of homosexuality was still new and beginning to take roots.

World War I World War I was a period that saw greater equality among sexes. Extensive traffic was witnessed due to the war across nations and continents. Couples remained divided for a long period due to war. Soldiers were fighting wars, getting killed, and those who did return home were psychologically damaged. Thus, the war separated not only the genders, but also blurred the lines between them. While men found their confidence shaken in the battlefields, women at home were taking over the responsibilities of men. Along with the death and violence war brought sexual violence too in the form of rapes, gang rape, sexual torture, genital mutilation, etc. The complex interconnections between war and sex are seen only in its negative manifestations. The war offered new opportunities' for sexual freedom, new pleasures and experimentations. Nation, colors sexual

orientations and class were completely ignored. The war offered countless chances for consensual delights, because of the anonymity and mass mobility brought by the war. The heightened intensity of sexual encounters during World War I was seen due to the imminent threat of death or long separation from lover or partner. The war brought both trauma and thrill that covered the wide array of terrifying sexual violence. Military brothers were engaged in a depersonalized quality of sex. The hostility towards contraception and abortion the church was creating deep conflicts among the followers. The experience of World War I also led to many European state governments expanding their health care systems.

Inter war Era Post World War I era saw alternate visions of sex surfacing that were unhinged from any concern with the Church or its teachings. The inter-war era saw a mushrooming of non-traditional sexual ventures that challenged the sexual conservatism preached by the Church. The objective was to think about the issues related to marriage and gender relations. The sex reforms as a transnational movement rebelled in the inter-war years. The broader spread of a culture of pleasure led to prevalence of overt homosexuality.

" Oh yes. There was tons of sex. Does that make you a fag- certainly not".  
(Herzog, 56)

Perhaps some aspect of homosexuality was just practiced for sheer fun and experimentation, However, the interwar era saw the flourishing of open homosexual subcultures in major European cities.

The sexual related activism in the inter-war era was about to take many forms and not all of it was risky. Sex reformers were fighting the government

and political parties. The demands of the most radical activists were met by fierce opposition from the church leaders. What was distinctive about World War I was that it brought the issues of sexuality and gender equality out in the open. It was this openness that also brought other issues relating to women's sexuality like contraception and abortion in limelight.

Homosexuality was handled with less harshness. There were clubs catering to transvestites. There was more homosexual activity seen after the World war I and it was fast becoming a more conspicuous part of the urban life.

Yet, there were plenty of complexities and ambiguities regarding homosexuality. Although homosexuality was spreading in the wake of World War I, it was discouraged by Mussolini and curbed to prove Nazi's straightness. Men caught in the same sex acts were persecuted.

### **The Nazi Leadership was tremendously anxious about that it not be perceived as “ queer” ( Herzog, 73)**

Later, the developments among homosexual men and lesbian women were drawn into greater parallelism. Women too seemed to get inclined to same sex attractions and were comfortable with the idea. Homosexuality was actually spreading in the wake of World War I as if it was contagious. World War II brought in violence never seen before. One saw mass murders of disabled, handicapped children, sterilization program by the Nazis. Prostitution and brothels were common at concentration camps.

Sexual humiliation of prisoners was normal, and homo and heterosexual affairs were normal. Killing was not enough, the death of the soul was aimed at. (Herzog, 85)The camps became centers of obscene intimate violence in the name of scientific experiments on both men and women. There were

sterilization experiments carried out on both men and women. Men and women from different nationalities were thrown together and were romantically involved. The number of illegitimate children was on the rise. The last weeks of the war saw an avalanche of rapes. In the camps, the guards and the complete power and sex was a good means of entertainment for them when they were bored. The authorities also believed that such sexual encounters were beneficial for a scolders' moral and his performance on the battlefield. There were gang rapes; women bled to death, mutilation of sexual organs, etc. Women were understood as sexual beings, and there were no bad women or good women.

### **Sexuality had escaped the marital framework in the years when the world turned upside down. ( Herzog, 94)**

Lives were battered and relationships stood broken.

However, after the carnage of World War II, many factors emerged stemming from guilt, fear, immeasurable loss and exhaustion. Millions had lost their lives during the war and many more lives were shattered and damaged due to the aftermath of the violence. The first years after the war not only saw a rise in the number of venereal disease, but also a soar in the number of divorces. There was a longing for stability, and the idea of sexual conservatism was more appealing. Social activists were beginning to talk about women's rights and gender equality. The initial restoration of sexual conservatism was not just a reaction to post war chaos, it was also related to a boost in self-image. Countries were eager to present a good image of theirs to the world. The model of the marital domesticity was restored in the post-war years. The war years had taught Europeans to think differently

about women. Reciprocal sexual pleasures were believed to be an important part of marital durability. Romance and companionship were given importance as reasons to marry. The idea of female sexual appeal was finding importance in the media.

## **References**

Herzog, Dagmar. *Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Print.