

Between Coitus and Commodification: Young West German Women and the Impact of the Pill

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The mass availability of birth control pills in the late 1960s coincided with at least three other dramatic developments in the history of sexuality: a thorough saturation of the visual landscape with nude and semi-nude images of women's bodies and the unabashed marketing of a multitude of objects via these images; a liberalization of sexual mores and of the terms of debate surrounding sexuality so profound that it acquired the name "sexual revolution"; and the emergence and rise to cultural prominence of both a New Left movement and an incipient feminist movement, both of which, albeit in different ways, sought deliberately to politicize questions of sexuality. All three of these phenomena were evident throughout Western Europe and the United States, and in many ways West German developments mirrored those in other nations. In the wider context of the Cold War, across the Western world, the initial fifteen or so postwar years had seen a strong emphasis on family values, political quiescence, and conformity to conservative gender norms. And in all these nations in the 1960s and 1970s, countercultural and youth rebellions coincided with and spurred further broader liberalizing trends. Similarly, in all these nations feminist women's organizations, often emerging out of anti-war and student activist groups, not only fought for reproductive control and abortion rights and greater social, economic, and political equality for women, but also made heterosexual sex

Yet there were also specificities to the cultural climate of post-Nazi Germany that shaped how all these transformations, and the relationships between them, were experienced and interpreted by contemporaries. Because of the intense salience of issues of sexuality and reproduction to Nazism itself, and because of the ways sexual politics functioned as a main site for coming to terms with, and attempting to master, the Nazi past—in both the conservative 1950s and the liberal and radical 1960s–1970s—conflicts over sex in Germany were unusually freighted and vehement. This essay will, first, reconstruct key elements of the pre-Pill culture of sex and birth control in the Federal Republic. Next, it will examine how that culture was liberalized, initially in the realm of advertising and subsequently also in official mores, and then explore the ways the distribution of the Pill both contributed to and benefited from other dynamics of liberalization. Finally, the essay will address the radical politicization of sex by New Left men and by the women's movement.

Before the Pill

Postwar West German culture was peculiarly hostile to open discussion of birth control products or practices. In comparison with the United States in the 1950s, for instance, there were in West Germany far fewer family planning clinics, and sales of such objects as diaphragms or spermicidal jellies were proportionally much lower; there was also far less medical literature discussing the subject available to specialists and of what literature there was, much expressed strong criticism of birth control.¹ There were a number of reasons for this. One was that in several of the Federal Republic's states, the Himmler order of 1941 banning the sale and advertisement of all birth control products besides condoms, remained in effect. (Condoms had been exempted from the order during the Third Reich because of their usefulness in preventing the spread of venereal disease.) Yet another was that many of the doctors practicing in postwar Germany had been trained under Nazism and had received no effective education about birth control issues in their medical school years. In addition, there were also more subtle—but no less tenacious—inherited forms of misogyny, and of unreflected anxieties about the declining German birthrate, that affected physicians' willingness to educate themselves or their patients about effective strategies.

The hesitation to defend fertility control vigorously as a basic human right was not only a direct inheritance of Nazism, however. There was also an indirect, but no less powerful, legacy. The effort of Christian con-

Democratic government under chancellor Konrad Adenauer—to enforce conservative sexual values in the postwar period needs to be understood not only as an extension of the values promoted during the Third Reich, but rather, and far more, as a deliberate backlash against Nazism. For while this has been largely forgotten now, Nazism brought with it many incitements and inducements to heterosexual activity—marital, premarital, and extramarital—not only for the sake of reproduction, but also for the sake of pleasure (or, as it was usually put, “drive-satisfaction,” *Triebebefriedigung*). For the duration of the Third Reich, Catholics in particular fought furiously against Nazi assaults on the sanctity of Christian marriage. And in the immediate aftermath of the war, Catholics were the most vocal in criticizing what they saw as Nazi-encouraged licentiousness and libertinage. There was far more concern with protecting youth from supposedly corrupting sexual influences—pornography or birth control products—in the postwar period than there had been under Nazism.

Symptomatically, for instance, while condom vending machines had been fairly familiar aspects of the streetscape, or the backs of bars orbershops, in many German towns throughout the Third Reich and in many places also for seven or eight years thereafter, the years from the mid-1950s into the early 1960s saw heated discussion among jurists and journalists over the desirability of these machines and their potential for morally corrupting youth. Even the neutral display of condoms in vending machines could be interpreted—as some courts did—as an offense to “morals and decency” (*Sitte und Anstand*), a particularly vague but for that reason all the more effective traditional legal category employed by conservative jurists in their efforts to constrict youth—and inevitably also adult—access to fertility control.² Again, Catholic activists set the tone. In 1951–52 conservative Catholic youth organizations had demonstratively burned down kiosks which marketed porn, and in 1953 they initiated “actions” against condom vending machines. In both instances these campaigns, far from being legally censured, themselves directly inspired conservative jurisdiction.³ Yet it is crucial also to note that the major opposition party of Social Democrats did not provide much of an alternative to the Christian Democrats on sex-related issues. Clearly very fearful of being associated with the sex radicalism of Weimar-era socialism, postwar Social Democrats displayed a singular lack of imagination and conviction. They might vote against a repressive measure—for example the censoring of pornography in the name of youth protection—but neither in the press nor in the *Bundestag* debates did they offer any truly energetic defenses of individual sexual freedom and self-determination.

The preoccupation with cleaning up sexual mores in postwar Germany had multiple functions. Stressing the importance of premarital chastity allowed postwar Christian commentators to delineate their difference from Nazism in especially stark terms, since Nazis had been so particularly eager to celebrate premarital sex and challenge the churches for their "prudery" on this matter. This postwar emphasis on sexual propriety was not only politically expedient. For many serious Christians, it was the result of a deeply held—and under the circumstances, not unperceptive—belief that sexual licentiousness and genocide had been, quite concretely, linked. Yet at the same time, and disturbingly, the manifest postwar departure from Nazi values with respect to premarital heterosexual sex was often accompanied by unapologetic continuity with Nazism in regard to the ongoing criminalization of homosexuality, as well as continuity in adherence to eugenic ideas, as homophobia and eugenics both were refurbished and given renewed legitimacy under Christian auspices. Moreover, the emphasis on postwar Christian sexual morality also deflected attention from the Christian churches' complicity with Nazism during the Third Reich—and not only with its anti-Bolshevism but also with its anti-semitism. In general, the postwar churches worked to redirect moral debate away from mass murder and toward sexual matters. Both Protestant and Catholic church leaders presented sexual propriety as the cure for the nation's larger moral crisis, and thereby implied, in a striking—and telling—displacement, that sexual immorality, not complicity in genocide, was the source of that crisis.

Precisely this complicated combination of rupture and continuity between Nazism and postwar Christian politics, together with the sense that the hyper-preoccupation with sexual morality only thinly veiled some deeper entanglement in national guilt—as well as ongoing anger and resentment at the fact of that guilt—was unnervingly palpable to more critical young people growing up in this climate. And yet at the same time the connections were difficult to decipher. What many young people were left with was a profound sense that their society was marked by hypocrisy.

Moreover, popular mores were not the same as official mores. This was true both with respect to Christian values more generally and with respect to sexual morality per se. Germany was a more secularized society than either the United States or Great Britain, and Nazism had done its part to further that secularization. Only about one-quarter of West Germans attended church regularly in the late 1940s, and the numbers dropped over the course of the 1950s. Meanwhile, even believers and church-goers had their own opinions about sexual matters that diverged from both the churches' official stances and from those advanced by

ducted in 1949, also among the regular church-goers, fully 44 percent were of the opinion that premarital sex was acceptable. And the numbers were far higher for those who did not attend church regularly. In this same survey, it was found that 89 percent of the men and 69 percent of the women interviewed admitted to having had premarital sex. Among young men under the age of 30, 97.8 percent thought premarital coitus was either permissible or simply necessary.⁴ Although the numbers admitting to and endorsing premarital coitus had dropped by approximately ten percentage points by the time the survey was repeated in 1963—and this was no doubt due precisely to the conservative rhetoric and cultural vigilance of the 1950s—numerous more informal estimates offered in the course of the 1950s and early 1960s suggested that anywhere between 80 and 90 percent of young people were practicing premarital coitus.⁵ These numbers are much higher than the comparable figures for the United States or Britain. In short, in spite of all of the official rhetoric adamantly insisting on female virginity before marriage, and pleading also for boys to desist from premarital experimentation, actual practices in Germany diverged sharply from the formal norms. In no area of sex-related discussion was there so wide a gap between prescription and actual behavior—even as the prescriptions had profound consequences for how the sex people did have experienced.

Two national peculiarities, then, came together: a low level of information about and access to birth control and a high rate of premarital coitus. Yet another national peculiarity was crucial as well. While American youth were internationally notorious for the practice of petting—manual mutual sexual play often leading to orgasm, a practice developed for the purpose of combining sexual intimacy and pleasure with pregnancy prevention (and the maintenance of technical virginity)—the conservative publicists who dominated the sex advice market in West Germany were tireless in their insistence that this form of sexuality, while seemingly offering "pleasure without regret" (*Gemuss ohne Reue*), would ruin the capacity for future sexual happiness in marriage. They were certain that girls who engaged in petting would prove to be frigid in their marriages.⁶ Also more liberal German commentators found American petting practices bizarre. As one postwar journalist disapprovingly summarized the general attitude, "this 'petting' cannot possibly offer any sort of deeper satisfaction."⁷ And, strikingly, although interviews with individuals who were adolescents in West Germany in the 1950s reveal quite a lot of activity that could be defined as petting, it was almost always seen—by the participants themselves—as a brief transitional phase before the onset of coital activity and/or as a paltry, even pathologically perverse, substitute for "real" sex, something unnatural.⁸

The discomfort with petting was undoubtedly exacerbated by the massive postwar campaign against youth masturbation. Although a range of experts in the Weimar and Nazi and early postwar years had emphasized not only the harmlessness of youth masturbation, but even its value as a preparatory experience for later sexual relationships, the majority of 1950s experts, with astonishing forcefulness and unanimity, insisted that masturbation was dangerous and deleterious to one's psychological health. Although most, if not all, experts rushed to assure readers that masturbation did not have the frightening physiological consequences it had once been rumored to have—deterioration of the bone marrow, a wasting-away of energy and health, impotence or insanity—sex-advice authors nonetheless emphasized that masturbation disturbed an individual's capacity for proper relationality. Having become dependent on self-stimulation and on fantasies, experts warned, young men would have trouble making the transition to having sex with an actual woman. Young women, if they became accustomed to clitoral self-stimulation, would in turn have trouble gaining any satisfaction in coitus. Any problems couples subsequently had with each other could be traced back to these early missteps. As one man who had been subjected to these exhortations in the 1950s remembered in 2001, "Of course we all masturbated. But we were *terrified*."⁹

In sum, the ultimate messages conveyed were contradictory. Coitus was treated as the only natural sexual activity. For example, with the exception of one sex advice magazine—which was shut down in 1951—no publication in West Germany in the 1950s ever mentioned oral or anal sex as possible alternatives to coitus. The contrast to Weimar-era sex advice—when for instance the well-known physician Max Marcuse not only endorsed both oral and anal sex as pleasurable ways of avoiding pregnancy, but also noted that their use was widespread—could not be more striking.¹⁰ Yet at the same time, almost all advice writers treated female orgasm during coitus as an important desideratum, and advice literature stoked women's fantasies of being overwhelmed by male strength and tenderness, while it also held out the dream of lifelong passion in bed. Indeed, some of the most sophisticated arguments put forward by medical doctors against birth control practices and products had to do with the idea that these practices or products would inhibit *female* pleasure. Simultaneously, however, the literature, whether Christian or secular, continually elaborated normative notions about gender that either placed the blame for any problems or sexual unhappiness women might feel on the women themselves, or—if it acknowledged that coitus, especially with a selfish man, might not always be a wonderful experience for a woman—did not suggest alternative or even supplementary

Aside from condoms, birth control products were almost impossible for unmarried people to procure. But birth control was not easily available for married people either. Access depended not only on the laws of the state in which one lived, but also on whether one lived in a big city or a little town, had (or did not have) a sympathetic and well-informed family physician, had (or did not have) a local pharmacist from whom one could purchase spermicidal powders or jellies without embarrassment, and/or had (or did not have) the wherewithal to order birth control products and information from mail-order catalogues. A general atmosphere of shame and secrecy surrounding sex also made conversations with friends or relatives over potentially awkward personal matters much less likely.

The rhythm method, invented and refined in the 1930s with the discovery of how women's cycles actually worked, was the *only* method in 1950s West Germany that was ever energetically endorsed in the medical literature. And although many doctors fiercely attacked the method as (variously) ineffective or unhealthy for a relationship, it was the only form of birth control officially permitted to believing Catholics. A general familiarity with which days were likely to be "safe" and which were not was also fairly common knowledge among all strata of the population. But so too was the knowledge that the method was not exactly fully reliable, especially if one tried to "stretch" the days when coitus might be all right beyond a supersafe minimum, or if any untoward event—stress, illness—threw the cycle off. Widely held beliefs that coitus during a woman's menstrual period was not normal or acceptable shortened the number of available days even more. And again, the hostility to, or ignorance and utter lack of imagination about, possible alternatives to coitus on the "unsafe" days was manifest throughout both the professional medical and the popular advice literature. Thus, for instance, a prominent physician analyzing the value of the rhythm method in 1953 could only recommend the method as a means of family planning "to that group of advice-seekers who have at their disposal a considerable amount of conscientiousness and self-discipline," for—in his opinion—the period of "abstinence" required by the method could prove to be an "unbearable burden" on marriages.¹¹

The single most widely used method of birth control in the pre-Pill era, both before and within marriage, was withdrawal during intercourse (i.e. coitus interruptus). "My husband is careful [*Mein Mann nimmt sich in acht*]," was the standard way women phrased it when prodded by a curious doctor about how they managed to space the births of their children.¹² And as a young man who grew up in 1950s West Germany remembered in 2001, speaking of himself and his girlfriend, "We

talked about it. We decided to use withdrawal." (And then when the girlfriend did get pregnant, this teenage couple married.)¹³

This story was part of a much larger phenomenon of premarital heterosexual activity among teens which led to "early marriages" (*Frühehen*), also colloquially called "must marriages" (*Müssehen*). Marriages among minors—a phenomenon which had reached "outrageous" levels by the late 1950s—were almost always entered into solely because a child was "on the way." Among the approximate average of 500,000 marriages entered into annually in the early 1960s, 88,000 spouses per year were between the ages of 16 and 20; 20,000 brides annually were 17 years old or less. Unsurprisingly, statistics showed that these marriages were also uniquely vulnerable to divorce.¹⁴ But also among young couples who were no longer minors, unplanned pregnancy often led to a marriage that would otherwise have been delayed or not entered into at all. Numerous memoirs and oral history testimonies describe the social pressures within local communities that made rushed marriages the norm. At the end of the 1950s, it was found that approximately one-third of West German brides were pregnant on their wedding day. By the early 1960s, studies variously found that anywhere from 40 to 70 percent of firstborn children were conceived out of wedlock; more than 50 percent of all marriages and fully 90 percent of early marriages (with spouses between the ages of 18 and 21) were entered into solely because the bride was pregnant.¹⁵

Early marriages—or, if married, another (sometimes only half-wanted) child—were, however, not the only consequences of a climate in which birth control products and information were not easily accessible to everyone. Professional physicians' discomfort with or hostility to dispensing birth control information and products contributed not only to the popularity of coitus interruptus, but also resulted in an environment in which abortion, despite its illegal status under Paragraph 218, was nevertheless widespread.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, abortion was *the* German method for keeping family size small—in stark contrast, as observers noted, to both France and Britain where there was much stronger official support for family planning.¹⁶ As one doctor put it bluntly in 1953, Germany was in the midst of an "abortion epidemic."¹⁷ Another in 1963 matter-of-factly referred to "the abortion plague."¹⁸ Over the course of the 1950s, estimates of abortion rates fluctuated and also varied by region, but there was general agreement among medical professionals that the rates remained extraordinarily high, or were even climbing. Midwives, quacks, and pregnant women themselves performed most of the abortions (sometimes using knitting needles or injections of soapy water or

doctors who were willing to break the law for a price.¹⁹ As some patients confided, when prodded gently by a trusted physician about what they had done in those instances when withdrawal had not worked: "Well yes, a few times I did let myself get scraped out [*na ja, ein paarmal habe ich mich ausschaben lassen*]."²⁰ A frequently used technique was to go to a physician for a routine brief walk-in office visit, have him or her induce a miscarriage mechanically, and then be rushed to either a public hospital or a private clinic with "sudden" bleeding.²¹ In 1959 alone, 5,400 individuals were each sentenced to several years in prison for performing abortions.²² Experts assumed that for every case that came to the attention of authorities, either the police or a hospital (where women sometimes ended up not just because of induced miscarriages but also after botched operations or in instances of life-threatening complications), there were at least 100 abortions that went unrecorded. Indeed, in a case that made national news in 1963, a doctor who had served time in prison a year earlier for the first time a woman in his care had died and was now committed to an insane asylum in the wake of his second fatality, admitted to having performed approximately 2,000 abortions over the previous decade.²³ Other ways of obtaining estimates involved asking women about their prior reproductive history, in confidential intake exams during visits to their gynecologists, and then extrapolating from this sample. Based on a total of between ten and eleven million women of reproductive age in the Federal Republic between 1950 and 1957, estimates found that in any given year between 5 and 10 percent of all German women had an abortion. Experts repeatedly spoke of an average, for the duration of the 1950s, of anywhere between 500,000 to one million abortions in the Federal Republic each year. Some studies found that there was a yearly ratio of one abortion to every birth; an oft-quoted 1953 study undertaken by a Hamburg gynecologist identified in his region an annual ratio of three abortions to every birth.²⁴

By the early 1960s, the mainstream press and medical journals repeatedly referred to an annual average of anywhere between 750,000 to more than one million abortions, with some physicians even estimating two million per year, and it had also become routine for mainstream periodicals to note as common sense that there was one illegal abortion for every birth in the Federal Republic.²⁵ Contemporaries variously speculated that one of every two German women faced the decision of whether or not to abort at some point in her life, or indeed that every year one in four women was affected.²⁶ One prominent gynecologist interviewed in 1964 noted that abortions were available not only in every major city, but also in the smallest villages, and that the methods used, also by nonprofessionals, had become so sophisticated (*geschickt*)

While doctors had pointed out already in the 1950s that death rates from abortion were much lower than they had been in previous decades because of the widespread use of antibiotics, numerous observers in the 1960s still noted that health complications from illegal abortions were nonetheless widespread. This was so not least because the illegality made proper follow-up care unlikely, and there is no question that the furtive and not always clean conditions under which abortions were performed exacerbated the likelihood of both physical and psychological damage. Insurance records from the 1950s also reveal that, every year, an average of 10,000 West German women died from complications due to their abortions.²⁸ Only the invention and widespread dissemination of the Pill brought an end to this scandalous state of affairs.

Commodification and Liberalization

The Pill did not cause the sexual revolution, however. Mass availability of the Pill brought West German abortion rates down dramatically from the end of the 1960s on. But the medical-technological invention of the Pill alone did not in itself bring about a liberalization of sexual mores. That liberalization depended upon two other crucial dynamics. One was the ever-intensifying use of sexual stimuli in advertising and journalism, in other words a dynamic largely intrinsic to economic processes. The second dynamic—in extraordinarily complex interaction with the first—was a process of political mobilization against the official culture of sexual conservatism. This political mobilization, beginning at the turn from the 1950s to the 1960s and escalating in ardor and strategic effectiveness in the first three to four years of the 1960s, involved both prominent liberal public intellectuals and younger, often left-leaning student activists. But there is no question that liberals and leftists, while on the one hand often critical of the commodification of sex and its role in consumer capitalism, were, on the other, able to use the space opened up by the manifest contradictions between conservative norms and sexualized marketing to press their own claims.

The sexualization of the public sphere preceded the 1960s. Despite strict constraints on naked images in the media for much of the 1950s—nudity was rigorously censored under the auspices of the “Law about the Circulation of Youth-Endangering Literature” (*Gesetz über den Vertrieb jugendgefährdender Schriften*), which took effect in 1953—it was clear to observers of all ideological persuasions that sex was being used to sell products. Moreover, the West German film industry, engaging in avid self-censorship through the umbrella organization for film studios, “Vol-

eschewed nudity and overt representations of sex—and yet simultaneously milked the “sex appeal” of starlets for all they were worth. In addition, international “bombshells” like Marilyn Monroe and Brigitte Bardot were as iconic and obsessively idealized in West Germany as they were in the United States or in France. For many conservative critics, this purported “hypersexualization” was yet another sign of what they feared was the decline of Western civilization.

Across the ideological spectrum, however, there were also a range of more trenchant interpretations of the effect of sexualized marketing appeals. The respected conservative sociologist Helmut Schelsky, for instance, astutely observed in 1955 that the sexualization of the visual environment so often hysterically criticized especially by conservative religious activists could actually have a rather anti-sexual impact. In Schelsky’s opinion, the constant inundation with external stimuli had the tendency not only to encourage conformity rather than individualized fantasies, but also to inhibit an individual’s internal desires and drives from developing at all. Forcing sexual images into everyone’s field of vision, he thought, ultimately had a de-eroticizing impact.²⁹ The left-leaning Frankfurt-based student newspaper *Diskus* in 1962 made a no less important observation. Although religious conservatives argued that youth were being “overenlightened” in dangerous ways by the wealth of sexually suggestive images in the media, *Diskus* was convinced that the success of sexualized advertising rested precisely on the fact that sex was still subject to many taboos and that society was only partially enlightened. It was specifically because enlightenment was incomplete that “one can still capitalize on sex,” and that politicians, opinion-makers, and advertising specialists alike could successfully appeal to “the sexual arousability of the human being.” *Diskus*’ big insight was that sex profoundly attracted the ultraconservative “phillistines” too. “We are floating in an ocean of sexual stimuli of all nuances, from the direct reference to the private parts to more subtle appeals to the unconscious. . . . The restorationist forces themselves address the unconscious when they polemicize against ‘smut and trash’ and appeal to the cleanliness complexes of the anal phase of our childhoods.”³⁰

A year later, in 1963, the Frankfurt School philosopher and sociologist Theodor W. Adorno argued that the never-ending stimulation brought by mass media and advertising—which permitted sex to be turned on and off, steered and exploited—meant that while sex appeared to have become more tolerated, it had also been tamed. In the process sex itself had become desexualized. But rather than just being nostalgic—as Schelsky had overtly been—for a time when sex held more drama, Adorno saw danger precisely in this sexual taming.

of naturalness" (*ein Ideal des Natürlichen*) had been accompanied by a relentlessly derogatory attitude toward all "perversion" (*Perversität*) or "sophistication" (*Refinement*). A single-minded emphasis on "pure genitality" (*pure Genitalität*) made sex a pitifully shriveled and dull thing. This single-mindedness was itself a form of profound repression and it had frightening consequences (e.g. it fueled hostility to sexual minorities like homosexuals and prostitutes). Just as bizarre but revealing was the fact that even though taboos against sexuality outside of marriage were becoming so manifestly outdated, the taboos were still mobilizable at any moment. Sexually conservative, even aggressively punitive, messages still reached a wide audience. All the more reason to be suspicious that the one kind of non-genital sexuality that was not just permitted but actively cultivated by the society was voyeurism.³¹

These diverse apertures from the pre-sexual revolution moment highlight for just how long the changes that would from 1966 on be grouped under the heading of "sex-wave" had already been underway. But more importantly, they foreground the ambiguities that from the start accompanied the sexual revolution as it took shape from the mid-1960s on. For from the beginning the manic explosions of nudity and sex-talk that had erupted over West Germany by 1966 and gathered force for the remainder of the 1960s were accompanied by indeterminate but nonetheless strong feelings that all this hype was not as sexually exciting or personally and socially transformative as people might have hoped.

What ultimately dissolved the former culture of censorship was above all market forces. By 1966, censorship of nudity or sex-related themes in the media had in many ways simply stopped working, for there was no doubt to anyone that West Germany had become home to a "sex-wave" of "pubescent flanks," "bethylburtons," and ubiquitous breasts—usually with all but the nipples uncovered—blanketing billboards and magazine covers, and of ever more frank descriptions of sexual matters in periodicals and mass-market books alike. The society was "obsessed with sex." Not only was West Germany full of *representations* of sex, but magazines also showed photos which proved that some young women were starting to go topless at swimming pools, and published articles which announced that nude dancing, or the "American" fashion for partner-swapping, were becoming popular at West German parties as well. "A flood of demonic forces is overwhelming our people. Countless individuals are being lured into unrestrained pleasure and the living-out of their drives," warned the Protestant campaign "Action Concern about Germany" (*Aktion Sorge um Deutschland*), and the archconservative Catholic campaign "Action Clean Screen" (*Aktion Saubere Leinwand*), under the direction of politician Adolf Susterhenn, sharply denounced the atmos-

Yet media and advertising just kept pushing the boundaries of what it was possible to show. Indeed, the print media—from popular illustrated magazines to serious newspapers—took advantage precisely of the intensifying conflict between liberal and conservative forces over sexual matters in order themselves to profit from the national preoccupation. Articles self-reflexively thematizing the culture of voyeurism—or "sex as spectator sport," as one magazine sardonically phrased it—were inevitably part of the same circuit they criticized.³² An ever-greater percentage of text space in popular magazines was devoted to sex-related themes. As recently as 1963, the ideal of marriage, and also young and not just older people's devotion to the value of marital fidelity, had been celebrated in the media as *the* West German cultural common sense. Indeed, fidelity had been at the top of the list of qualities most valued in a marriage partner, also among female and male youth.³⁴ But starting in 1965 and within a few years spreading relentlessly also into the most mainstream of venues, infidelity and its possible benefits became an especially popular media theme. From the left-wing youth magazine *Konkret* to the right-wing tabloid *Bild*, infidelity in general and threesomes in particular (always two women with one man, a familiar constellation in heterosexual porn), were discussed in elaborate detail. Meanwhile, sexual representations in film that two or three years earlier had been considered absolutely shocking, had come to seem utterly routine. By the late 1960s, the bourgeois sex apostle Oswald Kolle's pseudoscientific "sex enlightenment" movies for the masses—which featured naked couples talking through their sexual problems, framed by expert voice-overs assuring people that marriages could be mended through open communication—functioned for many people more as amusing soft-core pornography than as genuinely educational materials.³⁵ Yet for all the new heightened visibility of and volubility around sex, enlightenment continued to remain only partial, and simultaneously generated many new anxieties. The yearning for sex to be easier, and more fun, coincided with a powerful awareness that the selling of sex and the sexing of sales involved manipulation and impossible-to-meet expectations.

Liberalization and Politicization

Although it was introduced to European markets in 1961, the Pill had only been taken by about 2,000 West German women by 1964. Initially, many doctors would only prescribe the Pill to married women. Outraged, student radicals publicized the existence and benefits of the Pill, auctioned pills as a form of guerrilla theater, circulated addresses of doc-

vide Pill access. "We're not talking about 'the Pill,' we're taking it," announced the sign in a typical student counseling clinic.³⁶ In addition, the increasing attention to sex in the news made it impossible to cover over any longer the truth of massive youthful sexual activity. Scholarly surveys and journalistic reports on sexual attitudes and practices confirmed what everyone knew. Sex simply was a major part of youth culture. The age at first coitus was dropping. In response to this new/old news, a remarkable range of professionals concerned with youth, among them leading pedagogues, psychologists, sociologists and even—and significantly—theologians, went on line to defend premarital coitus as a normal developmental phenomenon.³⁷ From the mid-1960s on, these more liberal authorities would set the terms of debate about sex, and conservatives were the ones on the defensive. The publicity surrounding two major scandals involving doctors who provided (in one case) abortions and (in another) sterilizations contributed significantly to turning Pill access into a moral *cause célèbre*.³⁸ The market-driven sex wave and the cultural ascendance of more liberal experts and the critical youth insurgency each did its part to legitimate what people were already doing—and to push even further the liberalization of popular mores and behavior.

Under the combined force of all these developments, barriers to Pill use by singles soon crumbled. By 1968, the number of West German women using the Pill had jumped to 1.4 million, and then jumped again to 3.8 million by 1977. By 1975, while 33 percent of fertile women relied on the Pill in West Germany, 47 percent relied on other birth control methods. But among young women, the rates of Pill use were very high. In 1977, fully 80 percent of girls under the age of 20 were on the Pill. Unsurprisingly, abortion rates declined precipitously. Yet the birthrate declined the most. Already by 1974 West Germany had the lowest birth rate in the world, with the GDR close behind. Everyone spoke of a "Pill-induced decline," a "*Pillennick*." Within the course of one decade, the birthrate in West Germany had dropped 50 percent. "Are the Germans dying out?" became a national discussion.³⁹

And yet, the very space opened by the Pill—since this was a birth control method that women controlled themselves—and the fact that the Pill's availability coincided with freer talk about sex in general, also created the circumstances which made it possible for women both to share with each other and to go public with their dissatisfactions about heterosexual relations. The very thing that made heterosexual sex less anxious and potentially far more pleasurable for women, also created the conditions for new conflicts. This was in part due to the way that the Pill's arrival reinforced, rather than challenged, longer-term belief-patterns that

forced skepticism not only about alternative but also even supplemental practices. It was also due to the fact that the Pill arrived into a culture that was not exactly egalitarian in gender terms, and in which men brought to sexual encounters their own, often not fully reflected, anger, condescension, neediness, and insecurities. And it was not least due to the fact that, having banished the constant dread of unwanted pregnancy, and also—in the context of the general liberalization—having banished at least some of the anxiety about reputation, women's economic and emotional dependence on men was dramatically diminished. Women had gained the chance to have sex become more enjoyable and meaningful for them, and to start to set more of the terms in sexual encounters.

Already in 1966, the influential liberal news magazine *Der Spiegel*, in a major cover story on the sex-wave, was recording massive male ambivalence about the very female orgasms that were now more possible than ever before. "The new pleasure-demands of women," it reported, were leading to a high incidence of "psychological impotence in men." The faddish "overvaluation of the orgasm," as one expert put it patronizingly, was leading women to complain that their men did not know how to satisfy them, and men were responding with inhibition, anxiety, and heightened self-consciousness. Unable to take any female criticism of heterosexual relations seriously, *Der Spiegel* in this instance insisted on seeing women's difficulty in achieving pleasure as an unfortunate but inevitable outgrowth of the monotony of monogamy (thereby rerouting a complaint about male behavior into a challenge to the value of marital fidelity).⁴⁰ Yet as research on sex multiplied, mainstream venues like the parenting magazine *Eltern*, and the illustrated news magazine *Stern*, and *Der Spiegel* as well, ended up—though usually only tentatively and in passing—reporting that coitus per se was not fully exciting for many women.⁴¹

Also among the most educated and politically active youth—precisely the ones who saw themselves as the avantgarde of both the anti-capitalist political revolution and the sexual revolution—there was considerable heterosexual conflict. Transforming sexual relations was one of the most important tasks the New Left in West Germany set itself. Indeed, the cultural critic Klaus Theweleit, himself a member of the West German New Left "generation of 1968," once retrospectively remarked that in West Germany, "the interest in the political was manifest among many young people as an interest in the sexual. The bodies of young people in the early sixties were sexually charged in a wholly unusual way."⁴² Or as the journalist Sabine Weisser summarily noted, after reading numerous New Left materials, the desire to change sexual relations was often *the* spark that led to political activism. "The flood of articles, lectures, events, and readings, the que-ry of

In school and student newspapers, ahead of Vietnam, emergency laws, university reform, etc. sex was "topic number one."⁴³ Yet almost from the start, gender conflict was evident. Complaining about the "laborious manipulations" demanded by other birth control methods, for instance, male students writing in the Berlin newspaper *FU Spiegel* in 1968 could not figure out why many female students were hesitant to take the Pill. Did not these young women also want a "de-problematicization of sexuality"? The only conclusion the authors could reach was that young German women must still have considerable prejudices about and hostility to sex.⁴⁴ In the fall of 1968, when young activist women in Frankfurt published the first broadside of the incipient women's movement, they complained specifically about "socialist screw-pressure" (*sozialistischer Bumszwang*), and the ways in which women who did not cooperate got labeled "lesbian," or "frigid," or as suffering from "penis envy."⁴⁵

Those we call "68ers" faced a double challenge. On the one hand, the student movement was definitively strongly motivated by sexual rebellion against the conformist postwar culture, fueled by a fervent desire for personal liberation and self-transformation. As a group of young activists in Frankfurt, speaking also about themselves, complained in 1970, "none of the adults in our fundamentally anti-sexual and pleasure-hostile society was able to develop an untroubled relationship to sexuality."⁴⁶ But on the other hand, the mainstream sex-wave booming all around them quickly repulsed them as well. As Theweleit remarked, "with repugnance we took cognizance of the partner-swapping tales of bourgeois couples," as "the sex-wave spread in the so-called populace."⁴⁷ And yet many members of the New Left engaged in plenty of partner-swapping experiments of their own, perpetually confused about whether fidelity was a bourgeois trap or—now that the bourgeoisie had given up on it also—actually an acceptable leftist value. The discomfort with the mainstream sexual revolution was acutely evident in some of the major New Left texts on sexuality, from former SDS leader Reimut Reich's 1968 study, *Sexualität und Klassenkampf* (Sexuality and Class Struggle) to the writings of the anti-authoritarian child-rearing movement at the turn from the 1960s to the 1970s. A classic sample of the typical tone—snatches of "materialist" analysis pasted together with inexpressible utopian longings—is provided in a 1970 book from Berlin: "As long as the nuclear family survives—ultimately, for economic reasons—sexual freedom serves as a sad little palliative for daily surfeit and disgust." And: "Even if people humped around ten times more than before, it would not add up to real sexual liberation. For merely to amass orgasms, even if man and woman arrive at them simultaneously, can not yet be seen as a satisfying form of sexuality."⁴⁸ What made activist students' perspective

se, but rather their insistence on connecting liberated sex with progressive politics. No coincidence then that sex rights activists in the New Left within a few years would turn away from the early, and often quite melodramatic, Wilhelm Reich-inspired calls for complete sexual liberation as an antifascist imperative toward more Herbert Marcuse-influenced analyses of the mainstream sexual revolution as just another aspect of repressive desublimation, while continuing to demand a form of sexual freedom linked to social criticism and social justice struggles.

Yet as grandiose as the New Left theoretical reflections often were, both early feminist writings and also New Left men's retrospective memory-writings record quite a bit of more mundane tensions about sexual behaviors. There was fierce rivalry between men within New Left groups not only over who could make the smartest Marxist statements, but also over who got to sleep with the prettiest women. Women were hardly the passive victims of this process. Within the feminist consciousness-raising groups, women too acknowledged that they had measured their own self-worth and expressed rivalry with each other by competing to "catch" the most impressive New Left leaders. Other women acknowledged that women could also have considerable power in erotic relationships with men, and that often it was the man, as much as if not more than the woman, who was the emotionally dependent one. Yet there was clearly often ambivalence on both sides. One woman put the problem poignantly: "I think the fear of being touched and the incapacity to touch others and to do so tenderly, passionately, is a general social phenomenon. It is hard, simply to approach people and hug them; the walls become higher all the time. But the worst thing is—I think—the way in which one tries to master this incapacity. After all, the need has not disappeared. So one does it aggressively, humiliates one another, separates emotionality and sexuality and 'bangs' on forcefully (like machines)."⁴⁹ Yet other women struggled to put into words the baggage that both men and women brought to sexual encounters, often inherited from their own parents.⁵⁰ As one woman put it in an early reflection, "Until recently I was involved with a man who had horrible fears about his potency and wanted to sleep with me very often, because he believed that otherwise it wouldn't work when he was older. I was rarely asked about my feelings and needs in this, and was at that time also not really capable of expressing these often enough or of refusing him. I have after all also learned 'that a man just needs that' and 'that a woman should subordinate herself in this way' (quote from my mother)."⁵¹

Many young women were obviously extremely happy with heterosexual sex, especially now that the Pill had simplified it. "We were not a group of sexually frustrated women," one woman affiliated with the

among New Leftists ultimately broke up more because the couples had simply grown apart, or even because the women had outgrown their male partners.⁵² And although, as another formerly New Left woman put it, "New Left men were so hung-up and lousy in bed, just dreadful as lovers," she solved the problem at least for herself: "That's when I turned to the working class. That went much better. [*Da hab ich mich an die Arbeiterklasse gewandt, da ging's viel besser.*]"⁵³

Yet reading the texts of the time—polemical flyers and mimeographed statements produced in the context of university seminars, study groups on sexual politics and in the first consciousness-raising groups, as well as newspapers, calendars, and handbooks—reveals an astonishing amount of anger, despite or sometimes even because of the Pill, expressed over the terms of heterosexual sex. As one woman in a Frankfurt consciousness-raising group described the benefits of a women's group in contradiction to her experiences of New Left coed groups: in the New Left groups, there was a feeling of being unable to be real, there was only the ability to "put on a show, to produce myself (clothes, make-up)." In the women's group, by contrast, there was finally "the feeling no longer to be treated like an object as in the mixed groups (suitable for fucking, nothing else)."⁵⁴ Others pointed out that women still were so economically dependent on men—because they did not have as saleable skills, they needed ultimately to find a man who would support them—that really sex was not a free exchange: "The market value of the woman, like that of a breeding pig, is determined by age, weight and the firmness of the flesh . . . Since usually she has not learned much . . . she must therefore behave such that the man wants to fuck her."⁵⁵ In 1972, when the Berlin feminist group Bread and Roses published its thoughts on the Pill, it not only listed "leg cramps, blue hands, more pounds, dried-out skin, hair loss or beard growth" as side effects that some women who took the Pill experienced, but also noted: "Many women would love best to throw every Pill one by one into the garbage, but most young men are so incredibly convinced of the Pill's wonders, that one does not even dare to communicate one's worries, out of fear of being considered bitchy, hysterical, or old-fashioned."⁵⁶ And as a group of young feminists put it in a contribution to the *Frauen Zeitung* in 1973, under the subhead, "What does the Pill have to do with the Revolution?" men were so egotistical and irresponsible in sexual matters that even if a male pill were to be developed, most men could not be trusted to take it. Men just presumed that the women they slept with were on the Pill, but "it's so shitty, those guys can't be depended on at all, one would have to monitor perpetually to make sure they swallowed it." Moreover, even (or especially) "comrades"—i.e. New Left men—were so hostile to women's emancipation in

someday a complete "revolutionizing of the relationships between women and men" might even be possible.⁵⁷

Problems between New Left-affiliated men and women were clearly reflective of broader conflicts within the society as a whole. Not until the mid-1970s did strategies for achieving better female orgasms—albeit orgasms produced by female masturbation rather than male solicitude—become a national obsession also in the West German mainstream, as the Bertelsmann and Ullstein publishing companies offered German translations of the works of American female sex specialists Shere Hite and Lonnie Barbach. Reluctantly, and while taking side slaps at Hite's research method, *Der Spiegel* did mention Hite's findings that only 30 percent of women achieved climax through penetration alone, and announced that "never before have so many women" freed themselves from the fatalistic and suffering-inducing Freudian belief in vaginal orgasms.⁵⁸ *Stern* took a more profeminist line, enthusiastically endorsing the advice of female masturbation guru Barbach, and informed its readers in no uncertain terms that men needed to read her book as much as women, for after all it was "all too often the clumsiness or brutality of sexist men" that was responsible for the "lack of orgasm" in women.⁵⁹ And again, even this kind of diversification of sex advice was immediately corralled into the culture of quasipornographic voyeurism. Typical here was the Munich-based sexologist Günter Hunold's study, *Intimreport der deutschen Frau* (Intimate Report on the German Woman, 1978), which shared with readers housewives' detailed descriptions of masturbating with the help of such aids as *Eierlikör*, or vegetables ("I always purchase a bit more asparagus than I'll need for our evening meals").⁶⁰ Whether this book provided more of a masturbation aid for men or for women was an open question.

Moreover, this very moment of graphic information and assertiveness about female orgasm coincided almost exactly with an untrammelled, albeit incoherent, backlash against feminism. Already in 1975, *Der Spiegel* was reporting hopefully on what it described as a "return to femininity," while also communicating male rage over having to slave away to bring home money for wives who, because of the Pill, weren't even making any babies anymore.⁶¹ By 1977, *Die Zeit*, under the alarmist caption "Lysistrata everywhere," fretted that women were turning away from both men and motherhood.⁶² But when *Der Spiegel* reported in 1977 that women were rejecting the Pill in droves, the magazine could not imagine any other reason for this than that women must secretly crave motherhood. Any negative side-effects reported by women were dismissed as psychosomatic. *Der Spiegel* could not comprehend what possible pleasures there were for women who were not

instead of abstaining entirely on the unsafe days—as surely something that only a few “avant-garde” feminists, and their men, might possibly try.⁶³ The contrast with the American scene at this moment—when for example the mainstream women’s magazine *Redbook* was publishing happy statistics about the diverse kinds of fun heterosexual women were having with oral sex, sex combined with marijuana, etc.—is striking.⁶⁴

Yet another, and crucial, aspect of the distinctive West German backlash against feminism involved an upsurge of reports of male sexual dysfunction under heightened performance pressure. Already in 1969, the conservative tabloid *Bild* was reporting on sexually overtaxed men: until the age of 25, the newspaper stated, Germans sought sex daily; after age 30, however, husbands preferred watching television after work, and claimed to be “too tired.”⁶⁵ But by 1977, precisely in the midst of mainstream perplexity about female resistance to the Pill and major confusion about how to feel about the reports that female orgasms were easier to achieve through masturbation than through coitus, the subject of men’s retreat from sex was almost constantly discussed. *Stern* printed a cartoon in which a woman compared a man’s lack of energy in bed to nicotine-free cigarettes.⁶⁶ *Der Spiegel* declared that performance pressure was rampant especially among men in their late forties and fifties; “fear is the enemy of erection.” Men this age put too much emphasis on their work and let their sex lives slide. Taking up sex again at all required an “especially sensitive female partner”; rarely was this the wife.⁶⁷ And in a different essay, *Der Spiegel* coupled its report on the American Betty Dodson’s female masturbation techniques with another reminder that “militant masturbation ... means man-hatred.”⁶⁸ Yet a third essay again educated readers to the fact that for men, “precisely ... performance expectations ... blocked sexual capacities the most.”⁶⁹ Depressingly, men’s sense that they were under pressure was not leading them to change their ways. On the contrary, a study done by the Hamburg research institute SEAT in 1978 found that “every third woman would be happy if she could at least regularly achieve an orgasm.”⁷⁰ Meanwhile, men’s masturbation was avidly defended.⁷¹

Notably, furthermore, announcements that the sexual revolution was winding down soon followed the anti-feminist backlash. A sequence of article titles and captions in *Stern* said it all: “Between Desire and Frustration: Sex in Germany 1980: After the rush of freedom comes the hangover?” Then in 1982: “Men are becoming chaste. An end to sex ... The German man ... is fed up with the women’s movement.” One man quoted by *Stern* said it outright: “The women’s movement has reduced our horniness to zero.”⁷² Men and women were now widely reported to be having sex not much more frequently than they had been before the

Conclusion

One cannot make sense of how the Pill was experienced and interpreted in West Germany without understanding the complex context in which it became widely available. The Pill took away fear of pregnancy, and freed women to enjoy coitus as never before. The Pill was “an incomparable salvation” (*eine Rettung ohnegleichen*), as one young woman who had been involved in both the New Left and the early feminist movement put it.⁷³ “I experimented around without any inhibitions,” said another.⁷⁴ Men and women both eagerly sought out the new possibilities the Pill offered them.

Yet it is also striking how quickly the media registered male anxieties about performance pressure. The longing for sexually free women and the fear of those free women came hand in hand. Arriving as it did in conjunction with the sex-wave, this new freedom to enjoy sex also raised female expectations of sex and made it possible for girls and women to make demands for better sex on their male partners. Many men in turn responded with new insecurities and anger. As one woman sarcastically summarized the dilemma in 1980: “The men are constantly calling for the hot-to-trot woman, who shows her desire openly—but woe if she actually shows up. [*Die Männer rufen ständig nach der scharfen Frau, die ihr Begehren offen zeigt—aber wehe, sie kommt wirklich.*]”⁷⁵

Finally, the commodification of young women’s bodies that was the main feature of the sex-wave would also be one of the main reasons for many women’s ultimate ambivalence about the sexual revolution more generally and the Pill specifically.⁷⁶ Certainly, girls and women could experience the pleasures of self-display and of being objects of desire, but they could also find the objectification unnerving. Meanwhile, boys and men could experience the pleasures of looking and fantasizing, but while the Pill also made real sex far more readily available for them, sex with real women, especially when they started to make demands, could also somehow be awfully irritating. As one fed-up man put it in 1980, “Honestly, I am for the peep-show. The women’s movement doesn’t do anything for me.”⁷⁷ Feminist anger about the Pill, as it became articulated ever more publicly through the first half of the 1970s, took the mainstream by surprise. And yet that anger was not separable from a larger rage about and deeper sense of discontent with heterosexual relationships in all their dimensions. It would take the next, younger cohort of men—less oppressed by their own upbringings, less threatened by women’s intelligence or strength—to develop a different, more expansive approach to heterosexual sex. The Pill, and the liberalization of mores of which it was a part, created the conditions for a revolution in gender rela-

Notes

1. See the summary remarks about the differences between West Germany and other Western nations in Hermann Knaus, "Zur Frage der natürlichen Geburtenregelung und ihrer individuellen Anwendung," *Die Heilkunst* 69 (1956): 272-73; K. Saller, "Zivilisation und Sexualität," *Die Heilkunst* 70 (1957): 48; Günter Grund, "Optimale Kontrazeption," *Medizinische Welt*, no. 32 (10 August 1963): 1601; and "Die Antikonzeption—in Deutschland noch ein Stiefkind," *Berliner Arzteblatt* 78, no. 2 (1965): 73-77.
2. See Clemens Beyer, "Verkauf von Gummischutzmitteln durch Ausenautomaten," *Zeitschrift für ärztliche Fortbildung* 50/6 (1961): 460-62.
3. See "Schwarzer Terror," *Rheinische Zeitung*, 25 January 1951; "Der erste Scheiterhaufen," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 8 April 1952; and Hans Harmsen, "Mittel zur Geburtenregelung in der Gesetzgebung des Staates," in *Sexualität und Verbrechen*, ed. Fritz Bauer et al. (Frankfurt am Main, 1963), 185.
4. See Ludwig von Friedeburg, *Die Umfrage in der Intimsphäre* (Beiträge zur Sexualforschung), vol. 4 (Stuttgart, 1953), 24, 27, 46, 50; and Udo Undeutsch, "Comparative Incidence of Premarital Coitus in Scandinavia, Germany, and the United States," in *Sexual Behavior in American Society: An Appraisal of the First Two Kinsey Reports*, ed. Jerome Himmelhoach and Sylvia Fleis Fava (New York, 1955), 362.
5. See "Theologische Stimmen zur ärztlichen Beratung über Empfängnisverhütung," *Wege zum Menschen* 9 (1957): 193; "Erst die Liebe, dann die Moral? Alles über die Deutschen (15)," *Stern* 48 (1963), 43-52; and Elisabeth Noelle and Peter Neumann, eds., *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung 1958-1964* (Allensbach, 1965), 589. In this context see also Helmut Schelsky, who—interestingly—gives authority to his own critique of petting by citing anthropologist Margaret Mead's negative assessment of it. Helmut Schelsky, *Soziologie der Sexualität* (Hamburg, 1955), 121-22. For an example of an ordinary citizen who shared these views that "substitute solutions" like petting would have "the most damaging consequences for a later marriage," see Gerda Rupprich, letter to the editor, *Twenn*, no. 10 (1962), 11.
7. L. M. Lawrence, "Der Kinsey Report," *Merkur* 3/5 (1949): 495-99.
8. On the 1950s, see Peter Kuhnert and Ute Ackermann, "Jenseits von Lust und Liebe: Jugendsexualität in den 50er Jahren," in *Die Elvis-Tolle, die hatte ich mir unauffällig wachsen lassen: Lebensgeschichte und jugendliche Alltagskultur in den fünfziger Jahren*, ed. Heinz-Hermann Krüger (Opladen, 1985). In the early 1960s, 72 percent of young men and 44 percent of young women between the ages of twenty and thirty admitted to having at some point engaged in petting. But only a small minority approved of the practice. While it was "okay for the start of a relationship," it was like "playing with fire," or something "unnatural." See "Erst die Liebe, dann die Moral?," 50. And even into the mid-1960s, with the sex-wave in full swing, West German working-class youths in particular continued to feel that anything outside of coitus was a perversion. See "Die gefallene Natur," *Der Spiegel* 19, 2 May 1966, 50-69. Conversation with F. B., 2001.
9. Max Marcuse was one of the most important and influential sexuality specialists in Weimar. See especially his *Der Präventivverkehr in der medizinischen Lehre und ärztlichen Praxis* (Stuttgart, 1931).
10. H. Dietel, "Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der natürlichen Geburtenregelung," *Hamburger Arzteblatt* (November 1953): 234-35.
12. Anne Marie Durand-Wever, "Ärztliche Indikationen zur Empfängnisverhütung," in *... (Jahre) ...*, 6.

- more than a decade of very hostile attacks on it by numerous physicians—see Herbert Lax, "Methodik der Antikonzeption," *Deutsches medizinisches Journal* 15, no. 8 (April 1964): 261-67.
13. Conversation with F. T., 2001.
 14. See R. Hobbings, "Zur Frage der Haltbarkeit von Minderjährigen," *Unsere Jugend* 6, no. 8 (1954): 366-68; "Erst die Liebe, dann die Moral?," 46; and "Jung gefreit—Nie gereut," *Twenn* (1960), 29; and "Darüber spricht man nicht," *Twenn* (1960), 30. The divorce rate for teen marriages was twice as high as that for marriages between 24- and 26-year-olds.
 15. See Angela Delille and Andrea Grohn, *Blick zurück aufs Glück* (Berlin, 1985), 124; "Ist der Betrieb ein Heiratsmarkt? Alles über die Deutschen (2)," *Stern* 16/35 (1963), 25; Harmsen, "Mittel zur Geburtenregelung," 175; Gisela Staube and Lisa Vieth, "Einführungs" in *Die Pille: Von der Lust und von der Liebe*, ed. Staube and Vieth (Berlin, 1996), 14; and "Heiraten nur weil ein Kind kommt?," *Twenn* (1960), 26. One feminist text in 1974 stated as self-evident that one out of every two marriages was a "must marriage." Criticizing the block placed by the Federal Constitutional Court in June 1974 on the implementation of a liberalized abortion law that had been preliminarily passed by the *Bundesrat* in 1973, feminists summarized the misery of an unwanted pregnancy. Referring to the eight judges, the women wrote: "None of these men ... know the panic of having a monthly period be even only a few days late, none of them knows the crashing breakdown that happens when we finally know that we are expecting a child that we cannot or do not want to raise. None of them know the sense of alienation from one's own body, when the biological mechanism of a pregnancy is moving along against the will of the woman. None of them seem even to know that in such situations marriages are entered into that develop into a terror for the woman, the man, and the children." See "Kundgebungsbeitrag: Frauen und soldarische Männer" (1974), personal archive Sibylla Flügge, Frankfurt am Main.
 16. See Hans Harmsen, "Abtreibung oder Empfängnisverhütung?," *Gesundheitsfürsorge* 3 (1953/54): 123; and the very informative essay by A. V. Knack and W. Pieper, "Der Stand der Empfängnisverhütung in der ärztlichen Praxis," *Ärztliche Mitteilungen* 41/14 (May 1956): 388.
 17. Hermann Doerfler, "Was kann die Bayer. Ärzteschaft und was der einzelne Arzt zur Bekämpfung der Abtreibungssuche beitragen?," *Münchener Medizinische Wochenschrift* 95, no. 17 (24 April 1953): 509-11.
 18. Harmsen, "Mittel zur Geburtenregelung," 186.
 19. See Michael Luft, "Abtreibung in Deutschland: Hilfe, ich kriege ein Kind! (1)," *Konkret* (May 1964), 7-11. One study done in Kiel in the early 1950s suggested that one out of every twenty abortions was performed by a physician. See Doerfler, "Was kann die Bayer. Ärzteschaft?," See also Theodor Bruck, *Geburtenregelung* (Flensburg, 1964), 129-30.
 20. Durand-Wever, "Ärztliche Indikationen."
 21. Luft, "Abtreibung in Deutschland," 9.
 22. Delille and Grohn, *Blick zurück aufs Glück*, 123.
 23. The case of Dr. Suhr is discussed in Michael Luft, "Paragraph 218 oder Baby-Pille für Alle: Hilfe, ich kriege ein Kind! (2)," *Konkret* (July-August 1964), 7-9, 16.
 24. See Delille and Grohn, *Blick zurück aufs Glück*, 123; and the comments about Dr. Hanns Dietel's study in the interview with Dr. Heinz Kirchoff in "Anti-Baby-Pillen nur für Ehefrauen," *Der Spiegel* 9, 26 February 1964, 87.
 25. See Carl Nedelmann, "Abtreibung: Geburtenregelung und Strafrechtsreform," *... (Jahre) ...*, 6.

26. See Heike Rieder, letter to the editor, *Konkret*, Sept 1964, 2; and the statistics on West Germany in Kühne, "Australiens Frauen und die Pille: Bremswirkung pseudowissenschaftlich erzeugter Karzinophobie," *Berliner Ärzteblatt* 78, no. 7 (1965): 370-73.
27. Kirchhoff quoted in "Anti-Baby Pillen," 87.
28. See Bruck, *Geburtenregelung*, 127-28; and Delille and Grohn, *Blick zurück aufs Glück*, 123.
29. Schelsky, *Soziologie der Sexualität*, 125-26.
30. Christian Crull and Hans Hagedorn, "Sex und Profit," *Diskus* 12, no. 7 (1962), 1.
31. Theodor W. Adorno, "Sexualtabu und Recht heute," in *Sexualität und Verbrechen*, ed. Fritz Bauer et al., especially 299-308.
32. See "Die gefällene Natur," 50, 53-54.
33. *Ibid.*, 58.
34. See "Umfrage in die Intimsphäre: Alles über die Deutschen (13)," *Stern* 16/46 (1963), 56; "Erst die Liebe, dann die Moral," 52; see also the comments about yearning for twosomeness and for founding a family in Dieter Binder, "Anmerkung-en zum Thema Sex on the Campus," *Diskus* no. 7, (July/August 1960), 1; and Anton van der Vet, "Generation ohne Hitler," *Konkret* (1962).
35. Conversation with C. K., 2001.
36. The poster can be seen in Sabine Weisler, "Sexy Sixties," in *CheSchahShit. Die sechziger Jahre zwischen Cocktail und Molotov* (Berlin, 1984).
37. E.g. see the authorities quoted in "Erst die Liebe, dann die Moral," 50; and "Zur Jugendliebe gehört die Empfängnisverhütung," *Der Spiegel* 35 (1966), 55.
38. See Luft, "Paragraph 218," 7-9, 16; and Moritz Pfeil, "Eine gewisse Presse, eine gewisse Justiz: Der Lehrfall Dohrn," *Der Spiegel* 17/47, 20 November 1963.
39. See Gerhard Döring, "Das erste Mal," *Eltern*, June 1969, 56; "Anti-Baby Pillen," 81; "Last und Lust," *Der Spiegel* 22/32, 5 August 1968, 85; "Ins rechte Mass," *Der Spiegel* 24/12, 16 March 1970, 190, 195; "Die Kinder wollen keine Kinder mehr," *Der Spiegel* 29/13, 24 March 1975, cover page ("Sterben die Deutschen aus?") and 42, 44; and "Das Unbehagen an der Pille," *Der Spiegel* 31/6, 31 January 1977, cover page ("Überdross an der Pille") and 40.
40. "Die gefällene Natur," 68. For a confident summary assertion, as late as 1964, that the vast majority of young girls were not experiencing anything at all in their coital encounters, see Lax, "Methodik der Antikonzeption," 266-67.
41. For example, see Gisela Schmeier, "Die Aufklärung und wir Frauen (VII)," *Eltern*, July 1969, 119; "Jeder sechste will mir jeder," *Der Spiegel* 13 (1971), 180; and Ingrid Kolb, "Das Warten der Frauen auf den Orgasmus," *Stern* 22 (1980), 132-45.
42. Klaus Theweleit, *Ghosts: Drei leicht inkorrekte Vorträge* (Frankfurt am Main, 1998), 106-7. Or, as Theweleit had put it several years earlier, a "special sort of sexual tension was the 'driving force' of 1968" in West Germany. Klaus Theweleit, ... *ein Aspirin von der Größe der Sonne* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1990), 49.
43. Weisler, "Sexy Sixties," 99.
44. H. Abholz, H. W. Dräger, and B. Wirt, "Lautloses Platzen," *FU Spiegel*, February 1968.
45. The *Weiberrat* quoted in Dagmar Herzog, "Pleasure, Sex and Politics Belong Together: Post-Holocaust Memory and the Sexual Revolution in West Germany," in *Intimacy*, ed. Lauren Berlant (Chicago, 2000), 139.
46. *Kinderschule* Frankfurt, in *Erziehung zum Ungehorsam*, ed. Gerhard Bott (Frankfurt am Main, 1970), 51, 54.
47. Theweleit, *Ghosts*, 129.
48. *Berliner Kinderläden: Antiautoritäre Erziehung und sozialistischer Kampf* (Cologne,

49. "Psychische Verelendung und Emanzipatorische Selbsttätigkeit" (collective statement produced by a women's group circa 1974), 6. Personal archive, Sibylla Flügge, Frankfurt am Main.
50. See Sibylla Flügge, "1968 und die Frauen—Ein Blick in die Beziehungskiste," in *Gender und soziale Praxis*, ed. Margit Göttert and Karin Wälsler (Königstein/Taunus, 2002), especially 266-86.
51. "Psychische Verelendung," 6-7.
52. Conversation with T. S., 2002.
53. Conversation with G. T., 2000.
54. "Psychische Verelendung," 5.
55. Elisabeth Skerutsch, "Was soll der Abtreibungsparagraf?," mimeograph flyer, circa 1974, personal archive Sibylla Flügge, Frankfurt am Main.
56. *Brot und Rosen* statement from 1972, quoted in Volkmar Sigusch, "Sexualwissenschaftliche Aspekte der hormonalen Kontrazeption bei jungen Mädchen," in *Sexualität und Medizin*, ed. Sigusch (Cologne, 1979), 91.
57. "Was denn nun: Pille, Spirale oder Gummi? (Beitrag vom Frauenzentrum Berlin)," *Frauen Zeitung*, no. 1, Oct. 1973, 7, 15.
58. "Hite-Report: Abnabeln von Doktor Freud," *Der Spiegel* 5 (1977), 185. Hite also reported that 87 percent of her respondents did still continue to seek penetration, but largely for "the sake of a bodily contact and the feeling of togetherness." In a rare moment of reflectiveness, *Der Spiegel* suggested that this idea of using the penis as a method of communication, not only an instrument, could perhaps lead the way out of the "genital labyrinth": "But this would mean, as the U.S. psychiatrist Herb Goldberg formulated it, to move men to feel. Goldberg is pessimistic: that's as though one would tell a cripple to run."
59. Otto Köhler, "Über die Liebe an und für sich," *Stern* 19, 28 April 1977, 74.
60. Günter Hunold, *Intimreport der deutschen Frau: Die sexuelle Befreiung vom Mann* (Munich, 1978), 190-93.
61. "Frau 75: 'Grosse erotische Mutter,'" *Der Spiegel* (1975). The cover displayed a naked woman with a child and announced "Woman 75: Return to Femininity."
62. Viola Roggenkamp, "Lysistrata geht um: Kein Pillenklick, sondern die Emanzipation der Frau lehrt die Gesellschaft das Fürchten," *Die Zeit* 18, 22 April 1977, 57.
63. "Das Unbehagen an der Pille," 40.
64. See Robert J. Levin and Amy Levin, "Sexual Pleasure: The Surprising Preferences of 100,000 Women," *Redbook* (1975), 55; and Robert J. Levin, "The Redbook Report on Premarital and Extramarital Sex," *Redbook*, October 1975, 190.
65. "Bis 25: Täglich Liebe. Ab 30: Ich bin so müde," *Bild*, 24 January 1969.
66. *Stern* cartoon reprinted in "Jüngstes Gerücht," *Der Spiegel*, 28 February 1977, 190.
67. "Jüngstes Gerücht," 191.
68. "Mild bis wild," *Der Spiegel*, 7 March 1977, 207.
69. "Stunde der Wahrheit," *Der Spiegel*, 18 April 1977, 231.
70. Ingrid Kolb, "Zwischen Lust und Frust," *Stern* 21 (1980), 132.
71. E.g. see *Pflasterstrand*, no. 23 (late January-early February 1978), 3.
72. Conrad Zander, "Die Männer werden keusch: Schluss mit dem Sex," *Stern* 51, 16 December 1982, 48-50; "Die verteuflerte Lust," *Stern* 47, 17 November 1983, 78.
73. Conversation with R. G., 2002.
74. Conversation with C. H., 1996.
75. Quoted in Kolb, "Zwischen Lust und Frust," 172.
76. For example, see the analysis in "Zum Wandel der Sexualmoral," a paper written by an anonymous woman in a seminar at the University of Frankfurt, probably in the

she pointed out, was not just about satisfying sexual drives; it was very much also about ego-confirmation for men who had so few other sources for that confirmation. Since in late capitalism sexuality was meant to function as a compensation for all existential insecurities induced in men by the experiences of daily life, especially at work, the fetishization of female bodies in the media and the recent rhetoric affirming female sexuality—and the presentation of that affirmation as a victory for women's emancipation—really meant nothing but a coercion for women, a constant compulsion "always and above all to be sexy ... always and above all to be available for sex," and "the pressure voluntarily to identify with her role as sex-object for men." The Pill was constantly presented as *the* ticket to women's emancipation, but it came together with insistent duress, and frequent declarations that women were "neurotic, frustrated, or even repressive, if they do not want to sleep with someone." See also the devastating interviews about women's bad experiences of heterosexual sex in Alice Schwarzer's *Der "kleine" Unterschied* (1975), discussed in Leona Sieben-schön, "Noch genauso frigide," *Die Zeit* 30, 18 July 1975, 37.

77. Gernot Galler, "Eine Traumfrau zieht sich aus," *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* 40–41 (September 1980): 91.

Chapter 13

Boy Trouble: French Pedophilia Discourse of the 1970s

Julian Bourq

On 28 January 2001, the British newspaper, the *Observer*, broke a story about a former 1960s radical turned Green Party delegate to the European Parliament.¹ Daniel Cohn-Bendit had first achieved prominence as a vocal figure in the French student/worker strikes of May 1968. Thirty-one years later he was elected to the Parliament in Strasbourg, representing France as a dedicated Europeanist. The *Observer* article publicized remarks Cohn-Bendit had made in a 1975 book he wrote on education, *The Big Madness*, and then in a German countercultural magazine in August 1976. Working in an experimental children's school set up by New Leftists, part of the 1970s *Kindergarten* movement, he said that his interactions with students occasionally became sensual or sexual. Sexually curious overtures were made by the children, and in the open, anti-authoritarian ambience of the time, he sometimes indulged them. As he wrote in 1976, "It has happened to me several times that a few children opened the fly of my pants and started to stroke me. I reacted differently each time according to the circumstances, but their desire confronted me with problems. I asked them: 'Why don't you play with each other, why have you chosen me and not other children?' But when they insisted on it, I then stroked them. For that reason I was accused of perverted behavior." When asked by the *Observer* to assess his earlier admission, Cohn-Bendit replied that, although it was correct for public figures to account for their pasts, his remarks should be viewed in the context of their times. As an educator in 1970s Germany, his published remarks had ~~been~~ interpreted to pro-~~claim~~ that tea had ~~been~~ had ~~by~~ people~~d~~ the