



Outrages

Sex, Censorship, and the Criminalization of Love

Naomi Wolf

Censorship / LGBT Studies / Social History

\$19.95 USD • \$28.95 CAD

Paperback Original • 6 × 9 • 384 pages

Black-and-white photographs and illustrations throughout

ISBN 978-1-64502-016-5

On-Sale Date: October 9, 2020

Media Contact:

info@drnaomiwolf.com

Event Contact:

Jenna Stewart, Events Manager

jstewart@chelseagreen.com



follow us on [f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [p](#)

From *New York Times* bestselling author Naomi Wolf, *Outrages* explores the history of state-sponsored censorship and violations of personal freedoms through the inspiring, forgotten story of one writer's refusal to stay silenced.

Released for the first time in North America on October 9, *Outrages* (newly updated and expanded) chronicles the struggles and eventual triumph of John Addington Symonds, a Victorian-era poet, biographer, and critic who penned what became a foundational text on our modern understanding of human sexual orientation and LGBTQ+ legal rights, despite writing at a time when anything interpreted as homoerotic could be used as evidence in trials leading to harsh sentences under British law.

Wolf's book is extremely relevant today for what it has to say about the vital importance of freedom of speech and the courageous roles of publishers and booksellers in an era of growing calls for censorship and ever-escalating state violations of privacy. At a time when the American Library Association, the *Guardian*, and other observers document national and global efforts from censoring LGBTQ+ voices in libraries to using anti-trans and homophobic sentiments cynically to win elections, the story of how such hateful efforts evolved from the past, to reach down to us now, is more important than ever.

Drawing on the work of a range of scholars of censorship and of LGBTQ+ legal history, Wolf depicts how state censorship, and state prosecution of same-sex sexuality, played out—decades before the infamous trial of Oscar Wilde—shadowing the lives of people who risked in ever-changing, targeted ways scrutiny by the criminal justice system. She shows how legal persecutions of writers, and of men who loved men affected Symonds and his contemporaries, all the while, Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* was illicitly crossing the Atlantic and finding its way into the hands of readers who reveled in the American poet's celebration of freedom, democracy, and unfettered love.

Inspired by Whitman, Symonds kept trying, stubbornly, to find a way to express his message—that love and sex between men were not “morbid” and deviant, but natural and even ennobling. He wrote a strikingly honest secret memoir written in code to embed hidden messages—which he embargoed for a generation after his death—and wrote the essay *A Problem in Modern Ethics* that was secretly shared in his lifetime and is now rightfully understood as one of the first gay rights manifestos in the English language.

Equal parts insightful historical critique and page-turning literary detective story, Wolf's *Outrages* is above all an uplifting testament to the triumph of romantic love.

To request a review copy or author interview, please contact: Christina Butt (802) 295-6300 ext. 127, or cbutt@chelseagreen.com



Naomi Wolf's most recent books include the *New York Times* best sellers *Vagina*, *Give Me Liberty*, and *The End of America*, as well as the landmark best seller *The Beauty Myth*. She completed a doctorate in English Language and Literature from the University of Oxford in 2015 and has taught at The George Washington University and Sony Brook University. Wolf lives in New York City.

Chelsea Green Publishing is an employee-owned global publishing house with offices in the UK and US, and a leading publisher of books on the politics and practice of sustainable living. Founded in 1984, our books share new ideas on organic farming and gardening, alternative agriculture, green and renewable energy, environmental stewardship and activism, sustainable economy, health and wellness, politics and public policy, and more. Find out more at chelseagreen.com.

PRAISE FOR

OUTRAGES

SEX, CENSORSHIP, AND THE
CRIMINALIZATION OF LOVE

“A heartbreaking, eye-opening book...*Outrages* is revelatory in the way it brings together sometimes unbearably painful personal narratives with political and literary history...[a] remarkable book.”

—*HARPER'S BAZAAR*

“A remarkable and moving work.”

—LARRY KRAMER, AUTHOR OF *FAGGOTS AND THE NORMAL HEART*

“With precision and sensitivity, Naomi Wolf traces how the state came to police the private sphere; she brings into the light the lives of those whose resistance to this brutality was a beacon for the future. *Outrages* is a remarkable, revelatory book.”

—ERICA WAGNER, AUTHOR OF *CHIEF ENGINEER: THE MAN WHO BUILT THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE*

“*Outrages* is a fascinating history book with a cast of characters and an epic sweep that make it read like a novel Charles Dickens could have written, if he had ever written one about queers.”

—*NEW YORK JOURNAL OF BOOKS*

“In *Outrages*, Naomi Wolf reveals a largely forgotten history of how science, law, and culture have intersected to suppress and silence sexual expression. As expanding acceptance threatens to erase a history of LGBTQ marginalization and struggle—and as we descend into authoritarian rule across so many countries—this is an important, powerful tale.”

—SHAHID BUTTAR, MARRIAGE EQUALITY ACTIVIST AND ATTORNEY

“[A] long-overdue literary investigation into censorship and the life of a tormented trailblazer, a prescient father of the modern gay rights movement.”

—*OPRAH MAGAZINE*

“[This] remarkable book is a tour de force of research and insight into Symonds' life and work and the related evolution of public and state attitudes toward homosexuality. [Wolf's] is an essential contribution not only to queer history but also to studies of nineteenth-century culture. It is not to be missed.”

—*BOOKLIST, STARRED REVIEW*

“Wolf provides engrossing accounts of Whitman and Symonds, yet her story is even more compelling in its wider portrait of the societies and institutions in America as well as England that served to shape the fears and prejudices that have lingered into our modern age. An absorbing and thoughtfully researched must-read for anyone interested in the history of censorship and issues relating to gay male sexuality.”

—*KIRKUS REVIEWS*

“This ambitious literary, biographical, and historical treatise from Wolf (*The Beauty Myth*) examines both 19th-century Britain's persecution of gay men and the work and life of the relatively obscure gay writer John Addington Symonds (1840–1893)...a fascinating look at this period and these writers.”

—*PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*

BY

NAOMI WOLF