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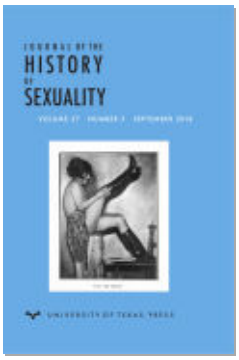
Sexologyâ€™s Photographic Turn: Visualizing Trans Identity in Interwar Germany



Katie Sutton

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Sexology's Photographic Turn: Visualizing Trans Identity in Interwar Germany

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PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE PLAYED an increasingly important role in the efforts of early twentieth-century sexual scientists to establish their discipline as what Michel Foucault describes as "legitimate knowledge."[1] Since the late nineteenth century, pioneers in the field of sexology, such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing in Vienna, Havelock Ellis in Britain, and Magnus Hirschfeld in Germany, had relied heavily on the autobiographical statements of patients and other informants in their efforts to uncover the mysteries of human sexual life, publishing these as case histories in support of newly forged classifications of what they at first described as sexual "pathologies" and "perversions." But the almost exclusive reliance on subjective textual evidence began to change when technological developments in photography and its mass reproduction combined with an expanding patient base in ways that enabled sexologists to embrace this seemingly more empirical form of evidence. Historians have shown that from the mid-nineteenth century onward scientists had started turning to photography as a more tangible, "scientific" form of evidence that, in its mechanical objectivity, resonated with society's abiding concern with the "Truth."[2] This article

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[1] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *The Will to Knowledge* (London: Penguin, 1998), 72.

[2] See, for example, Anne Maxwell, *Picture Imperfect: Photography and Eugenics, 1879–1940* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2008), 50; Molly Rogers, *Delia's Tears: Race, Science, and Photography in Nineteenth-Century America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010); Gunnar Schmidt, *Anamorphotische Körper: Medizinische Bilder vom Menschen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001); John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (London: Macmillan, 1988); John Tagg, *The Disciplinary*

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sets out, first, to chart the ways in which this sexological turn toward the visual in the first decades of the twentieth century played out in relation to the historical diagnosis of a new "transvestite" (*Transvestit/in*, Hirschfeld) or "Eonist" (Ellis) category. (In the following, I frequently refer to these categories using the umbrella category of "trans identifications," a somewhat anachronistic label, but one that reflects both the broad parameters of these historical terms and the fact that they have been fiercely disputed by trans scholars and activists in recent decades. At the same time, it remains useful to deploy the term "transvestite," in particular, to reference the historically dominant term adopted by trans-identified individuals and doctors alike in early twentieth-century Germany.)[3] Second, this article considers the ways in which medical images of trans subjects differed from the kind of self-representation emerging in German "third sex" subcultural contexts, which included emerging homosexual and trans political organizations and media.

There were significant overlaps, I suggest, in the representational practices framing early German sexological photography, particularly in the works of Hirschfeld—the self-declared expert on "sexual intermediaries"—and the kinds of images that were beginning to appear in subcultural community magazines by the late Weimar period, such as *Das 3. Geschlecht* (The third sex). At the same time, there were some significant divergences that can be traced to the differing scientific and political motivations of each group. For while sexologists were working to firm up their disciplinary credentials, a first generation of transgender activists was working to extend the rights and public recognition of individuals whose gender identification did not align with the sex assigned to them at birth.

In her 2013 book *Disturbing Practices*, Laura Doan argues that history writing that is framed by concepts of identity constrains as much as it illuminates because it remains tied to "the logic of lineage." This applies not only to what Doan describes as the "ancestral genealogy" mode of queer history writing, which seeks to "recover" nonheteronormative subjectivities in the past in ways that affirm identities in the present, but also to what she terms the "queer genealogy" mode, with roots in Foucauldian critiques, which explicitly sets out to destabilize identity categories.[4] Similarly, Robyn Wiegman highlights the ways in which twentieth-century "identity knowledges" such as queer, race, transgender, and feminist studies inevitably force the

Frame: Photographic Truths and the Capture of Meaning (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); Jennifer Tucker, *Nature Exposed: Photography as Eyewitness in Victorian Science* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

[3] For a thoughtful critical introduction to the ways in which the terms "transvestite" and "transvest(it)ism" have been deployed and contested since their early twentieth-century emergence, see Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2008), 16–17, 38, 42–43, 46–47, 49, 53–57, 96–97.

[4] Laura Doan, *Disturbing Practices: History, Sexuality, and Women's Experience of Modern War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), ix, 58–59.

reproduction of identity categories, "no matter how resolutely one may be moved by their traditions of anti-identity critique."[5] Wiegman's emphasis on the complex links and divergences between social justice projects and academic identity knowledges prompts the question, how might we begin to think about the relationship between contemporary transgender activism and theory, on the one hand, which tends to treat trans as an intersecting modality rather than a category, and, on the other hand, early twentieth-century efforts to create discrete identity categories intended to clearly distinguish between trans and same-sex desires and identifications?[6]

Seeking to directly confront the limits of such identity-oriented forms of knowledge for the history of sexuality, Doan proposes a form of "queer critical history" focused on understanding how historical subjects themselves negotiated the "limits of naming and self-naming," particularly around questions of gender and sexuality.[7] This approach considers individual subjectivity as a process rather than a given and seeks to understand how sexual difference, in the words of Joan Scott, "is established, how it operates, [and] how and in what ways it constitutes subjects who see and act in the world."[8] Crucially, Doan's queer critical history provides a means of extending the scope of the history of sexuality, forcing scholars to "'look through' the archive to see what is unknown at the present moment," including the many "topsy-turvy," incoherent, or unnamed sexual practices and experiences of gendered embodiment that defy easy categorization according to twenty-first-century labels.[9]

While this essay does not escape the constraints of naming and identity, focusing as it does on photographs of individuals published under the new biomedical label of the "transvestite," I do seek to engage critically with the ways in which the making of new sexual classifications and identities in the first decades of the twentieth century was linked to the making of new visual genres or modes of representation. "Resemblance," as Roland Barthes writes of the process of creating photographically mediated "likenesses," "is a conformity, but to what? to an identity."[10] Decades of photographic scholarship have offered deep insights into the complex workings of invention, mirroring, and identification that shape the process of reproducing lens-based images of human subjects. More recently, scholars have productively interrogated the relationships of affect and attachment that link the

[5] Robyn Wiegman, *Object Lessons* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 113n19.

[6] On approaching trans as a "modality," see Susan Stryker, "Transgender History, Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity," *Radical History Review*, no. 100 (2008): 145–57.

[7] Doan, *Disturbing Practices*, 141.

[8] Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991): 777, as cited in Doan, *Disturbing Practices*, 4.

[9] Doan, *Disturbing Practices*, 90.

[10] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 100.

photographic object to its subjects, spectators, and creators.[11] Yet historians of this modern medium, such as Jennifer Tucker, have rightly noted that we do not yet know enough about how photographs function "as mediators between scientific and popular culture."[12] In this article I argue that the dialogical relationship between sexology's visual turn and an emerging trans subculture helped to solidify a recognizable transvestite "look" by the late Weimar period, even as overlapping representational tropes could carry very different meanings for sexual scientists and the individuals photographed.

From the Case Study to the Photograph

The dependence of a first generation of sexual scientists on the "voices of perverts" points to the significance of the case history as a genre of evidence in modern medicine.[13] This field had undergone rapid professionalization and a rise in prestige during the nineteenth century, particularly in German-speaking central Europe.[14] In an era in which sexology had not yet established its own discrete body of clinical patients, early medical sex researchers relied heavily on informants who had heard about this research and shared details of their sexual proclivities. Researchers then worked to resituate these patient tales into more scientific, respectable contexts.[15] The paucity of patients also led sexologists to draw on unconventional sources

[11] This is, of course, a vast body of scholarship; in the following I draw particularly on Barthes, *Camera Lucida*; Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," in *Selected Writings, Vol. 3, 1935–1938*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Elspeth Brown and Thy Phu, eds., *Feeling Photography* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014); Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October*, nos. 36–39 (1986); Kaja Silverman, *The Miracle of Analogy or The History of Photography, Part 1* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015); Tagg, *Disciplinary Frame*; Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977); Annette Vowinckel, *Agenten der Bilder: Fotografisches Handeln im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2016).

[12] Tucker, *Nature Exposed*, 10.

[13] This phrase appears in Harry Oosterhuis, "Sexual Modernity in the Works of Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Albert Moll," *Medical History* 56, no. 2 (2012): 133–55.

[14] On the professionalization of German medicine, see Paul Weindling, "Bourgeois Values, Doctors and the State: The Professionalization of Medicine in Germany 1848–1933," in *The German Bourgeoisie*, ed. David Blackbourn and Richard J. Evans (London: Routledge, 1991), 198–223. On the role of the case study in the history of modern medicine, see Warwick Anderson, "The Case of the Archive," in *Cases and the Dissemination of Knowledge*, ed. Joy Damousi, Birgit Lang, and Katie Sutton (New York: Routledge, 2015), 15–30; Julia Epstein, "Historiography, Diagnosis, and Poetics," *Literature and Medicine* 11, no. 1 (1992): 23–44; and John Forrester, "If *p*, Then What? Thinking in Cases," *History of the Human Sciences* 9 (1996): 1–25.

[15] An excellent analysis of these interactions between early sex researchers and their lay informants can be found in Harry Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren of Nature: Krafft-Ebing, Psychiatry, and the Making of Sexual Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

for their scientific inquiries, with Krafft-Ebing basing his new diagnostic categories of "sadism" and "masochism" on the literary accounts of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch and the Marquis de Sade.[16] The production of sexological knowledge in this era thus depended as much on the mutually informative interactions between doctors, patients, and cultural producers as on the hierarchical imposition of pathologizing diagnoses that many early post-Foucauldian readings of sexual science tended to emphasize. Most sexologists were sympathetic to the plight of patients who visited their clinics in search of help, even if they often classified these individuals as deviants, perverts, or mentally ill. As Krafft-Ebing declared in 1892, "Science shows that such moral monsters are stepchildren of nature, unfortunate creatures, against whom society has to protect itself, to be sure, but who . . . should not be made to suffer for their social incapacity and their sexuality, for which they cannot be held responsible."[17] Sexologists offered their patients a medicalized understanding of their seemingly abnormal desires, often reassuring them, as Krafft-Ebing's words were aimed to do, that inclinations such as homosexuality were inborn and thus unchangeable. This approach marked a distinct shift from earlier moralizing and religious frameworks for assessing and criminalizing sex/gender diversity.[18]

In return, sexologists received collections of individual life stories that they could transform, through careful selection, editing, and commentary, into scientific evidence.[19] Such exchanges marked a crucial moment in establishing the legitimacy of sexual science in the context of modern scientific medicine. The ever more frequent deployment of photographic evidence by sexual scientists in the first decades of the twentieth century, then, represented only the most recent iteration of this wider striving for scientific legitimacy; sexologists were also turning increasingly in these decades toward more empirical and quantitative modes of data collection

[16] On the interactions between modern literature and sexology, see, for example, Heike Bauer, *English Literary Sexology: Translations of Inversion, 1860–1930* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Lucy Bland and Laura Doan, *Sexology in Culture: Labelling Bodies and Desires* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998); Birgit Lang, Joy Damousi, and Alison Lewis, *A History of the Case Study: Sexology, Psychoanalysis, Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017); and Anna Katharina Schaffner, *Modernism and Perversion: Sexual Deviance in Sexology and Literature, 1850–1930* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[17] Krafft-Ebing, as cited in Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren*, 95–96.

[18] See, in particular, Arnold Davidson's Foucauldian-inspired description of the emergence of distinctly modern psychiatric models of sexual "abnormality" out of older religious and moral frameworks and his close history of these nineteenth-century psychiatric approaches in *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[19] On this process, see, for example, Ivan Crozier, "Pillow Talk: Credibility, Trust and the Sexological Case History," *History of Science* 46 (2008): 375–404; Birgit Lang and Katie Sutton, "The Queer Cases of Psychoanalysis: Rethinking the Scientific Study of Homosexuality, 1890s–1920s," *German History* 34, no. 3 (2016): 419–44.

such as surveys and laboratory-based research.[20] Yet as sexologists' pool of informants grew, technological developments in photography and its mass reproduction meant that this was beginning to represent a particularly appealing form of scientific evidence, one that appeared far less subject to the vagaries of individual memory and selection than the text-based case study. From the late nineteenth century onward, photography provided scientists with a tangible form of evidence that not only offered embodied illustrations of medical diagnoses but also, in its mechanical reproducibility, resonated with the concerns of a more thoroughly "scientific" medicine. "The objectivity of the process . . . suggested that the photograph was not a representation, a mere copy of the original object, but in fact the thing itself," argues Molly Rogers. Although scholars have deeply problematized photography's ability to represent, in any straightforward sense, any singular "truths" about its subjects, Kaja Silverman emphasizes the enduring appeal of the medium's indexicality: "Since an analogue photograph is the luminous trace of what was in front of the camera at the moment the photograph was made . . . it attests to its referent's reality, just as a footprint attests to the reality of the foot that formed it."[21]

Exploring the specific value of photography as a static medium in the context of scientific modernity, Dana Seitler emphasizes the ways in which growing concerns about the limitations of other forms of scientific evidence contributed to an increasingly strong belief in the "photograph as synecdoche for the modern subject":

> The static medium of the photograph was used by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century science as an instrument not only to document the human body, but also to reproduce it in a suspended state, more easily allowing for slow, methodical observation. We might understand the scientific and juridical investment in the photograph as opposed to the motion picture, then, as stemming from the camera's ability to freeze its subjects in time. . . . By freezing bodies in time as well as in space, photography, as Benjamin famously put it, "made it possible for the first time to preserve permanent and unmistakable traces of a human being."[22]

[20] On the increasing impact of ideas of "science" on medicine in modernity, see Michael Hagner, "Scientific Medicine," in *From Natural Philosophy to the Sciences: Writing the History of Nineteenth-Century Science*, ed. David Cahan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 49–87. On the changing methods of sexual scientific inquiry across the course of the twentieth century, see, for example, Vern L. Bullough, *Science in the Bedroom: A History of Sex Research* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); and Volkmar Sigusch, *Geschichte der Sexualwissenschaft* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2008).

[21] Rogers, *Delia's Tears*, 14; Silverman, *Miracle of Analogy*, 1. See also Tucker, *Nature Exposed*, 6 and passim; Tagg, *The Disciplinary Frame*.

[22] Dana Seitler, *Atavistic Tendencies: The Culture of Science in American Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 88, 67–68. See also Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), 255.

Sexologists particularly valued photography, then, for its realism, which allowed it to seem, as Birgit Lang observes, "more authentic and meaningful" (*aussagekräftiger*) than either works of art or the "ambivalent" genre of literary case studies.[23] Reflecting the more positivistic brand of medicine that had emerged during the nineteenth century, oriented toward that which is visible on the body and experimental modes such as the autopsy, the growing belief that photography could offer a convincing form of scientific evidence also supports Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison's observation of a shift away from older, idealizing traditions of scientific illustration, which had focused on illustrating underlying types and regularities rather than the idiosyncrasies of the individual object.[24]

Only a handful of studies to date have considered this move toward visual evidence within early twentieth-century sexology, focusing particularly on publications by Hirschfeld.[25] My article contributes to this still patchy

[23] Birgit Lang, "Die Erotik in der Photographie: Zum Habitus von Sexualwissenschaftern," *LiTheS*, no. 5 (November 2010): 6, my translation. In similar terms, Caplan argues that photographs offered a means of making the body "more transparent to scientific interpretation and manipulation": Jane Caplan, "Educating the Eye: The Tattooed Prostitute," in *Sexology in Culture*, ed. Bland and Doan, 102.

[24] Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone, 2007), 42. Kathrin Peters similarly notes the value of photography as a form of evidence lending itself to comparative analyses, in contrast to earlier forms of medical illustration, and usefully situates Foucault's discussion of the growing medical emphasis on the visible, in which the autopsy played a central role, in relation to fin-de-siècle sexology: *Rätselbilder des Geschlechts: Körperwissen und Medialität um 1900* (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2010), 24, 34, 38–39. See also Michel Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage, 1994).

[25] The most significant studies of the uses of photography in early twentieth-century German sexology include Kathrin Peters's German-language monograph examining how images were used to constitute sex/gender difference in German medical texts ca. 1900, together with a recent essay in English examining their uses by Hirschfeld and Wilhelm von Gloeden; Katharina Sykora's and David Prickett's article-length examinations of the ways in which Hirschfeld used photographs to support his theory of "sexual intermediaries"; Rainer Herrn's consideration of a rich collection of trans photography in a monograph examining German trans history from a sexological perspective; and Birgit Lang's consideration of how sexologists oversaw the photographic depiction of themselves and their spaces of work as part of a broader project of disciplinary legitimation. See Peters, *Rätselbilder des Geschlechts*, 24, 38–39; Kathrin Peters, "Anatomy Is Sublime: The Photographic Activity of Wilhelm von Gloeden and Magnus Hirschfeld," in *Not Straight from Germany: Sexual Publics and Sexual Citizenship since Magnus Hirschfeld*, ed. Michael Thomas Taylor, Annette F. Timm, and Rainer Herrn (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 170–90; Katharina Sykora, "Umkleidekabinen des Geschlechts: Sexualmedizinische Fotographie im frühen 20. Jahrhundert," *Fotogeschichte: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Ästhetik der Fotografie* 24, no. 92 (2004): 15–30; David James Prickett, "Magnus Hirschfeld and the Photographic (Re)Invention of the 'Third Sex,'" in *Visual Culture in Twentieth-Century Germany: Text as Spectacle* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 103–19; Rainer Herrn, *Schnittmuster des Geschlechts: Transvestitismus und Transsexualität in der frühen Sexualwissenschaft*, Beiträge zur Sexualforschung 85 (Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2005); Lang, "Erotik in der Photographie."

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historiography by charting the specific representational modes that emerged in relation to the new medical-scientific category of the "transvestite," building on significant previous research by German historian Rainer Herrn and others. By carefully contrasting sexological and subcultural imagery, I reflect upon how these sets of images reveal at times overlapping and at times competing sexological, political, and ethical priorities. This shift within sexology away from case studies and toward lens-based images marked, I suggest, a move away from a predominantly textual culture of evidence to a more embodied, material mode of representation.

This increasing prioritization of visual over textual evidence coincided with new terminological developments in the classification of gender-atypical subjects. Until the late nineteenth century, the concept of "sexual inversion" had dominated medical thinking on both cross-gendered identifications and same-sex desires, such that it becomes impossible to neatly distinguish between "homosexual" and "transgender" history during this period. This began to change in the first decades of the twentieth century, as I explore below, as the figure of the "transvestite" was born into the language of a medicalized sexual science. During these decades, scholars such as Hirschfeld and Ellis made concerted efforts to develop new terms to describe male-born individuals who identified as women, or at least occasionally "cross-dressed" or exhibited "feminine" characteristics, and also, although with less intensity, to identify as a category female-born individuals exhibiting masculine identifications. Hirschfeld's "transvestite" (*Transvestit/in*) and "transvestitism" (*Transvestitismus*) coinage in this context, as noted above, carried much the same connotations as the umbrella terms "transgender" and "trans" do today.[26] Trans-identified individuals were now increasingly viewed, by themselves and by others, as a quite distinct category from those whose sexual desires were directed toward same-sex partners, who were increasingly designated as "homosexuals." Certainly, this linguistic shift did not happen all of a sudden, nor was this process of conceptual separation without its messiness, particularly when it came to persons, often women, who identified as both "transvestites" *and* "homosexual." Rather, ideas about "inversion," "homosexuality," "transvestism," and, at times, "contrary sexual feeling" or "Urningism" (a term coined by German lawyer Karl Heinrich Ulrichs in the 1860s to designate men who loved other men and who possessed a "female soul" in a male body) formed an overlapping web of reference points for considering sexual and gendered diversity in both medical and wider contexts.[27]

[26] For Hirschfeld's own discussion of his choice of terminology, see the section entitled "Name, Begriff, Prognose und Therapie des Transvestitismus" (Name, concept, prognosis, and therapy of transvestitism), in *Die Transvestiten: Eine Untersuchung über den erotischen Verkleidungstrieb,* by Magnus Hirschfeld (Berlin: Med. Verlag Alfred Pulvermacher, 1910).

[27] On these linguistic and conceptual shifts, see Heike Bauer, "Theorizing Female Inversion: Sexology, Discipline, and Gender at the Fin de Siècle," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*

The images and representational practices examined in this essay lend themselves to consideration not only from the perspective of medical and sexological history but also in the context of more recent theorizations of photography within trans, queer, and affect studies.[28] In the 1970s and 1980s, observe Elspeth Brown and Thy Phu in *Feeling Photography*, a tendency toward materialist and historicist photography criticism, focusing on the medium's "real effects" rather than its "affects," "effectively marginalized photography's shadow subjects, most notably, women, racialized minorities, and queer sexualities."[29] Seeking to engage here in a more affectively attuned queer history, I am concerned with exploring not only the significance of visual evidence for sexologists seeking to firm up the legitimacy and respectability of their fledgling scientific discipline but also the importance of photographic images for the subjects of that sexual scientific research. This mutually instructive relationship offers an instance, I suggest, of what Foucault several decades ago began to theorize in terms of a "reverse discourse" of self-conscious homosexual culture, which began to consolidate from the late nineteenth century in response to medicalizing interventions; for the first time new medical, legal, and cultural discourses made it possible for homosexuality "to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or 'naturality' be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified."[30] From a history and philosophy of science perspective, Ian Hacking describes such relationships in more overtly dialogical terms as "looping effects," whereby new forms of classifying human "kinds" can change the very self-perception and behavior of people designated "of that kind."[31]

18, no. 1 (2009): 84–102; George Chauncey Jr., "From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality: The Changing Medical Conceptualization of Female 'Deviance,'" in *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History*, ed. Kathy Peiss, Christina Simmons, and Robert A. Padgug (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 87–117; Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*, 34–37; Jay Prosser, "Transsexuals and the Transsexologists: Inversion and the Emergence of Transsexual Subjectivity," in *Sexology in Culture*, ed. Bland and Doan, 116–31; Robert Deam Tobin, *Peripheral Desires: The German Discovery of Sex* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 10–14, 98; and Charles Upchurch, "Liberal Exclusions and Sex between Men in the Modern Era: Speculations on a Framework," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 19, no. 3 (2010): 409–31.

[28] See, for example, Brown and Phu, *Feeling Photography*, including Ann Cvetkovich's essay in this volume, "Photographing Objects as Queer Archival Practice," which explores the "specific practice of photographing objects to archive the feelings that are attached to them" (274); Jeanne Vaccaro, "'Look More at the Camera Than at Me': Susan and the Transgender Archive," *Radical History Review* 122 (May 2015): 38–46; and Jennifer Evans, "Seeing Subjectivity: Erotic Photography and the Optics of Desire," *American Historical Review* 118, no. 2 (2013): 430–62.

[29] Brown and Phu, introduction to *Feeling Photography*, 3.

[30] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 101.

[31] Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 105.

Recent discussions of sexual historiography have increasingly moved beyond viewing early encounters between sexual scientists and their informants merely in terms of top-down exercises of power and toward more nuanced explorations of Foucault's work in this area, considering how modern scientific discourses of sexuality have historically provided a dynamic and creative—not merely a destructive—impulse for the "production of sexual subjects, not merely as objects of categorical analysis but as beings who understand themselves and speak for themselves in terms of categories of sexuality."[32] The publications and case studies of early sexual science did not merely serve a medical readership, they could also provide patients with a scientifically respectable means of self-legitimation—and, as a consequence, with a crucial basis for modern formations of identity politics.[33] In the first decades of the twentieth century, photographic materials began realigning this relationship between sex researchers and their wider publics in significant ways. In the process, they raised important questions about the ethics of the medicalized gaze.

Transvestite Photography in Early Twentieth-Century Sexology

As I have noted, until the first decades of the twentieth century sexologists treated trans and same-sex identifications as belonging to a single condition that they variously labeled "sexual inversion," "contrary sexual feeling," or "Urningism." This merged sex/gender classification is on display in the "image of an urning man" (fig. 1) in feminine dress and jewelry included by leading German sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld in his 1899 essay, "The Objective Diagnosis of Homosexuality."[34]

This early example of a sexologist incorporating photography into a formal scientific publication appeared in the inaugural volume of Hirschfeld's glossy *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* (Yearbook of sexual intermediaries).

[32] Scott Spector, "Introduction: After *The History of Sexuality*? Periodicities, Subjectivities, Ethics," in *After "The History of Sexuality"? German Genealogies with and beyond Foucault*, ed. Scott Spector, Helmut Puff, and Dagmar Herzog (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 6. Critical positions on Foucault's legacy for our reading of sexual scientific encounters are further explored in the other essays of this volume and in Scott Spector, *Violent Sensations: Sex, Crime & Utopia in Vienna and Berlin, 1860–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016). Oosterhuis's analysis of Krafft-Ebing's relationships with his patients similarly entails a careful revisiting and negotiation of Foucault's arguments surrounding sexological encounters; see *Stepchildren of Nature*.

[33] I explore these arguments around Weimar transvestite politics as a precursor of contemporary trans activism in Katie Sutton, "Sexological Cases and the Prehistory of Transgender Identity Politics in Interwar Germany," in Damousi, Lang, and Sutton, *Cases and the Dissemination of Knowledge*, 85–103. See also Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 55–64, 207ff.

[34] "Bild eines urnischen Mannes," in Magnus Hirschfeld, "Die objektive Diagnose der Homosexualität," *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* 1 (1899): 22.

Figure 1. "Image of an urning man," in Magnus Hirschfeld, "Die objektive Diagnose der Homosexualität," *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* 1 (1899): 22.

This essay was the first on the topic that Hirschfeld published in his own name rather than under a pseudonym, and it offers an overview of his theory of same-sex attraction and "sexual intermediacy."[35] It also serves to set the scope of this first scientific journal to focus exclusively on questions of sex/gender inversion: from the beginning, this periodical encompassed discussions of cross-dressing and contributions by trans-identifying individuals as well as topics related to same-sex desire.[36] Moreover, Hirschfeld clearly intended this image, the sole photograph included in this essay, to function as a representative embodiment of his diagnosis of homosexuality as an intermediary sexual form. In the tradition of Ulrichs's 1860s description of "Urnings" as possessing a "female soul in a male body," Hirschfeld in these early stages of his career considered feminine clothing to be "positively symptomatic" (*geradezu symptomatisch*) of male homosexuality, even though he did not directly address this characteristic in the text

[35] See the discussion of this essay in Peters, *Rätselbilder*, 158.

[36] Herrn notes that the first essay on cross-dressing in the *Jahrbuch* was written by a self-identified cross-dresser and cites a number of further examples; see *Schnittmuster*, 34, 42. The essay in question is J. G. F. (Lehrer), "Ein Fall von Effemination mit Fetischismus," *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* 2 (1900): 324–44.

of the essay.[37] Underlying this emphasis on homosexuals as "psychological hermaphrodites" (*psychische Hermaphroditen*), the photograph was accompanied by two woodcuts based on photographs of "pseudo-hermaphrodite" Zepthe Akaira, an intersex individual whose case German medical pioneer Rudolf Virchow had presented at the Berlin Medical Society a year earlier.[38]

In a distinct shift from these fin-de-siècle attempts to merge same-sex and cross-gender identifications, a decade later Hirschfeld was leading the push to conceptually distinguish between homosexual and transgendered identifications (a process that, it bears noting, involved sidelining individuals who identified with both categories). In 1910 he coined a new term when he published his major study *Die Transvestiten: Eine Untersuchung über den erotischen Verkleidungstrieb* (*Transvestites: The Erotic Drive to Cross-Dress*; hereafter *Transvestites*).[39] This study, with its diagnostic descriptions and critical discussions of seventeen individual cases, was ostensibly aimed at a medical audience, but Hirschfeld also had a view to a wider, lay readership with his inclusion of an extensive "ethnological-historical" section. Here he surveyed topics as varied as cross-dressing in children and "primitive peoples" (*Naturvölkern*); the legal situation of individuals we would now refer to as trans persons; and a brief foray into "transvestites on thrones," a quick history of (mostly European) royal cross-dressing. Hirschfeld's taxonomizing efforts received reinforcement in these years from British sexologist Havelock Ellis. Ellis coined his own terms, "sexo-aesthetic inversion" and "Eonism" (named after a cross-dressing eighteenth-century diplomat and spy, the Chevalier d'Éon) first in a series of articles for psychiatric journals and later as part of his wide-reaching *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, which also attracted an educated lay readership in addition to a specialist medical one.[40]

While these terms differed in their diagnostic nuances, each was understood to encompass not just cross-dressing but also a wide range of transgendered embodiments and experiences, including identifications that would in later decades be classified as transsexual. Only grudgingly did these sexologists acknowledge the existence of people they referred to as homosexual transvestites (a category they defined along anatomical rather

[37] Herrn, *Schnittmuster*, 43. On Ulrichs and his connections to Hirschfeld, see Tobin, *Peripheral Desires*, 86–97.

[38] One of these woodcuts depicts Akaira with a full beard and wearing a man's suit, while the second shows them, genitals exposed, reclining on a bed in feminine attire. Peters argues that Hirschfeld sought to use Akaira, whose hermaphroditic status remained unclear, to illustrate the first stage of his scale of sexual intermediacy, or *Geschlechtermischung*; see *Rätselbilder*, 161–64.

[39] Hirschfeld, *Die Transvestiten* (1910). This work was first published in English translation in the 1990s as Magnus Hirschfeld, *Transvestites: The Erotic Drive to Cross-Dress*, trans. Michael A. Lombardi-Nash (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus, 1991).

[40] Havelock Ellis, "Sexo-Aesthetic Inversion," *Alienist and Neurologist* 34 (May 1913): 156–67; Havelock Ellis, *Eonism and Other Supplementary Studies*, vol. 7 of *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, 7 vols. (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis, 1919).

than gender identity lines); in contrast, they placed a concerted emphasis on placing heterosexual-identifying individuals into the "transvestite" category, seeing them as embodying the new biomedical diagnosis in a more straightforward fashion.[41] These early sexological discussions of trans identification were also joined by a number of psychoanalytic cases of sex/gender inversion, but whereas the sexologists were concerned mostly with diagnosis, analysts focused on questions of therapy and a potential cure. Wilhelm Stekel's case of a female-to-male transvestite in the early 1920s is a key example of such work; it was published as part of a scientific study of female "frigidity" in which Stekel sought not to affirm his patient's trans identification but rather to intervene in and "cure" their perceived pathology.[42]

Although Hirschfeld, Ellis, and Stekel each focused, at least initially, on collecting clinical case histories to underwrite their theories of cross-gendered identification, it is in Hirschfeld's *Transvestites* study that we can detect the beginnings of a more comprehensive turn toward the visual within scientific sex research. Several scholars have examined Hirschfeld's deployment of photography in one of his earlier works, a short 1905–6 sexual scientific study of intersex and "intermediary" types published as *Geschlechtsübergänge* (Sex/gender transitions). I return to these analyses below, not least for the way in which they draw attention to an ethically questionable sexological gaze.[43] With *Transvestites*, however, the Berlin

[41] On the sexologists' emphasis on heterosexual and predominantly male-to-female trans identifications, see Darryl Hill, "Sexuality and Gender in Hirschfeld's *Die Transvestiten*: A Case of the 'Elusive Evidence of the Ordinary,'" *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14, no. 3 (2005): 316–32; and Geertje Mak, "'Passing Women' im Sprechzimmer von Magnus Hirschfeld: Warum der Begriff 'Transvestit' nicht für Frauen in Männerkleidern eingeführt wurde," trans. Mirjam Hausmann, *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 9, no. 3 (1998): 384–99. The counterpart of this emphasis, observes Herrn, was a push to represent male homosexuals in more masculine guises, often in male-male couple scenarios, such as photographs featuring an unambiguously masculinely attired Walt Whitman or Peter Tchaikovsky together with their similarly attired male partners; see *Schnittmuster*, 47. On sexological case histories of transvestism, see also Ivan Crozier, "Havelock Ellis, Eonism and the Patient's Discourse; Or, Writing a Book about Sex," *History of Psychiatry* 11 (2000): 125–54; and Sutton, "Sexological Cases," 85–103.

[42] See, for example, Wilhelm Stekel, "Chapter XIV. Fragmentary Analysis of a Transvestite," in *Frigidity in Woman*, vol. 2 of 2 vols., trans. James S. Van Teslaar, *Disorders of the Instincts and the Emotions: The Parapathia Disorders* (New York: Liveright, 1926), 237–72; Emil Gutheil and Wilhelm Stekel, "XVI. Analyse eines Falles von Transvestitismus," in *Der Fetischismus*, vol. 7 of *Störungen des Trieb- und Affektlebens (die parapathischen Erkrankungen)*, 10 vols. (Berlin: Urban & Schwarzenberg, 1923), 534–70. I use the pronouns "they" and "them" here and throughout where an individual's preferred pronouns are not apparent from the sources.

[43] Magnus Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtsübergänge: Mischungen männlicher und weiblicher Geschlechtscharaktere (sexuelle Zwischenstufen): Erweiterte Ausgabe eines auf der 76. Naturforscherversammlung zu Breslau gehaltenen Vortrages* (Leipzig: Verlag der Monatsschrift für Harnkrankheiten und sexuelle Hygiene, 1906). This publication of a revised and extended essay was thirty-three pages long. On the use of images in this study, see Peters, *Rätselbilder*, 164–76; and Prickett, "Magnus Hirschfeld."

[145.107.184.190] Project MUSE (2026-11-03 07:15 GMT) Leiden University / LUMC

sexologist took his embrace of photographic media to a new level. The first edition of this study—a massive volume of almost six hundred pages—had not included images for reasons of length and expense, but Hirschfeld clearly had a nose for the commercial potential of such a venture. This inspired him to include a footnote in which he requested readers interested in a separate, illustrated volume to register this interest with the publisher.[44] Sure enough, by 1912 Hirschfeld was able to collaborate with Berlin-based artist Max Tilke to publish an entire illustrated companion volume containing fifty-four plates, and he remarked in a footnote on the "higher than expected interest" in this project among readers of the initial study. The majority of this volume consists of photographic images, although Tilke also contributed a number of drawings to an initial "ethnographic-historical" section. This roughly corresponded with the ethnographic themes of Hirschfeld's earlier volume. For example, Hirschfeld points out that, whereas female-to-male transvestites "where we live" (*bei uns*) tend to wear their hair short, like "our men," they instead wear it long in places, such as among the Caroline Islanders of Micronesia, where this is the usual male practice.[45] This section was aimed, then, at demonstrating the historical and cultural specificity of gendered clothing and styles of self-decoration, not least through contrast with so-called primitives (*die Wilden*).

At the same time, Hirschfeld's reputation as a chronicler and vocal advocate of Germany's sexual minorities—and as someone who himself favored relationships with men and occasional cross-dressing in his private life, although he was not publicly "out"—gave him privileged access to queer photographic materials. "As a cross-dresser, he had many connections with people whose gender did not match the one assigned at birth or who were intersex," observes Heike Bauer in her impressive recent study of this prolific German researcher.[46] After cofounding the Scientific Humanitarian Committee (Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee) in 1897 to lobby the German parliament for homosexual rights and having overseen the establishment of the aforementioned *Jahrbuch* two years later, Hirschfeld's reputation in queer circles continued to grow during the war years and into the Weimar period, when in 1919 he founded his Institute for Sexual Science in Berlin. The institute provided a haven and research hub for all manner of questions

[44] Hirschfeld, *Die Transvestiten* (1910), 1n.

[45] Magnus Hirschfeld and Max Tilke, *Der erotische Verkleidungstrieb (Die Transvestiten): Illustrierter Teil*, vol. 2 of 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Berlin: Alfred Pulvermacher, 1912). As Sykora points out, such combinations of photographic and nonphotographic visual media have implications that extend beyond illustrating Hirschfeld's anthropological explanation; they carry "other connotations of reality and enmesh the photographic exposures in an implicit competition about the best form of sexual medical representation" while also suggesting different levels of distance from the subject. See "Umkleidekabinen," 15, 18, my translation.

[46] Heike Bauer, *The Hirschfeld Archives: Violence, Death, and Modern Queer Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2017), 48.

relating to human gender and sexuality, from marriage and contraceptive advice to a transvestite counseling center. As a humanitarian sex reformer and politician as well as a scientist, Hirschfeld's appeal for LGBTQ activists and scholars has remained strong into the present.[47] Indeed, a wave of recent scholarship has transformed him into a veritable queer academic celebrity, "lionized," observes Jennifer Evans, "as the guiding light of a rational, scientifically driven human rights movement for sexual toleration"—even as such celebratory approaches have tended to obscure the more ambivalent, misogynist, or colonialist aspects of his legacy that Bauer explores.[48] Hirschfeld's own queer credentials aside, in this instance the collation of trans photographic materials presumably also benefited from Tilke's connections to the urban third-sex scene, and featured among the fifty-four plates is a photograph now believed to depict Tilke themself in female dress and a fashionable wide-brimmed hat.[49]

Buoyed by these rich queer connections, Hirschfeld and Tilke's compilation of the illustrated companion volume could draw on a wide range of private, often studio-based images that readers had sent in in support of the Berlin sexologist's research into their "condition." As with Krafft-Ebing's correspondence with his patients, this exchange suggests a high degree of collaboration between sex researcher and an emerging subculture, and Hirschfeld expresses in his preface the hope that "our transvestite readers will continue their friendly support . . . by sending further suitable pictures," with a view to publishing additional illustrated volumes, possibly on a yearly basis. This was a project on which, he notes, the authors and publishers were already agreed, provided there was sufficient interest (read: commercial potential), as the material published in the 1912 volume was only a "fraction" (*Bruchteil*) of that which had been received to date.[50]

[47] On Hirschfeld's role in German homosexual emancipation politics, see Ralf Dose, *Magnus Hirschfeld: The Origins of the Gay Liberation Movement*, trans. Edward H. Willis (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2014); Atina Grossmann, "Magnus Hirschfeld, Sexualreform und die Neue Frau: Das Institut für Sexualwissenschaft und das Weimarer Berlin," in *Der Sexualreformer Magnus Hirschfeld: Ein Leben im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft, Politik und Gesellschaft*, ed. Elke-Vera Kotowski and Julius H. Schoeps (Berlin-Brandenburg: be.bra wissenschaft, 2004), 201–16; and Manfred Herzer, *Magnus Hirschfeld: Leben und Werk eines jüdischen, schwulen und sozialistischen Sexologen*, 2nd rev. ed. (Hamburg: Männerschwarm-Skript Verlag, 2001). On the Berlin Institute in the context of Weimar sexual politics, see also Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic*; Bauer, *Hirschfeld Archives*.

[48] Jennifer Evans, "Introduction: Why Queer German History?," *German History* 34, no. 3 (2016): 371–84; Bauer, *Hirschfeld Archives*. For a further critical account of the wave of Hirschfeld scholarship, see Kirsten Leng, "Magnus Hirschfeld's Meanings: Analysing Biography and the Politics of Representation," *German History* 35, no. 1 (2017): 96–116.

[49] On Tilke's biography, contributions to the volume, and the evidence pointing to this correlation see Herrn, *Schnittmuster*, 70–72.

[50] Preface in Hirschfeld and Tilke, *Der erotische Verkleidungstrieb*, 2:1–2. These future volumes did not eventuate, possibly, as Herrn surmises, due to Tilke's move from Berlin for professional reasons; see *Schnittmuster*, 71.

The many studio photographs of mostly male-to-female transvestites published in this illustrated companion volume reflect the gendered imbalance of Hirschfeld's case histories, in which only one of seventeen cases had focused on female-to-male experience.[51] In many images, a degree of anonymity is maintained by the suppression of the subjects' names, although, as the captions reveal, a number of photographs feature individuals who had previously appeared as case histories in Hirschfeld's 1910 study.[52] Most of the images were presumably intended to showcase mastery over very different styles of feminine self-presentation, featuring individuals in carefully arranged poses and elegant, fashionable attire, with soft, feminine lighting and backdrops supporting the appearance of smooth facial complexions and feminine curves. Figure 2, for example, shows an individual in reasonably conventional bourgeois female street wear of the Wilhelmine era. In figure 3 the first individual's pose and dress are suggestive of upper-class late nineteenth-century girlhood, while the second offers a more decidedly erotic pose in lacy underwear and an exoticized studio setting, complete with potted palm and Persian rug. In most instances, a slightly lowered camera angle works to underwrite the dignity and confidence of the individuals depicted, as does the bourgeois studio setting itself.

These images present individuals as in control of the circumstances of their self-representation, from dress and accessories to lighting and pose. They are conscious self-stagings of individual subjectivity and involve careful manipulation of the camera. In the agency of the subject's gaze, whether looking at us directly or coyly over the viewer's shoulders, we see early examples of what J. Jack Halberstam has theorized in terms of a "transgender look": "a mode of seeing and being seen that is not simply at odds with binary gender but that is part of a reorientation of the body in space and time."[53] They reflect not only the scientific requirement of illustrating a new medical diagnosis—the more problematic aspects of which I return to below—but also the nonclinical conditions of their production. As such, they speak simultaneously to medical priorities and also, as Herrn points out, to the identificatory needs of an emerging subculture. This impression is supported by advertisements in the interwar German queer media that indicate that this subculture was already commercially strong enough to support a handful of photographers specializing in transvestite photography. These photographers were adept at techniques such as deploying soft lighting or arranging their subjects in coy poses when it came to photographing male-to-female subjects, or enhancing the masculinity of female-to-male

[51] On this imbalance, see Mak, "'Passing Women.'"

[52] From the captions provided, however, it is not possible to ascertain precisely which of Hirschfeld's seventeen original cases are featured in the photographic section. On these correlations, see Herrn, *Schnittmuster*, 53ff., 70ff.

[53] Judith (Jack) Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 107.

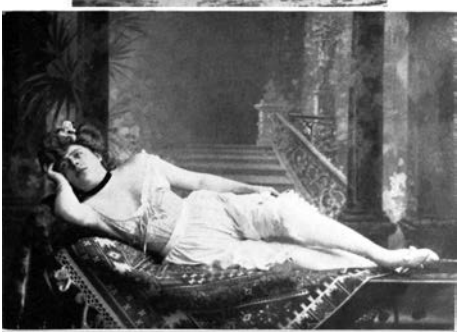

Figure 2 (*left*). Plate 19 of Magnus Hirschfeld and Max Tilke, *Der erotische Verkleidungstrieb (Die Transvestiten): Illustrierter Teil*, vol. 2 of 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Berlin: Alfred Pulvermacher, 1912).

Figure 3 (*right*). Plate 21 of Magnus Hirschfeld and Max Tilke, *Der erotische Verkleidungstrieb (Die Transvestiten): Illustrierter Teil*, vol. 2 of 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Berlin: Alfred Pulvermacher, 1912).

sitters with heavy fabric backdrops, dark lighting, and class-conscious accessories such as monocles and handkerchiefs.[54]

Although a desire for scientific enlightenment and personal affirmation seems to have been a key factor motivating individuals to share such intimate images with sex researchers, many would also have been aware of Hirschfeld's willingness to supply medical certificates to individuals seeking to apply for a "transvestite certificate" or "passport" (*Transvestitenschein/Transvestiten-Reisepass*). These documents allowed the bearer to dress in public according to their gender identity without being vulnerable to arrest

[54] These included the studio run by Gertrud Liebherr in Berlin. See Herrn, *Schnittmuster*, 70, 145–46.

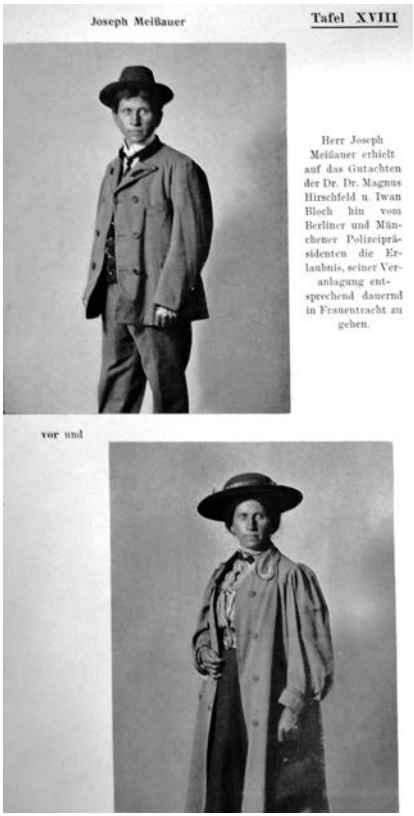

Figure 4. Plate 18, "Joseph Meißauer," in Magnus Hirschfeld and Max Tilke, *Der erotische Verkleidungstrieb (Die Transvestiten): Illustrierter Teil*, vol. 2 of 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Berlin: Alfred Pulvermacher, 1912).

as a "public nuisance" or for "gross mischief"; the role of photographs in obtaining such documentation is apparent in the above two photographs of Joseph Meißauer (fig. 4).[55]

In these two photographs featuring Meißauer in male and female dress, respectively, one can identify a series of carefully staged visual parallels, including a similar light source, neutral backdrop, respectable Bavarian street wear, direct gaze to the camera, and a mildly defensive but in no way

[55] Hirschfeld describes the process of obtaining such certificates in relation to the case of "Katharina T." in Berlin, as well as the specific significance of photographic evidence in such an application, in Hirschfeld, *Die Transvestiten* (1910), 192ff., 363. See also Jane Caplan, "The Administration of Gender Identity in Nazi Germany," *History Workshop Journal* 72, no. 1 (2011): 173–75; Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic*, 61–62.

eroticized side-on pose.[56] Each of these representational decisions seems intended to encourage an objective, "scientific" judgment by the viewer concerning which is the more natural or authentic gender performance. As Katharina Sykora argues, careful selection and captioning by the sexologist author rhetorically frame such potentially risqué or "precarious" sexological images in ways that protected authors and publishers alike from charges of voyeurism and pornography and "steer the gaze" toward a scientifically approved interpretation. At the same time, photography allowed individuals viewing their own portraits access to an external gaze on their own, preferred self.[57] Photographs, as Annette Vowinckel emphasizes, themselves "have agency, in that they communicate," even as their existence and meanings are shaped by a whole series of additional, human agents: the photographer, who is responsible for selecting a certain pose or clicking the shutter; the technician, who chooses a particular negative for development; and the author, who selects one image over another for publication and then frames its meaning through captioning.[58] In this case, the captions inform us that the photographs were indeed commissioned by Meißauer as part of the process of applying to the police for a *Transvestitenschein*, a process that also involved obtaining from Hirschfeld and his sexologist colleague Iwan Bloch medical certificates that would officially verify the wearer's condition. Such formalized interactions are multilayered in their meanings; on the one hand, they suggest a certain sympathy among sexologists and German police departments for the harassment faced by trans-identifying individuals. But they also parallel and foreshadow the problematic rituals of medical and psychiatric hoop-jumping that were forced upon trans individuals seeking medical and surgical interventions throughout the twentieth century.[59]

Aware of both the novelty of their research and the fact that their readership extended well beyond the medical profession, Hirschfeld and Tilke used their 1912 volume to showcase not only photographs sent in by contemporary informants but also a wide variety of historical, ethnographic, and artistic representations of transvestite life; again, these themes roughly aligned with the major topics that had been addressed in the 1910 study. In this vein, figures 5–7 feature photographs and drawings of famous artists, actors, and male and female imitators, including American artist Emma

[56] Herrn notes that the photographs are from an unknown source, but I follow his speculation that they were produced in a medical context to support reports leading to an application for a transvestite certificate; see *Schnittmuster*, 66.

[57] Sykora, "Umkleidekabinen," 16, 28.

[58] Vowinckel, *Agenten der Bilder*, 427.

[59] In a late twentieth-century context, Jay Prosser has discussed the onerous requirements placed on trans individuals seeking sex confirmation surgery, which has generally demanded that one tell a coherent narrative of oneself *as* a transsexual, following a carefully established pattern of generic expectations, before the diagnosis is approved by psychologists and access to surgery granted: *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

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Figure 5. Plate 15, "Female artists who live in men's clothing," in Magnus Hirschfeld and Max Tilke, *Der erotische Verkleidungstrieb (Die Transvestiten): Illustrierter Teil*, vol. 2 of 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Berlin: Alfred Pulvermacher, 1912).

Carus, Russian author Zinaide Hippius, music hall star Vesta Tilley, and dancer Willy Pape, better known by the stage name Voo-Doo.

The captions of these images, which are not just simple glamour shots, occasionally reveal a more somber side to the editorial choices. Voo-Doo's trans identity was only revealed, Hirschfeld observes, following a suicide attempt in female clothing, after which Hirschfeld "enlightened" Pape's parents about his "peculiar condition" (*eigenartigen Zustand*). Following this intervention, the parents permitted Pape to go onstage in the Variétés (variety theater and entertainment shows), where Voo-Doo achieved much success as a snake dancer.[60] Such captioning signposts the significance of

[60] Plate XVI, "Der junge Transvestit Willy Pape," in Hirschfeld and Tilke, *Der erotische Verkleidungstrieb.*

Figure 6. Plate 40, Vesta Tilley in street clothes / as a "swell," in Magnus Hirschfeld and Max Tilke, *Der erotische Verkleidungstrieb (Die Transvestiten): Illustrierter Teil*, vol. 2 of 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Berlin: Alfred Pulvermacher, 1912).

Figure 7. Plate 16, "The young transvestite Willy Pape . . . ," in Magnus Hirschfeld and Max Tilke, *Der erotische Verkleidungstrieb (Die Transvestiten): Illustrierter Teil*, vol. 2 of 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Berlin: Alfred Pulvermacher, 1912).

Figures 8 and 9. Details from plate 48, "Women who love to wear uniform," and plate 49, "Two (female) war veterans," in Magnus Hirschfeld and Max Tilke, *Der erotische Verkleidungstrieb (Die Transvestiten): Illustrierter Teil*, vol. 2 of 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Berlin: Alfred Pulvermacher, 1912).

queer suicide and violence—prominent themes also of the popular 1919 silent film *Anders als die Andern* (Different from the others), a tale of homosexual suicide and blackmail for which Hirschfeld served as scientific advisor—as what Bauer describes as "part of a traumatic collective experience, markers of the potentially lethal force of heteronormative ideals and expectations but also complex sites of shared identification and resistance."[61] A further theme of the volume centered on female-to-male transvestites in soldier's uniform (figs. 8 and 9), including several individuals who had passed and fought as male soldiers for extended periods. This particular series of images foreshadows a regular column that appeared in Hirschfeld's *Jahrbuch* during World War I and detailed the experiences of "women as

[61] Bauer, *Hirschfeld Archives*, 37. On *Anders als die Andern,* see, for example, James Steakley, *"Anders als die Andern": Ein Film und seine Geschichte* (Hamburg: Männerschwarm, 2007).

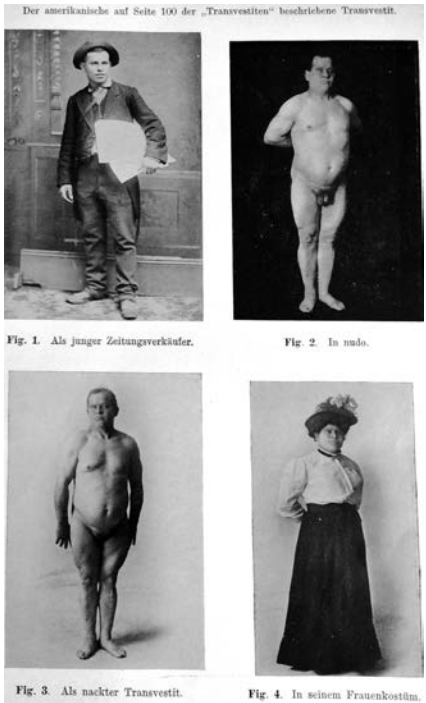

Figure 10. Plate 22, "John O. from San Francisco. Fig. 1 As a young newspaper man / Fig. 2 Nude / Fig. 3 As a naked transvestite / Fig. 4 In his female costume/ outfit," in Magnus Hirschfeld and Max Tilke, *Der erotische Verkleidungstrieb (Die Transvestiten): Illustrierter Teil*, vol. 2 of 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Berlin: Alfred Pulvermacher, 1912).

soldiers," serving to diversify, at least on the level of the visual, Hirschfeld's uneven focus on male-to-female and female-to-male trans issues.

Yet a number of photographs fall outside of these patterns, their aesthetics governed less by the photographed subject than by the scientific priorities of the researcher and targeted more obviously toward Hirschfeld's medical readers. Just as scholars of late nineteenth-century criminological and psychiatric photography have shown how photographic practices "operat[ed] in a series of discourses . . . [to produce] the body as mute testimony of its own deviance,"[62] the following sets of images provide a link to other contemporary scientific and legal representations of sexual "perversion" and "deviance." Figure 10 features one John O. of San Francisco, also Case 13 in Hirschfeld's 1910 study. These images are some of the most overtly

[62] Suren Lalvani, *Photography, Vision, and the Production of Modern Bodies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 136.

medicalized included in *Transvestites*, primarily because they include two nude shots against plain backdrops in poses that emulate those featuring O. in masculine and feminine dress—although there is a misalignment between the feminized pose and the masculine image it cites, and vice versa.[63] This plate also visually cites medical studies of hermaphroditism by Hirschfeld's scientific contemporaries, including gynecologist Franz L. von Neugebauer's publication in Hirschfeld's *Jahrbuch* of two images of "a male pseudo-hermaphrodite" in female and male dress (*ein männlicher Scheinzwitter*), which Hirschfeld later reproduced in *Geschlechtsübergänge*.[64]

Such "compare and contrast" images mark the beginnings of a distinct and at times distinctly problematic trend in Hirschfeld's representation of gender-atypical subjects that becomes particularly evident in his later series on *Sexualpathologie* (Sexual pathology, 1916–20). As Jeanne Vaccaro asks in relation to a much more recent archive of trans photography, "What are the ethics of staging" trans bodies in such ways, "and how does the camera enact, perpetuate, and archive a diagnostic and medical gaze?"[65] Emphasizing the dehumanizing potential of medical photography, Vaccaro cites public health scholar T. Benjamin Singer, who theorizes the ways in which "the medical gaze creates the illusion of anonymous bodies, suspended in time and placed outside of any habitable social world, and thus disallows the very possibility of subjectivity."[66] In figure 11, for example, the central, front-on image clearly marks these frames as objects of biomedical interest, "specimens" rather than private studio photographs, even as the neutral stance underlines that this is not an erotic pose.

Such taxonomizing and thus desubjectivizing patterns of bodily display can also be found in other studies of sexual inversion and transvestism from these decades, such as a striking set of images published in the German

[63] Herrn also comments on this plate in some detail, noting that the black backdrop and even the lighting of the top right image, together with clearly visible genitalia, emphasize the wearer's masculinity, even though the pose disrupts this parallel by emulating that in which John O. appears in female costume. In contrast, the image on the bottom right uses top-down, softer lighting and a white backdrop to emphasize a sense of bodily curves and femininity, while the penis is hidden between pressed-together thighs; see *Schnittmuster*, 56–57.

[64] On this photograph and, more broadly, Hirschfeld's use of photographs to illustrate "hermaphroditism," "pseudohermaproditism," and his theory of "sexual intermediacy," see Peters, *Rätselbilder*, 7–12, 23–36, 166–76; Prickett, "Magnus Hirschfeld"; Sykora, "Umkleidekabinen," 16–24. Sykora's study is notable for the way she carefully distinguishes between Hirschfeld's representation of intersex and transgender individuals, while Peters emphasizes how photography is used to focus the "riddle" of sex on the substance of the body (9, 12–16). On Neugebauer's work with intersex patients, see Geertje Mak, "Conflicting Heterosexualities: Hermaphroditism and the Emergence of Surgery around 1900," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 24, no. 3 (2015): 402–27.

[65] Vaccaro, "'Look More at the Camera,'" 44.

[66] T. Benjamin Singer, "From the Medical Gaze to Sublime Mutations: The Ethics of (Re)Viewing Non-normative Body Images," in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (New York: Routledge, 2006), 611, cited in Vaccaro, "'Look More at the Camera,'" 44.

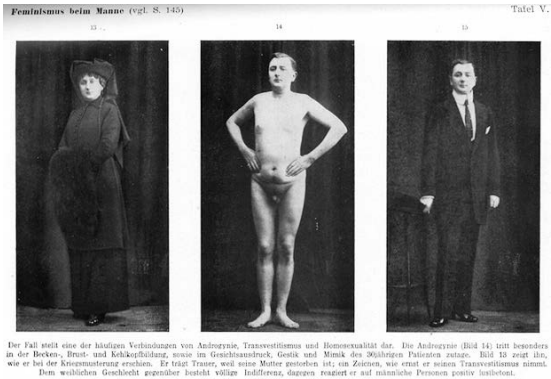

Figure 11. Plate 5 (p. 144) in Magnus Hirschfeld, *Sexualpathologie: Sexuelle Zwischenstufen; Das männliche Weib und der weibliche Mann*, vol. 2 (Bonn: Marcus & Webers, 1918).

journal *Geschlecht und Gesellschaft* (Sex and society) in the mid-1920s (fig. 12). Somewhat puzzlingly described by the article's US-based author, Lothar Goldmann, as "one of the first known cases of transvestism," these images cite not only the Hirschfeldian pattern of contrasting "male" and "female" images of the same individual but also the classic police mug shot, complete with front and side-on views. This forensic framing lends an air of deceitful, even criminal inauthenticity to the individual's otherwise convincing gender performances.[67]

Just as historians have observed a broad turn toward photography across the natural sciences in the late nineteenth century, these visual strategies may be read as attempts to satisfy the expectations of a more thoroughly scientificized brand of modern sex research. Starting at the fin de siècle—and thus with a delay of several decades when compared to cognate disciplines such as psychiatry, a delay that likely reflected both the newness of sexology itself as a discrete medical-scientific field and its socially marginalized subject matter—sexual scientists, too, were increasingly looking to photography as a source of authenticity, objectivity, and "Truth."[68]

If we shift our historical attention from the demands of scientific legitimacy to the subjects of these images, however, a number of ethical issues emerge. To begin with, there is no authorial attempt made to anonymize

[67] Plate 1, in Lothar Goldmann, "Über das Wesen des Umkleidungstriebes (der Transvestitismus)," *Geschlecht und Gesellschaft* 12, no. 7/8 (1924): 281–88; no. 9/10 (1924): 289–96; no. 11/12 (1924): 334–78.

[68] On the wider role of photography in the Victorian-era natural sciences, see Tucker, *Nature Exposed*. Sexologists' relatively late uptake of this form contrasts with its uses in medical and psychiatric photography from the 1850s, which expanded significantly thanks to technological developments in the 1880s and 1890s. See Sykora, "Umkleidekabinen," 16, 29n9.

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Figure 12. From Lothar Goldmann, "Über das Wesen des Umkleidungstriebes" (On the nature of the drive to cross-dress), *Geschlecht und Gesellschaft* 12 (1924).

the images, as there had been in several of Hirschfeld's earlier works.[69] While we can hope that they were published only after obtaining the explicit permission of their subjects, this is by no means clear, and their inclusion in widely available medical-scientific publications potentially undermines the clinical relationship of doctor-patient confidentiality. Such blurrings become even more ethically questionable in a further set of images from Hirschfeld's *Sexualpathologie* series aimed at illustrating the diagnosis of hermaphroditism. The largest of these images deploys a framing that merges understandings of intersex and transgender embodiment and features a close-up image of patient genitalia being teased apart for display by the sexologist's gloved fingers. This photograph is juxtaposed against a three-part series of full-length front-to-camera images of the same patient: first in middle-class women's attire, then naked with hands on hips, and finally in a man's suit replete with hat and cane.[70]

While the genitalia photo published directly below this triptych can be categorized as part of a much larger and older archive of genitally oriented hermaphrodite photography in medical publications of this era, I have elected to describe rather than republish this particular image due to the ways in which it, much more than the full-length images, perpetuates what historian Susanne Regener describes as the "visual violence" of the medical gaze.[71] Such fragmentations of the patient's body demand that the viewer

[69] See, for example, the discussion of anonymizing techniques such as dark masks in Hirschfeld's *Geschlechtsübergänge* in Sykora, "Umkleidekabinen," 17.

[70] Plate 1, Magnus Hirschfeld, *Sexualpathologie: Sexuelle Zwischenstufen; Das männliche Weib und der weibliche Mann*, vol. 2 (Bonn: Marcus & Webers, 1918).

[71] Susanne Regener, *Visuelle Gewalt: Menschenbilder aus der Psychiatrie des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2010). For further scholarly critiques of the violence that photography

partake in what media scholar Gunnar Schmidt describes as a *Mehr-Sehen* (more-seeing) to complete the partial image in front of them.[72] These fragmented images, as Sykora suggests, are little more than "fetishistic obsessions" that are unable to enter into or explain the body's interior; "always an excerpt, segment, detail," they are in need of rhetorical bridging. Such scholarly observations highlight the limits of photography as a medium of scientific explanation.[73]

Traces of this violent medical gaze can also be seen in sexological photographs from this period dealing with neither trans nor intersex identities but in which the patient's body is similarly displayed in the manner of a medical specimen, naked and under harsh lights. Figure 13, for example, features a naked soldier whose genitals were mutilated in World War I.

Figure 13. Plate 5, "Loss of testicles in the war," in Magnus Hirschfeld, *Sexualpathologie: Sexuelle Zwischenstufen; Das männliche Weib und der weibliche Mann*, vol. 1 (Bonn: Marcus & Webers, 1917).

Clearly published for informational purposes and for circulation primarily among medical professionals, this image uses overexposure to draw particular attention to the patient's injured abdominal area. On one level, such images may be read as part of a longer historical "cultural preoccupation with such spectacles of anatomical difference" that can be traced back to the voyeuristic freak shows and anatomical displays of the early modern period; in this respect, they highlight what Elizabeth Stephens has argued is "the sexualisation inherent in the construction of medical knowledge itself."[74]

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can perpetuate, particularly in relation to nonnormatively gendered subjects, see Beate Ochsner and Anne Grebe, eds., *Andere Bilder: Zur Produktion von Behinderung in der visuellen Kultur* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2013); Susanne Regener, *Fotografische Erfassung: Zur Geschichte medialer Konstruktionen des Kriminellen* (Munich: Fink, 1999); Singer, "From the Medical Gaze," 601–20.

[72] Schmidt sees this strategy as typical of modern scientific photography more broadly, from the microscopic to the astronomical, in that it frequently allows for visual representation beyond the capacity of the natural eye; see *Anamorphotische Körper*.

[73] Sykora, "Umkleidekabinen," 20. Sykora carefully examines a series of images of hermaphrodite genitalia from this period on pages 16–24; see also Peters, *Rätselbilder*, 17, 28–32.

[74] Elizabeth Stephens, "Touching Bodies: Tact/ility in Nineteenth-Century Medical Photographs and Models," in *Bodies, Sex and Desire from the Renaissance to the Present*, ed. Kate Fisher and Sarah Toulalan (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 87, 89. On the historical links between medical photography and the genres of the "freakshow," the cabinet of curiosities, the obscene, or the pornographic, see also Michael Hagner, "Vom Naturalienkabinett zur Embryologie: Wandlungen des Monströsen und die Ordnung des

The flesh of the patient's body, when viewed from such a Foucauldian perspective, forms "the material through which relations of power circulate to reproduce cultural norms."[75] The displacement of the subjectivity of the photographed is similarly evident in images in which there is a staging of the body of the sexologist himself (or, very rarely in this period, herself). Often present only in the shape of disembodied gloved fingers or a pointing hand, such medicalized stagings work to legitimize the photograph's currency as scientific evidence.[76] Similar techniques are evident in early photographs of sex realignment surgeries (which, again, I have elected not to republish here); the presence of the doctor's hands and surgical tools underlines the function of these images as medical teaching tools rather than expressions of trans subjectivity.[77]

Needless to say, such surgical and visual fragmentations of the patient's body are worlds apart from the carefully constructed private studio commissions voluntarily supplied to sexologists by queer and trans informants to support scientific research into new sex/gender classifications. Yet even in these more thoroughly medicalizing images, one can find productive moments of resistance and self-affirmation that complicate Regener's assessment of "visual violence." In the image of the mutilated soldier in figure 13, for example, the man's bold stance and confident gaze suggest a subject who, despite his experience of physical trauma, refuses to be fragmented, objectified, or dehumanized through a medicalized lens. In this, the photograph resonates with the less obviously clinical representations of trans individuals surveyed above, where the domestic settings and carefully arranged poses were published every bit as much in the name of "sexological" research as images of patient genitalia and in which the posed subjects maintain a clear sense of agency over the terms of their representation. Rather than straightforward acts of "visual violence," then, these photographs represent complex entanglements of medical, emancipatory, and self-affirming priorities and discourses. In this, they can be productively read as supporting the kind of historiographical attempts to complicate assumptions about the "top-down" nature of doctor-patient encounters in the history of sexual science outlined earlier in this essay.

Lebens," in *Der falsche Körper: Beiträge zu einer Geschichte der Monstrositäten*, ed. Michael Hagner (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1995), 73–107; Ludmilla Jordanova, *Sexual Visions: Images of Gender in Science and Medicine between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); Peters, *Rätselbilder*, 36–40; Schmidt, *Anamorphotische Körper*; Seitler, *Atavistic Tendencies*, 8–9; and Elizabeth Stephens, *Anatomy as Spectacle: Public Exhibitions of the Body, 1700 to the Present* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011).

[75] Paul Youngquist, *Monstrosities: Bodies and British Romanticism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xiv.

[76] On the presence of the sexologist in published medical photography, see Peters, *Rätselbilder*, 29–30; Prickett, "Magnus Hirschfeld," 114–15; Stephens, "Touching Bodies," 87.

[77] A series of surgical training images were published, for example, in the following article by Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Science coworker Felix Abraham showing the various stages of a "genital transition in two male transvestites": "Genitalumwandlung an zwei männlichen Transvestiten," *Zeitschrift für Sexualwissenschaft* 18, no. 32 (1931): 223–26.

The photographs examined in this section demonstrate some of the ways in which visual evidence, with its capacity to provide embodied illustrations of new medical categories, was beginning to encroach upon the role that had previously been occupied by narrative patient case histories within early twentieth-century sexology and sometimes to replace these case histories altogether. Sexologists by the 1910s and 1920s had begun to exploit what Roland Barthes terms the "evidential force" of photography to advance their still-young discipline.[78] This entailed the establishment of new generic conventions for representing sexual intermediacy, including eye-level camera angles aimed at creating a sense of objectivity, direct front or side-on poses against a neutral backdrop, and the use of visual contrasts between "normal" and "deviant" forms. These conventions worked to suture the emerging evidentiary genre of sexological photography to other scientific modes of visually classifying deviance and pathology, showcasing sexology as a thoroughly modern biomedical discipline; at the same time, I have suggested that these images, at least on occasion, could also have emancipatory and identity-affirming effects.

Nonetheless, the publication of these often very intimate photographs of gender-atypical individuals in medical textbooks and journal articles raises important questions about the representation of non-gender-normative individuals in the sexological archive that require further interrogation. How, we might ask, should historians of sexuality today go about problematizing such practices for representing queer or gender-atypical subjects, and how might we use our work to emphasize or recover the traces of subjectivity that these medicalized images work to erase? How might scholars in the present go about negotiating the ethical considerations surrounding not only the images themselves but also what Molly Rogers terms the "objectifying gaze" of the historical researcher—a gaze that threatens to replicate the kinds of representational violence evident in some of these more overtly medicalized images?[79] One possibility, I submit, is to contrast the photographic tropes of biomedical sex research with the representational practices of individuals who were starting to claim a trans and, specifically, a transvestite identity for themselves.

Trans Photography in Interwar German Subcultures

An important example of such self-representation is the little-known periodical *Das 3. Geschlecht* (The third sex), which appeared for five issues between 1930 and 1932 with the Berlin-based Radszuweit-Verlag (fig. 14). This

[78] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 89. Benjamin, too, attributes the evidentiary power and "hidden political significance" of photography to its indexicality, or capacity to reference a now-absent reality, in his classic essay "Work of Art," 108. See also discussion in Silverman, *Miracle of Analogy*, 2–7.

[79] Rogers, *Delia's Tears*, xxiii.

Figure 14. *Das 3. Geschlecht* (The third sex), no. 5 (May 1932): cover image.

magazine was marketed in other Weimar-era Radszuweit magazines aimed at a homosexual or crossover third-sex audience, including *Die Freundin* (Girlfriend) and *Die Insel* (The island), but *Das 3. Geschlecht* was the only magazine aimed exclusively at transvestites in interwar Germany. It was also the only transvestite media outlet to regularly feature illustrated materials, and it thus occupied a subcultural media niche different from a number of longer-running columns with titles such as "Der Transvestit" (The transvestite) and "Welt der Transvestiten" (Transvestites' world) that had begun to appear in periodicals for homosexual women from as early as 1924. The emergence of such trans-specific media in these years can be attributed, at least in part, to the broader reduction in censorship and the rise in mass media production that had followed the war and revolution of 1918–19.[80]

For many years this magazine was almost impossible to access, although it is now readily available, thanks to a new critical edition.[81] In contrast to the reasonably well-preserved scientific publications of the sexologists, this magazine's fragmented archival legacy puts it into the category of what José Esteban Muñoz terms "queer evidence": "evidence that has been

[80] On the impact of reduced censorship in expanding the possibilities for queer publishing in the Weimar era, see Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic*; Laurie Marhoefer, "'The Book Was a Revelation, I Recognized Myself in It': Lesbian Sexuality, Censorship, and the Queer Press in Weimar-Era Germany," *Journal of Women's History* 27, no. 2 (2015): 62–86.

[81] Rainer Herrn, *Das 3. Geschlecht: Reprint der 1930–1932 erschienenen Zeitschrift für Transvestiten* (Hamburg: Männerschwarm, 2016). The initial source for the current essay was a copy of issue 5 of *Das 3. Geschlecht* held at the library of the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction at Indiana University in Bloomington. The magazine is not held at any German state or university library.

queered in relation to the laws of what counts as proof."[82] Given the scarcity of subculturally produced evidence documenting trans experience at this period, scholars have highlighted the value of undertaking a microhistory approach. One good example is Laurie Marhoefer's examination of a single Gestapo case file as revelatory of "factors that were not unique to [the case file subject's] situation but rather were endemic to the functioning of the Gestapo system and to the circumstances faced by some lesbians and transvestites in Nazi Germany"; another is Evans's close analysis of Herbert Tobias's erotic photography in the 1950s and the ways in which this sheds light on the "changing optics of queer desire in the second half of the twentieth century."[83] Homing in on the citational practices of the only surviving publication produced exclusively for and largely by self-identified transvestites in interwar Germany cannot tell a comprehensive history of trans self-representation during this period, but it can shed light, as Bauer argues, on the ways in which "archival practices are bound up with fundamental questions about power, resistance, and the legitimatization or erasure of certain lives and deaths."[84]

Das 3. Geschlecht, overseen by the commercially savvy media man Friedrich Radszuweit, displayed a clear awareness that photography was a crucial aspect of any new magazine aimed at a transvestite niche market.[85] In figure 14 this is evident from the headline reference to the thirty pictures featured in this issue alone. Prior to the appearance of the first issue, announcements in affiliated homosexual magazines—also overseen by Radszuweit—had requested that readers send in their own photographs for inclusion, a process that paralleled Hirschfeld's sourcing of many of his images from readers of his 1910 study. It is thus not surprising that there are a number of visual parallels between the two sources, particularly with respect to privately commissioned studio photographs. Nor were the editors averse to treating readers to a spot of transvestite glamour and celebrity culture (as Hirschfeld and Tilke had similarly done with their photographs of female and male imitators and performers), as we can see in figure 15, which depicts "the famous international star of the stage 'Henriette.'"

At the same time, there are important differences in the selection, weighting, and captioning of photographs in this magazine that point to distinct subcultural priorities. For one thing, *Das 3. Geschlecht* overtly thematizes the erotics of gender ambiguity, as evident in the high-booted, thigh-revealing

[82] José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 65.

[83] Laurie Marhoefer, "Lesbianism, Transvestitism, and the Nazi State: A Microhistory of a Gestapo Investigation, 1939–1943," *American Historical Review* 121, no. 4 (2016): 1172; Evans, "Seeing Subjectivity," 433.

[84] Bauer, *Hirschfeld Archives*, 4.

[85] On Radszuweit's role in Weimar homosexual and transvestite politics and publishing, see Herrn, *Das 3. Geschlecht*, 243, 260–61; Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic*, 50–51, 62.

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Der bekannte internationale Bühnenstar „Henriette"

Figure 15. "The famous international star of the stage 'Henriette,'" in *Das 3. Geschlecht*, no. 5 (May 1932).

cover image of issue 5 (fig. 14), which was reprinted in the body of the magazine with the playful caption "Woman or man?" The eroticized half-naked, full-breasted nudes gracing each of the previous covers of this magazine—often wafting exotic Oriental or ancient Egyptian veils and skirts—set this up as a theme, echoing the erotic nude images that regularly featured on the cover of affiliated lesbian magazine *Die Freundin* during the 1920s. At the same time, these cover images performatively embody the blurred boundaries of intersex and trans identity, a gesture underlined when they were reprinted in the body of the same issue with captions such as "Woman or man?" and "hermaphrodite," prompting readers into a teasing guessing game.[86] These images, then, are citations that work at multiple levels.[87] On the one hand, they cite the sexological pattern of presenting sexually intermediate individuals whose gender presented the viewer with a riddle; while on the other, they playfully reference the gender-bending caricatures of masculine women and feminine men popular in Weimar theater, film, and the illustrated press, and they point to the same public fascination that had caused cinema audiences across Europe to flock to the

[86] "Hermaphrodit," *Das 3. Geschlecht*, no. 1 (May 1930): cover image, 27; "Frau oder Mann?," *Das 3. Geschlecht*, no. 5 (May 1932): cover image, 30. Each of these covers is reproduced in Herrn's critical edition.

[87] This process of critical citation might be considered an early precursor of more recent queer and postcolonial critiques of academic and scientific citational practices, including Bauer's analysis of the Eurocentric and gendered limitations of Hirschfeld's writing; see *Hirschfeld Archives*, 103, 109, 111–17. See also Sara Ahmed's work, discussed by Bauer, on how citational practices function as "screening techniques" that provide "a way of reproducing the world around certain bodies": "'Making Feminist Points,'" *Feministkilljoys* (blog), September 11, 2013, http://feministkilljoys.com/2013/09/11/making-feminist-points.

Figures 16 and 17. "Well-dressed male transvestites" and "a well-dressed, inconspicuous male transvestite," in *Das 3. Geschlecht*, no. 5 (May 1932).

documentary *Steinach Film* (1923) about the effects of the newly discovered sex hormones.[88]

Although the cover images thus enact an overtly performative and playful genre of gender queering, the majority of photographs in this magazine are concerned less with eroticized gender transgressions than with portraying transvestites as respectable bourgeois citizens who convincingly pass in public when dressed according to their gender identity. In this, to follow Barthes, they constitute a series of acts of individual self-transformation enabled through processes of "posing," as the photographed subject metaphorically "derive[s their] existence from the photographer." In Foucauldian terms, one might describe this self-affirming representational process in terms of a "technology of the self."[89] Alternatively, we might view these representations of trans identity and agency along more psychoanalytic lines as "transitional objects" (Winnicott) or stepping stones toward another

[88] On gender-ambiguous images and discourse in the Weimar popular media and links to contemporary sexual science, see Maria Makela, "Rejuvenation and Regen(d)eration: 'Der Steinachfilm,' Sex Glands, and Weimar-Era Visual and Literary Culture," *German Studies Review* 38, no. 1 (2015): 35–62; and Katie Sutton, *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 90–125. On the sexological "riddle" and "man or woman" tropes as a convention for dealing with "intermediary" sexual forms, see Peters, *Rätselbilder*, 168, 172–73; Spector, *Violent Sensations*, 94.

[89] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 11; Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton, eds., *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

Weiblicher Transvestit

Weiblicher Transvestit, der als Mann lebt

Figures 18 and 19. "Female transvestite" and "female transvestite who lives as a man," in *Das 3. Geschlecht*, no. 5 (May 1932).

reality, at once mediating and shaping the photographed individual's sense of self—and thus more in tune with recent discussions of photography's role in shaping a "transsexual real."[90] As well as conveying a sense of a preferred gendered self, then, these images display a concerted affirmation of their subjects' respectability. This is evident in the repeated use of adjectives such as "well-dressed," "inconspicuous," and "reputable" in the captions of portraits of male-to-female transvestites (figs. 16–17). Similarly, middle-class respectability is on display in the neat suits and ties and the short-back-and-sides haircuts in headshots of female-to-male transvestites in this magazine (figs. 18–19).

As I and others have argued elsewhere, the political agenda that took shape in and through the Weimar transvestite media drew strongly on such notions of bourgeois respectability as a basis for formulating claims to wider social and legal recognition and freedom from police harassment. Such recognition included the aforementioned issuing by the police of transvestite certificates and official name change documentation with the goal of reducing the public vulnerability of trans-identified individuals. "Respectability" in this context meant conforming to dominant standards of contemporary, unadorned dress and inconspicuous behavior. As a result, various subgroups who may also have sought identification with this new sexological classification were excluded from the terms of Weimar transvestite politics, including conspicuously effeminate homosexuals, individuals

[90] D. W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (London: Tavistock Publications), 1971. See also Rosy Martin and Jo Spence, "Photo-Therapy: Psychic Realism as a Healing Art?," *Ten 8* 30 (Autumn 1988): 2–17. Prosser coined the term "transsexual real" not only to convey a sense of gender authenticity in trans photography but also to allude to an authenticity that contains within it a layer of traumatic wounding, scarring, or absence that he views as part and parcel of an individual's postreassignment sense of self: *Light in the Dark Room: Photography and Loss* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 172.

with a preference for flamboyant or dated styles of dress, and prostitutes and criminals.[91] While the sexual orientation or occupations of these photographed individuals goes largely unmarked, we can assume that at least the male-to-female transvestites identified as predominantly heterosexual (in other words, they desired women) and thus embodied the majority viewpoint of both mainstream sexology and this early trans subculture alike. And while the lines dividing female homosexuality and female-to-male trans identity remained more blurred during this period, here, too, the focus is on a clean-cut, masculine look, suggesting an aspiration to convincingly pass as a man engaged in respectable employment rather than any sustained attempt to disrupt gendered norms.[92]

From a historiographical perspective, the Weimar transvestite magazines thus function much in the way that Regina Kunzel, in a roundtable discussion on queer archives in *Radical History Review*, describes the workings of archives more broadly, namely, as "themselves historical agents, organized around unwritten logics of inclusion and exclusion, with the power to exalt certain stories, experiences, and events and to bury others."[93] Such efforts to legitimate protections for some at the expense of others—a process that, somewhat paradoxically, regularly occurs even among members of already marginalized sex/gender minorities—resonate with recent critiques of "precarity" within neoliberal contexts, where hierarchies of social and economic vulnerability often require the construction of "dangerous others, positioned . . . outside the political and social community."[94] Transvestite activists of this era, particularly those who belonged to the middle classes and had access to Berlin's emerging subcultural scene, saw respectability as necessary to the negotiation of expanded public participation within the constraints of post–World War I German democracy, a negotiation that Marhoefer has usefully dubbed—albeit not exclusively in relation to

[91] Katie Sutton, "'We Too Deserve a Place in the Sun': The Politics of Transvestite Identity in Weimar Germany," *German Studies Review* 35, no. 2 (2012): 335–54. On Weimar trans politics, see also Bauer, *Hirschfeld Archives*, 84–87; Herrn, *Schnittmuster*, 142–57; and Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic*, 55–65.

[92] In addition to the sources cited above, the categorical blurring between female-to-male and female homosexual identity during this period receives critical attention in Mak, "'Passing Women'"; and Marti M. Lybeck, *Desiring Emancipation: New Women and Homosexuality in Germany, 1890–1933* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 151–88.

[93] "Queering Archives: A Roundtable Discussion; Anjali Arondekar, Ann Cvetkovich, Christina B. Hanhardt, Regina Kunzel, Tavia Nyong'o, Juana María Rodríguez, and Susan Stryker (Compiled by Daniel Marshall, Kevin P. Murphy, and Zeb Tortorici)," *Radical History Review* 122 (May 2015): 214.

[94] Isabell Lorey, *State of Insecurity: Government of the Precarious*, trans. Aileen Derieg and Judith Butler (London: Verso, 2015), 14. Similarly, Judith Butler reminds us that the same collectivities of "we, the people" that enable the articulation of "some demand, some felt sense of injustice and unlivability," always also have their "constitutive outside": "'We, the People': Thoughts on Freedom of Assembly," in *What Is a People?*, ed. Alain Badiou et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 51–52, 62.

trans politics—the "Weimar Settlement on Sexual Politics."[95] This selective and at the same time exclusionary emphasis on transvestite respectability receives its visual counterpart in the editorial selection and weighting of photographs published in *Das 3. Geschlecht*.

Yet the push for respectability should not, as Marhoefer's phrase suggests, be read simply in terms of a conservative assimilation to bourgeois norms. The pressure to assimilate via middle-class invisibility represented a strategic negotiation of both the new possibilities and ongoing limits of sexual citizenship in Weimar Germany, a time and place in which, as Kathleen Canning has found, "citizenship [had] emerged as a new political imaginary" that was also, in the wake of constitutional changes to enable women's suffrage and political participation, closely informed by questions of gender.[96] While Canning's focus is on women's suffrage and political subjectivity, her arguments concerning the specifically gendered "symbolics and subjectivities" of Weimar-era citizenship also speak to questions of trans citizenship in important ways. For if, as she argues, citizenship is understood as defining "the terms of political participation *within* nations and civil societies, the rhetorics or 'narrative identities' of citizenship are also relevant for those on the margins of these formal rights."[97]

In this respect, the activism of an emerging trans subculture in interwar Germany might usefully be compared to the US homophile movement's politics of respectability in the 1950s and 1960s, albeit without the gender normativity that, as Susan Stryker observes, characterized that movement.[98] While it is easy to dismiss the respectability politics of German gay and trans activists in the interwar period as an early example of "transnormativity," to adapt Lisa Duggan's term, we might learn more from thinking about how movements purportedly challenging gendered and sexual norms could "also totally endorse other norms," as Marhoefer's research highlights, and the ways in which images were deployed to support these endeavors.[99] To focus simply on those more radical elements of historical movements for sex/gender emancipation that sit more comfortably with a twenty-first-century socially progressive agenda does not make for responsible history writing; instead, doing so brushes over the diversity of political positions that have constituted movements for queer and trans identity politics in both the past and the present.

[95] Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic*, 207–9.

[96] Kathleen Canning, "Claiming Citizenship: Suffrage and Subjectivity in Germany after the First World War," in *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class & Citizenship* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 116–17.

[97] Ibid., 118.

[98] Stryker, *Transgender History*, 150.

[99] Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic*, 212. On "homonormativity," see Lisa Duggan, "The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism," in *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics*, ed. Russ Castronovo and Dana Nelson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 175–94.

Conclusion

Sexological deployments of trans photography in early twentieth-century Germany supported new diagnostic categories and casuistries that often worked to objectify and decenter the subjectivities and lived experiences of trans individuals. Yet these new approaches to lens-based media were also shaped in important ways by mutually influential relationships with the individuals photographed. Trans-identified patients and informants helped to mold the terms and codes of medicalized trans representation by participating in clinical research and sending in privately commissioned images over which they themselves had frequently been able to exercise a significant degree of aesthetic control. The solidification of a legible set of images of "the transvestite" in these decades, then, marked an important moment not just in the history of sexology's disciplinary legitimation as a modern specialization of medical-scientific research but also in the emergence of a distinct brand of modern trans identity politics in early twentieth-century Europe. That sex researchers such as Hirschfeld had moved away from the subjective narratives of the case study genre to the seemingly more objective, tangible evidence provided by newer, lens-based technologies aligned with broader methodological innovations in sexology during the 1910s and 1920s and spoke to a broader desire by practitioners to prove their fledgling field's "scientific" credentials. Meanwhile, subcultural actors appropriated, adapted, and rejected sexology's solidifying visual conventions to suit an emerging minority politics focused less on medical explanation and more on public recognition and respect.

These overlapping archives of queer photographic objects also prompt consideration of the kinds of bodies, gendered performances, and visual representations that received recognition within the taxonomies of early twentieth-century sexology and interwar trans identity politics, as well as those that did not. Where might we look, for example, for visual records of the kinds of queer bodies and genders excluded from the terms of early twentieth-century trans representation outlined here: the transvestite prostitutes or noncelebrity drag queens who didn't make the pages of either Hirschfeld's study or *Das 3. Geschlecht*? What is the price of attributing to the photographs examined in this article the status of "objects" for a queer critical history? What kinds of affective attachments or detachments does turning such representations of real, embodied trans-identified individuals into a source of evidence for historical research entail? Such questions do not liberate us from the historiographical constraints of "identity," but they do point to the advantages of approaching queer history with, as Doan argues, a critical stance toward the "limits of naming and self-naming."

Interwar transvestite photography, I have argued here, worked in the service of multiple and at times competing discourses: on the one hand, it served an emerging identity politics by visually reinforcing subcultural

respectability discourses, while on the other hand, it was deployed to secure the scientific legitimacy of the still marginal biomedical field of sexual science. Pushing at the limits of sexological naming and classification, these photographs—at once strategic and exclusionary in their effects— highlight some of the ways in which self-identified transvestites were beginning to control the terms of their own public image by the 1920s, offering an alternative set of visual conventions to those of sexual science.

About the Author

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