Universal Fetishism? Emancipation and Race in Magnus Hirschfeld's 1930 Sexological Visual Atlas

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"Bilder sollen bilden." With this succinctly worded statement that "images should educate," the influential German sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld (1868–1935) opened the visual volume, or *Bilderteil*, of a five-volume book series entitled *Geschlechtskunde* (Sex studies, 1926–30).[1] This nine-hundred-page volume is an intriguing recapitulation of the thirty years of sexological and emancipatory experience presented in the *Geschlechtskunde* series.[2] In line with other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scientific atlases, which functioned as crucial tools in the organization of individual research objects into visual compendia virtually mapping the territory of a discipline, the volume offers a truly kaleidoscopic abundance of pictures.[3] More than fourteen hundred images depict a great variety of subjects, ranging from sixteenth-century etchings of Adam and Eve to microphotographs of gonadic tissue, images showing phenomena such as exotic phallus statues, bodily deformations, medieval chastity belts, stillborn babies, syphilitic infections, skeletons, and even sex-changing chickens (see fig. 1). The sole common denominator of these images is that they are all in one way or another related to Hirschfeld's lifelong research into the varieties of human sexuality.

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[1] Magnus Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde: Auf Grund dreißigjähriger Forschung und Erfahrung bearbeitet* IV, *Bilderteil* (Stuttgart: Julius Püttmann, 1930), 1.

[2] Magnus Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* I, *Die körperseelischen Grundlagen* (Stuttgart: Julius Püttmann, 1926), vii.

[3] Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2007), 19–27. As Daston and Galiston note, "The term ["atlas"] was apparently transferred to all illustrated scientific works in the mid-nineteenth century. . . . As text and figures merged into a single, often oversize, volume, 'atlas' came to refer to the entire work, and 'atlases' described the whole genre of such scientific picture books" (421).

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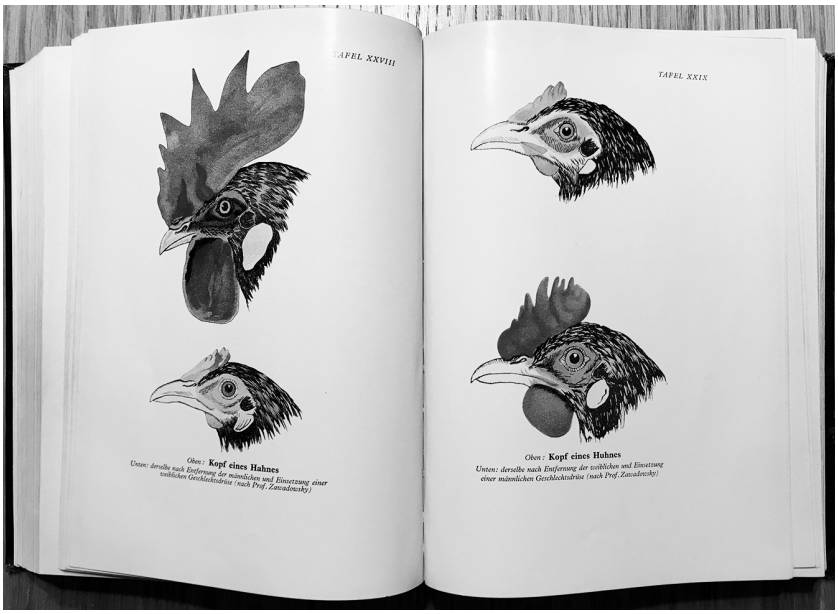

Figure 1. "Head of a rooster" (*left*) and "Head of a hen" (*right*), in Magnus Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde: Auf Grund dreißigjähriger Forschung und Erfahrung bearbeitet* IV, *Bilderteil* (Stuttgart: Julius Püttmann, 1930). The images on the left show the head of a rooster before and after its castration and the implantation of female gonads. The images on the left show a hen before and after a similar operation with male gonads.

Hirschfeld was both a renowned sexologist and an influential activist for the rights of sexual minorities. Through scientific reasoning he hoped to be able to alleviate the burdens borne by homosexuals and others whose sexual identities contravened contemporary norms. He was committed to disseminating his sexological research in the hopes of changing public opinion and to persuade legislators to revoke discriminatory laws. In *Bilderteil zur Geschlechtskunde* his goal was to demonstrate that the subjects of his research—homosexuals, people then known as transvestites, intersex people, sadomasochists, and other categories then considered sexually deviant—had natural, biological causes and that they should therefore be accepted instead of repressed or discriminated against. Following his book's motto, "Bilder sollen bilden," he sought to provide readers from all levels of society with sexological *education* by inviting them to take part in his reasoning and to *see for themselves* what he meant.[4] Even though the book's cost limited the

[4] Hirschfeld also used popular media like film to convince a wider audience of his emancipatory ideals. See Ina Linge, "Sexology, Popular Science and Queer History in *Anders als die Andern* (Different from the Others)," *Gender & History* 30, no. 3 (2018): 595–610.

target audience to consumers who could afford the work or could read it in public libraries, Hirschfeld aimed for it to be understandable to all readers and therefore chose to explain all specialist terminology.[5]

Previous scholarship has highlighted Hirschfeld's importance as one of the most prominent members of the German homosexual movement and has demonstrated his lasting influence on the construction of early homosexual and trans identities.[6] During the last years of his career, Hirschfeld also began to write more explicitly on the concept of race. Although an interest in sexuality in other cultures had been at the heart of his project from the start, his stronger engagement with race was also related to the growing influence of anti-Semitic right-wing movements in Germany, whose racist ideologies had severe implications for Hirschfeld and other people of Jewish descent.[7] In the second volume of *Geschlechtskunde* (1928) he strongly condemned racism, arguing that it was an invention of normative discourses and in no way related to actual biological traits.[8] A few years later, he was forced to extend a lecture tour across America that he had started in 1930 into a world tour when the Nazis rose to power and prevented his return to Germany. Before he died in exile in 1935, he published a large number of "sexual-ethnographical" observations as an account of his travels.[9] He also elaborated on his *Geschlechtskunde* argument against racism in his posthumously published book, *Racism*, which was one of the first studies to explicitly criticize the concept of race from a scientific point of view.[10]

[5] The *Deutsche Nationalbibliografie*, accessible through the online catalog of the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, indicates that the price of the *Sexualwissenschaftlicher Bilderatlas zur Geschlechtskunde* was thirty Reichsmarks when it was first published. When using the methodology explained on Harold Marcuse's "Historical Dollar-to-Marks Currency Conversion Page" at http://marcuse.faculty.history.ucsb.edu/projects/currency.htm#infcalc in combination with the Consumer Price Index Calculator on westegg.com, one can calculate that this is the equivalent of about eighty dollars in 2019. Contrary to Damien Delille's recent assertion, *Geschlechtskunde*'s intended audience was not limited to medical professionals, as is made clear in its introduction (Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* I, x). See also Damien Delille, "Trans-archive: Magnus Hirschfeld et l'atlas visuel des sexualités de l'entre-deux-guerres," *Genre & Histoire* 23 (Spring 2019): para. 2, http://journals.openedition.org/genrehistoire/4215.

[6] Rainer Herrn, *Schnittmuster des Geschlechts: Transvestismus und Transsexualität in der frühen Sexualwissenschaft* (Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2005), 121. See also Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity* (New York: Knopf, 2014), 106.

[7] Heike Bauer, *The Hirschfeld Archives: Violence, Death, and Modern Queer Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2017), 14.

[8] Magnus Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* II, *Folgen und Forderungen* (Stuttgart: Julius Püttmann, 1928), 600–659.

[9] Jana Funke, "Navigating the Past: Sexuality, Race, and the Uses of the Primitive in Magnus Hirschfeld's *The World Journey of a Sexologist*," in *Sex, Knowledge, and Receptions of the Past*, ed. Kate Fisher and Rebecca Langlands (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 112–16; Magnus Hirschfeld, *Die Weltreise eines Sexualforschers* (Brugg: Bözberg, 1933).

[10] In the early 1930s Hirschfeld further developed his argument in a series of articles titled "Phantom Rasse: Ein Hirngespinst als Weltgefahr" (Phantom race: A chimera as a world danger). A final book, *Rassismus* (Racism), recapitulated the argument from these

Conceptualizing race in terms of universal "intermediarity," Hirschfeld argued that all individuals are essentially a mix of various races and therefore "racial hybrids."[11]

As historians of sexology and anthropology have shown, Hirschfeld and other homosexual rights activists and sexologists avidly used cross-cultural and ethnographical comparison to prove their central claim that the divergent sexual identities that they perceived among their patients had to be both universal and innate.[12] As part of a recent global turn in sexuality studies, a growing number of researchers have argued that global processes are indeed crucial to the formation of scientific disciplines and that Hirschfeld's work and early twentieth-century sexology in general should be placed in a global historical perspective.[13] As Kate Fisher and Jana Funke have pointed out, the ways in which sexual scientists such as Hirschfeld drew upon, adapted, and contributed to the often racialized contrasts between cultures and how they were influenced by early twentieth-century colonialism have not yet received enough scholarly attention.[14] Heike Bauer, another influential scholar in this field, has argued that this important human rights activist largely "constructed his thinking over, rather than against," the racism of his time.[15] She demonstrates that Hirschfeld was influenced by contemporary norms, and she calls into question the extent to which he really disassociated himself from racist and colonialist views.[16] According to Laurie Marhoefer, "empire provided the raw data as well as the conceptual frame" for Hirschfeld's arguments about emancipation.[17] This article engages with

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articles and was first published posthumously in an English translation in 1938. Heike Bauer, "'Race,' Normativity and the History of Sexuality: Magnus Hirschfeld's Racism and Early Twentieth-Century Sexology," *Psychology and Sexuality* 1, no. 3 (August 2010): 245; J. Edgar Bauer, "On Behalf of Hermaphrodites and Mongrels: Refocusing the Reception of Magnus Hirschfeld's Critical Thought on Sexuality and Race," *Journal of Homosexuality 68, no 5,* (2019): 8, https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2019.1661686.

[11] J. Edgar Bauer, "Sexuality and Its Nuances: On Magnus Hirschfeld's Sexual Ethnology and China's Sapiential Heritage," *Anthropological Notebooks* 17, no. 1 (2011): 9.

[12] Rudi C. Bleys, *The Geography of Perversion: Male-to-Male Sexual Behaviour outside the West and the Ethnographic Imagination, 1750–1918* (London: Cassell, 1996), 214–28; Funke, "Navigating the Past," 114–20.

[13] For a useful summary of these trends, see Veronika Fuechtner, Douglas E. Haynes, and Ryan M. Jones, "Introduction: Toward a Global History of Sexual Science; Movements, Networks, and Deployments," in *A Global History of Sexual Science, 1880–1960*, ed. Veronika Fuechtner, Douglas E. Haynes, and Ryan M. Jones (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 33.

[14] Kate Fisher and Jana Funke, "'Let Us Leave the Hospital; Let Us Go on a Journey around the World': British and German Sexual Science and the Global Search for Sexual Variation," in Fuechtner, Haynes, and Jones, *A Global History*, 112–48.

[15] Bauer, *The Hirschfeld Archives*, 35.

[16] Bauer, 13–36.

[17] Laurie Marhoefer, "Was the Homosexual Made White? Race, Empire, and Analogy in Gay and Trans Thought in Twentieth-Century Germany," *Gender & History* 31, no. 1 (2019): 101.

this underlying system by focusing on the ways in which he instrumentalized images of anthropological others in order to convince his readers of the universality and innate nature of the sexual identities that he discerned.

The importance of visual sources for Hirschfeld and the elaboration of his sexological theories is widely recognized. As a keen collector of visual material, he believed that photography had the power to capture "visibly discernible markers of sexual orientation" and that such images might subsequently serve to prove the biological nature of sexual conduct then considered deviant.[18] The archives of his renowned Institute for Sexual Science in Berlin contained a stunning thirty-five thousand photographs, many of which were available to the public in publications, slide lectures, and guided tours.[19] Although recent scholarly work has started to engage with the use of photographic evidence in early twentieth-century sexological research, this research has tended to focus on the images in Hirschfeld's earlier publications, which contain far fewer images, while also limiting itself to analyzing the way he instrumentalized photographs of white European sexual intermediates such as people he called "pseudo-hermaphrodites," homosexuals, or transvestites.[20] Still, images of racial others also figured prominently in Hirschfeld's argument, precisely because he wanted them to show the universality and innate nature of sexual identity. In light of the recent wave of scholarship on early sexology's tendency to employ anthropological and cross-cultural comparison, engaging with Hirschfeld's use of images of people of color is particularly instructive, especially since visual argumentation played such an important role in his popularizing efforts. He had already made visual comparisons between white Europeans and colonized others in earlier publications, such as the 1912 illustrated volume

[18] Thomas O. Haakenson, "The Rise of the Celluloid Soldier: Magnus Hirschfeld, Til Brugman, and the Department Store of Love," *Proceedings of the Humanities and Sciences Department of the School of Visual Arts' Twenty-Third Annual National Conference on Liberal Arts and the Education of Artists: Visions of War; The Arts Represent Conflict,* New York, 21–23 October 2009, 59, http://www.sva.edu/downloadFile/proceedings-2009.

[19] Erwin J. Haeberle, "The Jewish Contribution to the Development of Sexology," *Journal of Sex Research* 18, no. 4 (1982): 315.

[20] See, for example, Katharina Sykora, "Umkleidekabinen des Geschlechts: Sexualmedizinische Fotografie im frühen 20. Jahrhundert," *Fotogeschichte: Beitrage zur Geschichte und Ästhetik der Fotografie* 24, no. 92 (March 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*, ed. Gail Finney (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 103–19; Rainer Herrn, "Metamorphotische Inszenierungen der sexualwissenschaftlichen Fotografie," *Mitteilungen der Magnus-Hirschfeld-Gesellschaft* 37–38 (June 2007): 104–8; Kathrin Peters, *Rätselbilder des Geschlechts: Körperwissen und Medialität um 1900* (Zürich: Diaphanes, 2010); Kevin S. Amidon, "Intersexes and Mixed Races: Visuality, Narrative, and 'Bastard' Identity in Early Twentieth-Century Germany," in *Representations of German Identity,* ed. Deborah Ascher Barnstone and Thomas O. Haakenson (Bern: Peter Lang, 2013), 103–27; and Katie Sutton, "Sexology's Photographic Turn: Visualizing Trans Identity in Interwar Germany," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 27, no. 3 (September 2018): 442–79.

of *Die Transvestiten*, but in line with a movement among sexologists and anthropologists toward the inclusion of photographs as "scientific" and objective evidence for the human types they were cataloging, Hirschfeld assigned an increasingly prominent role to photographs in his later publications.[21] The *Bilderteil* is Hirschfeld's most notable and most elaborate visual publication, but it has thus far failed to attract adequate scholarly scrutiny.[22]

While previous research has pointed to the importance of both cross-cultural comparison and visual analysis for his work, the exact ways in which Hirschfeld's *visual* comparisons of white European sexual intermediaries with colonized people of color functioned have not yet been analyzed in detail. By examining a number of these modes of analysis in Hirschfeld's writing, I aim to show how these visual cross-cultural comparisons functioned and lent scientific credibility and cogency to Hirschfeld's argumentation. Since late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anthropological photography entailed uneven power relations between the photographer and the photographed, while the context in which these photographs were previously instrumentalized can still affect their meanings in a new historical context, such as Hirschfeld's publications, it is highly relevant to analyze what they came to signify in Hirschfeld's emancipatory arguments.[23] Thus, I shed light on the way in which colonial(ist) tropes visually underpinned the early twentieth-century emancipatory movements that were focused on legitimizing the sexual behavior of sexual minorities in the European metropole.

The five volumes of Hirschfeld's *Geschlechtskunde* cover an exceptionally broad—almost limitless—range of sexual identities and behaviors. The *Bilderteil* chapter "Fetishism and Sexual Symbols," which provides images to corroborate Hirschfeld's argument about the universal nature of fetishism and body decoration, serves as a case study of how his emancipatory theory depended on colonial structures. I will begin by focusing on Hirschfeld's textual and visual discourse on fetishism and on the binary oppositions in his comparisons between white and nonwhite individuals. I will then scrutinize

[21] On the introduction of photographic evidence to sexology, see Sutton, "Sexology's Photographic Turn." On the introduction of photographic series in studies of race, see Amos Morris-Reich, *Race and Photography: Racial Photography as Scientific Evidence, 1876–1980* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 115.

[22] The feminist visual culture historian Barbara Eder briefly addressed the *Bilderteil* in a 2013 article on an artwork that was inspired by it. Barbara Eder, "'Butterfly Kisses, Addressed to 'N. O. Body': Zur Animation von Magnus Hirschfelds Bilderatlas 'Geschlechtskunde,'" in *"When We Were Gender . . .": Geschlechter erinnern und vergessen,* ed. Jacob Guggenheimer et al. (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2013), 321–36. Some scholars have engaged with individual images from the *Bilderteil*. See, for instance, Rainer Herrn and Michael Thomas Taylor, "Magnus Hirschfeld's Interpretation of the Japanese Onnagata as Transvestites," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 27, no. 1 (2018): 63–100. In 2019 the art historian Damien Delille engaged with the *Bilderteil* from an art historical perspective. See Delille, "Trans-archive," para. 2.

[23] Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 31–32; Peters, *Rätselbilder des Geschlechts*, 161–66.

Hirschfeld's use of a number of anthropological photographs of African women in order to disclose the colonial structures enabling this comparison. In analyzing the function of these images, my objective is twofold: to improve our understanding of the use of visual sources in the construction of apparently coherent theories in human sciences such as sexology and to shed new light on the instrumentalization of anthropological and racial others in early twentieth-century Western emancipatory theories.

Hirschfeld and His Theory of Sexual Intermediates

As an enthusiastic inventor of rhetorical wordplays, Hirschfeld claimed that sexuality was "das gewaltigste Leit- und Leidmotiv der Menschheit": both humanity's greatest drive and its greatest cause of sorrow.[24] He therefore felt a strong urge to change the sexual worldview of his contemporaries. In 1896, four years after his graduation from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Berlin, he published his first treatise on human sexuality, prompted by the criminal conviction of Oscar Wilde and the suicide of a depressed homosexual patient.[25] In this work, titled Sappho und Sokrates, he theorized that homosexual desire arises "from human nature itself."[26] In the following years, a steady stream of books and pamphlets, along with the publication of his own journal and the foundation of the renowned Institute for Sexual Science in 1919, made Hirschfeld the best-known German sexologist of the 1920s and early 1930s. His position nevertheless remained vulnerable throughout his career. Colleagues such as the influential psychiatrist Albert Moll were concerned that Hirschfeld's own homosexuality, which he kept hidden from the public, impaired his scientific qualifications and objectivity. Additionally, Moll was afraid that Hirschfeld's crusade for the rights of homosexuals would harm the young discipline of sexology, which at that point was not yet fully acknowledged or institutionalized.[27]

Over the years, Hirschfeld continually expanded the scope of his research until it encompassed all aspects of human sexuality. Striving to formulate a scientific organizing principle for sexual variation, he devised the so-called Zwischenstufentheorie, or "theory of sexual intermediates," to make sense of the great sexual variety in humankind.[28] As he explained in the laws of

[24] Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* I, xi.

[25] For biographical details, see Ralf Dose, *Magnus Hirschfeld: Deutscher—Jude—Weltbürger* (Teetz: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2005); Manfred Herzer, *Magnus Hirschfeld und seine Zeit* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017). For an English-language biography, see Charlotte Wolff, *Magnus Hirschfeld: A Portrait of a Pioneer in Sexology* (London: Quartet Books, 1986).

[26] Th. Ramien [Magnus Hirschfeld], *Sappho und Sokrates oder wie erklärt sich die Liebe der Männer und Frauen zu Personen des eigenen Geschlechts?* (Leipzig: Spohr, 1896).

[27] Volkmar Sigusch, *Geschichte der Sexualwissenschaft* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2008), 211–18.

[28] The term *Zwischenstufentheorie* was coined by opponents of Hirschfeld's work such as Benedikt Friedländer. Hirschfeld was initially against using the term but adopted it from

this theory, Hirschfeld believed that every human individual was essentially made up of a mixture of male and female traits and that people who were 100 percent male or female represented only theoretical ends of the spectrum.[29] He maintained that the sexual behaviors and identities that many of his contemporaries considered abnormal were in fact both natural and universal; they biologically originated in the body and occurred in all cultures. In other words, even though social behaviors might be highly heterogeneous, they were caused by the same universal biological factors.[30] The Zwischenstufentheorie provided a scientific foundation for the assertion that homosexuality and other sexual deviations such as fetishism and what Hirschfeld initially called transvestism were innate and natural and that they should not therefore be criminalized.

"Bilder sollen bilden"

From the mid-nineteenth century onward, scientists started to compile atlases that were supposed to function as visual compendia with the help of which one could train the eye to see and compare the objects relevant to one's studies in a scientific way, whether those objects were birds, fossils, snow crystals, bacteria, flowers, or human bodies. As Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison have shown, debates on the usefulness of photography arising in the beginning of the twentieth century led scientists to a strategy of "trained judgment," highlighting what they thought to be most relevant from the images that they published while telling their readers what they were supposed to see.[31] In its great heterogeneity of image types from diverse sources relating to a great number of subjects, Hirschfeld's volume diverges from the neat and conveniently ordered atlases discussed by Daston and Galison, but it nevertheless exploits this strategy of trained judgment. In line with the visual tradition in Hirschfeld's work, his *Bilderteil* can be understood as a training atlas for a scientific way of seeing sexuality.

Hirschfeld assumed that the sexological way of dealing with sexuality, which he believed to be scientific and objective, would put an end to prejudiced and moralized understandings of sexual behavior and would thus lead the way to a happier, sexually reformed world. By means of the many images in his publications, he tried to help people see this with their own

1906 onward. Rainer Herrn, "Magnus Hirschfelds Geschlechterkosmos: Die Zwischenstufentheorie im Kontext hegemonialer Männlichkeit," in *Männlichkeiten und Moderne: Geschlecht in den Wissenskulturen um 1900,* ed. Ulrike Brunotte and Rainer Herrn (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2008), 178–79.

[29] For a discussion of Hirschfeld's theory, see Herrn, "Magnus Hirschfelds Geschlechterkosmos," 173–96.

[30] Hirschfeld assumed that there were hormonal reasons for the differentiation of the sexes, although he also conceded that there were still some blind spots in his theory. Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* I, 601.

[31] Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 19–27, 313–17.

eyes. In 1905 he published *Geschlechtsübergänge*, an extended version of a slide lecture he had given at a meeting of natural scientists during which he aimed to formulate rules for the occurrence of sexual variety. In this work, he maintained that when looking with strict scientific objectivity, one simply has to conclude "how unjustified it was to place fellow human beings [with same-sex desires] . . . into a position whose cruelty our language is too poor and our voice too weak to adequately describe."[32] In accordance with his motto, "per scientiam ad justitiam" (through knowledge to justice), Hirschfeld was convinced that a scientific view of human sexuality would correct this injustice.

Geschlechtsübergänge bears a close resemblance to the significantly more comprehensive *Bilderteil*, published twenty-five years later. Both books provide their readers with images of various transgressions of the normative borders between the sexes. The order of the images functions like a film montage, introducing a narrative into the book. The story begins with the *Zwischenstufen*, or sexual intermediates, that originate during the earliest development of a human individual and then moves to descriptions of gradually less fundamental bodily and then psychological mixtures of the two genders. Hirschfeld stressed that the publication's readers should see these images "not with subjective, instinctive or aesthetic feelings, not with any feelings at all, but with strict scientific objectivity."[33] In the final chapter of the work, entitled "Man or Woman," Hirschfeld even instructed his readers to practice this technique themselves by "meticulously observing" a number of images to subsequently "solve some puzzles that I shall show you on the following pages."[34] With this assignment, he was implicitly urging readers to acquire their own scientific way of seeing, to assess correctly the images that he provided.

Twenty-five years later, Hirschfeld noted in the introduction to *Geschlechtskunde*'s *Bilderteil* that he had not initially planned to publish a visual addition to the series but that readers had asked him to do so because the increasingly encyclopedic character of the book series called for a visual supplement.[35] He stated that the images were strictly meant as companions to the textual volumes of the series and urged his readers to not simply glance over the images. Instead, they should look up any phenomena that they were unfamiliar with in the textual parts of the series. Notwithstanding these introductory remarks, which might have served to legitimize the publication of a work filled with hundreds of images that adversaries could label as unsavory and obscene, the *Bilderteil* was more

[32] Magnus Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtsübergänge: Mischungen männlicher und weiblicher Geschlechtscharaktere (Sexuelle Zwischenstufen)* (Leipzig: Malende, 1905), n.p., plate XXXII.

[33] Hirschfeld, plates XXVIII, XXIX, XXX.

[34] Hirschfeld, plate XXXII.

[35] The same pattern can be identified in earlier publications by Hirschfeld that were later accompanied by a visual volume, such as *Die Transvestiten* (1912). See Sutton, "Sexology's Photographic Turn," 455.

than a collection of illustrations perfectly matching the arguments of the textual volumes. Instead, I argue that it was intended to be read by itself, providing its readers with a clear and largely visual narrative that was laid out and explained in the short written introductions to each chapter—a structure very much in line with that of *Geschlechtsübergänge*.[36] These introductions provide viewing instructions for each chapter, describing what is to be seen in the images and explaining the chapter's structure. When following the visual narrative of the *Bilderteil*, Hirschfeld's readers were expected to see Hirschfeld's developmental biological laws at work. In this way, he hoped that they would learn methods of trained judgment similar to his own and learn to see clearly that sexual diversity was nothing to be ashamed or afraid of.

People of Color in the *Bilderteil*

Even though the visual narrative of the *Bilderteil* often digresses, it aims to show in a very direct way how individuals considered sexually atypical come into being by mapping out their ontogenesis against the background of the *Zwischenstufentheorie*.[37] It does this mainly by presenting the reader with images; the introductions to each of the thirty-two chapters rarely comprise more than two or three paragraphs of text. The visual narrative begins with chapters depicting the heterosexual couple and then follows the male and female gamete through fertilization, the egg cell's development into a fetus, the birth of a baby, and eventually its postnatal development into an adult human being who develops a sexuality of their own. Various chapters highlight processes that play a role in this ontogenesis, such as hormonal secretions and the laws of inheritance. Along the way, Hirschfeld frequently paid attention to what diverted from the typical path of development during the sexual development of an individual, thus using pathological cases to shed more light on the development he considered normal.[38]

[36] The fact that an identical version of the *Bilderteil zur Geschlechtskunde* was published under the title *Sexualwissenschaftlicher Bilderatlas zur Geschlechtskunde* also indicates that the book might have been intended as a stand-alone sexological atlas. This version of the book is undated, but the German National Library assumes it was published in 1932, two years after the *Bilderteil*.

[37] Even though he rejected the degeneration theory, which considered individuals with mixed sexualities as evolutionary throwbacks, Hirschfeld's *Zwischenstufentheorie* did theorize that sexual intermediates were caused by a suspension of individual ontogenetic development. Phenomena like androgyny and homosexuality, he argued, were caused by arrests of embryological sexual development. Herrn, "Magnus Hirschfelds Geschlechterkosmos," 182–83.

[38] For a discussion of the normal and the pathological in nineteenth-century biology, see Peter Cryle and Elizabeth Stephens, *Normality: A Critical Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017); Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological* (New York: Zone Books, 1991).

Throughout the *Bilderteil*, Hirschfeld also included images depicting the ways in which various groups of people, both in his own time and culture and in past or foreign societies, engaged with the broad range of sexual difference that he described. His study of male genitals, for example, features a chapter on phallus cults in various times and places. Likewise, the chapter on pregnancy contains images of delivery customs in other cultures, such as a drawing of a Cesarean section in Uganda. The chapters on the effects of sexual biology on people's bodily and psychological sexual constitution similarly contain images of sexual intermediates from contemporary Europe, as well as from the past and from other cultures, supporting Hirschfeld's theory that sex hormones have the same effects all over the world.

Geschlechtskunde also covered sexual fetishism. In his discussion of fetishism in the second textual part of the book series, Hirschfeld countered previous explanations for fetishism by psychologists such as Sigmund Freud and Richard von Krafft-Ebing, theorizing that instead of external impressions or trauma, the primary cause for the emergence of fetishistic desires had to be the "specific sexual developmental constitution" of the individual, which could be explained within the universally human, biological rules of his theory.[39] He argued that fetishism, or "partial attraction" (*Teilanziehung*), as he preferred to call it, was in fact the very foundation of sexual attraction, since most people are attracted to specific features of their sex partners—such as a body type, a hair color, or the color of someone's eyes. Only when the fetishized characteristic is overvalued to the extent that the person behind it is no longer relevant to the fetishist does the fetish become pathological, Hirschfeld argued. Using a number of cases from his practice, Hirschfeld explains how for some individuals, certain objects or characteristics have in fact become "concentrated symbols" that typify the kind of person that the biological makeup of the fetishist makes him or her susceptible to. For a patient who fetishizes long fingernails, for instance, the nails symbolize a strong female sadist—the kind of woman to whom the fetishist is particularly attracted due to their own sexual nature.[40] Hirschfeld then continues to categorize various kinds of fetishism, ranging from boot fetishism to attractions to braided hair or even young girls in cold weather.[41]

Mirroring the textual discussion of fetishism in *Geschlechtskunde* II, the *Bilderteil* chapter on fetishism and body decoration deploys images of various forms of fetishism as a visual foundation for the theory previously established. It includes images related to many of the fetish types mentioned in the text: fetishist collections of soldiers' boots and cut-off plaits of hair, images of long fingernails from the collection of a nail fetishist, and colored drawings of a man whose fetish was related to scantily dressed girls in cold

[39] Magnus Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* II, *Folgen und Förderungen* (Stuttgart: Julius Püttmann, 1928), 93–96.

[40] Hirschfeld, 99.

[41] Hirschfeld, 100–135.

weather, for example.[42] People of color are also included in this section about fetishism, and they figure most prominently in the second part of the visual chapter covering the theme of bodily "embellishments and disfigurements," which Hirschfeld believed were motivated by fetishistic desires.[43] This part of the chapter hinges upon a comparative gesture that connects the dress, jewelry, and fashions of white Europeans to approximately thirty images displaying non-European counterparts. These images and the comparisons they construct offer an intriguing example of the veiled ways in which Hirschfeld deployed people of color to lend credibility to his overarching theories while attempting to legitimize the sexual behavior and identities of sexual minority groups in Europe.[44]

Hirschfeld included a great number of these juxtapositions in the *Bilderteil*: foot binding in China appears alongside European foot disfigurement caused by ill-fitting shoes; he placed decorative face scarring in Africa next to the dueling scars of German students; he contrasts the jewelry of an African woman with that worn by a white European; he shows Japanese, ancient Greek, New Zealander, and Ainu tattoos and festive dress from African and Asian cultures next to the festive dress of a sixteenth-century European knight and eighteenth-century European elites (see fig. 2). The chapter also depicts cultural phenomena such as artificially lengthened lips, arm lacing, artificially deformed skulls, filed teeth, piercings in noses and ears, hairstyles, and face painting. He does not provide European equivalents for these practices, but these images still invite readers to consider these customs in relation to parallel phenomena more familiar to them.

At first glance, the message of these visual comparisons is clear: Hirschfeld implies that both white subjects and the opposing people of color are formed by the same biological laws. People of color just express their urges in a different way. But we might ask whether people of color as a category really occupy a position similar to that of the white Europeans to which Hirschfeld compares them. Do the images really imply similarity? The *Bilderteil* chapter on fetishism and body decorations and alterations visually condenses written accounts elaborated in the first two volumes of *Geschlechtskunde*: its initial pages illustrate the various types of fetishism in Europe described in volume 2, and those images depicting the universal urge to decorate the body correspond closely to the discourse on clothing and sexuality that appears in volume 1. Even though the written narration on clothing and fashion in the textual volume does not specifically link the universal urge to embellish

[42] Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* IV, 739–45. Judging by the similarities between patient descriptions and some of the images, these images even seem to have been given to Hirschfeld by the described patients. For more on this practice, see Sutton, "Sexology's Photographic Turn."

[43] Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* IV, 731.

[44] For a discussion of the conceptualization of fetishism in the context of Western imperialism, see Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), esp. 181–203.

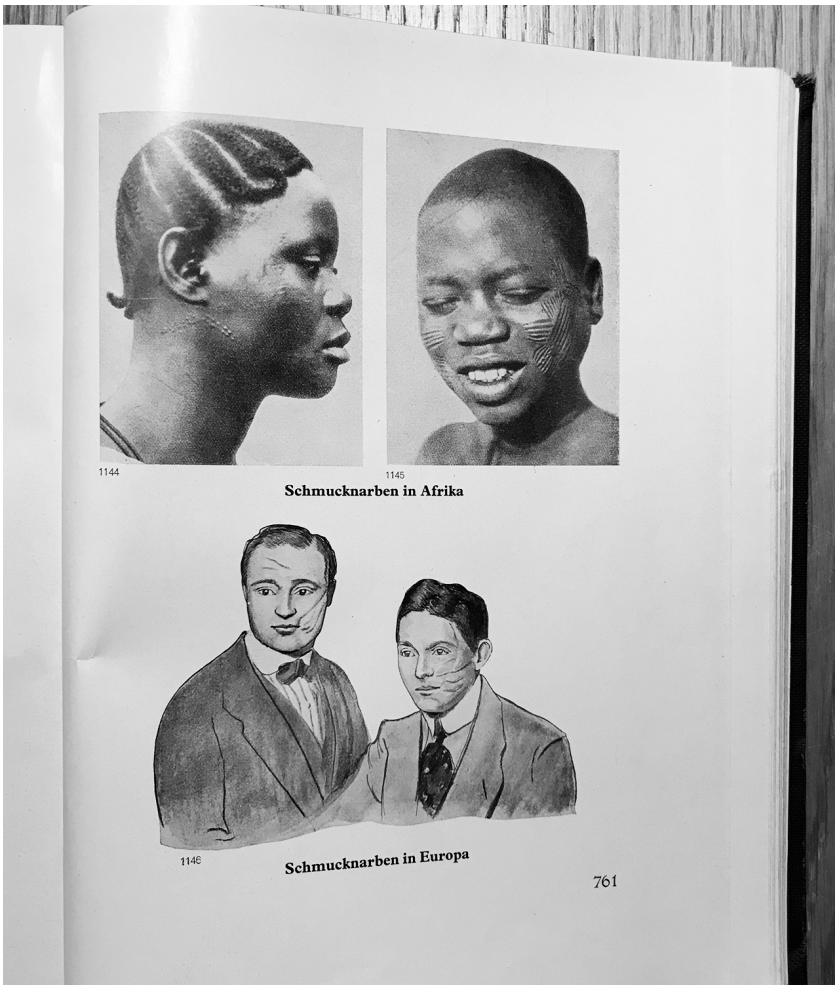

Figure 2. "Decorative scarring in Africa" and "Decorative scarring in Europe," in Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* IV, 761.

the body to fetishistic desires, the short introduction to the images in the *Bilderteil* does. Indeed, there are striking similarities between the textual and visual narratives. Deconstructing Hirschfeld's more developed written argumentation is thus critical to understanding what he meant to argue about universal human sexual similarity:

> Among all peoples, even among the native inhabitants of the primeval forests, where shame and protection are out of the question, . . . we see . . . the inclination to decorate and embellish the body, a drive to reinforce the natural stimuli. Whether the primitives fish for *shells*

> from the sea or the civilized for expensive *pearls* to hang around their necks, whether *they* take raw pieces of metal or *we* take golden rings and silver bracelets to put around fingers, arms, and legs, whether a people draws pins, rings, and studs through pierced *noses* or through pierced *ears*, whether the savages tuck feathers directly into their hair or the moderns insert a processed *piece of straw* or felt in between . . . strictly psychologically, all of this boils down to the same thing. It becomes clear that, just as in ancient times, we today take all possible objects from the three domains of nature . . . to confer upon ourselves *more splendor and regard*. . . . There can be no doubt that this universal longing to make the body look more pretty, stimulating, and thus more erotic can be attributed to the wish to make our attire appear ever more peculiar, new, and impactful—a wish to which fashion owes its emergence.[45]

On the surface, Hirschfeld's eloquent text describes how the desire to decorate the body appears all over the world. Yet subtextually, the well-composed and seemingly antidiscriminatory comparison rests upon the same persistent binary oppositions that also underlie the *Bilderteil*'s visual section. In the description of the native inhabitants, or *Ureinwohner*, as living in primeval jungles, or *Urwälder*, the prefix "*ur-*" carries the connotations of original, authentic, and earliest but also primitive. According to Hirschfeld's rhetoric, these people apparently feel no shame and need no protection from the elements, reinforcing the impression that they are somehow more natural than those on the other side of the binary—Europeans who are more developed and cultured.

Hirschfeld's long list of contrasting practices of bodily embellishment deepens this impression. The primitive and wild apparently embellish their bodies by taking materials from nature and applying these to their bodies without processing them, whereas the civilized and modern take more valuable materials (pearls instead of seashells) and transform them into objects such as necklaces, hats, and fur coats. The text further differentiates the us/them binary by opposing "we today" (*wir heute*) to "ancient times" (*uralte Zeiten*), thus placing contemporary primitives on the same level as prehistoric people. This echoes contemporary evolutionary thinking, which conceived of the differences between the West and its others in terms of distance in evolutionary time. In this way, late nineteenth-century anthropologists often conceptualized primitive peoples as evolutionarily backward, while they saw the white race and, above all, its male sex as most developed.[46]

Still, not all binary oppositions in the book's description of bodily embellishment support the analysis that Hirschfeld was relying on a more natural

[45] Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* I, 170.

[46] Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 147. For a discussion of Hirschfeld's thought on primitive and non-Western cultures, see Funke, "Navigating the Past."

and evolutionarily backward other as a contrast with a more cultured and developed white subject. His comparison of foot binding in China with the use of the corset in Europe, for instance, condemns two practices that are both harmful—and he condemned the European one even more vigorously than the Chinese. He points out that "Asian peoples curtail and constrict *only the feet,* [while] Europeans use whalebone, processed into corsets, to contract and lace up [body] parts that are far more vital and precious."[47] The argument is meant to convince readers of the objectivity of Hirschfeld's critical gaze and to encourage them to leave behind their previous assumptions of what constitutes normal behavior. Apparently, everyone is guided by the same urges, even corset-wearing Europeans and the German students whose scarred faces mirror those of young native Australians. In the end, both the message of universal sameness on the text's surface and the subtextual difference between the two groups mutually reinforce each other. Exactly because of the profound binary differences the argument raises, the impression that all people are nevertheless the same becomes all the more captivating.

Deconstructing the *Bilderteil* Fetishism Chapter

In his *Mythologies*, an examination of modern myths—artificial constructs naturalizing dominant bourgeois worldviews—Roland Barthes analyzed how the 1950s exhibition of *The Family of Man* focused on the differences between people while simultaneously supporting the myth of "the solid rock of a universal human nature" in relation to which all difference was ultimately superficial. According to Barthes, the exposition's photographic argument that "man is born, works, laughs and dies everywhere in the same way" was one example of the myth that there is one universal community of humankind to which history and diversity are simply superficial layers—even though in their concrete historical forms, human lives do show differences, some of which are even gravely unjust.[48] Thirty years earlier, Hirschfeld assembled images of various people from numerous sources to construct a similar visual argument. The images that he used appeal to a central, seemingly self-evident system of visual truth: neatly organized and categorized, the images seem to tell a natural, coherent, and noncontradictory visual narrative. By analyzing the images themselves, as well as their relation to each other and to the surrounding texts, it is possible to discern the lurking hierarchies and binary oppositions among the meanings generated by the argument.[49] Deconstructing this visual narrative depends on identifying not

[47] Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* I, 170.

[48] Roland Barthes, "The Great Family of Man," in *Mythologies* (New York: Noonday Press, 1991), 100–102.

[49] Norah Campbell, "Regarding Derrida: The Tasks of Visual Deconstruction," *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal* 7, no. 1 (May 2012): 108–11, https://doi.org/10.1108/17465641211223492.

only *what* the images show but particularly *how* they show it, what they imply, and what, to the contrary, they omit. Closely reading the images by describing them in detail can help to pinpoint the various elements in each image and their implications for the meanings that the image creates both in itself and in the combination of images that it is a part of.

At a superficial level, the images in the fetishism chapter imply that white Europeans and people of color are essentially the same, displaying behavior caused by universal sexual laws. Yet Hirschfeld's choice of images does imply great differences between the two groups. For example, the chapter presents numerous *Wunschzeichnungen* by white fetishists—drawings they made to illustrate their greatest (individual) desires—as well as photographs of their collections of fetishized objects. While the images in this part of the book evoke the inner world of these white fetishists, the chapter does not depict equivalent collections or drawings made by people of color. As a result, their inner world and thus an important part of their individuality go unseen.

Similarly, the captions that accompany the images, such as "apron fetishist" or "corset fetishist," on the one hand, and "Melanesian" or "negress from the Congo area," on the other, insinuate important differences between the two categories. They describe both white fetishists and people of color in generalized terms, but for the fetishists the designation derives from their fetish, which is both idiosyncratic and related to their inner self. The designation for the racial others, on the other hand, derives from their geographic or cultural origin, pointing to their collective identity only. Only three of the depicted people are named, and they are all from the West. As a whole, the fetishism chapter reveals Hirschfeld's implicit assumption that underlying the superficial impression of similarity there is a binary pitting a collective other against a more individual white subject.

In figure 3 the juxtaposition of two images depicting the "ear, neck, arm, and head decoration" of a Zulu woman and of a white European woman clearly illustrates how Hirschfeld's reasoning rested upon the implied collectivity of people of color and their greater naturalness and primitivity.[50] The picture on the left is an edited photograph depicting a young black woman from the waist up against an even white background. The woman, who is looking to the viewer's right, is almost naked. She does not seem to

[50] I have purposely not provided the neat, cleanly cut reproductions of these images that the reader might expect. As Mieke Bal has pointed out, scholars who engage with the history of anthropological images such as these run the risk of repeating the visual exploitation of colonized people. In order not to continue the processes of eroticization, sexualization, and dehumanization to which the subjects of anthropological photography have been subjected, I follow Bal's suggestion of making visible my own "gesture of showing" in these figures while also trying to make explicit how I read the images by extensively describing the components I discern in them, thus narrativizing the interaction between the image and its viewer. Mieke Bal, *Double Exposures: The Subject of Cultural Analysis* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 218–23.

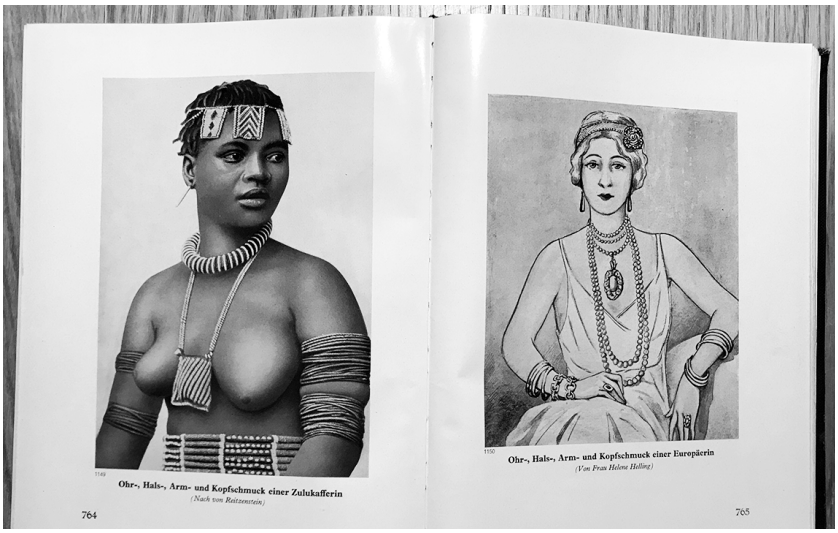

Figure 3. "Ear, neck, arm, and head decoration of a Zulu kaffir woman" (*left*) and "Ear, neck, arm, and head decoration of a European woman" (*right*), in Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* IV, 764–65.

be wearing makeup, and her short hair is styled in dreadlocks. She sports various decorative pieces, to which the caption more particularly directs the reader's attention. Part of her forehead is covered by a headdress that seems to be made up of small beads and consists of three larger patterned square pads connected by a string. A thick round necklace and another longer and thinner necklace consisting of two strings with a kind of pouch connected to them, both made up of similar beads, cover her neck and chest. She is, furthermore, wearing what looks like a small rounded stick in the lobe of her right ear, while several layers of string fit tightly around both of her upper arms. She also carries a belt or skirt, which also appears to be composed of beads and consists of six or more linked cords decorated with colored patterns. Together with the arrangement of the jewelry, the lighting of the image emphasizes the woman's naked breasts.

The slightly smaller image on the right is a pencil drawing that also depicts a young, bejeweled woman. She is white and has light-colored hair. She is wearing a white, loose-fitting dress with a lengthy string of beads, probably pearls, that is looped several times around her neck. She also wears a large medallion adorned with a gem on her chest, several loose-fitting bracelets around her wrists, several rings, earrings, and two strings of beads with an ornamental rose attached to them in her short (or upswept) hair. Her eyebrows are plucked, her eyelashes are emphasized with mascara, and her lips are darkened with lipstick. She looks the viewer directly in the eye, sitting upright, with her legs crossed, one hand in her lap and another resting

easily on what seems to be the arm of the chair in which she is seated. Her jewelry, dress, makeup, and hairstyle give her the appearance of a fashionable early twentieth-century white woman.

Placed on opposing pages, the two images mirror each other in their depictions of young women wearing jewelry, an impression reinforced by their matching captions. The goal is undeniably to invite comparison. Hirschfeld presumably wanted his readers to see that even though the women come from very different origins, they both demonstrate the universal human urge to decorate oneself, and they do so in a similar fashion, turning to "ear, neck, arm, and head decoration."[51] Much like the aforementioned textual comparison, however, this superficial similarity relies on a more problematic opposition, one congruent with colonialism and racial prejudice. The white figure is individualized in the caption as "Frau Helene Helling," while the other woman literally remains nameless—an unidentified representative of Zulu culture.[52] Whereas the white woman is clothed and looks at the viewer with confidence, assertively and self-consciously occupying the space around her, the black woman looks away while the camera presses close to her body, allowing her little personal space. Her naked breasts are (literally) highlighted, and her necklace with the pouch only pulls the gaze in further. The white woman's medallion, on the other hand, draws attention to itself rather than to her covered and largely indiscernible breasts. The unevenly colored background and the dark lines marking the figure's contours in this drawing add to the impression that it is a portrait; it captures the woman's individuality. In the case of the black woman, the smooth white background and photographic clarity of the image evoke anthropological objectivity, while the nakedness of the subject elicits exotic and primitive otherness. Her diverted gaze enables her objectification, as the observer is not forced to look her in the eye.

In short, the white woman is marked as more culturally advanced or civilized than the largely naked and therefore supposedly more natural black woman, as the white woman is not only dressed but also wearing refined clothes and jewelry. The nakedness of the African woman also underlines contemporary presumptions concerning the heightened sexuality of Africans. Indeed, just like other images of people of color in the *Bilderteil*, this particular photograph echoes anthropological or ethnographical discourses that postulated the evolutionary primitiveness and, by extension, greater sexuality of black women.[53] In all probability, Hirschfeld obtained the image from Ferdinand von Reitzenstein's 1923 book *Das Weib bei den Naturvölkern*,

[51] Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* IV, 764–65.

[52] The word "von" before Helling's name in the image's caption could also indicate that the image was drawn by Helling or that the jewelry belonged to her.

[53] For a discussion of the racist objectification and sexualization of Black women, see Robin Mitchell, *Vénus Noire: Black Women and Colonial Fantasies in Nineteenth-Century France* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2020), 1–18.

which is referenced in the *Bilderteil*'s list of sources. Reitzenstein was a cultural scientist and self-proclaimed "sexual anthropologist" and the director of the anthropological department of Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Science. He had referenced this photograph in a discussion of the beauty of the breasts of women from various peoples, as well as in a discussion of how the form of a breast sheds light on the evolutionary development of a race.[54] During the early twentieth century, images like these tended to circulate through highly divergent discourses. Photographs originating in anthropology could be stripped from their original contexts and then redeployed in works on (art) history, popular journalism, and sexology.[55] Reappearing in Hirschfeld's comparison, the image arguably continues to carry here the taint of a discourse that conceptualized savage peoples as evolutionarily backward in comparison to white Europeans. The image of the individualized white woman, on the other hand, stems from an entirely different context and thus entails completely different meanings.

The Politics of Anthropological Photography

The *Bilderteil*'s chapter on fetishism and body decoration also contains a second juxtaposition of female bodies that reveals the importance of the *types* of images that Hirschfeld used and the need to pay attention to their provenance. The reader finds several drawings of "corset and waistline fetishism," including an image of dancing couples with extremely narrow waists from the collection of a waistline fetishist and a French caricature of a man putting on a fashionable men's corset. These drawings are followed by two edited photographs of "African women with enlarged buttocks." They are placed opposite two colored images of a typical and a constricted female torso, making clear that they are indeed part of the section on waistline fetishism. The colored images are followed by another colored image depicting a full-bosomed and wasp-waisted woman from 1200 BC. The next image is a pen-and-ink caricature of a similarly full-bosomed white woman wearing a dress that optically enlarges her buttocks (see fig. 4). The similarities between the two anthropological images and this caricature are striking, which is no coincidence: their captions clearly mark them as examples of the same phenomenon of enlarged buttocks, while the numeration of the images excludes the colored images that are placed between them.[56]

[54] Ferdinand von Reitzenstein, *Das Weib bei den Naturvölkern* (Berlin: Neufeld und Henius, [1923]), 37, 50–51. Reitzenstein, in turn, took the picture from Albert Friedenthal's *Das Weib im Leben der Völker I* (Berlin: Hermann Klemm, 1910), facing page 288.

[55] For an analysis of image circulation in early twentieth-century German sexology, see Peters, *Rätselbilder des Geschlechts*, 161–66.

[56] Correspondingly, the *Geschlechtskunde* index treats them as examples of one single phenomenon, called "Enlarged buttocks in Africa and Europe." Magnus Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* V, *Registerteil* (Stuttgart: Julius Püttmann, 1930), 43.

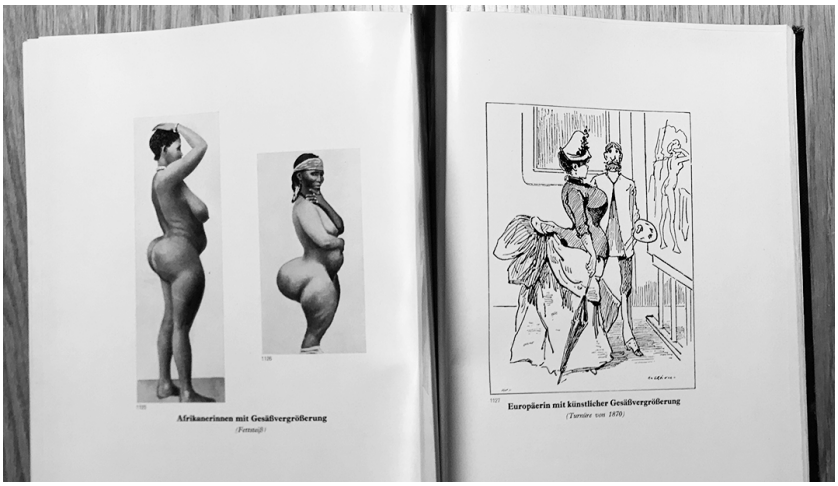

Figure 4. "African women with enlarged buttocks" and "European woman with artificially enlarged buttocks," in Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* IV, 752–53. Note that on this photograph, I am holding up the pages with the colored plates in order to show the similarities between the images on the left and the image on the right.

Like the image depicting the bejeweled Zulu woman, these photographs are a part of Hirschfeld's comparison connecting the fashions and fetishes of white Westerners to nonwhite equivalents. The naked women are similarly depicted in front of a neutral white background in black and white, and the staging highlights the form of their breasts, bellies, and buttocks. Both illustrations, which have a drawing-like touch to them, as they are somewhat smoothed by the printing technique used, are clearly based on anthropological photographs.[57] Like the image analyzed above, Hirschfeld took them from popular-scientific publications on the "history of morals" (*Sittengeschichten*), a genre that typically connected popular-scientific text with a great number of historical and anthropological images of often scantily dressed women, thus providing readers with both education and the voyeuristic opportunity of looking at images that could be perceived as erotic.[58] In these publications, the images figure in discussions linking the

[57] As Jana Funke and her coauthors have demonstrated, Hirschfeld's and other sexual scientists' use of images of objects from other cultures mirrored the visual argumentation of eighteenth-century antiquarianism. See Jana Funke et al., "Illustrating Phallic Worship: Uses of Material Objects and the Production of Sexual Knowledge in Eighteenth-Century Antiquarianism and Early Twentieth-Century Sexual Science," *Word & Image: Mediating the Materiality of the Past, 1700–1930* 33, no. 3 (2017): 324–37.

[58] Eugen Holländer, *Äskulap und Venus: Eine Kultur- und Sittengeschichte im Spiegel des Arztes* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1928), 145; Reitzenstein, *Das Weib bei den Naturvölkern*, 47, respectively. On the *Sittengeschichte*, see Stephanie D'Alessandro, "A Lustful Passion for Clarification: Bildung, Aufklärung, and the Sight of Sexual Imagery," *Studies in 20th Century Literature* 22, no. 1 (1998): 1–46.

depicted women to prehistoric beauty ideals and primitive, even animal-like sexuality.[59] These publications, in turn, mention the Berlin Museum for Ethnology (Museum für Völkerkunde) and the Anthropological Society Berlin (Anthropologische Gesellschaft Berlin) as the sources for the photographs. This indicates that they traveled from anthropological and ethnographical collections through popular-scientific works to Hirschfeld's *Bilderteil*.

Like the other images in the section on "waistline fetishism," the caricature of the white woman is of an entirely different kind. It depicts a full-bosomed white woman wearing a bustle dress that optically enlarges her buttocks. As in the photographs of the Zulu women, the contours of her breasts and buttocks are highlighted, but she is not positioned in front of a neutral background, and she is not naked. The illustrator probably intended this image as a critique of the artificiality of the woman's dress.[60] Again, the superficial similarity between the three images does not entirely succeed in covering up the crucial differences between them. As the women of color are naked and more objectified, they appear more natural and sexual than the clothed white woman, whose figure is artificially changed to present "enlarged buttocks"—a matter of culture instead of nature.

An anthropological photograph differs from a drawn or sketched portrait in many ways.[61] As the American critic and writer Susan Sontag once argued, a photograph is "a material vestige of its subject in a way that no painting can be," as it has been created by the light that was reflected by an object, thus presenting a trace of it.[62] Given that the photograph is somehow part of the object it depicts, Sontag argues, it is also a means of acquiring it: in owning a photograph, one symbolically owns the person depicted in it. This photograph subsequently becomes part of a system of information in which it can be classified and stored and could "establish and delimit the terrain of the *other*."[63] All in all, this acquisition of people through photography, with the camera as, in Sontag's words, a "sublimated gun" that shoots pictures,

[59] See Holländer, *Äskulap und Venus*, 147. The connection between African women and a presumed primitive sexuality goes back to earlier depictions of African women. For a discussion of images of African women and the work of Holländer in relation to the infamous depictions of the Khoikhoi woman Sarah Baartman, who was displayed in Europe as the "Hottentot Venus" in the early nineteenth century, see Sabine Ritter, *Facetten der Sarah Baartman: Repräsentationen und Rekonstruktionen der "Hottentottenvenus"* (Berlin: LIT, 2010), 125–51.

[60] The probable meaning of the sketch thus corresponds with Hirschfeld's own negative opinion of the corset as a damaging influence on both women's health and beauty. Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* II, 129.

[61] For an introduction on postcolonial thought on colonialist photography, see Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson, "Photography, 'Race,' and Post-colonial Theory," in *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*, ed. Eleanor Hight and Gary Sampson (New York: Routledge, 2013), 1–19.

[62] Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Rosetta Books, 2005), 120.

[63] Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (Winter 1986): 7.

is inherently violent and turns individuals into objects that are symbolically available to possess and arrange.[64]

Seen through the lens of Sontag's theory about the effects of photography, the fact that the African women were photographed instead of drawn means that just like numerous other colonial subjects, they have been made into objects to possess and categorize. They were then used to create complex forms of knowledge and served as examples of racial types.[65] As Barthes notes, the photograph confirms that the depicted object has unquestionably *been there*: the medium testifies that these women, their unconventional jewelry, and their bodies really did exist, thus providing the visual argument with a sense of objectivity.[66] The drawings, on the other hand, do not objectify or possess their subjects in the same way, as they do not entail a *trace* of their existence. As readers could be expected to be familiar with fashionable white ladies, there was no need objectively to prove their existence.

According to Bruno Latour, scientists gather information and then distill, combine, and communicate this information in the form of "immutable mobiles": objects—in many cases images—that can be moved around but that are at the same time "*immutable*, *presentable*, *readable* and *combinable*" with each other.[67] Necessarily, the composition of the *Bilderteil* was facilitated through such a process. During the century before its publication, anthropologists began the project of mapping humankind and categorizing its variations, an enterprise that helped create a belief in the concept of race. They ventured out into the world to collect data on and images of other peoples before taking the information home for publication.[68] The discipline of anthropology was thus a valuable source of visual material for Hirschfeld, who rearranged images of colonized subjects to clarify and validate his sexological and emancipatory theories.

Just as he described all manners of fetishism and then gave them a place in his textual argument of the universality of sexual laws, Hirschfeld also collected images from all over the world that he considered related to fetishism and used them to create the visual narrative of his *Bilderteil*. As Elizabeth Edwards memorably argued, the earlier meaning of images affects what they can come to mean in the new contexts in which they are applied. Anthropological images became part of a comparing gesture contrasting the other with the colonizer. The presumption that these images self-evidently show

[64] Sontag, *On Photography*, 10.

[65] Morris-Reich, *Race and Photography*, 100–115.

[66] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (London: Cape, 1982), 76. On the importance of photographic evidence for Hirschfeld and his contemporaries, see Peters, *Rätselbilder des Geschlechts*, 164.

[67] Bruno Latour, "Visualization and Cognition: Thinking with Eyes and Hands," *Knowledge and Society: Studies in the Sociology of Culture Past and Present* 6, no. 1 (1986): 7, italics in original.

[68] See Morris-Reich, *Race and Photography*, 4–27.

reality, though, conceals the fact that they are the product of a vast system of anthropological study that went to great lengths to create and assemble them.[69] Hiding behind Hirschfeld's publication is an apparatus consisting of networks of people, skills, material objects, knowledge, infrastructures of travel, and centers of calculation that enabled the production of ostensibly objective data such as photographs.[70] This system spread an intricate network over the entire world in its effort to gather and classify images of all kinds of people in order to make them universally comparable and thus to discern all supposed races. As Geertje Mak has shown, this system sought to establish a disembodied, mechanically objective universal overview for scientists such as Hirschfeld, but in the end the comparison still implied a fundamentally Western colonial perspective in the way that it substantiated racial hierarchy and difference.[71]

To substantiate his emancipatory argument, Hirschfeld collected, arranged, and ultimately published his own selection from among the many images that traveling anthropologists had collected in their expeditions. Together with images from other sources, Hirschfeld used them to create the impression that one could objectively see the universal laws of sexuality at work all over the world.

Conclusion: Comparing People

At first sight, the images in the *Bilderteil*'s chapter on fetishism and body decoration show the similarity of the phenomena they depict, visually arguing that people all over the world are subject to the same universal sexual urges delineated in Hirschfeld's *Zwischenstufentheorie*. Notwithstanding its plea for the acceptance of sexual variety, the narrative of the *Bilderteil* as a whole does delineate an implicit *normal* development of the heterosexual man or woman. This untainted ontogeny is juxtaposed against the bodies and sexualities that occur when statistically typical development is disrupted, at which point intermediary sexualities or phenomena such as fetishism and homosexuality appear. In the *Bilderteil*, the development of both typical and atypical bodies is mainly visualized by showing images of white individuals. This article has shown how Hirschfeld's theory also leaned upon a third group. Apart from numerous white fetishists, the *Bilderteil*'s fetishism chapter also shows a substantial number of racialized others. Both the white fetishists and the people of color are seen to deviate from white European standards, but the latter do so collectively, while the fetishists are regarded as individual aberrations that deserve pity and understanding. Most importantly, these (pictures of) people of color are used to explain

[69] Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 31–32.

[70] Geertje Mak, "Touch in Anthropometry: Enacting Race in Dutch Papua New Guinea 1903–1909," *History and Anthropology* 28, no. 3 (January 2017): 327.

[71] Mak, 338.

and legitimize the sexual identities and behaviors of white Europeans, but not vice versa.

The anthropological images that Hirschfeld used to underpin his emancipatory argument bring along strong subtextual meanings and hierarchies that run contrary to the antiracist argument he aimed to make. Many of the depicted people of color differ from their white counterparts in rather striking ways: they appear to be more primitive, more collective, and more inescapably defined by their origins. They remain nameless, and, in contrast to the depicted white fetishists, there is no reference to their inner emotional worlds. Beyond that, they are objectified and eroticized, in most cases not drawn but exposed to the classifying, violent gaze of the camera in order to validate the supposed objectivity of the image. These images issued from the vast global structure of anthropology, along with its colonial networks and technologies, which went to great lengths to enable scientists such as Hirschfeld to make universalizing claims such as those expressed in his *Bilderteil.*

It is important to note that Hirschfeld's arguments about emancipation and the universality of sexual variation benefited from the differences that the images also depict. His narrative gains cogency precisely because the superficial message of a universally equal humanity is underpinned by the subtext of continuously confirmed difference: the images clearly show disparities between two groups, but Hirschfeld used that underlying difference first to show the universal diversity in sexuality and then to convince his readers that sexual variations were both natural and innate. The two parts of this discourse reciprocally reinforce and coconstitute each other, enabling Hirschfeld's readers to *see* like he did that sexual difference had to be innate and universal.

Even when early twentieth-century emancipators such as Hirschfeld strongly opposed racism, colonial structures and racist thought inevitably informed their reasoning. As my deconstruction of Hirschfeld's visual argumentation has shown, he inadvertently relied on these structures because they created the photographs that enabled the universal observation that his visual argument needed. Ironically, one could even argue that despite his best intentions, Hirschfeld reinforced the discriminatory thought that he aimed to fight.

About the Author

Wouter Egelmeers studied history at Radboud University (Nijmegen, the Netherlands), the Free University of Berlin, and Humboldt University in Berlin. His academic interest lies with (scientific) knowledge production and circulation and the roles played by images, gender, the body, and anthropological others in this process. In his master's thesis (2016), which was shortlisted for the Gewina-Descartes-Huygens Thesis Award, he

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