



# Performative Figures of Queer Masculinity

---

A Media History of Film and Cinema in  
Germany Until 1945

---

Christiane König

palgrave  
macmillan

# Performative Figures of Queer Masculinity

Christiane König

# Performative Figures of Queer Masculinity

A Media History of Film and Cinema  
in Germany Until 1945



**J.B. METZLER**

palgrave  
macmillan

Christiane König  
Institut für Medienkultur und Theater  
Universität zu Köln  
Köln, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany

ISBN 978-3-476-05887-4      ISBN 978-3-476-05888-1 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-476-05888-1>

© Springer-Verlag GmbH Germany, part of Springer Nature 2022

The translation was done with the help of artificial intelligence (machine translation by the service DeepL.com). A subsequent human revision was done primarily in terms of content by the help of Megan Hanson.

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors, and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer-Verlag GmbH, DE, part of Springer Nature.

The registered company address is: Heidelberger Platz 3, 14197 Berlin, Germany

*For Bärbel, Rolf-Peter and Chris*

# Acknowledgements

This book has a very long history, in fact, too long in the increasingly rushed and competitive academic world. In its implementation, the subject has inevitably changed over these many years. The theoretical-methodological approaches also changed over the course of personal changes concerning my professional knowledge, but also my experiences in academia. The final version of the book is not only the result of a necessary revision of the submitted habilitation thesis. Rather, it is the material-semiotic engraving of a lengthy process of (non-)available financial and human resources. The fact that this book has been published is therefore due to many gestures and acts of intellectual and practical giving, holding, framing and supporting, and gracious challenging. My thanks therefore go to Ingrid Hotz-Davies, who read and commented on the first draft. I thank Marie-Luise Angerer for providing useful institutional frameworks. I owe too much to Norbert Finzsch for it to be listed here. I thank Olaf Stieglitz for his support regarding the research design of the study. I thank Peter Marx for the very inspiring conversations that made me think outside the box, for his support in defending the paper, and for generously offering to publish it in this great series. I thank Sabine Haenni for the in-depth film-historical exchange. I thank Paul Fleming and Elke Siegel for the opportunity to present my project for discussion to an international, accomplished academic audience. I thank Stephan Trinkaus for reading and giving feedback on the final theoretical-methodological core idea and his appeal to courageously stand up for un/ambiguity of all kinds and fi/faction. A film history project cannot be realized without archival work and research. I would therefore like to thank Anke Hahn of the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek in particular for providing barrier-free access to the audiovisual collection as well as her very friendly and accommodating cooperation. Without Maria Matzke and Olaf Saeger I would have been lost around the editing tables. I would like to thank them as well. My special thanks also go to Marcel Steinlein for the very nice communication as well as the uncomplicated and smooth cooperation with the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation. I would also like to thank the Bundesarchiv – Filmarchiv. Mrs. Burkhardt and Mrs. Schwendele from Beta Film GmbH as well as Mrs. Herberger from Rio-Film GmbH have handled the assignment of rights to the published film stills as a matter of course. I

would like to thank my editor, Oliver Schütze, for his immensely helpful support in all editorial matters. I would like to express my special thanks to Renate Kroll for her generous financial support of the 1st, German edition of the book through FONTE – Stiftung zur Förderung des geisteswissenschaftlichen Nachwuchses. Rolf-Peter König has given me invaluable advice. And Chris, as always, has been fully there for me in every situation, including the most difficult ones of my life thus far.

in August 2019

Christiane König

# Contents

|          |                                                                                                                                 |            |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Introduction</b>                                                                                                             | <b>1</b>   |
| 1.1      | Film History as Media History: Technical-Anthropomorphic/<br>Performative Queer Masculinity                                     | 1          |
| 1.2      | Media Archaeological Prerequisites of the Medium Film                                                                           | 7          |
| 1.3      | Queer Masculinity Around 1900: The Double Bind of the<br>Anthropomorphic                                                        | 18         |
|          | References                                                                                                                      | 24         |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Empire/Germany: Film and Cinema, Gender and Sexuality</b>                                                                    | <b>33</b>  |
| 2.1      | Empire/Short Excursus: Cinema and Film in Germany (1896 to<br>1910)                                                             | 33         |
| 2.2      | Continuation/German Empire: Film/Cinema/Gender/Sex Starting<br>in 1910                                                          | 38         |
| 2.3      | The <i>Fantastic</i> Scene of the <i>Strange Other</i> – <i>Das Geschenk des<br/>Inders</i>                                     | 60         |
| 2.4      | The Comic <i>Ge-stell</i> of Masculinity: <i>Aus eines Mannes<br/>Mädchenzeit</i>                                               | 81         |
| 2.5      | The Media Pursuit of One's Own Truth: <i>Die Toten erwachen</i> – 6.<br><i>Abenteuer des berühmten Detektivs Stuart Webbs</i>   | 103        |
| 2.6      | The Spatiotemporal Geostrategic <i>Betrayal</i> – <i>Das Tagebuch des<br/>Dr. Hart</i>                                          | 128        |
|          | References                                                                                                                      | 153        |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Weimar Republic/Germany: Film and Cinema, Gender and<br/>Sexuality</b>                                                       | <b>169</b> |
| 3.1      | Interlude/Game I: The Technical Spaces of Intoxicating<br><i>Artificiality</i> – <i>Opium</i> – <i>Die Sensation der Nerven</i> | 193        |
| 3.2      | The Narrative Tableau of Im/Mediate Relationships: <i>Das<br/>Cabinett des Dr. Caligari</i>                                     | 217        |
| 3.3      | The <i>Monstrous</i> Impossibility of Self-Knowledge: <i>Nosferatu, eine<br/>Symphonie des Grauens</i>                          | 251        |



|          |                                                                                                                   |     |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 3.4      | The Narrative Un/Decidability of the <i>Empty Origin</i> :<br><i>Geheimnisse einer Seele</i> .....                | 274 |
| 3.5      | The Mounted Vividness of Narrative Reality: <i>Geschlecht<br/>in Fesseln – Die Sexualnot der Gefangenen</i> ..... | 299 |
| 3.6      | Fore/Play I: The in/Authentic Relationships of Image<br>Acoustics – <i>Ein Lied geht um die Welt</i> .....        | 329 |
|          | References .....                                                                                                  | 358 |
| <b>4</b> | <b>National Socialism/Germany: Film and Cinema, Gender and<br/>Sexuality</b> .....                                | 373 |
| 4.1      | The Cinematographic Dream of Oneness: <i>Robert und Bertram</i> ...                                               | 399 |
| 4.2      | The Particular Scene of Cinematic Immediacy: <i>Wunschkonzert</i> ...                                             | 425 |
|          | References .....                                                                                                  | 448 |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Concluding Remarks</b> .....                                                                                   | 463 |
|          | References .....                                                                                                  | 466 |
|          | Appendix A. Filmography .....                                                                                     | 469 |
|          | References .....                                                                                                  | 473 |

# List of Figures

|           |                                                                                                       |     |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Fig. 2.1  | <i>Das Geschenk des Inders</i> ; GER 1913, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 1st reel 86.28 .....         | 64  |
| Fig. 2.2  | <i>Das Geschenk des Inders</i> , GER 1913, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 2nd reel 149.15 .....        | 75  |
| Fig. 2.3  | <i>Das Geschenk des Inders</i> , GER 1913, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 2nd reel 149.65 .....        | 76  |
| Fig. 2.4  | <i>Das Geschenk des Inders</i> , GER 1913, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 2nd reel 150.41 .....        | 76  |
| Fig. 2.5  | <i>Aus eines Mannes Mädchenzeit</i> , GER 1913, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 95.16 .....             | 94  |
| Fig. 2.6  | <i>Aus eines Mannes Mädchenzeit</i> , GER 1913, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 420.35 .....            | 101 |
| Fig. 2.7  | <i>Aus eines Mannes Mädchenzeit</i> , GER 1913, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 431.33 .....            | 103 |
| Fig. 2.8  | <i>Die Toten erwachen</i> , GER 1915, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 1037.00 .....                     | 125 |
| Fig. 2.9  | <i>Die Toten erwachen</i> , GER 1915, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 1048.13 .....                     | 126 |
| Fig. 2.10 | <i>Das Tagebuch des Dr. Hart</i> , GER 1918/19, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, 0:44:17:65 ..... | 150 |
| Fig. 2.11 | <i>Das Tagebuch des Dr. Hart</i> , GER 1918/19, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, 0:27:56:89 ..... | 152 |
| Fig. 3.1  | <i>Opium</i> , GER 1918/19, legacy of Peter Ostermayr, 2nd reel 1148.36 .....                         | 215 |
| Fig. 3.2  | <i>Opium</i> , GER 1918/19, legacy of Peter Ostermayr, 2nd reel 1478.07 .....                         | 216 |
| Fig. 3.3  | <i>Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari</i> , GER 1920, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, 1:08:54 .....    | 241 |
| Fig. 3.4  | <i>Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari</i> , GER 1920, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, 0:42:56:18 ..... | 244 |

|           |                                                                                                     |     |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Fig. 3.5  | <i>Das Cabinett des Dr. Caligari</i> , GER 1920, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, 0:21:58 ..... | 250 |
| Fig. 3.6  | <i>Nosferatu</i> , GER 1922, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, 0:29:30:10 .....                  | 272 |
| Fig. 3.7  | <i>Nosferatu</i> , GER 1922, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, 0:29:35:17 .....                  | 273 |
| Fig. 3.8  | <i>Geheimnisse einer Seele</i> , GER 1926, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, 0:11:18:14 .....    | 286 |
| Fig. 3.9  | <i>Geheimnisse einer Seele</i> , GER 1926, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, 1:12:55:11 .....    | 297 |
| Fig. 3.10 | <i>Geschlecht in Fesseln</i> , GER 1928, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 01:04:20.....                | 316 |
| Fig. 3.11 | <i>Geschlecht in Fesseln</i> , GER 1928, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 01:05:12.....                | 316 |
| Fig. 3.12 | <i>Geschlecht in Fesseln</i> , GER 1928, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 01:46:40.....                | 319 |
| Fig. 3.13 | <i>Geschlecht in Fesseln</i> , GER 1928, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 00:39:42.....                | 320 |
| Fig. 3.14 | <i>Geschlecht in Fesseln</i> , GER 1928, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 01:11:02.....                | 322 |
| Fig. 3.15 | <i>Geschlecht in Fesseln</i> , GER 1928, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 01:20:00.....                | 326 |
| Fig. 3.16 | <i>Geschlecht in Fesseln</i> , GER 1928, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 01:20:08.....                | 327 |
| Fig. 3.17 | <i>Geschlecht in Fesseln</i> , GER 1928, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 01:20:13.....                | 327 |
| Fig. 3.18 | <i>Geschlecht in Fesseln</i> , GER 1928, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 01:20:18.....                | 328 |
| Fig. 3.19 | <i>Ein Lied geht um die Welt</i> , GER 1936, Rio Film GmbH, 4th reel 30.34 .....                    | 348 |
| Fig. 3.20 | <i>Ein Lied geht um die Welt</i> , GER 1936, Rio Film GmbH, 4th reel 30.36 .....                    | 348 |
| Fig. 3.21 | <i>Ein Lied geht um die Welt</i> , GER 1936, Rio Film GmbH, 4th reel 34.08 .....                    | 350 |
| Fig. 3.22 | <i>Ein Lied geht um die Welt</i> , GER 1936, Rio Film GmbH, 4th reel 97.12 .....                    | 351 |
| Fig. 4.1  | <i>Robert und Bertram</i> , GER 1939, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, 1:20:58:22.....          | 420 |
| Fig. 4.2  | <i>Robert und Bertram</i> , GER 1939, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, 1:21:02:03.....          | 421 |
| Fig. 4.3  | <i>Robert und Bertram</i> , GER 1939, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, 1:21:02:06.....          | 422 |
| Fig. 4.4  | <i>Robert und Bertram</i> , GER 1939, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, 1:21:02:10.....          | 423 |

|          |                                                                                               |     |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Fig. 4.5 | <i>Robert und Bertram</i> , GER 1939, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau<br>Foundation, 1:21:03:22..... | 424 |
| Fig. 4.6 | <i>Robert und Bertram</i> , GER 1939, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau<br>Foundation, 1:21:13:24..... | 425 |
| Fig. 4.7 | <i>Wunschkonzert</i> , GER 1940, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau<br>Foundation, 52:25:02.....        | 446 |
| Fig. 4.8 | <i>Wunschkonzert</i> , GER 1940, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau<br>Foundation, 52:38:22.....        | 447 |

# Chapter 1

## Introduction



### 1.1 Film History as Media History: Technical-Anthropomorphic/Performative Queer Masculinity

From 1896, traveling cinemas toured throughout Europe.<sup>1</sup> They were usually found at fairs, where they were one of many attractions and integrated into the rhythms of travel and performance.<sup>2</sup> The people who visited the traveling cinemas came from all walks of life. Men, women and children of all ages and from all social backgrounds attended the fairs. Only regional religious emphases or socio-geographical contexts such as towns or villages served as relevant classification criteria. The films shown at the traveling cinemas were short, a few minutes long at most. They were combined into a program with a dramaturgy. There were several screenings each day, which pre-structured the spectators into interest groups. For example, there were family-friendly performances and performances for *gentlemen* only. The program was explained by the same person who owned the cinema.<sup>3</sup> This narrator had the freedom to decide which films were shown in which order and in which way. It is said that many an operator played his films backwards. The program was often accompanied by live music—a musician or a music group. It consisted of current affairs, that is, short films showing political or cultural events from around the world. It also contained comical scenes, one-act dramas, dances, sports and acrobatics, animal training, magic tricks, *tableaux vivants* or a view of nature. Most of the content was not new per se: The audience knew a lot from the news, literature, other

---

<sup>1</sup>On traveling cinema in Europe, Turkey and Russia in the nineteenth century until the Second World War, cf. Loiperdinger (ed.) (2008).

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Garncarz deserves credit for having reconstructed this for Germany in a large-scale research project from various textual sources. Cf. Garncarz (2010).

<sup>3</sup>On the narrator, cf. Lacasse (2012), Châteauevert (1996).

fairgrounds, and from specialty and sensation theaters or vaudeville shows. Due to its particularity of now being technically re-produced and at the same time *lifelike*, the experience of the so-called cinematograph was a novelty.

The audience was exposed to a multitude of heterogeneous, constantly changing visual appeals generated by the apparatus and the image projections, so that perception was constantly challenged, stimulated and heightened. The aim was to maintain attention until the end of the program, if possible. The moving images projected onto the screen presented themselves to the viewers as objects of the visible. However, the mode of reference could be as diverse as the heterogeneity of the visuals was great. The only mode of reception was not only passive-aggressive *gawking*, as Tom Gunning postulates for cinema during this period.<sup>4</sup> Sensual-aesthetic reference to moving images was multiplied by the heterogeneity of vistas. One could stare at the moving images, but one could also look at them thoughtfully. One could be as absorbed by what was happening on the screen, just as they could be shocked or distant. All of this occurred in rapidly changing combinations and repetitions. What was viewed could be shared with others, it could be commented on loudly, even the narrator could be included in the experience. Or one could simply leave the tent in the middle of a show. One was never concretely involved in the events with their eyes and ears alone. Rather, the entire body with all its senses was permanently constituted in a multifaceted, heterogeneously relational way to what was happening not only on the screen, but in the entire performance space, including the bodily individual self-perceptions and self-reflections.<sup>5</sup>

It is within this space that I imagine a young man in the audience watching a program, perhaps alone, perhaps with his work colleagues, friends or even relatives, his sisters, for example. They may have been to a psychic earlier in the day, after which the group might have strolled to a stand selling sweets before going for a beer in a taproom. The program, consisting of international productions, possibly featured a serpentine dance,<sup>6</sup> a boxing match,<sup>7</sup> a drama involving decapitation,<sup>8</sup> a magic trick,<sup>9</sup> a comical scene,<sup>10</sup> a second comical scene,<sup>11</sup> and, finally, a landscape shot. I imagine this viewer having been mesmerized by the powerful suppleness, the light-filled figure of the serpentine dancer, while he admired the muscular, agile bodies of Greiner and Sandow, imagining himself to be that strong and athletic as well. As he did so, he recalled the boxing match with Sandow that he had read about in the newspaper. With the decapitated Queen Mary, he perhaps suffered along with her,

---

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Gunning (1994) and Thompson (1996) for further details.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Vogl-Bienek (1994) on early cinema as event and projection art in historical perspective.

<sup>6</sup>It could be a dance by Loïe Fuller or one by Mlle. Ancion as shown in Max and Emil Skladanowsky's Winter Garden program of 1895/96.

<sup>7</sup>Such as the 1895 fight between Greiner and Sandow, also from the Winter Garden program.

<sup>8</sup>This would be the 1895 Edison production *The Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots*.

<sup>9</sup>Such as Georges Méliès' 1896 *L'Éscamotage d'une dame au théâtre Robert Houdin*.

<sup>10</sup>The example here is based on the 1895 Lumière production *La voltige*.

<sup>11</sup>This is the 1896 Lumière production *L'arroseur arrosé*.

possibly thinking of the Schillerian drama with which he was familiar, in order to quickly immerse himself for a few minutes in the rugged beauty of U.S. nature. The kangaroo boxing with Mr. Delaware made him laugh, while he kept gawking at the butt of the man trying to mount the horse. He simultaneously thought of an acquaintance who looked like the boxer and whom he had not seen for a long time, and now wished to see again. During the demonstration, he might let his gaze wander around the hall and meet a pair of eyes that returned his gaze, which was that of an older man. Perhaps the young man turned away abruptly, full of excitement, while at the same time his neighbor whispered something in his ear, his gaze fixed spellbound on the dancer on the screen. The voice of the narrator drowned out the murmurs of the audience. The orchestra roared. The scenes on the screen replaced each other in rapid succession. A work colleague waved at him from a few rows ahead. The young man waved back, at the same time beginning to imagine how an encounter with the stranger might have gone, or even with that friend who resembled Sandow, until finally, in his imagination, he first danced with a kangaroo, then had a rendezvous with Sandow, finally had sex, perhaps was Sandow himself, the latter being draped in a sweeping robe like Mademoiselle Ancion or Loïe Fuller, while he himself wore boxing gloves. He briefly embraced the person sitting next to him and breathed a peck on her cheek. Later that evening, at home, he might have jotted down in his diary his experiences at the traveling cinema, initiated by those moving images projected onto the screen by light, as well as the fantasies associated with them, after which he might have masturbated. He may have been thinking about Albert Moll's or Alfred Nordau's remarks on the degeneration of masturbation, which he had cursorily read, or of Richard Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* or of the Berlin sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld, whose work on the "drittes Geschlecht" ("Third Sex") he had just become familiar with, whereby he would have felt some shame at the act of masturbation. Perhaps, however, he went to a pub to dance, bop and cuddle, even though he had to be back at the office early the next day.

The year deliberately chosen for this scenario does not coincide with the mythical date of the birth of cinema, namely 1895. This is the year in film history when the institutionalization process of cinema began with the light projection of moving images onto a screen for a larger audience. Prior to this, the technical apparatus had been the focus of interest at world exhibitions or fairs as a technical novelty; the films were illustrative accessories. They were often shown on other devices, such as Edison's kinetoscope without screen projection, which limited the visual experience to a single viewer. With traveling cinemas, however, the accessibility of the audience increased immensely. From 1896 onwards, the medium of film began to have a broad impact, which accompanied the already initiated institutionalization process of cinema.<sup>12</sup>

However, the entire setting is important to me: the short films were the focus of the people sitting in the hall with all their senses, the tactility of their bodies, including their cognitive abilities, but also with the sociability of their identities as they

---

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Garnarcz (2010).

pertain to gender, religion, age and origin. At the same time, this scene demonstrates the dynamic, irreducible complexity, diversity, and malleability through which the visual and auditory field was experienced by the subjects present as simultaneously tactile, cognitive and social. Perceptions, bodily motor skills, affects, desires and cognition were indeed directed towards the dazzling, light-flooded immaterial moving images. However, despite all tendencies towards order, the heterogeneous arrangement and diversity of the program content did not allow for a stable relationship between what was seen, what was experienced and the (heterogeneous) audience. Thus, perception and cognition, affects and desires of the individual subjects were addressed and increased in order to be remodeled, whereby in this *assemblage* partially new patterns emerged. However, due to the openings co-produced in the process, moments of temporary undecidability emerged that could lead to potentially unpredictable continuations. In other words, the newly produced was not completely determinable in its undeterminedness. Moreover, the im/possibilities and in/stabilities that accompanied it could be discharged or made intelligible in another place, at another time, with respect to other objects of knowledge and desire. The technical-medial of apparatus, cinema and film projection intertwined in manifold and complex ways with the socially likewise multiply intertwined human affects, modes of perception and forms of cognition. At the site of traveling cinema, ever-changing techno-human, material-sensory-cognitive-semiotic entities emerged, such as the one I illustrated with the figure of the young man with this singular queer *assemblage*.

This study is therefore not a film history in the conventional sense, but a media history of queer masculinity as it relates to film and cinema in Germany.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, I am not primarily oriented towards the paradigm of representation,<sup>14</sup> which is why a few words about the epistemology of media that I represent are in order here. At the same time, these also determine the underlying method.

All the characteristic features of the medium of film already existed when cinema began to emerge. In particular, these include photography, which was reproduced in it as a series, and the *théâtre optique*, whose virtual movement composite supplemented it with photography, but also the changing scenes of the dioramas, which were sequential and narrative. This also includes sensations, such as train derailments or volcanic eruptions that audiences were familiar with from sensation theater, as well as sneezing men, acrobats or trained kangaroos, which the audience knew from vaudeville and specialty theaters. In the medium of film, all these elements came together in a very specific constellation around the time of its supposedly mythical origin. Film constituted itself by making these references visibly

---

<sup>13</sup>This media history could, of course, also have been written as a transnational history. Due to material limitations, such as resources for access to archives, among other things, I had to focus here on the discursive and dispositive circumstances specific to the European and German contexts.

<sup>14</sup>This is not a historiography of the increasing visibility of gay identities in cinema and film since the beginning, as was Vito Russo's concern. This work also does not intend to take a glance into film history with supposedly current knowledge of male homosexuality in order to retrospectively *out* figures as gay or to clarify constellations of desire. Cf. Russo (1981).



apparent, to the extent that it set out under the signum of making *life itself* optimized, that is, more visible than any other previous medium. The medium of film thus produced its characteristic visibilities by technically re-producing pre-existing media. It emerged as a medium through the visible, specific formation of difference to other media through differential relationality. This essentially recurred to the basic principles of presence and absence, of the creation of illusion and the disruption of illusion, as well as relations of proximity and distance. These spatiotemporally dynamic and critical processes of de- and recomposition of visually heterogeneous views can therefore be described as performative re-performances in the realm of the symbolic.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, this media history of queer masculinity begins with the media-archaeological preconditions of film<sup>16</sup> beginning in the late eighteenth century at the latest.

For queer masculinity, in turn, this specific medial constellation of film means that both gender and sexuality have never been represented in only simple ways – as gender identity, as *sexual orientation* or sexual practices. They were (and still are) subjected to the specific technical-medial processes of multiple and at the same time specific productions of difference characterized by the optimized visualization of *life itself* in two respects. In the technical re-production of sex and gender in film, pre-existing images, views, concepts, narratives and discourse elements of both were largely re-performed, that is, performatively produced. Moreover, this performative re-performance also occurred under the condition of the emphasized visibility of their (medial) origins characterized by the enhancement of *life itself* as differential relationality. Consequently, gender and sexual identity as well as desire and constellations of desire could only appear as differentiated relationalities in themselves, especially in the tension between the character of construction and *lifelikeness*.

In this light, one must consider the medial reorganization of affects, desire, perception and cognition of the spectatorial subjects. By experiencing the film, the relationship of the *subject* to itself was newly constituted as an affective and cognitive (self-)experience and as an affective as well as cognitive (self-)experience of difference(s) with reference to these concepts. Film as a medium was not only an object of knowledge and cognition about and of the (other) medium. It was also an

---

<sup>15</sup> This approach is inspired by the concept of remediation by Jay D. Bolter and Richard Grusin, which is specifically located historically and methodologically adapted here. In their historically oriented study, they focus first of all on new media, in this case the computer. The fact that these do not come out of nowhere, but are constituted by re-producing what is already familiar, is illustrated by the two as art historians through an archaeology of this configuration. Using the computer as an example, they further elaborate a fundamental constitutive medial principle of difference: the productive interplay of transparent illusion (supposedly unmediated access to *life*, to *reality*) and hypermediality (revealing medial constitution). The effect of lifelikeness produced by one medium is therefore indissolubly intertwined with the reference to another medium and its constructed character.

<sup>16</sup> With regard to media archaeology as a method, cf. Kittler (1986), Ernst (n.d.) and (2001), Huhtamo and Parikka (eds.) (2011). An early archaeology of cinema can be found in Cerams (1964). Elsaesser (2004) specifically outlines film history as media archaeology.

instrument and operator of (one's own) increased pleasure in watching and pleasure in the will to know oneself and the other; in line with Michel Foucault, Georges Didi-Huberman and Linda Hentschel, I refer to this as the pleasure of knowing.<sup>17</sup>

The technical-medial, performative and affective-cognitive entanglements of gender, sexuality and desire with the film audience's pleasure of knowing constantly formed new contours due to the dynamic processes of de- and recomposition during their un/determined re-performance. I refer to these flexible contours in exemplary terms as the technical-anthropomorphic of the medium of film. What is meant by this is the performative, yet relational relationship between technical-medial and human processes. In it, the positions of object and subject (in front of and on the screen) became partially indistinguishable. Affect and desire as well as knowledge and cognition (on the part of the images, on the part of the viewers) constantly produced (new) bodies, desires, sexualities, genders and identities in an un/determined way.

With the reference to the media-archaeological conditions of film, the aspects of the technical-anthropomorphic which were relevant for the figures of the technical-anthropomorphic of queer masculinity can be specified. This also results in a special epistemological basis for the term *queer* in this book, which also calls for a different theoretical-methodological approach to it: *queer* here does not necessarily mean interpreting what is supposedly given in the symbolic, such as desire, objects of desire, or constellations of desire. Rather, *queer* is a practice of seeking out intrinsically different re-performances of gender and sexuality as contours of the technical-anthropomorphic of the medium of film. Queer is thereby the incessant driving force through which the historiographical perspective engages these contours in specific ways, primarily recording their appreciative and empowering effects as an anti-homophobic, anti-misogynistic, and anti-racist project, pace Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.<sup>18</sup>

The aim is to trace the contours of the technical-anthropomorphic of film and its empowering effects as technical-medial performative queer masculinity as of 1896 and to note its changes until 1945. I have deliberately chosen this period to show that while the period of Nazi rule represents a marked break indicated by the changes in the cinematic dispositive due to socio-political circumstances, it did not completely stop the constitution of technical-medial, performative queer masculinity.<sup>19</sup> I specifically focus here on the technical-medial performativity of queer masculinity

---

<sup>17</sup>On the power of knowledge and the pleasure of knowing, cf. Foucault (2005), Didi-Huberman (1997), Kittler (2002) as well as Hentschel (2001). The fact that the relationship to cinema and film was strongly structured in a libidinous way was already attested to in written comments on early cinema, for example, by Walter Serner. Serner's observations in this regard appeared in 1913 in *Die Schaubühne* 9. Cf. Serner (1913).

<sup>18</sup>Cf. Sedgwick (1990).

<sup>19</sup>There were and have not been any hard breaks in history, which is why the supposedly unrestricted expressivity of queer identities in the more *open* culture of the Weimar Republic did not end abruptly with the beginning of Nazi rule, as is often claimed in queer theory. Cf. the argumentation in Russo (1981), Mennel (2012) and Brown (2016). Implicitly, the thesis can already be found in Dyer (1990a, b) and Kuzniar (2000).

not only because, as Teresa de Lauretis put it,<sup>20</sup> there is a historically conditioned differential level of experience between men and women, with the masculine one being more visible and simply easier to catch up with due to socio-political conditions.<sup>21</sup> Rather, I use Eve Sedgwick's brilliant work on queer masculinity in literature in a particular way to explain the media-archaeological presuppositions of queer masculinity.

In the next section, I will present the media-archaeological conditions that existed at the time of the historical emergence of the medium of film with which the film-specific preconditions for queer masculinity can be explained. These are to be seen in the larger context of the characteristics of modern European societies that emerged during the nineteenth century, and can broadly be attributed to their significant domains of entertainment and knowledge cultures. I will then discuss Sedgwick's historical account of the figure of that *specific* anthropomorphic whose contours emerged specifically through rhetorical strategies in literature up to the end of the century on the basis of the work of the inherently irreducibly incoherent, paradoxically effective double structure of the two central definitions available for masculinity and male relations, respectively. At the end of the introduction, by linking the two, there will ultimately be a historically situated, specific techno-anthropomorphic figure of the entanglement of the medium of film and gender, that is, technical-medial, performative queer masculinity. In the main part of the thesis, I will demonstrate their modifications over the course of the formation of the cinema and film dispositive in Germany by reading selected films and outlining the respective figures of the technical-anthropomorphic queer masculinity they re-present.

## 1.2 Media Archaeological Prerequisites of the Medium Film

The cultures of entertainment and knowledge can be viewed in the context of the socio-cultural and socio-political conditions characteristic of *modern* European societies in the nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup> Work, life and representation formed their essential socio-political axioms, according to which processes of capitalist

---

<sup>20</sup> This is not about the difference between male and female sexual identity. Crucial to this understanding of queerness are the different discursive attributions and individual and collective experiences, including self-understandings that have been generated by different codings and normings regarding female and male homosexuality and have historically entailed different strategies of (in) visibility, media re-production and performativity (up to the present day). Such a film and media history of queer femininity has yet to be written.

<sup>21</sup> By this I mean all men and women in principle, but here in this particular case people who are marked as non-heterosexual in the socio-political sense and who potentially identify as such.

<sup>22</sup> On the concept of modernity as an inherently contradictory process of differentiation, as a non-linear process of re-composition and decomposition of variously actualized patterns of order, cf. Welskopp et al. (eds.) (2012). This is a continuation of the concept of modernity in Harvey (1990). On the queer critique of this, cf. Halberstam (2005).

(re)production, distribution and consumption were systematized and standardized by means of imperialist-territorial overexploitation and expansion movements. They were accompanied by transport and communication technologies,<sup>23</sup> migration movements and urbanization thrusts.<sup>24</sup> European nation states emerged on the basis of technologies for the recording, medical-physiological and anthropological classification of individuals as well as for biopolitical population regulation,<sup>25</sup> mindful of their experimental testing in the colonies.<sup>26</sup> Consumption and leisure emerged as homologous complements to production and work.<sup>27</sup> Both were subject to the same modern principles of increasing systematization, functional differentiation, standardization and frequency. In them, the confusing *modern* world of technology and lifestyles could be re-produced and experienced under *safe* conditions.<sup>28</sup>

This particularly included the mental and physical experience of space and time, of relations of proximity and distance, of relationships to technology, goods and bodies, that is of animate and inanimate objects, of relationships to individuals and groups as well as of self-relationships. In partly mobile, partly fixed institutions such as specialty theaters,<sup>29</sup> taprooms and drinking halls,<sup>30</sup> circuses,<sup>31</sup> waxworks,<sup>32</sup> panoramas and dioramas,<sup>33</sup> panoptica,<sup>34</sup> sensation and illusion theaters,<sup>35</sup> vaudeville,<sup>36</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Hugill (1999), Ross (2008), and Headrick (1981, 2000).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Bade (2000) and Mergel (2009).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Hagner (2000), Florey and Breidbach (eds.) (1993), Harrington (2002), Palm (2008, 2009), Zimmermann (2001, 2004), and Köstering (2003).

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Grosse (2000), Conrad (2006), Kundrus (2003a), (ed.) (2003b) and Goodman et al. (eds.) (2003).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Haupt and Torp (eds.) (2009), König (2000), Siegrist et al. (eds.) (1997). On the relationship between leisure and consumption, cf. Cross (1993), Furlough (2001), Furlough and Strikwerda (eds.) (1999) and Butsch (eds.) (1990). For a gender perspective, cf. de Grazia and Furlough (eds.) (1996). For a post-colonial perspective, cf. Ciarlo (2011).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Kane (2013).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Jansen (1990).

<sup>30</sup> On drinking and taprooms, cf. Geisthövel (2005), Lange (2016), and Kosok (1992).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Cray (2002).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Sandberg (2003), Jordanova (1995), and Warner (1995).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Sternberger (1946), Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland GmbH (Federal Republic of Germany GmbH; ed.) (1993), Koschorke (1996), Oettermann (1997), Miller (1996), Huhtamo (2013), Haps (2010), and Griffith (2008). On the dioramas, cf. Gernsheim and Gernsheim (1956).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Oettermann (1992).

<sup>35</sup> On sensation theater, cf. Singer (2001) as well as Becker (2016). On illusion theaters, cf. During (2002), Steinmeyer (2003), Solomon (2010), and Gunning (2012).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Jansen (1990), Günther (1981) as well as Ochaim and Bald (1998).

cabarets,<sup>37</sup> fairs, amusement parks,<sup>38</sup> fairgrounds,<sup>39</sup> zoos<sup>40</sup> and world exhibitions,<sup>41</sup> a conglomerate of unmanageable visual, auditory and tactile stimuli was offered in the mode of sensation. These were in turn divided into forms of experience and perceptual schemas according to the principles of analysis and classification.

The respective mode of presentation initially mainly corresponded with a static schema, such as the scene or the tableau, which presented a static section of the world within a fixed framework. That which was presented was structured by regulated movements and changes of views, like in peep-boxes, dioramas, magic lantern shows as well as in early stereoscopy, for example. Views, perspectives and sections were brought together and welded together without their boundaries disappearing completely.<sup>42</sup>

Initially, the viewer's position was just as static and also distanced. The viewer was supposed to be able to perceive and be aware of the boundaries of detail and environment as the difference between a technically aesthetic, illusionistically presented *reality* and the existing *reality*. In the play of illusion and disruption of illusion, the (observing, experiencing) self was to experience itself as a quantity that sensually perceived this consciously constructed boundary. In the—always retroactive—recognition and understanding of the distinction between illusion and disruption, they became aware of themselves as a controlling instance in the firm demarcation from the presented spectacle and its, epistemologically speaking, supposedly completely different space-time.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the modes of experience and cognition changed again under the influence of new transport and communication technologies, which at the same time modified the epistemo-ontological space-time schema. Instead of a limited space in which time proceeded linearly and sequentially, hence in a controlled and limited manner, it now consisted of principally endless territorial expanses as well as potentially inconclusive time. In the manifestations of technical-aesthetic re-production, it was implemented as multiple, differently directed movements of objects in space, combined with heterogeneous, changing spatial sections, hence also moving perspectives. The movements of the viewers themselves were of particular importance. It is no coincidence that Wolfgang Schivelbusch and Anne Friedberg outline the emergence of a regime of the *virtual* gaze in panoramas and photographs (often as postcards),<sup>43</sup> which was prefigured in the mode of perception of the experience of railway travel.<sup>44</sup> Visuality as an analytical category; however, it

---

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Jelavich (1990, 1993).

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Rabinovitz (2012), Becker et al. (eds.) (2011), Berger (2016), Niedbalski (2016), Dreesbach and Zedelmeier (eds.) (2003), Brändle (2013), and Griffith (2002).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Szabo (2006), (ed.) (2009).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Wessely (2008), Rothfels (1994), Dreesbach (2005), Wolter (2005), Blanchard et al. (eds.) (2012), and Thode-Arora (1989).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Mitchell (1997), Cauter (1993), Bennett (2004), Leach (1989) and Spiekermann (2000).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Crary (1992), Hentschel (2001).

<sup>43</sup> Cf. on the medium of the postcard Geary and Webb (1998).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Schivelbusch (1977) and Friedberg (1993).

needs to be extended to include the haptic and tactile dimensions because they already played a key role in the experience of all kinds of railways, as well as in visiting hydraulically operated superstructures equipped with moving images.<sup>45</sup> These included the overall sensorimotor experiences of this kind offered by the elaborate, multiple-movement panoramas of the 1890s that incorporated moving arrangements such as sailboats, submarines and balloons. A similar overall experience was also provided by the railway carriages in amusement parks, which were equipped with the first railway films (phantom rides) around 1900. The beginning (*boarding*) and end (*arriving at a sight*) were predetermined, but the *ride* was theoretically endless.

The modes of presentation and experience also expressed the significance of the changed space-time schema in their material existence. The installations around 1900 were either very light and modular, thus low-budget and easily transportable, such as the constructions of the *faux terrains* made of wood and papier-mâché at world exhibitions around 1900.<sup>46</sup> They often created composites that corresponded to the synthesis of different modes of presentation as well as to the respective modes of their perception. Especially the walk-in, very elaborate panoramas of the late 1890s formed a simulative, synesthetic overall experience for the viewer's temporary immersion in an *artificial world*.

This spatio-temporal schema became significant in the respective installation whenever the temporal component of continuity and duration was linked with the principle of constant change in content and spatial views.

The exaggerations that emerged in the generated experience of difference were supposed to refer back to newly established standards. Because they were potentially new and thus indeterminate, they had to be permanently repeated in order to stabilize them, meaning the modes of experience had to be systematized, standardized and frequented. This endeavor can generally be observed in the increasing institutionalization of urban entertainment facilities. It can also be seen in special opening and performance times that dictated the regularity of events as well as their attendance. Preset programs with numbers, for example, in vaudeville theaters, also testify to the tendency towards quantitative frequency and the scheduling of leisure and consumption experiences. In general, therefore, those institutions and apparatuses, techniques and procedures that combined segmentation and standardization with variation and variety were particularly promising. Moreover, it was only by means of good transportability, marketability and easy consumption could they keep up with the processes of acceleration, intensification and expansion of the movements of goods and people, with their rotational and exchange movements; otherwise they were marginalized.

The re-productive spectacularization of the differentiated un/known was by no means presented in a symmetrical arrangement of binarisms. Rather, a part of the respective binarism was re-produced as a limit of norms, especially in freak shows,

---

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Williams (1997).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Haps (2010).

for example, in which the normalization of modern bodies fit for work was negotiated and balanced on the basis of the spectacularized extraordinary body.<sup>47</sup> The respective limit of a norm was usually technically-aesthetically drawn by the *disturbance of order*, such as *the sick* or *the stranger* (often in combination as well), in order to renegotiate and subsequently stabilize it in terms of knowledge politics by shifting the boundaries.<sup>48</sup>

The ethnological shows that took place in zoos, beer gardens, collections of curios and world exhibitions demonstrate that although the construction of norms was intended, the in/determinacies that arose over the course of the production of difference could always lead to unwanted constellations.<sup>49</sup> Through the presentation of *other foreign* people, Europeans were supposed to perceive and recognize themselves as such in the difference. The reference was doubly structured in that they were supposed to gain knowledge about the *foreign peoples*. However, since the presentation took place in the mode of spectacularization, the pleasure of knowing always played a major role. Intrinsically inscribed in the reference, then, was the exotic and erotic fascination and attraction that linked the two groups, each in difference. Conceptually, the Europeans were supposed to constitute themselves by recognizing the difference. In reality, however, both groups entered into partly erotic and sexual relationships with each other.<sup>50</sup> The positions of *subject* and *object*, of *own* and *foreign* potentially became as indistinguishable here as the nature of the reference of delimiting (reflexive) identification and voyeuristic and sexual desire.

Epistemologically, the modes of experience and modes of cognition of the *modern* world were thus fundamentally dependent on the composite illusionist worlds and their disruption. This referred to a real that, due to the constantly re-produced difference, never showed itself directly and truthfully, precisely because it had to be repeatedly redefined. Because it was merely illustrated in permanent repetition as a relation of difference, illusion and the real were also potentially indistinguishable. Since the modes of perception and cognition of the spectator as a subject depended on this, this constellation also potentially always affected the stability of the position of the (self-)experiencing, perceiving, cognizing subject. Particularly due to the fact that the illusionist techniques were based on the trickery and simulation of human sensory performance, and therefore went unnoticed because they were automatic, it was ultimately impossible to gain any certain knowledge about them. By the end of the nineteenth century, knowledge of the world, of the respective medium, and of the self as constituted by this medium were relationally entangled. The world

<sup>47</sup> On the freak shows, cf. Durbach (2010), Craton (2009) and Blue II (2014).

<sup>48</sup> On the performance of binarisms as material-semiotic borders, cf. Garland Thompson (ed.) (1996). For specific reference to gender on the basis of the transgender body, cf. Grosz (1996). In Western cultures, the extreme cases of these borders of the representable are death and sex. On death, cf. Stewart (1995). Explicitly with reference to the epistemic space-time theme towards the end of the nineteenth century in the field of medical photography, cf. Schmidt (2001).

<sup>49</sup> With this example I do not want to relieve the ethnological shows of their socio-political function. They are to be radically condemned as technologies of dehumanization.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Brändle (2013), Dreesbach and Zedelmeier (eds.) (2003) and Lewerenz (2007).



appeared as a heterogeneously structured moving image, which was composed by the medium. The self, intertwined with the technically-medially constituted world-view, existed in its entirety – in terms of its body, its identity, its will to knowledge, its desire – exclusively as a product and effect of this relationality.<sup>51</sup> It was available to itself only in this way insofar as experiencing and knowing took place qua self-images that were constituted medially and as well as through an apparatus. Through this, in the epistemo-ontological, thereby double sense, it was no longer really possible to truly know whether one saw and recognized oneself or an image of the self, which, however, was also always an image of the other, especially since the image could always be multiply structured through the differentiated re-production. The potential indistinguishability of visible and perceptible objects and subjects therefore overlapped inextricably with the potential indistinguishability of one's own body and that of another, of one's own identity and that of another, of the other and the self.

A look at the cultures of knowledge is informative here. By cultures of knowledge we mean first and foremost scientific museums, lecture halls and laboratories.<sup>52</sup> They were subject to the same axioms of work, life and representation with regard to individual and social (un)productivity, the necessary (non-)re-productivity, and their (impossible) visualizations.<sup>53</sup> Correspondingly, physical and physiological entities or materialities (of animal and human origin) were subjected, in part quite violently, to analysis, description and classification according to the general principles of standardization (averageness, re-producibility) as well as functional differentiation (fragmentation, comparability) with regard to their economic, socio-cultural and socio-political fungibility.

The modes of exhibition and presentation for a (selective, interested) public,<sup>54</sup> as well as the practices and modes of displaying human and non-human objects, were similar.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the epistemic objects,<sup>56</sup> including apparatuses and media, as well as the physiological, biological, ethnographic, anthropological, but also mathematical and physical knowledge implemented in each – they all circulated between laboratory and entertainment industry, not to mention overlaps of personnel. That which was investigated in the laboratories, written down as laws and shaped concretely and model-like was practically implemented in the entertainment cultures.

---

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Goble (2010) and Schrage (2001).

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Felsch (2005) and Hoffmann (2001a, b).

<sup>53</sup> On the topic of productivity, cf. Rabinbach (2001), Sarasin and Tanner (eds.) (1998), Varchmin and Radkau (1981) as well as Rieger (2002). For a perspective specifically based on gender, cf. Osietzki (2003).

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Daum (2002), Zimmermann (2002), Daston (ed.) (2004), Daston and Galison (2004), Heintz et al. (eds.) (2001) and Reichert (2007).

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Griffith (2008), Rony (1996) and Grewe (ed.) (2006).

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Rheinberger (1992).



The new experiences and knowledge generated there, in turn, flowed back into the experimental arrangements.<sup>57</sup>

Qua this materially founded knowledge, the principles of presence and absence, analysis and synthesis, as well as frequency and repetition in particular were implemented in the resulting apparatuses. The principle of difference was strategically applied in an experimental *and* entertaining way. The apparatuses operated with the limits of illusion and visibility per se, such as the aforementioned stereoscopy, but also the thaumatrope. The apparative movement of flipping the little leaf, which showed an empty cage on one side and a bird on the other, produced a static image. The effect of synthesis, namely the image of a bird sitting in a cage, took place in the technically supported perception. This effect of outwitting the human visual faculty was to be a decided part of the experience and was also to become conscious in this way. The phenakistiscope, the zoetrope, the praxinoscope and many other devices were based on the principle of creating a continuous movement from sequential images. At the same time, these were also initially subject to potential temporal incompleteness insofar as what was shown, such as a dancing couple or a flying seagull that endlessly repeated itself. In various apparatus arrangements, these moving images were then layered, mirrored and framed so that changing actions could be seen in a section, such as in peep-boxes or even projected onto a screen. The *théâtre optique* is the brilliant culmination of these composition-like moving images, in which several strips of moving images were once clamped in a projection apparatus, mirrored, and then projected onto a large screen as virtual images on a stage layered several times in the depth of the room.<sup>58</sup> The medium of film differs from this only in that it is able to scale depth ratios to a greater extent and in its use of the photorealistic image mode. In the *théâtre optique* it was possible to view changing scenes in which figures performed short sequences of action in the foreground and middle ground of the image, whose semantic-narrative causal connection had to be developed by the viewer.<sup>59</sup>

Not only were the spectators sensory-motorically addressed by the apparatuses. They were also connected to them as actors by operating them themselves. They cranked and turned for all they were worth. As part of the arrangement, the spectators ensured that the viewing was successful to the extent that it depended on the tactile, *correct* operation of the apparatuses.<sup>60</sup> Systematically, the knowledge of physiological vision in particular was used for the production of the apparatuses, which in turn had *internalized* the principles of physiology in such a way that they could simulate them, meaning to subliminally realize the re-production.

---

<sup>57</sup> This was not a master plan carried out by a general staff. The systematization process took place on the basis of local conditions in which specific actors, technical-physical and -physiological arrangements and discursive strategies came together to form an *assemblage*.

<sup>58</sup> On the variety of these apparatuses, cf. Rossell (1998).

<sup>59</sup> The panoramas and dioramas were also partly subject to this mode of operation, in which the overall impression opened up for the audience by abstracting from represented space and represented time and filling the *blanks* themselves in a meaningful way, as in a novel, for example.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Williams (1997).

However, in order to detect the physiological laws, one first had to get to the bottom of them. Accordingly, the optical-mechanical and electro-mechanical apparatuses recorded sensorimotor processes, meaning that they graphed them. From an analytical perspective, graphs are therefore of great epistemological importance because, strictly speaking, they did not bring anything to view. Instead of symbolically inscribing a reference object, the processes of *life itself* – such as movement, pulse and heart rates – were supposedly engraved directly into physical matter.<sup>61</sup> But if the frequency of the movement of a human actor is now recorded by a graph, who is the scientist himself, knowledge about the human object of knowledge as well as of the subject of knowledge become one.<sup>62</sup> This already circumvents the dividing line between object and subject.

This arrangement intensified with the phenomenon that Jonathan Crary called the “subjective vision.”<sup>63</sup> Seeing became physiological,<sup>64</sup> by which Crary means that *stubborn* human matter inserted itself into the previously transparent process of knowledge and cognition production, that is metaphorically expressed by the camera obscura. In terms of the history of knowledge, at any rate, it became reflexive for the first time as an object of knowledge in its material constitution. Over the course of the discursive differentiation of sensory and motor nerves in relation to the central voluntary and involuntary activities as well as the entire nervous system, for the first time in physiological research the fundamental arbitrariness of stimulus and sensation, of sensation and perception, and ultimately of perception and cognition became evident.<sup>65</sup>

In particular, Johannes Müller’s so-called theory of *specific nerves* demonstrated that stimulus and sensation apparently had no systematic causal relationship to each other, but were scattered and disorganized.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, visual perception apparently formed a composite like all other modes of perception. The scandalous thing about this finding is not only that human matter obstructs immediate access to the cognition of a cogito, but that because of this material *obstruction*, all human cognition necessarily becomes problematic per se. Nor is it only relevant, as Crary argues,

---

<sup>61</sup> In physiology, Claude Bernard began the method of examining the living body in the 1830s. Cf. Schmidgen (2013) and Bühler (2004).

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Hahn et al. (eds.) (2002), Hess (2010), Hoffmann (2001b) and Rieger (2004).

<sup>63</sup> Crary (1992: 67).

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Crary (1992).

<sup>65</sup> In this context, Crary mentions the research of Maine de Biran, Sir Charles Bell, François Magendie, Pierre Flourens, Alois Riegl, Konrad Fiedler and Theodor Lipps. However, he places special focus on the work of Johannes Müller and Hermann von Helmholtz. Cf. Crary (1992: 67 ff.).

<sup>66</sup> The functional differentiation of nerve activity (a nerve always produces the same sensation) was recorded in it. It could be triggered by any stimuli caused by completely different sources (fist blow, electricity). On Müller’s experiments and theories, cf. Lenoir (1998), Lohoff and Müller (1993), Verwey (1992) and Otis (2007). On the work of Gustav Th. Fechner, cf. Scheerer (1993), Marshall (1982) and Heidelberger (2000). On the work of Wilhelm Wundt, cf. Woodward (1982), Fahrenberg (2013) and Jüttemann (ed.) (2006). On the work of Helmholtz, cf. Lenoir (1998), Osietzki (1998), Turner (1982) and Schmidgen (2009).

that sense apparatus and perception are fundamentally susceptible to interference as well as virtually predestined to malfunction and manipulation.<sup>67</sup> Rather, physical matters in a regulated form such as media have a destabilizing effect on the position of a transcendental cogito.

Bernhard Siegert emphasized the epistemo-ontological dimension of this constellation.<sup>68</sup> As the subject of knowledge advanced to become an instrument of measurement and the physiological forces thereby recorded themselves, man's epistemology also changed his ontology since the recording processes eluded vividness *and* analysis. The corresponding material substrate, such as a graph's recordings, did not represent matter, but encoded it, and instead of turning it into a symbolic sign, it turned it into a time-critical, dynamic signal that could be triggered automatically (when a threshold was crossed). Here the material substrate *man* became analogous to a physical substrate, such as the conductor or relay. According to Siegert, the differences between stimulus and sensation as well as between sensation and perception could not be written down as a continuous flow of forces in the laws of sensorimotor activities that could be studied. Decisive for this were new findings about electricity as studied by Faraday in solid state physics (electromagnetic induction), which were confirmed by the findings in the field of optics as well as by Fresnel's wave theory. In essence, they said that this type of electricity was not a fluid, as it had previously been assumed, but time-dependent decomposition and recombination processes, meaning combined oscillation frequencies, or oscillating vibrations (alternating current).<sup>69</sup>

With the physical order of the electromagnetic induction as recorded by Faraday and experimentally proven for operating machines, the difference between human stimulus and human sensation as well as between sensation and perception could also be described. The differences that became visible in the recording could be visualized as temporal differences of the function of two combined movements, and therefore as pulse frequencies. Their physical regularities were mathematically calculated as relations of continuous and unsteady boundary functions. According to Siegert, in the illustration itself, however, they did not represent a continuum, but rather jumps. The real to which they referred could only be deciphered as discrete dust or *data chaos*.<sup>70</sup> The fact that the subject was now reduced to a relay that was

---

<sup>67</sup> On the automatic unconscious processes as well as on the disturbances of these processes cf. Schüttelpelz and Kümmel (eds.) (2003) as well as Rieger (2001).

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Siegert (2003: 225–390).

<sup>69</sup> These, in turn, were mathematically calculated as relations of continuous and discontinuous boundary functions or oscillating functions. In the illustration, they no longer resulted in a continuum, but depicted jumps, so that the phenomenon or real to which they referred could only be deciphered as discrete dust.

<sup>70</sup> On modern formalized mathematics and analysis, cf. Merthens (1990), Heintz (1993) and Stigler (1986). According to Siegert, the resulting double realization that both the lawful physical representation of reality and the human perceptual apparatus were completely unreliable initiated the social debate on the so called *crisis of perception*. For more on this, cf. Volkert (1997). For more on the *crisis of perception* in the cultural and social sphere in a brief overview, cf. Peters and Schäfer (2006) as well as Burrow (2003).

switched by impulses and consisted of rotational movements and oscillating vibrations, as the psychophysical researcher put it, is to be understood less as a change in the metaphorical designation practice of the mode of perception or cognition and the technical medium. Rather, it is an epistemo-ontological entanglement of the self and media, which are materially *and* semiotically relational and thereby differentially given.

However, this realization could not initially be conceived in its radicality around 1900. Accordingly, in this new order of being, human consciousness first appeared as a mathematical limit, as a malfunction or disturbance of the processes and a retroactively occurring component. As Stefan Rieger demonstrates,<sup>71</sup> this was rewritten in a positive light as a clocked pulse frequency. This is how it appeared in Henri Bergson's theory of consciousness, delineated by the new medium of the cinematograph. In contrast to the groundless inconceivability of the onto-epistemology of electromagnetic devices, the principles of the manipulability of time and space (reversibility, rewind and forward motion) could be explained by the medium film. However, consciousness could only be expressed as the ratio of two irreversible impulse frequencies (threshold) to simple, reversible impulse frequencies, which meant that its uniqueness could only be distinguished from the activity of technical apparatuses. In psycho-physical research, it was precisely this differential relationship that could, in turn, only be written as a difference between recording and perception frequency, meaning human sensory perception could only exist epistemo-ontologically in the entanglement of apparatus and subject. The supposedly purely biological-human result was a figure whose specific time-dependent perception as a separation of consciousness and experience could only be depicted in two –technically recorded–impulse frequencies. As a *purely* biological organism, it had to permanently continually align itself with its environment in the mode of a specific temporal behavior, which operated in sync with image frequencies. According to Rieger's main thesis, these were virtual images insofar as they were generated by the subject with oscillating vibrations, or processes of de- and recombination. Moreover, the real to which they referred also consisted of oscillating and impulse frequencies, which did not yield a coherent *image* of reality upon viewing. According to Rieger, this epistemo-ontological impasse of the post-sustainability, inconceivability and unreliability of *real* phenomena and consciousness explains the theoretical justification of an almost existential compulsion for the organism to produce these virtual images. It is only through image production that the coherent reference to the world and the unity of the organism could (still) be guaranteed. Hereby, the essential difference between human and apparatus dynamics of clocked image frequencies should once again become evident: In contrast to apparatuses, *man* succeeded in a pictorial anticipation (pro-jection) due to the double impulse frequency of his sensorimotor system, which Rieger called "vital imagination" in accordance with Melchior Palágyi.<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Rieger (2003: 159–186).

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Rieger (2003: 226–236) and Palágyi (1901).

Since the doing had to align itself with the environment in the system-environment relationship, it constantly changed when its parameters changed. Due to this, however, the results and therefore the existence of the phenomenon itself were also continuously being modified during the observation (*disturbance*). Not only was the given no longer what it has been before at the moment of its fixation. It also had (always already) been and would always be another.<sup>73</sup> As Rieger argues, the order of evidence of one's own existence, which is continuously processed by the body, was a perpetually time-dependent dynamic principle of movement of constant self-regulation. Around the year 1900, *man*, as Rieger notes, was a being that permanently controlled himself through image production. *He* himself basically existed as this merely intrinsically differentiated figure. In a slight modification of the figure of the automatically switched self whose cogito forms a subsequent *appendage*, the figure of a time-critical, minor (self-)difference emerged here in which a self had to be somewhat ahead of itself qua virtual fantasy in order to then be able to newly re-define itself time and again. In this self-image, according to Rieger's conclusion, the self was basically constantly out of sync with time and therefore its own Other.<sup>74</sup>

Admittedly, this figure was written as *purely* biological-human. However, it was relationally intertwined via the concepts of oscillation, pulse frequency and image timing with those media and apparatuses from which it was supposed to clearly distinguish. The self, differentiating itself in continual repetition, is to be described as the figure of the techno-anthropomorph of knowledge cultures par excellence. It is the epistemo-ontological transcription of that flexible figure in which subject and object as well as knowledge and desire were potentially indistinguishable, as this figure of a *self* was permanently re-staged in entertainment cultures in the form of oscillating binarisms of the *own* and the *other*, *familiar* and *foreign* bodies, identities and desires, in order to (re)stabilize them (in vain, yet continually).

In the next section I will explain the epistemo-ontological dimension of this figure of the techno-anthropomorph specifically for queer masculinity by using Sedgwick's reflections to outline its entanglements with the gender order and epistemology of gender and sexuality that emerged in the nineteenth century up to the end of the century.

---

<sup>73</sup> On this paradoxical epistemo-ontological constellation, see the remarks of Karen Barad that she explains based on the Doppler experiment in quantum physics and calls the intra-active phenomenon of cutting together-apart. Cf. Barad (2014). It reflexively became observer-relationality in physics. Accordingly, Barad refers to Niels Bohr's quantum model.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Rieger (2003: 239).

### 1.3 Queer Masculinity Around 1900: The Double Bind of the Anthropomorphic

Sedgwick's historical epistemology of masculinity in nineteenth-century European societies clearly reveals its discursive dynamics.<sup>75</sup> Strongly influenced by the categories of life, work and representation, this dynamic made male gender identity and male bodies increasingly visible. The result was the increasing discrimination against male homosexuality. In the wake of a fixing heterosexual binary norm, a bundle of sexual acts that had previously only been loosely tied to a gendered body was condensed into "perversions." They served as marginal cases of what could (not) be defined as masculine, thereby making *normal masculinity* seem evident. Gender and sexuality, though not yet conceived as coherent identities, became intertwined in this, so that, as Foucault writes, "the homosexual" constituted a species.<sup>76</sup> In this context, Sedgwick emphasizes the reduction of a variety of socioeconomic, -political, and -cultural differentiators that had formerly defined male identity and male relationships. By 1900, what we are accustomed to calling *sexual orientation* (the orientation of desire towards an object of sexual choice) emerged in which the gender of the object of desire is extremely emphasized.

Accordingly, the definition of masculinity (and femininity) was oriented toward the gender of a person, and also predominantly toward gendered desire. Sedgwick explains the resulting discursive dynamics by means of two contemporary tropes, namely that of sexual inversion and that of gender separatism. Underlying this inversion was the understanding that a person's desire was composed of male and female components (*hetero*) that were relatively independent of bodily gender. This can be inferred, for example, from Hirschfeld's concept of the "third sex." In contrast, gender separatism defined the desire of one person as the same as that of another person who shared gender with him (*homo*). In the first case, there is a particularist, or in Sedgwick's terms minoritarian, understanding of desire and identification (*other*) from which a particularist gay identity and politics could be derived. In Hirschfeld's case, it was also gender-transitive, as evidenced by his alliances with feminist groups. In the second case, on the other hand, there was a universal understanding of desire and identification (*same*), as expressed, for example, in Benedict Friedländer's culture *of one's own*, which was both misogynist and anti-Semitic.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Sedgwick systematically elaborated this in *Epistemology of the Closet*. Cf. Sedgwick (1990: 86 f. and 157 ff.). Preliminary work on this can already be found in Sedgwick (1985, 1986).

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Foucault (1983), Katz (1995) and Halperin (1990).

<sup>77</sup> Historiographical research on masculinity and (homo-)sexuality in Germany around 1900 clearly shows that both binarisms produced minoritizing, discriminatory variants as well as universalizing, appreciative variants of male relationships, such as in the homosocial men's associations or the Wandervogel movement. Depending on the fundamental orientation of the community, Eros was either marginalized or identified as a basic constituent of universally defined male relationships, while only the sexual act was frowned upon (see Sect. 2.2 and Chap. 4).