CHAPTER 4

Representations and Identities

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter investigates the features of German culture that informed people’s understanding of same-sex desire, especially the country’s strong classical and Romantic traditions in literature and the arts, but also more modern influences. It considers as well the role played by the homosexual press by the 1920s in offering a space to express some of these understandings and identities.

OVERVIEW

Since the publication of the philosopher Michel Foucault’s work on sexuality, in the 1970s, historians, sociologists, and queer theorists have considered the emergence of sexual identities. Sociologists and many social historians have tended to emphasize the importance of urbanization and economic transformation in the formation of sexual identity. Others have taken their lead from Foucault by tracing the influence of scientific understanding and medical knowledge about sexuality. Still others have suggested the roles that the middle-class ideal of romantic love, changing gender norms, and even nationalism might play. Most fundamentally, perhaps, queer theory has made us attentive to the multiple ways of understanding and defining sexual identity. What seems clear is that multiple social and cultural forces were at work, forces that both created constraints on how people could behave and generated new opportunities for self-understanding.

As men and women began to develop identities in which deep physical or erotic attachments to members of the same sex played an important role, they found they had much available in their society and culture to work with. This chapter focuses mostly on the efforts of recent historians to broaden our understanding of science’s effects and in other ways expand the conversation to include additional factors. It considers the importance of the classical heritage in some detail, but it also examines the significance of the Romantic tradition, ideas about “modernity,” and the homosexual press for the articulation of homosexual identity. Special attention is given to the poems of Stefan George, the photographs of Wilhelm von Gloeden, the film Girls in Uniform, and novels written by Klaus Mann, John Henry Mackay, and Anna Elisabet Weirauch.

KEY TERMS

Germany; gay and lesbian identity; Stefan George; Wilhelm von Gloeden; Klaus Mann; Girls in Uniform (film)
NOTES TO CHAPTER 4


2 Ibid., 43.


9 Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism*, 62.

10 Ibid., 162–63.


17 The influence of queer theory, with its more fluid take on identity construction, can clearly be seen in Michele, *Selbstbilder und Fremdbilder der "Anderen. “* For my own effort at using Judith Butler’s conception of “performance” to reconstruct identities in a slightly later period, see Whisnant, “Styles of Masculinity in the West German Gay Scene.”

18 Michael Warner, introduction to *Fear of a Queer Planet*, xv.


20 Lybeck, *Desiring Emancipation*, esp. chap. 5.
21 Interestingly, this appears to have been true even in some countries where homosexuality was not a crime. For the case of France, see Victoria Thompson, “Creating Boundaries: Homosexuality and the Changing Social Order in France, 1830–1870,” in Homosexuality in Modern France, ed. Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan Jr. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 113–17.

22 On the turn-of-the-century media explosion, see Fritzsche, Reading Berlin 1900.


24 Skinner, Wärme Brüder, Kesse Väter, 146.


27 Faderman, Surpassing the Love of Men, 29.

28 Ibid., 43–45.

29 James W. Jones, “We of the Third Sex”: Literary Representations of Homosexuality in Wilhelmine Germany (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 174–75.

30 Aimée Duc, Sind Es Frauen? Roman über das dritte Geschlecht (Berlin: Gabriele Meixner, 1976).

31 Jones, “We of the Third Sex,” 150.

32 Hughes, Consciousness and Society.

33 Oosterhuis, Stepchildren of Nature, 260.

34 On the so-called discovery of adolescence, see Gillis, Youth and History, 95–131.


37 Ibid., 82.

38 Schader, Virile, Vamps und wilde Veilchen, 139.


41 Kracauer, From Caligari to Hitler, 227.


43 Ibid., 33.

44 Jones, “We of the Third Sex,” 150.


48 Ibid., 215–16.
55 Ibid., 119–21.
56 Ibid., 339–41.
58 Ibid., 208.
59 Norton, *Secret Germany*, 266.
60 Ibid., 510–11.
64 Ibid., 298–301.
65 Ibid., 420–22.
67 Ibid., 63–85.
70 Ibid., 82–86.
74 Ibid., 17, 19–20.
77 Rowe, *Representing Berlin.*
78 Jones, “We of the Third Sex,” 137.
81 Thompson, “Creating Boundaries,” 120.
82 Ibid., 118–19.
86 Marti Lybeck, “Gender, Sexuality, and Belonging: Female Homosexuality in Germany, 1890–1933” (PhD diss., University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, 2008), 229.
87 Ibid., 235.
89 Weiss, *In the Shadow of Magic Mountain*, 42.
92 Mackay, *The Hustler*, 35.
93 Ibid., 42.
94 Quoted in Hubert Kennedy, afterword to Mackay, *The Hustler*, 302.
95 Ibid., 305.
96 Mackay, *The Hustler*, 254.
98 Ibid., 156–57.
100 Nancy P. Nenno, “Bildung and Desire: Anna Elisabet Weirauch’s *Der Skorpion*,” in Lorey and Plews, *Queering the Canon*, 209.
104 Micheleler, *Selbstbilder und Fremdbilder*, 130–34.
105 Ibid., 163–66.
106 This is my translation of the original, German-language lyrics written by Kurt Schwabach, not the English version composed by Jeremy Lawrence and made famous by Ute Lemper with her 1996 recording of the song.
107 Micheler, Selbstbilder und Fremdbilder, 117.
110 Micheler, Selbstbilder und Fremdbilder, 157.
111 Ibid., 154.
112 Quoted ibid., 154–55.
113 Ibid., 184.
114 Ibid., 197.
115 Ibid., 199.
116 Dr. R. Schild, quoted ibid., 186.
117 Micheler, Selbstbilder und Fremdbilder, 184.
118 Ibid., 171–73.
120 Micheler, Selbstbilder und Fremdbilder, 143.
122 Micheler, Selbstbilder und Fremdbilder, 146.
123 Ibid., 156.
124 Ibid., 145.
125 Schader, Virile, Vamps und wilde Veilchen, 84–85.
126 Katie Sutton, The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany, 117.
127 Ibid.
128 Schader, Virile, Vamps und wilde Veilchen, 110.
129 Sutton, The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany, 28.
130 Ibid., 40.
131 For a queer analysis of the “breeches role” in Weimar film, see ibid., especially chap. 4. For an analysis of the role as it was revived in 1950s film, see Alison Guenther-Pal, “Projecting Deviance/Seeing Queerly: Homosexual Representations and Queer Spectatorship in 1950s West Germany” (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2007), especially chap. 5.
132 Sutton, The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany, 6.
133 Ruth Röllig, quoted in Katie Sutton, The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany, 48.
136 Both quoted ibid.
137 Quoted in Sutton, The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany, 100.
138 Ibid., 101.
139 Schader, Virile, Vamps und wilde Veilchen, 109–14.
140 Sutton, The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany, 98.
141 Schader, Virile, Vamps und wilde Veilchen, 114–19.
144 Vogel, “Zum Selbstverständnis lesbischer Frauen in der Weimarer Republik,” 165.
146 Ibid., 96–98.